The political promise of choreography in performance and/as research: First Physical Theatre Company's manifesto and repertory, 1993–2015

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ABSTRACT

This study redefines the political in dance by drawing on the scholarly concept of the "choreopolitical" (André Lepecki) and extending it into analysing related concepts such as the "postdramatic" (Hans-Thies Lehmann), performance and/as research, among others from Performance Studies scholarship as well as from First Physical Theatre Company's pioneering legacy of production, pedagogy and research in making Phyical Theatre performance. Following from the notion that performance is both a site *and* a method of study/knowing, the research invites a rethinking of the relationship between art (performance), epistemology and the political, in the sense that performance becomes a way, not of simply re-presenting the political but, as its own way of knowing, actively questioning the very categories on which the political is premised. The argument for Physical Theatre as having nascent potential to invoke what I call "the power of the small" is analysed as a choreopolitical method and community of practice that has a generative capacity to produce the "intimate revolts" (Julia Kristeva) or body of questions that can perform the imaginative curiosities/forms required to create provocative, subversive, ethical, reflexive and charged performance. My argument is supported by critical commentary, insight, choreological analysis and reflection on the dramaturgical strategies and choreopolitics of selected commissioned choreographers and dance forms that extended FPTC's manifesto and production between 1993 and 2015.

My project has the following three goals: (i) to contextualise, conceptualise and identify key issues in the identity, pedagogy and performance ethos of Physical Theatre as a performance philosophy and form; (ii) to engage critically with the praxis of Physical Theatre within the contextual, cultural, historical and political relationships between Physical Theatre and other performance practices in South Africa; and (iii) to document, analyse and interpret selected claims, works and performance processes from the archive of FPTC's repertory and training manifesto from 1993 to 2015. The research evaluates the political significance and consequence of FPTC's heritage and legacy problematising constraints, possibilities, tensions, failures and proposing the hope of imaginative entanglements with practising freedoms.

DEDICATION

To two dancers that inspired and grew me in profound ways – Sifiso Majola and Ayanda Nondlwana – whose untimely, violent passings left us reeling but whose collaborative work with a community of dance practice is celebrated.

DECLARATION OF INTENT

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work, and that to the best of my knowledge it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

I declare that I have included references to my Master of Arts mini-dissertation and to various research papers that I have written, which I clearly indicate in this text and which are referenced in the bibliography.

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List of abbreviations and terms

Amazwi   South African Museum of Literature (the first "green" museum in South Africa, completed in 2017)

CAP   Creative analytic processes

FATC   Forgotten Angle Theatre Company

FPTC   First Physical Theatre Company

NELM   New English Literary Museum

P-a-R   Practice-as-research

T-a-R   Teaching-as-research

Notes

(i)   I have selected to use capital letters when discussing the term "Physical Theatre" given its focus as a specific performance modality and form in this thesis, in contrast to referring more generally to theatre that incorporates a somatic or physical presence by virtue of the fact that it is performed by a living body.

(ii)   I use the term choreopolitics without inverted commas except for where I first introduce it as a term coined by André Lepecki, noting that it has been popularised in performance discourse and appears to be used frequently as a term not requiring direct quotation.

(iii)   To note that Athena Fatseas/Athena Mazarakis are the same person. Athena Fatseas was the name used until 1998 (which covers most of her early work with FPTC) and then shifted to Mazarakis, which was used as her professional stage name as performer/choreographer. For academic/career work she still uses Fatseas to facilitate administrative courtesies. She sometimes uses both names double-barrelled for which I have selected to use when discussing her performance work.

(iv)   To note that Juanita Finestone and Juanita Finestone-Praeg are the names used for my own writing and academic authorship. There are no incidents of co-authorship with Leonhard Praeg in this thesis - though I do cite conversations with him and also reference his creative commissions (compositions) with FPTC in the thesis.

PREFACE

In an earlier publication – *Memory in Translation* (Finestone-Praeg 2002) – I noted a "sad history of illiteracy" in South African Performance Studies – specifically in dance scholarship – and observed how the question of remembering is complicated by the "scarcity of permanent records and also by this evanescent nature of the dancing body which resists a permanent and textual presence" (13). I argued that the task of the researcher was not unlike that of the translator: as we research and document (in order to preserve) the various ways in which meaning is performed, we cannot but do so by translating our dance histories into memory. We are required to witness (where we can), to document, remember, interpret and transform the choreographer's undertaking, which is to evoke the intimate liaison between the appearances and disappearances of bodily memory through time and space. The reading of bodily memory has taken me directly to history, both social and personal, because bodily memory is the site of a complex interface between social and personal history. The researcher/translator has to document but also creatively transform what they perceive and read in a text (in the all-encompassing sense of the word). Trying to create a cartography of these connections, I begin to see that "writing dancing" (Susan Leigh Foster's term) is another way of choreographing the body-as-archive.[1] The body becomes memory in movement and no textual reconstruction of history can exhaust what the body remembers. This notion of embodied creativity embraces the idea of translation/writing/narration as transformation and applies equally to both choreographers and researchers:

> Writing is a wager of solitude, flux and reflux of anxiety. It is also the reflection of a reality reflected in its new origin, whose image we shape deep in our jumble of desires and doubts (Jabès 1996, 35).

Jabès' suggestion that writing manifests a "new origin" for an already-reflected experience which may produce an "unsuspected subversion" resonates with some of the spectral anxieties of negotiating writing about performance or performative writing. In this regard, Performance Studies theorist Adrian Heathfield notes

> how *outside* the writer's language is in relation to the event...How lacking in that which would turn inside, make the thing flow and burn, touch and weigh

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[1] I first encountered the term "writing dancing" in dance scholar Susan Leigh Foster's *Reading dancing: bodies and subjects in Contemporary American Dance* (1986). Her Chapter 4 is entitled "Writing Dancing: The Viewer as Choreographer in Contemporary Dance" (1986, 186–229).

again. How utterly significant, unique and unforgettable is the event. How lost it is now. All that one can do is proceed inside this tear; vibrate at the borders of memory (2006, 179; emphasis in original).

Restaging the residues of the performance event through writing becomes a play with shape-shifting silhouettes of subjective and collective memory. Heathfield suggests that a "recurrent trope of the event-text" is the interweaving of autobiographical writing with critical discourse through which "a crossing: a dialogue" is staged, which brings writing into proximity with "the now" (182). He asks:

> of what does the text speak when its writing subject is spoken rather than the text speaking of its object?...Performative writing does not see cultural events or artworks as objects, but rather as situations, manifestations, articulations of ideas...they are seen not just as representations but also as sayings...to address such sayings in writing is to say back, to respond, to engage in a process relation that is corporeal, animate and transformative (2006, 181–182).

Throughout this thesis my own "sayings" are similarly translations aimed at "saying back to" various encounters: with my own choreographic praxis, with performance research and my teaching and learning encounters in the field of Performance Studies, especially Physical Theatre and choreography. How can and do we remember, document, write and teach the complex absence/presence embodied in the "live" performance moment? How do we train and educate performers within this realm of liminality and disappearance? How does this body of questions converse with my evolving understanding of what performance does and where it performs its asking?

As ways of addressing and correcting this historical "illiteracy" or invisibility of documentation on South African dance performance, I have selected to draw extensively on Masters' dissertations and PhD theses currently emerging in South African performance scholarship. The contemporaneity of these dissertations and theses makes their critiques and visions relevant to current South African scholarship and performing arts research. In addition, I have made extensive use of interviews as a way to remember all these bodies through an orality of recall and as sites where many of the archives remain embodied.

INTRODUCTION

Contextual framings

This study is located in the general field of Physical Theatre and in the particular practice of choreography as one of the strands that constitute its interdisciplinary nexus. The establishment of Physical Theatre as a distinct genre began to gain momentum in the 1980s (Sanchez-Colberg 1996), becoming a "fashionable designation of a range of emerging practices" (Murray and Keefe 2007, 14). The terms "Physical Theatre" and "dance" were at times used interchangeably but, as its non-formulaic collision of drama and dance in the creative matrix of its production and politics began to challenge conventional understandings of the accepted role of movement and voice (embodiment) in dance, Physical Theatre soon began to distinguish itself as a particular artistic form. Ana Sanchez-Colberg's seminal article, "Altered states and subliminal spaces: Charting the road towards a Physical Theatre" (2006, 45) remains a key text for understanding central aspects of the genealogy of precedents that would lead to the emergence of Physical Theatre; the hybridity of explorations and subversions of form by avant-garde artists who worked in theatre and in dance and who insisted on devaluing the apolitical and ahistorical language of technical virtuosity in which the body had historically been bound to ideal forms which could objectify the body precisely because they existed outside of the body. These provocations nurtured the spirit and experimental form of early Physical Theatre in the United Kingdom and Europe.[2]

In South Africa, precedents for a holistic play with elements of a "Physical Theatre" and cross-pollinations of traditional dance and theatre had always been part of productions such as *Woza Albert* (1983) and other forms of workshopped theatre, though not necessarily in a way that complied with the new emerging criteria of what was consolidating itself as Physical Theatre. That said, in both instances transgressive shifts away from movement as a somatic "must" for dance performance radically transformed the choreographic possibilities for dance performance and profoundly questioned the normative bodily politics in/of dance. It is clear that one of the presiding impulses which nourished Physical Theatre was that it was not a "style of dance" as much as a way of making theatre; an approach to devising performance that essentially proposed a new "body of questions".

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[2] The thesis will not specifically document or review the rise of Physical Theatre as a Contemporary Performance practice globally but acknowledges the influence and impact on FPTC of the DV8 collective which was founded by Lloyd Newson, Michelle Richecoeur and Nigel Charnock in 1986 in the United Kingdom. It is noteworthy that Gary Gordon, founder of FPTC, was invited to join the DV8 collective as a performer in 1991, though he could not accept the invitation because he was already teaching at the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance and was unable to be granted a visa as a performer.

A filigreed labyrinth of research pathways, frameworks, artistic encounters, and experiences have informed my research processes over many years of making, teaching and researching Physical Theatre. As such, my style of analysis and methodology gravitates towards a more organic, poetic approach that, while full of fragments, holes, and silences, hopefully opens a clearing for ways of understanding *how performance knows* and also, *how performance can be known through performing writing*. Performance scholar André Lepecki asks how we account for "these endless mobilities of discourses and objects that we analyse"? Indeed. With so much *movement* he acknowledges the need for a "little bit of critical misbehaviour"; "a little bit of cracking hope in the well-behaved modalities of academic appliances of what is a definition of a field" (cited in Cutugno 2014, 83–84). Lepecki's "misbehaviour" resonates with current performance research as offered and described by Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) in their co-authored work: "Writing: A method of inquiry" (2005). These new methodologies advocate for the "evolution, proliferation and diversity of new ethnographic species" witnessed in the CAP (creative analytical processes) ethnographies being brought into performance research and which validate writing as a "method of nomadic inquiry" (2005, 967). I discuss these ideas in greater depth below in relation to the methodological considerations activated and pursued in this thesis. The manner in which First Physical Theatre Company (FPTC) used movement research (via improvisation, autobiography, physical risk) and devised process (collaboration, original commissions) produced unconventional ways of staging which provoked and challenged traditional modes of spectatorship. These deconstructive processes of historical boundaries and performance praxis opened Physical Theatre performance to the historical, the political and the contextual – in other words, to a democratising logic embedded in contemporary choreographic practice. This study explores the potential of Physical Theatre to provoke a rethinking of the relationship between politics and performance, between the political (conventionally understood) and the performative as a space where identities are forged, interpreted and contested.

FPTC was established in 1993 as an associated non-profit performing arts company based at Rhodes University's Drama Department in Grahamstown, Eastern Cape, South Africa.[3] It was the first performing arts company in the South Africa to articulate a performance manifesto and artistic approach and gave Physical Theatre an identity and a

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[3] In 2018, Grahamstown was renamed Makhanda. I will use both names in this thesis because Grahamstown is cited in some of the historical references and the new name is still not entirely in common parlance.

political commitment. Artistic director, Professor Gary Gordon, has the reputation of having nurtured and trained a lineage of top theatre makers and choreographic innovators in the country. Veteran dance critic, Adrienne Sichel,[4] notes that while "to trace the history and impact of Physical Theatre in South Africa is a tall order...the obvious starting point is Gary Gordon, who is arguably the father of the current local form of training, practice and performance" (Sichel 2010, 41). FPTC has produced over a hundred and fifty original choreographies including twelve major full-length danceplays.[5] Many of these works have pushed theatrical boundaries through their unusual theatricality and performance. Located in the Rhodes Drama Department, FPTC has inspired the innovative and compelling research that has earned it recognition as one of the "few consistent choreographic laboratories in the country" (Jay Pather[6] at University of Cape Town 2008, Rhodes University Masters' Examination Report) which has "blazed a trail in choreographic research, training and conceptual performance" (Sichel 2010, 168).

Conceptual underpinnings

This research is located in the field of Performance Studies with a particular focus on Physical Theatre and related scholarly areas such as Choreology, Dance Studies and Postdramatic Theatre Studies. Performance Studies is a broad-based, multi-disciplinary field "with a continually moving centre of gravity" (Stucky and Wimmer 2002, 10). Its roots are interdisciplinary and as such transgress cultural, disciplinary, theoretical, personal, and political borders. Particularly relevant for this research project is my argument, based on performance studies theorists (Conquergood 2002; Auslander 2003; Lepecki 2004; Lehmann 2006; Nelson 2006; Schechner 2006; Bottoms and Goulish 2007; Fleishman 2012), that performance is not merely the representation of knowledge, but rather the active *presentation*

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[4] As Samuel (2016, 26) notes, within the dance fraternity, Sichel's name is virtually "synonymous with the emergence of the South African contemporary dance itself" as she has been a "dynamic advocate" and "key role-player" in this historical account.

[5] See the inventory of the company's repertory as indexed. The term "danceplay" was coined by Gary Gordon and will be discussed in PART I (ii).

[6] Jay Pather is a choreographer, curator and director who has worked for many years within the performing arts in South Africa. He is the director of the Siwela Sonke Dance Theatre (Durban) and is an associate professor at the University of Cape Town. He has become a curatorial force in South African performing arts via his directorship of the Gordon Institute for Performing and Creative Arts (GIPCA) and the newly developed Institute of Creative Arts (ICA) which hosts a variety of interdisciplinary platforms like the Great Texts/Big Questions open lecture/seminar series, symposiums, the annual LIVE ART Festival, and the Curatorial fellowship performances and the ICA Fellowship performances. His seasoned curation of the *Infecting The City* public arts festival has ensured its quality and sustainability to become an annual event of free, socially engaged performance in various public spaces in Cape Town and surrounding areas of the Western Cape since 2007.

of epistemology; in other words, that performance is at once a *source* of knowledge, a *way* of knowing and the *presentation* of that knowing. As Stucky and Wimmer (2002) succinctly remark, "[p]erformance epistemology locates performance itself as a site *and* a method of study" (12; emphasis added). Performance Studies offers a critical, contextual approach for interpreting the "function rather than the form" (Kennedy 2009, 71) of performances – the way works are framed. As Kennedy argues, in consciously and actively identifying how we frame our research, we see how the processes of "understanding, interpreting and evaluating are intrinsically linked" (2009, 27). The choreological approaches of Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg (2002) and Adshead-Lansdale (1999) offer frameworks that permit a deeper, detailed analysis of the structural compositional devices, languages and forms of a performance. Their approaches have informed my own thinking of movement analysis over many years, though I do not rigorously adopt, apply or integrate their terminologies or models for my own movement analysis.[7] In this sense, both a contextual nexus (function) and structural depth (form) are selectively activated as frames through which to analyse works from FPTC's repertory. Utilising the methods and methods proposed by Conquergood (creativity, critique and citizenship), Fleishman (P-a-R) and Richardson and St. Pierre (crystallisation, auto-ethnography, nomadic enquiry), the thesis stutters between these methodological considerations in its own attempt to articulate a coherent account of the fragments, fractured histories, and silences of FPTC's experiments with the politics of form.

A politics of form: Choreopolitics, performance studies, postdramatic theatre

For André Lepecki the term "choreopolitics" focuses on "the notion that choreographers and dancers articulate their own political concepts…not as metaphors for politics but as concrete activations of political practice and thought" (Lepecki 2012, 22). The choreopolitical has been a leading methodological thread pursued in this research. The term "choreopolitics" also resonates with Hans-Thies Lehmann's attempt to posit a space of positive articulation and autonomy for Contemporary Performance praxis through his articulation of the "postdramatic", a concept coined from within the discipline of Performance Studies, and which critiques a tradition of equating the dramatic and the theatrical with performance practice in all its myriad and manifest forms and expressions. In his influential text,

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[7] For instance, Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg (2002) and Adshead-Lansdale (1999) have theorised models of triangulation for dance analysis where I prefer the thinking advocated by Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) that supports a deconstruction of triangulation via proposed methodologies of "crystallisation". This argument is elaborated on and discussed below.

Postdramatic Theatre (2006), Lehmann develops what he calls an "aesthetic logic of the new theatre" (18). As he states in the prologue,

> *I want to read the realised artistic constructions and forms of practice as answers to artistic questions, as manifest reactions to the representational problems faced by theatre.* In this sense, the term "postdramatic" – as opposed to the epochal category of the "postmodern" – means a concrete problem of theatre aesthetics (Lehmann 2002, 20; emphasis added).[8]

Lehmann poses a direct challenge to Performance Studies to understand its practice in and on its own terms. Similarly to Lepecki's "choreopolitics" it offers a term and a methodology for choreography to locate itself as both a "site *and* a method of study which inter-animate each other" (Stucky and Wimmer 2002, 12; emphasis added). In short, choreopolitics extends the idea that choreography articulates a variety of pedagogical practices that embody its *own way of knowing*. Lehmann, for instance, argues that Contemporary Performance practice has often met with little understanding and that those who are convinced of its integrity often lack the conceptual tools to articulate their perception. His point is that contemporary performance is often defined by practitioners and audiences alike through a "lack or negative description of what a work is not", rather than a "positive articulation of what it is" (19):

> Provocation alone, however, does not make a form; even provocative, negating art has to create something new under its own steam. Through this alone, and not through the negation of classical norms, can it obtain its own identity (Lehmann 2006, 28).

The term "postdramatic" has subsequently gained international currency as a way of articulating and questioning the identity and politics of contemporary performance.[9] In a similar vein, Lepecki's "choreopolitics" has become popularised as a term that focuses on performance knowledge arising intrinsically from the way bodies are performed (and policed) and choreographed. The terms "postdramatic" and "choreopolitics" offer a way for choreography to articulate a variety of contextually specific research and pedagogical

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[8] I am aware of critique that suggests that the term "postdramatic" simply replaces the term "postmodern" as a "vast epistemic theory every bit as 'epochal' as the 'postmodern' theory Lehmann rejects on precisely that ground" (Fuchs 2008, 180). Despite controversy, I argue Lehmann's text remains an important contribution for rethinking frames and providing terminologies for understanding and analysing performance from within our own disciplinary terrain.

[9] The 2013 text, *Postdramatic theatre and the Political* (Jurs-Munby, Carroll and Giles) is an example of text that has applied and responded to the efficacy of the term.

practices that embody their *own way of knowing*. They invite the choreographic researcher-practitioner to rethink the relationship between art (performance), epistemology and the political in the sense that the performance becomes a way, not of simply representing the political, but as its own way of knowing, thereby actively questioning the very categories upon which the formal political is premised.

Throughout this thesis the formal political is assessed and critiqued in relation to FPTC's manifesto and repertory. A range of theorists are cited in this regard.[10] I acknowledge that in analysing these terms I focus less on a philosophical description and deliberation of their arguments but rather seek to apply a selection of proposed concepts to a reading and interpretation of FPTC's process and production. This is in the hope of assessing the praxis of Physical Theatre within the contextual, cultural, historical and political relationships between Physical Theatre as a performance philosophy and form. In what she calls a "postmodernist deconstruction of triangulation", Richardson proposes a layered methodology of "crystallisation" that allows for a prism of multiple viewpoints and approaches to co-exist within arts-based research. A refracted, rhizoidal logic allows for a layered research approach that avoids the need for a "fixed point" on which to pin research findings (Richardson and St. Pierre 2005, 934). Rather, convergences between these various concepts are extended as ways to shape the web or prism that holds and unfolds within the research.

Michael Wood (2013), for example, aligns arguments made by Lehmann and Rancière, noting the ways in which Rancière argues for "politics as a formal category, whereby politics shares with aesthetics its foundation on the *organisation* of the material within" (Wood 2013, 256; emphasis in original), while Lehmann declares that the "politics of a text is not determined by the theses it contains but rather by the manner in which it organizes these (theses) and itself. Not the politics *in* the text, rather the politics *of* the text" (Lehmann, cited in Wood 2013, 255; emphasis in original). Lehmann and Primavesi propose that "the shift from the *use of art for politics* towards *a political way of making art* is particularly important for the role of dramaturgy in contemporary theatre and performance" (2009, 5; emphasis added). Following this thinking, I contend that the choreopolitical choices made by selected choreographers in the repertory of FPTC inform and perform precisely such a "political way of making art". The choreopolitical approaches analysed define their own terms of choreopolitical reference, and the political premise and promise of these choreographies

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[10] A range of theorists are cited in this regard: Kershaw (1999); Kristeva (2002); Lepecki (2004; 2009; 2010; 2012); Lehmann and Primavesi (2009); Rancière (2009); Cull (2012); Moyo (2013).

resides in the way that they stage ambiguous dialogues (or embodied revolts) which potentially open up a questioning rather than offering a set of ideologically prescriptive political statements as answers – the implication being that "difference is revolting".[11] This opening up of a body of questions disrupts consensus of interpretation and allows for different perspectives to co-exist and create a "collective" bound by "internal difference" (Wood 2015, 266), in the process, activating this collective as a "space of 'politics'" (267). As Wood observes, this disruption of conventional spectating has convergences with Ranciére's notion of "dissensus" which views this democratic impulse between art and politics in the following way:

> If there exists a connection between art and politics, it should be cast in terms of dissensus, the very kernel of the aesthetic regime: artworks can produce effects of dissensus precisely because they neither give lessons nor have any destination (Ranciére, cited in Wood 2013, 267).[12]

Theatre theorist, activist and P-a-R advocate, Baz Kershaw, too, asks:

> So how might we judge one aesthetic approach to be more politically promising than another? Is live art's deconstruction of the politics of representation, say, any more or less potent than community celebration's political reinforcement of collective identity? (1999, 17).

Kershaw (1999) reviews the idea of the political in performance and discusses contemporary performance as a form of "democratised performance". He proposes that we think this "ethical" by replacing our common and uncritical use of the word "political" with that of the "radical" because, as he puts it, radical performance invokes

> not just freedom from oppression, repression, exploitation – the resistant sense of the radical – but also freedom to reach beyond existing forms of formalised power, freedoms to create currently unimaginable forms of association and action – the transgressive or transcendent sense of the radical (1999, 19).

Julia Kristeva similarly suggests that revolt is not only *against* but also and more importantly *for* something – that revolt foregrounds "starting over…an element of renewal and regeneration" (2002, 123). She has argued fervently for the capacity of art to perform an

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[11] This was the impulse for the title and content of my 2011 keynote address (Confluences 6 July) and my public address as recipient of the Vice Chancellor's Award for Distinguished Teaching (August) 2013: *Difference is Revolting* which is discussed in PART I.
[12] Wood draws this quotation from Ranciére (2011, 11).

"intimate revolt" which embodies the original impulse of revolt as that which *continually* questions, unveils and discovers (Kristeva, cited in Lotringer 2002, 120; emphasis added). While I subscribe to Kershaw's suggestion to replace the "political" with the term "radical", I have chosen rather to embrace Kristeva's notion of "intimate revolt" (see also p 198) as that which permanently re-activates and generates "freedom as a practice" (Bogues 2012, 30), the idea that Physical Theatre rehearses a movement toward freedom.

Through a complex and delicate rendering of Hannah Arendt's political theory of freedom, focussing particularly on her 1950 statement in her unfinished *Introduction into Politics* that "we have arrived in a situation where we do not know – at least not yet – how to move politically," (Arendt, cited in Lepecki 2013, 13), Lepecki claims that that "we have lost kinetic knowledge of the political." He considers choreography as having the potential to activate the kinetic as a dialogic impulse, which he argues, is choreopolitical. In a *Vimeo* film of his lecture for the International Interdisciplinary Symposium on Choreography, Human Rights and Violence, *weaving politics* (12–14 December 2012), Lepecki shares a thesis that the formal politics of neoliberalism, with its "policy as correction", its systematised policies and plannings which fix and stabilise the other as a "well-balanced being" who is *in equilibrium* (in other words, *out* of movement), assembles a universal subject whose ability to move is "captured" through the neoliberal apparatus of instrumental control. This, he argues, produces systems of obedience (to obey and command, consensually) which "foreclose how to learn to move politically" (Lepecki, transcribed from *Vimeo*, 11:05–19:09). He argues that, for Arendt, to obey and command are "essentially and explicitly non- or anti-political relations" and that to speak in the form of commanding and to hear in the form of obeying, cannot be considered actual forms of speech and hearing (Lepecki, transcribed from *Vimeo* 21:04–21:22); cannot be considered "political functions of speaking or hearing" because real speaking and hearing activate through exchange, not commands. He envisions a space that tries to imagine, for a moment, being suspended from this "burden of humanity" (Lepecki, transcribed from *Vimeo*, 19:09) and locates it in dialogic impulse or action, the movement known as freedom. He locates this choreopolitically as "the task of the dancer" (Lepecki 2013, 13). In his *Choreopolice and Choreopolitics* (2013), he explains that

> [t]he adjectival "political" defined as the movement of freedom is a difficult, ever-evolving commitment. It is less predicated on a subject than on a *movement (beweging)*, defined by inter-subjective *action*, that, moreover must be learned, rehearsed, nurtured, and above all experimented with, practised, and experienced. Again and again, and again and again, and in every repetition,

through every repetition renewed. And what is the practice that needs to be practised in order to ensure that the political does not vanish from the world? Precisely that thing called freedom...In what follows, I bind together the *political* (as the opposite of the business of politics, politicians, and policy makers), *movement* (sometimes danced, sometimes not), and *freedom* (as that about which we must gain *kinetic* knowledge) to propose the concepts of choreopolitics and choreopolice (Lepecki 2013, 13–15; emphasis in original).

This mobilisation of movement as political is part of the "dissensus" that activates an active, dialogic spectatorship in which the audience becomes instrumental to a responsibility for meaning. In the words of Ranciére,

> [i]n contrast to dialectical practice, which accentuates the heterogeneity of elements in order to provoke a shock that reveals a reality driven by contradictions, mystery emphasizes the connection between heterogeneous elements...mystery was a central concept of Symbolism...I am thinking of the more modest, sometimes imperceptible way in which the arrangements of objects, images and signs displayed in contemporary exhibitions have shifted from a logic of provocative dissensus to that of mystery testifying to co-presence (2009, 58).

These ideas speak to the notions of hope articulated by Kristeva's "intimate revolt" (that must happen "again and again") and Kershaw's hope for the generative ("transcendent") sense of the radical in performance. Awelani Moyo's notion of "corporeal networks" in performance – "the array of accumulated discursive meanings and signs which bodies carry and convey to and through on another" (2013, 201) – extends this idea of "intimate revolt". In the research presented here I use a loose configuration of these terms – Lepecki's "choreopolitics", Kershaw' "radical", Kristeva's "intimate revolt", Moyo's "corporeal networking" – to analyse the potential efficacy of performance to activate, embody and archive alternate moments and movements of freedom and narratives of identity that can disrupt official versions of institutionalised power and its representational apparatus in artistic form.

There is an emergent body of scholarly writing on contemporary South African performance which I will critically engage with and draw from.[13] Each chapter of this thesis refers to a number of masters' dissertations and PhD theses that provide current information on South African performance practice while speaking to the contemporaneity of

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[13] Some of these draw on writings by Fatseas (2009); Fleishman (2009); Friedman (2012); Gordon (1994); Loots (2010); Mahali (2014); Moyo (2013); Pather (2006; 2014); Sassen (2015); Sichel (2010); Tang (2006) and Vlachos (2017).

performance research in the country. I have relied extensively on these unpublished texts as key theoretical impulses for my research. Interviews with Gary Gordon (in his role as artistic director of FPTC) and a range of commissioned choreographers, collaborators, designers, composers, performers, publicists, reviewers have been undertaken. All interviewees were informed as to the purpose and significance of the research and granted their consent for the interview data to be being interpreted. FPTC, under Gordon's guidance, has undertaken (as a vital part of its manifesto) the archiving of all its work in order to contribute to and grow epistemological and scholarly interest in South African dance forms, particularly Contemporary Dance and Physical Theatre. These archives are held at NELM (now Amazwi: South African Museum of Literature), and have been consulted over numerous visits. This study also reflects (on) my evolving understanding of FPTC's contributions to the performing arts industry in South Africa, specifically to a lineage of pedagogy that aims to transform teaching practice and research within the academy towards a more responsible (because contextualised) choreopolitics. As "insider" to FPTC's history, my 26-year relationship with FPTC as practitioner, performer, teacher and researcher of Physical Theatre resulted in a certain undeniable "proximity" of the subjective which, at times, borders on an auto-ethnographic account – "borders" because I do not explicitly position or frame my relation to/with the research material at hand in terms of an (auto)ethnography *qua* formal methodology.

A comprehensive analysis and interpretation of FPTC's performance archive of 26 years has to date not been undertaken. In this respect, my research contributes new knowledge to the field of Performance Studies in South Africa, memorialising this Physical Theatre (and dance) heritage while simultaneously recognising the impact of this heritage on current performance trends. The study is an interpretative history in the sense of deconstructing and reconstructing an embodied archive of FPTC's manifesto and repertory and the impact this lineage has and continues to have on transforming choreographic practice, performance pedagogy and Physical Theatre form in South Africa.

To that end, this study explores the choreopolitics of selected works in the repertory of FPTC as continually rehearsing freedom from conventional understandings of the political and the perceptual politics of traditional theatrical dance representations, along with performing difference, liberating difference and opening up a space for difference to decolonise representations of racialised and gendered dancing bodies. The potential provocation of Physical Theatre to mainstream theatre/dance forms as well as methodologies

of research and teaching resides precisely in the way its processes and products activate a "perceptual training" (Copeland 1983, 314) according to which the importance of a work resides not only in what we are "given to see and hear; but in *the way we see and hear what we are given*" (1983, 322; emphasis in original): its politics of form. Physical Theatre champions a certain freedom for the performer through its devised processes and its insistence on an embodied presence (what the FPTC company has called "physical intelligence") and has upended notions of the performer as a passive, docile body awaiting the instructions of the teacher-choreographer-god, and in this, its choreological process allows for an idiosyncratic and individual response to orbit around its construction. At the same time, each performer-choreographer may have a distinctive signature that marks his/her choreographic aesthetic. In short then, my study focuses on the presentation of this choreological tension and choreopolitics (Lepecki 2004; 2012; 2013) with specific reference to selected works from the repertory of FPTC (1993–2015) as choreological case studies through which to examine the manifesto and lineage of the company as well as its fluid identity in the ever-changing choreopolitical landscape of South African choreography.

Methodological considerations

As argued above, since the early 1990s, Performance Studies has articulated a variety of pedagogical practices that argue convincingly for *performance as a way of knowing*. This marks a critical paradigm shift within the discipline which has transformed how Performance Studies both informs and performs its research and teaching pedagogies. Dwight Conquergood (2002) notes that Performance Studies makes its most radical intervention in its challenge of the "hegemony of the text" in the sense that it brings a "rare hybridity into the academy, a commingling of analytical and artistic ways of knowing that unsettles the institutional organisation of knowledge and disciplines" (151). He delineates epistemological connections between a commitment to the "three Cs of Performance Studies" – *creativity* (practical knowledge: the "knowing how"), *critique* (propositional knowledge: the "knowing that") and *citizenship* (political savvy as the "knowing who, when and where") – as "mutually replenishing and pedagogically powerful", and argues that this experiential and engaged model of inquiry is co-extensive with the participant-observation methods of ethnographic research (153). Within this paradigm shift, "proximity, not objectivity, becomes an epistemological point of departure and return" (149).

Extending these insights, South African theatre-maker, Mark Fleishman (2012), argues

that practice-as-research (P-a-R) challenges three major knowledge orthodoxies that are interconnected and which give rise to a particular "geography of knowledge production" that sets up very clear distances between the investigating subject and the object of investigation. In the sequence of their historical emergence in the hegemonic discourse of the West, these are: (i) the Platonic notion that action is the "inability to contemplate" (118); (ii) the Cartesian notion that mind (as opposed to body) is "the sole locus of knowledge" (118); and (iii) the Durkheimian distinction between "ephemeral sensation and durable representation" (119), "the consequence of which is the assumption that knowledge transfer is dependent on forms of representation that stabilise that which is generated by sensation to make them durable and available in language". As Fleishman argues, "the corollary is that which evades representation, or remains in the agitated world of the sensations and perceptions beyond concepts and language remains hidden, unavailable, and unreliably private and subjective" (2012, 119).

Resonant with arguments for a performance research using a stratified, layered research approach that values the interweaving of autobiographical writing with critical discourse, Laurel Richardson (2000) has coined the term CAP (creative analytical processes) ethnographies to describe a range of ethnographic practices and forms currently utilised by arts researchers. Co-existent with the proposed layered methodology of "crystallisation" discussed above, Richardson notes that auto-ethnographic methods are "highly personalised, revealing texts in which authors tell stories of their own lived experiences, relating the personal to the cultural" (2000, 931). She suggests that some of these processes are about the writing process itself – that they situate the author's writing contextually and offer "critical reflexivity about the writing self in different contexts…They evoke new questions about the self and subject; they remind us that our work is grounded, contextual and rhizomatic" (2000, 931).

In 2014, preparing for a research paper for the 2015 *Confluences 8* conference ("Negotiating Contemporary Dance in Africa"), I commenced research with the intention to apply a postcolonial reading to selected dance works that I had viewed in the Eastern Cape, Grahamstown, South Africa. As my research process deepened, I found my application increasingly constrained by the postcolonial theoretical framing which began to feel somewhat outside of the choreographic sites and methods suggested by the works themselves and also in informal conversations and interview exchanges with the choreographers. In the same way that Lehmann poses critical questions towards developing what he calls an

"aesthetic logic of the new theatre" (2006, 18), Lepecki's choreopolitics seemed to offer potential for reviewing the distinctive, idiosyncratic choreographic vision that each of these works had stirred. Lepecki's points are underscored by Laura Cull's incisive and timely theorisations on the current interest in performance as philosophy.[14] Cull aptly identifies one of the central problems to have "troubled" the relationship between performance and philosophy as one of application, specifically the "tendency of both sides to apply philosophy to performance" (2012, 21), and not vice versa. She argues that if "philosophy is willing to encounter performance as thinking, and as that which might extend what philosophy counts as thinking, then this may lead us to question the implications of this notion that '*everything* (not just subjects or minds) *thinks*'" (2012, 21; emphasis in original). Extending this argument to application, Cull observes that processes of "application" in scholarship have come to "connote a kind of methodological hylomorphism, in which a fixed idea is superimposed upon a pliant example, a predetermined theory over a passive practice" (2012, 21). This idea parallels many arguments for P-a-R. South African pioneer in this field, Mark Fleishman,[15] has reflected extensively on the nature of performance research within the standardised strictures and constraints upheld by the academy. Here I could, by way of example, cite the procedural policies for proposals, where research goals are difficult to posit *on* a map because within P-a-R, the research *is* the mapping. In "Knowing Performance: Performance as Knowledge Paradigm for Africa" (2009), Fleishman suggests that the three orthodoxies of knowledge referred to above establish a "certain sequentiality of knowledge production based on an idea that knowledge systems are vertically integrated" –

> In other words they involve an application of a pre-existent schema or concept onto the experience of the world. According to this view, in order to know we refer our immediate and fragmentary experience or sense-data (lower level) to the pre-existent schema (higher level) in order to render it coherent and intelligible. In other words we produce a kind of cognitive map *before* we use it to find our way…[I]t also assumes that the world represented by the map is fixed rather than in a constant state of our own emergence in the course of our embodied, practical engagement and involvement with the world (2009, 120; emphasis in original).

[14] Writing by theorists like Cull, Lepecki, Sloterdijk, and Cvejic from the West advance this as a new field. In South Africa, writing on epistemological underpinnings for thinking art in Africa have been advanced by new platforms such as the ICA (Institute for Creative Arts) curated by Jay Pather. These programmes of work are timely interventions in the dialogical repartee of performance practitioners from abroad and locally in thinking and practising decoloniality.

[15] Mark Fleishman has been the artistic director of Magnet Theatre (1987–2018) and Professor at UCT in the drama department. Fleishman is one of the most prolific academic authors of Contemporary Performance scholarship in South Africa.

Opposing this logic for performance research and citing Ingold (2000) and Turnbull (1989; 1991), Fleishman argues that it appears knowledge is not "vertically but laterally integrated" (121) – that it is always in a constant process of formation. This has profound implications for research epistemes. As Fleishman suggests,

> [s]o rather than applying a map that has been pre-made, the map is produced on the go. In other words, as Ingold puts it, "we know as we go, not before we go" (230). This is not map-making or map-using but simply mapping, an ongoing process of attention and involvement … [I]t is interesting that while rejecting the idea that mapping is an outward manifestation of the map that pre-exists in the mind of the mapper, Ingold suggests that it is a "genre of performance" (231). By this he means two things: one, that it is an interactive, embodied process of relating to the world by moving through it, and two, that it is a kind of "retrospective storytelling…the retelling of journeys made or possibly the rehearsal of journeys to be made" (2009, 121).

Part of my own insistence on arguing for a choreopolitical approach is the attempt to engage with arts research in a way that honours this interactive, embodied process of mapping which does not undermine the rich diversity of methodologies available to the specifically wandering nature of arts research. Richardson (2005, 962) notes that the "prisms of crystallization" as a new methodology for qualitative writing parallels the current social and political world of "uncertainty" and further identifies certain features of CAP – auto-ethnography, fiction, poetry, drama, aphorisms, conversations, visual texts, choreographed findings and performance pieces – as research processes that drive new methodologies for arts research. Co-authoring with Richardson, St. Pierre calls this "writing as a method of nomadic enquiry" (Richardson and St. Pierre 2005, 969). While St. Pierre pronounces that "writing under erasure" brings its own "politics and ethics of difficulty", that "there are no rules for post-representational writing", she concurs with Richardson that we cannot "go back" even though there is "nowhere to turn for authorising comfort" (972). I reiterate arguments forwarded by Conquergood (2002) when he refers to the "epistemic violence" of dominant Western regimes of knowledge. Conquergood's discussion of "subjugated knowledges" (Foucault, cited in Conquergood 2002, 146) and the "arrogance of scriptocentrism" (Williams, cited in Conquergood 2002, 147) of Western scholarship and research procedure, for instance, are not places performance research wishes to return to. Conquergood reports that theorists like Antonio Gramsci (his call for "engaged knowledge") and Frederick Douglass (his call for a "hermeneutics of experience, relocation, co-presence, humility and vulnerability" in research method) reveal that knowledge is "located, not

transcendent" (149) and that "proximity, not objectivity becomes an epistemological point of departure and return" (149). In staging dialogues with these choreographers it is precisely this proximity to our mutual excavation of their choreopolitics that produces the "epistemological point of departure and return".

It is part of this methodological endeavour to avoid the vicarious vampirism implicit in applying other disciplines' theories to understand our own that has fuelled this approach. As David Saltz articulates, performance theorists

> typically apply theories by scholars in other disciplines such as philosophy...If someone we respect has published a theoretical assertion that sounds good and supports our own position, we uncritically adopt and apply the assertion...Because performance theory very rarely advances original arguments in support of the philosophical principles it adopts...we are often merely theoretical parasites (Saltz, cited in Cull 2012, 22).

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to engage fully with the complexities and depth of the challenge presented by Cull's argument, but the premise and promise of this field for *thinking performance* (and the politics of performance) appears profound. Cull is correct in suggesting that the stakes go beyond a "disciplinary territorialism" or the fears of a "generalised post-disciplinary academy" (2012, 25). As she suggests, citing Francois Laruelle, possibly the project is "not to think *without* philosophy but without the *authority* of philosophy" (emphasis in original) – to move away from application "towards an embodied encounter with the resistant materiality of performance's thinking: its embodied-thinking, participatory-thinking, or durational-thinking – encounters that generate new ideas of what thought is and where, when and how it occurs" (2012, 25). Cull clinches the point when she asserts that to go beyond application,

> we must allow new ideas to be created, ideas that the thinker has not already developed on the basis of some other encounter – that it is through theatre, and indeed through this particular aspect of theatre alone, that this thought has emerged (2012, 23).

As Cull argues, performance as a *way of thinking* rather than a "mere demonstration of existing ideas" allows new ideas to be created (2012, 25). Her argument provides the rationale for this study to stay with the choreopolitical as a methodology for thinking the epistemological curiosity that is South African Physical Theatre and choreography.

The choreological/choreopolitical case studies analysed in this thesis argue for the political significance and consequence of FPTC's production. I selected for examination and analysis works that were made in the Eastern Cape because so often these voices are marginal in the South African dance economy.[16] I have relied extensively on personal interviews with the choreographers as source for the research conversations given that not much is written on any of these works, but also because the subjective voice directly accesses the particularity of each choreographers' choreopolitical vision. In this, I cite Paolo Freire's point, to be elaborated on in PART II, that "dialogic experience is fundamental to building epistemological curiosity" (Freire 1998, 94). Norman K. Denzin (2001, 25), in his writing on the "reflexive interview", notes that the interview as interpretative practice is not a "mirror of the external world, nor is it a window into the inner life of the person". Citing Dillard (1982, 32), Denzin notes that the interview's meanings are "contextual, improvised and performative" (25):

> The interview is an active text, a site where meaning is created and performed. When performed, the interview text creates the world, giving the world its situated meaningfulness. From this perspective, the interview is a fabrication, a construction, a fiction…[E]very interview text selectively and unsystematically reconstructs that world, tells and performs a story according to its own version of narrative logic (26).

My use of the interview as both site and method of knowledge production is perhaps another way to counter the object/subject power dynamics of researcher/interviewee, an attempt to offset the power relations implicit in the traditional idea of the researcher as all-knowing. Cull observes that this dynamic can be shifted – if it is possible to generate "new ideas of both [participants] on the basis of a mutually transformative encounter", or through what Isabelle Stengers refers to as "reciprocal capture" as a dual process of identity construction (cited in Cull 2012, 23).

My own reluctance to transport theories/methods from one theoretical domain to another is supported by Cull's argument and borne out by the other scholars mentioned in relation to her. These methodological considerations mean that I have steered away from analysing my sources' theories in any descriptive, philosophical or critical depth. Instead, I tried to create a framing prism through which to refract some of their thinking about the political and to

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[16] This is possibly due to a number of causes, some of which may include that the Eastern Cape remains one of the poorest provinces in the country; that it is the place that has birthed much resistance historically to oppressive regimes; that it is geographically isolated and is closer to rural economies than urban economies.

combine that with a contextualisation of ideas by way of reading the choreopolitics implicit in the works I analyse with as much input from local, South African scholarly sources.

Research design

I was quite intuitively drawn to the usefulness of conceiving and shaping the movements of FPTC's repertory (considered a "body of questions") in three parts. The research design for this review of FPTC's manifesto and repertory traces a similar tripartite structure to the one Lepecki explores (via Ricardo Dominguez's suggestion) that every "movement" (whether philosophical or artistic) follows three moments: "the epic moment, the moment of signature and the moment of the corps" (Dominguez, cited by Lepecki in Cutugno 2014, 82).[17] Lepecki uses this structure to describe his own relationship with and understanding of the evolving and transforming nature of Performance Studies as a discipline/discourse he has engaged over a period of twenty odd years. My "body of questions" traces a similar tripartite arc:

(i)   the *epic moment as beginning*. Here, "PART I: Physical Theatre as reaction and revolt";

(ii)   the *moment of signature* which Lepecki refers to as the "moment of economy" (Cutugno 2014, 82), when the thing begins to circulate globally and consolidates a "signature". Here, signed as "PART II: FPTC Manifesto and Physical Theatre pedagogy as/and presence"; and finally,

(iii)   the phase of *the corps* where it "escapes economy again...the hope [being that] at this point there is a possibility of creating a different kind of articulation of Performance Studies in which it does not matter anymore to affirm it as a discipline" (ibid.) Here, "PART III: Epistemological Curiosities: Innovative Choreographers Building on FPTC's Legacy".

Tracing these three moments, PART I engages the idea of Physical Theatre as reaction and revolt with contextual analysis of early precedents and practices of FPTC. It explores the epic moment of discovery and beginnings. I interpret key works created by FPTC's artistic

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[17] Ricardo Dominguez is an artist activist and associate professor of visual arts at University of California San Diego who co-founded Electronic Disturbance Theatre, an ensemble of cyber activists and performance artists who produce subversive and controversial cyber interventions through art. He has worked with the Critical Art Ensemble collective who have been interrogating convergences and intersections between art and science since 1987 when the collective formed.

director, Gary Gordon, their ethos, pathos and pedagogies of form as expressed in selected early signature works like *Shattered Windows* (1989; 1993; 2003), *Manifesto* (1993), and *The Unspeakable Story* (1995). I introduce two key concepts that have nourished the form of FPTC's production and process, namely the "danceplay" and "physical intelligence", as embodied methodologies for the company's movement research and devised choreographic process. I posit a "body of questions" that acknowledges the particularity of Physical Theatre form as a choreopolitics that attempts to curate a revolt against codified modes of knowledge through which we have come to encode and decode the dancing body. I analyse some of the ways that FPTC's manifesto attempted to respond to the body as one strand and site of resistance for challenging the body, racial and gender stereotypes in order to address a shifting South African sociopolitical landscape. I examine this (choreographed) shift through a choreological reading of "spasm as repair" and explore some of the ethical investment of these small, micropolitical practices as an ecology for addressing a proxemics of power relations – a way of knowing, a way of changing.

PART II explores Physical Theatre pedagogy and/as presence analyses key concepts such as physical intelligence, performance-as-research, Physical Theatre as embodied dramaturgy, and historiography. In this section, I analyse the development of the company's identity as it began to expand its production and reputation nationally and internationally – the "moment of signature", when FPTC's manifesto took shape and hold, consolidating an (inter)national presence. This period also saw the choreography diversifying with the emergence of what Gordon called the "documentary danceplays" – longer, full-length works which embodied the company's vision of using devised process with dramaturgy and original collaborations. The period saw an opening up of the company's choreographic vision as guest or invited choreographers began to make works on the company more regularly. The medium of Physical Theatre diversified with the influence of technologies for dance. The choreography-for-camera series developed, as did explorations into new and unusual dance styles like butoh. I excavate how a different compositional repertoire was opened up through the input of a collaborative pedagogy and an innovative play with form/s which per*form*ed the idea that freedom is a practice and not an idea that is put into practice.

The idea of a "physical intelligence" is analysed as part of FPTC's pedagogical heritage which fostered a community of practice using an ethics of training, teaching and learning – all of which is described, discussed and evaluated as examples of pedagogy and/as presence; a way of opening the politics of spectating and shifting old paradigms of how we know and

consume performance. This pedagogical nexus has crucially informed my own work and pedagogy, and I share selected readings of how it has impacted on performing arts research and scholarship (P-a-R and T-a-R) as well as how that has been shared through this community of practice. The notion of Physical Theatre as an embodied, postdramatic dramaturgy and Physical Theatre as historiography are of particular interest as dramaturgical strategies that have prompted processes of a collective authorship or collaboration that offer political alternatives to mainstream models of theatre production through their stagings of dialogue, and embodied questioning. I elaborate on these ideas through readings of eight works in FPTC's repertoire that perform the promise of the choreopolitical as that which rehearses its freedom as a political way of making art.

PART III is a dialogue with some of the epistemological curiosities and questions raised by four current Physical Theatre experiments commissioned by FPTC (2009; 2014; 2015). These moments follow a splintered trajectory of the company's rise, its expansion and its current dispersed production. This interpretative history of FPTC does not attempt to locate a linear, teleological and progressive logic, as will be evidenced by the threads of argument that weave a prism of viewpoints and viewings of the company's repertory. At the same time, it does trace a temporal historiography that moves from 1993 to 2019. In this part, the fullness of FPTC's lineage is encountered, explored and possibly, re-invented as its reach expands in ways that dissolve its originary need for a self-articulated manifesto and vision – hence, the "moment of the corps". Its particular legacy of artistic struggle, its search for a democratic practice in a participatory collaboration, and its commitment to stimulating and incubating a creativity that has nurtured three generations of choreographers and theatre-makers/practitioners becomes a focus for reflection. Using a central image from four commissioned works as visual reference and starting point, the stance of four FPTC choreographers' works forms the basis for analysis. I assess the nascent political promise of their embodied epistemological questionings to become a space for a generative (rather than reactive) choreopolitics. The engagement within a dynamic field of possibility to perform new questions in the turbulent politics of current South Africa evidences an epistemological curiosity that performs difference, liberates difference and opens an aperture for questioning the meanings of how and where the choreopolitical matters.

I begin, then, by sharing an image offered by Eastern Cape poet Mangaliso Buzani in his poem *My First Lesson* from the anthology *A Naked Bone* (2019, 10):

...on my arrival here
I looked at my hand
And I named it a hand
I kept on naming things
Until a full body arrived...

These words form the arc of "namings" I trace through an emergent body of questions as they have composed themselves for remembering, analysis and reflection, gesture by gesture, part by part, through an accumulated though fractured becoming until the fullness of the "moment of the corps" arrives in the concluding observations. These "namings" move from the "epic moment of beginnings" as FPTC's reaction and revolt through announcing modernities in its manifesto for a contemporary South African choreography, tracing the "moments of signature" through FPTC's pedagogical heritage and community of practice, to arrive at the "moment of the corps" where the originary body of questions is delivered to history, relinquished to a decolonial moment of de- and re-composition.

PART I PHYSICAL THEATRE AS REACTION AND REVOLT

(i) Difference is revolting. A body of questions…or towards a democratised performance…[18]

Shattered Windows (1989; 1993; 2003) can be regarded as FPTC's first revolt. This raw, ecstatic dance choreographed by Gary Gordon was the first work to place FPTC on the national dance map. It shook the South African dance world with its uncompromising savagery and startling images of an unyielding body in and of revolt. A foreboding, disintegrating landscape is ruptured by the anarchic mumblings and incoherent shrieks of the performers as they fling their bodies with violent abandon through barbed wire doorways. Bodies pound, shake, collapse, lie inert and uncomprehending, while others fall into paroxysms of wild, dark trembling. These nihilistic physical impulses embody an insurrection against the mannered dramatic traditions and codified languages of mainstream Western theatre and the classical spirit of grace and clarity[19] embedded in many dance forms. Gordon deconstructs this image of the ideal dancing body and the gendered social body through a performative body that is unstable and fragmented – but one very much alive with possibility and reaction. C. S. Pierce (cited in Davis 2007, 43) claims that "experience is what happens when our ways of knowing break down". In short, *Shattered Windows* offered the audience an experience of the body exactly because it ruptured the modes of knowledge through which we have come to encode and decode the dancing body.

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[18] In 2011 I was invited to do a keynote address at the Confluences 6 conference held bi-annually in Cape Town and hosted by the University of Cape Town (UCT) School of Music and Dance, now the Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies (CTDPS). This was the title of my address and this opening description of *Shattered Windows* draws on this account (Finestone-Praeg 2011). I draw on this analysis here.

[19] This is a playful reference to John Cage's 1944 essay, "Grace and Clarity" in Cage (1961). Observing the dual nature of clarity (cold) and grace (warm), Cage discusses the relation of these two principles in dance noting that "[g]race is not here used to mean prettiness; it is used to mean the play with and against the clarity of the rhythmic structure" (Cage 1961, 91).

Figure 1. *Shattered Windows* (1994). Photograph by Elsabe van Tonder. The performers are Lanon Prigge (airborne), Peter van Heerden (in the background) and Debbie Rivett (lying on the floor).

Responding to this provocative impulse in the company's work, director, Ilse van Hemert, pertinently named her 1996 TV documentary on FPTC's work, *The Liberated Body*. This work was my first encounter with a Physical Theatre. I was to perform this work at three different cycles in my life. First created by Gordon in my Honours year of study in

1989, my 25-year-old body marvelled at the (literally) breathless exhilaration of such physical and emotional abandon. I had come to university to escape the violent contradictions of my comfortable, white middle-class life and had a dream of becoming a trade unionist who would contribute to the struggle for sociopolitical freedom and human rights in apartheid South Africa. My political experiences between the years 1982 and 1991 brought me to acknowledge that I did not have the sensibility to be an activist in the world of "big politics". I would need to look elsewhere to manifest responses to my existential questionings and to find my political usefulness in the world. And so, with a deep suspicion at what I then perceived to be the political ignorance and frivolity of the dance and theatre world, I was nonetheless seduced by the "intimate revolt" (Kristeva's term) I was invited to consider by *Shattered Windows*.

The second performances of *Shattered Windows* took place at the 1993 Dance Umbrella in Johannesburg. My now 29-year-old body was again trying to write itself in uncertainty and to perform a series of questions interrogating the ability of the body in a Physical Theatre to embody and express difference. This non-formulaic collision of drama and dance in the creative matrix of a Physical Theatre continued to challenge understandings of the accepted role of movement and voice in choreography. As Ana Sanchez-Colberg (1996) suggests, the hybrid nature of Physical Theatre is testimony to its "double legacy" in the avant-garde theatre of practitioners like Ionesco, Artaud and Beckett, as well as the provocations of modern dance and postmodern dance practitioners that rejected the codified languages of mainstream dance – practitioners like Laban, Wigman and Gert in Germany in 1910s and later, the ilk of Pina Bausch (Germany) and Merce Cunningham (United States). Both streams of influence were birthed in the failure of codified languages to express experiences of the horror and absurdity of the world wars as well as the inability of language to speak to the human condition in a suitably contemporary idiom. As Sanchez-Colberg identifies, "the locating of physical theatre within the avant-garde must be given to issues of anti-establishment within the context of alienation and transgression common to both forms" (1996, 40).

Physical Theatre, following the provocations of Ausdrückstanz and Tanztheater in Germany and the Judson experimentations in the United States of America questioned the place of movement within dance.[20] As Sanchez-Colberg (1996) notes, these artists proposed

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[20] See Lepecki (2004a) for a more precise and in-depth discussion of these threads that nourished the rise of a Physical Theatre.

a devaluation of the language of technical virtuosity in which the body is bound to ideal forms which exist outside it and which objectify it. This rejection of a reified body, she argues, opens the boundaries of what can constitute dance movement and the dance medium:

> Given that the focus is on the nexus of the body and space, movement becomes subordinate, and intrinsically linked to the environment that contextualises it…movement is relevant in as much as it may express aspects of the body/space nexus (2006, 45).

In this way, argues Sanchez-Colberg, the boundaries of what can constitute dance movement are opened and hence also the boundaries of what constitutes the dance medium, and the dance experience. *Shattered Windows* provoked these choreographic boundaries in its questioning of form.

Figure 2. *Shattered Windows* (2003). Photograph by Elsabe van Tonder. Performers are Juanita Finestone Praeg (myself) with Bailey Snyman in the forefront.

In 2003, for the third time, my now 39-year-old body again revisited this site of questioning – although this time I intuited that if I did one of those Gordon "polar bear

dives"[21] through one of the empty doorways, I would be permanently shattered – and yet…I was desperate to do exactly that because even then, by the third time I was involved in staging this revolt, I was also still in revolt against the question that haunted this piece from its inception, the banal question that responded to the gender confusion of dancers in distressed, decomposing dresses worn by both male and female performers…long hair, bald heads and exposed body parts smeared with wet clay which gradually flaked off leaving in its wake an ashen trail of dust on the nice clean floors of the theatres we performed in, the question that has and continues to haunt the world of creative performance, the question: is this dancing?

Figure 3. *Shattered Windows* (2003). Photograph by Elsabe van Tonder. Performers are Musa Hlatswayo in the front and Andrew Cameron in the background.

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[21] This is what the notorious dive through the barbed wire doorframes became known as. Gordon still has the postcard with the image of a huge, white polar bear diving into a bank of snow. I also recall him telling us that Martha Graham had said one should always fall to the left, into the unknown. The risk and courage to dive blindly, with no protection, through these doorframes was part of the raw danger and physical elation of performing and watching this work.

In 1993, within the context of dance in South Africa, this question was a demanding, difficult one. Classical Ballet was the still dominant, privileged and state-funded "face" of South African dance while the cultural boycott and a rich array of alternative dance expressions wrestled for place, space and autonomy/agency within which to provoke this Western form blighted by the racist class divisions that structure South African society. Each time we performed, I had the sense we were seen as a horde of wild Amazons – unrecognisable, abject, unspeakable – disrupting the veneer of order and respectability of *the* dance. We were performing some sort of sacrificial ritual amounting to a "tribal"[22] suicide. And the politics of feeling was one of ecstatic release. I experienced *Shattered Windows* as a spasm, a paroxysm of inarticulate abandon expressed in bodily stutters – a subversive encounter with the uncertainty, instability and turbulence of the body – and which I experienced each time, not as pathology, but as restorative. The work seemed to elicit a collective interiority that had the insight to potentially untangle our bodies from the repressive regimes of power and control exercised on our bodies by a racialised, patriarchal, Calvinist and colonial heritage. Its turbulence extended, as a spasm does, beyond its initial and involuntary point of origin – from our individual bodies to the group and then beyond to the spectators, spiralling in and out of reciprocal response. The felt excitement was tangible as spectators gasped with each vocal spasm or collision of body with the floor or other bodies. *Shattered Windows* had touched a raw nerve.

Spasm as somatic threshold…choreological readings…

The spasm as a gestural somatic reaction in *Shattered Windows* conjures up images of the shudder, tremor, contraction, seizure, oscillation, twinge, quake, shock, shiver, vibration. There is, as most dictionary definitions describe, an element of involuntary reaction at the start of a spasm (an impact) which gradually dissipates. In "Anatomies of Spasm" (2009), Jenn Joy analyses the still photographs of Bill Durgin's *Figurations* series (2005–2008) in which his images capture naked bodies in unusual moments of "stilled distortion", their reflected shadows caught by the eye of the camera against the studio's white cyclorama. Joy reads these figures as capturing a threshold between stillness/contraction and the potential for movement via a choreological reading of spasm. She calls the spasm a "clinical seizure that arrives with no warning" – it is a convulsion, a gesture that begins in stillness, crescendos to

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[22] I use this term ironically to resonate with Joann Kealiinohomoku's 1983 article, "An anthropologist looks at ballet as a form of ethnic dance."

"extreme intensity" and then dissipates (67). She notes that its effect sometimes lingers "along its surfaces" while at other moments it disappears immediately, and though it "reiterates its presence unexpectedly", it is "not exactly repeatable" (67). As I have already suggested through my own embodied experience of performing movements initiated by spasm (as a thought, emotion and action) in *Shattered Windows*, its pathway and effect reaches deep below its surface expression, and each spasm can only be produced as presence – in the immediate moment of embodying the action impulse – it is difficult to feign or pretend a spasm, its movement impulse can only ever be instantaneous, where the thought impulse and bodily action occur at precisely the same moment. Joy suggests that the movement of spasm has to be re-considered as "something interior" – you see the surface, but this surface hints at what lies beneath. She observes a parallel between Durgin's photographic shadows and the shadowy distortions of the figures in Francis Bacon's triptych, *Studies of the Human Body* (1970) which, Joy argues, are described by Gilles Deleuze as the "shadow-spasm" (Deleuze, cited in Joy 2009, 70) – the attempt to make the spasm visible. Joy calls this shadow-spasm a "paradoxical site", arguing that the spasm has a "serial instability that offers a glimpse of contracted movement at that very moment of its concealment" (70). This choreographed instability "disputes representation and signification" (Heathfield, cited in Joy 2009, 73) or as Deleuze proposes, the shadow is a "break from representation" (Deleuze, cited in Joy 2009, 70). I found it fascinating, in my own moment of parallel recall, that Gordon had, in the original 1989 version of *Shattered Windows*, used the paintings by Francis Bacon as a key source of inspiration for his movement research and the design of the costumes. Gordon's incoherent, incomplete and repetitive (though partial) stutterings of the body in extremis hold powerful resonance with Bacon's portraiture of shadowy, distorted figures who defy a representational clarity. Alexxa Gotthardt (2016) claims Bacon brought new emotional intensity to portraits by representing his subjects as "contorted, fleshy, emotionally open masses", while the biographical synopsis on the website *The Art Story* describes his figures as "violently distorted, almost slabs of raw meat".[23] The performers in *Shattered Windows* similarly remain, in authentic expressionist form, anonymously embodied in movement – they are pure gesture, an abstract mass of convulsing nerves and twitching muscles.

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[23] See https://www.theartstory.org/artist/bacon-francis/. Bacon's iconic *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* (1944), *Two Figures* (1953) – based on the sequential photographs of two men wrestling by Eadweard Muybridge (1885) – and *Three Studies for Self-Portrait* (1976) are examples that capture the surreal distortion of his figuration.

Bacon's *Sleeping Figure* (1959) recalls the one, inert and uncomprehending body that lies at the edge of one of the three tilted doorframes of the *Shattered Windows* set for the duration of each performance. Composed in contrast to the feverish, athletic mass of chaotic bodies which never stopped moving, this one, still figure always retains a bruising pathos – a prescient foreboding of an aftermath – what happens after the experience? The repetitive and repeated dives through the doorframes, accompanied by guttural cries, produce a ritualised, relentless energy which cross boundaries of control and order. The hypnotic and cyclic Philip Glass score complements these obsessive actions of bodies in extreme acquiescence, small ecstasies of abandon. Gordon's reference to Antonin Artaud in the programme note is deliberate:

> ...no one knows how to scream anymore...how to cry out, since they do nothing but talk...throats are no longer organs but monstrous talking abstractions... (Artaud 1970).

This performance attacks the senses much like Artaud's vision of the theatre as plague (and/or cruelty) and as an acknowledgement of the power and autonomy of the body to rebel.

Gordon recalls that for the first 1989 version of *Shattered Windows*, he had no budget or designer for the costumes so he created his own. Each performer had to find flesh-coloured tights and by removing the crotch, we were able to create a top so that the legs of the tights became the sleeves of the arms. We made holes which we then allowed to run to create patterns of striation and which allowed flesh to become visible. Gordon locates the source for this "distressed look" as inspired by the holes in the faces and bodies in Bacon's paintings which, for him, were not unlike the holes in the bodies of South Africans that had been shot by the police (Interview, Gordon 2017a). He notes that the work "did belong to this country...that kind of dis-ease and pain" (Interview, Gordon 2017a). The second and third versions were designed by Lindy Roberts,[24] the Rhodes Drama department's resident designer. Gordon argues that her design was what really made the work fly, that her design "gave it a social reading" because she "gave them a society":

> They were slightly smart in evening dresses yet so distressed, rich and poor, dirty and clean in their look...there was clay on the bodies...this kind of mist and haze that we saw you (the performers) through...Lindy also put the lights

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[24] Lindy Roberts subsequently created many designs (set, costumes and props) for FPTC productions, most notably the set and costumes for *The Unspeakable Story* (1995). Her conceptual inspirations are discussed at length in Finestone (1995), where I analyse her deconstructed design elements for *The Unspeakable Story* via a postmodern framing.

on the floor which helped to create that chaos, so that the world was upside down…she had the neon lights on the floor as though you were dancing on the ceiling…That wonderful danger was part of it…we created that danger in the bodies, but she did it in the space…I think it was about the world upside down and whether that is personally or politically, we have all experienced this…where chaos ensues and they are linked (Interview, Gordon 2017a).

Gordon claims the world as a "third space of gender" and that the combination of Robert's design and the choreography gave these creatures a "chaotic order" that was "sacred" (Interview, Gordon 2017a). In this interview, I mention to Gordon that the work has a strange, timeless quality and we reminisce about the politics of form. I mention that I had thought the work perfectly poised for a revival post the #FeesMustFall protests on university campuses in South Africa (2016–2018) – that in some way, the work is always dealing with the cyclic, turbulent nature of revolt. I also reminisce about Kristeva's (2002) notion of "intimate revolt" as a kind of spasm skin that repeatedly gets shed in order for change to occur. I reflect on the profound point raised by Paul Carter (2014, 1). He says that

> [t]urbulence is associated with open systems, with networks; it is not simply a complex and unpredictable cultural or physical environment. It is the phenomenon of feedback: or, more exactly, it is the self-conscious awareness of the power of feedback mechanisms to inaugurate new behaviours…Turbulence is a challenge to representation…it is a threshold between what can and what cannot be observed.

Carter's observation is akin to Pierce's point about the ambiguities opened up to experience by "not knowing" (cited at the start of PART I (i)). It is also aligned with Joy's viewings of the ambiguity bound up in the spasm – the not knowing/not seeing – which proposes an "almost impossible body, one that rejects coherence and unity, striving instead to articulate a core vertiginous flux of subjectivity" (Joy 2009, 78). She argues that spasms question the "philosophical and psychological notions of subjectivity" (66). The flux and uncertainty of individual subjectivity provokes systemic order – subject positions produce a more grainy, yin, peripheral vision (a fluid myopia) that unframes certainty. Carter takes this further, proposing that visuality may be one of the primary means of repressing turbulence:

> Once one acknowledges the turbulent constitution of nature, meteorology, biology – and indeed, the endlessly complex feedback processes that maintain equilibrium in any system (economic, moral, social) – it is astonishing that no evidence of these surfaces in our dominant cultures of representation. Such notions as the sovereign subject, linear logic and even the cult of smoothness in design seem like forms of psychological infantilism; as if the psyche could not

confront the turbulence of living in the midst of it all. The gaze with its valorisation of fixity, focus, outline and image suddenly appears autistic (2014, 3).

These ideas align with many cited histories of the collusion between Western patriarchal culture and a tendency to privilege the visual over the tactile. There are so many accounts of the way that Western dance, while claiming to be the art of the body, has colluded with this visual patterning to contain and frame the dancing body (Adair 1992; Thomas 1993; Claid 2006 – to name just three key texts). Roger Copeland's "Founding Mothers" (1990, 10) remains a seminal text in these debates, especially his point that the repudiation of late 19th century ballet was not primarily aesthetic, but "essentially moral and political". Luce Irigaray extends these insights in her post-structuralist deconstruction of the male gaze:

> Investment in the look is not as privileged in women as in men. More than the other senses, the eye objectifies and masters…The moment the look dominates, the body loses its materiality (Irigaray 1991, 8).

I have explored this topic in greater depth in Finestone (1995) where I analyse the role of kinetic imagination/action in the development of the Western modern dance which fundamentally opposed the shaping of the body through visual imagination in ballet and, more specifically, the particular racialised expressions of the dancing body in South Africa that has produced "narcissism, exclusivity and disempowerment" in South African dance (Pather 1991, 4). Nathanael Vlachos (2017, 64) writes that a "key intervention of physical theatre was the inauguration of a shift in the bodily politics of dance, primarily around the ideal body and shape of the dancer" – he cites my comment that Physical Theatre brought about a "subversion of the ideal dancing body" (Finestone 1995, 71). He notes that Gordon agrees that this intervention was not only directed at ideals around female bodies but also the male body. In the binary constructions of an institutionalised, hierarchical and patriarchal order, it makes sense that if one of the binaries of gender is displaced, it calls into question its opposite polarity. *Shattered Windows* (especially the first 1994 version) possibly took this even further – it was quite difficult at times to pin a gender on some of the performers. As noted earlier, Gordon speaks with me of a "third space of gender" (Gordon 2017a), while Vlachos states that "some of Gordon's works, *Shattered Windows* in particular, would work to completely efface gender within the spectacle of performance" (Vlachos 2017, 65). Vlachos claims FPTC's "constitution as a mode of artistic expertise" in South Africa in the closing years of apartheid and argues that its "impetus is deconstructive":

...and the objects of its deconstruction are the bodily residues of apartheid; not only conceptions of race, gender and sexuality that were predicated of bodies, but their entanglement with aesthetic judgements of beauty, delicacy, frailty and strength (Vlachos 2017, 61).

This deconstruction is sustained through the attempt to rupture or subvert representational form – the primacy of kinetic impact, via an athletic partnering and collision of bodies in *Shattered Windows* – which disturbs a framed pictorial visuality through its turbulent movement language. Carter contrasts this visuality to what he calls the "other sense of the world, touch":

> Touch, which can be extended to other modes of proprioceptive engagement with the world, introduces a different temporality. Things are not fixed (visually) in their place and sequence; they aggregate at the surfaces where two bodies meet. In choreographing moments of touch (sought and unsought) a different history of space emerges, vortical, occasional and turbulent...to be touched is to be infected with someone else's mania, suffering or humanity. It is, fundamentally, to be stirred up, agitated...Reconceived as a dynamic force, drawing out and drawing in, its power to shape the future as well as repair past wounds emerges (2014, 3).

This idea of touch has intrinsic and extrinsic metaphoric resonance – visceral and kinetic touch within the micro- and macrocosm of the dance itself, the layers of connection between performers and the nexus of the theatrical world they inhabit, and the reception and relations with spectating. Joy, as one example, observes that the intimacy and excess of bodily sensation expressed in Jeremy Wade's *Glory* (2006)[25] breaks with "passive spectatorship to open up to the disturbing affective modes of sensual address":

> ...the spasm undoes legibility through its supplementary excess – both stilled and danced – to propose a notion of subjectivity that challenges the regimes of the operative or the quotidian. Against these dominant patterns, the anatomies of spasms disrupt. They quiver, they tremble, they repeat. They trip over folds of flesh: a figure escapes the bounds of representation through corporeal disorganisation (Joy 2009, 78).

This "corporeal disorganisation" occurs at many levels. Joy perceives that the spasm is not only a "physical movement", but is simultaneously a "theoretical labour":

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[25] *Glory* (2006) has been described as "a duet based on the salvation attained through the acts of expulsion, prostration and pilgrimage" on Wade's website www.jeremywade.de.

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> As a movement of thought, the spasm interrogates the visual through the kinetic, the body through language, expression through emotion, performer through witness, pain through pleasure (2009, 67).

These proximities of relation, brought about by these stuttering, corporeal collisions of touch and presence, recalibrate the relationship between production and reception as an intimacy, or as Rancière calls it, the participatory. Rancière's description of the "emancipated spectator" is sited at "the strategic intersection between art and politics" (Rancière, cited in Lepecki and Joy 2009, 66) and is described by Joy in the following way:

> For Rancière, this new spectator breaks with the speculative passivity denounced by Plato, the cruel immersive theatrics of Antonin Artaud and the distancing effect of Bertolt Brecht to announce a new mode of watching as a participatory act (2009, 66).

Much has been written on the shifting nature of spectatorship in 21st century performance – for example, Bourriard's "relational aesthetics", Forsythe's "amateur spectators", and Tim Etchells' claim that within Contemporary Performance, the "spectator" has become a "witness". Etchells[26] (1999) speaks to the ethical dimension of this spectating, noting that watching someone go through something is different to watching them represent something – risk implicates and in the complicity of the performers with their task lies our own complicity as witnesses. Etchells explains that to witness an event is to be present at it in some fundamentally ethical way – "to feel the weight of things and one's own place in them, even if that place is simply for the moment as an onlooker" (17). The texture of this investment gives sensation to experience and produces a physical or sensual reaction in those witnessing. This affective touch has become one of the central tenets of a Physical Theatre. The use of improvisational contact work to devise embodied research for our Physical Theatre language has been an enduring feature of FPTC's choreographic process.[27] In these processes, touch/contact has remained a cornerstone to activate an intimacy based on performer presence and immediacy (temporality) – the tactile as a way to produce connection. In *Shattered Windows*, audiences often experienced a visceral response and empathy with the violent collision of bodies so close to them. In some way, they became witnesses to our experience, to the affective aftermath of our spasms. Joy cites the example

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[26] Tim Etchells is the director of the Forced Entertainment collective, a Sheffield-based theatre company founded in 1984. Their work is known for its organic, devised process and durational performances.
[27] See Appendix 1 for details of a Master's by Coursework laboratory experience shaped by me in relation to ideas – conceptual and embodied – created around the idea of "spasm" as a catalyst for choreographic invention.

of Wade's *Glory* (2006) as an "extreme articulation of the spasm" – which she calls a "three-dimensional kinaesthetic blur" (Joy 2009, 73). Much like FPTC processes of devising a dance language through improvisational strategies, Wade uses authentic movement, improvisation, vulnerability (in the nakedness of the bodies) so that their spasms becomes a "violent excess" (2009, 75), both sensual and erotic. Joy's analysis is an acknowledgement of the way this spillage moves beyond the knowable – one of the central premises of my argument in this discussion. I extend this idea in PART III with reference to Moyo's notion of "theatricalising the unspeakable" (Moyo 2013, 221) as an expression of the "crisis of representation" in her analysis of *Inner Piece*, a work I created in 2006 for FPTC. In *Shattered Windows*, this "crisis of representation" manifests as risk, both emotional and physical – but, I argue, as restorative rather than hedonistic risk.

Ethical investment: The power of the small

In *Small Acts of Repair* (2007), Bottoms and Goulish align the work of Goat Island and its creativity with restoration and healing, as their book title denotes. In a co-authored motivational letter to the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation accompanying their request for a funding grant and elucidating Goat Island's "ecology", they say that their work is "to remind ourselves of the impossible, the historical, to choreograph to repair the world, to say 'We have become human again'" (2007, xvii). I have through many years of work with FPTC explored my own way into this concept of repair – quite organically at first through performance and devised processes of choreographic creation with FPTC – but later through formalising these experiences into ideas via Kristeva's notion of "intimate revolt" and my own interest in an *I Ching* principle and maxim, "the power of the small".[28] These two concepts frame my understanding of FPTC's manifesto and repertory. Guattari (2000, 51) states that we need to work towards an "ethico-aesthetic" experimentation – practices rooted in smallness: "It seems to me essential to organise new micropolitical and microsocial practices, new solidarities, a new gentleness".

I posit, for instance, that the devised processes of collaboration practised by current contemporary performing arts companies like FPTC, Ubom! or Magnet Theatre in South Africa (whether linked overtly to the protest tradition of social justice theatre [Ubom! and

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[28] This term, the power of the small, is one I use to describe my own choreopolitics and it is a concept drawn from the Chinese Book of Changes called the *I Ching*. This idea is discussed in greater detail in PART II in relation to the butoh work, *amanogawa* (2010), created for FPTC by Frauke.

Magnet] or the body as a potential site of resistance and repair [FPTC]), and Newson's DV8 Collective or Forced Entertainment in the UK, or Goat Island in America (as a few international examples) are instances of this "gentleness", this "smallness" in action. This restorative principle appears to be a wellspring for much Physical Theatre process, especially in South Africa. Creative process and product by various practitioners or companies[29] appear to have this intention to suture psychic, emotional and physical wounds through collaborative artistic interventions. Not surprisingly, Jennie Reznek and Mark Fleishman from Magnet Theatre collective reference the Kabbalistic notion of *"Tikkun Olam"* – "the repairing of the world", as part of the ethos of Magnet's creative process (cited in Lewis and Krueger 2016, 18). In their discussion of "The Magnet Method", Lewis and Krueger locate Magnet's process as part of the "particular brand of theatrical practice known as 'workshop theatre' which emerged as part of the long history of political activism and resistance, and which saw its heyday during the apartheid era" (18) – they crucially cite Wakashe, who marks a difference between a more general use of the term "devised process" and "workshop method" as lying in the "articulated political approach and revolutionary tone espoused by the 'workshop method'" (Wakashe, cited in Lewis and Krueger 2016, 17). Fleishman points to this "collaborative workshopping" as "a form based on the principles of democracy" (Fleishman 1990, 110) and focuses Magnet's theatrical lineage on "process" as having deep value, where work is undertaken not only for the achievement of a polished product.

Collaboration as a "micropolitical" or "microsocial" practice problematises and destabilises the hierarchies of political power that have historically been mirrored in artistic practice. One example, for instance, is the idea of the artistic genius. Cited in *Small Acts of Repair* (2007), Lin Hixson responds to her collaborations with Goat Island. Sharing her own graduate school education, she comments on its exclusiveness and its limited notion of the artist, arguing that her learning rather came with the meeting of a feminist performance art community:

> This movement problematized the solitary genius, a concept which dominated art history. In this sphere, artists posed a different question. Instead of examining oneself individually, the opposite vantage point prevailed. "Who are we?" was the question. By seeing oneself as part of a social construct, and by finding the collective conditions one shares with others, one comes to

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[29] For a rich inventory of precedents and current physical theatre practitioners in South Africa, see Sassen's Chapter 4 on Physical Theatre (77–92) in Homann, Middeke and Schnierer (2015).

understand oneself as an individual. Many of these feminist artists collaborated to make performance work in opposition to the solitary genius image, considering collaboration to be a political act (Hixson, cited in Bottoms and Goulish 2007, 116).

Bryan Saner argues that "probably the greatest political statement that Goat Island makes is that it's a collaborative group" (cited in Bottoms and Goulish 2007, 117). These arguments are unravelled with erudite depth by Rebecca Schneider (in Butt 2004), where she questions the legitimacy of the traditional "modernist masculinist myth" (26) of the artist as genius and the solo as the historical form announcing the originality of artistic signature. Schneider argues for her proposed reading of this question as an "illegitimate history" – she asks, if this means "listening for a syncopation of intention not 'properly' resolvable in direct lineage…can we listen for other voices in seeming 'solo' work?" (32). She draws the analogy of the call and response of jazz riffs as the repetitive play (suggested by the title of her article, "Solo, solo, solo") that can "undo" the logic of this originary idea of the solo as "discrete" and open it up to hear its "collectivity" (36–37).[30] The essential investment and participation of each performer in the process of creating the dance and expressive language of *Shattered Windows* is an instance of this collective contribution which lies also in the particular forms of training developed by the company (and which will be discussed in greater depth in PART II: Pedagogy and/as Presence). While Gordon's central role as artistic director and the driving force behind FPTC is acknowledged here, it is never to posit this role as sole artistic genius, the notion of the teacher-guru-god being part of this trajectory of thinking. In Finestone-Praeg (2010a), I probed this idea of the teacher as guru in conversation with Gordon, noting that Josette Fêral cites Eugenio Barba's argument for the view that apprenticeships need to be undertaken through the tutelage of a master (Fêral 2009, 19). Working with a master or guru was clearly a trend in twentieth-century theatre and dance (Fêral cites the theatre masters like Grotowski, Brook, Barba, and in dance, practitioners like Graham, Cunningham, and Rainer might be identified as masters), but this practice of apprenticeship training seems to have shifted in the 21st century. Bojana Bauer's research seems to support a reading for a more nomadic, freelance training logic evident in the 21st century – she says training has now, in many ways come to epitomise "the

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[30] She cites Yvonne Rainer's 1966 *Trio A* as one example of an "illegitimate solo", a late-century "solo" performance that in fact appears as a "critique of singularity", for while composed as a solo, it was performed in various sites and forms, by both dancers and non-dancers, at times as a trio, at other times as a solo. She notes its performance "undoes the formal indication of what is contained on the level of the (performative) name" (Schneider, in Butt 2004, 36).

subjectivity of the worker in late capitalist society" (Bauer 2009, 76). Bauer suggests that mobility, adaptability and flexibility mark dancer training which rests on a broad variety of techniques which the dancer permanently upgrades – "dancers are inclined to pick from a diversified body-training supermarket" (Bauer 2009, 76). This allows them to feed into a niche dance market economy. Based on this context sketched out for performer training in the 21st century, I asked Gordon if he felt this master/apprenticeship model is still valid or is it an outmoded concept for training? Gordon replies,

> I would like to say yes and no to that question. In the company, for instance, we have both, but I think that we have undone the "master" bit because I don't teach all the classes…I might teach perhaps, once or twice a week, so in essence, there is a security in that I am there and I am teaching class…but I am not the only one who "knows" (Interview, Gordon, cited in Finestone-Praeg 2010a, 36).

Andrew Buckland[31] agrees that Gordon always worked against the "outmoded" idea of the master guru – "I think part of Gary's genius is that he could easily have become the guru but in fact he wasn't teaching this thing". He confers that his "greatest lesson" learnt from Gordon was learning to trust his own voice and understanding that "each individual is different – their journeys are different…it's been my greatest lesson as a teacher from him and as a maker" (Interview, Buckland 2017). Vlachos, responding to my claims of the "bodily revolt" implicit in Physical Theatre, notes that Physical Theatre is also a revolt against "the politics of production that would situate the choreographer/director as the sole authority" – he suggests it is in many ways "a fitting post-apartheid performance form after decades of the state speaking on behalf of bodies" (2017, 68). He says that "Physical Theatre agitates consistently for the freedom to chart new aesthetic terrains and imagine and inhabit new subject positions through performance" (ibid.). Fostering the agency of these subject positions in performers became an articulated pedagogical principle for company training.

Steve Bottoms (Goat Island), in his statement called *Triggers*, reveals how this kind of collaborative ecology elicits (via Guattari) such a "micropolitics":

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[31] Andrew Buckland, currently Associate Professor Emeritus at Rhodes University is a national award-winning theatre maker, contemporary Physical Theatre clown and cultural activist who has had an enduring and profound impact on the performing arts industry in South Africa. He worked intimately in relation with FPTC from its inception in 1993 and performed and created selected dramaturgies and works for FPTC. See Buckland's entry under Choreochronologies for a fuller account of his collaborations with FPTC and his interface with various works like *The Unspeakable Story* (1995) and *Wreckage* (2011), both of which I analyse later in PART II.

Rather than expecting movement work to illustrate a consciously held socio-political concern, Goat Island looked increasingly to generate more abstract or ambiguous movement, detached from any easily agreed-upon reference points or emotional content. In pursuing an intuitive physical creativity whose outcomes were not predetermined by rational objectives, it was hoped the performers could, instead, learn from the feelings and sensations arising from their bodies' attempts to perform unfamiliar, often unusual tasks. This cultivation of "body intelligence" would then allow meaning to emerge or be extrapolated *from* movement, rather than vice versa. It also held out the possibility to the performers themselves of a "rehumanisation" very different to the one undergone by soldiers in training. Hixson's choice of this word, rather than the more familiar term "dehumanisation", seems to me significant: soldiers, after all, are not turned into monsters, but they may well become different kinds of people than they once were – their bodies attuned to the gun, to the impulse of pulling the trigger…the question, then: what kind of person might a performer become, if her or his body is constantly challenged to experience previously foreign sensations of motion, to feel things from another perspective? (2007, 149; emphasis in original).

From my own embodied encounters with performing *Shattered Windows*, I experienced the weight and gravitas of being "touched" and this experience opening me up to sensing differently. Cultivating a physical intelligence was key to this learning – learning to listen and ask questions with the body, learning to be vulnerable, in relation.[32] This power of the small is a way for artists to crack into the narratives that are obliterated by the bigger, national, hegemonic political rhetoric. Buckland responds to this idea with insight:

> Look, national political rhetoric is there…we can't change that national thing – we have to make these strong little ruptures in the earth's surface so a spring can hit the surface and if it's for the few people who watch that thing, that's what we do – we find truth there and then we do the next thing…rather grow the fungus underneath – and it grows, or it dies – you just keep making, that's all we can do is keep looking, looking for those moments of truth and we fail and we succeed (Interview, Buckland 2017a).

How can this kind of failure lead to repair? And how can one make a repair through such an inarticulate body? Bottoms and Goulish propose that in fact it is this very condition of an inability to move forward coherently (as in a spasm or stutter) that can produce real progress or change:

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[32] The term "Physical Intelligence" is analysed in greater depth in PART II (Pedagogy and/as Presence) as one of the central concepts of FPTC's ethos and brand which tried to prise open readings and perceptions of what constitutes intelligence, and also knowledge.

> A stutter is a moment that overflows…it arrests itself in its overflow, its quality of being too much…the arrest makes time itself stutter – move forward haltingly, if at all…stuttering movements interrupt the flow of dance…makes progress impossible. It replaces forward movement with crystalline rotation (Bottoms and Goulish 2007, 105).

As proposed by the argument for crystallisation as a methodological ethnography for understanding creative arts practice pursued by Richardson and St. Pierre (2005, 963), the fractal logic that crystalline structure possesses replaces the "forward movement" of a Hegelian progressive, cumulative logic or Aristotlean unities of time, place and character which usually drive plot construction and resolution, and which fixes the theatrical experience. Richardson and St. Pierre argue that "crystallization, without losing structure, deconstructs the traditional idea of 'validity'" (2005, 963) – it allows for partial understandings and experiences. In this, when fixity as a principle dissolves, experience is opened up to difference, the other, an (un)knowing.

Reception…closing the circuit

Sichel claims that Shattered Windows "set the benchmark"[33] for Gordon's choreography, though she observes that his later works "are a lot more refined and complex" with less of its "initial torso tackling, emotionally draining form" (2010, 42). Debuting at the 1994 FNB Dance Umbrella, just weeks before the first democratic election, Adrienne Sichel reads the work as "an outpouring of white angst and desperation to survive against the looming catastrophic odds" (2010, 42). Patricia Handley interprets its "violent and assailing physicality" as suggesting "human consciousness on the very edge of despair; and evokes a scenario which seems to be located in the darkest interior of the mind itself" (Handley 1994, 3). Handley's reading conjures an existential interiority which interprets the "shattered windows" as a physic splintering, a fragile and broken mind, while Sichel's experience locates a critical commentary on the social and political fractures in a South Africa poised on the edge of civil war. Dr Awelani Moyo (18 years later) reflects that the work "spoke to the violence and trauma which had been suffered in South Africa and which were a continuing reality at the time" (2013, 224), while Marilyn Jenkins' review in *The Citizen* (1994) acknowledges the visceral impact of the work:

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[33] Performer, Lanon Prigge was nominated for the 1994 FNB Vita best male contemporary dancer award for his performances in *Shattered Windows*.

The sheer guts and hurtling energy of the First Physical Theatre Company's performance of Gary Gordon's *Shattered Windows* was an exhausting experience – and that was simply watching…It was like watching members of a primitive society concuss themselves into a masochistic frenzy, occasionally pushing or being pushed through one of the rhomboid shattered windows of the title. But even this rite of passage seemed to hold out no promise of proper communication or order, its savagery was powerful with the motivation taken by the neck and shaken until it hung in limp defeat.

Margot Beard's review of the original version of *Shattered Windows* in 1989, in which she called the work a "tour-de-force", observes more closely the formal dance aspects of the expressionist choreography:

[C]horeographed to the disturbing music of Philip Glass (not, I gather, an intended pun) certainly shattered many conventional and patronizing ideas of dance as mere escapism. A crescendo of sound and movement never lets up till the sudden silence and stillness releases dancers and audience from an inferno of pain and suffering. The spasm-like, frenetic movements, agonized writhings, staccato shouts and other verbal and physical signs of distress never once slackened in pace. The artistry with which this was conceived and performed paradoxically added to the sense of pain and sorrow with which one viewed these beings in torment (Beard, 1989).

In Beard's review of the 1994 performance, six years later, she confirms her original response, commenting that the work "comes across as a blow to the solar plexus not necessarily pleasant but – what an impact!" (Beard, 1994).

Responding to these different readings, one is made aware of both the deeply subjective and the politically contextual nexus of interpretation possible in audience reception. The circuitry of these different readings opens up to an idea of politics as a display of power relations – a "body of questions". These questions juxtapose difference and allow the work to provoke diverse reaction. Gordon suggests that all the readings are valid and valuable. He cites Preston-Dunlop's choreological (making, performing and appreciating) and triadic perspective[34] (creation, performance, reception) as useful in creating a "composite sense" of a work. This would include evaluating different perspectives – the choreographer's intention, the audience or reviewer's experience and the performer's embodied knowing. He says,

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[34] The term "triadic perspective" was first coined by Valerie Preston-Dunlop in 2002. Her concepts of the triadic and the strands of the medium are part of her framing of the choreological as a methodology to analyse dance.

what is interesting in all those readings is that the personal is also the political and personal angst is also interfacing with the world and the way we live in that world…it was so charged… (Interview, Gordon 2017a).

Gordon agrees that *Shattered Windows* marked FPTC's first revolt:

> The work came from a personal space within me, but a lot of people saw in its devastation an image of the violence and trauma in the country…I think it was two things that marked the difference of this work: the way I put things together with the collaborators, what I would call my choreographic imagination, and secondly, the performance mode itself which was corporeal, immediate and frightening! And then there was the perception of these elements that made many people rethink their assumptions. I know, because many people asked me: "what on earth goes on in your head?" I think it changed the way people thought about dance, choreography and performance and it gave Physical Theatre in this country an edge and an identity (Interview, Gordon cited in Finestone-Praeg 2010a, 39).

In the analysis above I have tried to develop a rage of responses via the choreographer's intention, my own embodied knowing through experiencing the work as a performer, and evaluating reception to the work. For me, the expressionism of this work makes it one of Gordon's most shadowy, violent statements about and against the cruel, overpowering forces that govern our lives, fostering obedience and passivity in all of us; passivity, that is, as the complete antithesis of the moving body. Gordon has commented that

> [i]t is not possible to use traditional criteria when approaching physical theatre as this theatre experience moves away from a tendency toward the familiar. Attempting to articulate the void cannot provide ordered and comfortable articulations (Interview, Gordon 1999 95).

Richard Stamelman (1991, xviii) in the preface to a book of poetry by Egyptian-French writer, Edmond Jabès[35] says that his book "activates not a story but the movement of writing". Similarly, the choreography in a work like *Shattered Windows* does not activate a dramatic tradition of narrative or storytelling, but using its own internal aesthetic logic establishes physical performance as an experience, as its own "way of knowing". I am often questioned by people who find Physical Theatre obscure and want to know not "But is it dance"? (although I often get this response too), but the perhaps more trite: "What does it mean"? To people who respond to a work like *Shattered Windows* with this question, I have

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[35] Jabès inspired my idea of writing the body as a "Body of Questions". Some of his own titles include: *The Book of Questions*; *The Book of Margins*; *The Little Book of Unsuspected Subversions*; *The Book of Resemblances*; *The Book of Dialogue*.

after many years of anguish formulated a simple response and it is this: when you listen to a Beethoven string quartet, or a group of African drummers, do you ask yourself: But what does it mean? Of course not. That would be inappropriate; a fundamental confusion of sorts. A confusion that assumes that all art should respond to the criteria of logical, rational and even narrative structure of meaning. In light of this obnoxious but entirely justified response, I reiterate the point about the promise of artistic imagination to activate a "not knowing" as a way of knowing.

This work has remained close to me because it seems to embody the poetics of revolt in a pure form. It captures the radical potential of a Physical Theatre, to question and resist the way power is both wielded on and – if we are to take Foucault seriously – inflicted by the self onto the self through micro-technologies of self-discipline. To watch a performance like this means opening oneself up to the experience that becomes possible only when modes of knowledge break down; it shatters ideas about mastery over the body through artistic representation and expresses a body that refuses to be domesticated, pinned down, or contained: a body of questions, permanently in revolt. A body that is revolting.

(ii) Early precedents and practices: FPTC and the Manifesto

This contextual discussion examines the rise and development of FPTC and is an account of early precedents and practices. Analyses of key works and programmes curated by FPTC's artistic director, Gary Gordon, are undertaken in order to understand the manifesto and choreopolitics of form as expressed in selected early works, particularly the *Manifesto programme* (1993) and the *Declarations programme* (1994). These early works exhibit the particularity of the Physical Theatre identity pursued by the company, which were grounded in experiments with dance, and which emerge as a "first" artistic statement of intent. These first works had precedent in Gordon's eclectic and multi-disciplinary collaborations that preceded the formation of FPTC and include selected dance programmes for the Rhodes Drama department (*Dance '87* and *Dance '88* will be discussed specifically) as well as his 1989 work, *Anatomical Journey of a Settler Man*, which he choreographed as first recipient of the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Contemporary Dance held annually at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. I also briefly consider the Eastern Cape *Dance*

Umdudo[36] as one example of FPTC's arts in education manifesto. I hope to flesh out in detail the conceptual and creative matrix underpinning FPTC's choreopolitics, and argue for its political significance within artistic production, pedagogy and notions of democratising performance in South Africa. As noted, these conceptual insights are guided by my own intimate subjective proximity with FPTC's processes, pedagogies and production, but also grounded in independent viewings and reviews of independent sources, references and critical analyses pertaining to underpinnings of Physical Theatre as a form, and as a form in South Africa with its specific social and political complexity.

Manifesto

In the NELM archive, I discover an original letter to Gordon, a first draft of an article that Trish Handley was writing for the *ADA* magazine on FPTC. Dated 28 September 1994, Handley declares that since FPTC's inception, "a political agenda has been suggested in its programmes which have been termed *Manifesto* (1993) and *Declarations* (1994)" (1994, 2). Responding to Handley, Gordon articulates a distinct politics in the social and educative role of FPTC, noting that

> I feel that the arts have a low status in this country, and it is my commitment that they should be uplifted. I believe that will contribute to the healing of our society, and to the bringing together of our society...Being political is more than thinking black and white. So I think that we have one of the most revolutionary agendas on board when I say that art should have first place in education...that is our first agenda, and that is why we do our best to go out into the country, to perform, conduct workshops, and teach. In this way we are spreading the arts (Gordon, cited in Handley 1994, 2–3).

Handley furthermore considers Gordon's citing of Rudolf Laban's assertion of a "dance for all" ethos as embracing an anti-elitist vision for the arts. Sanchez-Colberg (2006), discussing the rise of a Physical Theatre in Europe, similarly cites Laban's democratising ethos as key in the avant-garde strategies of German *Ausdrückstanz* and similar early modern dance movements which advocated for a holistic approach to dance training and for a more integrated role for dance in everyday society. Gordon elaborates that in Physical Theatre, the body is used to mobilise people, "to make your viewpoint, so that the body becomes your

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[36] The Eastern Cape *Dance Umdudo* was a dance festival, a local equivalent of Durban's *Dance Songololo* and Cape Town's *Dance Indaba* which were all satellite festivals of Gauteng's *Dance Umbrella*, the most prominent, exclusively dance platform in South Africa.

missile, your weapon and point of source" (Gordon, cited in Handley 1994, 2–3). This notion of a political body or a bodily politics has broad application and implication for questioning the efficacy and place of embodied performance in a politically charged society like South Africa. The terminology of these early declarations unmistakably espouses a revolutionary idiom that employs shades of anti-apartheid "struggle" lingo. In the *Manifesto* programme (1993) which was part of the three performance programmes offered at the National Arts Festival, Gordon states that

> [c]hange is demanded in the new South Africa – ideologies, political structures, social systems, educational bodies and most importantly artistic manifestos. This is a VOICE for physical power…Power for all People (Gordon *Manifesto* Programme, 1993).

The tone of this declaration, especially the words "Power for all People", echoes the struggle tropes of many other political manifestos that were the order of the day during anti-apartheid struggles. The chant, "*Amandla awethu*", (roughly translated as "power to the people") became the rallying cry at anti-apartheid protests and is still used in South Africa as a call to action against systemic oppressive policies or events. Resonances are overtly apparent. The title of Gordon's 1994 inaugural lecture,[37] "Motion arrested: Body politics and the struggle for a Physical Theatre", corroborates my reading of the choreopolitics nascent in these embryonic stages of FPTC – the choice of words like "arrested", "body politics" and "struggle", while re-contextualised, delineate a nascent political circumstance or inference. A fuller manifesto, alluded to in this public lecture, is developed more explicitly in Gordon's "Physical Theatre: Weaving together the threads of the curriculum" (1994b),

> Manifesto
> The Rhodes University Drama Department established a resident company, the FIRST PHYSICAL THEATRE COMPANY, at the 1993 Standard Bank National Festival of the Arts. The purpose of this initiative was threefold:
> ▪ to identify a theatre practice that is unique to the department;
> ▪ to raise the profile of Physical Theatre through concert performances and outreach projects; and
> ▪ to provide a platform for engendering, promoting and presenting new works by both experienced artists and new aspirants.
> The MANIFESTO of that season identified a number of central concerns – these concerns are specific to this company and need not necessarily relate to the notion of

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[37] This inaugural lecture was held on 17 August 1994 at Rhodes University.

Physical Theatre in general. Physical Theatre is not a separatist performing art but an artistic manifesto that includes fact, fiction, movement, mime, text, song, dance and design. It is a plea for an holistic theatre experience that draws together mind, body, emotion, thought, action and word (Gordon 1994, paper cited in *The Art of Physical Intelligence* 2002c, 10–11).

In a 1995 benefit fund brochure archived at NELM, I find a page that distils artistic and educational challenges and goals in the following way:

FPTC aims to continue to expand its role providing collaborative opportunities to:
    (1)   Educators and learners; and
    (2)   Young, aspiring and experienced artists,
To explore new directions in South African theatre; and to expose theatre as an accessible experience.

Transitions
RDP: Arts education for all
Debate: Collapsing structures
Manifestos: "New South African Aesthetic"

Problems
Uninspiring theatre
Poor communities
No training material
Slow implementation
Limited facilities
Few teachers

Solutions
Asserting innovative theatre practices
Promoting accessibility
Publishing support material
Providing interim solutions
Developing resources
Building teacher capacity

These early manifestos crystallised the company's three-pronged approach of (i) artistic production; (ii) education and training (residencies like the Choreographic Development Programme, work at festivals like the *Dance Umdudo*, a local offshoot of the *Dance Umbrella* and community engagement via school's touring programmes like *Suitcase of*

Stories and work within the Rhodes Drama department and local schools); and (iii) research (archiving and scholarship) as integrated parts of the company's vision. Gordon distils three key issues from this first statement of intent as "this theatre is a collaborative theatre; it is a repertory theatre and it is an holistic theatre" (Gordon 1994b, cited in Stevenson 2002c, 11). Employing a creative analogy to his 1994 work, *Dialogue*, he nimbly unravels the inter-connectedness of these choreographic strands in a vision for the company:

> For example, *dialogue* (1994) is a duet for two performers but it required a director, another performer, a scriptwriter, two designers (costumes and lighting) and a musician...*dialogue* referred not only to the theme but to the working processes as well. This working process is particularly appropriate where the political agenda is focused towards reconciliation. Working together as a collective also becomes part of the healing process in a country which historically has suffered from cultural and political apartheid (Gordon 1994b, cited in Stevenson 2002c, 10–11).

Gordon's 1994 inaugural lecture became a foundational text for the emerging aesthetic of Physical Theatre and the expansion of the artistic vision for the company, coinciding with South Africa's gradual move away the cultural boycott.[38] The observations of Martin Puchner (2002) and Galia Yanoshevsky[39] (2009) are useful in examining selected aspects of FPTC's manifesto in relation to the historical development of the artistic manifesto as a genre. Puchner stresses an inescapable connection between the art manifesto and the political manifesto, viewing the art manifesto as one of the least understood and most important inventions of the historical avant-garde.[40] Puchner directly affiliates the origins of the art manifesto with Engels and Marx's 1848 *Communist Manifesto*, still regarded as one of the most influential revolutionary declarations. He states that the manifesto, as a genre of "political agitation", becomes canonised in the late nineteenth century through the *Communist Manifesto*, where its features stabilised the characteristics of the manifesto, especially its performativity, as a genre (Puchner 2002, 462). For example, Puchner analyses the *Communist Manifesto* (Marx and Engels 1848) as a critical reference point for the form

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[38] The cultural boycott was announced as early as 1959 but took off in the 1960s. It was part of the larger campaign of "total isolation" against the apartheid regime enacted by many anti-apartheid groups, both nationally and internationally.

[39] This relationship between the art and literary manifesto and the political manifesto is complex and ambiguous and Yanoshevsky summarises key approaches via a range of theorists in *Three Decades of Writing on Manifesto: The making of a Genre* (2009, 267). For more detailed argument on what Yanoshevsky calls the "fuzzy frontiers" between the political origins of the artistic and literary manifesto, see 267–272.

[40] Most of the authors researched refer to the historical avant-garde as those artistic movements that broke with tradition and convention at the beginning of the twentieth century – movements like Futurism, Cubism, Dadaism and Surrealism, to select a few.

of Marinetti's 1909 Futurist manifesto, "where it was adopted and adapted to suit artistic purposes" (Yanoshevsky 2009, 267). I submit that Gordon obliquely referenced the chant of "*Amandla Awethu*" as such a critical reference point at the inception of FPTC to align his vision symbolically with anti-apartheid voices. This resonance is given weight by Lyons who argues that the manifesto becomes an "emblem of political strife" and that

> to write a manifesto is to participate symbolically in a history of struggle against dominant forces; it is to link one's voice to the countless voices of previously revolutionary conflicts (Lyon, cited in Yanoshevsky 2009, 268).

Yanoshevsky argues that whether one is considering the literary or the political kind, the "force and theatricality of the manifesto are singled out by all researchers" – "manifestos are violent acts, spectacular acts, a way to sound your voice", whether the act is artistic or political (2009, 266). In form, the manifesto exhibits critical tensions and ambiguities between its often prescriptive pronouncements and its desire for change. Puchner notes that its "morphology" often includes: numbered theses; denunciations of the past; aggressive attitude towards audience; collective authorship; exaggerated, shrill declarations; varied and bold letters; and mass distribution in newspapers/billboards/flyers, some of which are observable in FPTC's manifesto and in the attention that was paid to the image, publicity and marketing of the company.[41] Puchner claims a "futurist performativity" associated with the form of the manifesto – the present act of revolt always signalling or heralding a new future, with an attendant impatience to act to achieve this change. While this futurist performativity is embedded in the declaratory, often authoritarian tone and content of manifestos, manifestos have also often performed a subversion of this dogma – as Puchner notes, there is no generic formula or "heroic" manifesto[42] (2002, 451). He cites John Cage's enigmatic *Lecture on Nothing* (printed in *Inconti Musicali*, August 1859) as one example of an artist undermining the prescriptive logic and controlling sensibility of the manifesto. Puchner says Cage's title suggests a refusal to take a position, to declare an allegiance – in short, to write a manifesto:

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[41] From its inception, FPTC worked creatively to share its work and ethos, winning the poster award at numerous National Arts Festivals and whenever we taught, we wore company T-shirts with the logo *Physical Intelligence* as the company "brand". As it expanded, we developed many resource materials to share with teachers at schools and universities. These culminated in the three published volumes of *The Art of Physical Intelligence* (2002) and the multi-media CD-ROM (2001).

[42] Puchner's article develops a rich discussion on whether or not the adoption or construction of the manifesto has become a "retro gesture" now – that for the neo avant-garde, the manifesto is merely something that becomes quoted.

Instead, this piece consists of whispered words, subtly and carefully superimposed onto one another, that obscure any lingering agenda or position. It is as if Cage had decided to tone down the voice of the manifesto and to eclipse its content, thus undermining its function as a statement of purpose (2002, 458).

Gordon, similarly, choreographed a dance work to celebrate and perform FPTC's manifesto. At the launch of the company in 1993, this work performed under the title *Manifesto* as a statement of Gordon's artistic vision and intent. The following description of this work draws on my original interpretation published in *The Art of Physical Intelligence: Volume 1, Experiments in Physical Theatre*:[43]

Throughout the work a foreboding dramatic tension is set up through the score which is a relentless drone creating an expectation: the feeling that something is going to happen. The sound creates a mechanised and industrial whirr that makes the urban context of the work clear. The design also feeds into this: workers in blue overalls, worker bees in a hive. This "whirr" is the music of John Cage interspersed with selections of Merce Cunningham in interview. Cunningham is discussing the process of choreography, and snippets of his words are heard – "about the formal matters of choreography…a crisis…a climax…". Possibly Gordon is drawing attention to his own artistic process and aesthetic. He is also drawing attention to the revolutionary innovations that the Cage-Cunningham collaboration brought to the dance world in the 1950s.

Paper is used as a metaphor for its resonance with the "writing up" of manifestos. This process of paper pushing, visiting ideas and then rejecting them becomes part of the process of the relentless search for personal and artistic identity. The dancers become like the paper they are using – rolled out, spread out on the floor, crumpled up, thrown away, recycled. The weight of the paper is dumped onto one lone body. The paper accumulates and then disappears, is creased, crushed up and piled into a heap only to be uncovered and re-read. New sheets keep emerging from under the dancers' costumes – a relentless stream of ideas and actions. Running, rolling, catching, diving into a brave new world. Gordon's manifesto clearly demanding change. The closing image shows the arrested movement of the group (with their backs to the audience); within this collective, one lone body falls while the others remain standing (Finestone-Praeg, cited in Stevenson 2002a, 14–15).

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[43] Volume One, *Experiments in Physical Theatre*, contextualised each work with detailed information about its programme, reviews, inventory of performances and a descriptive interpretation of each work. As Research Officer for this project, a total of 68 works which were created by FPTC from 1993–2000, I described and documented this repertory. This information was later distilled into visual form in the multi-media "journey", CD-ROM, *The Art of Physical Intelligence: Part 1* published in 2001 as a "series of animations which illustrate 'archetypal'" modes of creative output revealing a rich diversity in the company's work. Volume Two, *Instructions in Physical Theatre*, was a teaching and learning manual for instruction, and Volume 3, *Enquiries Into Physical Theatre*, was a series of research papers written by various members of FPTC or Rhodes University postgraduate students.

The images of paper that abound in this work embody a politics of manifesto writing and at one point in the work, burning torches are carried in by the performers – a clear analogy to "lighting a new way", or the use of fire to combust the old and usher in the new. This "burning of old wood" alluded to in the work's theatricality is Gordon's performance of a "futurist" manifesto.

Gordon's manifesto was a commitment to shifting South African contemporary dance into an alignment with modernising practices that had occurred in Western modern dance in Europe and America and which also cut with the colonial and patriarchal values imposed on South African dance by the classical ballet. Yanoshevsky (citing Puchner and Luca Somigli 2003) views the manifesto as a form "that announces modernity" (2009, 260). Puchner argues that it is in the "temporality" of the modernist manifesto, in its "construction of a history of rupture", that its particular performativity can be located (2002, 451) – "It does not merely describe a rupture, but produces such a history, seeking to create this rupture actively through its own intervention" (2002, 450).

He supports this view by noting that the art manifesto becomes the primary way that different avant-garde movements present themselves and compete with one another, what he terms, "manifesto attention-mongering rhetoric" (451). A pertinent example of this cut or break in later dance manifestos is, for instance, Yvonne Rainer's 1965 "NO" Manifesto[44] which is still quoted today as a seminal blueprint informing her iconoclastic break from, in this instance, the traditional modern dance. In Gordon's case, a Western modernity is vividly apparent in Gordon's own eclectic training as well as his early works which exhibit this tendency to "modernise" a South African choreographic aesthetic through a futurist performance of choreographic rupture. His vision for FPTC made a distinctive break with dance traditions and conventions in South Africa – both from the strangling dominance of classical ballet (which colluded with the racial and class strictures of apartheid structures in the arts) but also, I argue, from the focus on values of "good" technical dancing (whether ballet, different African dance styles or modern dance) as distinct from engaging with the craft and art of choreography. Gordon has stated that

> [f]or far too long dance in South Africa has been regarded almost solely as a technical and performing activity. Furthermore, conservative and traditional

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[44] Yvonne Rainer's "NO" Manifesto from 1965. The manifesto intended to revolutionise and cut with the conventions of the modern dance, especially its virtuosity and the traditional audience-performer relationship. Her manifesto claimed a distillation of dance as a form to its essential and visceral qualities.

attitudes towards technical training have tended to dominate educational strategies providing on the one hand rigorous programmes and impressive dancing, but on the other hand minimizing rich understandings of creative processes that I believe can be articulated, discussed and reviewed (Gordon, cited in Samuel 2016, 56).

In what follows, I attempt to reflect on some of the emergent modernising tendencies in Gordon's early works pre the formation of FPTC and in the first years of the company's work.

Gary Gordon…some geographical roots and biographical routes

Gordon studied drama and dance at the University of Natal and was influenced strongly by the Laban-based pedagogical approaches and principles taught to him by Dr Fred Hagemann and Ms Jilian Hurst, his lecturers in the area of movement and dance. He also studied ballet and qualified as a Cecchetti ballet teacher. The eclecticism of these early artistic precedents inspired Gordon's choreographic imagination. He accepted a post as the movement and dance lecturer at Rhodes University in 1974 after his Honours year, having learnt Graham-based and Alvin Ailey techniques from Jilian Hurst and Margaret Larlham in his Honours year. He attended a Winter School in 1976 at the Martha Graham School in New York. He was a member of the Jazzart Dance Theatre[45] in Cape Town for a six-month period in 1982 while on sabbatical and performed with the company, including with dancers like Alfred Hinkel. Gordon received his Master's degree in Choreography and Dance Studies at the Laban School of Dance, an extension of Goldsmiths College, University of London in 1986.[46] He attended a diverse range of professional level classes on release techniques, Graham classes, Cunningham classes, Humphrey/Limon classes and ballet classes, also observing dance repertory as part of the curriculum. Of particular interest to him were the classes on choreography, and also dance history and the sociology of dance. He later returned to the Laban to lecture in these areas of dance thinking and making.

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[45] Jazzart Dance Theatre was founded in 1973 by Sonje Mayo as a modern and jazz dance studio. It was under the directorship of Sue Parker from 1978 to 1982 and then Val Steyn, until Alfred Hinkel became director in 1986. Dawn Langdown, John Linden and later, Jay Pather worked collaboratively with Hinkel. Sichel notes that Jazzart led the way in the 1980s when "combining political protest with art making and provocative debate, they boycotted government-funded arts council theatres and festivals like the NAF in Grahamstown. They broke this boycott in 1991" (Sichel 2018, 52).

[46] As Gordon has indicated in personal discussion with me, the politics of the Laban Centre as a legitimate educational and academic arts centre in relation to tertiary institutions and governing bodies legitimizing academic qualifications is in itself a complex arena for debate.

These varied lineages fed the eclectic and experiential palette of movement, modern and contemporary dance that he was exposed to as a young practitioner. He notes,

> I just hope I can give expression to the excitement that pervaded the work in those early days...you must remember it was the apartheid years so the only official companies were ballet companies. In a way it was set up that Ballet was art, the centre of artistic expression and the highest form and all the others were of no importance...I think what was exciting about Laban, was a creative act...it was that you contributed to the making of the work, it wasn't always something that was always given to you...I remember I used to get so excited I used to shake... (Interview, Gordon 2017a).

Gerard M. Samuel's PhD thesis, "Dancing the Other in South Africa", provides a rich context for the rise of South African contemporary dance, calling it a "partial history" that attempts to trace some of the materials that are "fragmented and unrecorded" (2016, 13). His account is augmented by Adrienne Sichel's[47] recent contribution, *Body Politics: Fingerprinting South African Contemporary Dance* which details, via inventory, anecdote and review (especially in the appendices), selected key South African dance festivals, dance companies, training centres and biographies of South African dancer-choreographers and dance styles (Sichel 2018). Samuel acknowledges the role of FPTC in a section entitled Spaces for Contemporary Dance outside of the major/urban centres (2016, 45), while Sichel recognises Gordon as one of the "moderns", one of the "choreographer-teachers" that pioneered these contemporary dance innovations during the "isolation years of the cultural boycott" (2018, 22).

Laban-based influence

The role of Laban-based approaches to movement training are instrumental in understanding Gordon's approach to performance pedagogy. Gordon's initial introduction to Laban-based work was through Geoffrey Sutherland who had been a Lecturer at the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance in London and in 1969, Sutherland was engaged by the Department of Drama, University of Natal where Gordon attended a Winter School.[48] Both Sichel (2018)

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[47] Within the dance fraternity, Sichel's name is virtually "synonymous with the emergence of the South African contemporary dance itself" as she has been a "dynamic advocate" and "key role-player" in this historical account (Samuel 2016, 26).

[48] In 1970, when Gordon commenced his studies at University of Natal, Sutherland was working as an independent artist in which Gordon landed the role of the Angel Gabriel in Sutherland's production of *Navidad Nuestra*, a folk nativity based on the rhythms and traditions of Hispanic America. Gordon, in conversation with me (2019), notes that he had at this stage only been dancing for one year, so this Laban-based influence would have been a significant influence in his early experiences of dance.

and Samuel (2016) acknowledge the debt of these Laban-based approaches to the development of contemporary dance in South Africa. Sichel (2018, 18) notes that part of this complex history of contemporary dance includes Elizabeth Sneddon of the University of Natal's Speech and Drama department who brought the Laban method to South Africa in 1949. She argues that the Laban component in the Speech and Drama curriculum at Natal spread to other universities and "laid one of the foundations for our formal contemporary dance development" (Sichel 2010, 41). Samuel observes that Grut (1981) records South Africa's "lesser known teachers" (like Isabel Nel, Edith Katzenellenbogen and Gisele Taeger-Berger in Stellenbosch; Masha Arsenieva in Port Elizabeth and Elizabeth Sneddon in Durban) as having introduced "Educational and Expressive Dance" (Samuel 2016, 18), albeit for mostly "white dancing bodies" (Samuel 2016, 21). He acknowledges Grut's writing as one of the earliest records of concerts, including contemporary dance, in South Africa in the 1940s and wryly interprets that some of her descriptions may be read either as "congratulatory" or as a "criticism" of a dance form that "belonged in Physical Education and was not to be confused with the art of classical ballet" (Samuel 2016, 23). Samuel draws connections between, for instance, the influences of Laban-based work and shifting approaches to choreography:

> Thus one can situate Durban's shift in approaches to dance making or choreographies in concert theatre dance since the 1950s and draw parallels with Stellenbosch University pioneers Nel and Taeger-Berger, who were teaching in the same period…It could be argued that the principles of Modern Educational dance (later to be reshaped as creative dance and movement), and Contemporary Dance, surfaced in these much earlier formations. For example, Grut's annotation could point out that Nel had already begun to teach in Bloemfontein Teachers' College in 1948 in what I believe to be one of the earliest expressions of the pedagogy of Modern Dance (Samuel 2016, 43–44).

Sichel observes that the term "contemporary dance" became popularised as a way to distance itself from the "modern dance" taught and performed in the "suburbs and inner cities of white South Africa" – what we termed "studio dance". Sichel gives an account of some of the diverse roots that fed this burgeoning dance via her "fingerprinting" of key figures, dance platforms and events that fostered this vital dance intervention and rebellion against the strictures of a constrained and limiting balletic tradition. Sichel locates the "matriarchs and patriarchs" of contemporary dance, even prior to democracy in 1994, as "proponents of contemporary dance" who were "at the forefront of cultural activism" – though she says that the history and definition of South African dance theatre are "difficult to

pinpoint and then unravel" (Sichel 2018, 33). She argues that this is possibly in part because contemporary dance "is fed by various genres and forms that cover a wide spectrum, running from deeply traditional to urban forms like gumboot dancing, *isipantsula, sbhujwa*, township tap and Afrojazz" as well as "important movement forms and influences which include classical ballet, jazz dance, tap, classical Indian and Spanish dance, physical theatre (which is taught in university departments), dance theatre, interdisciplinary and site-specific theatre dance and performance/live art" (33).

It is interesting that Sichel makes a "special mention" of university departments in relation to Physical Theatre (as though any of the other dance forms, especially classical ballet were/are not taught in universities). I believe this comment to be revealing in some respects of FPTC's reception and production in the South African dancescape. The company's work has sometimes been informally spoken about as "intellectual dance". Vlachos' PhD study (2017) has made similar claims around the systemic constraints he perceives FPTC's work has encountered through being based in a historically white and elitist university context. I return to some of these questions in this research, especially in PART III: Epistemological Curiosities. Straddling uncomfortable (though provocative) interstices between theatre and dance, choreography versus dancing, and dance as performance (rather than as entertainment or overtly as protest theatre) has, I propose, masked some of the deeper choreopolitical significance of FPTC's production. So while these interpreted histories offer current and long-awaited documentation on contemporary dance in South Africa, they mostly cross reference and footnote the work of FPTC. Here I argue for a political significance and lineage fostered by FPTC in democratising crucial elements of both pedagogy and production.

Announcing modernities in South African contemporary dance: *Anatomical Journey of a Settler Man* (1989)

In 1989, Gordon became the first recipient of the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Contemporary Dance at the National Arts Festival held annually in Grahamstown. His choreographic creation for this award, the *Anatomical Journey of a Settler Man*, was called an "inter-racial, multi-media collaboration" (Sichel 2010, 42). Nascent in this work are many of the hallmarks of what later became identified as Gordon's eclectic brand of Physical Theatre – an interdisciplinary drive to collaborate and create original works that were South African in source, style and commissioned artistry. As an Honours student at Rhodes Drama

Department at the time, with Eric Bouvron[49] and Beverley Barry,[50] it is in this production that I first met and worked with artist-teachers like Jilian Hurst,[51] Paul Datlen,[52] Andrew Buckland,[53] and Lucky Diale.[54] The strategy of having teachers and apprentices work and perform side by side is a longstanding and significant hallmark of Gordon's pedagogy and is discussed at length in the Butoh case study in PART II *Pedagogy as/and Presence* as an example of teaching as research/research as teaching.

For this work, original collaborations were commissioned – the percussive score was composed and performed by Maciek Schejbal and a singer, Siphiwe Sithole, a second-year Drama student, devised a Xhosa song with Schejbal, which was performed live. Gordon describes the layered score as having

> ordinary noise as well as sounds from inside your head; songs were sung to the beat of a drum and clashed with the ringing of a telephone; there was silence; performers moved to words and not only in English; this anatomical journey contemplated struggle, humour, power, emptiness, aspiration and loss. The breath of this settler man inspired shapes, sounds and movements of this world of his in the Eastern Cape. He started the work in stillness and he continued in it dancing his part in a land that was still waiting to be re-imagined. It was after all 1989 (Gordon, cited in Sichel 2010, 43).

Other notable hallmarks include the heterogeneous use of varied dance languages, theatrical styles and performance modalities which expressed kaleidoscopic fragments of experience, not unlike the colliding parallel realities experienced on a daily basis by South Africans of different race, gender and class. The work was shaped by five poetic images or landscapes described by Gordon in the programme as *"A Dance in Five Fragments"*:

Prologue and arrival
Some insects and other people
Dark marshes
Local duets
Conversation piece and epilogue

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[49] Eric Bouvron studied at Rhodes University and later moved to France where he started up his own company, *Les Odes Bleues*, and later became the director and performer for *Barefoot Productions*, winning the prestigious Molière award for Best Play in 2016.
[50] Beverly Barry studied at Rhodes University and later performed with dancers like Balu Searle, Jenny von Papendorp and myself in the all-female company, Southern Women, which won the 1991 FNB Vita Dance Award for their work, *Wild Honey*. Beverley became an arts activist who has worked closely with developing arts policy in education. She is currently completing a Master's degree in Fine Art through Rhodes University.
[51] Jilian Hurst, lectured at University of Natal, Durban.
[52] Paul Datlen, lectured at University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.
[53] Andrew Buckland, performer and lecturer at Rhodes University and currently Associate Professor Emeritus.
[54] Lucky Diale, dancer with the Soweto Dance Theatre from 1987.

Dancing...now and then...in the veld...on the floor, but never at sea...a dance ensemble! A multi-media experience incorporating Robinson sculptures, Schejbal music. Some episodes might be recognizable...others may appear new or different...The Anatomical Journey of a Settler Man...a slightly fragmented dance by Gary Gordon.

There will be no interval.

The danceplay

The five episodic fragments of *"A Dance in Five Fragments"* as articulated by Gordon locate his interest in structuring a world that references a myriad of performance interests and can be seen as a precursor to his notion of the "danceplay", the term Gordon later coined as a company signature for marketing and expressing the form of company works. The term "documentary danceplay" was later used to describe the production of full-length works like *The Unspeakable Story* (1995). The idea of the danceplay is implicit in *Anatomical Journey of a Settler Man* where Gordon's trademark integration of embodied texts (dance) and spoken texts (play) is used to create a Physical Theatre. His use of levity and humour to describe the worlds he was conjuring are other hallmarks of his writing – here, for instance, the idea of "dancing in the veld", "on the floor" – "but never at sea" are classic Gordon wit.[55] The spoken word had not been used in theatre dance works before in South Africa and Gordon worked at creating sonic landscapes as choreographic textures and contexts for his Physical Theatre. He speaks about "an old fashioned sense of dance" being prevalent at this time – that dance was "movement with no words, action with no words" and that drama was "words with hardly any action". He suggests that this integration between dance and drama in the "danceplay", this breaking down of binaries through interdisciplinary collaborations, was "perhaps the most political thing that we did":

> ...asking questions about what can drama do? what can dance do?...if you want to think differently, you have to think differently about how you make art. And that is sometimes where the real radical intervention takes place (Interview, Gordon 2017b).

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[55] Many of the works analysed in this PhD are drawn from the more serious side of the company's repertory, but it is important to note that Gordon also choreographed many whimsical and humorous works like *On The Light Side of the Moon* (1993), *Can Baby John Fit Into Big Daddy's Shoes* (1994), *they dreamt of diving where the fishes fly* (1995), to name just a few examples. The texts of all these works, written by Gordon himself, use a similar humorous wit or effect to offset stereotype and deconstruct both social and dance conventions and expectations.

Gordon's point aligns with Lehmann and Primavesi's distinction (2009, 3 – 6) between a political way of making art rather than making art about politics and in this regard, Gordon's danceplay pronounces its choreopolitical form as a "radical intervention".

Interpreting the *Anatomical Journeys*

The opening statement of *Prologue and arrival* was a solo by Gordon in which he announced his idiosyncratic contemporary dance movement – he notes that this was "the statement of the choreographer...I remember I was in white and brown and it was just indicating – this is who I am and this is the way I move in the space on my own" (Interview, Gordon 2017a). In *Some Insects and other people*, the dancers – in earthy maroons and browns, and with masked faces that neutralised their human expression – joined Gordon to sketch out a landscape, "especially in the Eastern Cape...we weren't mimicking animals but there was a sense of responding to that" (Interview, Gordon 2017a). The *Dark Marshes* was an expressionist outpouring of the pain, suffering and "the angst in the country" at that time. Performer Beverley Barry's rhythmic convulsions and writhing body, twisting in her white dress (which Gordon claims was "actually a reference to Alvin Ailey style, but then we played with that and in this context it lost the joy") located the dark heart of this anatomical journey – South Africa in the late 1980s. The "local duets" (Gordon), performed by myself and Lucky Diale, reference the two characters in Fugard's iconic *Boesman and Lena* (1969) who are forced to bear witness to each other's poverty and pain living in the Swartkops mudflats outside Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape.

These brief duets were juxtaposed and positioned between other scenes that alluded to the absurd contradictions of a South Africa moving into modernity that is caught up in a system of racial capitalism that polarises social and political experience via race and class. The term "Settler Man" is not used without awareness in the title of this work. Jillian Hurst, for instance, performed a slick tap dance routine behind and through a gold lamé curtain which dropped down to create a meta stage-within-a-stage; Andrew Buckland and Eric Bouvron performed an absurd mime with the enormous playful cut-out sculptural figures which formed part of the set design by Ken Robinson; Lucky Diale, in a top hat and on roller skates sashayed through the space, his luminescent feather boa flying wildly behind him, only to appear later on a bicycle. The epilogue was an abstract dance performed by the

ensemble, who sang out telephone numbers while dancing between enormous orange telephone booths. As Gordon explains, these telephones were

> really about how we long for connection, and relationships – there is a kind of loneliness…you heard answering machines…that despite this technology we still are not communicating…each fragment offered another way of looking at movement – it wasn't just a theme – and I think that's what I always loved. You look at the same event but it's played out in a different style (Interview, Gordon 2017a).

Anatomical Journey of a Settler Man was Gordon's first full-length choreography and in it, he begins to solidify the elements of production that would later become the characteristic trademarks of FPTC's repertory of danceplays. Sichel corroborates many of the points I have raised above in her reflection on *Anatomical Journey of a Settler Man*:

> These theatrical elements, probing aesthetics and local textures were defining characteristics of what became the highly influential First Physical Theatre Company. Other hallmarks were, and still are, the use of issue-based or deeply personal text; heightened physicality; corporeal mime in certain instances (as in Andrew and Janet Buckland's oeuvre); the exploration of the South African cultural heritage (as in Gordon's *Bessie's Head*); themes of identity; use of multi-media and most importantly intrinsic choreographic research (Sichel 2010, 43).

This "intrinsic choreographic research" had been part of Gordon's earlier eclectic play with a multiplicity of dance forms. From 1974, when he took up his post at Rhodes University, he had annually created dance programmes for the Drama department. These programmes can be seen to be the gestation period that allowed him to experiment with diverse theatrical and dance traditions. I have selected two of these programmes as case studies to excavate the prolific experimentation that Gordon pursued in the search to foster a contemporary dance idiom in South Africa.

Case study I: *Dancers in Search of a Choreographer…*

The programme of work for *Dance '87* was created by Gordon for the 21st birthday of the then Speech and Drama department at Rhodes University. Each title reveals the modernising context and local textures embodied in each dance.

Dance '87

Dance 1: *Dancers In Search of a Choreographer* (with original score by three musicians: Janet Hall; Simon Jones; and Patricia Sandler; 16 dancers and two mime artists). This work alluded directly to Italian dramatist, Luigi Pirandello's *Six Characters In Search of an Author* (1921) which is regarded as a modernist, absurdist play with a meta-narrative self-referentially revealing the constructions of the creative and theatrical process after six unfinished characters go in search of their missing author. In the light of Gordon's earlier comments about dance in South Africa being regarded as primarily a "technical and performing" activity, this work playfully deconstructs the often prescriptive relationship between choreographers and dancers as well as between dance expectations and audiences. Gordon remarks that his other great interest was "the metaphor of theatre for life – meta-theatre, the theatre reflecting on itself, the illusion of theatre, the pretence and artifice of theatre…like Pirandello's *Six Characters In Search of a Author*" (Interview, Gordon 2017a). The review by Margot Beard called the eclecticism of this work, "a collage of styles and periods, rhythms and sounds that, through visual jokes and charm, exuberance and unpredictability, surely broke through our reserve and questioned our assumptions about what the evening should/would contain" (*The Grocotts Mail* 1 September, 1987).

Dance 2: *Songs For The Common Man*
Song 1: *Fanfare* (Score by Coplan; eight dancers)
Song 2: *Homeless* (Score by Ladysmith Black Mambazo; a solo performed by Peter Frost).
Song 3: *Elegy* (Traditional African score; eight dancers)
Song 4: *Duet* (Original score by Susie Dietrich; performed by Julie Coghlin and Peter Frost).

This four-part work had a strong South African essence as is evidenced by the local sound scores. Beard's review makes special mention of the way that conventional expectations of what constitutes an appropriate score for dance "were also overturned by the varied sounds as well as by the quite startling use of silence" in this work (*The Grocotts Mail* 1 September, 1987). I recall performing in *Elegy* which was a mourning ritual for eight female dancers costumed in hessian ropes that hung and moved with our bodies. I danced on top of a small bench and remember Gordon saying it was a symbol of a baby's coffin. In literary terms, an elegy is a poem of remembrance or reflection that evokes a lament or dirge for the dead. This work held powerful resonance with the shootings and killings that

happened on a weekly basis in the local township, Joza, in Grahamstown during this period of apartheid repression. Every weekend saw another funeral from the weekend before where police would crack down on resistance and protest at funerals. *Elegy's* local source was made very clear.

Dance 3. *A Woman's Story* (Music by Bizet and based on an adaptation of a tale by the Brothers Grimm). This work shifted the tone of the programme, playfully deconstructing the romantic narratives of ballet embedded in its storytelling. Again, Beard's review notes that "at first glance conventional, it soon revealed a nicely wry approach to the very conventions in which it was cast" (*The Grocotts Mail* 1 September, 1987).

INTERVAL

Dance 4: *Birthday Offering* (Score by Dira; nine dancers including Gordon) had Gordon co-performing with the cast, and the finale,
Dance 5: *Ella Fitzgerald* (nine dancers, including Gordon) referenced in celebratory tone, the jazzy blues and improvisational skill of "The First Lady of Song", as Fitzgerald was known.

Beard argues that the programme reveals that Gordon is interested in exploring the potential of movement – "in doing so he refuses to confine himself or his department to any rigid definition of what dance 'is' or 'should be'" (*The Grocotts Mail* 1 September, 1987).

Case study II: *The Parade for a Defunct Ballerina*
The programme of *Dance '88* cited below demonstrates an intertextual play with theatre and dance histories, both international (the Ballet Russes) and local (the landmark 1959 jazz-influenced African musical, *King Kong*, and Jennifer Ferguson, a powerful anti-apartheid singer and musical icon). The brief descriptions below draw on the programme notes.

Dance '88
Dance 1: *Parade for A Defunct Ballerina*
Parade presented by Diaghilev's Ballet Russes in 1917 was an attempt to translate cubism into a theatrical spectacle. Massine utilized naturalistic mime and vernacular movement. Satie used sirens, typewriters, piston shots. Apollinaire maintained that *Parade* "upset all the

public's preconceived notions". Modernism in dance is still progressing in leaps and bounds (Gordon' programme notes).

Dance 2: *Jennifer Sings*
The songs are taken from Jennifer Ferguson's latest album *Hand Around The Heart*. Jennifer was a first-year drama student at Rhodes in 1980 – she appeared as a nightclub singer in *Salad Days*.

Dance 3: *Back of the Moon*
The music is from Leon Gluckman's production of the South African musical *King Kong* (1959). Todd Matshikiza composed the music – Miriam Makeba sings "Back of the Moon".

INTERVAL

Dance 4: *The Swimming Pool*
Nigel Maister, a third-year student at UCT, composed original music for this work.

Collaborations and defunct ballerinas

Gordon's *Parade for A Defunct Ballerina* (1988) references the riotous manifesto of the Ballet Russes and Diaghilev's remarkable ability to draw into relation and collaboration a range of artistic talents which he exploded into the ballet world. *Parade* was a one-act ballet by Jean Cocteau which was presented on 18 May 1917 at the Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris. The score was by Erik Satie, décor and costumes by Pablo Picasso and choreography by Léonide Massine. Gordon says that

> I think *Parade* showed my interest at the time – *collaboration*…and remember I had just come back from Laban so I had been studying Dance History, which is my other great love…(with Clement Crisp)…and also with postmodernism at that time, so it was playing with the past in terms of now and there is a delight in the past but also a need to see it in the light of now – that was quite exciting (Interview, Gordon 2017a).

Rothschild (1991, 30) asserts that *Parade* constituted the first incursion of truly radical modernism into ballet. In her account of the scandal and riot created by *Parade*, Rothschild claims that contrary to popular belief, "it was not so much *Parade*'s cubism (which was of the 'polite' variety the audience had anticipated) that shocked and disconcerted the ballet's

patrons, but the introduction of low-brow popular entertainments to the sanctified realm of the ballet" (32). Gordon's own interest in and insertion of this "defunct ballerina" into a modern work was similarly provoked by the spectacle of the ballerina in the apartheid cultural imaginary:

> Because at the end of the eighties, it was coming to the end of the political regime here, so there was a huge questioning about the viability of ballet as an aesthetic for South Africa…ballet only did the classics in a way – there were one or two excursions into more South African themes but South African ballet companies didn't really go into the contemporary world…I am not only talking about technique…it was seen to belong to another order which I think has changed now…reworking ballet in the light of contemporary politics, gender, sexuality, representation…it was wonderful then this defunct ballerina – does she have a place in this world? (Interview, Gordon 2017a).

In *Dance '88*, each work seems to have referenced a different slice of theatre/dance and South African society. In *Jennifer Sings*, the dance and songs were juxtaposed with slides as a backdrop which were images from the local Grahamstown township. Gordon recalls that our photographer at the time, Elsabe van Tonder,[56] introduced him to the historian, Julian Cobbing, who had a collection of photographs:

> …and so I made the dance and placed that against the images and audiences could make their own associations that they could make, either with the words or the images (Interview, Gordon 2017a).

The songs were taken from Ferguson's latest album *Hand Around The Heart*. Again, I recall dancing to *Suburban Hum* and to the lyrics of "won't you take me away to the Bay of Bombay" while performing a duet with an ironing board – the work spoke to a woman's nostalgia and isolation as she lay dreaming in her safe, quiet, white, suburban home. Immersed in the construction of these images, Ferguson's songs are about women trapped in their mothers' gardens, mothers oppressed by their white Calvinist upbringing and, while dreaming of their gardens, also having to deal with restriction in their own lives. Gordon shares that this image of a woman ironing had a strong South African identity, but was also inspired by "one of his favourite" Picasso's during his Blue Period (Interview, Gordon 2017a).

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[56] Elsabe van Tonder is a local photographer in Grahamstown who photographed FPTC's work for many years. In 2006, she exhibited some of these photographs in an exhibition entitled *unforeseen*, This was exhibited along with Suzy Bernstein, John Hogg and other South African dance photographers at the National Arts Festival, in Rhodes Drama department's Red Room.

Modernising and avant-garde influences in FPTC's repertory

Andrew Buckland (2017) and Nathanael Vlachos (2017) both perceive the influence of a European and American avant-garde aesthetic impact or inspiration embedded in the company's ethos. Buckland says

> I had a sense that Gary brought with him not only the name of Physical Theatre, but the politics where it was born as well – and that was looking at gender politics…to bring it to this context…so when you say politics, it doesn't just mean race – presenting that as a notion and working with that to say we are political, but our politics concerns these particular issues…so that can be critiqued from whatever side you want, but it's not like the company was apolitical… (Interview, Buckland 2017).

Vlachos argues that FPTC's lineage stems, by and large, from "European dance and avant-garde theatre traditions – one needs facility in Artaud and Grotowski, Lecoq and Lehmann to fully comprehend its interventions" (2017, 77).

These statements are partially borne out by the offerings discussed above, and also presented in *Manifesto* (1994)[57] and company works that reference avant-garde dance practitioners, especially the artistic collaborations of American iconoclasts, Merce Cunningham and John Cage. While Buckland and Vlachos are correct in citing this persuasive avant-garde influence, I argue it is important to consider the curation and composition of the entire programme at the NAF that year to comprehend the larger complex of the politics implicit in the manifesto that the company was offering. Gordon himself has cited in parallel to Western avant-garde influences the sway and inspiration of local South African theatre and dance forms as influencing content and form in selected company works. Sassen (2015, 88) identifies a "field of informally grown physical theatre which is rich and fertile" and which moved away from realism – in this regard, Sassen comments that Gordon was

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[57] This work premiered at the Standard Bank National Arts Festival on Saturday 4 July 1993, City Hall, Grahamstown, and there were performances on 6 July 1993 at Nombulelo Hall, Grahamstown. Choreographed by Gary Gordon (1993; originally conceived in 1992) and with a sound score constructed by Gary Gordon and Lindy Roberts that interspersed the avant-garde music of John Cage with snippets of an interview from avant-garde choreographer, Merce Cunningham.

aware of the potential for local, unexplored stories in the 1990s. He commented on how elements of physical theatre were part of productions like *Woza Albert!* But were not recognized as "physical theatre" (2015, 90).

These rich cross-pollinations of traditional dance and theatre forms alongside the collaborative workshopping tradition of, for example, Barney Simon and The Company which became The Market Theatre Laboratory in 1976 (Sassen 2015, 89), or Buckland and Orlin, are examples of the expansive palette of influence feeding Physical Theatre history. Again, Sassen perceptively notes that while this history of Physical Theatre "formally begins in South Africa with Gordon at Rhodes, it draws threads from many time periods" – she states that

> [t]here are touches of ancient oral traditions, as there are strong dance ties. It bears resonance with theatre emerging from amateur groups as it relates to conventions which embrace old European theatre styles that touch on masking, puppeteering and clowning (Sassen 2015, 79).

Many of these threads of influence are indeed present in these first two programmes of artistic offerings by FPTC in 1993 (*Manifesto*) and 1994 (*Declarations*), and an analysis follows which considers the diverse incitements of these two programmes.

Curating danced manifestos

Collaboration (or dialogue) through Gordon's concepts of (i) the "danceplay" and (ii) "physical intelligence" were articulated as foundational to the company's methodology for this politics of form. FPTC's ethics of training, teaching and choreographic process has re-iterated over the years that to have radical content housed in dance forms that do not question a "docile body" (via Foucault) simply perpetuates a certain representational logic of power and control that dance has historically birthed and nourished as normative and prime. Gordon clearly conceives a critical performance research around this body politics. In a pre-publication draft of an article published in the *ADA* magazine (November/December 1994) Patricia Handley[58] discerns that

> Gordon would anyway argue that when your body is your starting-point, you are bound to be political. This is because traditionally the body has been denied, particularly in Western society. And in education, it has been denied recognition alongside the intellectual and the scientific as worthwhile pursuits.

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[58] This source is housed in the NELM archive under 2009.26.2.4.2.

There is an idea, Gordon notes wryly, that you don't have to think when you dance (Handley 1994, 3).

The *Manifesto* programme of 1993 had 15 original performance offerings, while *Declarations* in 1994 shared eight new physical theatre works. The multiplicity of styles, stories and bodily identities performed speak to the democratising impulse of these early physical theatre programmes. As Handley notes, "the works speak from diverse inner workings" (1994, 6). For a full listing of the works in these two programmes, see Appendix 2.

A bodily politics

Seasoned South African choreographer, Jeanette Ginslov,[59] in her reflection on modes of production in the work of FPTC, *The Moving Body: a political minefield. The Body Politic in the mode of production of the FPTC*, extends these ideas, arguing that the body is a "political minefield…capable of threatening traditional modes of performance that are restrictive and retrogressive" (Ginslov, cited in Stevenson 2002c, 98). She judiciously discerns that "this does not mean that the body here expresses a stand or adherence to a political climate of the state. This would entail supporting an ideology, master narrative or hegemony as implemented by the state" (ibid.). Rather, she argues for a "personal politics" where the body is capable of "destabilising or exploding stereotypical, hegemonic and traditional representations of gender and identity" (ibid.). Ginslov further argues that the choreographic procedures of FPTC are "feminist in orientation" (2002, 99). She concurs with Brown that feminist strategies

> consider the inventiveness of the dancer as interpreter and articulator of the text…(the dancers) are not neutral surfaces awaiting masterly inscriptions. They exist as highly trained and articulate experts of movement who color the choreographic process with their own subjectivities" (Brown, cited by Ginslov, in Stevenson 2002c, 99).

Ginslov's paper details the experience of performers in three FPTC works and I note with amusement that the title of the work she created for FPTC in 1996 was *Women With Big feet*

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[59] Jeannette Ginslov was a Master's student at Rhodes and has worked on a freelance basis for FPTC at different points in her career. In 2013 and 2014, I invited her to be a leave replacement lecturer and artist in residence at Rhodes for a year where she taught Physical Performance and Screendance modalities. We co-created a dance film called *nightflower* in 2014. Ginslov is cited under Choreochronologies.

Take Big Steps. Her final concluding remarks observe that the choreographic processes and dance histories uncovered in FPTC's production

> refocuses the individual body as the primary site of power. It draws attention to the power of the dancer as an articulate thinking being, rewriting dance at every turn, step, catch and fall (Ginslov, cited in Stevenson 2002c, 103).

In an interview conducted with me at the time, Ginslov writes that

> Finestone maintains that because we come from a country where bodies have been incredibly repressed, through violence and fear, the personal stories that these bodies express in physical theatre, are powerfully political…The methodology utilized in the mode of production challenges other dance practitioners who create dance with passive or silent bodies. It is only from this choreographic procedure that South African dance can grow into a powerful form reflective of empowered and liberated individuals (Finestone, cited in Ginslov in Stevenson 2002c, 103).

A cursory consideration of the titles of programmes curated in these early years of the company's work identifies this idiosyncratic, personalised and often autobiographical approach to choreographic creation: *Abundance* (1996 – with its pun on a "bun" dance); *Icons* (1998); *Portraits* (1998) and *Autographs* (1999). I consider three of these "New Voices"[60] that presented their own work as part of their identity and history in these first two programmes: Lulu Khumalo; PJ Sabbagha; and Athena Fatseas-Mazarakis.

Dancing identities and histories: the body as a site of resistance

In *Manifesto*, Lulu Khumalo[61] created *Africance* which was set in the context of apartheid South Africa. Three characters have a chance meeting which expresses their different dance identities and histories – gumboot, pantsula and contemporary. The encounter leads to a shared moment of a pleasure which is disrupted by reality (signalled by a police siren) and which shatters any attempt at confluence or a sustained exchange between the three characters. They are thrown back into apartheid roles of fear and prejudice in relation to their

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[60] "New Voices" was the name given to the annual Fringe programme contribution that FPTC made at the National Arts Festival. It was a choreographic platform that promoted and showcased the work of young aspiring choreographers drawn from Rhodes University and the Eastern Cape.

[61] Lulu Khumalo studied at Rhodes and performed and created work with FPTC while at university. She was nominated in 1993 for an IGI Vita Award for Most Outstanding Performance by a Female Dance in the Contemporary Style, for her performance in *Africance*. While she did not go on to pursue a performance career, she retained close ties with the company and was a member of its board from 2004.

identity, race, class and gender. As noted in my 2002 description of this work, particularly refreshing is the female protagonist – it is her story that becomes central:

> The traditional histories of South African class and race structures are excavated in a light, quite playful interaction. Two young black men (dressed in yellow overalls) enter the space carrying cardboard boxes which are filled with gumboots. They chat in Xhosa and polish the boots. It appears that they might be preparing for a gumboot session. Then they leave and a young white girl enters the room. She is dressed for a dance rehearsal and begins to practise balletic steps. Dissatisfied, she sees some gumboots lying in a corner and at first apprehensively examines them. She sniffs, circles and eventually tries them on. When she has them both on, she tries a gumboot dance but doesn't know the style and ends up doing ballet (the known) in the boots. The two men then re-enter and after a protracted sounding out of each other, the boys try to teach her gumboot dancing. It becomes slightly deconstructed as she remains seated on a chair throughout the process. Through mimed action, they blow her up like a doll and then they drag her to standing. Here they proceed (in solo dances) to narrate their own dance histories through movement – a confluence of mime and pantsula as well as hip-hop and township jive. The music is played through a small mobile tape deck as was fashionable on the streets in the eighties in South Africa. Eventually all three of the dancers are dancing a trio that combines a range of rhythms and different dance styles. They appear to be having great fun when their play is interrupted by a siren which signals a return to self-conscious social roles. They part and take their leave from each other without acknowledging the interchange that has occurred (Finestone-Praeg, cited in Stevenson 2002a, 8).

In *Africance*, the pun in the title plays on the idea of different cultures and dance identities colliding (Afrikaans and African dance) and is intended to frame the experience of the dance. Each work in this programme similarly references a deeply personal South African experience. PJ Sabbagha[62] made his choreographic debut with his *Catacomb Trilogy*. *Catacomb I* (1993), with its "direct and aggressive physicality" (Handley 1994, 6) is a duet between two young men which focuses on issues surrounding forced conscription for white men, something that was compulsory in South Africa during the apartheid regime's militarised rule. Sabbagha suggests the work deals with conscription as well as social perceptions of the male body:

> …our bodies are just meat, and soulless…the movement is quite aggressive and fast, and this deals quite strongly with my personal emotional response to a

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[62] PJ Sabbagha studied Drama at Rhodes and made his choreographic debut on FPTC platforms like "New Voices" at the Standard Bank National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. He went on to create Forgotten Angle Theatre Collaborative (FATC), which has expanded into the Ebhudlweni Arts Centre in Mphumalanga. His choreochronology is listed.

situation, and one that I could have found myself in (Sabbagha, cited in Handley 1994, 6).

Catacomb II (1993; 1994) is a "labyrinthine survival rite" which "dazzled with its conceptual crystallization" (Sichel, *The Star*, 7 March, 1994). My 2002 description of the work captures this subterranean underbelly that the title refers to – "the work becomes a sacrificial rite that takes place in the catacombs of memory. They [performers] remain spectral ghosts in the crypts of sexual repression" (cited in Stevenson 2002a, 12). The dance is accompanied by a Meredith Monk score with mournful, unrelenting moans and weeping motifs, and the characters begin hidden beneath layers of bandage, coats, jerseys and jackets:

> A naked man is raised in the centre of the stage bandaged up like a child in swaddling wraps by a woman. He later removes these icons of 'dis-ease' and returns to his naked state. These images collude as witnesses to a denial of the body in Western society, revealing its shame and its wounds (Finestone-Praeg, cited in Stevenson 2002a, 12).

Using a gestural and pedestrian dance language with a powerful physical theatre athleticism, Sabbagha discusses the immediacy of Physical Theatre as both an intellectual and emotional challenge:

> So when you watch it you do not have the sense of watching steps being performed; you have a sense of watching people in a very special interaction...there is no way you could perform our work without being there in person, committed and focused, and interacting with the vocabulary all of the time (Sabbagha, cited in Handley 1991, 7).

Probing a male experience, Sabbagha's works stood in contrast to the work of FPTC member, Athena Fatseas-Mazarakis,[63] who choreographed and performed *it was at the laundromat* (1994), a contemporary mime-physical theatre solo:

> Boasting a beret and single plastic flower behind her ear, reminiscent of Marcel Marceau's famous character Bip, Athena weaves the tale of a young woman intent on getting her washing done but is plagued by an over-zealous suitor and

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[63] Athena Fatseas studied at Rhodes University and made her choreographic debut on FPTC platforms like "New Voices". See the note under abbreviations which explains her choice to alternate the use of Fatseas and Mazarakis as names or to use them in double-barrelled form. She is currently working as education officer with PJ Sabbagha at Forgotten Angle Theatre Company (FATC) in Mpumalanga. She has been awarded a Gauteng MEC award for most outstanding female dancer (2005) and a Kanna award for most prestigious achievement in dance theatre (2007). She received a silver Standard Bank ovation award for her choreographic work, *ele(v)iate2*. Her choreochronology is listed.

a washing machine with a mind of its own (anon., cited in Stevenson 2002a, 49).

It was unusual at this time in South Africa for women to perform solo mime and it was equally unusual for women to choreograph comedy in performance genres like dance or mime. Fatseas-Mazarakis' solo is another instance of the company's politics of challenging classically male-dominated genres like mime and the choreography of ballet. Rhodes University graduate, Nicola Elliott's[64] half-thesis for her Master's degree, "Humour's critical capacity in the context of South African dance, with two related analyses"[65] (2010), makes a significant contribution to examining the impact and importance of works made by female choreographers that use humour to critique gender stereotypes. While she herself does not analyse Fatseas-Mazarakis' work, her thesis provides an incisive and perceptive account of the way humour by female choreographers in South Africa operates to produce a "critical praxis" which she argues is lacking in South African dance discourse and practice (Elliott 2010, 1). She advocates strongly for this criticality in the South African dancescape, suggesting that the dance world tends to view humour as "frivolous" (28) – especially humour performed and created by women, and more especially, dance that questions conventional dance forms. Elliott weaves a complex analysis of what she calls "the quality of vitality" prevalent in many South African dances which she argues is linked to the "proudly South African discourse" (2010, 65). She insists that this criticality (via a meta-level of signification) stimulates choreographic innovation – " it is not only through content, but also crucially through form, that dance articulates meaning" (13) – and argues that this choreographic provocation is sorely needed to open up and grow choreographic invention through form. This provocation toward choreographic innovation is not only nascent, but clearly visible in these early company works.

Fatseas-Mazarakis created works for the FPTC's annual *Dance Umdudo* like *My back to the bells* (1996) which was her first expression of a lesbian identity. Years later, *Standing By* (2011) extended this voice in its focus on the issue of "corrective rape" of lesbians prevalent

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[64] Nicola Elliott was the recipient of the 2014 Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Dance at the National Arts Festival. She created *bruising*, and in a lovely turn, Mazarakis was one of the performers in this profound dance. For an outstanding account and analysis of this work, see another ex-Rhodes student, Sonja Smit's paper, "Thinking through Nicola Elliott's *bruising* (2014)" in 2018.

[65] The two case studies include Nelisiwe's *Plasticization* (2004) and Elliott's *This part should be uncomfortable* (2008).

in the gender-based violence that haunts South Africa.[66] First commissioned in 2011 for a Rhodes University Human Rights week, *Standing By* addressed the idea of responsibility or "response-ability" (Mazarakis) – questioning an ethics of civil passivity in the face of South Africa's extreme statistics of violence against women. In conversation with theatre critic, Robyn Sassen (2015), Mazarakis says the statistics began to paralyse her and she started speaking through performance narratives. She says she had to create a "visceral response in my audience" (85) and so she introduced elements like the sounding of a shrill whistle, every 26 seconds in the work, to indicate how frequently black lesbians are attacked in the township. She explains that

> [i]t allowed me to take the intent of the performance and shift the performing body as a way to hold people to account. As a white homosexual woman, I could never dance that pain because it is black homosexual women who are being targeted. I can only be a bystander. Hence the piece in question: *Standing By* (Mazarakis, cited in Sassen 2015, 86).

This work grew to become an immersive performance utilising text and stop-frame animation.[67]

Utilising her trademark combination of humour, contemporary mime and Physical Theatre,[68] Mazarakis is one of the key examples of choreographers that, like many others, claim as foundational to their training and vision the rich pedagogy espoused and practised within FPTC and Rhodes University. This inter-animating confluence provided an incubatory space for nourishing and inspiring three generations of South African theatre and dance makers. While most of this impetus fed Rhodes students, given that FPTC was devised as a repertory company for Rhodes graduates, as part of its three-pronged approach towards an artistic manifesto, FPTC was simultaneously producing apprenticeship and choreographic development programmes and community- and school-based programmes.

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[66] In 2012, South African choreographer Mamela Nyamza collaborated with UK-based artist, Mojisola Adebayo to create a work with this concern as its source. Engaging with homophobia and corrective rape, the work is entitled *I Stand Corrected.*

[67] For extended details and analysis on her work process and use of interdisciplinary media, see Fatseas-Mazarakis' auto-ethnographic Master's dissertation entitled "Body of Knowledge: Interrogating Physical Intelligence and the translation of memory into motion in *Coming To.*" (2009).

[68] See her *Elev(i)ate 1* (2007) and *Elev(i)ate 2* (2010) in which she humorously deliberates on "uplifting" experiences. In *Elev(i)ate 1* she lifted 83 people over two days in a public shopping mall, noting that at an average of 63 kg per person, it meant that she lifted over 4 980 kg, almost 5 tonnes of humanity. As Sassen notes, "the idea of the burden of weight was teased apart linguistically and literally, examining all the different connotations burden could represent, yielding a deeply poetic gesture. This, intertwined with her physicality on stage, has become a kind of signature for Mazarakis" (2015, 85).

Reciprocal influence: Community engagement

In the early days of the company, these exchanges were conceived under the rubric of "outreach" work. This concept is now recognised for its one-sided, parochial approach and within the current context of decoloniality, it is recognised that this notion of "outreach" was another instance of veiled paternalism where programmes were mostly devised on the terms of those that had procured funding for "outreach" programmes, albeit with good intention. What the premise of many of these early outreach programmes missed was that performers from disadvantaged communities were often already artists in their own right – and often had equally as much to share/teach in dance/choreography as to learn. Programmes were not always devised in consultation with community activists or performers, but rather devised "at" them. The term for exchange work has altered to "community engagement" and still remains fraught with political paradox and complexities. With the ethical and political context of "outreach" work problematised, it is still important to consider the impact and value of these programmes in stimulating and growing dance experience in the Eastern Cape in the '80s and '90s. FPTC's role in supporting local educational and developmental projects has significance and many of the company's early educational programmes shared and brought performance possibility to polarised and marginalised communities. The *Dance Umdudo* will be discussed as one example of this engagement.

FPTC was instrumental in setting up the Eastern Cape *Dance Umdudo*, the local equivalent of Durban's *Dance Songololo* and Cape Town's *Dance Indaba*, all satellites of Gauteng's *Dance Umbrella*. Launched in 1996, *Dance Umdudo*'s ambitious enterprise ran until 2002. Curated by FPTC with Gordon at the artistic helm, the festival drew a range of local stake holders into conversation – advisors from the Eastern Cape Department of Sports, Arts, Culture, and Business Arts South Africa (BASA) worked with FPTC and the Rhodes Drama department to devise the main performance programmes, fringe programmes and a series of dance classes and workshops. The FNB Vita Choreographic Development programme, hosted by Rhodes Drama prepared ten choreographers for the creation of new works in a contemporary style under the guidance of Gordon, with company members facilitating. The *Dance Umdudo* provided a much-needed performance platform for the kaleidoscope of dance happening in the Eastern Cape and gave many young dance groups their first experience of performing in a formal theatre space. Travelling from as far as East London, Mount Frere or Mthatha, the *Umdudo* was a magnificent celebration of cultural

dance play. Access to this platform, entry to being seen and reviewed, and to sharing works and workshops started to open up the exchange of learning between different dance communities in the Eastern Cape. Each year, a guest artist was invited to share their choreography in performance and to do workshops for local artists. Some of these artists included Vincent Mantsoe, Moeketsi Koena, Thembinkosi Hlatswayo, Christopher Kindo, Martin Schonberg, Gladys Agulhas, Gregory Maqoma, and Thabo Rapoo. At the fourth annual FNB Vita *Dance Umdudo* in 1999, for instance, 80 choreographers with over 500 performers participated. In her review, Catherine Knox, *Mail and Guardian* staff reporter, says

> The Eastern Cape has always been an incubator bed, a crucible...an unadjudicated bricolage of bodies in movement – the eloquent, the anxious, the liberated, the lolloping – challenging mind and gut to make meaning... (Knox 1999).

That year, some of the featured companies included: Border Youth Dance theatre; FPTC; Guild Theatre Dance Company from East London; East London College Ballet; Rhythm Nation in Mixed Colours; the Uitenhage Township Dancers; Young Kids On Fire; Rhodes University Drama students and Vuyo Booi's "raucous and witty" (Knox) gumboot dance for the Sakhuluntu Cultural Group. In 2002, other participants included: First Physical Professional Training Group; Disabled Integrated Group; Janet Buckland; Mount Ayliff Modern dancers; Masizame Cultural Group dancers; and Velwano Traditional dancers. Anna Morris and Terra Puwane. The *Dance Umdudo* ran out of the promised co-funding collaboration with the Eastern Cape government and by 2003 had to cut the entire programme due to a lack of infrastructural and sustainable funding support.

A range of other community engagement projects had been created from FPTC's inception to address some of the infrastructural lack in the dance communities within the Eastern Cape. These included: *Dance For All* and the *First Physical Adult Education Group* which were programmes of dance classes offered to the wider Grahamstown community;[69] in-service teacher training projects (urban and rural); performance programmes like *Stories on the Run* (1993) for primary schools; and a touring programme called *A Suitcase of Stories*

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[69] These classes have run from 1993 to 2019. In 2019, the weekly classes are called "Body Forms" and a programme of diverse offerings are shared: Contempo-Funk with Lenin Shabalala; Intermediate and Beginner Yoga with Maria Praeg and Meghan Harris; Pantsula with Ayanda Nondlwana and the Via Kasi Movers; and Contemporary Dance with Alan Parker.

for high schools were performed throughout the Eastern Cape, including in areas as far as Mthatha and Lady Grey. School residencies, summer schools, regional, and national NAF schools festivals, the Ilitha Arts Education project – *The Chameleon Project*, a range of choreographic development projects and many exchanges with artists from other dance companies were run by FPTC company members. These sustained a rich exchange with many dance groups and communities, and FPTC became an exciting hub for dance experimentation and exchange. The impact and efficacy of these programmes has always been linked to cycles and levels of funding available to expand resources and pay facilitators to grow educational programmes.

The myth of intellectual dance?

While for some, the legacy of FPTC's political promise has always had limitation in its relation to its links with the academy, others acknowledge the vital role the company has played in shifting perceptions of dance and the dancing body. With FPTC's aesthetic revolt firmly acknowledged, it is also entirely plausible that the work of the company never became regarded as fashionably "political" in the more hegemonic understanding of an articulated "political" protest theatre. Moyo, for example, claims that Gordon and FPTC's early work "challenged and expanded ideas around the relationship between traditional categories of dance and theatre in South Africa at that time" (2013, 223–224), but she discerns a distinction between the company's aesthetic as protest versus resistance performance. She clarifies this in her analysis of one of my own choreographies, *Inner Piece* (2009) which I discuss in PART III, *Power and/as Proxemics*, saying that

> [t]he performance in *Inner Piece* is certainly not political in the sense of agit-prop, protest or documentary theatre, but it has its roots in the model of physical theatre in South Africa within which the performing body functions as a site of potential resistance (Moyo 2013, 221).

Moyo's reading lends support to my positioning of FPTC's choreopolitics as such a potential site of resistance. This understanding of FPTC's choreopolitics as a site for a bodily, embodied politics aligns strongly with Lehmann's *Postdramatic Theatre*, as reading forms of practice as "answers to artistic questions" (2006, 20). What is invigorating about Lehmann's proposals are that they allow us to question the veracity and value of performance on its own terms. As stated, this has implication for re-thinking the relationship between politics and performance – the relationship between the political (conventionally

understood) and the performative as a space where identities are forged, interpreted and questioned. It raises a related, comparative question, a question about *how* we infer a "politics" as a criteria to measure the relative worth of artistic expressions.

These questions remain difficult as the analyses in PART III: Epistemological Curiosities will examine more directly. Sassen, for instance, claims that Physical Theatre has "exploded in pockets and bursts all over the disciplines relating to both drama and dance education and performance" (2015, 82), she also attempts to "fathom why the identity of this discipline, which has status within several South African universities, is disputed" (2015, 79). She does not indicate by whom or where this "disputed" identity is expressed, but she dispels such a narrow reading of Physical Theatre stating that she wants to consider "how it has not only a history, but a present and a future" (ibid.). I argue that the accusations of elitist, "intellectual dance" that at times accompany critique of FPTC's work lie in its umbilical ties with the historically white and privileged space of the university. Vlachos (2017) extends a similar critique of the some of the political limitations of FPTC in relation to systemic constraints that he argues are still manifest at a university like Rhodes/UCKAR in 2014 and which will be explored in greater depth in PART III (iii) in his analysis of Athina Vahla's work. Gordon acknowledges that while universities are indeed elitist in many senses, he also notes that it is important to look at the "composite picture" in its context:

> ...in 1993, there were no permanent state-subsidised companies besides the performing arts companies...so it was an incredible achievement...we were the first one in a university environment and that gave it a conceptual and creative ethos and so it became a creative arts laboratory (Interview, Gordon 2017a).

Andrew Buckland, in his longstanding collaborative relationship with FPTC over the years concurs that the "creative politics" of FPTC, the potential that was made available in empowering each performer and their sense of autonomy and agency was "incredible", but he soberly reflects and acknowledges that this was mostly "negotiated on our terms":

> we can't deny that it was in a context where a whole lot of people did not have access to the facilities and would have benefitted from the same kind of physical engagement. We can't assess that politics without acknowledging that there was another layer of politics which still needs addressing (Interview, Buckland 2017).

Buckland's point resonates with the complex questions around artistic epistemologies in South Africa which have erupted in relation to debates around transformation and

decolonising of universities, and from this vantage point, 26 years later, one might argue that at many levels FPTC can be seen to have had a limited political efficacy in terms of a macro-politics. This is historically contextual in that it has taken inordinately long for universities to transform – for instance, the racial demographics for black Drama postgraduate students at Rhodes only started shifting manifestly after 2000, which meant that many of the students applying for creative access to company projects were, in the early years, mostly white university students. A glance at the company's choreographic repertory of "New Voices" projects bears out this point. Yet from a different viewpoint, Samuel, for instance, argues that he viewed FPTC's work as one of the spaces where he viewed a "cross-over" between white and black dancing bodies in contemporary dance styles:

> My awareness was about the dynamic of black dancers in Gary's company because in a way, it was my opportunity to see myself in there…I hope I am making myself very clear…because I mean, of course I travel to Johannesburg and see dance companies there, then I see Moving Into Dance coming in, but they tend to come to us as "black companies" where physical theatre at that time for me, is seeing the cross-over… (Interview, Samuel 2016).

He makes special mention of how he took particular delight in the way that Gordon always danced *with* his performers in works and how this impacted on his own experience of working with Gordon as a young male dancer in a version of *Travellers*,[70] the work that Gordon recreated for the Playhouse Dance Company in 1993:

> And Gary himself being onstage…the approaches that Gary took with his company normalised something for me…he made absolutely no apology, he made a piece and then Gary was in the piece. And he danced with you this week, and then he danced with me the next week, and he danced with a couple, he danced with two men, he danced with no one…and that also speaks a lot about his own philosophies around the body and what he was trying to articulate then in the company…Its contemporary dance, it's about art and what his art allowed us to feel and to think about. So we started to think about black bodies differently, older bodies differently, women…strong types, different sizes (Interview, Samuel 2016).

Samuel's point is that he saw Gordon forging a "unique identity" for his dancers that broke many of the stereotypical conventions around bodily difference in terms of race, gender and dance ability.

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[70] *Travellers I* was created for a Drama III physical performance course in 1993 and later that year for the Playhouse Dance Company. *Travellers II* was reconstructed for FPTC in 1994.

I remain haunted by this relationship between politics and performance and perhaps these responses can be distilled into two related questions: How do works mean?; and Should the supposed meaning of choreographies *translate* into the political or should it *undermine* the very notion of the political by staging a revolt against its hegemonic understandings of both meaning and the political? In short, is an understanding of performance possible that not only refuses to play politics, but that actively undermines the categories of meaning upon which the political is premised? In my argument for the promise embedded in a micro-politics, I suggest that FPTC's lineage and impact on the choreographic landscape of South African contemporary dance has been significant, especially given the geographic isolation of Grahamstown (a small town in the Eastern Cape, one of the poorest provinces in South Africa), its location within the systemic limitations of the academy, and in the unusual and experimental artistic, choreographic production and pedagogic approaches offered to transforming the South African dancescape.

It is to this history of subversive, continual disruption of the idea of the political that the company's experimental pedagogical history now turns.

PART II   PHYSICAL THEATRE PEDAGOGY AS/AND PRESENCE

(i) A pedagogical heritage…a community of practice

> It is not my words but perhaps only my presence that can say something (Barba 1972, 54).

A legacy of choreographers and teachers (1993–2015) fostered by FPTC bears witness to an allegiance in pedagogical innovation – a choreopolitics of creation, rather than imitation. Some of the finest choreographers and teachers in South Africa have been nurtured through their originary relationships with the community of practice fostered by FPTC.[71] The pedagogical approaches of FPTC appear to have had an enduring and significant impact on the evolving choreographic landscape in South Africa via this heritage. Work produced by FPTC, in close collaboration with the Rhodes Drama Department, has been credited as inspiring innovative and compelling teaching and research that has placed Rhodes University as developing one of the few places for Physical Theatre and choreographic research, training and performance. I have already noted the influence of Laban in relation to this creative teaching methodology, and I will now consider some of the philosophies the company itself evolved and espoused – the first being the concept of "Physical Intelligence" and secondly, the notion of the "danceplay". Both of these concepts, as processes towards a Physical Theatre remain key to the alchemy of creativity fostered by the company.

FPTC has engaged with a history of democratising performance through the principles of (i) original collaboration in its process and production, and (ii) an integrated, holistic approach to arts education and training. In its commitment to co-create a participatory, democratic arts practice and an ethics of safe practice, FPTC has developed trajectories of performer training, teaching and research that inter-animate each other and via these pedagogical approaches, it has cultivated performer-practitioners who are empowered and curious. This nexus of interaction has always had as its touchstone the idea of a Physical

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[71] While it is not possible to name all of these choreographer and teachers, many of them are cited and can be referred to in the Choreochronologies I have drawn up. Many are performer-practitioners who have gone into educational work, rather than choreography. It is also notable that quite a few graduates from Rhodes University, all of which worked with FPTC, have become Young Artist Award winners for Dance at the NAF – Gordon (1989), Human (2001), Sabbagha (2005), Tang (2007), Snyman (2012) and Elliott (2014). Many of our graduates have been appointed as Dance/Physical Theatre lectureships in tertiary institutions of higher education in South Africa – in 2018, for instance, two Master's graduates, have both received key posts as Physical Theatre lecturers at tertiary institutions – Kamogelo Molobye (University of the Witwatersrand) and Nomcebisi Moyikwa (Durban – Howard campus).

Intelligence which has invited student/apprentice perspectives and valued their own approaches to the authoring of a Physical Theatre. PART II (i) A pedagogical heritage, and (ii) Practice-as-research and teaching-as-research engage with aspects of a Physical Theatre training; while PART II (iii) Physical Theatre as embodied dramaturgy, and (iv) Physical Theatre as historiography analyse dramaturgical aspects of FPTC's improvisational and devised processes of creating original works. I reflect on some of these histories and draw on responses with facilitators and students alike to elucidate the purpose and goals of a "pedagogy as presence" as a form of choreological research.

Physical Intelligence

The idea of a "Physical Intelligence" became the articulated logo and visual brand for FPTC. We wore the logo like a badge of honour on our T-shirts; it was the face of the company, a conceptual and visual icon for the company's philosophy and spirit. Gordon cites the work of Howard Gardner[72] and Eugenio Barba[73] as two key figures that inspired his own thinking around bodily intelligence as a legitimate way of knowing. While there are numerous influences at play, including Gordon's eclectic training, Gordon specifically acknowledges the experiences of workshops with Lloyd Newson's DV8 Collective in London as having inspired his pedagogy and practice around bodily intelligence in relation to creative agency.[74] The notion of Physical Intelligence directly nurtured FPTC's ethos of fostering an embodied, integrated approach to training, while contesting and turning on its head the strong Cartesian body-mind binary/polarity that separates thinking (mind) from doing (body), and which is insidiously and invisibly embedded in our understandings of a Western logos with its

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[72] Howard Gardner's 1983 book, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences,* identified eight different modalities of intelligences, one of which was "bodily-kinesthetic intelligence". Gordon notes that his theory "worked against the model that mathematical intelligence and sciences were the only real way to measure intelligences" (Gordon 2017b).

[73] Eugenio Barba, founder of Odin Theatre and the International School of Theatre Anthropology in Denmark, has remained a profound influence for thinking and promoting a bodily-based performance training which encourages personal agency through inventive training approaches. Gordon says he drew from Barba's ideas of Physical Intelligence in *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer* (1994) and this thinking "informed the centrality of this practised concept in the company's pedagogy" (personal correspondence with Gordon 2019).

[74] Two other seminal influences were Bonnie Bird, a founding member of the Martha Graham company, who taught the Choreography course on the Master's Dance Studies programme at the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance and Marion North, Director of the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance who mentored Gordon during his Master's studies at the Centre (1985 – 1986) and who later employed him to teach at the Centre as Lecturer (1989 – 1992).

hierarchical structures of knowledge.[75] The argument for P-a-R has been one such provocation to the idea that the only way to know is through cerebral cognition.

In her Master's dissertation, Athena Fatseas (2009) develops a cogent argument for conceiving of cognition, or thinking, "*as* a somatic or embodied process, therefore acknowledging the body as implicit in the act of thinking and cognition" (2009, 39; emphasis in original). She cites Gardner's view that "dance (and by extension here Physical Theatre as an embodied activity) 'far from being divorced from cognition…involve[s] highly developed forms of cognition'"(2009, 38).[76] This argument for thinking as an embodied activity is a profound inversion of the logic that has historically marginalised the body in Western thinking and, ironically, in Western artistic practice.[77] Gordon confirms the intention of a Physical Theatre to subvert the hierarchical polarising of the mind/body binary through assimilation:

> I suppose I always liked the word intelligence because we were at a university, so it was a kind of cheeky play with that…it wasn't a negation of the word or linguistics or conceptual knowledge, but it was embracing, integrating, it was drawing together…I think that was key in understanding Physical Intelligence (Interview, Gordon 2017b).

This holistic integration was primarily fostered through the idea of a Physical Intelligence which stimulated teaching and learning methodologies that instilled in students (alongside professionals) the empowering facility to create, own and manifest (in a word, author) performance knowledge. Andrew Buckland, for example, notes that while FPTC's artistic productions were "windows into the world" of creativity, it was "the way that we understood what Physical Intelligence meant, and what creating new knowledge with the

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[75] Gordon's Masters specialisations at the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance included Choreography, the Sociology of Dance and Dance History. Gordon has shared in conversation (2019) that Paul Filmer, who lectured the Sociology of Dance course on this Master's programme had a strong impact on shaping conceptual framings that undermined this binary approach and theorised notions of the marginalisation of the body in Western societies.

[76] Fatseas-Mazarakis, a company member of the first FPTC in 1993, has written one of the most in-depth research accounts of the premises and processes of the Physical Theatre form as well as its roots in South Africa in her Master's practice-as-research work, "Body of Knowledge: Interrogating Physical Intelligence and the translation of memory into motion in *Coming To*." The thesis speaks to ways in which embodied experience might rupture or disrupt a representational logic within scholarly writing through notions of the body as archive and improvisational processes both in writing and performance practice – she claims, "in this way I was foregrounding my body as both the site and subject of the work" (2009, 14).

[77] Discussion around the way that dance has historically been less visible and less funded than the visual arts or even theatre recognises this Western legacy of trusting a commodifiable product over an ephemeral performance. Scholars like Peggy Phelan (1993) and Susan Leigh Foster (1995) have written extensively on dance's "disappearance".

body meant" that really grew this heritage of theatre makers – he says, "and Gary and you guys were using these words before it became a 'thing' – other ways of creating knowledge, other ways of knowing" (Interview, Buckland 2017). Physical Intelligence instigated a re-evaluation of the idea of the "muse" and her role in bestowing creative genius on select virtuoso artistic prodigies.[78] In the context of this discussion, Buckland reiterates the idea that art cannot necessarily bring about concrete political change, but that it can sometimes make people think differently and that possibly it is through these interactions that people transform or change. It is on the floor of rehearsal rooms or in classes/workshops that these miniscule and intimate transformations can be experienced. This confirms my argument for the "political promise" (as opposed to political outcomes) of FPTC's legacy as a site of resistance to social and political control and the political and social domestication of our bodies and spirits. The idea of becoming Physically Intelligent is crucially linked to the idea of the performer-creator as a central collaborator in the creative process. As Gordon suggests, a personal investment in the creative process leads to an empowering of the performers' creativities "because there is ownership of the idea and the material because you have contributed to that" (Interview, Gordon 2017a). This investment fosters a "space for invention and intervention" (Interview, Gordon 2017a). Gordon's words locate teaching and learning as rehearsals for both collaborative dialogue and dialogic research, and these principles and practices have been a part of the liberatory ethos that informed the company's educational praxis. In this, Physical Intelligence can be regarded as a methodology for stimulating the awareness and reflexivity that leads to embodied knowledge/practice.

Towards a liberatory teaching

Through my own experiential knowledge in a Physical Theatre educational practice, I have felt the power of creative play and embodied learning to instil a sense of self-worth and to effect personal transformation. I have witnessed on numerous occasions that moment when students realise that they have within them the agency and awareness to create, for and by *themselves*, and how this becomes a transforming experience. Physical Intelligence holds the potential to rehearse a nascent democratic nuance towards imagining small moments of meaning as repair. Baz Kershaw's suggestion that radical performance invokes a freedom to

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[78] I have discussed this in Part I (with reference to Rebecca Schneider's *Solo Solo Solo*) and in a short paper called "The Muse and the Archaeologist: revising the creative sites of The Unspeakable Story (1977)" in *The Art of Physical Intelligence*.

imagine a "transgressive" (1999, 19), procreant quality of learning and making aligns with Kristeva's "intimate revolt" as experience that might perform a sovereignty (through agency or authoring) not dissimilar to the notions of repair discussed earlier, or in my appropriation of the *I Ching*'s maxim, the "Power of the Small", as a choreopolitical method. Kershaw further identifies four main characteristics of the radical in "performance beyond theatre", which he argues leads to "democratised performance": dialogic exchange; participatory engagement; performative absence; and aesthetic reflexivity (1999, 20). These four qualities parallel many of the educational philosophies that speak to a liberatory educational experience. Dialogic exchange, participatory engagement and aesthetic reflexivity are all critical to teaching pedagogies that value galvanising the learner as an active participant in the educational process and context.[79] As a distinct focus and articulated approach, the training and choreographic processes of FPTC have tried to nurture participatory dialogue. Freire argues that *dialogism* or a dialogic relationship is essential for communication and is a fundamental practice to human nature and to democracy (1998, 92). He notes that dialogue must not be regarded as merely a strategy or "tool" by the educator, in keeping with their political choices and in order to reach results. Freire's point becomes clear for me. He argues here for the deeper ethical significance in making dialogical relationships possible. The idea of dialogue, of interaction, takes on greater complexity, he argues, in relationship and suggests that curiosity is key to this encounter:

> Without the curiosity that makes us beings in permanent availability for questioning…there would be no gnoseologic activity, a concrete expression of our possibility of knowing…dialogic experience is fundamental to building epistemological curiosity (Freire 1998, 94).

My teaching methodology, incubated within FPTC's ethos and teaching methodologies, has become imbricated in such attempts to foster epistemological curiosity, engaging both teacher and learner in an embodied dialogue of renewal and exchange. The act of learning performs knowledge which requires the active presence of the learner. The focus on stimulating an unexpected (improvised) response to ideas and actions is elicited through

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[79] The writing of progressive educational philosophers like Freire and hooks have long maintained that students should be involved in the constructions of their own learning, and advocate a holistic, integrated approach to teaching which takes into account the interconnectedness of all the context pertaining to the educational experience. "Conscious teaching" – with "a heightened awareness of methods, attitudes, hidden curricula, postures and inflections" (Stucky and Wimmer 2002, 3) – can interrogate and make transparent the status and power relations we occupy as teacher-facilitators and can lead to reflexivity.

teaching via the ideal of a laboratory mode of interaction – an experimental praxis brings theoretical enquiries (research, writing, scholarship) into an interactive, dynamic relationship with practical explorations (improvisation, experimentation and creative play in the teaching, making and performing of works). This encourages bringing conceptual or critical thinking and creative practice into a (though not always comfortable or successful) relation. Valuing experiential knowledge allows the learner to subjectively experience learning as a process that demands their active participation and critical reflection. Through experiential knowledge, the learner, now active and embodied in the learning process, can reclaim the different intelligences of the mind-body. The learner is a subjective *presence* rather than an empty receptacle into which knowledge is poured. Gordon expresses this humanist, integrated approach as a transcendent rather than mechanical endeavour:

> I think more and more that training should be a spiritual experience that celebrates the imagination of the dancer and the world he or she inhabits…a kind of laboratory for playing with improvisation, creative tasks, transforming ideas into movement, confronting personal challenges and conflicts, responding to other art forms, interacting with other dancers and collaborators so that this laboratory opens up a vast field for investigation. This laboratory becomes a creative nexus that poses a number of multi-layered and multi-dimensional signifiers that resonate with our own mythology, "contemporaneity" and identity (Interview, Gordon, cited in Finestone-Praeg 2010a, 35).

The laboratory as a method for collaborative pedagogy

The layers of experiential encounter set up by a laboratory style experimentation/ improvisation constructs the educational encounter as a space for vulnerability, failure and imaginative play. Freire's observation that the trajectory through which we make ourselves conscious as human beings is marked by "inconclusion" and that this makes us "educable" (1997, 93) is pertinent to ideas of play and improvisation. These notions of "inconclusion" are resonant with Kristeva's "intimate revolt" as that which is "in contrast with certainties and beliefs", as that which is always questioning, always incomplete and renewing its process, always becoming (Kristeva 2014, 3). Again, I refer back to C. S. Pierce's succinct reflection (cited in Davis 2007, 43) that "not knowing" produces questions which incite curiosity. Importantly, then, to experience is to become available to (unexpected) knowing. Preston-Dunlop and Sanchez-Colberg (2002), for instance, reason that one way of coming to choreological knowledge is to "experience". They propose that to experience the bodily facilitates a corporeal attitude to whatever is beyond the boundaries of the body – and that

shifting inter-subjectivity from "proprioception" to "exteroperception" is dependent on the perceiver having developed a facility to attend and engage – in short, a capacity to perceive. They claim that "to experience movement subjectively is starkly different to 'doing' movements" (2002, 126). This is different to the casting of a critical eye as a detached observer on another body-object "doing" movements. Movement is thus seen as subjective, not a reified body in codified form. Fatseas (2009) observes that these training methods are called "psychophysical" by Zarilli (2006), and she notes that one of the ways in which these psychophysical methods work is "through the development of a refined or heightened sense of awareness of the body-mind" (Fatseas 2009, 65) which has to be "awakened" in order to become available to the practitioner (Zarilli 2006, 55). Fatseas discusses the way that this body-mind can be activated though an emphasis on the "*sensation* of movement for the performer, rather than on the 'look' or 'form' of the movement" (65; emphasis in original). She notes that in her own training and teaching this encouragement of the sensation of movement was often facilitated through the employment of instructions that were rich in imagery:

> A description and demonstration of a spiralling drop to the ground for instance would be accompanied by an image of water spiralling down a drain. This image encouraged the participant to discover the sensation of movement, affectively, which then guided the movement…Foregrounding the sensation of movement allows the performer to access the movement from the inside, which simultaneously sets up a trust in the sensorial and experiential knowledge of the participant (Fatseas 2009, 66).

The use of evocative word-sounds to create movement poems and the use of evocative imagistic or sonic textures has always been a marker of Gordon's teaching style. Levern Botha, who joined FPTC in 2009, comments that FPTC changed her own teaching style – she cites the way "Gary Gordon, for example, kept changing fronts and using terminology like 'she blows in the wind, she spreads'…using charm and image…" (Interview with Botha 2017). This use of poetic image, improvised vocal dynamics or percussive scoring to stimulate movement sensation is activated to counter the "counting system" ("…and 5, 6, 7, 8") of conventional dance training. These improvisational methods, also fostered by Laban and Wigman's teaching methodologies, observe organic bodily rhythm as markedly different to melodic rhythm via an insistence on inner intention as the primary motivation for movement. Peggy Phelan (1996), in her analysis of a profound alignment between

psychoanalysis and choreography, notes that while both psychoanalysis and choreography explore different modes of performing the body's movement, both seek to "give the body a system of time" (94). Phelan's insights are profound for reviewing many of the assumptions that surround understandings of the spatial and temporal relationship of the body to dance in choreography, and hence to training the dancing body. Phelan argues that psychoanalysis suggests that the body's "truth" does not "organise itself narratively or chronologically":

> The body does not experience the world the same way consciousness does: the gap between these two ways of "processing" experiences punctuates the formation of the unconscious. The function of analysis is to repair this join, to find a way to suture the body into time's order...If the body is not a priori, in time, then dance can be said to be the elaboration of possible temporalities for the body that are interpreted in movement...while it is true that bodies usually manage to move in time and space, dancing *consciously* performs the body's discovery of its temporal and spatial dimensions...dance, like psychoanalysis, helps to join the body to time (Phelan 1996, 91–92; emphasis in original).

Consequently, it becomes clear that set counting rhythms impose a systemic external order onto the body that performs a particular imitative logic and mostly reifies an ideal way of moving – similar to a code or formula. Sanchez-Colberg (1996, 40–56) similarly details the way that codification of the conventional dancing body, through imposing a temporal order onto the body, is historically linked to particular ways of understanding the role of movement in choreography, which is crucially linked to the way temporal and spatial order are produced in the very conditions of the logic developed, systematised and repeated (endlessly) in many dance vocabularies and codified techniques. She argues that "it is commonly assumed that it is 'movement' which begins to organize – in time – the body's existence in space" and that this "infers that movement progresses in time towards a final goal (making most of the approaches to dance teleological) which usually leads to a 'meaningful understanding'" (1996, 44). She analyses the significant contribution made by the legacy of German expressionism, particularly of Laban, to re-orientating understandings of the body's relation to time and space in dance. It is worth delineating her argument in order to clarify the significance of re-evaluating these central premises of dance/choreography as these are the very principles which Physical Theatre has questioned and which has led to a revisioning of training. Sanchez-Colberg notes that in Laban's work

> the principal guiding premise is that of the "body in space"...Before there is movement, there is a body in space – a body that has orientation, dimensions,

inclination, that by virtue of just existing occupies and produces space. Movement follows from this first principle. The experience of self is understood in relation to its approach to the space. It may seem like an incredibly simplistic statement, but to accept that dance is about the body, in space, through movement necessitates a significant shift from the common understanding of the body in movement through space. Movement (and time) is a result of a first inner intention of the body – what Laban defined as inner motivation – as it desires to project itself into space. *Movement is the effect, not the cause* (1996, 44; emphasis added).

Sanchez-Colberg's analysis discloses this understanding of inner intention of the body's movement as the impulse towards performer presence which "eliminates the a-priori relationship" (45) between the body and space, and via Phelan, between the body and time:

> These artists proposed a devaluation of a "language" of technical virtuosity in which the body is bound to ideal forms which exist outside of and which leads to the body's objectification and reification (exacerbated by its links to music)…In the absence of a time-focus and through a "surrender to space", the dancer aims to achieve a sense of "ecstatic" presence in which experience is defined in terms of the present (1996, 45).

I propose that these psychophysical approaches to training elicit particular ways of being in movement through presence.

Stimulating performer presence through a perceptual training

Physical Theatre champions a certain freedom conceived as a *perceptual*, but also *perpetual* politics for the performer through its devised and dialogic processes. Discussing the ways that Physical Theatre allows for an idiosyncratic and individual response to orbit around its construction, it is clear that working closely with the performers' autobiographical histories, intimate idiosyncrasies and bodily gestures has effected a shift away from the virtuosity of representation towards "performer presence" which focuses on inner perception and subjective, individual experience sourced through the body. Its insistence on this embodied presence (as Physical Intelligence) has upended notions of the performer as a passive, docile body awaiting the instructions of the teacher-choreographer-god, both in training and creative process. This can be regarded as a democratisation of the traditional hierarchy implicit in dance training, rehearsal and performance processes. Fatseas (2009) observes this democratising influence when she notes that the early attention on the centrality of the

performer within Physical Theatre processes in the work of FPTC "mirrored the democratization of the political context" in South Africa in the 1990s (2009, 45). Her observation bears out my earlier point about the possibilities that dialogic exchange holds for democratising choreopolitical engagement – movement research as a collaborative pedagogy that can empower. Training a perceptual self-awareness requires the activation of imagination through stimulating a curiosity – particularly, a bodily curiosity. This fascination with personal bodily memory and instinct has insisted on creative processes that require the immediate, personal responses of performers to task-based explorations. These explorations extend to a play with aesthetic boundaries – collaborations, gesture, dance, movement, text, design, image. In rehearsal, workshopped processes include a range of experiences that might involve improvisation around devising the ideas, images and movement pertinent to the source of the work which would then be structured and refined through crafting and rhythmic interpretation. In an interview with Gordon (Finestone-Praeg 2010a, 33), he names this pedagogical approach "movement research" – movement research as the process of finding the movement and the language that will serve a particular work because each work is different. For instance, the organic processes of improvisation elicit immediate responses (both of content and form) that activate presence, rather than learning steps and rhythms that are imposed by the teacher onto the learners' bodies. Gordon concurs that an organic expression and rhythm is allowed to emerge from these unexpected responses to impulses:

> Absolutely. I mean, then you are dealing with presence…I'm not going to be naïve and say you are going to have authentic movement…that's almost impossible because as human beings, from an early age, there are so many influences on us…cultural, social, from the family, educational…but I'm trying more and more to get to each individual performer and play out these conflicts and challenges…to tap into the individuality of each performer and to use that as an incentive for further exploration in creating statements, encounters and images (Interview, Gordon, cited in Finestone-Praeg 2010a, 33).

The training approaches of FPTC are not taught as a codified method or designed structure to discipline the body – it utilises discipline through a daily practice of body work and creative experimentation – but the discipline is never invoked as a way to formalise or design the body. Andrew Buckland's experiences with FPTC affirms this approach:

> Yes, it certainly never felt like the movement was there to make everybody move in the same kind of way…certain motifs would reappear because of who was teaching…the way the teaching worked meant you were on a journey of

self-discovery…you see yourself reflected in others and the beautiful aspects of collaborative pedagogy where you are teaching and learning (Interview, Buckland 2017).

Gordon, speaking to this collaborative pedagogy, has often reiterated that FPTC's pedagogy aims to *educate* performers rather than merely *train* bodies. This approach can be seen to finally produce what Roger Copeland (1979) "perceptual training". In *Merce Cunningham and the Politics of Perception*, Copeland (1979) introduces this idea in relation to Merce Cunningham's aesthetic. He suggests that we are so eager to credit Cunningham with having liberated dance from the burden of having to project various sorts of meaning (narrative, symbolism, personal expression, etc.), "that we fail to properly consider the meaning of this liberation" (Copeland 1983, 314). Avant-garde choreographer, Merce Cunningham choreographed the logic of the *I Ching* in his choice to use chance and indeterminacy as a methodology for his choreographic process and product. Cunningham entirely altered the way dances could be made and perceived – he decentred the stage, refiguring the spatial placement and configuration of soloists' performances (there could be numerous solos happening at the same time) thereby displacing the role of the "star" soloist. He used a range of unexpected choreographic devices like chance to structure works, he brought theatricalities and scores (often by John Cage) together in unexpected, unusual ways (the movement and music often met for the first time in performance) and he innovated when he used his Life Forms computer software to choreograph works. Copeland argues that what Cunningham achieves through his work is a "perceptual training" – that the importance of his work is not only in "what we are given to see and hear; but in *the way we see and hear what we are given*" (1983, 322; emphasis in original), and he cites Peter Brook who proposes Cunningham's aesthetic as a "continual preparation for the shock of freedom" (Brook, cited in Copeland 1983, 322). Copeland's point is that Cunningham's choreopolitical provocation, embedded in his form, entirely altered the perception of what dance could be. In this sense, the shock of freedom becomes integral to the spectator's intertextual labour – the freedom to perceive, to actively spectate. The potential provocation of a Physical Theatre to mainstream theatre and dance forms and also to methodologies of teaching, resides precisely in the way its processes and products activate this perceptual politics. Physical Theatre's insistence on experimenting with traditional narrative structures and deconstructing known dance and theatrical codes and languages continues to question conventional perceptions of what dance or theatre might be. In this sense, it is continually rehearsing its freedom from the perceptual

politics of traditional theatrical representations through a performance of presence. The activation of performer presence demands a particular ethos and ethics of training which has not always made Physical Theatre as popular or fashionably entertaining as mainstream theatre/performance.

Stimulating performer presence through an ethical training

FPTC's approach to teaching technique can be located as an ethical approach as training is clearly not about developing skills that will allow learners to mark themselves in particular ways or reproduce a particular movement style – rather, techniques explored or generated are constituted as movement research towards finding a suitable form for embodied expression. As performance practitioners and teachers, we come to understand that technique can easily lock performers into habitual repetitions producing a bodily memory that prevents the spontaneity and openness that new searches for form and creativity require. Technique can indeed become complicit in producing an overly designed body, one that replicates power relations and techniques instead of fostering a bodily questioning and presence which is required for Physical Theatre's devised process and choreographic innovation. To merely replicate forms would produce imitation rather than invention. The strategies for teaching technique that FPTC selected to work with attempt not to reproduce a mechanical effect of habit, imitation and repetition.

FPTC has worked against this commodification of knowledge, promoting training as part of a larger human and artistic orientation – bringing awareness of a contextual questioning of what and how learning happens. Nicholas Mirzoeff (2004), in *Anarchy in the ruins: dreaming the experimental university*, notes that the late Edward Said used to declare that "the university was the last utopia in Western society", but he states that

> the slightest glance at any report by a senior university official will quickly make it apparent that no hint of utopia remains, with its language of incentivizing the faculty, naming students as customers and claiming the benefits of the institution is to function as an economic multiplier (143).

Harking to this "ghost" of the university, Mirzoeff declares that possibly the university is "yet to come" – that it can become a place where "ideas, identities and knowledge are troubled rather than reinforced", where the alternative risk is that "knowledge production simply becomes knowledge commodification" (146). I propose through these descriptions, analysis and evaluations that FPTC's training programmes (in close proximity with Rhodes

University) and choreological methodologies are instances of valuing the promise of such an ethical approach, as rehearsals for freedom from a commodification of performance knowledge. Frank Camilleri (2009) notes that performance training has become increasingly commodified over the past two decades. While performer training is always a contested terrain with many opposing views, Camilleri proposes evidence of a paradigm shift currently underway between what he terms an "ethical" approach to training versus an "ideological" or "institutional" approach to training. His distinction locates the ethical approach as a context where training is not approached as an end in itself (skills training), but becomes part of a larger "utopian project" conceived as process, not product (Camilleri 2009, 27) and is not determined, but is "alive and adaptable according to the development of the performer" (Camilleri 2009, 28). A few of the selected examples cited below and the two case studies in PART II (ii) elaborate on the premise and promise of an evolving ethical training in FPTC.

Selected examples of fostering performer presence in FPTC training modules
The myth of technique…

Corroborating these practices of Physical Intelligence, I found myself drawn to Barba's thinking of a laboratory-style praxis in extending my own teaching approaches. Barba, in *Words and Presence* argues that training is a "process of self-definition" – that the exercise or task itself is not what counts, but rather, the individual's "justification" for his/her own work (1972, 47). Like the expressionist philosophies of Kandinsky (who identified the concept of "inner necessity" to describe the non-representational nature of abstract art), Barba similarly poses the idea that this justification becomes physiologically perceptible as a "quality of energy" in performance – it is perceptible as presence. Barba speaks of finally coming to realise the "myth of technique" (1972, 49) – what he calls a "pragmatic blackmail", and replacing this with a "process of self-definition" guided by an embodied subjectivity. Barba suggests that technique should explore principles where training tasks become "small labyrinths" that the performers' body-mind can trace and retrace in order to distance themselves from their own daily behaviours in order to enter the domain of the stage's "extra-daily behaviours":

> Exercises are like amulets, which the actor carries around, not to show them off, but to draw from them certain qualities of energy out of which a second nervous system slowly develops (Barba 1997, 128).

Learning to free associate via bodily stream-of-consciousness or bodily montages to create physically intelligent responses to source material is one way of fostering this presence or "second nervous system". I have absorbed these ideas into my own teaching and training as working methods toward excavating a surreal, organic bodily memory or archive, using improvised bodily research as a way to elicit movement research and develop performers' self-definition.

Improvisation as a methodology for devising Physical Theatre

In Finestone-Praeg (2002), I explore the way that history's claim to an authentic truth has been debunked by deconstructive discourses, and similarly, memory's claim to personal truth, or authentic autobiographical revelation has also been questioned. Adam Phillips' *On Flirtation* (1994) claims that one of the greatest obstacles to memory is in fact memory itself. As he suggests, by imaginative acts of substitution, we repress and replace whatever has been unacceptable in our experience, and hence our memory is often a defence of memory. He cites Freud's suggestion that memory is akin to dream in the sense that it is neither logical, rational nor chronological. Freud noted that the falsified memory is the first that we become aware of. As Phillips suggests, until this memory is interpreted, it remains a "screen-memory" (1994, 65), a waking dream of the past. Improvised responses to a given source can provide the catalyst for unleashing unconscious responses to material that emerges through a dreamlike logic and which can then be interpreted. Extending this idea, Phillips states that like dream, free association is one way of tapping into or behind defensive memory:

> free-association is memory in its most incoherent and therefore fluent form; because of repression, the past can only return as disarray in de-narrativised fragments (Phillips 1994, 67).

The techniques of free-association referred to by Phillips for the purposes of therapy are not unlike the techniques of improvisation used by the Physical Theatre practitioner and teacher in the attempt to develop innovative, personalised physical statements from their performers/learners with which they can then interact. Choreography via an improvised process can become a rich site for the meeting of collective and personal histories. In *Profiles in Translation*, I argued that

> [i]mprovised responses to a given source can provide the catalyst for unleashing unconscious responses to material that emerge through a dreamlike

logic…Graphs or fragments of memory are released that can be shaped and played with by the choreographer to create compelling images of the body and its relation to narrative, identity and history (Finestone-Praeg, cited in Fatseas 2009, 45).

Crucially, as Sandor Ferenczi notes, "the patient is not cured by free-associating, he is cured when he *can* free associate" (cited in Phillips 1994, 67; emphasis added).[80] Phillips concurs that the aim of analysis is not to recover the past, but to make recovery of the past possible. For the teacher or choreographer, this journey to source an authentic response from the learners/performers involves, via the body, such a return of the repressed. It becomes an attempt to allow the body to remember what it has forgotten to remember. As Phillips succinctly sums up: "Dreaming may be our only truly solitary form of autobiography" (1994, 73).

These insights helped me to connect the structuring of improvisation to the surreal logic of the dream – or the dream as a catalyst for creative invention; and improvisation as a method for excavating bodily memory. The value of improvisation as a process for rehearsing identity, or versions of the self, becomes apparent.

The body as memory, the body as archive

Drawing on my earlier choreographic interest in body memory (public and personal) with works created for FPTC, I have developed a postgraduate module called *Private Myths: Performing the Self*, based on workshops I had explored with FPTC members over the years of making works exploring the body as memory/archive.[81] The course demands an intimate interaction with each student and as a group, we begin to identify their personal body armour which is often revealed through physical habits, areas of personal bodily tension, movement and temporal-spatial preferences. It is a small study of the micro- and macro-choreutics (space) and eukinetics (rhythm and dynamic) of each body – but interpreted through the bodily politics manifest in the repetitive performances of habitual unconscious and conscious patterns of expression. A succinct course description invites students to

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[80] Having said this, I do take cognisance of Lepecki's cogent argument for the limitations offered by essentialist notions that spontaneous expression ("technologies of improvisation") are somehow "free". Via Massumi, he speaks to these "micro-fascist expressions" of the self as possibly expressing nothing other than cliché (Lepecki, 2016; "Weaving Politics"; Transcribed from *Vimeo*, 1:10:39). And yet, my point is re-iterated – the "small acts of repair" (Bottoms and Goulish 2007) happen not necessarily through the content of the improvisation, but because one *can* improvise.

[81] Some of these works that perform this concern with bodily memory include: *The Passion of Judas* (1997); *Diary of a Burning Tree* (2003); *Journey to Fez* (2004); *37 degrees of fear* (2004); and *Monogram* (2008).

unravel ways of (un)masking the performer exploring memory, nostalgia, sleep and dreaming…Through a reflective creative practice, we marvel at and excavate some of the intimacies of bodily habit, body armour, and gesture that shape and give expression to somatic impulses and embodied action. We explore ways to devise solo moments of performance from given and devised source fragments and engage with ensemble to embody issues/images of contemporary relevance by means of embodied movement research in performance (Honours *Private Myths*, Course Information Sheet).

Some workshop titles have included the following: The Body's Hysteria: intimacies of habit, defence and gesture; (Un)Masking The Performer; Authentic Movement; The Body's Hysteria: Graphs and Body Maps; Between Shadows: fractal logic of body repetitions and accumulations; The Dream as catalyst for creative invention; Dreamscapes and the Surreal Body (Movement Poems).

These experiential reflections require from the students a commitment to the vulnerable processes of examining the causes of particular structural and systemic stresses in their own bodies. It requires of them to bring quite intimate knowledge of personal narratives and experiences into the learning context. Given the context of the academy and its knowledge bias, it took me a number of years to feel entirely comfortable with arguing for the validity of including this kind of subjective experience into the learning context but with value drawn from FPTC experience and from the proliferation of a range of articulated performance methodologies and pedagogies that value the personal within the research/learning context, this course has extended, over the years, its conceptual and practical foundation and application. Knowledge of research that documents the potential and value of, for example, auto-ethnographic approaches and phenomenological approaches as valid and viable research methodologies have also provided much support for growing this as a course validates subjectivity and the active presence of the authorial voice (writing as a mode of enquiry; performance as a mode of enquiry). The results it has yielded have been a testament to its power as a means of unlocking a personal creativity and response to physical and perceptual understandings of performance as presence. It made me trust the value of risk, failure and vulnerability as a viable and valid method of teaching Physical Theatre, and recognising aesthetic reflexivity as an essential and ethical part of the teaching and learning process. Aligned to his rethinking on technique, Barba pertinently reasons that "[v]irtuosity does not lead to situations of new human relationships which are the decisive ferment for a reorientation, a new way of defining oneself vis-à-vis others" (1972, 53).

In order to produce the content of works that require a personal investment and risk from the performer's own personalities, subjective embodiments and vulnerabilities, it is clear that FPTC's ethos locates its own understandings of "virtuosity" as drawn from an inner experience – but in relation to and with others. This collaborative pedagogy as a community of practice is linked to notions of the dialogic and participatory as discussed earlier, but also to the ethical demands of practitioner/facilitator reflection and reflexivity in relation to notions of the body as archive.

The concept of the "body as archive" provides the framework for Fatseas' (2009) persuasive arguments for examining the way that Physical Theatre training and practice enables the body to become not merely a "receptacle" for archival information, but to constitute itself *as* archive. Her Master's dissertation validates the ways that Physical Theatre training and its relationship to notions of Physical Intelligence via improvisation (as a key strategy) can become a site for excavating the bodily archive to disclose the implicit embodiments of improvisatory process. In the chapter, "Anatomy of the Creator-Researcher" (2009, 12–25), Fatseas provides a substantial overview of central tenets and seminal texts that identify key issues and trends within a Physical Theatre with reference to selected key theorists like Callery (2001), Sanchez-Colberg (2006), Chamberlain (2007), Murray and Keefe (2007). As suggested earlier, her writing emerges as one of the first substantial texts to map, archive, document and critically contextualise the emergence and development of a Physical Theatre in South Africa, and documents its early beginnings, commenting on its legacy.[82] Fatseas claims that Physical Intelligence posits "active perception as the primary means through which the integrated body-mind experiences the world, the self and the self in the world" (46). I argue that it is this reflexive authorial presence that finally distinguishes Physical Theatre training and process from a more traditional dance stance. Fatseas argues that it is this "centrality of the performer and the primacy of the somatic impulse" that "significantly recasts the role of improvisation as a key tool within the creation process" (45). Fatseas comments that she and I both studied at Rhodes University, "the first tertiary institution in South Africa to offer Physical Theatre as a specialist elective" (45), and that we were both founding members of FPTC. She argues that our shared interest in the translation of memory into artistic material and the conception of choreography as a process "begins to speak to a vested interest in this area by South African Physical Theatre artists of a shared

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[82] See Appendix 3 for a summary of Fatseas' theoretical underpinnings via Zarilli, Grotowski, Hanna, Cohen Feldenkrais, Alexander, Damasio, Merleau-Ponty and Gardner.

training and performance 'lineage', and points towards a significant aspect of Physical Theatre as it is practised in this country" (46).

Collaborative mentorship

Respect for each other's opinions and views are fostered through the participatory reflection and feedback on each other's works. The disclosure of agency and authorial signature within these laboratory processes and through practice-as-research seem to promote the development of a personal performance signature which is tested in relation to peer review. Two ex-company members and ex-Rhodes students, Joni Barnard (2015), and Jenni-Lee Crewe (2015), both make special mention of the community of practice instilled by FPTC – especially through its processes of mentorship and the lack of a competitiveness that created safe learning spaces. Barnard says there was

> a real sense of community, of artistic practice…a legacy of mentorship that the company instilled within the members of the company…feeds into your kind of approach to life and communication, it feeds into your global politic, this real sense of being open and vulnerable…your blueprint is in that ethical approach and that is what also holds everything because it filters through…from the minute the kids walk into the classroom, from how you greet people, from how you have to leave your bags at the door, how you have to warm up, it's in the detail of the practice… (Interview, Barnard 2015).

Barnard comments that these ethical values served her well in her own teaching, especially during #Fees Must Fall protests at Wits University in 2016. She states that the most transformative classes were the ones drawn from her FPTC experiences – where, for instance, the personality of the student is expected to be *in* the classroom, and whose input and perceptions are valued and respected. She reflects on how the cross-fertilisation between teachers, company members, students and youth projects were filtered through this non-judgemental mentorship.

Crewe suggests that "there's an embodied way of knowing that is privileged" – she argues that this "real belief" in embodied knowledge was already a practice-as-research in the early days of her work with FPTC:

> I think at the present time, if you think about debate happening around creative practice in research, I mean, you were already doing that…we just didn't have that kind of pedagogic language…but it was happening already and that because of the real belief in the idea of embodied knowledge (Interview, Crewe 2015).

Nicola Haskins, as practitioner of this training lineage, draws some of these threads together in her Master's dissertation (2016), *Embodied Narratives: mapping a choreographic signature though physical theatre practice*.[83] She acknowledges this collective mentorship in her assessment of what Andrew Buckland, Gary Gordon and I (Juanita Finestone-Praeg), as the three key practitioners influential to her own choreographic identity and her "moving identity", have offered her. She identifies traits specific to each that were foundational to her notion of "embodied narrative". She claims Gordon "fostered an atmosphere of investigation, collaboration and creative research through his teachings of physical theatre and choreography", especially his focus on the "collective" in FPTC; she identifies my "expressive, visceral and strong emotional teachings" as connected strongly with "body memory and presence and how the body is a site of investigation", while Buckland's focus on "new mime" taught her in what ways the body could "generate a narrative where a strong focus on still points and gestures was highlighted" (2016, 39).[84]

Interactive team teaching has complemented this collaborative mentorship. Team teaching with other staff or company facilitators creates trust in the process of play. For example, I have invited Professor Andrew Buckland in to work on aspects of finding the "inner clown" in a Physical Performance course. These workshops have required the students to trust each other as the clown as a persona evokes much vulnerability (everyone laughs at you – especially when you are not being funny). These interactive teaching sessions have also opened up the teaching/learning space as Andrew and I join in as participants, revealing that we too can be vulnerable and are not the only experts. The learners get to own knowledge about performance practice through their participation at many levels. Through their unexpected views and provocations, I as teacher also get to interact with them in unexpected ways, which helps me to modify my own practice. Their participation mitigates against a technicist approach to the flow of the teaching dynamic. The commitment to an integrated and holistic educational experience for both teacher and student has led myself and some of my colleagues to experiment with a range of interactive teaching methodologies. Apart from the more obvious value of being able to bounce ideas off colleagues, the

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[83] Nicola Haskins was a Rhodes University student and member of FPTC (2002–2006) and has since worked as a performer-choreographer with Dada Masilo (she has toured extensively internationally with Masilo's *Swan Lake*) and created with Matchbox Theatre Collective, co-founded with ex-Rhodes student and FPTC member (2002–2006), Bailey Snyman. Snyman was recipient of the Standard Bank Young Artist for Dance in 2012 and created *MOFFIE.*). See Appendix 4 for some examples of the range of different classes that have been offered in our daily morning preparation sessions.

[84] It is interesting to note that Gary Gordon was Andrew Buckland's first mime teacher.

construction of courses/works with a peer is both stimulating and extends one's own views on selected topics. It also serves as a constant peer review of one's own teaching. The company has often used team teaching with apprentice tutors that shadow-teach or co-teach with company members. Again, this collaboration serves to generate a greater pool of ideas and feedback and also gives the newer teacher the confidence to try out ideas and practices with guidance. Sometimes we also invite each other to view classes as we all use different teaching styles. The exchanges – both at the level of ideas and practice – nourish and inspire growth.

Aesthetic reflexivity[85]

Theatre researcher, Jonathan Neelands argues that the term reflective practitioner describes a "working, practising, professional who brings to their work a praxis shaped by reflection-on-practice and reflexivity-in-practice" (Neelands, cited in Ackroyd 2006, 19). Neelands identifies Schon's three dynamic concepts of reflective practice as:

- Knowing-in-action (the professional know-how which informs actions and interactions – training and various sources of knowing inform our practice);
- Reflection-on-action (the evaluation or contemplation of practice to assess efficacy or consider changes which may lead to greater efficacy); and
- Reflection-in-action (thinking on our feet during practice, action-centred, improvised and interactive teaching).

Neelands contends that "reflexivity-in-practice" brings an additional ethical dimension to Shon's model:

> Reflexive teaching, based on reflective practice, is designed to disrupt the natural authority of the teacher and the versions of reality contained in the curriculum plan, so that both teachers and learners are made aware of knowledge as an interactive process which is selective, produced and constructed between teachers and learners rather than as the mechanical transference of naturalised and un-contestable facts and figures (Neelands, cited in Ackroyd 2006, 21).

I have noted, for instance, how many more learners apply their knowledge if they are given challenging "homework tasks" which they have to own, both in its research aspect and

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[85] For a more in-depth account of the politics of difference between reflection and reflexivity, see Appendix 5 for Madison's astute account.

in its presentation (*reflection-on-action*). They are offered the option of working solo or in groups – this is discussed and they are free to choose their own best practice. The following week they present, and the group plus facilitator are invited to give them feedback on aspects that worked or did not. In this, learners create their own works (experiences) which through feedback are peer reviewed, leading to critical reflection. This approach fosters a hands-on learning experience coupled with critical thinking which allows for a certain independence in creating and articulating their experiences with knowledge about performance (*reflection-in-action*). Embedded in these presentation sessions are also a series of task-based workshops which introduce learners to key debates and processes of devised work in contemporary performance: the work of selected practitioners are discussed, the re-framing of performance through investigations of site is introduced (through photographic material, DVDs, images, a play with different spaces and objects) and a range of improvisory experiences are constructed to explore their skills as performers (*knowing-in-action*). For a vital contemporary physical performance praxis, a key focus is possibly having to *unlearn* all the theatrical and dramatic tricks and habits that they have often already embodied – this involves a process of allowing them to learn how to play – to learn about how to be present in the performing moment so as to nurture the performance of the "real" as an impulse for their performance. Various workshops serve this end: Viewpoints, a structured improvisation methodology, and choreographic crafting principles are explored through play with body and object.[86] Whether within the formal teaching and learning programme or for practice-as-research with company members, debate has become one of my favourite ways of generating dialogic exchange and a forum for activating a diversity of viewpoints. I would set up a debate topic in the first session with learners around the topic at hand (for example, I refer to a course called Sights of Resistance: performing womxn's bodies in two dance forms: ballet and the striptease). The anticipation of the debate kept students receptive to the topic and because they had to own a viewpoint, they seemed to invest more generously in their

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[86] Viewpoints is a philosophy and training technique of composition that generates and structures improvised play as a physical and aesthetic approach to creating movement and meaning for performance. The original Viewpoints were conceived by a choreographer, Mary Overlie, who had a strong link with the Judson Church Group in the United States, but her Viewpoints were adapted and extended by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau in their Viewpoints book (2004), which popularised the system of training. I used Viewpoints in my performance work *16 kinds of emptiness* (2006) as part of the P-a-R attempt to perform presence in the moment of performance. Dion van Niekerk, who performed in this work, and co-wrote the script with Leonhard Praeg, had studied Viewpoints with Ann Bogart in 2004 at Tulane University and helped me to share this training system with the company.

preparation for the contestation. Neelands offers a useful explanation of what might have transpired in this debate. With regard to research and teaching, he suggests that

> the data and the interpretation of data must be problematised, so that they can be seen from other angles, rather than just from the perspective of the individual reflective practitioner...truth has to be negotiated and based on different perspectives (Neelands, cited in Ackroyd 2006, 33).

This allows learners to value different positions and ways of seeing and the context of a debate means that learners talk with each other instead of always directing discussion towards the facilitator. In this, they realise that they too have a voice that is valid and powerful. This deconstructs the role of the authoritarian "teacher-as expert" and allows the learners to discover an own authorial presence. Neelands again offers an insightful response with regard to content that has agency or impact beyond the classroom:

> In adopting the critical reflective practitioner model in my practice as a drama educator I work with the expectation that change is possible, both in the locality of my teaching and also in the wider world beyond (Neelands, cited in Ackroyd 2006, 32).

Neeland's point resonates with my relationship to pedagogy in this particular example. I found myself working collaboratively with the student performers to try to make sense of the very real connections between their opinions on how women's bodies are represented and on violence towards women – especially in South Africa, where violent misogyny is the order of the day. Historically, this dialogue has incited much debate about where and how performance happens and matters – both in the classroom and in the world.

Risk and failure as pedagogical "pathologies of hope"
This returns me to my opening thoughts with regard to pedagogy: that a liberatory education can perform "intimate revolts" or initiate small moments or forms of resistance that may, as Baz Kershaw suggests, "institute pathologies of hope" (Kershaw 1999, 26). It is my belief and manifesto that a reflexive, participatory and embodied teaching praxis can and ought to engender and instil such intimate moments of possibility as rehearsals for change and transformation. It is to this spirit of enquiry, renewal and hope that the legacy of FPTC's pedagogy directs itself. It is my belief and manifesto that a reflexive, participatory and

embodied choreographic and teaching praxis can and ought to engender and instil such intimate moments of possibility as rehearsals for the "shock of freedom".

(ii) Practice-as-research (P-a-R) and teaching-as-research (T-a-R): Two FPTC case studies

From its inception, FPTC has invested in movement research as a methodology for choreography, performer training and education. In its close relationship with the Rhodes Drama department, FPTC sought to engage collaborative projects that would advocate and manifest this praxis of movement research. The following two case studies demonstrate a creative nexus of choreographic innovation fostered by the company. I have selected these two works as they align with current thinking around practice-as-research, performative writing and new modalities of teaching and learning. The two works and their processes include:

(i)   *16 kinds of emptiness* (2006): a practice-as-research pilot project

(ii)   Butoh: *amanogawa*[87] (2010): an example of teaching-as-research.

Practice-as-research (P-a-R): a teaching methodology

The question of P-a-R remains a fraught battle within our discipline, and particularly impacts on the ability to achieve research outputs and receive acknowledgement and subsidy for them – historically, one usually has to choose between pursuing a vital professional performance practice or focusing on traditional written research in the form of publication (academic papers or books). My commitment to the advancement of performance research within FPTC, the Rhodes Drama department and the performing arts profession has become a critical and articulated focus of my teaching pedagogy with a concentration on scholarship pertaining to choreography and contemporary performance. My engagement with the national initiative towards P-a-R in 2006 (a pilot project) and my participation in 2007 with the P-a-R working group of the IFTR (International Federation of Theatre Research, chaired by Baz Kershaw from Warwick University in the UK and Jacqueline Martin from Queensland in Australia) has helped to extend my understandings of P-a-R as a model and methodology for performance studies. The Rhodes Masters by Coursework is modelled on experimenting with different CAP methodologies to extend knowledges of P-a-R. Many of these notions were originally

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[87] *Amanogawa* is Japanese for the "heavenly river" or the Milky Way.

fostered in the work principles and methods of FPTC – collaboration, movement research and devised process as ways of coming to creative creation and production.

What constitutes P-a-R?

In a report (2006–2008) entitled *Testing criteria for recognizing practice-as-research in the Performing Arts in South Africa with particular reference to the case of drama and theatre: 2006–2008*, Mark Fleishman (UCT), Temple Hauptfleisch (Stellenbosch), Veronica Baxter (UKZN PMB), Alex Sutherland (Rhodes) and with support from the National Research Foundation (Knowledge Fields Development) have contextualised P-a-R in the following way:

> Creative practice which is framed as a research question/investigation, can be evaluated as research *when the research output is contained in the practice itself*. In traditional research practices, a journal article in which a researcher may write about creative processes/products is the research output, and certainly in many cases, this might be the most effective research output based on one's research design. For example, if a research investigation concerns changing or evaluating audience/participant's perceptions of a particular product or process, the research design necessarily entails gathering data about an audience/participant's perceptions *after* the practice. The research output is therefore not contained within the practice itself. If, however, the research investigation involves exploring theatre strategies which can authentically break the fourth wall and activate the audience within certain South African contexts, the research output can only be observed within the moment of live performance and audience/performer interaction. This example would therefore qualify to be submitted for review as practice as research (P-a-R Report 2006–2008, 40; emphasis in original).

Case study I: Reflective (a)musings on *16 kinds of emptiness*: reframing research for practice

I include this case study as an example of interrogating the politics of a Physical Theatre form. In 2006, I chose to conceptualise, devise and produce a P-a-R project that extended investigation into aspects of contemporary performance and choreography with the dual purpose of being a case study for a National Research Foundation (NRF) pilot project in South Africa. This P-a-R project was a national initiative set up by university drama departments in consultation with the NRF to conduct a pilot project for the peer review of live performance. The first of its kind in South Africa, this call for case studies seemed to present a unique opportunity to engage actively, and with some agency, towards shifting the status

and perception of research in the performing arts within the academy and the profession. It also presented a space within which to experiment and extend my own understandings of P-a-R. *16 kinds of emptiness* became one of the six pilot projects selected for this peer review process. Appendix 6 provides a background to the project via my own research framing document and evaluation report. Appendix 6 includes the final peer evaluation which was included in the pilot project report for the National Research Foundation and all the research offices of tertiary education institutions in South Africa. It brings together the final peer evaluation by three different reviewers/researchers on my pilot project: *16 kinds of emptiness* (2006). The project was regarded as a "rigorous engagement" with P-a-R and the critical commentaries provided in this peer evaluation are worth a read to understand the complexities involved in peer review of arts research. The research on evolving assessment criteria to evaluate different types of projects (process-based work, for instance) is ongoing.

The initial research questions which framed the research for this work were articulated in a framing document as an attempt to:

- interrogate notions of *site, collaboration* and *performer presence* as viewed within contemporary performance/physical theatre by devising a work that engaged with these issues performatively; and

- explore a process of artistic *collaboration* by creating a transdisciplinary work that employed a range of technologies (installation, animation, lighting, script, bodily performance, site) in relation to the concept and vocabularies of the choreographic investigation.

In the account that follows, I draw closely on my reflections of this experience and process as shared in Finestone-Praeg (2007).

Reflections

Vignette IX: The Fullness of Life

(the empty promise of words I)

> What is the "it" in "*It* is raining"? … Or when we say "*It* is hot"?
> Is there something other than the rain or the heat present, some *thing* that rains?
> Does *it* ever rain?
> Is *it* ever hot?
> How can we express our deepest longing for the void, for nothingness, for no-thing in a language that is so full?

(Stage lights off. Darkness)

Sometimes in the dead of the night when I lie in the bath, I can hear dogs bark in the distance. Beyond that – the ringing in my ears…
Beyond that – *it* is quiet.

(Text from Leonhard Praeg's *16 kinds of emptiness: Vignette IX: The Fullness Of Life*, 2006)

(*viewpoints*)

The elusive "*it*" cited in this text from *16 kinds of emptiness* re-performs a complex play with notions of absence/presence as activated in the live performing moment. It resonates the "emptiness" that delights and complicates research processes within the performing arts: how to document, how to capture this disappearing "*it*" of performance? How, it asks, does one write, in a "language that is so full", that which insists on its own loss, emptiness, erasure? Robin Nelson (2006, 108) articulates this tension in his referencing of Rebecca Schneider's challenge to Peggy Phelan's (1993, 146) assertion that performance "becomes itself through disappearance". Schneider asks whether "in privileging an understanding of performance as a refusal to remain, do we ignore other ways of knowing, other ways of remembering, that might be situated precisely in the ways in which performance remains, but remains differently" (in Gough 2001, 101). As Nelson states, some examples of P-a-R seem to "test certain concepts in ways of which words are not capable" (2006, 108). In *16 kinds of emptiness*, the research investigation embodied this question: how to create a form, a praxis for performing the idea of emptiness, as a challenge to the fullness of words as represented through language, and through the saturated representational logic of a traditional Western theatre aesthetics. The concept for *16 kinds of emptiness* was a dialogue with this limit or failure of language to represent "emptiness" and so began my own experimentation.

The quite obvious play with notions of absence or presence – how to embody emptiness – seemed to be a pertinent starting point for this work. The challenge discovered through the organic creative process ("organic" in the sense that a methodology was not laid out in advance of the rehearsals) was recognising, through trial and error, that emptiness could not be directly represented but possibly only *revealed*. This involved a process of exploring appropriate forms or rituals to evoke or provoke this as an experience. Resisting representation and evoking performer presence were largely addressed through an attempt to create (i) intimacy and (ii) immediacy of experience for the performers and audience. These

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two ideas began to link directly to the research questions concerning performer presence and collaboration.

Intimacy: Smallness as microscopy of perception...spatial thresholds

Reflecting on my choreographic practice as work towards the project intensified, I understood for the first time that the framings of the proscenium arch were perhaps never that well suited for the intimacies of my own choreographic interest with a personal and intimate body – manifest in either a minimal, "small" movement language or a filigreed detail of movement and gesture that seemed to get lost in the vast distances between the auditorium and the visual framings of the proscenium arch. In a questioning of my own choreographic identity, Lepecki's text (2004a) became seminal in structuring and generating a response to my intuitive interrogations of my earlier working environment and method. Lepecki (2004a) distils *reduction,* or minimalism (which reduces the scale and scope for movement) as one of the major modes of operation in European Contemporary Dance. He cites philosopher Jose Gil's (1996) notion of a "microscopy of perception", suggesting that by working the microscopic, one has to radically rethink the space where dance has been taking place – Lepecki submits that the proscenium arch or box no longer become the "ideal optical architectures" for a minimal dance (2004a, 179). The choice of a new performance space in a deconsecrated chapel, the Old Nun's Chapel, seemed to provide an opportunity for me to extend exploration into a different, intimate space within which to extend possibilities of my choreography. The choice of the Old Nun's Chapel as a *site* for the performance, allowed me to reposition the spectating perspectives of the audience. As Heathfield (2005, 10) suggests, new contexts for performance makes performance "migratory": it leaves its "institutional home", the proscenium arch, and "in this emigration, performance has become a means through which to test the foundations and borders of identity". In the Old Nun's Chapel, intimacy was created through the seating arrangement, which positioned the audience on parallel pews, facing each other, and in extremely close proximity to the performers. This ensured there was seldom a one way, frontal viewing. A little like a Wimbledon tennis match, the spatial positionings of performance were kept fluid, in flux, and constantly shifting for the audience. The photographic images (see Figures 4 and 5) taken by Monique Pelser, share the intimate spatial proximity between the audience and the performers.

Figure 4: *16 kinds of emptiness* (2006). Vignette (i) *Jug*. Photograph by Monique Pelser. Solo performer is Sifiso Majola.

Each vignette re-configured the spatial dynamic, disassembling space and creating what I finally located as spatial thresholds.[88] A single, cohesive and shared viewing of the work was disrupted. Sanchez-Colberg, in a discussion of Pina Bausch's work, suggests that when the confines of the proscenium are transgressed, a "lived experience" is created for the audience:

> Moreover, the perception of the piece takes a positional stance: "you can see it like this or like that…it all depends where you look". There is no hidden code to be deciphered, the experience of the piece is the thing itself (Sanchez-Colberg 1996, 47).

Nelson's comments on liminal space also resonate with the P-a-R notion of a praxis. He posits that

> [t]he inhabiting of liminal space in itself poses a conceptual challenge to the clear categorical boundaries of Aristotelean logic. The case for such a praxis (theory imbricated within practice) is not only that it effectively makes arguments but that the arguments are better made in the praxis…rather than in writing (2006, 108).

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[88] In terms of theoretical inquiry, a more in-depth resonance with notions of the liminal in contemporary performance can be pursued in Broadhurst (1999) and Heathfield (2005).

Figure 5: *16 kinds of emptiness* (2006). Vignette (xiii) *Consolation: Life goes on* – adapted from Tanya Poole's video installation: *Consolation: Just think how lucky you are*.[89] Photograph by Monique Pelser. Solo performer on chair is Sheena Stannard.

Immediacy: performing/collaborative presence

The processes of interrogating notions of performer presence and collaboration were researched largely through the context aimed at recasting dance from a theatrical to a performance paradigm. Lepecki argues that this trend towards performance is characterised by

> a distrust of representation, a suspicion of virtuosity as an end, the reduction of unessential props and scenic elements, an insistence on the performers presence and a "deep dialogue" with the visual arts and with performance theory (2004a, 172).

Lepecki draws these ideas together noting that the defining element behind all these aspects is "an absolute lack of interest in defining whether the work falls within the ontological, formal or ideological parameters of something called, or recognized as, 'dance'"

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[89] Photograph by Monique Pelser. Performed by Shenna Stannard (in the chair) and the full company – see list of names in the programme in Appendix 6.

(2004a, 173). Lepecki outlines how this practice is described by a range of terminologies and suggests that "the very possibility of open and endless naming suggests that the truth of the work resides in its performance rather than its accommodation to previously fixed, established, hermetically sealed aesthetic and disciplinary boundaries" (2004a, 172). He proposes that the names define a very specific semantic field for this dance: "it is a field where the visual arts, performance art, political art, meet performance theory and institute a mode of creation truly trans-disciplinary" (2004a, 172).

The term "transdisciplinary" and the list of elements defining this interest seemed to resonate and trace many of the points of discomfort and experimentation I was wanting to explore in *16 kinds of emptiness*. The choice to create 16 narratively and stylistically different vignettes was similarly an invitation to experience, not the unity/coherence of narrative, but the elusiveness of emptiness in its various forms. The 16 vignettes (see the titles listed in the programme note in Appendix 6) abandoned the linear and causal logic of traditional narrative (adhering to Aristotelian unities of time, place and character). Rather, each vignette favoured a fractal logic that resisted the representational logic of traditional narrative's flow, cohesion and closure.

Improvising immediacy…real versus fictional time

Another strategy that provoked immediacy in relation to performer presence was the choice to use *improvisation* in performance. Though loosely structured and conceptually contextualised, four vignettes were improvised. As Nelson (2006, 109) argues, improvisation has long been "an established mode of artistic investigation" and in this sense, it was utilised as a performance and research strategy to resist the allure of virtuosity and representation. Heathfield notes that the clash of "real versus fictional" time has long been a critical concern of live art,

> [w]here the embodied event has been employed as a generative force: to shock, to destroy pretence, to break apart traditions of representation, to foreground the experimental, to open different kinds of engagement with meaning, to activate audiences (2005, 7).

The improvised play and experimentations with employing actions in real time and space were attempts to engage the performers in present time (the "fullness" or "emptiness" of immediacy?) as well as "to unsettle the audience's perceptions of performance time…to

diminish the 'known' and rehearsed dynamics of performance…banishing or rupturing or warping fictional time and narration" (Heathfield 2005, 8).

It is perhaps in the arena of *collaboration* that the most trying aspects of this praxis were encountered. From the outset, I was determined to deepen or extend my understandings of collaborative exchange. What forms and methodologies for working could manifest a collaborative exchange that might produce a dynamic dialogue towards this transdisciplinary experience? Johannes Birringer (2000) offers a wealth of theoretical insights and reflections on experiential processes and knowledges generated around the collaborative exchange. Using the term "border work" to indicate processes of transcultural negotiation, he raises some of the ethical and contextual considerations that attend performance collaborations:

> Our creativity in performance also depends on our physical awareness and critical sensitivity towards the media with which we translate each other's ideas, movements and images, and although the creative process draws on what we know, there are no rules that could protect us from the pressures of the social worlds in which we encounter the fearfulness and violence of transformation. In a sense, what I am addressing here are the limits of the aesthetic, the limits of the protection of forms (Birringer 2000, 8).

While his collaborative project embodies a larger context of transcultural collaboration, his insights, particularly his thoughts on "the limits of the protection of forms", resonated with my attempts to challenge my own boundaries as a choreographer. Part of my own desire to collaborate intimately with a range of media was being fuelled by a similar concern to disengage dance/physical theatre from its usual moorings. It was also my attempt to shift from my own aesthetic formulas and projected choreographic identity. Birringer's insights on the excitement of collaborative practice sustained the trust in "play" as a method:

> the necessarily constant struggle to welcome the widening range of the unexpected, the unpredictable, and the transformative experience…The excitement of creativity comes from those moments, as in good sex, when we may lose control or realize, during the play of experimentation, that the boundaries drawn by rules and the demarcations of difference can unexpectedly shift, and thus change our relationship to perceived or projected identity (2000, 8).

Here, the performance research seemed to resonate directly with some of the theoretical questions posed by Lepecki and Birringer on the issues of collaborative exchange. Lepecki's

comments on the link between conceptual art and the shifting trends in European choreography note, for instance, that

> traditionally, dance enters economy by escaping its ephemerality through an investment and reliance on precise techniques defined also as signature of the choreographer's personal style (2004a, 177).

Lepecki poses that this new dance is a radical challenge to the choreographic art object precisely at the level of its reproduction because

> not only does this object not rely on technique (which is different from saying it does not have one); it doesn't even concern itself with making the technique the specific signature of the choreographer…it challenges the very "saleability" of the dance object by withdrawing quite often from it what should be its distinctive (market) trait: dance (2004a, 177).

Parallel interests can be noted in the collaborations with installation artist, Tanya Poole. Rejecting notions of technique becoming the signature of choreographic expertise, I requested that she co-direct Vignette (xii) *Consolation: Life goes on* which was a theatrical embodiment of a video solo called *Consolation: Just think how lucky you are* which I had performed for Poole's installation work on the *Console* exhibition a few years before. Her animated portrait called *Wait* became Vignette (x) *The empty promise of words II.* Poole's own shift to animated installation portraiture was a response to what she terms "vanitas" and "posterity" in traditional portraiture. Her own deconstruction of these inherited traits in portraiture ("vanitas" as painting the subject in the best possible light, whatever that may be – grace, beauty, even idiosyncrasy; and "posterity" linking to the "fixity" or representational closure of a particular chosen moment to be passed down through history or generationally) by creating an animated portrait seemed somehow connected to my own questioning of the "vanitas" and "posterity" of the traditional dancing body, always shown in the best possible light through technique (even in physical theatre) and through signatures of choreographic expertise. For example, interplay of collaborative process with the dancer-performers was credited by citing them as co-choreographers in the programme. The juxtapositions of the use of improvisation, the lack of virtuosic bodily display in selected vignettes as opposed to moments of extreme athletic physicality and risky partnering work in others, the animated movements of a portrait, all performed to a questioning of the "emptiness" of the

representational logic of theatrical production. Lehmann captures this tension in his discussion of the term postdramatic theatre:

> It is inherent to the constitution of theatre that the real that is literally being masked in and by the theatrical semblance can resurface in it at any moment. Without the real there is no staging. Representation and presence, mimetic play and performance, the represented realities and the process of representation itself: from this structural split the contemporary theatre has extracted a central element of the postdramatic paradigm – radically thematicising it and by putting the real on equal footing with the fictive. It is not the occurrence of anything "real" as such but its self-reflexive use that characterises the aesthetic of postdramatic theatre...It is concerned with developing a perception that undergoes – at its own risk – the "come and go" between the perception of structure and of the sensorial real (2006, 103).

I reflect that part of my own desire to collaborate intimately with a range of media was fuelled by a similar concern to disengage dance/physical theatre from its usual moorings and to provoke my aesthetic formulas and projected choreographic identity. This praxis demanded a redesigning of my working process. Although I have worked closely with collaborators in the past, and always tend to work through an improvised process with the performer-creators in my works, I have never relinquished the role as sole author, or sole conceptual presence of any creation. I usually conceive the narrative (albeit fragmented) flow of thoughts, words or images that will frame the final product. Narrative disclosure occurs through embodied images and experiences that I narrate (or structure) and which the dancers then interpret. Through a series of task-related improvisations, I would clearly "control" the process. In this work, I tried to abandon the role of sole conceptual presence as a method for questioning this "saleability" of the dance product through my choreographic signature. I felt in the end, rather like a *curator* (*curare* – Latin term meaning "to take care of" – one responsible for the care of souls) who had to oversee or provide guardianship and direction for the extraordinary creative energies of the praxis, the collaborative team and the performers.

Some examples may illustrate these ideas. The text, written predominantly by Leonhard Praeg, was largely conceived by him but in constant collaboration with my own imaginative ramblings. To offset some of his own predictable patterns, two of the vignettes were written by Dion van Niekerk, and another two were co-written by both writers. In this sense, I chose to let go of much of the ego-role of the choreographer as the prime "voice" or authorial presence of the performance text. In Vignette (vi) *The Soul*, my brief for the lighting designer, Guy Nelson, was very brief: a Tom Waits song and the notion of an empty, waiting space

(and a play with Brook's *The Empty Space*) that the audience would be forced to negotiate in time. His response, which I did not tamper with, was to plunge the audience into darkness for a minute and a half before surreptitiously lowering a little blue light bulb which then came on and just hung quietly in the space.

Figure 6. *16 kinds of emptiness* (2006). Vignette (vi) *The Soul.* Photograph by Monique Pelser. Concept and installation of the vignette by Guy Nelson

The example of the lighting vignette (*The Soul*) raises many questions with regard to P-a-R. For research purposes, or for an archival documenting process, how can this "live" moment of the empty/full space be recaptured? How to provide evidence of an empty outcome? On the DVD, there is only darkness and the sounds of audience shuffling and coughing. The tangible and immediate experience of the live stillness and energy generated in the live performed moment could not be captured for research or documentation purposes as the outcome was the experience, the "it". I believe that the work produced a response to the research questions that were initially framed. Reflecting on his own processes of editing the

book, *LIVE Art and Performance*, as a response to the Live Culture event at the Tate Modern in March 2003, Adrian Heathfield comments on documenting and reflecting on practice by suggesting that the "essays, interviews and documentary strategies that have arisen from it, like all residues of performance, have substantially transformed and extended the event, creating something altogether different" (Heathfield 2005, 7). And yet, as he posits,

> [t]he document of performance is a creative re-making whose referent remains resiliently absent…the thoughts and words collected…both hit and miss the live moments that they attempt to capture, but in doing so, something of their life, and of the live, remain (Heathfield 2005, 13).

The shifting parameters of academic research

I believe that *16 kinds of emptiness* performed dialogues with the research questions that were initially framed. It also produced new insights, knowledges and documentations as "residues" of the performance. Perhaps these documentations (see the list of outcomes in my self-evaluation report in Appendix 6: photographs, a DVD in the making, a curious pupa we named Miss Havisham, an animated installation, a text) do provide some kind of testimony or witness to what happened "there" – that in some way, these research outcomes do transform and extend the event itself. Nelson (2006) suggests that the academy needs to shift in the conception of what constitutes research, and even what constitutes knowledge. He proposes that it is time to speak "less of practice as research and to speak instead of *arts research* (a significant methodology of which just happens to be based in practices" (2006, 115; emphasis added). This process took me closer to a vision of what arts research might be, and though it will require much more rigorous processes of self-reflexivity on the part of practitioners and researchers, I believe there is value in pursuing the impulse towards reframing research for arts practice so that it may become a viable way of researching practice and practising research, or in this work, perhaps another way of practising choreography or of choreographing practice.

Case study II: Teaching-as-research; or towards a democratised performance

thunder stirs under the lake: unlearning through butoh

In 2010, FPTC made contact with a Swedish butoh choreographer called Frauke[90] and commissioned her to create a butoh work on the company. The collaboration included Frauke, Gary Gordon, myself, the FPTC company performers and apprentices, and two of our Masters' students. We were all encountering, for the first time, a dance form called butoh – an avant-garde Japanese dance form which we had researched and taught theoretically in various courses in the Drama department since the late 1980s, but never had an experiential encounter with. The project embodied a performative praxis in its construction of a matrix of learning experiences in which teachers and learners alike experienced the art of making, performing and appreciating butoh. We were learning to embody a new expressionism, to work as an ensemble, to bring teaching, practice and research about choreography into various relations, discovering humility, and experimenting with how to write performatively as a new scholarly approach to writing the performance event, or choreograph writing.

The project, through its process, had many different aspects that shifted traditional notions of the "teacher as expert". As teachers, Gary and I learnt (or rather, unlearned) a new dance form at the same time as our students, equally vulnerable with them through the process; together, we performed it as an ensemble at the National Arts Festival (where the work received an Ovation Award); and as researchers, we constructed a research package as an educational resource (the company has others which have been purchased by teachers and various educational institutions).[91] This package, *Glimpses into Butoh*, includes:

(i)   A DVD video of the performance at the National Arts Festival, July 2010;
(ii)   a DVD documentary of training and creative research, filmed and edited by Acty Tang and including interviews conducted with Frauke on the form and processes of butoh by myself and Gordon;
(iii)   A short video documentary: filmed and edited by Jess Levy for Cue TV (Jess was a Drama III student in 2009);
(iv)   Two research papers – both attempts at performative writing (and as part of the new performance studies discourse and an affiliated project with practice-as-research). One by Gary Gordon entitled *Shifting between body and words: writing and performing the dance Amanogawa*, and one by

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[90] This is Frauke's performance identity. She is also named Caroline Lundblad and is originally from Sweden. The connection with Frauke was via one of our ex-students, Vincent Truter, who has a deep, abiding fascination with butoh as an aesthetic and he had met Frauke in his studies in Japan post his Masters' degree at Rhodes University. Vincent Truter collaborated with us for the costume designs of *amanogawa*, the work created with Frauke for FPTC in 2010.

[91] This is the three-volume series entitled *The Art of Physical Intelligence* (2002) and is cited in the bibliography.

myself entitled *Body Of Questions: Book Of Changes: Event-texts from the butoh performance work Amanogawa*[92]. For this writing process I interviewed the Masters' students and company members on their experience of the training and choreographic process – a lovely twist of the convention where students usually interview their lecturers. This facilitated some exciting debate and discussion and parts of the interviews are cited below as reflections on their praxis in the work;

(v)   An artist's statement by visiting choreographer, Frauke on butoh training and the making of *Amanogawa* in South Africa.

Performative writing: A politics of form?

My own attempts at performative writing were an experiment with it as a methodology for writing about practice.[93] These debates surrounding a politics of writing are grounded in the precedents set by performance studies to value P-a-R and in finding appropriate modes of writing to account for performative ways of knowing. I have already contextualised these ideas via my methodological premise for CAP ethnographies via Richardson and St. Pierre (2005). Dwight Conquergood (2002, 152) has similarly advocated for a critical review of arts research (via his three Cs of performance studies: creativity, critique and citizenship), and Robin Nelson (2006) advances analogous viewings of the possibilities for arts research that counter the dogmas surrounding writing in academia. Nelson notes that much P-a-R appears to fundamentally challenge established research paradigms in that its processes aim to be experimental, and to embody play as a method of inquiry in order to "discover 'what works' or what invites critical insights through a dialogic engagement, rather than what is true adjudged by the criteria of scientific rationalism" (2006, 109).

In this regard, Nelson has noted a tendency with P-a-R projects to align themselves with critical theory, modern phenomenology and poststructuralist discourses. He suggests that the poststructuralist disposition is consonant with arts practices in the aspect of "creative play as method":

> There is a deliberate playfulness – as well as seriousness of purpose – in obfuscatory writing which consciously draws attention to the problematics of discourse...aiming not to establish findings by way of data to support a demonstrable and finite answer to a research question, but to put in play

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[92] Both of these papers have been published in the *South African Theatre Journal*, 2010. Volume 24 was a special edition on Physical Theatre in South Africa.
[93] Some theorists I have consulted who have written about performative writing as a method of creative arts practice include Della Pollock, Norman K. Denzin, D. Soyini Madison, Robin Nelson, Peggy Phelan and Ronald J. Pelias.

elements in a bricolage which afford insights through deliberate and careful juxtaposition (2006, 109).

My own experiences with both of these projects brought the insights that as arts practitioners, we need to claim our work as privileged, in the sense that it is possible in practice to embody research approaches in a way that surpasses the level of "play" possible within language. Nelson, citing Pears (1971), confirms this idea:

> Devices of self-reflexiveness acknowledging the different rules of the poststructuralist game being played are often better performed than made in writing where deletions, bracketing off parts of words, and raised eyebrow pairs of inverted commas are more obtrusive (2006, 109).

Bella Martin's questioning of how we are to "concretise the somatic" (2004, 44) and evolve epistemologies for P-a-R were in part produced through the devised processes of these projects. I highlight selected examples from these case studies to reveal the significance of opening up teaching, training, performance and research to this more transcendent sense of play, and argue for its transformative politics.

amanogawa (the Heavenly River, or the Milky Way)

As a method of performative writing, I conceived and devised the following form as a shape for my reflection in *Body of Questions: Book of Changes: Event-texts from the Butoh performance work Ama-no-gawa* (Finestone-Praeg 2010b): using the form of the *I Ching*'s structure[94] (the *I Ching*'s oracle is rendered as an image which interprets the energy of each hexagram to produce a reading of each of its six lines, alone and in relation to each other), I choreographed my own event-text, reflecting on my personal experience while simultaneously in dialogue with critical writings on butoh and the process of *amanogawa*'s creation. *I Ching*, the ancient *Book of Changes*, shows the image of a state or event and the unfolding of conditions contained within its situation. The hexagram's six lines reveal this state of change: where a situation comes from (its past) and its possibilities of movement for going somewhere (a trajectory for future). The form of my reflection was explained in relation to the *I Ching*'s design:

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[94] The *I Ching* (or *Book of Changes*) is an ancient Chinese divination text drawn from 64 hexagrams based on 64 principles which provide interpretations to the question posed. Coins or yarrow sticks are thrown to produce a hexagram image based on broken or unbroken lines.

Guide: (bracketed parts are *I Ching* explanations and italicised parts are their application for this event-text)

The image	(derived from the hexagram's image of events) – *here, the initial image-narrative and the form for writing these memories*
The conditions	(descriptions of the idea/situation) – *here, personal reflections and memories from journal entries*
The judgements	("clothe the images in words": Wilhelm 1984, 7 – the Judgements produce guidance) – *here, a conversation with critical commentaries and interpretations on performative writing and butoh from varied sources...*
Degrees of change	(the six changing lines that produce commentary on a progressive development through the situation) – *here, a series of interviews with some changing perceptions of the performers* (Finestone-Praeg 2010b, 280–281).

The image

I firstly threw the *I Ching* to get an interpretation of whether to research *and* perform, and received the following hexagram:

Hexagram 54: *The Marrying Maiden (Love)*

I sense a deep libidinal energy driving up through the length of my spine.
I make the choice to perform.
I breathe.
My body longs to ask questions again (Finestone-Praeg 2010b, 279–280).

In **The conditions** (my descriptions and personal reflections of the process), I traced six narratives sharing the vulnerability of unlearning habits and relearning new forms together with our students and company members. In each, I share my experiences learned through teaching-as-research. I cite the first, Condition I: (unlearning the body) here and add the others in Appendix 7. They include: Condition II (the absence of a choreographed body), Condition III (the curious body), Condition IV (the empathetic body), Condition VI (the hungry body), Condition IV (the empathetic body), and Condition VI (producing the body).

Example: Condition I (unlearning the body)
The first weeks of learning butoh through the Hakutobu (White peach chamber) lineage has been intense. None of us, some seasoned performers and professional dancers, and others Masters' students, have anticipated the rigor and unexpected subversions that this form will exact from us. We need to UNLEARN so much. I join the circle of performers and together we engage this deep process of battling the armoury of the Western performance ethos with its representational structures and concepts – its "self" with its insidious ego and its litany of directives for individual excellence and personal creativity. Frauke keeps explaining that the self has to be erased. Bodily questionings are ritualised through a series of preparations that aim to empty the body, locate the breath in this encounter and to link these to a receptive consciousness that shapes and listens rather than makes claims. An active, directed vision and focus needs to be erased in the attempt to "see" differently – perhaps to perceive? The eyes become non-seeing, the entire body becomes eye as the field of vision starts to blur...to soften...This is Yin energy – the cloudy, the yielding, the absorbing. I re-invent notes from my first butoh walk...trying to keep the characteristic butoh body with bent knees, the distinctive lowering and backward placement of the gravity line...my awareness starts to shift...using peripheral vision helps to erase the solidity of the social body...there I trace a watery pool of plastic...a song of steel...twitters, grasses...sentience...I am inconsequential...and yet conscious that any encounter I produce nonetheless has effect...my breath is hot...I think about my Tai Chi...empty the mind...empty the body...start with the breath...inhalation is receptive...an absorbing focus and breath...it is partially passive...it listens...while the exhalation is directed with a clear focus and active presence...I am aware of the way my sternum stays lifted...Frauke has been prodding at this place for days...trying to get me to erase this liftedness in the chest...I suddenly realise with intense immediacy and shock that this lifted energy in my chest is a bodily defence...how I hold things "up" or "together" – a confrontation with the world through my defended armour. I recall one of my favourite poems by the Greek poet Odysseus Elytis (and which I know by heart) and think about the way a Western logic does not nurture vulnerability or gentleness:

> I was late in understanding the meaning of humility, and it's the fault of those who taught me to place it at the other end of pride. You must domesticate the idea of existence in you to understand it (Elytis in XXVII of *Anoint the Ariston*).

Be real. Juanita. Be here...now. I breathe out. I feel my chest shift down and back...at the same time my thumbs relax...The next time we do the "metal pipe" walk I find I am able to embody the butoh-tai with greater ease and confidence...Frauke notices...my butoh body map is becoming clearer (Finestone-Praeg 2010b, 282–283).

These experiences and reflections of eliminating bodily armour and becoming vulnerable in front of the group resonate with the Honours Physical Performance module that I discussed in PART II (i) as Private myths: Performing the Self. It was also an interesting learning and teaching strategy to observe another choreographer at work and to learn with my students about working through struggle and process. In a different reflection, I considered various roles, for instance, Frauke's role as choreographer and teacher. Acknowledging vulnerability as process, both as for teachers and learners, is part of the process of self-reflection and self-

evaluation that allows one to modify own practice. Learning this with our students was a difficult exposure but has been an invaluable part of a reflexive journey into processes of teaching and learning. In this sense, the Butoh project could be seen as a performative ethnography of the sort described by Madison (2006) where knowledge is both reflective and reflexive.

Figure 7. *Amanogawa* (2010). Photograph by Stefan de Klerk. Performers are (from the left): Juanita Finestone-Praeg; Frauke and Gary Gordon.

In **The judgements,** I considered my conversations with other critical commentaries on both butoh and performative writing. Based on reading and research into butoh, I observed three judgements on butoh ethics, its ethos and procedures. They include: First judgement: Butoh as event-text which explored some of the "spectral anxieties of negotiating performative writing" (2010b, 281); Second judgement: *The Butoh-tai and Ubuntu* which examined the resonances between the African concept of ubuntu and butoh's principles of an erasure of the personal ego through the prism of the group/commune or what Sichel called "Afro-Butoh" (2010), and Judgement III: On butoh as expressionism, which explored the limits of the butoh form in relation to performance principles of expressionism. The bodily questions posed by the experience of performing butoh led to new questions that stimulated

and provoked new knowledge about the performing body in South Africa. See Appendix 7 for details of these judgements.

Figure 8. *Amanogawa* (2010). Photograph by Stefan de Klerk. Performers are (from the left): Siyabulela Mbambaza; Alan Parker; Sifiso Majola and (on the floor) Juanita Finestone-Praeg.

In **degrees of change** I produced my series of interviews with various performers and their own changing perceptions through the process of creating the work. I shared the experiences of five of the performers (as identified in Figure 7 and 8) and one with Frauke herself to illuminate the learning that had happened. I share these in Appendix 7.

Finally, Adrienne Sichel, one of the most prominent and influential dance critics in South Africa, saw the work and reviewed my performance:

> Juanita Finestone-Praeg's performance was a complete revelation. I thought I knew what the capabilities of this consistently excellent artist as a performer, researcher and choreographer are but it took me a few minutes to realise that the human figure whose flesh and bones dissolved before my eyes, transforming into an epic tragic scream, was Juanita (Sichel, personal email, 2010)

In the *The Star Tonight*, Sichel captured another moment of performative significance in her review:

> And there two pioneers were gloriously in *amanogawa/The Heavenly River*...Gordon and Finestone-Praeg, in particular, encapsulated the

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transformative and spiritual nature of the deep, dark poetry of the human body (13 July, 2010).

I include this review, not to stroke our egos, but as a validation of this learning/teaching process as a mode of enquiry. This peer review endorses some of the success and degree of excellence embedded within the project. It affirms and validates my argument for valuing teaching as a way of learning. This work attests to these perceptions of the company's research manifesto.

(iii) Physical Theatre as embodied dramaturgy

In the next two sections II (iii) and II (iv), I analyse the development of the company's identity as it began to grow its production and reputation nationally and internationally. The choreography of smaller dance works in programmes began to diversify with the emergence of what Gordon called the "documentary danceplays" – longer, full-length works which embodied the company's vision of using devised process with dramaturgy and original collaborations. The notion of an embodied, postdramatic dramaturgy is of particular interest as a dramaturgical strategy and is used here to appraise the processes of a collective authorship or collaboration that offer political alternatives to mainstream models of theatre production, and which are evident in some of the danceplays by FPTC. Selected case studies will assess the efficacy of FPTC's dramaturgical strategies as examples of democratised performance. In *Memory In Translation* (2000), I conceptualised the different dramaturgies offered in the company's earlier repertory (1995–2000) through the idea of the documentary danceplay as historiography – personal memory (autobiography) and collective memory (biography). I will briefly reconsider some of these ideas as activating the body as a site for translating history/memory (embodied archives). In PART II (iii), I revisit Gordon's full length work *The Unspeakable Story* (1995) and consider the original dramaturgical collaborations by renowned South African playwright Reza de Wet with FPTC.[95] To my knowledge, though much has been written on De Wet's work, nobody has researched the six

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[95] Anton Krueger notes that while de Wet is primarily known as an Afrikaans playwright, she also published 12 plays in English and wrote six short scripts for FPTC. Her work is regarded as a form of magical realism which parodies the Afrikaner Calvinism (e.g. *Diepe Grond* 1985; *African Gothic* 2005) and the colonial duplicity of English society (e.g. *Worm in the Bud* 1990; *Concealment* 2004) – "her darkly comic masterpieces have enthralled (and perplexed) audiences with their idiosyncratic mix of magic, realism and fantasy counterpoised with menacing erotic undercurrents" and "evoked as much laughter as they have aroused a sense of disquiet" (2015, 145).

unusual dramaturgical collaborations between De Wet and FPTC, and I will consider De Wet's contribution to this dramaturgical history. De Wet's texts for FPTC include: *Dialogue* (1994); *The Unspeakable Story* (1995); *Dead: a slight history of one called Ivan* (1996); *Lilith* (1998) and *Bessie's Head* (2000).[96] In PART II (iv), I extend the analysis of embodied responses to the idea of a documentary, archival dramaturgy and argue for a reading of Physical Theatre as historiography. I focus on three works as case studies: my work, *The Passion of Judas* (1996), Gordon's *Bessie's Head* (2000) and *Wreckage*,[97] the later 2011 collaboration by UBOM! and FPTC, both associated performing arts companies housed at the Rhodes University drama department. *Wreckage* is discussed as a recent example of the choreopolitical play with postdramatic dramaturgies and the analysis will assess its dramaturgical strategies as a sensorial, reflexive and democratised performance practice.

Dramaturgical histories

It is beyond the ambit of this research to provide an in-depth outline or critically assess the impact of the discourse and praxis of current dance dramaturgy which has emerged as a compelling field within current contemporary performance/choreography. Scott deLahunta (2000) distils aspects of the debates surrounding dance dramaturgy and highlights the vastly different experiences, expectations and experiments that define current dramaturgy. He argues that the idea of dramaturgy is attributed to the work of those seeking to "elucidate the rules for making theatre" (2000, 1), citing the most well-known in the West as Aristotle's *Poetics* (to which Bharata's *Natyasastra* and Zeami's texts on Noh drama are often compared). As deLahunta explains, "classical" dramaturgy did not concern itself directly with the performance of a play – it took Brecht to "move the dramaturge out of the rooms and libraries where the scripts were read, chosen and edited" (deLahunta 2000, 2) into rehearsal spaces where the dramaturge could participate in the entire process of making theatre. Myriam van Imschoot notes traditional dramaturgy is still linked with some kind of intellectual skill or intellectual capacity (following tensions elucidated in her seminal 2003 article, "Anxious Dramaturgies"), and Lepecki concurs, noting that this reputation or relation has a "political dimension related to the privileging of knowledge" (cited in deLaHunta 2000,

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[96] See Appendix 8 for more details about the performed eulogy, *Drifting* (2013) that we performed for her using her first script for FPTC, *dialogue* (1994) as a central source.
[97] The collaboration, *Wreckage*, by UBOM! and FPTC, Andrew Buckland, Brink Scholtz and Athina Vahla.

4). And so, we return yet again, to the theory/practice divide which has historically beset performance and/as research and which traces a thread through this thesis.

Antagonisms and "anxious histories"

Boenisch contextualises the deep rift of the "ossified antagonism" and "fully institutionalized" opposition between embodied dramaturgical experiments and text-based theatre, summarising the battle as

> a contest fought over semiotic primacy within the performance text: between the assertion of continued hierarchical superiority for the written playtext and the privilege in performance for the body and visual signs that allegedly escape that logic (2010, 162).

In the context of traditional academia in South Africa, one of the persistent tensions I have experienced has been a constant fight to validate what and how we teach in the Drama department and to contest the marginal status and paternalistic attitudes that reveal a deep misunderstanding of performance studies as vital and significant scholarship. At times I have encountered incredulity at the fact that I have students writing an MA dissertation in dance and choreography – the thinking persists that dance is something you do, not something you think about or research. An example is the 2007 battle at Rhodes University Faculty level to do away with English as a compulsory subject required for the study of Drama at Rhodes. This was a contested issue at the meeting and had to do with historical fact that most Drama departments originally grew out of English departments. William Worthen succinctly captures this tension:

> Literary engagements with performativity tend to focus on the performative function of language as represented in literary texts, and much performance-orientated criticism of drama, for all its invocation of the theatre, similarly betrays a desire to locate the meanings of the stage in the contours of the dramatic text. Performance studies has developed a vivid account of the nondramatic, nontheatrical, non-scripted, ceremonial, and everyday-life performances, performances that appear to depart from the authority of texts (Worthen, cited in the introduction of Stucky and Wimmer 2002, 15).

The dramaturgical work of FPTC in liaison with the Drama department at Rhodes University has gone a long way in starting to shift some of these perceptions. Shifting an understanding of dramaturgy away from a purpose to construct a dramatic tradition of an Aristotelean teleology (progression of the unities of time, place and character within a

playtext that follows the curves of the well-made play), Barba suggests a more complex role for dramaturgy that has to do with a "particular way of looking", one that focuses on the "overlapping logics" and layers organising a work (2010, 9). Barba (2010, 8) defines dramaturgy according to its etymology, drama-*ergon*, the work of actions, or rather, as he suggests, "the way the actor's actions enter the work". Dramaturgy is crucially linked, for Barba (2010, 11), to the active participation of the director (or choreographer) to take the "organic material of process and re-forge or overturn the obvious relationships that emerge into complex, ambiguous relationships…demolish, disarrange and destroy logics and links suggested by the texts, my actors and my own themes – to create complexity in the webs". In this sense, dramaturgy emerges as a layered and complex labour. Barba (2010, 10) articulates three levels of organisation which interest him, each with their own logic, demands and objectives: (i) the level of organic or dynamic dramaturgy – the "rhythms; physical and vocal actions of performers to stimulate sensorially the attention of the spectators"; (ii) the level of narrative dramaturgy – the "intertwining of events which orientate the spectators about the meanings"; and (iii) the level of evocative dramaturgy – the dramaturgy that "distils the unintentional and concealed meaning of the performance":

> The organic dramaturgy makes the spectators dance kinaesthetically on their seats; the narrative dramaturgy releases conjectures, thoughts, doubts, evaluations and questions; the evocative dramaturgy makes us live a state of change (2010, 10–11).

This idea of the way actions enter a work relate clearly to an intentionality which links to Barba's notion of dramaturgy to a "way of looking" and which I propose is similar to Copeland's idea of a "perceptual politics" in forging the action and form of a work. Barba's three-tiered evocation of dramaturgy starts to edge closer to FPTC's dramaturgical process. deLahunta's notion of "visual dramaturgy" extends the insights further, noting that the "privilege of a pre-written text as the primary source of theatre" has given way to new forms of theatrical composition and communication, and there has evolved a rich diversity of ways to work with text closely connected to the visual – a "visual dramaturgy" which has entirely changed the job/task of the traditional dramaturge. Lepecki, in contrast, queries all the conceptual talk about "seeing", proposing that "dance dramaturgy implies the reconfiguration of one's whole anatomy, not just the eyes" – he promotes an embodied dramaturgy in his claim to "reinvent this eye. For instance, I can make it listen" – and argues that the most important task of the dance dramaturge is to constantly explore "sensorial manifestoes"

(Lepecki, cited in deLaHunta 2000, 5–6). Extending this insight, Brizzell and Lepecki (2003) note that the blurring of theoretical and aesthetic boundaries is one of the most intriguing changes brought by this new dramaturgical praxis which has shifted the stance of the dramaturge:

> The dramaturge no longer defers…Rather, dramaturgy provocatively turns towards the textural and the excessive as sites for existential, dramatic, and political in(ter)vention. Dramaturgy, as unexpected weaving of text and texture, world and stage, presence and representation, becomes a generatively disruptive process rather than a museological stabilizer of theatrical and semiological truths. The creative and political potential of dramaturgy in contemporary performance is thus filled with exponential amount of innovation and resistance (2003, 15–16).

Lepecki's observation of possible "in(ter)vention" through an embodied dramaturgical presence as a "generatively disruptive process" has resonance with Boenisch's description of the new dramaturgical approaches in European theatre as "reflexive dramaturgy", arguing for performance analysis that avoids this unproductive antagonism, and that focuses on approaches that assist residues of conventional dramatic logic within contemporary experimental modes of performance. In other words, ambiguity and complexity can be seen to perform difference as simultaneously disruptive and generative through processes of what Boenisch calls "texturing" (2010, 163).

Sensorial manifestoes and reflexive dramaturgies

Lepecki's "sensorial manifestoes" align with Boenisch's idea of "texturing" and both echo Lehmann's postdramatic strategies as embodied critiques of the purely dramatic traditions of dramaturgy. Boenisch develops his analysis of reflexive dramaturgies in relation to works that he argues are able to structure and maintain a "parallax perspective".[98] Boenisch argues that this postdramatic "rift" can install in the spectator, a "parallax view". He describes "parallax" as that "constantly shifting perspective between two points between which no synthesis or mediation is possible", and shares Žižek's likening of the shifting perspectives to the "opposed sides of the Moebius strip which…although they are linked, they are two sides of the same phenomenon which, precisely as two sides, can never meet" (Žižek 2006, 4, cited in Boenisch 2010, 164). Boenisch explains that Lehmann has identified an "essential opposition" of dramatic and postdramatic theatre as "appearance instead of plot action,

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[98] The term is borrowed from Slavoj Žižek (2006).

performance instead of representation" and suggests that reflexive dramaturgies can short-circuit this "rupture" to reconfigure this essential opposition – "to stage the appearance of plot action (not: instead of) and the performance of representation (not: instead of)":

> A complex interference of representation and presence, perfectly symbolized in the parallax, emerges, and traditional representational closure makes way to a performance aperture (2010, 171).

Boenisch's reviewing of this aporetic logic as an "aperture" opens up the understanding of new dramaturgical approaches for fictional representation and performative presence to co-exist, suggesting that it breaks the antagonism between these modalities, opening up varied "points of entry" and a "multiplication of perspectives" – "such a constantly shifting spectatorial perspective ultimately prevents any superficial consumption" (ibid.). He cites Russian philosopher, Boris Groys who has coined the term "sub-medial suspicion" as meaning

> a testing, inquisitive attention to and an expectation precisely of remaining differences and gaps in and between multiple perspectives on offer, instead of the established assumption of closed, unambiguous coherence (Groys, cited in Boenisch 2010, 172).

Boenisch's reflexive dramaturgies align with arguments through this research for an epistemological curiosity that has the potential to "turn theatre performance into a vital contemporary cultural site of encounter and experience" (ibid.). This concept links to Moyo's argument for a Physical Theatre as embodying "corporeal networks", which I explore in PART III. I argue that the potential for a reflexive dramaturgy is heightened in FPTC's notion of the "documentary danceplay". Boenisch crucially highlights that Lehmann's seminal study of the Postdramatic Theatre of the 1980s and 1990s not be understood as a "theatre without dramatic texts" – as Lehmann points out, dramaturgic approaches can be "both full of play and, yet, still full of the play" (Lehmann, cited in Boenisch 2010, 163–164). Lehmann observes that certain dramaturgies take advantage of a postdramatic "rift between the discourse of the text and that of the theatre" (ibid.) which allows for a foregrounding of presentational, self-reflexive and experiential *mises en scène* in place of the traditional representation of a play-text (Boenisch 2010, 164). Many of FPTC's dramaturgical experiments exhibit this kind of "play" with plays.

The collaborations between playwright, Reza de Wet's scripts and Gordon's choreographies are examples of this embodied, relational play with traditional dramaturgical structures – especially her "texturing" of a canonical Chekovian sensibility and landscape in for instance, *On The Lake* (2001) which FPTC produced for the 2001 National Arts Festival and our collaborative response (co-choreographed by Gordon and Finestone-Praeg), *Lake beneath the Surface* (2001). Krueger (2015, 155) notes that De Wet's *Russian Trilogy* (2002) is "a postmodern response to her favourite author", but he also observes that she "distanced herself from postmodern writing and aligned herself with what might seem a more old-fashioned tradition: one drawing on medieval mystery plays and archetypal characters, rather than the more cerebral realms of deconstruction". Krueger remarks that for De Wet, mood was always more important than character. Krueger cites Hannes van Zyl who claims that for De Wet the "social framework in the piece is less important…than the texture of dream and play" (2015, 150). I argue that De Wet possibly found immense imaginative "play" in her collaborations with FPTC, which further allowed her space to experiment with different forms of playwriting. Gordon observes that the texts that De Wet wrote for FPTC mostly did not require any or much amendment and he credits this to the close relationship he and De Wet had at this stage in their careers: "she knew how I moved, she knew how I worked…the collaboration wasn't something new, it had a history" (Gordon, in interview with Mostert 2016). Gordon describes her contribution as "a poetic landscape of words, and signifiers and meanings that fed the movement landscape" (Gordon, in interview with Mostert 2016). Her writing for FPTC is perhaps more akin to what Lehmann identifies as the development of an "autonomisation of language" (Poschmann's term, cited in Lehmann 2006, 18), in which language appears not as the speech of characters but as an "autonomous theatricality" – Lehmann clarifies that Poschmann explains it as "a form directed against the 'depth' of speaking figures, which would suggest a mimetic illusion" (Poschmann, cited in Lehmann 2006, 18). Lehmann develops this observation through Elfriede Jelinek's concept of "juxtaposed 'language surfaces'" ("*Sprachflagen*") emerging in place of dialogue (2006, 18). And yet, while De Wet's dream texts for FPTC manifest in fragments and episodic dreamscapes, in a parallax twist, Gordon has remarked that De Wet's texts often "centred" the dance/physical theatre work (Gordon, cited in Mostert 2016). Gordon's explanation for his use of the term "danceplay" references this related imaginative play with notions of "the play":

I used danceplay because I was collaborating with people like Reza de Wet at that time – so she was writing text as a playwright and so it was "a play" – her works for us went into the interior of these people – so rather than realist dialogues, it went into interior monologues and so it really pushed the dreamscape and the atmosphere and the mood of the piece. I think that's where I got the idea – it had words, it had movement...I had used it earlier in *Surround Her with Water*...character, action, interaction, fact, fiction...and I used the word "play" because I like play itself – games and imagination. And the "documentary" came from a naughty way of wanting to tease history and objectivity and facts and *The Unspeakable Story* was based on a fact but so little was known – how she was found, lots of conjecture...Nobody knows why, was it an accident and all those maddening possibilities made for excitement...That was the mystery. And that was my other great love – the mysteries...they are part of the ambiguities of life...and so that was the documentary danceplay – the words are ironic I think (Interview, Gordon 2017a).

The documentary danceplay – the body as a site of histories

The "documentary danceplay" is a term conjured by Gordon to describe the full-length works conceived and devised for the company. It was first used to describe the company's signature work, *The Unspeakable Story* (1995), which used original documentaries as sources for its devised dramaturgy.[99] In the documentary danceplays, Gordon usually translates an event in the life of a historical figure, re-inventing narratives from their lives within a contemporary context. In this way, the documentary danceplay elaborates and stages dialogues between creativity, history, fact, fiction, truth, fabrication, transformation and interpretation. In *The Unspeakable Story* (1995), the historical figure is the surrealist painter, René Magritte and in *Bessie's Head* (2000), the historical evocation of creativity is figured in South African writer, Bessie Head. Notably, both figures are artists. Gordon selects one event (historical source) in their lives that becomes the presiding concern for the documentary research – the death by drowning of Magritte's mother, and the questions surrounding the identity of Head's birth identity. Gordon becomes historiographer/cartographer as he begins to map out a bodily site for the excavation of these singular events through the dramaturgical and choreographic imagination.

In these documentary danceplays, the certainty of objective, factual truth is fundamentally deconstructed. The etymology of the term documentary is derived from the Latin "docere", meaning to teach; while the Latin "documentum" is a lesson or proof and the

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[99] My mini Master's dissertation is a postmodern analysis of the "Poetics and Politics" of choreography in *The Unspeakable Story* and Robyn Orlin's *in a corner the sky surrenders*. I have reviewed and summarised some of the descriptions of the work here, but a fuller analysis can be found in Finestone (1995).

Old French word for a document. Its connotations suggest an account or teaching based on documents presented objectively and which serve to record or authenticate a subject (wiktionary; www.etymonline.com). The online resource, www.finedictionary.com, suggests the adjective is "emphasizing or expressing things as perceived without distortion of personal feelings, insertion of fictional matter, or interpretation". Gordon does precisely the opposite in his documentary danceplays. The programme note for *Bessie's Head* sets up this de-composition as playfully forensic:

> A documentary danceplay that dissects the events surrounding the birth of the writer born in South Africa: Bessie Head. Facts and stories…dance and drama…words and song…music, design and imagination collude in this interior viewing of an artist's private domain. A theatrical vision that reveals sights of passion, tenderness and power (Gary Gordon, Programme Note, March 2000).

In *The Unspeakable Story* (1995), the work was originally inspired by a video documentary on the life of the Belgian surrealist painter, René Magritte, as well as Magritte's surrealist paintings which Gordon sought to explore through a single event in Magritte's life: the suicide of his mother. What emerged from the research was that Magritte's mother had committed suicide by throwing herself into the river below their house, and that she was "faceless" when she was pulled out of the river eight days later. In Magritte's paintings, he often depicts faceless or distorted features, and these images fascinated Gordon as a choreographer who chose to probe the intrusive collisions between Magritte's surrealist art and history/life. Discussing the source for *The Unspeakable Story* (1995) script, De Wet comments that

> [w]e spoke about possibilities and then he [Gary] said: let's watch this thing [documentary] about Magritte – he interests me. So we watched it and then someone said that Magritte's mother had drowned herself when he was a child and that he had always said that when they found his mother, her nightgown was over her face like a shroud and then someone else said this wasn't true – that she had been in a polluted river and that she had no face whatsoever and that Magritte never wanted to face up to that – literally [Reza laughs] – then we turned to each other and I'm afraid I don't know what it says about us, but a look of glee is what we shared [sharp intake of breath] because we, suddenly [pause] that!…absolutely, there was a spark! (transcribed from the documentary DVD *The Liberated Body* by Van Hemert and Fox 1996).

That spark finally manifest in a documentary danceplay written in six scenes: The Mirror...the House...The River...The Funeral...the Dream...and the Cycle. Adrienne Sichel wrote of the work that "it is rare to see a South African full-length collaboration of such sustained creativity and cohesive conceptual brilliance" and called the work "a choreographic splicing of fact and magic" (*The Star*, 7 March 1996), while the *Ouest-France* (24 October 1997) in Nantes, France called the work "a shock in space and time, dreamlike and discreetly erotic". Lehmann (2006, 84) cites dream images as one of the postdramatic theatrical signs of production, noting that "an essential quality of the dream is the non-hierarchy of images, movements and words" – that "dream thoughts" form a texture that resembles collage, montage and fragment rather than a logically structured course of events. Gordon's documentary danceplay, *The Unspeakable Story*, embodies this non-hierarchical dreamscape dramaturgy.

Revisiting the creative sites of *The Unspeakable Story* (1995)

In *The Unspeakable Story* we journey through the "unfathomable" house of Magritte's mother. The collaborative ensemble of performer-creators, playwright Reza de Wet, designer Lindy Roberts, composer Leonhard Praeg, and choreographer Gary Gordon, transports the audience into a world that is at once sensual, visual, aural, motional and emotional: a world of ideas and action. Working in conversation with information gleaned from documentary and their own creativity, the artists sought to interpret and represent this tragic event in Magritte's life. Gordon claims:

> I couldn't be as arrogant to say I know why she did it and I don't think in the work we ever provide an answer...we only have the facts and as artists we responded to that incredibly tragic and moving circumstance...one of the factors might perhaps have been living in this confining little house on this dirty river and the fact that she had a job beforehand and she seemed not to do it anymore (Interview, Gordon 1995).

The narrative structure of De Wet's text provides six different episodes that attempt to comment on and investigate why this woman might have committed suicide. Each episode is a different interpretation of the fact of her death. The work becomes like a thriller – a "why did she do it?". Many stories are being shared simultaneously and similarly, there is never one dead female body that can be looked at in only one way. The woman is not only danced by one performer: it is almost as if each dancer represents some aspect of this woman, or that

this woman represents, in small echoes, an aspect of any woman. The work itself also finds no home in the specific details of the Magritte story; it migrates in and out of past and present stories about art, dance, and the cycles of life and death. Gordon says this prevents the Magritte story from becoming a "mere curiosity".

> The whole point of looking at Magritte, at that particular unspeakable fact, was: does this have something to say to us as human beings, dealing with relationships, dealing with people, but also dealing in art (Interview, Gordon 1995).

Before the work even begins, the audience are offered two probing images to ponder. One is the intriguing title of the work and the other is the box-shaped set which is pre-set and present as the audience enters. This box house is painted inside with Magritte's famed clouds and is inscribed at the bottom with the following signature: *Ceci n'est pas un Magritte*. ("This is not a Magritte."). The paradoxes implied in both the title (how can one tell a story that is unspeakable?) and the set (this is not a Magritte) raise many questions, not unlike the titles of Magritte's own paintings. Magritte named many of his paintings in ways that undermined the obvious relation between the title and the painting, the name and the thing, in order to contest or question ways of perception and acts of representation. Roberts' set design flirts playfully with these concepts and intertextually references Magritte's painting, *This is not a pipe* (*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*), which is a depiction of a pipe. Gordon's title resonates similar strategies of inversion in order to bring into question the very act of representation itself. The set is also "cheeky" (Interview with Gordon 1995) in the way it clearly identifies a French theme but is actually a South African version of that theme. The word "story" implies a fictional interpretation, and was inspired by and also refers to one of Magritte's works, *The Central Story*. As Gordon states:

> It was narrative that I was dealing with and different ways of looking at that, so "story" was such a wonderful word…it was also being playful because in our unspeakable story there was so much speech (Interview, Gordon 1995).
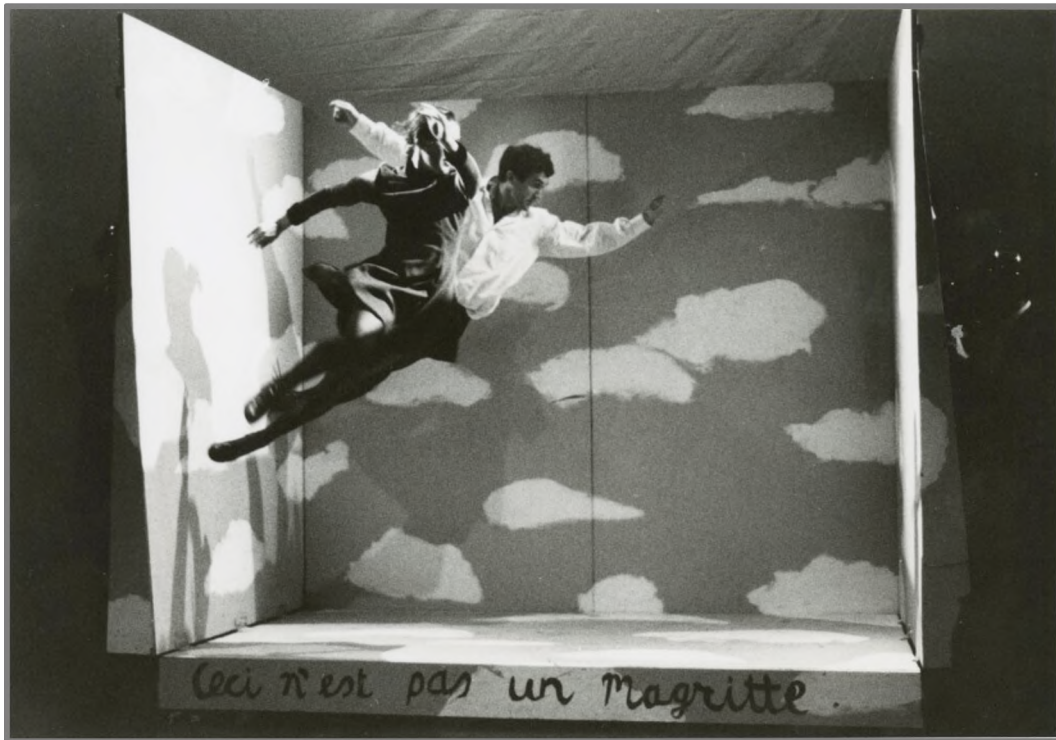
Figure 9. *The Unspeakable Story* (1995). *The House.* Photograph by Elsabe van Tonder. Performers are Andrew Buckland and Samantha Pienaar.

The audience is immediately initiated into an artistic dialogue – this work is about art and the making of art. The six different episodes are The Mirror, The House, The River, The Funeral, The Dream and The Cycle, with each archetypal episode presenting a different view of the unspeakable fact of this woman's death and with each episode referencing a different stylistic expression – for example, a dreamscape is embodied in "The House" scene through the juxtapositions of the "story" (a voice over), the visual imagery (bricks and the set) and embodied Physical Theatre:

> **WOMAN'S VOICE** [Announcing] **The House**
>
> From then on, my narrow house became a dream. It did. Yes, it really did. A house where everything would shift and change – a house where the rooms could be rearranged, an attic be added, a window discovered and a staircase spiral endlessly upwards.
>
> [laughs]
>
> I can simply walk through the walls. While everyone comes and goes, returns to rooms and closed doors, I stand where the draughty hallway should have been, immersed in a transparent grandfather clock.

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[Very formal. Announcing]

The house. Verticals. And silences. And a complete absence of dust. Reeking
of damp and of black soil. The thick walls as smooth as ice.
(De Wet 1994)

Later, in a stylistic turn, "The Funeral" scene is a grotesque and macabre funereal ritual –
with two vaudeville "gravediggers" who carry in a dead woman's body on a chair and
perform a rude, gritty dance around the body. They sing about "a bloated, a belly-up
floater…spare us from maggoty floaters, the terrible strong, smell-stink pong of bloated
belly-up floaters" (De Wet 1995). They also share a series of rude jokes about stinking,
decomposing bodies – "ugly on the table…one time pretty in the cradle". "The River", on the
other hand, is an expressionistic, abstract rendering of a dance of death in which the woman's
body is tossed and tumbled through a seething river (orchestrated through the three
performers in black that become the water that carries her to her death). In Appendix 9, I
attach a succinct description and brief analysis of each of the six scenes under the title
Sensorial Manifestoes: a brief exhumation of the embodied dramaturgy in *The Unspeakable
Story* for a more in-depth analysis of each episode.

De Wet's emotional landscapes scripted for FPTC's performances migrate between the
macabre, the Gothic, the magical, and the dreamscape. Similarly, the geographical and
historical landscapes veer between wildly different contexts and locations. From this world of
this "documentary" thriller, whose surreal dislocations of image (via Magritte as source)
comment on the veracity of how we come to see, know and believe in certain truths – what is
verifiable? what is authentic? – Gordon and De Wet hurled their imaginations into a macabre
Russian nightmare (via Genet and de Sade) in the dark and irreverent *Dead: A slight history
of one called Ivan* (1996). Both works had plenty to say, obliquely, about South Africa and its
own perverse and displaced performances of history as memory, history as truth.

Figure 10. *The Unspeakable Story* (1995). *The Funeral.* Photograph by Elsabe van Tonder. Performers include with Reza de Wet (on the chair), and dancers, Lanon Prigge and Natalie Gmur (on the floor) and standing funeral-goers, Juanita Finestone-Praeg and Samantha Pienaar).

Dead: A slight history of one called Ivan

In sketching some of the geographies/histories of these texts for FPTC, there are clear parallels to stylistic and thematic strategies used in De Wet's own plays. In an interview with De Wet, Ilse van Hemert, the director of *The Liberated Body*, a 1996 SABC TV documentary on FPTC, discusses the script for *Dead: A slight history of one called Ivan* with her. De Wet notes,

> Well, Gary said, why don't we write a life of One Ivan? And then we laughed for about ten minutes and I don't know, we just immediately became fond of One Ivan. Of course, I'd been working on a Russian play and so I was very happy about Ivan and St Petersburg and that's how it happened (transcribed from the documentary DVD *The Liberated Body* by Van Hemert and Fox 1996).

This Russian context and the characters resonate though the performance in an original music score by Leonhard Praeg (playing the accordion live) and the choice of additional music from Zhalejka – folklore from St Petersburg. As Gordon intimates,

> the work is about that sense of the absurdity, the grotesqueness of the moment of dying...Ivan is Russian but I mean he's anywhere really, and I think it is a story a lot of us know. It's about the people that are close to us...mother, father...church, community...all those institutions that surround us and envelop us...and this poor man is consumed by them (Gordon, transcribed from the documentary DVD *The Liberated Body* by Van Hemert and Fox 1996).

This "slight history" of the anti-hero, Ivan, is an expressionist and surreal journey through his damaged life from cradle to death. The first character we encounter in De Wet's narrative is the drunk and dishevelled biographer of Ivan's sad tale: a Mr Horace Balls, whose "own hopeless life is manifest in and by his useless attempts to sell the story of One Ivan" and the ever-present Singer, "with his wistful, nostalgic accordion" becomes the Brechtian alienation technique of distancing the action in order to provide some critical commentary on it (Finestone-Praeg, cited in Stevenson 2002a, 86). Both of these characters becomes narrators of Ivan's story. Following De Wet's tone in the interview, the text is a grotesque, black comedy utilising the dark Gothic; it is a macabre, but also humorous storytelling present in many of her full-length works like *Diepe Grond* (1986), *Mirakel* (1992), *Mis* (1993), or *Drif* (1994). De Wet's love of the grotesque is evident in *Dead: A slight history of one called Ivan* (1996) in her use of the rude ditty and foreboding lullaby-cum-nursery rhyme that the

deranged mother sings to Ivan. When we first meet Ivan, he is stifled, in the dark, on his deathbed. A chorus of dancers sing to him in a Gregorian chant version of "Oranges and Lemons" (De Wet's stage directions).

> What is all the fuss?
> About a little pus?
> Why not let it rot?
> Throbbing and hot.
> Let it squelch and squirt.
> And out comes all the dirt.
> Let it run and ooze.
> What have you got to lose?
> (De Wet 1996)

The chant parodies the religious rites and rituals that so often attend the dying and is a confessional about the body – "its concealed and congealed matter" (Finestone-Praeg, cited in Stevenson 2002a, 86). Lying on his deathbed, the tortured, bandaged and hallucinating Ivan vomits out his torrid sexual fantasies and shudders and rasps for breath while Nursie attends to all his needs. Describing the inventory of his condition (stage direction reads: "excited"), she notes his blood pressure, that his bowel movements have stopped, that his temperature is extremely high and his heartbeat is "almost-not-at-all". She also notes that his "male member is very, very small [with a terrible, sarcastic laugh]" and cruelly calls him "Wee Willie Winkie". Krueger (2015, 146) says that "for De Wet, the imaginative world of childhood was associated not only with innocence, but also with primal drives and polymorphic erotic explorations. Many of her childlike characters come across as both brutal and innocent, and they're caught up in a curious muddle of naivety and cruelty". This scene captures this "muddle" of behaviour. Like Nursie, the mother appears similarly as an extreme and demonised sexual predator of sorts. The mother is a nightmarish creature – insatiable, smothering, needy. She appears as an abhorrent, absurd parody – with huge, suffocating breasts which she shoves into Ivan's mouth, feeding him on her own corrupt greed. The biographer, Mr Horace Balls, describes the mother from his Big Book:

> Barely confined in taut, cheap cotton, her stomach protruded with monstrous abruptness. Her person expressed with overpowering force every kind of physical process I remember, when she spoke to me, she seemed to swallow me down into her womanly amplitudes. Even her voice, gassy, ruminative, seemed a kind of alimentary canal and everything she said sounded like the slow release of noxious gas (De Wet 1996).

When she sings her lullaby for Ivan, she holds him tightly in her talon-like grip. Both of Ivan's parents beat him up as they engage in their own deranged power plays and poor Ivan is irrevocably caught up in their violence.

Lullaby
Baby, baby, naughty baby
Hush, you squealing thing, I say.
Peace this moment, peace or maybe,
Daddykins will pass this way.

Baby, baby, if he hears you
As he comes into the house,
Limb from limb at once he'll tear you,
just as pussy tears a mouse.

And he'll beat you, beat you, beat you,
And he'll beat you to pap,
And he'll eat you, eat you, eat you,
Every morsel, snap, snap, snap.
(De Wet 1996)

As noted, the sinister and grotesque content of the work, while signalling a Russian context, resonated deeply with the underbelly of many South African institutions in 1996. Our own histories of colonial mentalities, Calvinism, restrictive religions, patriarchal prejudices and moralities, and social and political atrocities were all recognisably close to the skin – "Ivan's repressed emotional body in his final hours, releases his torrent of pent up and pathologised anger" (Finestone-Praeg, cited in Stevenson 2002a, 86). In the *Unwilling Champion* (1999) interview, De Wet (referring to the female character, Emma in *Worm in the Bud* (1990), signals this corrosive relationship between psychic repression of a patriarchal and Calvinist consciousness and the South Africa context:

> I think Emma is a more terrible embodiment of masculine consciousness. It gave me great joy to see her disintegrating like that. I think Africa is a very feminine place. Jung called Africa the subconscious of the human race...because it is feminine and quite threatening and in that way a very strange and ambiguous continent. The colonial attitude has been very divorced from it, trying to stave it off and control it and not encounter it. And of course if you repress something it will shatter you. And deep repression that is never faced will destroy you (Hauptfleisch, Huisman and Finestone 1999, 62).

Patricia Handley, reviewing *Dead* at the National Arts Festival, pertinently comments that the programme note indicates that De Wet had based the scripted text on quotations from

Jean Genet and the Marquis de Sade, both of whom wrote with a deep interest in the ambiguities of erotic desires and primal drives. Gordon comments that he read Genet and de Sade at that time in an attempt to understand and appreciate the butoh dance of Tatsumi Hijikata which he had started lecturing on (Personal correspondence 2019). In the programme, the Genet quotation reads: "We love each other without love" (from *Our Lady of the Flowers*), while the de Sade was based on a *Dialogue between a Priest and a Dying Man*, which was the main inspiration for the work:

> The dying man rang, the women entered; and after he had been a while in their arms the preacher became one whom nature has corrupted, all because he had not succeeded in explaining what a corrupt nature is (Marquis de Sade, from *The Art of Physical Intelligence*, cited in Stevenson 2002a, 85).

Krueger has noted De Wet's characteristic "juxtaposition of the crude with the lyrical" (2015, 150) and in this "small" text, this contrast is captured perfectly in the Gregorian chant and the lullaby. Handley reads aspects of Gordon's embodied response to De Wet's script as drawing together a "seal" for the work's reception:

> Narrated by Lindsay Reardon, this grotesque portrait of a dying man and his abusive priest rips into hypocrisy, corruption and facets of sexuality with a relentless, sadistic physicality. Lindy Robert's design and Leonhard Praeg's score (which he also performs as part of the action) put the seal on a disturbing theatre piece which taps into a pervading masochism, that snarling brutality, infecting South African lives (Handley, in *The Star* 15 July 1996).

Transformation and embodiment

Gordon, like De Wet, has never been fond of obvious political commentary and both preferred to allow the form of their works to critique via imaginative form and irreverent humour. Krueger re-iterates De Wet's strong positionality on the transformative function of theatre. She is well-known for her insistence that the function of theatre be neither to educate nor to entertain, and "least of all to perform a sociopolitical function" (Krueger 2010, 217) – rather, she believed that theatre has

> …the profound function of transforming. To enlighten or to inform is deadly. Transformation is radiant. To inform does nothing. It only goes into your mind. The other, as Artaud says, goes into your whole body (De Wet, cited in Solberg 2003, 188).

Krueger (2010, 188) locates De Wet's view as referring to "an ancient ur interpretation of theatrical ritual whereby enactment not only demonstrates transformation but is also transformative". Krueger, in this insight, articulates the possibility I have argued for that a Physical Theatre can embrace and construe complexity/multiple possibilities through the way the body/image can hold and translate a transformative impulse. For instance, in her script for *Lilith* (1998), De Wet construes Lilith's anger as mythic and ceremonially ritualistic rather than rhetorical or educative. In *Lilith* (1998), De Wet evokes an archaic and archetypal underworld which describes the mythic betrayal of Lilith by Adam. Adrienne Sichel called *Lilith* a work of "brooding creativity, Wagnerian passions and stormy physicality" (*Cue Review*, 4 July 1998). The opening lines of text imagine a mythic world where

> beautiful Lilith, so they say, forlorn and betrayed by her husband, Adam, went away to live under the sea until, on a black night, hanging hard to the dark with her hands, and pushing against it with her feet, Lilith gave birth to the moon (De Wet 1998).

In *Lilith* (1998), for instance, De Wet re-interprets classic mythologies surrounding the biblical figure of Lilith. In her visioning of Lilith as a mythic archetype rather than a stereotype, De Wet conjures an image of Lilith's complexity. McVickar Edwards, in her book *The Storyteller's Goddess*, describes a mythological lineage of Lilith in relation to the biblical account of Lilith in the following way:

> Lilith is related to the Sumerian Goddess Ninlil…and is identified with the lily or the lotus…the sweeping sexuality of Her Person characterises the endless mysteries of growing things over which She once unquestionably ruled…It is easy to see Eve and Lilith as two Sisters, both degraded versions of the Goddess who, split from each other, represent two halves of a once-sacred sexual whole (McVickar Edwards 2000, 195–196).

De Wet recalls this patriarchal lineage in Lilith's history and in episodic form, her text simultaneously contemporises the narrative, tracing, via a courtroom scene, a modern couple engaged in divorce proceedings, a contemporary version of this historical betrayal (see Appendix 10 to view De Wet's original handwritten script on an old Drama examination question paper – she was likely invigilating, something she was not kindly disposed to). Lilith's mythic wrath finally combusts in a vengeful curse,

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[m]ay you be filled with an ever-lasting unfathomable longing for me? Not only you – but all of your progeny. Even when they have forgotten the name of Lilith – may you burn in the profane and in the sacred fire (De Wet 1998).

This poetic, ceremonial curse (embodied in the production through a voice-over using De Wet's own voice) is accompanied by Gordon's choice of a cacophonous Alfred Schnittke operatic score and the set of tall Daliesque bronze "crutches" and ladders from which the ensemble of performers relentlessly climb and fall.[100] With this moment, Lilith's vengeful wrath is complete, and, exhausted, she gives birth to the moon.

Figure 11. *Lilith* (1998). Photograph by Elsabe van Tonder. Performers are Juanita Finestone-Praeg, Simphiwe Mba, Andrew Cameron and Angela Smith.

Embodying Lilith

Gordon was nominated for the 1998 FNB Vita Choreographer of the Year for *Lilith*. In this work, Gordon returns to an expression reminiscent of earlier works like *Shattered Windows*. The work is a primitive rite which calls on the universal – the characters are mythic, immense

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[100] Costume and set design by Diana Cupsa, resident designer at Rhodes University in 1998.

and god-like. Their costumes (in bronze earthy palettes) are sensual, in a pagan way, and scant, exposing flesh and isolated body parts. In the description below, I rework my original description from *The Art of Physical Intelligence* (Finestone-Praeg, cited in Stevenson 2002a, 129–133), drawing attention to the ways in which Gordon has embodied De Wet's script through a Physical Theatre ethos of collaboration which is evident in the independent layers and yet integrated shaping of text, design and performance. Diana Cupsa's set is a labyrinth of metal crutches (sourced in inspiration from Dali) about a metre high. The crutches lead to a ladder which extends upward towards the theatre ceiling. This set evokes a treacherous spikiness that becomes more foreboding and dangerous as the shards of lighting reveal moulded body parts which are draped over some of the crutches. We dimly see the outline of a woman clutching a baby and balancing precariously, and she begins to walk along the labyrinthian path created by the crutches.

Figure 12. *Lilith* (1998). Photograph by Elsabe van Tonder. Performers are Juanita Finestone-Praeg, Werner Marx and Andrew Cameron.

A voice-over recites a letter Lilith has written to Adam in which she assures him that she has survived their parting and that he need not be concerned for her well-being:

You really mustn't think that I'm moping about and feeling alone…I'm having a delightful time here at the sea (you know me!) and I have a string of admirers. All bright and handsome (De Wet 1998).

Simultaneously, a duet between a man and a woman commences – it is full of intricate and playful rhythms echoing their flirtations and recalling perhaps happier times of union and play echoed in the music score. The juxtaposition of several aural texts occurring simultaneously is typical of a Physical Theatre which, as David Alcock says, uses the coexistence of simultaneous narratives – those embodied in the verbal texts as well as those of the physically performing bodies (Alcock 1999). This layering achieves the purpose of opening up interpretation – in this instance, it performs an ambiguity – the couple may be Lilith and Adam in better days, or Adam with his new wife, Eve.

The mood shifts as the two lovers come to rest and we see the body of a man crawling over and along the obstructive maze of crutches. Beneath the ladder, Lilith waits.

Love has lit a flame in my heart;
It burns like a candle that no-one can put out.
Though I carry it in the wind, against the fury of the east and the north,
I can find no peace or rest, it cannot be blown out
(De Wet 1998).

The text captures her status – she can command the spheres. The duet that follows is like a tempestuous and passionate dream – it is her memory of Adam and the enormity of their passion. The duet is a bruising, violent outburst bordering on a duplicitous pleasure/pain threshold. Its concluding energy resides in exhaustion – and the onset of separation. The voice-over tells of a contemporary court scene where divorce proceedings are taking place. Here, De Wet draws the mythic back to the personal and the intimate. It is also here that Lilith commits to and calls up her epic curse against Adam before her world explodes and the set transforms into an anarchic, volcanic surge with the rise of the operatic Schnittke score. Flesh collides, bodies hurtle through space, falling and bashing against other bodies. Primal moans resound through the as bodies make contact with the floor and metal in a final ritual of catharsis and deliverance. As Lilith's vengeful wrath is finally satiated and, exhausted, she gives birth to the moon.

Physical image

Krueger lightly touches on the contribution to the development of post-apartheid drama in South Africa made by Physical Theatre. He notes that

> [b]y not being bound overtly to textuality, this form of theatre-making may be able to work with and transform identities more easily than text-based work – textuality conceptualises, abstracts; whereas the move towards a physical theatre challenges an emphasis on intellectualisation, and does not rely on any specific language (2010, 219).

He says that Artaud's suggestion for a theatre of sensation implies a theatrical language beyond the verbal which involves spectacle, and emphasises visual and rhythmic elements, rather than dialogue (2010, 220). In his early writings in *Physical Images in the South African Theatre* (1997), Fleishman provides a rich account of the rejection of a Western, verbal theatre and the provocations offered by a Physical Theatre. As Krueger notes, Fleishman considers the body as a text which challenges the logo-centrism of the written word and endorses Physical Theatre as a viable means of transformation since it is not restricted to cultural interpretations embodied in a particular language (Krueger 2010, 223). I have similarly argued for this in pointing out that via a personalised, idiosyncratic improvisation and devised process, Physical Theatre rejects a reified body/dance form and has the potential to embody any expression that is potentially relevant to the nexus of research and creation around a particular work – as implied earlier, Physical Theatre is an approach to making performance/theatre. Fleishman (1996, 223) interestingly identifies two types of transformation that can occur – "the first is when the performer's body changes in front of the spectator into a multiplicity of characters and images" – for example, Andrew Buckland's morphing mime techniques of characters or the characters in *Woza Albert* – but Fleishman cites a second, more "significant" type of transformation. This, he argues, "involves a physical action or gesture which begins as one thing and metamorphoses into something else passing through a range of possibilities" (1996, 177). As Krueger (2016, 223) explains, Fleishman believes it is this second kind of transformation that has liberatory potential – it is not simply the "adoption of a new role or a different image" or "exchanging one identity for another" – but it is an "act of transformation which reveals that the alternative identity was already part of the original formulation – it's a transformation and reinterpretation of an image". Krueger comments that "in this way, theatrical movement is able to open up some of the ambiguities of identification" (ibid.) and in this way, Physical Theatre has a "vital role to

play in the presentation and representations of identities in South African theatre" (2010, 224). Fleishman advocates for this multiplicity of meaning in the physical image:

> The physical image is multi-valent, ambiguous and complex. It leads to a proliferation of meaning which demands an imaginative response from the spectator. There are those that would argue that such open-ended images are inappropriate for a country struggling to deal with the uncertainties of a changing reality. They would have clarity, single meanings, a narrowing down of options in a manner designed to appeal to the audience's need for stability and certainty of understanding. I would suggest this is a misguided opinion. The theatre in our country has often been guilty of simplicity as much in its condemnation as in its condonation of apartheid. What we need now is the opening up of alternatives and options, the promotion of dialogue in a desperate attempt to avoid the replacement of one monologistic absolutism with another. Physical images are essentially dialogical: a double-voiced play of opposites. They are ambiguous, ambivalent, often opaque, but precisely because they do not reduce to simple single meanings, they demand that the audience be actively involved in making individual choices (1997, 203).

Fleishman observes that "the choice of the physical body as a primary meaning system is prevalent in the South African theatre" exactly because it can celebrate difference and present alternate possibilities (ibid.).

The collaborative dialogue between De Wet's written scripts and Gordon's embodied physical performance are instances of the dialogic of physical images that Fleishman speaks of – layered, opaque and complex. Hauptfleich notes that because De Wet has not had a "confrontational style" and because she has "not taken to the role of public figure quite as easily as some of her peers (despite a quite magnificent eloquence once forced in to the spotlight – vide the interview)", few have realised the extent to which Reza de Wet has contributed to "breaking down barriers within the theatrical system in South Africa":

> ...she has not only staked a claim for women writer and writers in Afrikaans, but has helped to re-establish the notion of serious and formal playwriting as a valid and complementary alternative to the workshop tradition which necessarily arose during the eighties and has worked so well for South Africa theatre (Hauptfleisch, Huisman and Finestone 1999, 56–57).

An interview undertaken with Reza de Wet in 1999, *Unwilling Champion* (Hauptfleisch, Huisman and Finestone) locates her "unwillingness" to champion causes or to be domesticated by a politics of identity – it also captures her sardonic, wicked wit and irreverent sense of humour. An example of De Wet's tone is captured in this short extract

from the interview when we enquired if she has any reservations about being identified as a feminist writer. She replied:

> I resent it entirely. I find it a rather condescending attitude...I don't agree with categorising people. It falls into the patriarchal trap of needing to define and separate. If you accept divisions, then you are accepting those structures. I believe to become psychically androgynous is the answer (1999, 59).

My reading of De Wet's notion of "psychic androgyny" is her intervention with a binary, polarised Western metaphysics that locates the masculine/feminine as sex-based categories; De Wet, I believe, would have understood these terms, masculine/feminine, as akin to principles or energies, rather than categories. In this, possibly De Wet's danceplays for FPTC are instances of French poststructuralist feminist, Hélène Cixous' *écriture feminine* – feminine writing – in which either sex could inhabit the logic of either of these energies, with the masculine as an active, directed principle/energy and the feminine as an absorbing, peripheral but encompassing principle/energy. Such thinking would foster ambiguity (and complexity) as attendant on psychic awareness as androgynous. Uytterhoeven (2015), in a review of the Hansen and Callison's *Dance Dramaturgy: Modes of Agency, Awareness and Engagement* (2015), similarly discerns an ambiguous dramaturgical awareness in this new collection of texts on dramaturgy which has shifted the discourse from one of anxiety about the figure of the dramaturge to one that acknowledges the "relationality and agency through a distributed dramaturgical awareness". Categorical and systematised thinking is rejected in defining the boundaries of new dramaturgy. Carter, Dowling and Schwartz (2016, 47) suggest that if traditionally the dance dramaturge is thought of as a choreographer's "outside eye" or "first audience", the only thing that is generally agreed upon is that dramaturgy is "about asking good questions". Performance research is about "asking good questions" of performance and, as Gordon has argued, choreography does not rely only on "inspiration, intuition, spontaneity, luck, chance and observation" – it requires the detailed movement research that draws on a nexus of "discursive, creative, experiential and informed modes of inquiry" (Gordon 1997). Embodied in Gordon's vision is a challenge to assumptions that creative impulses are innate talents exclusive to some but not others, that creative works are inspired by a benevolent Terpsichorean muse and that creative acts are feeling things rather than thinking things. While not denying that an inspired vision and mysterious alchemy takes place, a Physical Theatre project requires a careful and thorough process of imaginative research. It is here that the muse and the archaeologist enter into a dialogue – the inspired

artist becomes an archaeologist who discovers, digs and sifts through an evolving process of sourcing and research to eventually unearth the work. This research can take many forms, but it is through surveying a range of sources and meticulously researching his/her subject that the choreographic imagination engages with collective memory and biography to re-invest these histories with a contemporary presence. As I suggest in Finestone-Praeg (2002), the delicate interface between notions of biography (the public) and autobiography (the intimate) as an evocation of memory – the wild water of the choreographic unconscious– are part of the choreographer's collective and personal recall. As Gordon's words intimate, this seduction of "play" creates ambiguity, mystery, the unknown – and through this layered complexity, creates Boenisch's "reflexive dramaturgies". As Lehmann and Primavesi (2009, 4) claim:

> Therefore the dramaturge should no longer be defined as the controlling power of the theatre. When he or she is not just the guard of the institution (a kind of "police") or the advocate of the text (a "literary adviser") or the advocate of the audience (the first "outside eye" in rehearsals), the dramaturge may instead become a negotiator for the freedom of theatrical experimentation and risk.

Finally, I argue that these dramaturgical ways align with the FPTC's pedagogical heritage which seeks to negotiate small freedoms via its choreopolitical promise to a Physical Intelligence and an embodied dramaturgy. In PART II (iv), I extend these ideas in an application to three FPTC case studies that extend this embodied dramaturgy to a South African historiography as archival dramaturgies.

(iv) Physical Theatre as historiography

Archival dramaturgies: Three embodied responses

(i)   *The Passion of Judas* (1996)[101]

(ii)   *Bessie's Head* (2002)[102]

(iii)   *Wreckage* (2011)[103]

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[101] This work was choreographed by myself and performed by Gary Gordon, Craig Morris and Lanon Prigge. See Appendix 11 for more detailed information.

[102] This work was choreographed by Gary Gordon and performed by myself, Martin Gylling (from Denmark), Zingisani Mkefa, Jane O'Connell, Daluxolo Papu, Helen Seaman, Tanya Surtees and Acty Tang. See Appendix 11 for details of the original collaborations.

[103] This work was a collaboration between UBOM! and FPTC with a collaborative devised process held by Andrew Buckland, Brink Scholtz and Athina Vahla. See Appendix 11 for details.

Memory in Translation in the body archive[104]

In his book, *African Philosophy and the Quest for Autonomy: A Philosophical Investigation* (2000), Leonhard Praeg discusses African philosophy as the recovery of a lost body of thought. In conversation with me in 2000, we mused on the idea that perhaps my attempts at writing dance history could be read as the recovery of lost thought on the body. This drew my attention to the lack of dance scholarship in relation to the spectral bodies of South African dance histories – in the attempts to access these lost thoughts on dancing bodies, we are left pondering over vague maps. In a contribution to the Shuttle 02 Dance History Research Skills Development Project, I evoked this image of the choreographer as cartographer mapping out co-ordinates for a historical exhumation of danced histories. In her novel, *Fugitive Pieces*, Anne Michaels says that in ancient maps those parts of the world that had not yet been identified were "labeled simply and frighteningly '*Terra incognita*', challenging every mariner who unfurled the chart". She writes:

> Maps of history have been less honest. *Terra cognita* [read by me as the known or remembered] and *Terra incognita* [read as the unknown or unremembered] inhabit exactly the same coordinates of time and space. The closest we come to knowing the location of what's unknown is when it melts through the map like a watermark, a stain transparent as a drop of rain. On the map of history, perhaps the water stain is memory (Michaels 1997, 137; emphasis added).

In response, I argued (Finestone-Praeg 2002) that perhaps the body is the stain that we drop on our textual reconstructions of history – a stain that reveals the watermark, the other, more elusive yet embodied side of this choreographed histories. Postmodern and postcolonial discourses have elucidated the multiple voices and subjectivities of history, revealing that history is not about facts or truths, but selective interpretations and translations of events and people. As historian Jenkins suggests, the past is gone, it has disappeared and historiography is what historians make of this past: "the past and history float free of each other" (Jenkins 1991, 5). Historiography is an intertextual, linguistic construct and often this history tells us more about historians than past events. Tang (2001), in his discussion of Physical Theatre as historiography, cites Munslow's distinction that while "the past" indicates the actual happenings, and can be associated with the "factual", "history" is a discourse about the past, a "narrative construction" (Munslow, in Tang 2001, cited in Stevenson 2002c, 136). Tang argues that historiography, understood in this light, "thus exhibits an awareness of its

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[104] This was the title of a paper I presented and published with the Shuttle 02 Dance History Research Skills Development Project, a South African and Danish exchange held in 2002.

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construction as a narrative or discourse" and this "self-reflexive act of narration reveals the present, and its attitudes towards and its methods of appropriating the past, more than revealing the past itself". Many of FPTC's works that engage with the idea of the "documentary danceplay" utilise deconstructive strategies to draw attention to the ways that contemporary narratives are assembled through particular ways of seeing, but always through a framing/knowing in the present. Tang alerts us to the possibilities that Physical Theatre strategies of deconstruction hold for opening up historiography through a visual, embodied dramaturgy. He says that

> [w]hen a Physical Theatre creates an intertextual narrative (rather than a linear, rational narrative), it interacts with the histories brought by the performers on stage, generating meanings (discourses) using the sentient bodies as sites where different histories collide. In its (re)enactment of this collection of histories, mysteries and dilemmas of the present are revealed; the space is opened from where a future different from the past can be negotiated. Transformation becomes a possibility (Tang, in Stevenson 2002c, 136).

Extending Leonhard Praeg and Acty Tang's insights, perhaps we begin to appreciate that the body has a mind of its own and that no textual reconstruction of history can exhaust what the body remembers. We possibly begin to understand that writing history is always the history of the present rather than documented chronological contexts that attempt to narrate the past. Both discursive discourse (a lost body of thought) and physical, experiential and interpretative discourse (lost thought about the body) become viable research methodologies – they are complementary, and we can use both through a "mutual archaeology" (Leonhard Praeg's term in our discussion). From the textual, we excavate that which has not been said (Michael's *Terra incognita*, the unknown) and from the physical we extrapolate that which can be said. In this middle ground, where these two discourses rub, we construct memory. In this way, writing/choreographing history becomes a creative, imaginative act of translation. And this does not imply "concocting" a history. Rather, it means that via a creative interaction with existing textual discourse and interpretations of the permutations of danced forms, and in relation with our own embodied subjectivities, we can attempt to encode, decode and construe meanings that share our histories.

Ann Cooper Albright, in her account of the body and identity in contemporary dance, cites the use of a term by Audre Lorde – "biomythography" – to describe a process where narratives "weave the historical facts of people's existence elaborating visionary sagas of

social and personal survival" (Albright 1997, 151). Albright suggests that in order to be effectively and potently embodied in performance, history has to be recast:

> situated in a different light and taken up by different bodies. The importance of history here is not the importance of historical fact or artefact; such documents, authorized in the service of white dominance are rightfully suspect. Rather, history for so many African-Americans is located in the story – in the telling again and again...It is this creative element in retelling the story that makes this history – the history of peoples and their stories rather than the history of facts – inherently performative (1997, 151–153).

While Albright's text refers to the Afro-American experience, the South African experience echoes similar strategies of story-telling as survival. Mjabulo Ndebele, in an article entitled "Memory, symbol, and the triumph of narrative" notes how at a certain point during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, "testimonies" transformed into "story":

> and so it is that the stories of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission seem poised to result in one major spin-off, among others: the restoration of narrative. In few countries in the contemporary world do we have a living example of people re-inventing themselves through narrative (Ndebele, in Kellner 2000, 24).

This re-invention through narration becomes critical to processes of transformation, and performance in South Africa continues to play a profound role in these processes of becoming healed.

(i)   *The Passion of Judas*

In 1996 I created a work called *The Passion of Judas* for the Standard Bank National Arts Festival as part of FPTC's programme, *Abundance*. In this work, the idea of a "biomythography" via collective and private storytelling was manifest through two historical sources: the first, a re-writing of the biblical story of Judas – his betrayal, guilt and absolution; and second, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) – the TRC in the Eastern Cape had just commenced and the work became a space to reflect on, question and respond to some of the vile excesses of apartheid through these translated histories. The devised process was vital to this translation of public memory, and our own "biomythographies" were created by exploring the performer's personal responses to ideas of betrayal, both intimate and public. David Alcock, in "Somatic emphasis in South African

theatre: Intervention in the body politic", acknowledges the gravitas of these sources in his reflection on the work:

> The creative process of this work was influenced to some extent by the start of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the Eastern Cape: it explores the impact of human beings "telling their story and collapsing under the weight of it" (programme note), as well as other related issues, such as the tension between public and private experience; the process whereby inner motivations become public information; and how individuals in the present desperately seek absolution from their personal stories of crime in the past (Alcock 1999, 55–56).

He cites a physical image from the work that encapsulates the pressure of holding emotional burden as an image of bearing weight:

> During the performance, one male performer is in a bent kneeling position while two other male performers, one carrying the other, proceed to stand on the kneeling man's back. The audience, to the point of being unbearable, feels the tension of the moment caused by our sense of endurance of the kneeling performer in kinaesthetic sympathy (Alcock 1999, 55–56).

Alcock's description of the use of immediacy, risk and danger in Physical Theatre in his response to this moment in the work mirrors journalist David Beresford's (1996) description of the TRC as South Africa's "theatre of catharsis and pain". The use of improvised process became central in investigating this "body politic" as a site for the meeting of collective and personal histories. My earlier commentary in PART II (i) on debunking assumptions about autobiography align with these notions of history as constructed narrative – the embellished nature of memory reveals autobiography/history to be a re-invention of what we imagine our most intimate and/or public memories to be. It is a space where two arenas of public and private experience either collude or collide, questioning the known relation between bodily experience and cultural representation, and tracing connections between bodies and identities. It is this resonance, this meeting of the socially inscribed body (culture) with the individually inscribed body (experience), that may question the constructions of history and identity within dance. With reference to American choreographers like Bill T. Jones and Johanna Boyce, Albright examines the audience/performer dialogue that utilises a more intimate "I":

> Claiming a voice within an art form that traditionally glorifies the mute body, these choreographers used autobiography in performance to change the dynamic of an objectifying gaze. Almost overnight, dance audiences and critics

had to contend not only with verbal text in dance, but also with personal narratives that insisted, sometimes in very confrontational ways, on the political relevance of the body's experience (Albright 1997, 121–122).

Albright notes the way that their work expands notions of autobiography and re-organises the boundaries of the self/other dichotomy. The personal bodily questionings in *The Passion of Judas* similarly insist on questioning (through juxtaposition and ambiguity) a self-attention and subjectivity of experience that interfaces with public and private identity. Within the context of these confessional histories, both new and old, the work explores the nature of betrayal, its motivations and consequences – the stories told, while resonating with historical themes and characters, become self-confessional acts of remembrance and healing which have political relevance. In *The Passion of Judas*, notions of justice are evoked through the set design. Three rostra are positioned in relation to each other – the rostra at the centre-back becomes a shrine/altar, while the rostra to either side are the weighted scales. Each of the three male figures has a personal confessional space – a space of reckoning. The costuming is monochrome with the exception of a single, red jacket-cape that hints at the treachery consequent to Judas' "passion". Salvador Dali's *The Sacrament of the Last Supper* (1955) provided a visual source that inspired the movement ideas. Images of the body as bread and the wine as blood are aroused in the performers' movements – vocal hisses, little tappings on the veins of an arm are all attempts to get "under the skin", to uncover a bodily knowing, to understand. Movements' themes of opening and closing the body, of covering the eyes, mouth or ears to avoid confrontation, hint at duplicity, deception. The use of movement repetitions of the rituals of confession come to embody the desire for absolution and forgiveness. Close, fleeting physical brushes and furtive glances between the three performers create a foreboding mood that hints at an emerging treachery. Judas' kiss is invoked in a myriad of ways through ruptures of intimacy, and the work has a subdued homoerotic tone. The final loss of dignity and vulnerability implicated in betrayal is expressed when the older male figure (Gary Gordon) lowers his trousers and is hoisted upside-down in an inverted crucifix by the other two male performers (Lanon Prigge and Craig Morris).

As both choreographer and researcher, I have, 23 years later, used similar processes of translating my memories of the work in order to examine its choreopolitical residue – organic, embodied, experiential, perhaps one might even say, biomythological and documentary evidences – to recast this work from traces of my working process, documents (photographs,

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DVD footage and programme notes) and notes from the repertory of FPTC in *The Art of Physical Intelligence* (in Stevenson 2002a, 94–95). I concur with Tang who eloquently explains that

> [c]orporeal expressions can be said to exist in the state of liminality because the privileging of rationality has renounced the body as an outsider in terms of acceptable social structures. The body is thus powerful in its potential to transgress these structures (Tang, cited in Stevenson 2002c, 135).

In this work, the idea of the TRC as representing public and personal truth is problematised through a liminality expressed in the performers' bodies. The body, in its ambiguous and unvoiced presentations, is able to transgress and so destabilise the rhetoric of master narratives. Its own performance of truth and reconciliation complicates notions of "truth" as verifiable and unalterable. This idea of the relation between the body, history and power will be extended in PART III via Moyo's notion of performance as a delicate process of "corporeal networking" that can speak back to and into versions of institutionalised power. Through the devised processes of a Physical Theatre, these stories, narrations, these biomythographies and liminalities manifest as embodied dramaturgies, often via an intertextual transdisciplinarity. As Lehmann and Primavesi (2009, 4) note, the "new perceptual habits" of this kind of postdramatic production are manifest through an "inter-mediality", where the "inter is decisive". This notion of *inter*-relation between historical account and the body embraces the idea of memory as translation. This bodily questioning is apparent in Gordon's documentary danceplay on famed South African female author, Bessie Head.

(ii) ***Bessie's Head*** **(2000)**

> The world has to change perhaps subtly, and the times of change are fascinating. The eyes that capture the new and unusual open many doors for others (Bessie Head, in a letter to Dottie Ewan, 30 September 1972; from the programme note). [105]

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[105] Dottie Ewan was a friend of Bessie Head and also a close friend of mine and Gary Gordon. A painter and mother, Dottie provided rich artistic inspiration and conversation to Gordon during his years in Grahamstown. He had lived in her garden flat as a young lecturer at Rhodes. Dottie also performed in Gordon's 1993 work *...they were caught waiting...* at the age of 75. This work stood as an indictment of an ageist tendency in dance to use only young and nubile bodies as performers.

In *Bessie's Head* (2000), Bessie Head's past is reimagined and reconfigured as a source to assemble images and design responses to questions of power and identity. Head's novel, *A Question of Power* (1973), deals with the psychic disintegration of a woman and her struggle to free herself from the controlling, tormented voices she hears in her head. Based on our sourcing of historical material in the New English Literary Museum – voice recordings of Bessie Head, photographic material, Head's novels and personal letters, and readings of the novel – resonances between Head and this female protagonist came to bear a striking resemblance. Head's own history appears to have been a battle with mental instability and a deep longing and nostalgia for her origins, represented in Gordon's danceplay by the focus on her absent mother, Toby (a white woman) and her unknown father (a black man) in South Africa. Gordon interprets Head's dream of the mother she longed for, but never knew. The work pursues this narrative deconstruction of Head's history – how Bessie Head herself had reconstructed a narrative via stories about her mother and her own wish-fulfilment in order to make sense of her abandonment as a child. Head's physical and imagined exile from her own history – first as a child and later as a political refugee living in Botswana – became poignant stories from which to translate her presence in the work. The work evolves through a number of disjointed and episodic fragments. Peggy Phelan points out that a Western myth of narrative order is not something shared by the body, or in fact, even the mind. She declares that

> [t]he body, in short, does not share consciousness's faith in narrative order. The uneven join between the body and consciousness is packed with the expansive ooze of the unconscious…the body's movements are the roaming rooms in which psychic "truths" are lodged (1996, 94–95).

In *Bessie's Head*, both the choreography and the text (an original script by de Wet) share this lack of chronology. The working process included a range of strategies for interpreting Head's obsession with origins as we too performed our readings of what her body did and did not remember. The "documentary" account provides very different and subjective accounts of events surrounding Head's conception and birth, dispelling any notion of a fixed or official historical "truth". Karen Rutter's review stated that the work was "part homage, part excavation, part discovery" (Daily Mail and Guardian, 21 March 2000). We are drawn into Bessie's "head" through the set which is a large Perspex reconstruction/sculpture of a head – slightly transparent and spacious enough to move in. In scattered moments throughout the work, it becomes both a physical and metaphorical locale for the performers to dwell in as

they literally embody/become Bessie's thoughts. The echoes inside Bessie's head, her imaginary compositions of her mother are juxtaposed and reconstructed in relation to voices of reason and power – the sombre rationality and controlling words of male authority. This is elicited through de Wet's text in a section called the "Talking head sequence".

Woman's voice [In the dark. Quietly and brokenly]
My mother is my private goddess. I alone adore her.
[Slowly lights up on head]

Man's voice [Deep and resounding]
My purpose is to clarify – to clarify. Since I am the senior member still living, being of reasonably sound health of mind, and with my knowledge, it is my duty to compile an official record of the white antecedents of Bessie Head. In particular, I wish to give true information about Toby, my sister – mother of Bessie.
[short silence. Deep resounding sigh]
She was a woman – as poor Bessie knew instinctively – who was surely born to tragedy.
[Short silence. When the voice continues, it has a solemn, sing-song, almost liturgical quality]
Born in 1894, commonly known as Toby.
Married to a certain Emery.
Gave birth to a son called Stanley. Who in the summer of '19 was killed by a speeding taxi.

Woman's voice [Broken]
Minds crack, they say, something shatter

Man's voice
And then divorced in '29
By final decree nisi
In '33 committed – very legally
To a mental hospital.
Behind bars and secretly in 1937
She gave birth to a little girl called Bessie.

Woman's voice [Harsh whisper]
They took you…away from me. They…took you away…from me.
[Strange bird-like cry. Short silence]

Man's voice [Now sounding quite normal and rather "proper"]
Who the father was, is completely unknown, and speculation is a waste of time.
A brief encounter? A issue of her mental state? Was she enticed somewhere?
[Short silence]
Was she…waylaid?
[Short silence. Deep and resounding]
And she died…quite peacefully…the thirteenth of December, 1943.

Woman's voice [Quiet and tearful]
I never knew my mother. To me she remained...an utter...utter...mystery.
[Whispers. Almost fearful]
Who is she?
[Chorus of wailing voices]
Who...who...whoooo...is...she?
AND/OR
[Sound of retreating, resounding footsteps. Many heavy metal doors being slammed. Cries close and far off, cries of women, of birds, of animals]
(De Wet 2000)

This opening scene exhibits many stylistic traits or signs that Lehmann associates with postdramatic production. As discussed earlier, in most of De Wet's texts for FPTC, the structure of feeling and form that presents in disjointed, often episodic fragments provides a dreamlike structure and tone that creates atmosphere rather than a logical, plot-driven narrative. The aural scoring in this scene of documentary fact (birth dates, inventories of data about Head's mother, places), juxtaposed to the "language surfaces" construed by the delicate, suggestive and repeated punctuations of de Wet's precise stage directions ("short silence", "strange bird-like cry", "quietly and brokenly") evoke unclear and contradictory information about Bessie Head. As Lehmann suggests in reference to this kind of textual embodiment in postdramatic theatre, this approximates a form of synaesthesia, which he argues stems from poetry (a technique which presents ideas or figures in a way that appeals to more than one sense – hearing, sight, smell, touch – at the same time) and which describes aptly "the new perception of theatre beyond drama as 'scenic poetry'" (2006, 84). Synaesthesia stimulates one sense which gives rise to an involuntary experience in a second sensory pathway. De Wet's scenic poetry is layered like a voice-over (which is juxtaposed with and provides the score for the work's Prologue), a distilled mosaic of visual gestures and movement vignettes. One by one, the performers wonder onto the stage from the auditorium forming a curious "chorus line" that stares out at the audience into a blinding spotlight. Clothed in very little and wrapped in bandages, the audience sees only their chests and faces. They represent a succinct, economic chronicle of the work through a writing of bodily signs – through enigmatic gestures, strange murmurings and whispers (a collage of hieroglyphics drawn from the aural text and the movement vocabulary throughout the dance), unconscious emotional residues and fragments of the danceplay are presented. These parallel dramaturgical signs construct complexity in this scene through their density and layered presentation. As Lehmann argues, because the human sensory apparatus does not easily

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tolerate disconnectedness, when it is deprived of connections, "it seeks out its own" (2006, 84) – it becomes active and searches for traces of connection. In this way, the audience have to engage their own imaginative labour of spectating. In this way, an active, fluid dramaturgy evolves.

Similar to the use of many female personae in *The Unspeakable Story* to present different approaches to reading the death of Magritte's mother (there is never only one drowned woman but many), in *Bessie's Head* there is also an accumulation and duplication of personae and narratives, each offering a different "take" on accounts of Head's story. For instance, to the thudding regularity of a heartbeat, two female figures, almost identical in appearance (tall, dark, dressed in the same costume) are discovered on stage. Their physical intimacy (a duet where their bodies are bound together through mirrored, interweaving movements that makes them shadows of each other) juxtaposes the idea that one may be the younger Bessie and the other, the older Bessie?. "Who am I"? she repeatedly asks herself, an incantation that repeatedly and ritualistically gives birth to various possible Bessies.

Figure 13. *Bessie's Head* (2000). Performers are Juanita Finestone-Praeg (below) and Helen Seaman (above).

In a different scene, three figures are isolated onstage by a sharp penetrating light. Each figure represents the vulnerability and shattered shell of the figure of her mother, Toby. The text is decomposed through a series of repeated gestures and submerged whispers as all three women simultaneously describe her desolation, and finally, in a parody of the

institutionalisation of madness, an obscene doctor and his two assistants arrive to medicate her and numb any remaining emotional life left in her.

Associations proliferate as the collaborators' independent offerings converge or clash to construe meaning for an auto/biography of Bessie Head. The audience share: a duet between a child and mother which hints at a possible parental closeness and unconditional love; a mother's lament (after Louis Leipoldt as De Wet's stage directions indicate) which remains an unsung song of loss, grief and yearning for a lost "ghost-child" (scored by Zingisani Mkefa); a seductive duet, completed by the lyrical and sweeping rhythms of a Cesaria Evora score, is danced as a fabricated vision of Toby and the absent father figure – Toby whispers and chatters delightedly throughout the duet revelling in it and allowing herself to be blindfolded and led into the man's embrace. We also experience the cruel sadness and dissociation of institutional care for the "broken mind" in a dance which explodes through discordant, asymmetrical rituals of movements which are grounded and repeat relentlessly to the pounding, erratic musical rhythms (score by Leonhard Praeg) that keep driving the performers until they collapse in a pool of red light, spent. The performers then break into a cabaret-style song, performed with hoots and cacophonous wails as a couple re-enact grotesque and caricatured gestures of madness. The song satirises institutional strictures and the way that they compromise individuality:

> Woman, woman go away (song)
> Refrain:
> Put her, put her, put her away
> Let her out another day
> The woman is a danger
> Her mind is filled with rage
> Put her in a straitjacket
> And keep her in her cage
> (De Wet 2000)

The final dance is a fabricated celebration of Head's fantasy of her mother. A tall elegant woman enters the empty stage clad is deep red velvet. The famous Albinoni *Adagio for strings in G minor* sounds out its exquisite sadness as she walks across the stage, searching for someone or something. Anticipating nostalgia, the composer, Leonhard Praeg, has adapted the score, transforming its themes into a sumptuous tango. The woman acquiesces to the ecstasy of performing a solo that elevates her prior "dumpiness" to elegance and transcendence, Gordon's play with the way we fabricate beauty for our memories. The chorus

provides a final and brief epilogue in their reactions to her. The final image of the work returns us to mother and child, embraced in each other, as the faint sound of heartbeats return.

The need for a single, legitimate, chronological history confounded, the mystery of Head's birth remains but has been delicately aired and cultivated as possible versions of her-story. As suggested in my 2002 description, the words colonisation and colonialism both derive from the Latin word "*colere*", meaning to cultivate or design. As African philosopher Valentin Mudimbe pertinently observes, the peaceful connotations of these words cannot be reflected in the historical colonial experience (Mudimbe 1998). And so, perhaps, it is in the act of reclaiming or re-inventing our histories that makes it possible to allow repressed and silenced voices in our heads to bear witness. In the resultant fractures created through deconstructed discourses, a space is cracked open.

With the premiere of a film adaptation at the First National Bank Festival of the Arts in 2000, *Bessie's Head* was featured as the country's first dance-in-camera production. Rhodes graduate master's student, Rob Murray noted the following:

> As it grows and is documented, so too is it documenting itself...*Bessie's Head*, as an artistic, theatrical expression combines fact with imagination and takes us into a realm where past and present collude – a realm of the beyond, an "in-between space" where negotiation on cultural meaning and interpretation, as well as signs of identity and innovative collaboration, can take place (Murray 2000, unpublished research paper).

(iii) *Wreckage* **(2011)**

Staging dialogues: (e)merging through *Wreckage* (2011) – considering a performative proxemics through/as ruin

In 2011, a unique performance collaboration took place at the National Arts Festival that excited in its possibility and expectation – "Two giants of the Eastern Cape theatre – Rhodes University's First Physical Theatre Company and Ubom Eastern Cape Drama Company – collide spectacularly in the locally created and inspired production, *Wreckage*" (Zinzi Mani and Sarita Pillay, *Cue Online* July 2011). From its first reviews, the work provoked controversy, producing a vital online dialogue which was something that both companies took delight in, given that the work intended, from the outset, and as its title *Wreckage* suggests, to invoke the difficulty of its subject matter – shipwrecked histories of the Eastern Cape, South Africa – and the challenges of its form – the aesthetic collision of the two companies' different dramaturgical approaches and performance forms.

The National Arts Festival programme note for *Wreckage* provides a succinct narrative description of the action of the work:

> A ship is in a storm. The passengers huddle till the hull breaks and they make a desperate swim for the shore through the violent surf. When light arrives, they find themselves on a wild coast. What people live here? What animals? What of the tales of cannibals and strange beasts and slavery and the savagery of the Xhosas? And what of the inhabitants who saw these impossible craft shatter and dissolve and the strange and unpredictable pale humans who were left derelict on the shore? The place is unique. The stories are extraordinary. The history is ours. The theatre will be breathtaking (2011 National Arts Festival Programme Booklet).

Performance theorist, Veronica Baxter, in her article "Eastern Cape voices in post-apartheid theatre" claims that the result of this collaboration "is a postdramatic (Lehmann) theatre piece that caused some controversy among festival audiences and critics" (2015, 59). Baxter cites some of these critical responses, describing two contrasting reviews. In the first, Brett Adkins writes that *Wreckage* showed "the damaged remains of lives, emotions, passions, hopes, and the hope for survival...with a clever time crossover to allow us a glimpse into the future – a provocative device to lay some seeds for thought". Adkins' appreciation is contrasted with Kgomotso Moncho's disappointment with the work's "schizophrenic nature, where a series of actions, making no sense, occurred all over the place" (cited in Baxter 2015, 59). Similarly, in his Master's mini-dissertation, Haxton (2014) observes two radically opposing experiences of the work's historical impulse – noting that Theresa Edlmann disclaimed the work as "disappointing", elaborating that "the conceptualisation of the piece (is) puzzling...the title invites so many historical and contemporary links, very few of which were clearly realised...History needs to be given a firm historiographical frame, rather than a series of vague and confusing allusions", while in a counter review, *Critter* journalist, Mike Loewe argues that *Wreckage* is a "rather large multi-dimensional artistic exploration of [these] historic themes...to be looking for a connect-the-dot, find-Donald-the-duck narrative is ludicrous. Indeed, more than a little insulting".[106]

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[106] Edlmann: http://cue.ru.ac.za/?p=3978; Loewe: http://www.nationalartsfestival.co.za/show/scue/ Date accessed: 25 January 2013 – both cited in Haxton (2014, 1).
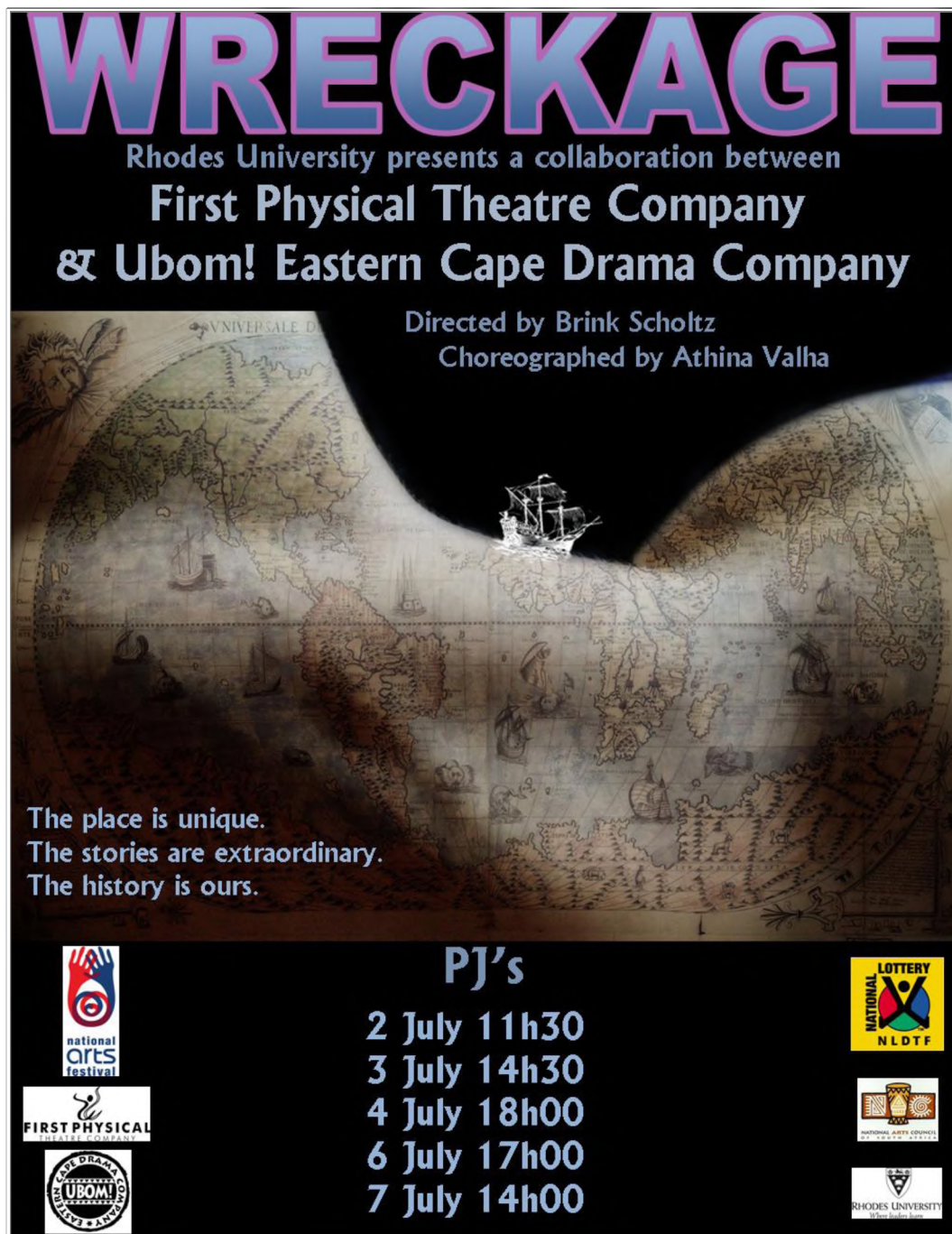
Figure 14. Small bloc poster for the National Arts Festival booklet.

As Haxton proposes, the crux of the heated online debate provoked by Edlmann and Loewe "seems to be located in the difficulty of articulating and evaluating experimental forms of performance":

> I posit that the conceptualisation and construction of *Wreckage* was in no way confused, but rather postdramatic (Haxton 2014, 1).

I concur with both Haxton and Baxter's readings of the work as postdramatic, but would like to examine the deeper political import of these claims. In his review of the work, veteran theatre activist, Mike van Graan states that "*Wreckage* is one of the finest, most revolutionary pieces of collaborative art to ever be presented at this South African National Arts Festival" (Mike van Graan, *Artsblog* 3 July 2011).[107] In response to this claim, I consider here the political significance and performance consequence of this postdramatic collaborative collision in relation to its archival and embodied historiography as another example of a documentary danceplay. In a slam interview with Loewe, the dramaturge/director, Brink Scholtz, states that she tried to "find the truth in this group (of performers), on this stage, in this place", that her dramaturgical question was asking: "What is our wreckage?":

> ...The (bleep!) problem is with the Western need to order and capture the world, and all the accounts of the first ship wreckages were written down by Europeans. I felt it was important to deal deeply with the multiplicity of meanings (which are associated with ships being wrecked on the Wild Coast). There is not just one account. I asked the cast and we interacted with the written sources and accounts, so our wreckages are there too, in relation to the (Eastern Cape) area (posted by Mike Loewe, 5 July 2011; http://www.nationalartsfestival.co.za/show/slam-interview-with-wreckage-director-brink-scholtz/).

Scholtz's reflection hints at the epistemological curiosities employed to elicit a devised and negotiated imaginative response to this wreckage of history, cultures, past and present lives in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. The fragments of this broken history are brought together in a poignant rendering of this collaborative dramaturgy in the final monologue. Performed with heart-rending vulnerability by Tshego Khutsoane, the monologue captures what these two companies achieve in the process of this performative proxemics, which was to rehearse and perform their own stories – sharing both their personal experiences of loss and ruin through the greater political frames of colonialism, apartheid and the current endeavours at decoloniality. *Wreckage* performs how they, as people, and as performers, survive the daily impact of the wreckage that shapes much of South African experience. Through an embodied historiography and dramaturgy, they share different performance styles (rubbing up close against each other), the clash of European and African cultures and values, past and present

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[107] Mike van Graan has a formidable reputation as being one of South Africa's foremost cultural activists as well as a prolific playwright and director of his own works. He has served on many cultural NGOs and has directed critical leadership and energy into shaping cultural policy in South Africa. He continues to be an articulate force and watchdog for arts activism in South Africa.

histories in collision, social, political, biographical and autobiographical stories fragmenting and smashing into a form. Baxter locates the Eastern Cape context for *Wreckage*:

> *Wreckage* does locate us in a terrain of hardship and deprivation – contemporary Eastern Cape is not very different from the past; it is still the poorest province in South Africa, where land is a contested place for farming, settlement and occupation. The Eastern Cape, part of it sometimes called "Settler Country", is a microcosm of South Africa's best and worst – the place where creativity flourishes despite adversity (2015, 59).

Recounting aspects of the colonial and apartheid history of the region, Baxter notes that "almost 200 years later, the Eastern Cape is still a contested space, where there are sharp contrasts born from history; where divisions between people are still rooted in settler or indigenous heritage, and socio-economic conditions" (2015, 59). The central impetus of the monologue captures these contested terrains and is held in the words: "And I would like to know if after all these collisions there will be anything to recognise us by?"

The monologue catalogues a long history of devastating impact which holds profound personal and political resonance. As Scholtz herself explains, the monologue was created from the casts' own stories – these were "personal and authentic experiences" (the loss of a father to a senseless, violent act where he loses his "form" after being hit on the head with a shovel walking down Joza Street in Grahamstown; a careless collision with a Ventura that doesn't stop at a stop street) and often about the "impact between different bodies and different worlds". Scholtz says that while *Wreckage* does deal with the clash of cultures where Africa and Europe "bump", the piece quickly moves into a series of "constant collisions". These collisions embody both the historical and present circumstance that has "locked" all the players into particular modes of being. And so, as Scholtz articulates, while the work has no linear or sequential narrative and is "postmodern", it is also, she states assertively, "definitely not a history play" (*Slam* interview). She claims that what we have are "incidents" which "work at the level of metaphor":

> It's about incidents where the links are associative, where one moment morphs into another, so for example, the death of an individual becomes the death of a culture…I wanted it to be multi-layered and always shifting…stylistically it's tricky. We are dealing with shards. There are moments and some stories are told, especially about relationships, but these are merely moments of depth…Don't worry if you feel lost or fragmented. You are invited to absolutely take what you want from the work. It is a total experience of wreckage. We did not use the word "wreck" because the ship becomes

unrecognisable. The form changes… (posted by Mike Loewe 5 July 2011; http://www.nationalartsfestival.co.za/show/slam-interview-with-wreckage-director-brink-scholtz/).

In the monologue, countless "shards" of unfathomable loss are recounted, as the account morphs through a recollection of different kinds of meeting – from a meeting with a head and a shovel, two cars colliding, a political account of the meeting between the Xhosa and British where "boundaries were drawn" between the Fish and Sundays Rivers, with local Eastern Cape history via reference to the cattle-killing prophecies of Xhosa prophet, Nongqawuse. It is also a more immediate meeting with this particular cast and this particular contemporary audience, with shared but different histories. These meetings are relayed as a series of numbered encounters:

> After the first time when we met when you borrowed my fields and my cattle and I borrowed them back and neither of us had permission, and the boundary between you and me was drawn between the Fish and the Sundays, after the second time that we met and the boundary was moved west, after the third time that we met and the boundary was confirmed…and the ninth time that we met that was the ninth of the Cape Frontier Xhosa kaffir collisions that had kept us far too busy for far too long and the tenth and the eleventh and 78th time that we met when I was wearing your shirt and the 123rd time that we met when you were singing my song…And I'd like to know how many times we can meet, before there will be nothing to recognise us by…And I'd like to know how much can bend and crack and tear and snap and change shape…And I'd like you to tell me if after all these collisions to have lived will be enough for us and if that will be the last time that we meet (*Wreckage* rehearsal script 2011).[108]

Baxter says that *Wreckage* is "resonant with the imagery of people reacting to each other with astonishment, and dread" (2015, 58). This combination is part of the self-reflexivity of the work as the performers too met each other with "astonishment" and "dread". Buckland shares that

> [t]here was a layer of mask, of performance, that invited the audience to say – this is not just us telling stories about Eastern Cape and a nice linear thing – this is about me and Nox, me and Themba, looking at each other and saying "you fucking whitey, this is what your ancestors did" and then you say "ja well, this is what your ancestors did"…so the truths of those things were invited in a way that we felt safe with each other, and held by the directors, and

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[108] The full version of this final monologue is in Appendix 12. In the 2011 production, it was performed by Tshego Khutsoane.

the way the companies were working – and the excitement of the two ways of working coming together, the challenges that those brought the amazing edge to the way we worked (Interview, Buckland 2017).

Buckland, for instance, claims that this was part of the reason for him performing moments of nudity:

> It was a lesson for me as well…I said to Brink – I want to be naked in this because I want to feel naked. And see what that does to me, to other people, to the performers…there is this old man hiding away in the maps (Interview, Buckland 2017).

This vulnerability may in many ways account for what van Graan calls the revolutionary aspect of the work. I observe an ethical aspect of performing self-reflexively, of performing into failure (discussed earlier as part of an ethical approach to training and collaborative, devised process), of not knowing what will be found or lost, healed or broken down even more, but still bravely excavating that which cannot necessarily be known. Scholtz keenly clarifies that

> [w]orks like *Wreckage* can be slightly sadistic in the direction. You are looking for the points of pain and vulnerability – in yourself and the people you are working with. This is what it means to be intimately human (posted by Mike Loewe 5 July 2011; http://www.nationalartsfestival.co.za/show/slam-interview-with-wreckage-director-brink-scholtz/).

In their editorial introduction, "On Failure (On Pedagogy)", O'Gormon and Werry (2012, 1) examine to what extent performance might provide us with a metaphor and methodology for failure which can become a "generative, unsettling and revelatory force". Reflecting on the vulnerabilities that an open, dialogic and participatory performance offers, they say that

> [p]erformance practice teaches us how to live with and as failures, finding possibility in predicament and embracing the vulnerability of moments of failure that may also be moments of profound discovery in which we remain open to what transpires, rather than measure it against our intentions. Failure focuses progressive hopes not on future transcendence but in the interstices of *present quotidian struggle* and in the alternatives and possibilities for ethical action – for thinking and feeling otherwise – which that struggle makes available to us. *It stands against the imperialism of hope*, generates a reflexive understanding of the inherently agonistic space of learning and change – a space in which aspirations, resistances, prejudices and passions constantly clash, feelings run high and stumbling and flailing are a productive inevitability (2012, 3; emphasis added).

I argue that the final form of *Wreckage* reveals the ways that performance processes can work against what O'Gormon and Werry call an "imperialism of hope" via "present quotidian struggles" (ibid.) – through the particular or specific (smallness), they construct a dialogue with a larger transcendence/hope. They show the political promise embedded in these small forms of resistance to initiate dialogue, participation, and change through their performance of "intimate revolts". Lehmann claims that this is one thing that theatre can do, to "artistically deconstruct the space of political discourse":

> This happens through the dismantling of discursive certainties of the political, the unmasking of rhetoric, the opening of the field of a non-thetical presentation (in the sense of Julia Kristeva) (Lehmann 2006, 177).

In their co-authored response to the intermediality of the postdramatic performance, "Dramaturgy on shifting grounds", Lehmann and Primavesi (2009, 6) furthermore argue that

> [t]he function of theatre as a public sphere requires a dramaturgical discourse that is more ready to pose questions than to give answers and that is constantly reflecting its relation to political contexts without patronizing the audience or insisting on a particular interpretation. More important than the dramaturge is the dramaturgy, collective whenever possible.

In *Wreckage*, truths or certainties are not represented – there is rather a presentation of chaos through a "retreat of signification" (Lehmann's term). Lehmann says that one has to grant theatre signs the "possibility that they can work through the retreat of signification" (2006, 82). He shares Marianne van Kerkhoven's comparison of the new theatre languages to chaos theory, which assumes that reality consists of unstable systems rather than closed circuits, noting that the arts respond to this with ambiguity, polyvalence and simultaneity – "partial structures rather than whole patterns" (Lehmann 2006, 83).[109] *Wreckage* is everywhere ambiguous, partial and fragmented, offering no assurances or certainties about the histories derived from these inherited shipwreck narratives. Haxton notes that *Wreckage* is created through "a process of collision". The remains, ruins or residues of the researched historical sources are re-assembled in fragments in relation to the cast members' own autobiographical memories and translations of past in the present. Haxton observes that

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[109] These ideas are explored in greater depth in PART III in works that use the dreamscape for its fragmentary, surreal logic where the dream world encodes, in a part, the whole.

> *Wreckage* deconstructs the notion of "history", bringing into question the "historiography" of events instead of manipulating these events into an ordered fictive cosmos"...In a work like *Wreckage* which interrogates over three hundred years of history, connections between scenes are governed by genre and sign relation instead of a narrative plot with a beginning, middle and end. The source texts, *The Sunburnt Queen, The Wind Makes Dust* and *Frontiers* create a blueprint of events, accounts and happenings that are, through storytelling, open for interpretation and display (Haxton 2014, 48).

The cast's responses to some of these sources also provided devised material through improvised responses and written reactions.[110] Any hierarchies of both content and form dissolve. Jane Stone's 2011 review identifies that the work "metaphorically locates us in a primal place – dislocation, dissolution, decay and severance", while Mike Loewe (*Critter*) poetically depicts the work as

> millions of shards, hard bright bits of our life, flashing past, grains of sand whistling on that beach, stinging the ankles, coming in waves, mouths as dry as paper. And death and suffering breaking the surf. Over and over (cited in Baxter 2015, 59).

It is clear that the structure of form and feeling in *Wreckage* metonymically performs its decay and disintegration. As Scholtz says above, it is a "total experience of wreckage".

The work commences with ruin. Through darkness, we share the narrator's vocal descriptions of this "cruel" but "beautiful" coastline and the foreboding moments prior to the impending impact with rocks that will wreck their ship on the wild Eastern Cape shoreline. The first images we make out are ghostly bodies, walking slowly as if in shock, each holding a single shoe filled with water or sand that gets tipped onto the stage. The barefoot motley crew are costumed in a sandy palette of shirts and skirts/trousers that deconstruct the opulence and fluff of 18th century British cuffs, collars and frills with waistcoats, breeches, gathered shirts, bodices mixed with hints of traditional South African *shweshwe* fabric.[111]

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[110] Scholtz and Buckland have both cited the following resources as pertinent to their own performance research: *The Sunburnt Queen* by novelist, Hazel Crampton; *The Wind Makes Dust* and *A Proper Degree of Terror* by historian, Ben McClennan; *Frontiers* by Noel Mostert; the work of historian, Jeff Peires, and historical accounts housed in the Cory Library in Grahamstown. Three performers appear to have been central to devised written responses – Tshego Khutsoane, Ilana Cilliers and Andrew Buckland – in collaboration with dramaturge, Brink Scholtz.

[111] *Shweshwe* cloth, also known as indigo cloth, has a complex history (the cotton was originally imported from India to Europe and brought to South Africa by German settlers in 1858) and its traditional usage in Sotho (*sheshweshwe*), Zulu (*isishweshwe*) and Xhosa (*ujamani*) cultures has shifted in contemporary South Africa, becoming a fashionable reference to its national heritage as the "denim" of South Africa. See the blog: londolozi.com/2015/11/10/41544/ for a more detailed history.

Figure 15. *Wreckage* (2011). Photograph by Stefan de Klerk. Performers are Andrew Buckland and Ntombizandile Nonyati.

Above them bits and scraps of maps hang, indicating an irretrievable direction plan which is a narrative theme pursued at various points by various players throughout the work. This sense of having lost one's bearings is persistently referenced throughout the work – it

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appears in the sinister encounters with numerous deaths which prefigure and re-iterate the historical losses of a "shipwrecked" South Africa in both past and present time. Death is symbolically embodied in each character or scene as past and present narratives collide in a wreck of the imagination – the loss of the ship, the loss of a country, the loss of family, the loss of culture, language and clarity. Mr Collett's (a real historical settler figure who did lose his wife is now played by Themba, a black South African man) desperate loss makes him keep insisting, in a meta-play with meaning, that "this is not how I wanted this scene to end" when it is revealed (through a grotesque and comic farce with clowning, double meanings and innuendo) that the "dead body" being discussed is actually his wife. His subsequent unmooring – he desperately approaches all the characters begging for "direction", "can someone tell me which direction I am supposed to take from here?" – formulates a metaphoric significance for many of the questions being posed about South Africa's 'wreckage'; where and how do we find direction after such political and personal impact has devastated our lives? These words are taken up periodically throughout the work. In a different moment late into the work, Andrew Buckland and Themba Mchunu, both holding, dancing with or dragging their wives' deaths with them, keep trying to escape their reality:

> Themba: No this is not how I wanted it to end either. What does it say on the map?
> Andrew: She's eating it.
> Thami: That's a lie. Okay. I was just eating the edges (*Wreckage* script 2011).

Critter reviewer, Steve Kretzmann, sums up this meta-play:

> Not only do you get First Physical's intellectual roundhouse to the head, you get Ubom!'s Buckland speciality of a comedic left jab in the gut, combined with a touch of postmodern…Meta-theatre as a dirty little head-butt to the frontal lobe (Steve Kretzman, *Artsblog* 2 July 2011).

Lehmann notes that the "irruption of the real" is the way it unsettles because one is never sure whether you are dealing with a reality or a fiction and how you should respond to events being presented. He points out that it is the "self-reflexive" use of the real that "characterises the aesthetic of postdramatic theatre" (2006, 103) – that this unsettling raises the spectre of an ethics which questions the *de facto* premise of spectatorship as that which has the "unreflected certainty and security in which they experience being spectators as an unproblematic social behaviour" (Lehmann 2006, 104). I argue, for instance, that *Wreckage* consistently asks of us where and how we are positioned or moved – in real life as well as

here – in relation to the ruin of our histories. An exhausted and traumatised Andrew Buckland, doubling Mr Collett's loss, waltzes with the corpse of a dead woman and then collapses over her body, noting, almost forensically, how the state of death is one of immobility:

> [Formal waltz; Thalia collapses].
> You have been stunned into an irreversible stillness. It is not spectacular. It cannot be changed. It is tightening. You are being locked in place. You are unable to use logic and thought to shift your internal energies to activate your muscular groupings in order that you might consciously undo the state in which you are. You may wish to move, but this is impossible. Your position, your situation, does not lend itself to it. It is not conducive. You are stuck (*Wreckage* rehearsal script 2011).

The resonances with class, race and gender positioning in South Africa given our "locked" histories make these words palpable to any South African. Our identities are so "stuck" that only small measures of realignment or repositioning alleviate cultural discomfort and misunderstandings between various social and political groupings. Change is difficult. This moment of the white woman's death is retraced backward (like memory, histories are interchangeable, reversible, back-to-front) when we see the couple prior to her demise as the dehydration and starvation begin to alter her behaviour, to change her. She, for instance, answers to her partner in a series of Xhosa clicks which he summarily (and comically) dismisses, only to patronisingly chastise one of the native dwellers whom he has asked for water. She has brought him a shoe and he derisively shouts at her, "I asked for water and you bring a shoe – since when does shoe sound like water?" His colonial arrogance has shifted a few moments later when his wife, dying, begins to mouth words in silence and he quietly brings her water in a shoe to soothe her feverish death throes. In her delirium, she manically returns to her abandoned heavy metal/rock song screaming out her pain – "I'm gonna sink to the bottom with you", while a woman with a microphone calls out an endless inventory, each numbered, of symptoms associated with her ailing condition – "4. Confusion…5. Confusion…6. Confusion…7. something….8. Not producing tears…11. Dry mouth…12. Dry eyes…". Lehmann comments that apart from collage and montage, the principle of polyglossia proves to be "omnipresent in postdramatic theatre", noting that "multilingual theatre texts dismantle the unity of national languages" (2006, 147). He says this surfaces the "difficulty of language communication – often broken, stuttering, not making sense…to anyone" (ibid.) and that polyglossia works by "playfully showing gaps, abruptions and

unresolved conflicts, even clumsiness and loss of control" (ibid.). In *Wreckage*, the faltering, stuttering attempts to share experience are caught up in repetitive chaotic actions of collision. The settler man (Buckland) insists that the Xhosa inhabitants utter words "that sound like curses"; he also tries to shut his delirious wife up when she starts to speak back to him in a series of Xhosa clicks and sounds. The outworn discourses of primitivism are referred to in various moments in this figure of the colonist – the nakedness of the Xhosa is, for him, the "worst insult that they have", they reveal "what God has kept hidden" and later when his wife, in her delirium lifts up her skirts and starts to "misbehave", we know the end is near for her. Again, Lehmann accurately describes what happens thought this work:

> The principle of exposition applied to body, gesture and voice also seizes the language material and attacks language's function of representation. Instead of a linguistic representation of facts, there is a "position" of tones, words, sentences, sounds that are hardly controlled by a "meaning" but instead by the scenic composition, by a visual, not text-oriented dramaturgy. The rupture between being and meaning has a shock-like effect: something is exposed with the urgency of suggested meaning – but then fails to make the expected meaning recognizable (2006, 146).

In *Wreckage*, there are perpetual clashes of languages (Xhosa, Zulu, English, Afrikaans, Sepedi, Sotho) and textures of sonic scoring – from Xhosa overtone singing, humming, wailing, the sounds of stamping and crying, a woman keeps breaking out into an Afrikaans song "Johnny is nie dood nie" ("hy's net uitgepas" – the lyrics ironically insist that Johnny is not dead, he is literally just passed out or unconscious).[112] The polyglossia activates and archives alternate embodiments/narratives of identity that position themselves against official versions of political rhetoric, institutionalised power and traditional performance forms. As Baxter observes,

> certainly one of the benefits to the physical theatre aesthetic in South Africa is that it offers a chance to transcend verbal language, and to explore the possibilities of stories told through gesture, sound and minimal words. In a country with eleven official and many unofficial languages, this has the advantage of creating a theatre that communicates across language barriers. Since language barriers often echo ethnic barriers, physical theatre can transcend across race as well (2015, 60).

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[112] Performer Ilana Cilliers explored the topic of sonic or aural scoring in her Master's mini-dissertation: "Composing affect: reflection on configurations of body, sound and technology in contemporary South African performance" (2016).

Highlighting specific collaborative dramaturgical approaches of both companies, Baxter cites Alcock's opinion that Buckland's storytelling does not "repudiate textuality", but questions "logocentric communication", and Baxter notes that FPTC did not see their focus as "negating the power of the word", but more in alignment with Zarilli (2015) who argues that in Physical Theatre, the role of the actor changes from interpreter of written text, to a collaborator in making physical text.[113] Given that the authority of written text is displaced in postdramatic theatre, the other elements of physical embodiment, scenography, sound, light, space, gesture all take up their positions as texts within the performance. As Lehmann explains,

> [i]n postdramatic theatre, breath, rhythm and the present actuality of the body's visceral presence take precedence over the logos...In this sense, we can say theatre is turned into chora-graphy: the deconstruction of a discourse oriented towards meaning and the invention of a space that eludes the laws of telos and unity (2006, 145).

Lehmann and Primavesi note the way the physical body in postdramatic theatre "has become its own reality which does not 'tell' this or that emotion but through its presence manifests itself as a site of inscription of collective history" (2009, 3). In *Wreckage*, the choreographic landscape escalates into bedlam with the collision of various forms of dancing expressing cultural dis/connection. In one scene, a performer (Alan) executes a dance routine reminiscent of disco or clubbing (to a classical score) which the ensemble pick up but soon lose interest in and each performer begins to slowly return to incorporating their own, known cultural dance forms – moments of Zulu *indlamu*, or *pantsula*, Xhosa *umxhentso* or Zulu *isicathamiya*, or snatches of contemporary gesture until they finally, in unison, all slowly descend in a long slow sinking into the floor.[114] Again, via Lehmann's analysis of postdramatic form, the dances here similarly articulate "not meaning but energy"; they represent "not illustrations but actions":

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[113] Baxter cites Rob Murray (ex-Rhodian and artistic director of South African performing arts company, Conspiracy of Clowns) whose unpublished Master's dissertation from Rhodes University traces Buckland's lineage as a "performer-creator" via contemporary physical clowning and his interest in Lecoq training (Murray 2002, 92).

[114] Traditional Zulu *indlamu* dance with its high lifted foot that rises over the dancer's head and slams down hard into the earth showing signs of strength and exuberance; or the fast nimble foot work of *isipantsula*; the thoracic shaking of the torso in Xhosa *umxhentso* dance or soft stamping with clapping as accompaniment; and *isicathamiya* with its "treading carefully" or stalking moves with a cappella humming or hints of overtone singing common to Xhosa music.

> Previously unknown or hidden energies seem to be released from the body. It becomes its own message and at the same time is exposed as the most profound stranger of the self: what is one's "own" is *terra incognita* (2006, 163).

The "*terra incognita*" Lehmann refers to bears a striking resemblance to the physical movements of these performers who are similarly trying to map or document their bodies into past, present and future memories of time and space. As cited in the opening to this discussion on archival dramaturgies, in their attempts to recover, or to know that which has become "unremembered", the movement texts are attempts to embody "fugitive" histories (in reference to Anne Michaels). In *Wreckage*, the waltz and variations of traditional African dance (especially Xhosa *umxhentso – ukhombela* with stamping, shudders and soft clapping) permeate the work. Both are recurring gestural and energetic motifs that are juxtaposed through different characters or the ensemble either simultaneously or in close proximity. For instance, at the end of the opening scene, the stage, already in ruin – covered with water, sand, shoes and bodies – one of the performers throws the bones to consult the ancestors – a Xhosa ritual. To loud groans, moans and wailing she asks: "how did this happen? We have come so far…does it mean we have to go back now?". Her words present the prescient questions of the work – how do we, as South Africans, go on now after all this wreckage? The woman begins to shake as the chorus/ensemble begin to stamp quietly, singing in overtones and preparing an ordered line which morphs into a preparation for a solitary waltz, with imaginary partners. This deconstructed waltz is accompanied by isolated and deconstructed gestures of preparation which are later repeated verbally in preparation for a more formal waltz:

> Step into the space. Face your partner. Step in. With your left hand take your partner's left hand and place it on your right upper arm…Step in, prepare (*Wreckage* rehearsal script 2011).

The strains of the famous song, *Fascination,* accompanies this estranged waltz, and the lyrics playfully hint at the potential for what might have been a "brief romance" but ended in ruin.[115] The lyrics intimate the allure that these groups of native inhabitants, colonists/settlers first have at discovering each other and which are later played out in various scenes (the

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[115] *Fascination*, a famous waltz song, was originally written in 1904 by an Italian, Marchetti, who moved to France and wrote the song in Paris. The original was instrumental and called *Gypsy Waltz*. It was later rewritten in French and then in English and popularised in its use in American films in the 1930s and 1940s. The Nat King Cole version is popular. See https://seany1001.wordpress.com.

native inhabitants shriek with delight and horror at discovering their visages in mirrors; the settlers arrogantly confuse their own entitlement in their own language with stupidity in the native inhabitants – we know this story so well here):

> It was fascination, I know
> And it might have ended right then at the start
> Just a passing glance
> Just a brief romance
> And I might have gone on my way empty-hearted
> It was fascination…I know… (Song lyrics, https://seany1001.wordpress.com).

One of the female settler women describes the thrill of the waltz as dizzy romance: "there is a certain thrill in being gripped in a man's embrace whilst whirling around the deck of a moving ship". In a different moment, the waltz is "frozen" and mixed-race couples embrace and hold each other – especially the face, kissing the face, and the cheeks and the forehead, while throwing sand from their pockets in ritual gestures of compassion and empathy. Throughout these confessional gestures of care, a naked young woman (Ntombizandile Nonyati) enters and walks across the stage to lie down in repose. Later it becomes clear that she too is dead as a young man (Siyabulela Mbambaza) performs a duet with her body – her legs keep falling open and apart, he keeps trying to close and compose her body, while a singer (Ntomoxolo Donyeli) repetitively and ritualistically recites the earlier monologue " because of the animal skin, Ntombasana changes". The ensemble enter singing, in Gregorian-style chant, a repetitive incantation about "rubbing her body to make it shine", "washing my body in the river to make it clean". After a chilling encounter with small mirrors which the local population have discovered and play with to observe their bodies from different angles, they laugh hysterically and the singer states: "we are all born naked". This image of nudity is threaded throughout the work as a constant reminder of our vulnerability.

As a prelude to the woman's death and final transformation with the earth, two images are presented and embodied. In the first, a male parades across the stage wearing a woman's dress made of fragile, beige paper flowers – the gender signifiers reversed in this image raise the spectre of his own transformation to complete nakedness as his dress is removed and he is left exposed and at risk onstage. His nudity is then covered by a second covering, a dress made entirely of hair. Two monologues follow in the ensuing chaos which reference these images of transformation. The first is when the man holds his dead wife and speaks to her body:

[In carrying dead and stiff Ilana on back].
I want to swaddle you in the leaves of the poison plant that grows next to the side of the road to PE. This way the insects will not lay their eggs in your body…I will preserve you for aeons and aeons. I want you to wear your skin again [Ilana leaves] (*Wreckage* rehearsal script 2011).

And the second is after a duet with another man (Alan Parker) in which their hands dance an intertwining attempt to merge or connect – then the man (Andrew Buckland) shares his excruciating account of the mystery and formlessness of loss:

I'm holding you. I am holding you. Do you see how I'm holding you? This is how I hold you. Do you see that? Do you see that I'm holding you? I'm holding you because you have no form or shape of your own. Except the form I give you when I'm holding you. So I'm holding you, but when I crack then you spill out and you fall through me and run through me. You're spilling out and through me and there's nothing that…I hold you, and then I crack and everything spills into you and out of you and you have no beginning and no end and when I crack you are all over the place and what am I supposed to do?! [Walk and collapse] (*Wreckage* rehearsal script 2011).

Later, the ensemble all move together singing in overtones and stamping while using a pointing gesture that shifts in direction backwards and forwards as though they are tracing paths into and out of their histories – where are they coming from and where are they going to? In and out of history. The work's cyclic repetitions keep returning us to the moment of impact – "I see land, ho!…Lights…Turn her about man, turn her about". As though we could turn our histories about. The closing monologue hurls the audience back into the present moment:

And I'd like to know how much can bend and crack and tear and snap and change shape. And I'd like you to tell me if that is me in the mirror or if that is your sister. And I'd like you to tell me if after all these collisions to have lived will be enough for us and if that will be the last time that we meet (*Wreckage* rehearsal script 2011).

Wreckage is a potent example of Physical Theatre as archival memory and it performs the promise of the choreopolitical as that which rehearses its freedom as a political way of making art. To re-iterate Lepecki's point regarding the choreopolitical – the work is not a metaphor for politics, but a "concrete activation of political practice and thought" (2012, 22).

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PART III EPISTEMOLOGICAL CURIOSITIES IN PHYSICAL THEATRE: BUILDING ON FPTC's LEGACY

(i) Diversification and future trajectories: The choreopolitical and/as rehearsing freedoms

The period 2006–2015 saw a diversification of the company's choreographic vision as guest or invited choreographers began to make works on the company with regularity. The medium of Physical Theatre itself diversified with the influence of technologies for dance – the choreography-for-camera series[116] – as did explorations into unusual dance styles like butoh[117] and inter-disciplinary/live art and site performance.[118] The period 2010–2015 manifest more distinct shifts, with Gordon leaving for Hong Kong to take up a position as MFA Coordinator/Head of Academic Studies at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts (HKAPA) (2010–2014), and returning to his post as Head of department at Rhodes University (2015–2017). Gordon retired in 2017 and is currently Professor Emeritus. Though Gordon and I had shared the artistic directorship for a number of years, when he left I assumed artistic directorship of FPTC. From mid-2006, FPTC had altered its company structures due to a lack of sustained funding, and the company had begun to work on a project-to-project basis, with a reduced, skeletal staff. Used to creating and producing its programmes with erratic funding bouts, the company continued to renew its visions, energies and directions, with younger members stepping up to the helm. Alan Parker became Company Manager and new collaborations took place. This period saw large-scale collaborative works like *Wreckage* (2011) as well as *Discharge* (2012), a rich site-specific collaboration between Alan Parker, Gavin Krastin and Rat Western, with guest performance by Andrew Buckland and myself on film (as the Whore of Babylon).[119]

The period 2013–2015 was marked by considerable political upheaval in South Africa, particularly in the higher education sector where there was an articulated questioning and

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[116] The FPTC Repertory Inventory provides a more detailed account of this curatorial development within FPTC and lists specific dance films created.

[117] *Amanogawa* (2010) by Frauke (Carolin Lundblad). See also two analyses of this work in the *South African Theatre Journal* (2010), Special Edition on Physical Performance in South Africa. These are both examples of performative writing undertaken by Gary Gordon and Juanita Finestone-Praeg.

[118] A collaboration like *Ozymandias* (2008) was both transdisciplinary and as Sichel called it, a "transatlantic collaboration" between New Orleans (Tulane) and Grahamstown (Rhodes and FPTC – John Allen and Gary Gordon. It engaged with the ravages of Hurricane Katrina.

[119] *Discharge* will be discussed briefly in PART III (iv). See the choreochronologies of Parker and Krastin for detail of their relationships with FPTC.

displacement of the university's tight hold on Western epistemic thinking and structural patterns that have shaped curricula in higher education. This context finally imploded as witnessed by the #FeesMustFall student protests and the #RapeCulture protests that took place at UCKAR[120] in 2014/2015. Decoloniality and Black feminisms were placed centrally as questions for thinking and growing new epistemologies and directions in higher education.[121] FPTC attempted to engage with many of these transformational and epistemic challenges around questions of leadership, ownership of projects and the division of work and roles in the company. Not all challenges met with success, but many did. The year 2014 saw projects like Moyikwa's *Intlgano/The Gatherings* expand FPTC's reach via renewed community exchange – the project aimed to extend a dialogical process of teaching and learning to "open a chain of dialogue" between a group of young male participants with the intention to "reinvestigate" power relations and social conflicts.

> It is a project encompassing a group of pantsula dancers from the townships of Grahamstown along with Rhodes drama department students – 6 pantsula dancers and 5 Rhodes drama department students…One gathering takes place in a school hall in Joza location and the other one takes place in the drama department movement room (from the project statement – see Appendix 13).[122]

2014 also saw a rich and diverse programme of work tour to the JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Festival in Durban that performatively researched these pressing calls to imagine political change.

It is within this context of political turbulence that the works selected for analysis below can be seen to provoke the perceptual politics of traditional theatrical dance representations, and I argue, in their form, these works perform difference, liberating difference and opening up a space for difference to decolonise representations of political power, as well as problematise racialised and gendered dancing bodies. I maintain that these works are evidence of a particular epistemological curiosity for choreographic form that the lineage of

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[120] UCKAR. The University Currently Known As Rhodes. This name is currently used politically to protest name contestations occurring at universities in South Arica, and at Rhodes University, especially since the #RapeProtest and #FeesMustFall protests that erupted on the campus in 2015. Grahamstown has changed its name to Makhanda, but presently Rhodes University has not agreed to alter its name, citing financial constraint as its central defence. I will use UCKAR when I describe politically charged contexts and Rhodes to refer to the university prior to these name protests.

[121] The framing of decolonial discourse and black feminist discourses in South Africa will be woven into and briefly contextualised in greater depth in the discussion of Moyikwa's work in PART III (iv).

[122] See Appendix 13 for some details of Moyikwa's vision for participating in the Creative City project via the *Intlangano/The Gatherings* project.

FPTC engendered and animated. The search for the choreopolitics of four choreographers commissioned by FPTC to create work during this period and responding to these epistemological subversions or provocations will form the basis for analysis via selected case studies. Each case study will assess the potential efficacy of these choreographies to activate, embody and archive alternate narratives of identity that fracture official versions of institutionalised power. I have identified the following four choreopolitical approaches for each choreographer:

- The power of the small as a method for Juanita Finestone-Praeg's *Inner Piece* (2009);
- Field of composition as a method for Acty Tang's *Hunger* (2013);
- Conflict and catharsis as a method for Athina Vahla's *Deadringer* (2014) and *Standing taller than liberty* (2014); and
- Surreo-activism as a method for Nomcebisi Moyikwa's *Inqindi* (2015) *and Home* (2016).

Each choreological stance reveals an attempt at building epistemological curiosity about current choreographic practice in South Africa – and pointedly, each work performs to some aspect of the prickly debates and capricious politics surrounding deconstructing relations and representations of power (Finestone-Praeg and Tang) and decolonising the black/female body (Vahla and Moyikwa).

Power and/as proxemics

In a number of dance works that I viewed between 2010 and 2015, a significant, recurring image stands out: an iconic, hyper-raised figure using its elevated presence and commanding height to re/present relations of political power and to speak back to, into and from an alternative position of power. Some of these images presaged the volatile content of the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall protests that took place in South Africa as well as the #RapeCulture protests that occurred at Rhodes University in 2015. The image struck me consciously while viewing Mamela Nymaza and Faniswa Yisa's work, *19-born-76-rebels* (2013) at the 2014 National Arts Festival. I draw on a description of this image that I shared at the *Confluences 8* conference in 2015 which describes this visual proxemics to power:

Two opposing and imposing figures, elegantly costumed in elaborate dresses made up in the colours that signal apartheid South Africa (Nyamza wears the colour of the Union Jack flag: red, white and blue while Faniswa Yisa wears the colors of the ANC: yellow, green and black) as they promenade slowly along a walkway towards each other. They perform a ceremonial of ritualised gestures (handshakes, demure curtseys, bowing and kowtowing) that reference the gestural displays of political negotiation between two state powers negotiating a political settlement. *19 born 76 rebels* (one of four choreographies in a 2014 National Arts Festival programme: *20/20 Visions)* was conceptualised and designed by Mamela Nyamza and performed by Nyamza and Yisa. The dramatic, authoritative presence of these looming figures (the audience are seated on the ground in the centre of the passage of walkways) engaged a provocative dialogue with the implication of the programme's title: *20/20 Visions* – a term used to express the clarity and sharpness of normal visual acuity. The perspectival proximity between the seated audience, the expectation of normal-sized performers and the contrast with these immense, statuesque figures called into question the sincerity of the encounter being performed between these two icons of power. Later in the performance, the status of these figures is parodied when their height is disclosed to be nothing more than Ricoffy tins tied to their feet by strings – like the Roman *cothurni*, a high, ornate boot used by actors to indicate the status of their characters in Greek tragedies, or to play the elevated status of gods or heroes, these African *cothurni* similarly help to construct the representation of these figures as authoritative, foreboding presences (Finestone-Praeg 2015, 176; Appendix 1). [123]

These processions of larger-than-life figures embody a choreographed response to the gravitas, height and effect of political power in South Africa. Like spectral premonitions foreshadowing the various #MustFall campaigns, these iconic images conjure a spectacle of political power made prescient and visceral. They both represent and speak back to the power of symbols/signs to create, transform or divest themselves of social identity and political meaning. A deconstruction of power through the visual proxemics of a hyper-extended figure is referenced as a presiding imagistic thread in Vahla's *Standing taller than liberty* and Tang's *Hunger*. Finestone-Praeg's *Inner Piece* stages a dialogue between extremities of a hyper-extended figure (on the trapeze) and a grounded, or earthed body (on the floor beneath the trapeze) as rituals of the sacred/profane body, while in contrast, Moyikwa's *Inqindi*

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[123] This brief description is cited directly from Finestone-Praeg (2015) and refers to Mamela Nymaza and Faniswa Yisa's work, *19-born-76-rebels* (2013).

inverts this looming presence of a hyper-extended icon to invoke the grounded presence of a chorus of women mapping a corporeal critique of power from below, beneath or "under".

I have chosen a visual image from each work (below) as a springboard for the discussions which extend in PART III (ii) *Staging Dialogues* – Finestone-Praeg and Tang; (iii) *Artistic Agon* – Vahla; and (iv) *Rehearsing Freedoms* – Moyikwa.

Image (i) Staging Dialogues: The power of the small
Finestone-Praeg's ***Inner Piece* (2009)**.

One of the central provocations in conceiving *Inner Piece* was a play with notions of "spectacle" in Western dance performance. Its meta-expressions in and through representations of space, time, and the body is contrasted with the brief, elemental and distilled nature of the haiku. In my programme note, I describe *Inner Piece* in the following way:

> Nine reflective (a)musings on the haiku form divided into three movements that explore (i) emptiness (ii) silence and (iii) light. The distilled economy of the haiku lends itself to an expression of silence and sound, movement and stasis, body and light. Devised as a series of stage(d) directions, the three movements use emptiness, stillness and light to weave new relationships between theatre, war, peace, torture and the body

A critique of spectacle is woven though performing various musings on the resonance between forms of virtuosic/excessive representation in both art and politics – from the heightened display of trapeze performance to the images of spectacle torture emerging from the notorious Abu Ghraib prison photographs. Moyo analyses the embodied scenography of the work in relation to her notion of "corporeal networking" that highlights "the gaps" in meaning – "*between* bodies in space, between texts and images, and between the different but implicated modalities of lived experience" (2013, 249, emphasis in original). Moyo argues for how these gaps allow a fracturing into the dominance of conventional political representations of power, and she analyses *Inner Piece* as a work that engages the spectator in a "pattern of complex activities" that unsettle and complicate binary, "simplistic or moralistic renderings" (2013, 250).

Figure 16. *Inner Piece* (2009). Photograph by Monique Pelser. Performers are Shaun Acker on trapeze and Richard Antrobus as the levitating body in mid-air. This image from *Inner Piece* captures this state of "in-betweenness" as a chaining or embodied networking where bodies are held and caught between space-time gaps – the aerial in relation to the terrestrial, the vertical in relation to the horizontal.

As the photograph above insinuates, the spatial contrast between the height of the trapeze and the floor of the deconsecrated Old Nun's Chapel, became a site for me as choreographer to meditate on and research the idea of spatial proxemics as a metonymic cipher for display, for re/presenting "spectacle". This image captures a moment in the second vignette, *Trapeze II*, which stages a juxtaposition between Acker's verticality and weightless body on the trapeze and Antrobus' more horizontal, grounded gravity beneath, highlighting the contrasting intimacies and proximities of spatial planes in the space. In *Trapeze II*, the spectacle of this "performance" is interrupted by an anti-climactic break – referencing the image above, after this delicately poised balance of two bodies chained in time-space, Antrobus is rudely dropped by Acker who bursts out laughing, and the audience realise that what they have been witness to is, in fact, merely a rehearsal. As Moyo (2013, 231) submits in her analysis of *Inner Piece*, the meta-theatrical device fractures the contemplative mode of spectatorship established in the preceding moments, "to reveal the banality of the backstage performance world". The use of self-conscious meta-theatricality is taken to extremes throughout *Inner Piece* to draw attention to a politics of form that fails to be able to adequately address the "unspeakable" horror of the theatre of war, torture and the body. These meta-theatrical interruptions stage a dialogue between the sublime and the ridiculous as limitations of meaning which both construct and disrupt the spectating and the performing rituals of the work.

Moyo (2013) analyses the different rituals in *Inner Piece* as performing the power of sacred and profane spectacle. She describes the "sacred" tone of the first ritual, *Trapeze I*, as one encountered by the audience at the start of the work where they are led into the chancel where a ritual is already underway:

> ...where the trapeze performer (Shaun Acker) is suspended in a peaceful, pieta-like repose...His dominant position in the space dictates the physical attitude of his audience, whose bodies, whether sitting or standing, are immediately drawn, upward: into postures of supplication or worship...although the chapel is deconsecrated, the architecture still generates a sense of religiosity...it is clear that the work's playful title and the performance space together connote the interiority and sanctuary associated with the sacred (Moyo 2013, 227–228).

Moyo notes how in *Trapeze I*, Acker's flight becomes more and more hypnotic as he swings in relation to the "crescendos and decrescendos" of the Arvo Pärt score – *Pilgrim's*

Song, a rendering of Psalm 121 – which Moyo suggests references not only the Biblical fall of man, but also the idea of divine redemption:

> With the audience gazing up at the trapeze, the scenario is of a sacrificial rite as Acker prepares to "fall" from standing height...Facing physical risk in this flight, Acker's body functions as a sacrificial object as much as it is imbued with the power of profane spectacle (Moyo 2013, 228).

As Moyo observes, at the same time, the trapeze performance is a show of physical dexterity through which the human body aspires to transcend the limits of its own capabilities and to become "superhuman" (2013, 229). She notes how Acker's body "represents the aspirations of the theatrical project" – this initial framing defines the key questions that the work performs – the spectacle brings about a "sense of anxiety" which lingers somewhere between what is "real" and what is being "represented" – "while there is a suggestion of the potential efficacy of the performance, there is also an awareness of its potential failure throughout *Inner Piece*" (230). As Moyo (2013, 225) argues,

> [i]t has been argued that the "theatricality" of the images of torture from Abu Ghraib prison renders suffering a spectacle (Anderson and Menon 2009). It is hardly surprising then that Finestone-Praeg found an "incongruous resonance" between these images and the challenge of deconstructing the spectacle of the trapeze...

Inner Piece stages these distilled aporetic musings as my choreopolitical method called "The power of the small".

Image (ii) Staging Dialogues: The Field of Composition
Acty Tang's *Hunger* (2014)[124]

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[124] Acty Tang's production of *Hunger* was created for FPTC and the drama department in a 2014 collaboration. FPTC brought Mr Tang out from Hong Kong to work with FPTC and in the process collaborated with the drama department at Rhodes University to create this original work.

Figure 17. *Hunger* (2014). Photograph by Stefan de Klerk. Performers are Smangaliso Ngwenya as the President and Ananda Paver as one of the Politicians.

In Tang's *Hunger*, in a scene called *The Parade*, four caricatured politicians promenade along a raised platform. We encounter the President with his steely entourage of three political "henchmen" (Interview, Tang 2015), the President's Singer (or Muse) who colludes with his political duplicity, and the Interpreter, who attempts to translate the President's

speech and whose translation ultimately ushers in resistance to the President's authority. With rock, opera and gospel music (Serj Tankian's "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition" is a brutal commentary on political hypocrisy) to conjure an epic pageant of power, these four figures parade their influence through an excess of slow, hyper-extended and stylised gestures of waving and curtseys to the witnessing crowds (the proletariat in the grey shadows and the audience). Tang suggests that the scene is reminiscent of both "the opening of parliament and the fashion parade", where both exude and embody projections of power – "money power and cultural power" (Interview, Tang 2015).

Tang describes his choreopolitical method as aligned with Gertrude Stein's "field of composition". Stein's field of composition elucidates her notion of the play as landscape, introducing what Marranca calls a "spatial conception of dramaturgy" (1994, 3):

> …space as a luxurious field of activity and wonder, a landscape of unlimited centres of focus. This spatial unfolding of composition distances itself from linearity as time flows into space: duration, not sequence, is what matters (Marranca 1994, 14).

Lehmann (1997, 59) similarly observes the ways in which Stein's landscape-plays signify an "*opsis*, which is without hierarchical dependence, connected to text as itself a spatial and architectonic quality". Miller (2000, 45) describes Stein's word portraits, her repetitions and associations, as creating a "spatialisation of language similar to cubist painting". Like cubist montage and collage, plot-driven narrative is abandoned and replaced by sensorial landscapes that produce simultaneity of image and layering of image perception. Marranca discusses this idea of relation as "simultaneous possibility" – in *Hunger*, the arrangement of spatial composition, fragments and their relation to the whole, are framed as composition, and non-hierarchical. Relation is presented rather than action represented. *Hunger* traverses this "landscape" of political machinations (the dance action obliquely references the political debacles surrounding the Marikana massacre, Nkandla, the farcical sign language interpreter of that could not actually sign, and a host of other high-powered political figures in South African politics) which move the action inexorably towards a final revolt or revolution by shadowy proletarian figures constantly skulking in the background. Dressed in shades of grey, which become their uniform, and moving in unison, the amorphous group organically gather at the start of the work in the first scene entitled "The Premonition". Their movement is largely abstract and their focus of attention is "never direct"

– as Tang suggests, "sometimes you cannot look at a problem too directly" (Interview, Tang 2015). Tang's comment here confirms his understanding of the way Stein's field of composition serves as a source for his own choreopolitical method. Tang's intention is to get his audience to critically reflect through their own particularity of experience. As Marranca has suggested, Stein's field "refuses the classical ideals of catharsis and communitas, posing instead a non-Aristotelian drama that proceeds as a philosophical inquiry into mind, perception, and being-in-the-theatre" (1994, 5) – the "perception of an activity" is offered over "its definition" (2000, 4). Marranca discusses the multiple and simultaneous centres of focus and activity of Stein's spatial dramaturgy as having replaced the "time-bound and fixed setting" of the dramatic tradition where the dramaturgy holds the effect of being "a kind of conceptual mapping in which the activity of thought itself creates an experience". As Marranca explains, a more expressive understanding of this idea is the Roman sense of the mind as a field, that is, a "site of cultivation" (3):

> A landscape is comprised of things and people to be viewed in relation to each other…The play is just there. It has no centre…Whatever you find in it depends on your own way of looking. Similarly, if you observe a view outdoors, the landscape seems stationary, yet life or inanimate objects are moving inside the part of it your eyes frame. Little by little you see and hear more until everything reveals an expressive quality. This scene, like Stein's landscape, makes itself known to you according to your individual powers of perception: you complete the view. Stein was not concerned with creating a drama but an image (1994, 4).

Tang, similarly, uses the image of the zombie as image, as "historical representation" (Interview, Tang 2015) and sets up their lurking menace as a foreboding presence which becomes more compulsive, menacing and ravenous as their "hunger" grows throughout the work. He spatialises these spectral figures as ciphers for a zombie spirit that constantly hungers – hungers for social and political change, hungers for a compulsive cultural consumerism, or for a ravenous emptiness that drives their actions to repeat and repeat in intensity. These zombies become Tang's critique of political passivity – "I was crystallising the idea of complicity in the zombie" (Tang 2014, Programme Note) and the consumerism that is generated by a global capitalist economy that hooks us all in, producing the silent complicity that paralyses the political will to act against corruption or injustice. The zombies become the catalyst for the Revolution introduced by the President's Interpreter whose "gestural clarity helps to bring about the Revolution" (Interview, van der Walt 2015)

with the aid of the figure of the Bride who presents herself as a scapegoat, and referencing *The Rite of Spring*, finally dances herself to death. Her emotional energy and decadent, unfinished dress complete her "mythic form" (Interview, Tang 2015) as the Bride who births the new nation.

Image (iii) Artistic Agon: Conflict and Catharsis
Athina Vahla's *Standing taller than liberty* (2014)[125]

Vahla's *Standing taller than liberty* launches a vision of two African women towering with mythic presence and wielding long silver blades that glint ominously and seductively in Guy Nelson's lighting.[126] The women are statuesquely poised and modelled as they appear as extensions of hyper-imposed structures or tall plinths near the front of the stage. They command the stage space, standing their own length plus 1.2 metres high. Their costumes are made of leather and the weight of the garments flaunt a gravitas that counterpoints their heightened perspective or viewpoint. Like ballerinas in a music box, they start to pivot slowly in circles, using exaggerated and stylised gestures of carving and cutting, their mouths sometimes opened in immense silent screams or foreboding grins.

Designer, Illka Louw motivates her choice of leather, suggesting that

> ...the leather is like a skin of something...it scars...and it extends the liveness of the performer by extending the skin over a structure...they extend the performer's space and the costume becomes a body mask and the performance sits on the outside of that...the headgear had stylised reference to Makoti – married Xhosa women covering the head – and it also extended the head and forehead of the women to make them statuesque...how much taller can one get than liberty? (Interview, Louw 2015).

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[125] *Standing taller than liberty* (2014). This description draws on the paper presented at the *Confluences 8* conferences by Finestone-Praeg (2015).
[126] Guy Nelson has been the official lighting designer for most of FPTC's touring productions since his lighting of *The Unspeakable Story* in 1996.

Figure 18. *Standing taller than liberty* (2014). Photograph by Val Adamson: JOMBA! 2014. The performer is Maipelo Gabang.

The women's actions insinuate a duplicitous presence. Vahla explains that "the knife can be a cleansing object in a ritual but at the same time it can be used in an aggressive way…there is something about the blade that is absolute" (Interview, Vahla 2015a). Knives are also domestic objects, used every day in ordinary ways by ordinary women. In this moment, their exaggerated presence through their precarious, unusual height displays them as mythic objects to be used for intoxicating ritual. In this opening image, Vahla has already staged an incongruous, ambiguous representation of the relation of gender to power. After the JOMBA! performances of *Standing taller than liberty*, Vahla started rehearsing *Deus Faber* for the all-female FPTC cast (November 2014) which she argues would become a prelude to the work if she had to reconstruct it. Vahla depicts the choreography in *Deus Faber* as "focused on the ritualised manipulation of a 3-metre high armour dress to create an unsettling landscape of a cathonic opera" (http://www.athinavahla.com/projects). *Deus Faber* refers to and translates the idea of origins with God as craftsman or architect of the world. Here, the two female figures transform to "become mother…as in motherland":

> I am exploring the emergence of liberty as a female icon inspired by the myths of Genesis…who are these women before they became these monsters and who put them there? Maybe the stupid patriarchal system… [laughs] (Interview, Vahla 2015).

The dresses are sonically amplified by microphones and as they are systematically and perfunctorily unfolded, manipulated and finally "danced" in the space, they evoke a sonic, aural presence that embodies the pre-verbal, instinct and intuition, but also a surfacing of the "unvoiced" narratives of the female figures which in *Standing taller than liberty* have already been rendered mute through their association with dominant patriarchal systems and representations of power.

Image (iv) Rehearsing Freedoms
Nomcebisi Moyikwa's *Inqindi* **(2015)**

Figure 19. *Inqindi* (2015). Photograph by Tamani Chitambo. The performers are Maipelo Gabang on the left and Nomcebisi Moyikwa on the right.

Inner Piece witnessed a spectacle of body from the hyper-extended height on the trapeze reflected through inversion from a body below it, like an echo or reverberation. In Moyikwa's imaginary, the choreopolitical rebellion in *Inqindi* emanates from below. It is captured in the form of a voluminous, expansive floor cloth, which, like a colossal dress, gets moved, reconfigured and stretched to create an architecture shaping the world that six women inhabit. Here, the proxemics of speaking back to power from a height is upended, with the performers claiming ground from which to speak. *Inqindi* is volatile, unstable, noisy, chaotic and hot. It has a hallucinatory intensity with a mood of "hysteria" that builds into frenzied outpourings of vocal, movement and emotional oscillation, slippage, outburst. There is a constant sense of vibration, the floor is unstable, always moving, changing and fluctuating its form as the floorcloth-as-dress shape-shifts to limit, accommodate and exceed the world that these women produce through their actions and movements. This inconstancy of the ground unsettles, with interactions poised as treacherous, unpredictable negotiations. This uncertainty is simultaneously countered by a sense of pressure and impact in the danced gestures which were executed using repeated actions of pulling and gathering, knotted hands pulling downward inexorably toward the earth and using strong, relentless impact rhythm to stamp

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and mark their presence in the space. When questioned about these two related features of the dance (repetition and impacted bodily pressure and rhythm), Moyikwa noted the following:

> It was important for *Inqindi*, the repetition. In the beginning it is a call, *"isa"*, or "come", which was used in five or six different contexts. You were calling the audience to come, you were calling yourself to come, you were calling the women to come, you were calling the world to come, you were calling…everything needs to come, to be gathered. In the text where I spoke about "How she moved", it made sense that she gathered her hands together and roped her fingers tight together. She held them together. She held her hands together (Interview, Moyikwa 2016).

I had read these knotted motifs in the embodied presence of the performers – this sense of gathering the energy, and pulling it into the ground, or roping it – so it could take hold. I kept probing Moyikwa, asking her: "But still, once you have that hold, why is the repetition necessary"? She replied:

> You repeat for newness. You repeat so that we don't get stuck on one thing…and because we lost language, we need to repeat it so that we can find newness in it (Interview, Moyikwa 2016).

These repetitive, pounding statements collude with the seething, organic vocal invocations of word, song and cry to create a dreamscape of de-narrativised images, bodies, actions within sonic and spatial planes and trajectories. On a first viewing of *Inqindi*, I recall being absorbed by the disregard for any progressive, linear logic in any aspect of the strands of the work's medium – score, vocabulary, performers or space – in which the work simply strove to become a seething incantation. It was in *Inqindi* that I first began to view aspects of Moyikwa's work as an attempt to think surreally in relation to decolonial dance practice in South Africa, or what I have chosen to call her surreo-activism. These strategies of form are resonant with the manifesto of Afro-surrealism as described by DS Miller (2009 and 2016) which capture aspects of the central tenets of Afro-surrealist thinking and its politics of form.[127] Some of these surreal forms include: fragmentation; hybridisation as a "form of disobedience"; madness and magic; rejection of the "quiet servitude that characterises

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[127] Miller acknowledges playwright, Amiri Baraka, as having "named" the term Afro-surrealism in relation to Henry Dumas's 1974 book *Ark of Bones and Other Stories*. Baraka describes Dumas' skill at "creating an entirely different world organically connected to this one…the black aesthetic in its actual contemporary and lived life" (Miller 2016, 114).

existing roles for African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, women and queers"; the use of excess as "the only legitimate means of subversion"; rococo strivings – "the beautiful, the sensuous and the whimsical"; and finally, in the words of Miller, to claim, "sensuous Gods to hunt down beautiful collapsed icons" (Miller 2016, 116–117). As Miller proposes is his Afro-surreal manifesto, "Afro-surrealism presupposes that beyond this visible world, there is an invisible world striving to manifest, and it is our job to uncover it" (Miller 2016, 113).

The work of theatre-maker Mwenya Kabwe's Afro-futuristic performances, were some of the first to invigorate and emancipate the potential for this kind of dream world simultaneity as a methodology for creating complexity, particularity and possibility for a decolonial arts practice in contemporary South African performance.[128] Kabwe's work has provided a persuasive initial foray into surreality as a method for performing a decolonial performance praxis.[129] I argue that Moyikwa's *Inqindi*, and current work with her company Unknown Assets persist in this trajectory of conjuring a surreal architecture through which to celebrate a surreo-activism.

(ii) Staging dialogues with Finestone-Praeg's *Inner Piece* (2009) *and* Acty Tang's *Hunger* (2014)

Acty Tang and myself share a deep, abiding historical trajectory with FPTC. Detailed information in our choreochronologies relates our specific temporal, performance and choreographic relationships with the company which trace the profound influence of FPTC's pedagogy in our own developing artistic profiles. We both studied at the Rhodes drama department under Gordon and have collaborated on diverse theatrical, education and research projects together. I recall teaching Tang in his first year of movement studies (I created a movement study called *Recollections* for their Movement 1 class where he danced on a circle of rocks) and recall being inspired by the promise of his expressive ability and corporeal imagination. We have performed intimate dialogues with each other via danced and written duets, practice-as-research interventions, curious site improvisations, debates – he has

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[128] Mwenya Kabwe is a Zambian theatre-maker living and working in South Africa. Her work has been instrumental and inspirational in shaping responses to embodied black feminisms in performance. Kabwe's works like *Afrocartography* (various iterations 2007–2013) and *Astronautus Afrikanus* (2015) activate a form and methodology for her imagination that allows her to escape these binding traps/templates of a Western colonial discourse and which allow her to spill away from the constraints of issues of location – political, social, artistic – to engage with the politics of Africa.

[129] See Appendix 14 for a more detailed account of Kabwe's *Astronautus Afrikanus* project that she created at the Rhodes University drama department in 2015. I supported the project through rehearsal feedback and some small butoh interventions with students and was bestowed with the Afroism, "Afroyogi".

performed in my works, I have performed in his works, he has made a screendance film (*Breath*) of one vignette from *Inner Piece* (*Corpse I*). As mature artists in 2019, both of us have played interconnected roles in growing and expanding FPTC's ethos and repertory. I have chosen to structure this discussion as an alternating conversation between his *Hunger* and my *Inner Piece,* because both explicitly provoke a choreopolitical questioning through a glocal proxemics – Tang cites a glocal political field in *Hunger* where the spatial proximity is between Hong Kong and South Africa, while my intention in *Inner Piece* was to activate and infer a depth of political critique in the way meaning was problematised through a swaying proximity between local (violence in South Africa) and global political affairs (genocide in Rwanda; torture in America). Given these resonances, I extend this attention to an oscillating space-time through a shared reflection in the analysis below.

Corporeal networking in *Inner Piece*

Moyo (2013, 220) is interested in the way selected performances in South Africa "retrace the invisible maps of violence". In the third chapter of her PhD entitled *Corporeal Networks: Culture Currents and Global Violence* (2013, 220), she locates *Inner Piece* as a work that has the potential to "displace the systems of (re)production and normalisation" within this cultural landscape characterised by a "crisis of representation and belonging" though the staging of fractures and gaps which draw attention to invisible geometries, architectures, proximities and lived experiences of violence. Moyo applies her concept of "corporeal networking" to examine *Inner Piece* arguing that the use of a "heightened dramaturgical super-structure" is where the choreography draws attention to local subjects "by framing them in terms of the global" (2013, 219):

> *Inner Piece* does not deal explicitly with the TRC or with the particular manifestations of violence and trauma in South Africa, whether during apartheid or in more contemporary times. Rather, I think, the performance responds to/locates itself within the immediate realities and legacies of the South African context by way of engaging a dialogue between local and global histories, spaces/places and discourses. As such it functions at the level of corporeal networks (Moyo 2013, 220–221).

Perhaps herein lies the promise of the choreopolitical – its corporeal activation of both personal and social meanings to performatively archive intimate and public responses to power. Moyo describes the deconstructive project of current choreography as a "corporeal

network" arguing that in the most basic sense, a "corporeal network specifically signals the array of accumulated discursive meanings and signs which bodies carry and convey to and through one another" (2013, 201). Through her discussion, Moyo's argument draws attention to the way that official narratives of identity are created by various forms of nationalism/state political rhetoric which essentialise lived experience and, in this, marginalise a particularity of individual response or identity. In the construction of the "smallness" of the chaining implied in corporeal dialogue/networking, relation allows for more embodied and localised encounters, opening up the archive of identity, experience and memory. This dialogue between the global and the intimate, the national and the personal serves to layer levels of spectating. Moyo discerns this interplay or resonance between the ahistorical and the specific as facilitating different kinds of "witnessing" for the spectators:

> So there are questions around the politics of vision and visibility (primary witnessing), around textuality and testimony (secondary witnessing) and around the nature and meaning of empathic response and/as ethical responsibility (tertiary witnessing) (2013, 225).

Moyo's concept of the "corporeal network" owes partial allegiance to Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome as a "concept for knowledge which is de-centralised and non-hierarchical" (Moyo 2013, 201). As Moyo keenly perceives, in the place of the "arboreal and genealogical models which attempt to flatten and homogenize complex spatial relations", or "plot a singular, linear trajectory for temporal experience", the rhizome "has no beginning or end", is always "*intermezzo*…inbetween things" (Deleuze and Guattari, cited in Moyo 2013, 201). Hence, as Moyo suggests, while this implies that as much as the process of identification is contingent on the "location of terms in space-time", it is also about "the gaps in which relations are able to develop between things/people/positions" (2013, 201). It is this "endless chaining of self to others through indivisible gaps" that Moyo explores in her analysis of embodied performance in South Africa.[130]

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[130] The other performance platforms/practitioners/works she discusses include Infecting The City Project, Third World Bun Fight, and Brett Baileys' *Terminal*.

Figure 20. *Inner Piece* (2009). Photograph by Monique Pelser. Performers are Shaun Acker on trapeze and Richard Antrobus on the floor.

Moyo furthermore suggests that "while the performing body can often be read in terms of its textual and significatory capabilities, it is also irreducible to such readings" (2013, 202). She extends this line of thinking, arguing that it is important to read the body "not

merely as an object or a sign, but as potentially in and of itself" (ibid.). In the image above, the particularity of Acker's body in relation to Antrobus' body in space-time has visceral impact as their musculature struggles to maintain this chain of connection – the flux of the moment is invited by real bodies. Moyo suggests that the notion of "intimate revolt" cited in my writing/practice (via Kristeva's writing) "relates the personal/private, the quotidian and the minutiae of embodied experience to broader political and ethical imperatives and contexts" (225). She observes that this notion of revolt extends not only to that which has been "denied a place in the broader national narrative of struggle and resistance (mapping the visible)", but that "it is expanded to include that which persistently escapes codification in language and law – the abject, the non-human and the profane" (ibid.). Tracing these ideas, she is later able to propose, in her analysis of *Inner Piece*, that the work attempts to "theatricalise the unspeakable" (2013, 221). Each of the 17 vignettes, which I called "stage(d) directions", unfolded as meditations on the idea of absence variously expressed or experienced as loss, trauma, the unspeakable and more self-consciously, the idea of an absent director – that which is unrepresentable. I noted that the challenge in the creative process consisted in recognising that this absence could not be directly represented, but possibly only "revealed":

> ...in this sense the vignettes are an invitation to experience, not the unity/coherence of narrative, but the elusiveness of absence (silence emptiness darkness) in its various forms (Programme note, Finestone-Praeg 2009).

My choreopolitical methodology of the "small" (or, "power of the small") was embodied in the design of the work which was conceived in response to the Japanese haiku poetic form. My programme note shares this intention:

> One of the originating sources for this work was the Japanese *haiku*. The haiku is regarded as the shortest form of poetry, its 17 syllables – in a rhythm of 5, 7, 5 – being the exact length of an outgoing breath. Its brevity and reduction capture an economy of form that perfectly conveys the clarity of a distilled image and lends itself to the expression of silence and sound in movement: the stasis of body and light. Inspired by the clarity of its immediacy I have attempted to explore, in vignette form, different viewpoints on emptiness, stillness and silence (Programme note, Finestone-Praeg 2009)

Each of the 17 vignettes were structured as *stage(d) directions* to a questioning on relationships between theatre, war, peace, torture and the body (see Figure 21 and also

Appendix 15 for the programme notes).

light	I	still life
	II	trapeze I
	III	trapeze II scarecrow
	IV	trapeze III smoking marine
	V	improvised viewpoints
emptiness	VI	empty fuck
	VII	inner piece
	VIII	origami
	IX	better than origami
	X	corpse I
	XI	fullness of life
	XII	corpse II
silence	XIII	monogram I
	XIV	monogram II
	XV	monogram III
	XVI	improvised viewpoints
	XVII	haiku

Figure 21. *Inner Piece* (2009). The programme note was structured to imitate (as cipher) the 5-7-5 shape of the haiku in three lines, with its characteristic 5-7-5 syllable structure per line. There three parts, light, emptiness and silence, each with a 5-7-5 vignette-as-syllable.

Upon reflection, I argue for the way that the choreographic encounters in *Inner Piece* animate a choreopolitical immediacy and intimacy that stages spatial tensions as dialogues and "small" revolts which have the potential to fracture the cohesive politics of dominant representational discourse. Tang's work, *Hunger*, similarly stages spatial composition as fragment.

The field of composition in **Hunger**

Tang's glocal references in *Hunger* (Hong Kong and South Africa) signify his use of the field of composition as a concrete activation for his choreopolitical critique. In conversation, Tang observes that two incidents of outrage informed the idea that it is "not about assigning blame but how we are complicit in giving power to the President…and also what it means to participate in a global market" (Tang 2015). His programme note clarifies that *Hunger* began in anger:

From the distance of living in Hong Kong, it was the news headlines that kept transporting me back to life here in South Africa: the Marikana strike and massacre, and the Nkandla scandal...During rehearsals, a discussion led me to ask some of the performers: How does the South African state keep the populace in consent? And then I realised, this is not only about what's happening in South Africa. This choreography is borne out of my anger also against the Chinese state's buying of political consent through economic development (Tang 2014, Programme note).

Tang's vision holds this tension between the global and the local in a delicate immediacy throughout the work.[131] This glocal signification is manifest in the use of the design and costuming for the movement scores in *Hunger*. Working closely with production designer, Illka Louw, Tang conjures a world that caricatures the displays of political symbols of power, while at the same time complicating these stereotypes in order to construct a field of choreographic action/image that draws attention to geographical relation and political connection. The visual layering of movement action, score and image reveal a reading of political complexity that cannot simply be reduced to malicious political caricatures that wield power indiscriminately. Tang does not let us off the hook that easily. He humorously notes that he might have called the work *Zuma's Song* but felt that would give the character of the President "too much power" (Tang 2015). As suggested earlier, Tang's choreopolitical approach is influenced by Gertrude Stein's notion of the field of composition, which opens up a political questioning by crafting multiple viewpoints within a field of composition where the whole choreographic text is devised with each element offering an equally valuable contribution to meaning or viewing of meaning in relation. A choreographic field is opened through which Tang offers a subjective interpretation or relationship to the material, but simultaneously offers multiple viewpoints. This creates crossings or dialogues which operate like "corporeal networks" to activate an accumulated diversity of embodied, social meanings/signs and archetypal symbols that can displace the pretence of a "knowable and coherent" truth about power (Moyo 2013). In this way, Tang unravels and deconstructs notions of ideological purity and political truths. By setting up the stereotypes and then complicating them, he starts to ask questions about the nature of power: who is complicit and how, in maintaining structures of political power? Tang's programme note expresses this clearly:

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[131] This analysis is indebted to research and interpretations of *Hunger* that were originally developed in Finestone-Praeg (2015).

It's not just a story about corrupt individuals, although they are so readily caricatured, and so much fun to do! But if we invest our pleasures only in the drama of a few individuals in power, we lose our own power to imagine a different society. In this regard, I'm trying to draw focus on the Brechtian heritage of physical theatre, showing the person as a social being, and using visceral, embodied experiences to encourage questioning and yearning for change (Tang 2014).

In *Hunger*, the layered corporeal networking scores a choreopolitical field that locates images, musical scores and movement in incongruous relation in order to interrogate what we see and how it signifies to an audience (often via Brechtian alienation techniques like episodic action and multiple viewpoints). As the photograph below shows, the President is literally constructed as the "big man", the political "boss man" – his costume is devised from layers of Chinese shopping bags expanding around his body to create an armour of fullness which parodies his enigmatic presence of violent restraint and facade of suggested magnanimity. He poses as the benevolent dictator, bestowing kisses and offerings to the crowd while hiding behind his immense size and dark sunglasses.

Figure 22. *Hunger* (2014). Photograph by Stefan de Klerk. Performers are, from the left, Kamogelo Molobye and Smangaliso Ngwenya. The scene comments on the idea of being politically lost in translation – well, in this instance, literally, lost in translation as the sign reader (at Mandela's memorial speech) literally did not know sign language. Hope, configured in the wedding dress in the background, extends the field of composition – Gertrude Stein's field, where all is seen at once, but the watcher finally selects the detail they wish to focus on.

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In conversation with me, designer Illka Louw offers the interpretation that a "politics of production and ownership" is implied in the choice of material for his costume which questions "who owns what and where it is manufactured". She elaborates that

> ...here are objects that are identified as South African but they are actually not made here...the material used was made from bags that people use to travel with in the Eastern Cape that are made in China...so you have Chinese bags, a metonymic object quite often used in productions...and here, the President had a Chinese Opera structure, a static second skin, that looked at traditional parts of the body that are used and manipulated to create a certain status...so when shoulders are expanded there is a militaristic element to that...but it also creates a bigger male silhouette...so structurally the waist was cinched, the shoulders were expanded, the head was framed with the headgear which is often a Chinese opera device which frames the focal point which is often eyes...you couldn't see the soul of the man because he had sunglasses on that were reflective as well so not only were they two black pools, they were two reflective mirrors...you couldn't see inside at all (Interview, Louw 2015).

The President's costume operates like a mask or bodily armour which hints at his myopia and his inability to reveal himself in any other form than caricature and stereotype. Later, when the President changes into a coat (cheekily made of shade cloth) it alludes to a Mao or Mandarin collar belonging to the Chinese but its insignia is the Nike brand logo, another reference to a consumer economy that has global political sway and significance – the iconography of capitalist consumerism. In the President's costuming, "his Nike insignia becomes his uniform...and if you repeat that it looks like a rib cage" (Interview, Louw 2015).

In the photograph above, we also see the President's Interpreter – a humorous resonance to the debacle surrounding the Nelson Mandela's memorial speech that President Zuma gave and which was incorrectly interpreted in sign language by someone who apparently was not qualified to use sign language. This inclusion of an Interpreter who gets it "wrong" alludes to the political favouritism, nepotism and corruption associated with Zuma's reign and associated ludicrous and absurd machinations. The price of state capture for ordinary South Africans, felt now in 2019, and suggested already then in *Hunger,* is captured by the lurking proletariat in Tang's production which seethe and swarm at the bottom of the raised platform or presidential podium in most scenes. Stepping up to this raised platform, ahead of the President, three of his political initiates set up his entrance. Their costumes have a garish excess and are so overextended that the performers are forced

to march at a measured, funereal pace. Designer, Illka Louw suggests that they became like three fashion figures, possibly oblique references to the glamour and prestige of parliamentarian events:

> …they were paraded as a collection of everything that this particular society aspires to and its like the model vision of everything that the world of the production aspires to…they are almost like billboards…there is an overextension of their limbs…there are elements that are recognisable pointers to a South African or African identity in that wigs were used in various ways…wigs and extensions…processes of Westernising their exterior (Interview, Louw 2015).

All of the costumes had inserts of a blue camouflage material, "taking the idea of being a rebel in a colour that parodies itself…I mean, what camouflages itself in blue?", and re-iterating the idea that they are "fighters in the name of consumerism" (Interview, Louw 2015). One of the characters has 20 yellow dishwashing gloves sewn around the edge of her apron – she is, as Louw points out, an Afro-Maria figure:

> …with blonde shoulder epaulettes…a halo of hair…the blonde housewife signalling a Westernisation of identity…she is a Barbarella figure…the apron is also a symbol of feminine domesticity but in this case the applique makes it a decorative apron so it becomes more like a flag or an icon of which the President's face is quilted on with sunrays emanating from his head in an iconographic kind of pseudo-religious image…they also had sunglasses with false eyelashes on – as a further extension of removing the eyes…so there is something that sits between you and this character…the costume *is* the character…they become empty shells (Interview, Louw 2015).

The costume of the Singer or President's Muse, has elements of the President's China bags sewn into the sides of the suit to extend the suggestion of their complicity. All these costumes embody the social and political symbols and signs that Tang sets out to problematise through an intricate juxtaposing.

Figure 23. *Hunger* (2014). Photograph by Stefan de Klerk. Performers are Kamogelo Molobye in front, Maipelo Gabang, centre and Ananda Paver, at the rear. The grotesque pretentions of an elite bourgeoisie and corrupt parliamentarians is heightened by their raised positionings spatially and their visual excess.

Challenging essentialising discourses…Kristeva's "intimate revolt"

One of my reasons to argue for the specificity of choreopolitical framing is the way it opens up the field of choreography to a range of questionings, especially probing the ahistorical and essentialist assumptions that impose a passive, even lazy spectatorship which can lead to uncritical consumption of work. I addressed this question in a keynote address (2011) through the citation of a particular incident in 2009, in which the then Minister of Arts and Culture of South Africa, Lulu Xingwana, left an art exhibition because she was allegedly "offended by images of black women in erotic embraces" and argued for art that is "nation-building". The editorial of a national newspaper, *The Mail and Guardian*, reacted against Xingwana's stance, arguing that "[n]ations, her view seems to be, are built on bland and heroic affirmation, not complex questioning or representations of difference" (*Mail And Guardian*, Editorial, 5 March 2009, 24). This incident highlights the ways in which nationalist rhetoric in a post-democratic South Africa can shut down the potential for art to express and engage politically. What is/can the political promise of art become? Does choreography have the ability to manifest such complex questionings in the hope of

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maintaining performance as a potential space of action and intervention in public life. In a compelling critique, sub-titled the "ideological paralysis of the left", Walther Davis (2007) questions the political correctness that uncritically affirms artistic mediocrity in much political theatre: if a work serves politics, he asks, is its artistic integrity irrelevant? He laments that often "mediocre works are the most serviceable because they don't cloud the political function of art with the kind of aesthetic complications that characterise 'high' or 'elitist' art". As Davis suggests, such narrow viewings of art deprive it of any agency to change our political perceptions: "a fundamental ideological necessity has been asserted in a way that deprives drama of any independence or significance" (57–58). He suggests that art viewed in this way does not seem to possess the "power to challenge or transform our political agendas" (ibid). It is to this transgressive impulse of revolt that Kristeva's notion of "intimate revolt" speaks.

In "Revolt, she said", Julia Kristeva (cited in Lotringer 2002, 107) claims to be "increasingly sceptical about the capacity of political movements to remain places of freedom". She speaks to a betrayal of revolt by political revolutions, where a history of political revolts show that once power is attained, the revolution ceases to question its own values, thus losing its impulse for revolt. Kristeva argues that art has the capacity to perform the original spirit of revolt – to "rehabilitate the microscopic sense of the word, its etymological and literary sense in which the root 'vel' means unveiling, returning, discovering, starting over, this is the permanent questioning that characterises psychic life and, at least in the best cases, art" (Kristeva, cited in Lotringer 2002, 120). Kristeva's notion of continuous questioning as revolutionary is most prominent in my mind. In *Fanon and the possibility of postcolonial critical imagination,* Ato Sekyi-Otu (2003) provides a counterpoint to Xingwana's nationalist discourse in his reading of Frantz Fanon's understandings of decolonisation, saying that

> [a]ccording to Fanon, then, the ultimate virtue of the revolution, the goal of historical action, is not the conquest of power but the resurrection of repressed questions and the disclosure of "unexpressed values". In his approving depiction of such transformations, such a renewal of openness to untried possibilities, may be discerned what he meant by "true decolonisation" (2003, 11).

Sekyi-Otu goes on to frame this "true decolonisation" in the following way:

Supposing decolonisation, the post-apartheid, is first and foremost a resumption of interrupted history. A resumption not indeed of some original purities and essences before the Fall, but of interrupted dramas, indigenous and universal dramas; above all a resumption of our dialogue with one another, with ourselves (2003, 12).

This sense of a continual resumption of dialogue is reminiscent of Kristeva's idea of a permanent questioning or "resumption of dialogue" with ourselves, in relation to others. In the discussion that follows below, I claim that the choreographic encounter in *Inner Piece* animates a choreopolitical space that stages questions/provocations as such "intimate" revolts.

Spectacle and counter-performativity

Inner Piece took risks, both aesthetically and ethically, especially in its representations of violence. As discussed earlier, the choice to examine the idea of "spectacle" through performance was framed as a meta-theatrical deconstruction but also, as an attempt to engage the spectacle that has come to define much of the domain of the contemporary political, most incongruously in the form of ethical and complicated questions generated by the visceral images of spectacle torture that came out of Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. Numerous critics and artists have responded to the absurdly theatrical dimension of these images. Slavoj Žižek, for instance, describes his first viewings of the Abu Ghraib photographs in the following way:

> When I first saw the notorious photograph of a prisoner wearing a black hood, electric wires attached to his limbs as he stood on a box in a ridiculous theatrical pose, my reaction was that this must be a piece of performance art. The positions and costumes of the prisoners suggest a theatrical staging, a tableau vivant, which cannot but call to mind the "theatre of cruelty", Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs, scenes from David Lynch movies (Žižek 2004 cited in https://www.16beavergroup.org/mtarchive/archives/001084.php).

In trying to cite these images and respond with my own reflections on their meaning in matrix of a technologically global context, I found myself trapped in a curious logic that bespoke the contradictions of representation: in representing or performing to images of violence, one can so easily re-insert them into the logic of "spectacle" resulting in what McKenzie (2009) calls a "counter-performativity" that contributes to the violence it seeks to critique. As I reflected in Finestone-Praeg (2011):

In many of the performances of *Inner Piece* this is exactly what happened. Using layerings of image and text and combining these with the irreverent use of humour beside images that evoked the Abu Ghraib image spectacles often made audiences laugh. This created extreme discomfort and rupture. At the same time these reactions signalled the failure and inability of such representations to effectively critique or reflect on such degradation, or to disarm the audience. As an artistic provocation or experiment, the work in its revolt, became in moments quite revolting (Praeg 2009, programme note).

Moyo notes that the failure of the performers in *Inner Piece* to respond to the Abu Ghraib images with any degree of sensitivity also implies the failure of representation to bear witness to suffering, the failure of testimony to do justice to the "gravity of trauma" (2013, 233). The fact that the audience often laughed at the performers' antics of failure also drew attention to their complicity in the consumption of this symbolic violence. While I often felt excruciatingly conflicted by my choice to portray suffering as spectacle, I knew that it was an important part of the choreographic encounter with difficult political and ethical questions (acknowledging also the limitations, resultant failures and ambiguities that this evoked). The work did not produce a comfortable experience, and it also did not produce a superficial, politically correct commentary on a difficult political topic. McKenzie suggests that the risks of such "counter-performativity" are often unavoidable when citing violent images or events, but while "the risks of producing them are great…the risks of not doing so are greater still" (2009, 355).

In the quiet and sometimes not so quiet censure I received from many colleagues and friends about my use of humour, but also in the many healthy discussions that followed, I was reminded that it is worth taking these risks if theatre is to remain a place of constant questioning – of agitation and provocation, a place to search for reaction, reflection and revolt. As Davis suggests, audiences are generally trained to expect meanings that easily translate into the familiarity of "bathos, pathos, sentimentality, and nostalgia" which "usually bathe us in the waters of an essentialistic ahistorical humanism, which once again provides the comfort and the guarantees that cleanse us of politics and history" (2007, 19–20). We go home unmoved and comforted, unchanged because unperplexed – maintaining intact the modes of knowledge we construct, often in order not to experience discomfort. Davis makes this point when he argues that the purpose of theatre is to move audiences from "the comfort of secondary emotions" like pity, fear, and contentment to the "agon of primary emotions" like anxiety, humiliation, envy, cruelty and melancholia. His reasoning

is that these primary emotions shatter the ego (a system of defences) and "awaken the psyche" (2007, 35). And I return for a third time, to acknowledge his citation of CS Pierce, that "experience is what happens when our ways of knowing break down" (Pierce, cited in Davis 2007, 43).

It is this unknowing, this unpredictability, that compels presence or performance that is live, which in turn activates a possibility for reaction or transformation. As Peggy Phelan suggests,

> ...live performance remains an interesting art form because it contains the possibility of both the actor and the spectator becoming transformed during the event's unfolding...this potential, this seductive promise of possibility of mutual transformation is extraordinarily important because this is the point where the aesthetic joins the ethical (2003, 291).

Moyo's thesis (drawing on Emmanuel Levinas) raises pertinent ethical questions around the representation of violence/trauma in relation to the concept of witnessing. She addresses the ability of representational forms to "entrench and normalise violence":

> At issue here is not only the ability of discourse/representation to formulate traumatic experience at all, but rather whether through representation a subject can ever offer viable *ethical* responses to its other...Specifically, it is the question "who may speak for whom?" (Moyo 2013, 211; emphasis in original).

As Moyo infers, the significance of this question to the idea of corporeal networks can be understood through the example of the "mediatisation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)" (2013, 212). Moyo argues that although the TRC seemed to equate the embodied act of giving testimony with the narrative and psychic closure of apartheid trauma, it at times not only failed to guarantee this closure, it even reproduced the logic of violence, "as in the infamous case of Jeffrey Benzien who was asked to demonstrate his own torture techniques" (Moyo 2013, 213). Moyo argues that while recollections of events were not always so "literal or theatrical", the very screening of the amnesty hearings made them highly theatrical and created an "air of spectacle" around the process even when there was no "literal re-enactment" (ibid.). In her analysis of *Inner Piece,* Moyo argues that while aesthetic responses to violence and suffering "can create new spaces for reflection, debate and dialogue – spaces in which to consider the ethical demands being made upon the individual subject by the other", she takes into account the limitations of performance "with regard to answering

these ethical demands" (Moyo 2013, 220) and notes that I draw attention to these limitations performatively as well as in my programme notes. Moyo furthermore recognises that the term I coined for the work of the vignettes, "stage(d)directions", foregrounds this questioning.

Baz Kershaw (1999) provides a useful rethinking of these limits in his reviewing of the idea of the political in performance. When he discusses contemporary performance as a form of "democratised performance", his point realigns the political as generative or transcendent, not only as reactive. Kristeva, similarly, suggests that revolt is not only *against* but also, and more importantly, *for* something – that revolt foregrounds "starting over…an element of renewal and regeneration" (Kristeva, cited in Lotringer 2002, 123). What does this mean for choreographing in terms of renewal and regeneration as political? South African choreographer, Jay Pather, for instance, proposes that the dance community rather develop the self-consciousness that may allow us to "unpack received notions" and that we rather work towards a contemporary aesthetics "informed by a life lived within and of our communities at this time and in this place" (2006, 14). Or as he re-articulated later in 2017, performance provides a space to "practise personally felt and executed democracy" (Pather, cited in conversation with Pinto, 2017, 24 February). I argue that it is in the lived reality of difference and diversity that specific choreopolitical stances hold that the potential for reviewing fixed definitions of choreographic identity within South Africa lies. In both *Inner Piece* and *Hunger*, the choreopolitical stances and processes activate such questionings and disclosures which restage or "resurrect" dialogues on "questions of power"[132] using the global to respond to the local.

In parallel stagings of this architecture of proxemics between influence and interchange, in PART III (iii) and (iv), Vahla and Moyikwa problematise the oscillating tensions between the public and private spaces that women inhabit. These ambiguous, juxtaposed proximities or "in-betweennesses" (global/local and public/private) reveal the complex geometries of connectedness between structural machinations of power and the accumulated corporeal networks that manifest in how our bodies say and mean. Vahla's choreopolitics plays itself out through a steam-of-consciousness collage of choreographic distillations which make up her choreographic *agon*, speaking to conflict and catharsis. Moyikwa's choreopolitical stance suggests a surreal imagination tackling the monsters of the colony and her attempts to "unvoice" her invisibility as a subjective black female

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[132] This is an intertexual play with author Bessie Head's novel *A Question of Power* which was one source for Gordon *Bessie's Head* (2002) discussed in PART II.

presence through a generative politics.

**(iii) Artistic agon: Conflict and catharsis in Athina Vahla's *Standing taller than liberty*
   (2014) and *Deadringer* (2014)**

Athina Vahla's choreopolitics can be characterised by a central thread in her choreographic
oeuvre which she articulates as "The agon: Conflict and catharsis". Referencing her Greek
ancestry, the agon captures this ancient conflict, the pulse of power relations that play out at
large within our personal and public lives. This artistic agon is a recurrent obsession that
haunts Athina's choreographic work and to which she has returned many times in her
performance research.[133] In 2014, Vahla conceived and choreographed two works for FPTC:
Standing taller than liberty (2014) and *Deadringer* (2014), which formed part of the larger
cycle of *Agon: Conflict and Catharsis in Boxing and Performance* (2014). *Deadringer* was
performed as a solo work when commissioned by FPTC.[134] The analysis of *Standing taller
than liberty* is indebted to my paper, Finestone-Praeg (2015), but is recontextualised for this
discussion. In both works, a deep wrestling with rendering an artistic agon is apparent and
manifest in Vahla's choreography.

In his PhD entitled "Ethics of Freedom, Pragmatics of Constraint: Theatre in a post-
Mandela South Africa", Nathanael M. Vlachos (2017) offers an in-depth analysis of Vahla's
work in Chapter 3, "In The Ring: Epistemic Agon and Institutional Constraint in a South
African University". Vlachos' analysis yields a sobering account of Vahla's *Agon* (2014)
project in its critical readings of the epistemic and other constraints that limited reception of
Agon at its Rhodes University/UCKAR debut. His analysis extends support for my prior
argument (Finestone-Praeg 2015) that Vahla's choreopolitical approach is shaped and driven
by this fascination with artistic and other forms of agon. Vlachos remarks that her visions for
Agon as a production evokes in many ways, "the fluidity of agon in its ancient Greek
usage...given that it referred broadly to contests and struggles that occurred across a variety
of social domains" (2017, 130). Vlachos lists among its fluid contestations war as a major
form of agon, but also competitive events like athletic competitions, equestrian competitions,

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[133] See works by Vahla's like *By Your leave* (2005), *Fight Club* (2008), *Boxing Is* (2013), *Deadringer* (2014),
The Splinter in the Flesh (2010), *Existential* (2014), *In Preparation* (ongoing) which in some form or another all
engage the idea of the conflict and catharsis in the "Ring" – from Greek gladiatorial battles to Spanish
bullfighting to the preparations for the "fight", struggle and contests of sport or performance.
[134] *Deadringer* toured to the JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Festival in Durban in September 2014 as part of a
FPTC programme entitled *Myths, then and now*. It also toured to the Baxter Dance Festival in Cape Town in late
2014.

musical competitions and, of course, Ancient Greek theatre itself as a site of competitions between plays, playwrights and actors. Citing research via Lloyd (1992) and Cartledge (1997), Vlachos discerns that agon was a formal element within tragedy itself:

> Generally coming at a point at which two characters (or, at times, one character and the chorus) argued from two opposing positions, the agon served to explicitly lay out the fundamental conflict of a tragedy and the logics that animated it (2017, 130).

Vlachos notes, furthermore, that tragedians took the rhetorical form and structure of tragic agon "directly from civic life" itself – situations in Athenian life which provided a formal context for the conflict of arguments (ibid.). Vlachos pertinently uses this proximal relationship between theatre and civic life as a central scaffold to structure his argument, suggesting that Vahla's ambitious goal in *Agon: Conflict and Catharsis in Boxing and Performance* was

> to evoke something of the original blurriness between theatre and civic life by stitching together seemingly distinct fields in academia and performance…By pairing performances of preparation and combat with discussions among members of a robust epistemic community, she hoped to represent agon artistically, while also showcasing a theatrical sense of agon as a method of critique and exploration…In these ways, *Agon* was an epistemic endeavour that played between boundaries as much as it was an embodied, physical endeavour…The goal was thus to generate knowledge through the starting point of embodiment. The bodies of the boxers (as well as the body of the ring girl) would create an immersive kinaesthetic environment from which forms of embodied knowledge could be theorised and worked out collectively (Vlachos 2017, 131–132).

This "playing between boundaries" that the interdisciplinarity of Vahla's performance research produces can be likened to the "gaps" that Moyo refers to in her discussion of corporeal networks – those interstices that can contest political and nationalist rhetoric – and which have formed an important framing for articulating corporeal networking as a parallel raison d'être for conceptualising the particularity of the choreopolitical. In Vahla's works, the close proximity of relations between the public and the private are placed into disruptive choreographic methodologies that insist on questioning where responsibility for conflict/catharsis lies? For instance, who or what is "standing taller than liberty"? In response to this question, Vahla clarifies her thought:

> As choreographer you don't go to solve the big problems…you do this pulling up yourself and doing what you do best…by asking – as performers – what are

we meant to do ?…what are we here to do now?…is it by dancing pantsula?…our humanity has become so structured by greed, lack of privacy, violence – Liberty is a word that is ridiculous…there is irony in this layering of images because things don't really matter…we try to separate things, but histories and incidents are so predictably entwined…the tragedy of our times is that there is no tragedy – there is drama but no tragedy…respect is gone…we lost so much…everything became so commodified (Interview, Vahla 2015).

And yet, as her work insinuates, there is always the human striving to survive – to hold onto and to share meaning. Vahla describes her work as having a genesis in anger – not a personal anger, but a "humanitarian anger" (Interview, Vahla 2015) that has always perceived artistic endeavour as a form of struggle itself. In Finestone-Praeg (2015), I argue that this "humanitarian anger" manifests as the innate struggle of the body in its striving to express freedom (catharsis) in relationship to the discipline (conflict) required to do its work – and in dance, this is an immediate and present concern whenever the body is at work: "at the heart of her work lie rituals of conflict through the body, the way the body does its work in the world, and then how it does its work particularly in her choreography" (ibid.). As Vahla suggests, "the body has its own instinct and logic…impulse is different to information" (Interview, Vahla 2015).

In the programme note for *Standing taller than liberty*, Vahla (2015) calls the work

A homage to Vivaldi, the work is an exercise on movement form and shifts of language and meanings. It is an existential study of striving and becoming. *Standing taller than liberty* uses hyper-raised figures, a male pantsula dancer and physical theatre to challenge receptions of selfhood.

She describes this "striving for perfection" as existential "in that it happens all the time in history…there is a global consciousness that connects us as people" (Interview, Vahla 2015). She explains that the work "questions liberty on a wider sociopolitical level, but it is also about making *this* work…it is an experiment of form and language" (Interview, Vahla 2015). Similarly, *Agon* (2014) researches the spaces of and between sport and performance, with a focus on boxing and the ring. It was constructed in four parts – the boxing training session, Dead Ringer, the final bout, and the aftermath (website: http://athinavahla.com/about). The training rituals of a boxer, his coach, and a ring girl are choreographed by Vahla to "become a ground for reflection on the themes of power, discipline and the body" (Vlachos 2017, 123). These central figures are placed within a context of collaborative performance research where, as Vlachos observes, Vahla "traversed numerous regimes of expertise and knowledge"

at UCKAR, drawing on insights from various disciplines and the performance parts included panel discussions with a range of local academics, performing artists and sports lovers. Vlachos notes that the psychoanalysts, community organisers, anthropologists and Physical Theatre experts were all "engaged in theoretical forms of agon that complemented the battle happening in the ring" (Vlachos 2017, 123).

In *Standing taller than liberty* and *Deadringer*, Vahla forges a rethinking about liberty/conflict as political content, and asks us to interpret liberty/struggle as a politics of form. A multiplicity of dance languages, styles and meanings support the visual and aural representations, and in their repetitive layering and juxtaposition, they begin to perform a questioning of the choreopolitics embodied in each work. Vahla suggests that

> the structure is a string of images and situations and none of them go deep…so there is a representational mode but the choices of form come from my questions of a performance language, a dance language – what language is this and whose language is this? (Interview, Vahla 2015).

Standing taller than liberty is devised as a montage of visual and aural references to power that are hyper-iconic historical images – a "collage of global history" (Interview, Vahla 2015) – with music from different eras (baroque, classical, contemporary pop). A lone pantsula dancer (Likhaya Petit Jack) obstinately and repetitively beats out the sharp rhythms of his steps against the epic rush of a Vivaldi score. The resultant contrast and juxtaposition questions a subjectivity in relation to identity politics – the smallness of the individual microcosm/kinesphere of the pantsula[135] dancer, pitted against the epic expanse of the Western musical canon of classical music. *Deadringer* similarly uses a montage of training rituals or preparations from sport, gym routines and contemporary and popular dance/clubbing routines with juxtaposed scores from the *Stabat Mater*, a 13th century catholic hymn, one of the oldest seven Latin hymns, where Mary's sorrow as Christ's Mother is invoked (a lament that returns twice in the work), alongside a barrage of popular club and gym music. The deathly knell of the boxing bell which signals the foreboding start/stop for each of the ritualised ring girl's entrances and exits is interspersed between spoken text, the sounds of the breath of a body in training and selected other popular video dance scores. In *Deadringer*, the *Stabat Mater* similarly pits the ring girl's personal smallness and individual vulnerability against the sadness and vast, immense possibility evoked by the score. When

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[135] Pantsula emerged as a form of social commentary/protest in black townships during the apartheid era.

questioned about this score as a choice for *Deadringer*, Vahla describes her decision as being part of an intuitive insight that the song and the performer, Levern Botha,[136] were about suffering and transcendence:

> ...the thing that came to me was "upness", something about suffering that you have to transcend through going up. I like boxing. I haven't got a problem with male fighting. It's like brotherhood and sisterhood...boxing is a sacrifice of the male body...it's an inescapable part of male existence...this war thing. While the woman is so big, with all that wisdom, and surrounding motherhood, she cannot stop a war or her child going to fight. There is something archetypal there – it is not the Pieta, it's not romanticising boxing, but she knows the arena, she knows the ring, she knows what is happening. She is part of the inevitability that always knows there has to be a winner and loser (Interview, Vahla 2017).

This paradox is played out in the work through the figure of Foxy, the ring girl. I asked Vahla whether women become complicit in holding the inevitability of that will to power that they hold in their bodies, in the same way that Foxy becomes complicit in her choice to perform the role of ring girl? I noted that this comes at great cost to women, which is the lament embodied in the *Stabat Mater*. Vahla replied that the difficulty is realising that this is not personal – that it is not about Foxy's own tragedy or destiny – but that it is related to the bigger existential questions of agon. She deliberates:

> It is much bigger than that. It is about human destiny – we are doing the same thing again and again...and it's a game. The *Stabat Mater* is bigger than the movement actually. It is also about the Colosseum and the Hero on the Big Chariot...it is what people made out of tolerable deviance – highly structured violence – and accepting it and glorifying it. We cannot have war so why not put our aggression into making vicious games. So that's why she stands there as a symbol beyond the game – she becomes mythic. And it comes again when Foxy transforms – where this placard is also about the cross – that is why her head is down, she carries the cross...and the placard was meant to be big. She is carrying the news of the world...we were going to be streaming it live...it was meant to be the gaze, the eye, the thing that is looked at (Interview, Vahla 2017).

Vahla's words point to the distilled clarity of her thinking of this aperture between the personal/the part (the role of ring girl) and the public/the whole (boxing as agon). Vlachos

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[136] Levern Botha has a working legacy of performing with alternative South African dance companies like Jazzart and FPTC. When Levern worked with Jazzart, it was under the directorship of Alfred Hinkel, along with John Linden, Dawn Langdown and Jay Pather. She also worked with Magnet Theatre in Jazzart's collaborations with the theatre on, for example, *Rain in a Deadman's Footprints* (2004). Her work with FPTC runs from 2010–2014.

advocates that the exploration of the ring girl in the boxing project is an exploration at the "embodied nexus of gender, race, and sexuality" (2017, 143). He provides a poignant interpretation of the portrayal and embodiment of the ring girl's movement with the *Stabat Mater* in *Deadringer*:

> *Stabat Mater* gave emotive content to her own forms of agon as she mentally prepared herself to bear the symbolic and physical weight of the signs she would carry for the fight's spectators and practised her choreography, mimicking the movements she would make once the bout started…and *Stabat Mater* would play again once she made her entrance into the stadium, now performing as the ring girl. Her movements as the ring girl were intense, seemingly impossible feats of balance and strength. One particular moment found her holding a large sign in one hand and one ankle in the other, all while balancing on the tiny point of one stiletto heel. Overcome by the weight of her sign, she eventually collapsed as the music reached a point of mournful crescendo. But the bout was starting soon. She picked herself back up and, as the Prodigy once again began blaring, resumed her sexualised composure. It was her job to get the audience excited (Vlachos 2017, 143–144).

Figure 24. *Deadringer* (2014). Photograph by Mark Wilby. Performer is Levern Botha.

This epiphanous moment of Foxy's collapse as described by Vlachos becomes, for me, the emotional heartland or centre of *Deadringer*. Throughout the work, there are labyrinths of exhausting training rituals that Foxy performs in preparation for her performance as ring girl – contemporary dance, shadow boxing, gym fitness routines, skipping. We see her practising her fighting rituals between rituals of drinking water, spitting in a bucket, sweating, sharing information about herself, smoking a cigarette. Foxy's preparations in *Deadringer* echo the

preparatory rituals performed by the pantsula dancer in *Standing taller than liberty* which are revealed through a montage of film, spoken text and combinations of pantsula, contemporary and popular social dancing that shares a local and a global matrix of political symbols/images. Likhaya Petit Jack, a local Grahamstown pantsula dancer, stands patiently at the back of the stage space holding onto a chain that appears to connect his slight gravity to a sacred height (already implicit in the opening image of female goddesses on plinths as described earlier). Vahla (Interview, 2015) argues for a "sacred geometry" that manifests through an "austere use of space". She explains this by describing Likhaya as the "altar piece", the "axis mundi", that which connects us to heaven along the vertical plane. The women are described as the "keepers of the space" (Interview, Vahla 2015). Eventually, Likhaya is forced to release his grip on this axis and once this vertical connection is severed, his movement shifts along the sagittal plane as he starts to manifest his role as "Fallen Angel". His pantsula becomes more and more aggressively obsessive as he struggles to work into his body. He yells to an absent God, "I'll get you…come down…", while becoming increasingly vocally incoherent. He stutters – "I am Likhaya…Lik…my name is Lik li li li berty…Berty…Liberty" – his identity and ability to be sure becoming more unstable and increasingly uncertain. His confusion is manifest through the gravity of the lower body and his feet working in the pantsula – particularly his compulsive persistence in repeating his movements. Vahla describes this almost compulsive repetition as being about striving – "its like the flamenco, the footwork…its about work but also the refusal to die" (Interview, Vahla 2015).

These ideas are repeated in a number of images throughout the work. In another instance, Likhaya is held in a pieta-like composition by one of the woman (Madonna and child), at which point he relinquishes his exhaustion and allows himself the emotional and physical abandon of being held. The image is abruptly shattered when the woman shakes him off her lap and orders him to "Get up! Get up! Come on now – get up". The moment of rest and support is lost, his respite is over, because, as Vahla seems to suggest, life is not a passive business – Liberty is hard work and Art is conflict and catharsis arrives through work/dance.

Figure 25. *Standing taller than liberty* (2014). Photograph by Val Adamson: JOMBA! Performers include, from the left: Nomcebisi Moyikwa; Likhaya Petit Jack; Ntombizandile Nonyati; and Maipelo Gabang.

Similarly, in *Deadringer*, it is the body's work in the world that defines this personal, social, political and artistic agon. Vahla extends this layered image construction in *Deadringer* via Foxy, the single solo female performer. She works with image as symbology, portraiture and stereotype (representation of object) but also with an intimacy and immediacy of image via a deconstructed portraiture which seeps through the autobiographical, subject voice of the performer. But again, as Vahla insists, and herein lies her choreopolitical approach, "we get to know her through her body language", her form:

> …she goes through experimenting with different forms of language…gym language, dance…it's across timelines of forms, she crosses different forms as a carrier of her body between the extremes of the Apollonian and Dionysiac, the masculine and the feminine, the grace and fight, her bipolar quality (Interview, Vahla 2017).

This tension, layering and persistent swopping of object/subject role is embodied through the performance of Foxy, whose job it is to simply perform the rounds between boxing bouts. The title, *Deadringer*, hints at the ambiguities of representing/presenting the female performer as both object/subject simultaneously, possibly as a way to complicate signification/meaning. A "deadringer" is an exact duplicate, a close replication of something.

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The word "dead" assumes multiple meanings such as precise, something that is "spot on", or "dead on", like a target. A "ringer" refers to a horse that is substituted for another horse of similar appearance to defraud the bookies in horse racing – in this sense, a "ringer" is a horse with a false name or pedigree. The word "deadringer" suggests a kind of double falsity or double pedigree, which in this instance, is on target with Foxy's character. Foxy/Levern performs her "false" pedigree – as Vahla explains, "because of the performer performing a role but also somehow through this role, performing herself" (Vahla 2017). Foxy/Levern performs her ambiguous roles of stereotypical, sexy female object as ring girl, but also as the vulnerable, real woman who has a name, a bra size, a child. Her monologue, which she addresses directly to the audience, shares both personal and clinical, anatomical information about who she is:

> I am a fighter. My mother used to say: "no guts, no glory. No pain, no gain".
> I'm a dancer. Yes, I have a child. I ring the bell. I walk the rounds. I like
> walking the rounds. I call the rounds. I ring the bell. I ring the bell on the
> graveyard shift. I…You don't know who I am (Interview, Botha 2017).

Vahla shares that the text came about through discussion and was a collaborative text. She says "Levern kept prompting me. She wanted more dancing so the form started to develop from our arguments" (Interview, Vahla 2017). Here is agon as process, as epistemological curiosity. I found this interesting as another expression of artistic agon – both choreographer and performer's comments bear out this contested terrain implicit in their devised process. These personal processes, of working with the particularity of a performer, their idiosyncratic way of being-in-the-world are typical to the creative methodologies of Physical Theatre as discussed in PARTs I and II. Vahla states that the rehearsal process was intuitive – that it was about "emergence" rather than "design" Interview, 2017). Fleishman's notion of "mapping" as performance methodology, or St. Pierre's "nomadic enquiry", resonate with this description. Botha, laughing uproariously, notes that

> Athina's name for me was tiger, tigress…she used to say to me, you are a tiger!
> She was absolutely on the money. I was in a fight stage of my life and so the
> fight was very real for me, the ring was very real for me. One thing that stands
> out for me was the preparation I needed to do – psychologically, physically and
> mentally – for the process. The external fight that you were witnessing was
> also happening internally…and Athina and I also fought…it was if we both had
> boxing gloves on. I don't know if she told you that…we were fighting with
> each other, I was fighting with myself, I was fighting within the physical space

but all the while, this femininity was coming through... (Interview, Botha 2017).

In the interview with Botha, I shared my own readings as researcher, acknowledging that I recognised that both her and Vahla's personalities are clearly emergent in the work – that they have a similar drive in the way their bodies work to endure, to survive – both in the world as people and as dancer-choreographers (both are freelancers). Given this contextual information, Vahla's response to my question about the title makes sense:

> *Deadringer* as a word is loaded...in Victorian times when people were buried, they had a little rope from the coffin in case they wake up, so they can ring the bell, so someone can take them out...and it is so macabre, but for me that was a very strong image. And then the idea of the "double" made it even more ambiguous...this was the feeling I had about the performer, Levern Botha, in that stage in her life and at the same time, the kind of role that the placard girl plays in a boxing ring – the sense of duality, the sense of her playing a double identity...the idea of fitting exactly to a role that she should fit as a placard girl but also the kind of superficiality of this role...and how she is subjected or thrown there or throws herself into a particular role as a woman to play in a male game. And also the idea is, is she subscribing to her role, is she the one that orchestrates the role, or...is she the subject or the object? (Interview, Vahla 2017).

Vahla also shared that in her process with Botha she was worried about her at a personal level:

> ...is she going to make it or not, is she driving herself to breaking ?...I felt that she had something really tragic in her life going on...and I was watching...would she be self-destructive...is she going to ring the rope? This sense of desperation...is she going to ask for help? Even of herself? (Interview, Vahla 2017).

In different interviews with both Vahla (2017) and Botha (2017), I relayed the profound pathos I felt in that moment of witnessing the collapse during the *Stabat Mater* scene (when Foxy holds up the placard and then strains under its weight). I suggested that the paradox of form is that Foxy does all these extreme preparations just to hold up a stupid placard – that these physical and emotional preparations as agon become absurd in the light of the fact that she merely uses them to don the facade of the ring girl. In response to a question about how this duplicity felt to her as performer, Botha answered:

But Foxy has a love/hate relationship with the ring girl...as much as she detested having to put herself through it...the degradation of it all, she did, a little bit, like the taste of blood in her mouth...so in the end when she lifts the placard she doesn't know what to feel – should she feel proud or ashamed...and so there's that battle (Interview, Botha 2017).

Vahla's layered re/presentations of Foxy's agon allow her to become a complex, ambiguous character. Observing Foxy's role/dance in performance, I noted delicate slippage between her presentation as a stereotypical ring girl/dancer and this performance undercutting that stereotype and allowing her to recover a personal voice. I also perceived an autobiographical aspect in Botha's performance that collided with this "woman as image". Vahla's choreopolitical process and method pose certain epistemological questions that possibly allow Foxy/Botha to recover her *own* voice through this difficult process. Vahla also intervenes in representations of stereotypes of beauty through this layering and swopping of the subject/object role. Each scene seems to develop through a conflict, resulting in a poetics of exhaustion and saturation. In the first scene in *Deadringer*, the movement language (the language of training) becomes more formalised in subsequent scenes, expanding in its range and diversity/complexity, until Foxy's fall/transformation where we see her embody both roles simultaneously.

Our first encounter with Foxy is through the form of the spatial design and lighting. Vahla compares her choreographic construction of image to the temporal dynamics and spatial precincts implicit in photography or film:

...you slow down the picture through the lens, you slow down a moment...Because in the beginning there is no sense of space, it is just the body and then as the body moves, its creates the boxing ring...she starts from appearing on the stage in darkness, we have no concept of where she is or what she's doing...she has her back to us and then with the movement, she begins to develop her world of stage and the work she inhabits. Because there is no set or anything she has to create this world through her movement, her decisions and her calculations and then she inhabits this world (Interview, Vahla 2017).

Through her movement, manifest in space and time, Foxy gradually dances her world into being. Her different movement vocabularies establish the contradictions of her world – or what Vahla calls the "confusion" of her world – "is she a dancer or a boxer? Or a dancer who wants to be a boxer?". Vahla comments that this happens organically – "and then she arrives through exposing the movement material" (Interview, Vahla 2017). Vahla further describes the shifts between these object/subject roles as "planes of separation" occurring between "rest

and pause" and "exhaustion" – that there are "breaks" through which Foxy "comes in and out" (Interview, Vahla 2017). She describes these alternating states of dancing/training versus stillness versus talking, and which veer between Foxy reflecting quietly versus performing dynamically for the audience, as "almost autistic" (ibid.). Each "plane of separation" provides a pristine and different viewing into Foxy's world which layers her image and deconstructs any stereotypical reading of the ring girl.

Vahla says that deconstructing an image and a stereotype disturbs the conventional male gaze, that she is constantly asking "what happens behind this picture?". She is acutely aware of the ambiguities she constructs and the intertextuality she references through this layering of image. For instance, she plays with the nexus of stereotypical images she calls "ballerina sexuality" – when Foxy falls under the weight of the sign she holds up, her movement is inelegant and crass. Vahla says, "her fall shows her crotch…she grabs her ass – it's quite crude – it is how you make crude interventions [laughs]" (Interview, Vahla 2017). In relation to the "thumbs up" image which re-appears in both works, Vahla (ibid) references it as a "Roman thing", taken from historical iconographies. She explains that she often works "with the *contrapposto* image", citing the way that in Italian Renaissance paintings, the posing for the models was created through oppositions in the body – "the posture of the body is to create points of tension". She references her three years of studying Renaissance iconography in Italy, via funding from the National Arts Gallery, to see particular paintings as a rich source of this movement research. These iconic images are contemporised in her works but closely position, present and deconstruct the relationship of the female body and beauty. Vahla describes Foxy's rising up from her fall as a depiction of the

> absolute power of the female body…it is like the rising of Venus from the water…but through the lens of a particular Western concept of beauty. And that's what rotates – statues – these images are very very strong in the history of Western art. And the centre that is quite lifted…and the awareness of the form, that one is aware in her body of the form…but also its very painful, if you start to rotating in this way, you suffer…although you are holding something very beautiful, you are as an artist performing a terrible strain in your own body, that almost creates a strain inside (Interview, Vahla 2017).

In these works, we see the ring girl in *Deadringer* and the women on the plinths in *Standing taller than liberty*, trying to uphold and embody images of beauty. And then we witness the "falls", the gestures of "thumbs down" and the moment that Foxy sits with the towel over her head. These juxtapositions require an active questioning of the images

presented through their proximity to each other. Vahla describes the "thumbs down" gesture as taking us back to the gladiatorial ring (the thumbs down gesture was traditionally a signal to kill the gladiator) and again, she complicates the stereotypical image of woman/beauty by having Foxy embody signifiers and behaviours typically associated with masculinity – like the spitting in the bucket that boxers do when training or fighting. Vahla works with absolute precision of movement research and detail of conceptual conception to locate and distil the image. What we see is never arbitrary. Botha's words capture this failure of perfection and aspiration:

> *Deadringer* was so lonely…she is so vulnerable. At one stage she just sits on her knees and looks out…but she sees no-one and nothing…when she is in the gym in front of an invisible mirror she is never good enough or perfect enough…there is only one time that she feels satisfied and that is when she aims at the punching bag…when she's fighting. In her imaginary world, it's when she's got the guy down…the voyeurism (of the performance) is like she allowed someone in her home…it's the spitting in the bucket… spitting out the sweat but also all the things people say to you to break you down…or how life breaks you down. Sitting there with the towel over your head and nothing matters in that moment (Interview, Botha 2017).

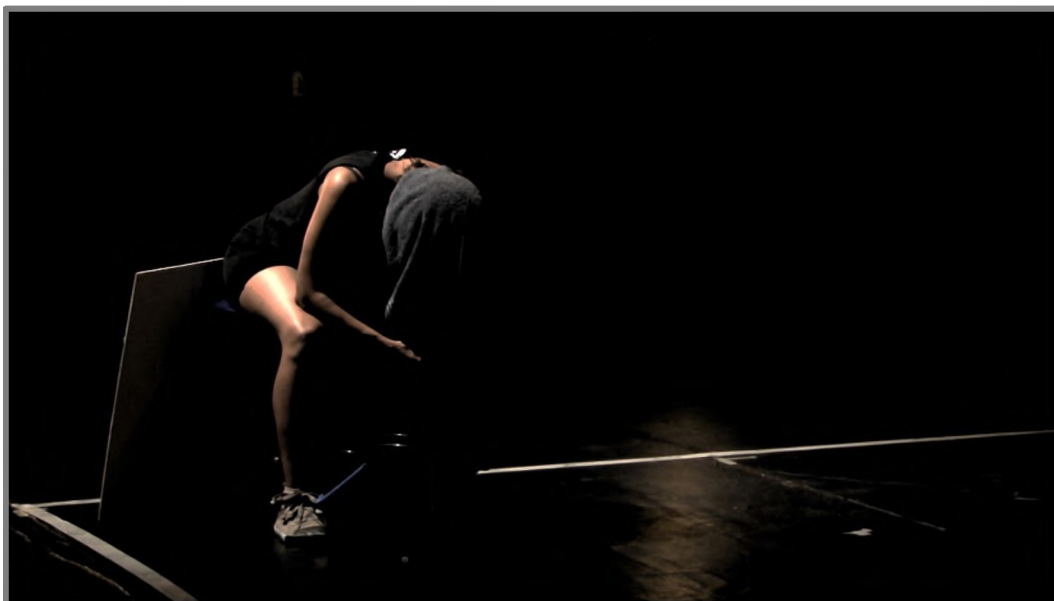**Figure 26.** *Deadringer* (2014). Photograph by Mark Wilby. Performer is Levern Botha.

This image grasps at something about Vahla's own conflicts, and in many ways *Deadringer* reveals aspects of her own constitution – I see the duplicate of Vahla in her choice to work with Botha and in this role of ring girl: Athina Vahla, with the towel over her head, and the thumbs up/down. She says:

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It's a theme and I am going to do it all my life…water spilling out of the mouth…it is the internal liquids…it's the body spilling out…sweat, tears, a primordial thing…the salivation of the cows (when they want food)…it creates a symbology and then it is being demystified when she wipes her mouth with the towel. Create a myth and then demystify it. Whatever is going to happen is going to fail – the thumb…we aspire but we can never be there (Interview, Vahla 2017).

Vahla had explored other transdisciplinary collaborations at UCKAR through three series of interdisciplinary performances that could be regarded as precursors to *Agon*,[137] but the scale and complexity of this production was indeed, as Vlachos notes, ambitious. Vlachos observes that while the project was not a failure, *Agon* came up against "significant forms of constraint" (2017, 124) and "institutional ambivalence" (2017, 159). He maintains that when the project was not met by silence, it was seen as a "fleeting seduction" or a "difficult task given the disciplinary constraints under which scholars are routinely asked to work". His point is that "there was simply no epistemic market" (ibid.) in the space of UCKAR for the work that Vahla set out to do with *Agon*. Vlachos' analysis of this "constraint" in relation to the *Agon* project sketches out a perceptively prescient relation between what he calls the "evidence of violence – both epistemic and embodied – that are continuing to threaten the legitimacy of a post-Mandela South Africa, and its universities in particular" (Vlachos 2017, 124). Vlachos notes that the tepid response to Vahla's project stands as a "prior and more elite iteration of irresolvable conflicts around the body" (ibid.) which certainly exploded in 2015 around the #RapeProtest and #FeesMustFall students protests at UCKAR. He astutely observes that Vahla's invitation to theorise the body

> required transcendence of the boundaries of disciplinary expertise and a flexible set of epistemologies that are deeply at odds with the UCKAR – a space marked by an audit culture (Strathern 2001) in which disciplinary orthodoxy and its products as a profession (weighed through assessments) are paramount (Vlachos 2017, 124).

Vlachos observed the frustration and anxiety that produces tension in a university drama department like UCKAR, where practice-led research, like all universities in South Africa

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[137] *Polis* (2012), a series of interdisciplinary collaborations between Rhodes University departments questioning the "performativity of knowledge" and *Interdisciplinary Encounters* (2011–2013) where Vahla conceived and curated 11 interdisciplinary events – lecture demonstrations, displays, discussions, disciplinary encounters. In 2011: *Playing Dirty* (Suspension lecture); in 2012: *Beyond Fighting; Man At Play; Synesthesia; Objects of Desire; Know Your Place; Retellings; Write the Moment;* and in 2013: *Materials Matter* and *Boxing Is.*

and in fact, globally, has historically had marginal status[138] and where a knowledge-production process that finds its epistemic starting point in the body would frustrate the processes of subsidy-producing academic output. He argues that

> it is little wonder that *Agon* had difficulty generating a sense of conversational momentum in the space of the university…It is not surprising that the failure of one form of agon – in the tragic sense of argumentation – would presage more violent forms of agon later. Bodies in struggle, for better or worse, are very much at the nexus of the current unrest at UCKAR and campuses across South Africa…*Agon* is no longer a spectacle that universities can simply ignore or observe passively. Successively intense forms of agon continually threaten to upend the stability of a post-Mandela South Africa. Like Athina, they call for greater and more careful attention to bodies, and the price of ignoring them gets more steep with each successive wave of unrest (Vlachos 2017, 159).

I concur with Vlachos' astute and critical readings of the constraints that limited reception to *Agon*. But would also like to concede that perhaps being "outside" allows a viewing that is not achievable from "inside"? While I fully endorse his critique, there is simultaneously a resistance in me that, like Foxy, reacts to his critique, as a "survivor" in this system. Having straddled 30 years of working within the difficult interstices between the performing arts industry in South Africa and the place of the performing arts within the academy, I wonder if Vlachos and Vahla (in re-iterated arguments of "not getting enough support") really comprehend what *was* actually achieved and the levels of support/interest that were offered. Vahla, as a guest choreographer for FPTC and a Rhodes research fellow, was granted access to rehearsal spaces, to theatre venues and technical assistance, to company and institutional funding that she didn't have to struggle to apply for – and sustain – and to a generosity of spirit from technicians, staff and students in the drama department and collaborators who participated willingly. From a different viewing, I wonder if the agon in a local and personal context allows one to understand "constraint" differently? The constraints that I perceive are not only institutional but deeply personal and embedded in the lived and embodied understanding of how dialogic reach *may be possible*. Decolonial protests on our campuses drew sharp attention to the spaces that allow/disallow engagement as agon – the

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[138] This is changing – in 2017, the UCKAR called for its first meetings to seriously address productivity in the form of Creative Outputs and their subsidy. A little late for FPTC which has produced over 200 original works which never received peer-reviewed subsidy. This said, the Rhodes University Joint Research Committee was supportive for many years of FPTC's work as "creative research" and provided grants in the form of a small but essential annual running grant (from 2009 to the present) to cover administrative and other costs. Any lack of support was always part of the systemically vulnerable and misunderstood relationship of the performing arts to the academy and which practice-as-research initiatives have attempted to redress.

slowness of curriculum transformation, the slowness of support for P-a-R within the academy, the still racist and classist structures of our educational system. PART III (iv) turns to some of these epistemological questions.

In closure, I defend the choreopolitical stance that Vahla's work has produced in its political promise to generate debate and epistemological curiosity about choreographies, wars and bodies in South Africa. *Standing taller than liberty* and *Deadringer* divert from a binary thinking that locks us, the audience, into orthodoxies of knowing, and rather, the works invite a becoming through their airing of questions about power, the body and subject-hood. Vahla constructs corporeal networks that pose difficult choreographic questions as artistic agon, and her work generates ambiguous images that offer a wealth of possible interpretations and which demand an active, participatory spectatorship. Through filigreed choreographic scoring and the transdisciplinarity of her choreographic vision, Vahla undercuts crass, simplistic understandings of power. Her existential and political interest questions an ethics of responsibility – what is the choreographer's responsibility to liberty, to activate personal agency, through choreographic form?

(iv) Rehearsing freedoms: Surreo-activism in Nomcebisi Moyikwa's *Inqindi* (2015)

> At the beginning of writing, there is a loss. What cannot be said.
> (De Certeau, cited in Shaughnessy 2012, xiv).

Nomcebisi Moyikwa has a long association with FPTC (2005 to 2018). As a teenager, she danced with the Amaphiko dance project as well as the FPTC Youth Company.[139] She was invited, while still at school in Grahamstown, to perform in Gordon's work, *Go* (2007) which had been commissioned by Georgina Thompson for the centenary celebrations of the national dance platform held annually in Johannesburg, the *Dance Umbrella*.[140] Moyikwa commenced

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[139] The Amaphiko Township dance project was launched in 1993 by Janet Buckland to provide free dance training and a dance platform for young dancers from Fingo Village, Joza and Grahamstown East, drawing many of its participants from local schools. For many years, Wendy Stamper has been Amaphiko's principal teacher, achieving her Teacher's Associate qualification in 2011, and Amaphiko is still active up to the present. The students participate annually in the Association of International Dance Teachers examination in modern dance. FPTC Youth Company was launched in 2005 at the National Arts Festival. In association with Amaphiko, auditions were held and 11 members were selected to join the Youth Company. Moyikwa was one of these members, along with Siyabulela Mbambaza (originally from Kwazakhele High School in Port Elizabeth). Mbambaza went on to become an apprentice and finally a company member of FPTC. The FPTC Youth Company dissolved in 2007 due to a lack of company funding after which there was no capacity to continue the youth programme.
[140] Georgina Thompson, Artistic Director of *Dance Umbrella* (1998–2018) provides a detailed account of the rise and growth of the *Dance Umbrella* festival in her 2015 keynote address at Confluences 8 *Negotiating*

undergraduate and postgraduate studies at Rhodes University, finally receiving her Master's degree in 2018. After a year with Forgotten Angle Theatre Company (FATC) as an intern, I extended an invitation to Moyikwa to join FPTC in 2014 as a performer-choreographer-facilitator because a funding opportunity had arisen.[141] She was particularly keen on having the opportunity to create works of her own and soon dived into this with a characteristic independence and committed focus. In 2014, she was invited as part of her working portfolio to create solo work for FPTC, and she began to conceive her own projects like *Intlangano/Gatherings*, an all-male group drawn from Grahamstown East and Rhodes University, with a clear commitment to initiating various communities into dance exchange.[142] It was within this context that I originally started to think about Moyikwa's work as edging towards a form of choreo-activism. But as her choreographic experience grew through creating/performing larger works in 2015 and 2016, I realised that there was an articulated resistance from Moyikwa to having her emerging work read, pigeon-holed or classified as a choreo-activism. In dialogue with Moyikwa in 2016 and 2017 (two lengthy interviews), it became increasingly evident that her choreopolitical stance rejected perceptions that defined her form/thinking only in relation to her political identity as a black female choreographer. While not devoid of sociopolitical concerns and contexts, her aesthetic presented a choreopolitical stance more closely aligned with a roguish imaginary around a utopian Afro-surrealism while aligned with current decolonial thinking and black feminisms. Moyikwa's presiding argument is that questions about a curiosity with choreographic form, about choreographic knowledge, were getting lost in assumptions that all work created by black artists had to, by virtue of being made by a black artist, locate a political context that spoke back to the colony and in this respect demanded a social account of responsibility. Epistemological curiosity, innovation in form and imaginative play were not being foregrounded within issues of form pertinent to current South African dance practice. Moyikwa has cited many of the debates between prominent black thinkers and artists like

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Contemporary Dance in Africa conference. It is published in the conference proceedings as Dance Umbrella Festival, Dance Forum, Johannesburg (2015).

[141] Forgotten Angle Theatre Collaborative – PJ Sabaggha's dance company formed in 1995 – which is now based at the Ebhudlweni Art Centre in Emakhazeni, Mpumalanga. FATC offers a range of activities from a rural outreach programme, internships for young artists and leadership programmes, artist-in-residence programmes, summer and winter dance programmes for schools and the curation of the annual *My Body My Space* Public Art Festival.

[142] See Appendix 13 for details on the *Intlangano/Gatherings* project. This project was later selected as one of the Creative City projects run by the Grahamstown National Arts Festival to nurture and develop the city as a creative hub.

Dubois, Hughes and Zora in America as inspirations for her own parallel questionings[143] as well as decolonial and black feminist debates in South Africa.[144]

Moyikwa's articulated visions for her works, *Inqindi* (2015), *Home* (2016) and *Qash Qash* (her 2017 Master's thesis project) pursue an epistemological curiosity which seeks to enquire into methodologies for animating imagination in the choreographic process/art, while simultaneously working with decolonising images of the black female dancing body. Black feminisms and decolonial discourses are centrally referenced in Moyikwa's writing and manifest in her choreographic experiments. I started to probe the political efficacy or promise in a work like *Inqindi*, locating her choreopolitical stance as embracing a surreo-activism. It is useful to consider the ways that Moyikwa's programme notes articulate the following visions for the works I will refer to:

> ***Inqindi*** is now embarking on a journey of how to posit herself in a society in which images of black women are figures of absence. The historically rebellious clenched black fist now opens to greet the other and reveal what they did not see in her; the fist now opens for a reintroduction (Moyikwa 2015, programme note. Inqindi translates as "fist" in Xhosa).

> ***Home*** is something peculiar in South Africa. There is a yearning for it; something mystical, restful, hopeful. The production will use unprocessed physicality to explore the insidious presence of the desire for a home in our contemporary lives (Moyikwa 2016, programme note).

> ***Qash Qash*** is a solo performance with interactive moments by the cast of technical performers and a choir which marches diagonally across the stage once. The translation of *Qash Qash* from Xhosa into English is roughly the equivalent of "I spy with my little eye" or as Moyikwa says, "A game of secrets" (Moyikwa 2017a).

Dreamtime choreography

Many of the ideas put forward by Miller's (2016) Afro-surrealist manifesto outlined in PART

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[143] Moyikwa is excavating a history of African American role models in this citation of writers and social activists who were all creating work in America in the early 1900s. Zora Neale Hurston's (1891–1960) writing has seen a revival with the upsurge of black female role models being acknowledged in recent years. Moyikwa argues that art in this moment in America was speaking "back to the colony", while Hurston was saying that she did not belong to the "sobbing school of blackhood" which spoke only to her blackness and her anger (Interview, Moyikwa 2017).

[144] For a brief contextual framing, decolonisation was a concept linked to struggles for liberation in Asia and Africa from 1945; while decoloniality refers to the process of de-linking (via acts of "epistemic disobedience") from what decolonial theorist, Walter Mignolo, has articulated as the "colonial matrix of power", and along with many others he has developed decolonial understandings of and approaches to "aestheTics" and "aestheSis" and their "entanglements with contemporary political and cultural processes" (Mignolo, cited in Gaztambide-Fernández 2014, 196). I will elaborate on these terms in the conclusion.

III (i) can be discerned in Moyikwa's programme descriptions above – black women as "figures of absence", the "mystical", the "hopeful", "unprocessed physicality" and "a game of secrets", as captured through the whimsical, and excess as subversion (in *Qash Qash*: "a choir which marches diagonally across the stage *once*" – emphasis added). Moyikwa's choreographic experiments unfold through a dreamscape choreography via a series of de-narrativised movements that are surreally juxtaposed to conjure a fragmented, fantastical world.[145] Closely aligned to the dance world, I was reminded that in 1992 Andrea Phillips had coined the term, "dreamtime choreography" to describe the form of Belgian choreographer, Wim Vanderkeybus' deconstructed dance – she called his work "dance that is not dance", and which displayed "scenes that are not scenes, snippets of narrative, comic ability, multi-media skills, real time, not 'acted' time, montage structure" (Phillips, cited in Preston-Dunlop 1995, 29). Discussing this kind of surreal, dreamtime choreography 17 years later in the work of another Belgian choreographer, Uytterhoeven speaks to similar deconstructed, "dreamtime" strategies used by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui in a work like *Foi/Myth* (2007) as the creative methodology for his compositional strategies. Uytterhoeven (2011) cites Janet Sonnenberg's point in *Dreamwork For Actors* in which she describes the way in which dream images operate: "in a dream, the whole is given all at once and is encoded in the image" – Uytterhoeven explains that these images encapsulate

> many fragments of ideas in a non-linear and simultaneous dramaturgy. They may therefore leave the spectator feeling incapable of recounting the performance they have just witnessed, just as it is impossible to relive and retell the dream (2011, 339).

This sense of energetic happening, but not really being able to say exactly what happened, describes the structure of feeling and energy in Moyikwa's *Inqindi* which does not trace a cohesive, teleological, narrative unfolding of events, but rather, the work itself holds as a dreamlike image with fractal parts echoing the whole, or self-similar to the complete choreographic encounter. This echoes Lehmann's argument raised earlier that within postdramatic form, dances articulate "not meaning but energy", that they "represent illustrations not actions" (Lehmann 2006, 163). This kind of surreal, organic logic requires, as Utterhoeven notes of Cherkaoui's work, "a specific dramaturgical labour from the spectator"

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[145] My first impressions of Moyikwa's form recalled Virginia Woolf's stream-of-consciousness writing, Hélène Cixous'(1991) notion of *écriture féminine*, and closer to home, the theatre-maker, Mwenya Kabwe's works which similarly explored an Afropolitan identity through an Afro-surrealism.

because the unfolding of the work's actions deliberately "complicate signification" (2011, 333). These questions surrounding spectatorship reiterate questions arising from the performance of spasm in *Shattered Windows* (PART I) – *if* this is this dance, *how* is this dance? These questions of form are critical to Moyikwa's epistemological and dramaturgical intentions and processes. Her thinking has been informed by South African academics like Pumla Dineo Gqola (2010; 2015) and Nthabiseng Motsemme (2004) who have risen to prominence as black feminisms have manifest as a discourse of protest and reclamation of African epistemic knowledge. Motsemme (2004) argues that various studies exploring the ways ordinary women speak about their traumatic pasts under violent regimes have consistently shown how they "tend to place their narratives within everyday life experience, rather than nationalist concerns" (Zur, cited in Motsemme 2004, 909). This re-iterates earlier arguments for a choreopolitics that supports Moyo's proposals about "corporeal networking" as a way to embed subjective voices between the "gaps" of ahistorical political and nationalist rhetoric. Motsemme contends that in rejecting dominant Western oppositional hierarchies of silence versus speech, and adopting instead frameworks where "words, silence, dreams, gestures, tears" all exist interdependently, "we find that the mute always speak" (ibid.). Motsemme's point holds pertinent resonance with Physical Theatre's attempts to dislodge the logocentric and patriarchal binary of the voice/silence polarity in Western dance forms. In her attempt to comprehend the workings of silences, which she cites as part of the "economy of the invisible", Motsemme tries to "show how this also reveals the invisible but agentic work of the imagination to reconfigure our social worlds" (ibid.). I argue that it is precisely this "agentic work of the imagination" that Moyikwa is trying to animate in her choreopolitics – trying to find what questions would elicit new images – or even more significantly, that we need new questions to find innovative answers.

Moyikwa, in the programme note for *Home*, speaks of working with "unprocessed physicality". In her works, movement and its images are not expressed in recognisable (codified) dance languages or narratively contextualised storylines. Rather, the dance language is idiosyncratic and deeply personal to each performers' organic bodily expression, producing a particular corporeal intimacy. The dance language emerges in mosaic form through improvised play with the performers' own bodily memories. The world of *Home,* for instance, is a surreal dreamscape of unconscious memories brought into contact and contrast with a brimming "inside and outside" world, simultaneously. Moyikwa says,

> [w]hat really interests me…[small sigh]…where I come from, the environment is a contrast of images where you see a zinc house which has a satellite dish on the outside. It speaks of choice, it speaks of decision, for me – those are the interesting choices…of us playing (as children) and seeing an aeroplane and saying "bring me sweets and apples" and knowing that is not going to happen but it is part of a ritual everyday…it reminds me of *Waiting For Godot*…you are waiting, you are hopeful…we are not hopeful that this aeroplane is coming back but are sending something out and continuing (Interview, Moyikwa 2017).

Moyikwa articulates this sense of imaginative ambiguity as play, as "being able to dream".

Being able to dream

This capacity to imagine is key to the devised process of choreographic improvisation in the Physical Theatre process. Moyikwa reflects that she attempted to create "unlimited mystery" or ambiguous information about the world of home in order to disrupt the "familiar world of reality" by introducing a "different and mysterious reality" which she suggests lies within the realm of the "grotesque" and the "anti-rational" – in order to "explore what we do not understand" (Moyikwa 2017a, 13 – a brief description of these influences in *Home* (2016) are chartered in Appendix 16). She describes the collision and nexus of different texts (bodily, sonic and visual) as a "language of longing" (Moyikwa 2017a, 18). When questioned about her choreopolitics, Moyikwa responded in the following way: "I think the politics comes from being magical or imaginative…us being *able* to dream" (Interview, Moyikwa 2017). Being able to dream possibly allows for emergence – how we see, feel and hear our particular experience.

Sonic scenography: the scoring of Inqindi

The sonic score invoked in *Inqindi* is a unyielding cacophony of words/sounds with a repetitive accumulation that finally reaches a tipping point where word/sounds morph to become a sonic scenography. It evoked a memory for me of the Dadaist, Hugo Ball, who spoke about the alchemy of the word in Dadaist simultaneous poetry – that the meaning of these words lay not in what they signify – but in *how* they signify – how the sound of the word itself holds and produces form. In *Inqindi*, words and sounds spill out of the performers' bodies to become pure score/song. There is a ritualised intention – the performer Maipelo Gabang's laughter escalates steadily but unpredictably in parallel pitch to a cacophonous jazz score (by Abdullah Ibrahim, an anti-apartheid musical veteran) to become a wailing or a

crying – an attempt to exorcise something out of the body. Her laughter becomes an incantation, a ritualised expression of excess or fullness that banishes/expels her energy. This excess of sonic scoring is reminiscent of what Alude Mahali has termed the "beautiful pain syndrome" in her 2013 PhD research on twenty-first century South African theatre-making. Mahali references Mamela Nyamza's choreography as embodying this "beautiful pain syndrome", which I argue is strongly grounded in Nyamza's choreo-activism.[146] Mahali (2013; 2015) provides in-depth analyses of Nyamza's *Isingqala* (2011) and *19-Born-76-Rebels* (2013), arguing that these works manifest mnemonic impressions (the "after-image") as performative strategies that allow Nyamza to re-vision her experience of a past experience into her present experience. Mahali notes that the after-image is "primarily produced by memory and the imagination" – an "emotional or psychological recall/re-imagining of something that is not immediately present to the senses" (2015, 1). Mahali reasons that in both of Nyamza's works, crying or crying out is "the most repeated expression" and that "The Cry" is a vocal after-image that "relies on non-verbal utterance for expression" (2015, 46). Motsemme's point that silence "speaks" – that "words, silence, dreams, gestures, tears" all exist interdependently "within the same interpretive field" (2004, 910) – holds true for this bodily "Cry".

The Cry

In her moving account, Mahali parallels these cries to an iconic moment during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), when during her testimony, activist Fort Calata's wife, Nomonde Calata, broke out into a loud "wail". Mahali (2015, 46) cites Cole (2010, 11), who argues that this wail captured something fundamental about the "experience of gross violations of human rights and served as a sign of the extent to which visceral and vocal expression was vital to the TRC process". As Mahali notes, Calata's expression of pain was complex because the cry was both personal but also suggested the pain of a nation over many generations (2015, 46). She cites anti-apartheid activist, Alex Boraine, who claimed that the cry "caught up in a single howl all the darkness and horror of the apartheid years" (Boraine, cited in Mahali 2015, 46). Mahali correctly observes that the TRC did not annotate or translate the non-verbal expressions of pain such as, cries, screams, sighs or moans, but that

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[146] The term "choreo-activism" is also used by Gerard Samuel and Ketu Katrak to describe Nyamza's work. Nyamza's works like *Hatch* (2008*), Isingqgala* (2011), *Amafongkong* (2011), *I Stand Corrected* (2012), *19-Born-76-Rebels* (2013/2014), *Last Attitude* (2015) and *Black Privilege* (2018) all deconstruct and intervene in the stereotypical patriarchal and colonial gaze that objectifies the black female body.

the interventions of art have extended the processes of bearing truth and remembering.[147] She cites Nyamza's solo *Isingqala* (2012) as one example of this delicate private/public proxemics. She explains that "loosely translated", *isingqala* "is that moment when one has been crying for so long or so heavily that when the tears and the wailing eventually subside, all you are left with is catching your breath between barely audible whimpers" (Mahali 2015, 47). Nyamza's own description from the 2012 production (at the GIPCA Exuberance project of 2012 at the University of Cape Town), explains her use of the cry:

> Let me begin with the bigger picture – the country as a whole. I think we are in a state of *isingqala,* we are crying inside. This is a kind of "aftermath"…In fact, we seem to be in a constant state of "aftermath" or "recovery". This crying does not end…I wonder what happens when that quiet crying inside becomes sound, what happens when the "private" becomes "public"? When others find their own cries in you? I would say that this is the human condition of continuation as a cry (Nyamza, cited in Mahali 2013, 141).

I would like to posit that this notion of the "after-image" embodied in "The Cry" as a form of "corporeal networking" (Moyo 2013) – that it holds resonance with the juxtaposed proxemics of the glocal as discussed in PART III (ii) – the local/global, the private/personal versus the social/national. In *Inqindi*, there is a recurring spatialised relation set up as a tension between a single woman and a chorus of women – an active performer with an observing group, the personal against the public, an individual stance standing in contrast to a social grouping. The scapegoat versus the pack? The logic of this image, of the one pitted against the many, is reiterated and replicated through the nexus of spatial proximities, movement language and the vocal scoring in the work. The image below captures a moment of this spatialising configuration.

Inqindi commences with six womens' backs to us as they lean and oscillate on the unstable floor cloth that twists and slips beneath them. Back and forth, back and forth, they attempt to travel, sometimes together, often alone, as the world beneath them gets caught and twisted into new configurations, landscapes of possibility. One movement motif is the pointer

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[147] A profound project that engaged performatively with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was the *Truth In Translation* play and project (2006) collaboratively devised by Michael Lessac, Paavo Tom Tammi, Hugh Masekela and the company of the Colonnades Theatre Lab, South Africa. See truthintranslation.org for more detailed information. The work performed the difficulty of the embodied "performances" of eight of the language translators whose task it was to translate/interpret the stories of the perpetrators and survivors of apartheid violence. Andrew Buckland performed in the premier of this work in Rwanda. The work performed transnationally in other locations with similar histories of violence, like the Balkans and Northern Ireland, to facilitate dialogue and healing – "small acts of repair".

finger that transcribes trajectories and directions through space and time, seeking out a pathway or trace to follow. Like mapmaking. This finger often traces the contours of the body, as though discovering a deeply situated pulse or pain beneath the surface of the skin. Another persistent movement motif is the quick lifting and stamping of the right foot into and yet away from the ground beneath their feet – like a horse's silent stamp. The rhythmic flow of energy of these grounded impressions was the use of intense impact rhythm and the use of fast, hard repetitions – a strong downward pounding of the earth and then always, a sudden stop.

Figure 27. *Inqindi* (2015). Photograph by Tamani Chitambo. Performers are, from the left, Maipelo Gabang, Palesa Theledi, Pumelela Nqelenga, hidden Ciko Sidzumo, Nomcebisi Moyikwa, and in the centre, Fezokuhle Mthonti.

In conversation with Moyikwa, I asked what movement histories or memories were embedded in this movement and what the visceral power felt like in her body to perform these gestures. She replied: "I love [a long pause]…power…and stamping is like leaving a mark" (Interview, Moyikwa 2016). I reflected on her response as understanding the movement's intuitive capacity as the power of a body to leave a mark, a bodily signature, the power of *this* woman to leave a mark. Moyikwa elaborated that it was also about "capability…it is *being capable*, and being able" (Interview, Moyikwa 2016). There is an insistent, autistic, automatic, maybe even instinctive aggression present in the movement

language that commands this as a bodily questioning. I argue that the strength and insistence in the power of the movement is part of Moyikwa disclosing a subjective voice, an insistence on being present in a body that is repeatedly saying, "I am here, I am here, I am here". This repetition is rhythmically repeated to re-instate, re-articulate and formulate a method of becoming. I ask Moyikwa if *Inqindi* is an angry work? She replies that it is not an angry work, but that it "focuses on what's missing" in relation to this group of women performing (Interview, Moyikwa 2017). I had noted this as a persistent question in Moyikwa's unpublished Master's paper (2016a), "Thinking beyond the debate of good and bad imagery of black womanhood: A reflection on the process of making *Inqindi*". A persistent question being – how to take black women's bodies out of colonial narratives? Moyikwa asks: "Why do we always see the black women in maids' costume?…Why is her bum always the centre of attention?" (Moyikwa 2016a, 1). She claims that through the process of *Inqindi* and growing alternative presentations of the black female body, "the image of a confident and powerful black women was for me very important because it suggested a new image of a black woman" (ibid.). She states that she started defining black womanhood as "*She is not*" (Moyikwa 2016a, 6)[148] – that "resisting does not tell us anything about black women" – rather, you need to "remove the black woman from the room that makes her the object of discovery" (Moyikwa 2016a, 7–8). Similarly to arguments related to the counter-performativity of representing violence in PART III (ii), in *Inner Piece* (2009) Moyikwa asserts that she does not want to re-insert the logic of colonial representation back into the image.[149] Moyikwa draws from her personal experience, her performers' lives, from real encounters with people close to her, like her grandmother, and she references a rich body of inspiration from black feminist writers to feed this epistemological curiosity. Selected written reflections to the making of *Inqindi* in her Master's research paper become a scripted

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[148] Moyikwa pertinently cites Pumla Gqola's research on rejecting representations that continually speak back to the slavery of black women – like the "Venus Hottentot", Sarah Baartman – she suggests Gqola's thinking "could be interpreted and seen as an epistemic project that would assist in the next step of fighting representations of black women" (Moyikwa 2016a, 7).

[149] Moyikwa claims that this was also her initial idea for another work, *Caught*, a duet that she created in 2014 when she was working with FPTC as a performer-facilitator. She observes that "*Caught* is very sexual, in its look…but we were not Jezebel, but we were also not wearing *doeks*. Part of the problem is that white people are so illiterate in reading black bodies and the only manual you have is the manual of the colony…the illiteracy comes from a position of not seeing the black body…it is to see it as human, not a representation (Interview, Moyikwa 2016). *Caught* performed in 2014 in Grahamstown and toured to the Detours Festival at Wits University in May 2014 as well as the GIPCA/ICA Arts Alive festival in Cape Town in September 2014, and the JOMBA! Contemporary Dance festival in Durban in September 2014. It also toured to Uganda in 2015 for the Bayimba International Festival of the Arts.

response to the character Nomathamsanqa that Moyikwa creates in collaboration with Palesa Theledi (the performer) in *Inqindi*. The various episodes are titled – "Known as the maid in the crooked room, Nomathamsanqa in *Inqindi*" and "Conceptualising *Inqindi* Episode 1: 'She is not'". These titles distil a method of research which creates a particular subject centre from which Moyikwa can begin to speak, both as choreographer, researcher, performer and woman. Below is this script for Episode 1 in *Inqindi*, wherein the woman's fist emerges as receptive, an opening, rather than a reaction.

Conceptualising *Inqindi*
Episode 1: 'She is not'

How she looks
I begin by listening who they say she is.
I made a list of what they did not mention about her. That's how she looked.
She looked like what they failed to tell me.

How she speaks
She never spoke before.
She had studied how they speak.
She had become familiar with the words that they valued the most. She was ready. Like yesterday she stood there prepared to listen.

What a relief, she thinks. What a vision, a beautiful sound, this time she was not just listening, she could also hear.
She usually doesn't hear. What a relief, what a beautiful sound, she thought to herself. She wonders where this sound comes from.
It must come from somewhere close, she thinks to herself. It must come from somewhere close.
This beautiful sound came from her.

What she talks about?
They asked her if she is tired.
She wishes she can talk about something else.
She has once turned the television on and the cricket was playing. She watched it although she didn't understand the sport.
Please, please, please ask me if I watched the cricket game last week, she thought to herself.

What language does she speak?
She had a music book.
That is how she remembers the lyrics to all her favourite songs.
She carries that book with her just in case while she is on the road someone plays her favourite songs.
When one of her songs played, she would sing. She sang
Awuyazi ukuba ndizalwa ngubani? That is her song.

What she wore
She has the most beautiful hair.

How she moved?
It made sense that she gathered her hands together and roped her fingers tight together. She held them together.
(Moyikwa 2016a, 4–5)

The writing here is poetic and its form echoes the musical play of call and response in musical forms like blues, gospel, jazz and hip-hop, where a solo instrument makes a proposition that is answered by a group of instruments. These statements, "how she looks", "how she moves" embody Moyikwa's questions for movement research which become answered or written in the performers' bodies. In the performed texts, which I call "memory fragments", a subjective authorial presence (written in the first person for the character, Nomathamsanqa) shares things about herself that are very personal – intimate, personal details. She says, for instance,

> I have this thing where I cannot tolerate a chaotic bedroom. I like my shirts folded in a perfect square and colour-coded from dark to lights. I place my sleeping garment under my perfectly straight pillows that are placed on my perfectly straight bed (Moyikwa 2016a, 9; Inqindi script).

In Nomathamsanqa then, we encounter a *particular* woman, not a general character standing in for woman as some kind of place-holder or function. Contemporary Vietnamese American novelist, Viet Thanh Nguyen, author of *The Sympathiser* (2015) and *The Refugees* (2017), comments that he creates characters that are complex and ambiguous to avoid having them stand "for" something – he says he didn't wish to "burden his characters with those kind of colonial histories".[150] I argue that Moyikwa similarly attempts to create complex, ambiguous personae in *Inqindi* to avoid the black female dancing body becoming responsible for representing stereotypically – for example, woman's body as representing an entire country or, in this instance, Nomathamsanqa's body as representing the "fist" of all young

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[150] With poet, Paul Tran in the Preface to Viet Thanh Nguyen's novel, *The Sympathiser* (2015) which won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2016. This conversation is also cited from an interview with Viet Thanh Nguyen: *Anger in the Asian American Novel* on 29 June 2015. Nguyen discusses how writers of colour have been tempted to write for what he calls, "dominant gazes", noting that the African American writer, Toni Morrison, says in her novel, *Beloved* (1987) that to have to explain yourself to white people distorts you because you start from a position of assuming your inhumanity or lack of humanity in other people's eyes. Nguyen suggests that ambiguity and complexity allow one to shift the positioning of marginality – "being able to present a narrator who's both human *and* inhuman was my way of challenging our subordination in dominant culture" (Tran/Nguyen interview 2015; emphasis added).

black women in South Africa. Possibly, through such a staging of opacity and complexity, choreographic form can also be read beyond the confines of the assumed political imperatives of "the struggling black artist". In the same way that characters are not made to "stand for" a stereotypical representation, so too the choreographer is not obliged to "stand for" black South African female choreography that engages a choreopolitical activism as its primary stance. Moyikwa's rejection of this pressure or complicity to choreograph in reaction to dominant colonial discourses of the "gaze" is ever-present. Simultaneously, Moyikwa is mindful of the double bind/double erasure of the colonial gaze. Moyikwa responds to what she calls "this idea of isolation":

> I want to re-iterate this idea of isolation. If you are trying to find other images, you forget about the white gaze…but what this denies is that black people live amongst white people and they live in these very structured colonial spaces…what I find very magical is that you can create a space around you in these very spaces that suppress you (Interview, Moyikwa 2017).

I became acutely aware of this positionality in Moyikwa (2016b) where she has written openly about selected incidents where her "blackness" as choreographer was highlighted over and above her play with imagination and dance form. When asked whether she felt she had found alternative presentations (rather than representations) of the women in the piece or if she achieved something authentic to the subject voices of those women, Moyikwa says, "I'm not sure if I really did but perhaps it was a beginning of thinking about that…we need to understand the layers in them" (Interview, Moyikwa 2017). Working with this particularity of each woman's experience in *Inqindi* is a parallel methodology or epistemological strategy to move away from reactive response or representation. In this, Moyikwa is not dealing with creating "dance steps" but with a generative movement context – a nexus of research – physical, emotional, historical, political.

In her solo Masters performance, *Qash Qash* (2017), Moyikwa is both supported and in dialogue (another version of call and response) by a "cast of technical performers and a choir which marches diagonally across the stage once" in her "game of secrets". The opening image of *Qash Qash* is a performed portrait of the performer-choreographer, Nomcebisi Moyikwa.[151] Her costume is a transparent dark grey dress that is lit by many small points of

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[151] I draw on reflections from viewing the work in performance as well as my written reflection on Moyikwa's written research report as an internal examiner for her Master's research report on her performed thesis project entitled *Qash Qash* (2017).

light (fairy lights) which illuminate her figure poised in stillness and staring up at a potential universe. She is standing on a raised, square platform which creates the geometry of a central performance space which later transforms magically into an immense floating dress beneath which she finally disappears and re-emerges. An image of Moyikwa from this opening scene is also a photograph on the first page of her Master's research report entitled *Ukuzenza ngokwenza* (A discourse of a black subject. Unpublished research report, November 2017). *Qash Qash* develops through what I argue are a surreally fashioned and positioned series of "portraits", the first of which she calls "*Transparency*" in her research reflection. This "transparency" references her ethical imperative – as writer and choreographer – to voice an optimism against the idea that the black female subject cannot speak, cannot become. Embedded in each portrait, and using personal narrative to situate herself epistemologically and authorially as choreographer-researcher, her body is located as a prime site of meaning. Her written "Abstract" is a photograph of this opening moment and she names it "*Transparency*". The image metonymically performs her subject voice as the invitation to an authorial presence that is intimate, conversational and which will become both more and less opaque and visible, in turns, both in the performance itself, and in its reflective account through a CAP ethnographic reflection (akin to Richardson and St. Pierre 2015). The proximities between this "coming into being" of subjectivity, of coming to a discourse of a black subject, is realised as an interface between various encounters with theory (others' ideas) and own thought in order to "stage" the research as an "utterance" (primary language) rather than as "explanation" or "analysis" (Moyikwa 2017a, 4). This intention honours the original performance thesis project which found its own traction through a similar immediacy/surreality that defied a teleological narrative with a progressive plot and trajectory of action. Rather, a series of vignettes of light, surface, movement, depth, fantastical costuming and image construction flow through a logic that she proposes as a system of "non-transparent knots" (Moyikwa 2017a, 4). This is a profound image with which to capture the aporetic and often impossible task of untying the delicate relations between making/doing and reflecting histories/metaphysics and thinking performance.

Moyikwa's generational history of "*ukuzenza ngokwenza*" (translated by Moyikwa as a discourse of a black subject) is revealed to be an uncertain one, one which refuses framing and being "captured", one which insists on a fluid "coming into being". Her work manifests where the political in a performance is not simply representing the political, but questioning the very categories on which the political is based.

De/Recomposing bodies

In concluding this argument for the ways innovative choreographers are building on this legacy of FPTC's pioneering performance research, I argue that the influence of FPTC performers and drama students trained at Rhodes University/UCKAR continues to have an enduring and generative effect on South African choreography. Some examples of this influence include ex-FPTC performers like Athena Mazarakis and PJ Sabbagha who have both been re-imagining the public and social positioning of Physical Theatre as public art. Sabbagha's FATC (originally in Johannesburg) relocated to a rural area of Emakhazeni, Mpumalanga where the Ebhudlweni Arts Centre was established in 2015, with Mazarakis as a key member of the collective. With a clear resolve to address artistic and arts education for the upliftment of rural communities, the centre is dedicated to arts activism and a commitment to personal and social transformation. PJ Sabbagha's FATC annual festival (started in 2015), *My Body My Space*, engages a disruption as its central choreopolitics. Sabbagha,[152] in conversation with Masego Panyane,[153] notes that FATC's collective curatorial decisions are always concerned with access, with disrupting patterns of spatial planning that have been used to enforce "certain divisions" – particularly between rural and urban spaces. Sabbagha says:

> Because theatre is part of our colonial heritage, we'll only be fine with it if we can access it. Where the theatre is placed also makes it inaccessible. And where the theatre industry is positioned, it's not accessible to the rest of the population. So the first objective of the festival is to tackle and disrupt that notion. Every curatorial choice must be a disruption (Sabbagha, in conversation with Panyane 2018).

These notions of disruption extend a more precise and articulated positioning of this bodily politics within new questions asked of current Physical Theatre practice in South Africa. Younger practioners like Alan Parker, and Gavin Krastin's collaborations with FPTC, for example, *Discharge* (2012) and *Arcade* (2019)[154] are evidence of a spillage of this legacy

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[152] PJ Sabbagha is noted as a choreographer/dance curator that has passed through the FPTC lineage – particularly via the pedagogical training he encountered at Rhodes. He is discussed in PART I (ii). See also his choreochronology.

[153] 24 March 2018 article called "My Body My Space" exhibits strength in collaboration in the Movies-Theatre section. https://www.iol.co.za

[154] *Discharge* was created in 2012 and will be discussed here; *Arcade* (2019) was conceived by Krastin in 2018 as a nomadic performance platform with the aim of supporting and showcasing the work of young performance artists in Cape Town. In 2019, in was co-produced by FPTC and performed at Makhanda's old power station. "It presents an immersive assemblage of durational body-based live-art performances. An imagined, fleeting, pop-up gallery of performance art…This performance features eight young and emerging transdisciplinary artists

which is expanding Physical Theatre forays into the politics of site work, Live Art and LGBTQI identities. Krastin's *Rough Musick* (2013),[155] which Sichel has called a "requiem to victims of homophobia" (Sichel, cited in Sassen 2015, 86), is a potent example of excavating a marginal, silenced bodily politics in a social realm and a mainstream dance economy. In this "dark ritual" (Pather 2012), Krastin spews forth an abject imaginary that disrupts the veneer of the respectable representation and abstraction of Western contemporaneity in performance.[156] Pather argues that Krastin creates a

> contemporary re-engaging with these dark rituals...Pre-empire white culture of the United Kingdom is rendered exotic and strange, positioning the ashen queer artist of European descent as the "primitive" and "ethnically other" (Pather, 2014 in conversation with the caperobynblog on 26 August).

This re-engagement with a politics of identity is currently a hot topic of South African dance/performance. The dissolution of notions of a coherent, stable identity have long been deconstructed through postmodernism, postcolonialism and decoloniality in both scholarship and in current choreographic performance in South Africa. In a recent interview with Gordon (2017), I asked him to reflect on emerging identities and choreographic signatures currently at play in South African Physical Theatre/dance. He noted a shift and "strong call" towards identity as that which is "layered, complex and not necessarily a given" – that "sometimes it is almost impossible for us to really understand ourselves". But, he claims, "this nexus of personal histories and memories is the catalyst for choreographic invention, articulating felt and lived experiences in disarming languages and fractured images" (Interview, Gordon 2017). A cursory glance at current works and curatorial manifestoes reveals some of these intentions. A few cases serve as example. The 2018 Standard Bank Young Artist Award Winner for Dance, Musa Hlatswayo's *Udodana*,[157] specifically addresses the ambiguities of

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who have come together to form a curious collection of live-art performances in a maze-like space to agitate the content and forms of performance" (https://gavinkrastin.com).

[155] I note that this work was not one created or co-produced in relation to or with FPTC.

[156] The first encounter we have with this *Rough Musick* is with Krastin's vacuum-packed body which performs its invective to counter consumerised consumption of the body; in his hooved shoes (traces of Steven Cohen or Vera Mantero), gas-masked face and black peekaboo skirt (traces of Josephine Baker), he makes us complicit in the ritual incantation he performs by demanding a participatory, active spectatorship (throwing bread – if you will? – at a street child; giving Krastin money and dancing with him; or banging pots and pans to humiliate and disgrace him). Jay Pather, in conversation with thecaperobyn.blogspot.com about The Live Art Festival (26 August 2014) described this work as referring to "the practice that originated in the small villages of medieval England as a means for the public to disgrace and humiliate petty criminals, sexual deviants and 'others' and which involved the creation of 'a brutal cacophony of sound directed at the chosen individual like a weapon, damning them through a symbolic expression of displeasure and exclusion'".

[157] Musa Hlatswayo is the director of Mhayise Productions which is based in Kwazulu-Natal. Musa has had a

black male identity complicit in gender-based violence in South Africa; Gerard Bester[158] and Alan Parker's collaborative *Sometimes I have to lean in* (2018) is a witty and poignant encounter with the lived complexities of living as gay, white men in the current South African context. A wealth of choreographic work has surged over the past decade with black feminisms manifesting a vital content and production – choreographers like Mamela Nymaza and Nelisiwe Xaba have insisted on illiciting a choreo-activism that challenges passive consumption of a colonised black female performing body. This decolonial project has been a procreant impulse for many choreographers and performers in South Africa. This decolonising impulse can be aligned with an epistemological "putting into thinking" of a South African choreography as one that addresses the historical invisibility of different dance forms, black dance histories, and especially the role and significance of the work achieved by female and LGBTQI choreographers.

Based on viewings over three decades I have noted that historically South African female performers predominantly "danced" and were not taken seriously as choreographers, either by themselves or by others. Research by Lliane Loots[159] notes that the "few black women who have found their way into the ranks of professional dancing bodies in South Africa still primarily remain in the ranks of the 'acted upon' and the interpreters of other choreographer's visions and voices" (2012, 62). Loots analyses selected works[160] as examples of choreographies that "voice the unspoken", which she argues, implies a "host of issues relating to power and how we have silenced, or let speak, certain discourses" (Loots 2012, 51). I argue that this marginal status of women-as-choreographer in South African dance has been rapidly shape-shifting in the current climate of decolonial debate. Nelisiwe Xaba and Mamela Nymaza have collaborated to create their deconstruction of balletic form in relation to the black female dancing body in *The Last Attitude (2015)*. Dada Masilo has taken canonic

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rich performance history, and worked with FPTC in 2004 performing in the 2004 reconstructions of Gordon's *Shattered Windows, Travellers* and *On the Light Side of the Moon.*

[158] Gerard Bester is a seasoned South African performer-creator and arts activist who is currently the Creative Director for the Hillbrow Theatre Project, Outreach Foundation. His body of work is grounded in clowning, or the anti-hero and he has worked with South African choreographers like Robyn Orlin and PJ Sabaggha. Interestingly, he has also choreographed on ex-FPTC members, Craig Morris and Athena Mazarakis (a work called *Attachments*), both of whom studied at Rhodes under Gordon and were part of the very first FPTC. Bester also performed with FPTC in a work called *They were caught waiting...* (1993).

[159] Lliane Loots, lecturer at the University of Kwazulu-Natal (Howard College Campus) and Artistic Director of Flatfoot Dance Company, founded in 2003 in Durban. Loots is also the Artistic Director of the annual JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience held in Durban. In 2017 she was awarded the coveted *Ordre des Arts des Lettres* from the French Government in acknowledgement of her support of dance in South Africa.

[160] Xaba's *Plasticization* (2007/2008) and *They look at me and that is all they see* (2009), Desire Davids' *Who is this beneath my Skin* (2011) and Loots' own work, *Skin* (2010).

Shakespearean works like *Romeo and Juliet* and the character of Ophelia in *Hamlet* and classics such as *Swan Lake and Carmen* and re-interpreted them within a South African context.[161] It is also noted that the growth of dance scholarship has made it more possible to document, analyse and critically recount histories and archives for our contemporary dance. As dance scholarship begins to flourish, choreographic practice becomes discussed and shared as part of larger national and artistic debates and conversations, which begins to impact on and enrich choreographic practice within dance communities. I cite one example of writing on Nelisiwe Xaba's body of work that has a substantial oeuvre that has spanned two decades.[162] Much of Xaba's work and writings on her work surface the complexities, ambiguities and difficulties of representing the black female body onstage. Nicola Elliott,[163] ex-Rhodes University and FPTC collaborator, notes for instance, the unusual use of humour in Xaba's work. She says,

> I shall first consider *Plasticization's* amusing incongruity within the broader context of South African dance...South African dance is dominated by fusion choreography and by a vital, energetic performing style. What is evident in *Plasticization* is a break from this practice. Instead of leaps, pirouettes and rolls – or indeed, "pleasing" dance language of any kind – we see tasks carried out in an awkward manner by a body restricted by its costume...This reflects on the dance discourse precisely because it is clear that Xaba's body *can* do so much more...Why then, one might ask, is she not "dancing"?...Dancing as she is (without moving much) on the terrain of dance-as-movement throws this terrain into ontological anxiety...It is also the absence of movement which causes the humour, being, as it is, incongruous within the structure of dance-as-movement (Elliott 2010, 60 – 61).

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[161] In a *culture trip* blog, it is noted that Masilo often chooses stories that have a strong female protagonist (like the female characters of Juliet, Ophelia, Carmen and Odette from the examples cited above). Historically, these female characters are usually "victimised and then die" (https://theculuretrip.com). Within the prevalent horror of gender-based violence statistics in South Africa, Masilo's work can be seen to be an attempt to wrestle back agency for these "victimised" images of women. In the blog post, Masilo says "all these women were victims and I wanted to redeem them in some sense" (https://theculuretrip.com).

[162] Xaba's work directly and significantly addresses a gender politics (note some of her titles – *They look at me and that is all they think* (2009) which addresses the objectification of the black female body; *Uncles and Angles* (2013) which questions notions of chastity, virginity testing, purity and tradition), but it is only really now, in the last few years, that there is an emergent body of scholarship devoted to critically analysing her choreography.

[163] Elliott won the National Arts Festival Young Artist Award in 2014 and created a work called *Bruising*. Smit (2014) has written a profound response to this work in her article *Thinking through Nicola Elliott's Bruising*. Elliott's mini Master's dissertation, entitled *Humor's critical capacity in the context of South African dance, with two related analyses* (2010) examines Xaba's *Plasticization* (2004).

As argued by Elliott and throughout this thesis, this displacement of movement as marking the choreographic in performance has been a recurrent intervention, disruption and experiment with notions of the political in Physical Theatre form in FPTC's repertory and pedagogy. The site-specific, multidisciplinary collaboration, *Discharge* (conceived by Gavin Krastin, Alan Parker and digital artist, Rat Western) produced by FPTC in 2012 at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown is one such instance of a persistent questioning to critically displace or "dis-charge" turbulence as "intimate revolt" in bodily performance. It claims its space as a concluding analysis in my argument.

Discharge (2012) is an encounter with "a dramatised society living in the wake of an undefined, imagined catastrophe…and is as much a lunatic asylum as it is a refugee camp" (FPTC press release, 19 June 2012). *Discharge* is "both a possible cautionary tale as well as a metaphoric diagram of contemporary experience" (FPTC press release, 19 June 2012). Audiences are transported in huge army trucks with guards to a dislocated, rambling site on the outskirts of Grahamstown which is the First City Military Hangar. It is an expansive, cold, and empty corrugated iron structure which conjures up a post-apocalyptic environment, a makeshift space with rows of iron and coiled-spring bed bases with no mattresses – a temporary home. On arrival, one encounters a hyper-extended organism or figure made from recycled waste who ushers you into the site. Once inside, the cold catacomb of the space envelops one's senses. A contemporised performance of *The Rite of Spring* (with Stravinsky's famed score) ensues – encircled by piles of recycled paper debris, three dancers in bulky yellow plastic suits (they look like exterminators of some sort) perform an exhausting ritual of welcome, until an excruciatingly loud siren goes off and they rush to other undefined spaces. One moves to escape the noise.

Figure 28. *Discharge* (2012). *Rite of Spring.* Photograph by Charlton Reimers. Performers are Alan Parker, Nomcebisi Moyikwa and Siyabulela Mbambaza.

One is not told where to go and has to activate an own sense of where to be lost in the overwhelming emptiness of the space. Passing through a strange, semi-translucent tunnel, a foreboding structure of feeling is produced through the pathologised environment which evokes a sense of imminent quarantine – that one is being herded, disinfected and processed in some undefined way. On exiting the structure, a sharp spotlight is thrust into each audience member's face, leaving one reeling and vulnerable. Once composed, it is possible to journey through the labyrinth of performed vignettes in makeshift structures that each share different sensorial worlds and experiences. Some vignettes include: a dispossessed clown standing aimlessly in front of a makeshift red theatre curtain, forlorn and useless; a naked "Vitruvian man" relentlessly attempts to map out co-ordinates of spatial proportions and bodily architectures for his existence; a room of lace and salt where The Whore of Babylon (myself, filmed) dances a macabre ritual of the macarena in butoh style and with enormous chicken wings and headdress; between the little makeshift shelters, a small group of young African female dancers perform their dance with a somnambulistic, minimal energy and exertion (in total contrast to their usually energetic dance); the story of Chicken Little or Chicken Licken, who believes the sky is going to fall on his head, is told as a bedtime story to an audience who can now sit on the uncomfortable beds provided for some respite from the barrage of images

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and assaults on the senses, while around them figures assemble, disperse, cry, dance or carry each other from one point to another, with seemingly little purpose or intention. As Sichel recounts in her review,

> at the core of *Discharge* is the notion of the displaced body – the body that feels like it does not belong in its space, or that feels foreign or ill at ease in its location – whether this is the body of a refugee, a prisoner, a quarantined or a diseased body, the lost or abandoned or a socially unacceptable body – the experience of being out of place is a common one and a condition one can identify with (2012, "No escaping the landscape." *Tonight. What's On – Joburg.* 26 June 2012).

Charged with these images of dispossession and loss, and the sense of having to make one's own way through the puzzle of the work, the work discharges its invective against a consumerist, alienating spectacle of a world in crisis. What are the pathways one should take? A sense of reliance on one's own agency becomes paramount. The FPTC press release narrates the action as

> different people with different sensibilities are flung together in this last outpost of survival where they naturally choose to hold onto, commemorate or embody personas, places and times they romantically imagine were better than the present. Through the creative colliding of body, text, image and sound, *Discharge* is an expression of loss – a loss of place, of culture and of identity. These displaced and dislocated bodies, left reeling as refugees of the world, endeavour to rebuild their world and themselves from anything and everything left behind (19 June 2012).

Discharge performs its revolt as questions offered up to the audience and displaces the comfort of a known performance experience through its nomadic presentation as enquiry.

Figure 29. *Discharge* (2012). Dispossessed Clown. Photography by Suzy Bernstein. The performer is Andrew Buckland.

The turbulence of *Discharge* builds on an artistic heritage and legacy of FPTC as rehearsing moments of freedom through its questioning of "how to move". Jay Pather's[164] curatorial manifesto for the Institute for Creative Art (ICA) speaks to the ways that live art

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[164] See footnote 6.

(including site performance and public art) produces a fundamental intervention in the traditional performing arts landscape of South Africa. In conversation with Gabriella Pinto (*between 10and5: the creative showcase* on 24 February 2017), Pather's commitment to the promise of a politics of form becomes evident. Pinto asks him two probing questions: (i) to what extent live art is a form of activism? and (ii) can live art foster civic responsibility and the everyday principles of democracy. Pather notes that live art, at its core, attempts to "undo the way we think":

> The activism also cuts deeper than sloganeering or simple agitation…In this resurgence of right-wing thought globally, it is more crucial than ever to dig deep into the core of civic responsibility which is not to establish dogma or one way of doing things but by testing the limits of what we can comprehend and allow a range of forms to exist. To undo dogma and allow individuals freedom of movement and self-identity. In simply starting with the premise of undoing established forms, live art troubles established ways of thinking and allows us to practice fluidity, openness and mature, personally felt and executed democracy (Pather, in conversation with Pinto 2017)

In conversation with Twijnstra and Durden (2016, 98–99), Pather insists on the "magic of art":

> if you materialise culture in an entertainment model you commit a sin, you cross a threshold of humanity…you cannot make culture into a job-creation project. That stops you thinking about culture and art. You are playing with the genetics of art making.

Pather's responses re-iterate an idea for art as one of the few remaining sites that can animate alternative places for practising forms of movement towards "freedom" through a "personally felt and executed democracy" (Pather, in conversation with Pinto 2017). With its originary energy spent, FPTC discharges its wager to a new generation who have taken up the cudgel to re-activate bodily sites of resistance as de/recomposing a performative proxemics through/as ruin.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

In closing, I return to reclaim the promise offered by Eastern Cape poet Mangaliso Buzani in his poem *My First Lesson* from the anthology *A Naked Bone* (2019, 10):

> ...on my arrival here
> I looked at my hand
> And I named it a hand
> I kept on naming things
> Until a full body arrived...

These words formed the arc of the trajectory of "namings" I traced in the preceding body of questions and, as I arrive at my own "moment of the corps", bring to a temporary closure the movement initiated in the Introduction. I experience a distinct open-endedness in the recognition that in this last gasp of aspiration in which I have to draw some of the threads of this partial, residual and interpretative body-as-archive together, I can only do so by making peace with the aporia of responsibility: in this delicate moment of letting go, I have to acknowledge that as much as this thesis was driven by a personal sense of responsibility, this is also all I have been capable of. Writing the body through choreography has a marked alterity to choreographing a body of writing. Writing (in the sense of making and leaving traces on paper) seems to possess (or is it possessed by?) an archival gravity that captures, frames and eternalises meaning in a way that the ephemeral, enigmatic writing of performance – that is, writing as making and dispersing the traces of gestures – both longs for and disavows. And so, the aporia of my responsibility is replicated in the aporetic tension at the heart of performance: the longing for an archival gravity that must be disavowed in order for performance to be(come) *performance*. In an interview with my colleague Alan Parker[165] about his work *Detritus for one* (2013), he states that "archives in my understanding have to do with capture; so it's not just about thinking back to history or imagining a past or those sort of things, but it really has to do with traces, with things that remain" (2016b). It is this "detritus" that lingers: as "failed responsibility", as memories of what necessarily had to be disavowed, this organic matter of being, that seeps in and out of memory and the work of mourning long after the process of de-composition has declared the end of the end, and announced the beginning of a new beginning.

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[165] For more detail on his relationship with FPTC, see Parker's choreochronology.

As Parker explains his own engagement with this wager of what it means to perform the archive: "my voice is not separate from a history of other voices, or from a history of all my self-performing, whether it's a solo or work, it's a work made on a group of people. The bodies there are more than the bodies that are present on the stage" (2016b).[166] He continues his musing on these alchemical chemistries of lineage as staged memory and archive:

> ...when I create work, I am creating work that is a result of the lineage of other people that have come into my being-ness...that idea of absorbing things through your experience of watching theatre, being trained in theatre, by lineages of those things that shape your thinking and your practice. Those voices are present in some way when you perform. And so, it's a way of recognising what those are. They all are complicating the authorship, that is not as simple as the choreographer, the author – *the choreographer is an author who is also authored by a memory* (2016b; emphasis added).

While Parker makes no claims to working within a decolonial paradigm, the notions of not forgetting what the body remembers, of remembering through the body's own knowingness (from what it has lived through, what it was (dis)allowed from experiencing and/or prevented from knowing), have the status of *archē* which, in an originary sense, remains anterior to the decolonial discourse on what had been lost, and what needs to be re-claimed as/from historical loss. This *archē* (which constitutes the archive as movement) echoes in Rolando Vázquez's notion of a decolonial "politics of remembering" as "rehearsals for an ethical life" and as a "mode of reception" through performing a "listening" body (Vázquez 2019, notes transcribed from his exceptional keynote address at the Confluences 10 conference). Such a "politics of remembering" takes on a particular expression and meaning in the context of the thinking/practice of a "decolonial de-linking" from "aestheTics" to "aestheSis". In a conversation with Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández, "Decolonial options and artistic/aestheSic entanglements: an interview with Walter Mignolo" (2014), Mignolo explains these terms in the following way:

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[166] In *Detritus for one*, Parker performs the detritus of four performances that he remembers, recasting their excess performatively as he dances his own and others' archives. Theatre critic, Steve Kretzmann, describes the experience as "the detritus of a moment past: a prop, a sweat-stained costume, a photograph, some notes perhaps, the flat facsimile of video, and partial memory of the movements and the feelings they evoked" (2015). *Detritus for one* received a Standard Bank Ovation award at the National Arts Festival in 2015. His *Scare for one,* received a Silver Ovation Award in 2016 and the third in this trilogy, *Ghostdance for one* was co-commissioned by the ICA for the 2017 Live Art Festival in Cape Town.

Decolonial aestheSis refers in general to any and every thinking and doing that is geared toward undoing a particular kind of aesthesis, of senses, that is the sensibility of the colonised subject. What decolonial artists want is not to create beautiful objects, installations, music, multimedia or whatever the possibilities are, but to create in order to decolonise sensibilities, to transform colonial aesthiTics into decolonial aesthesis. In that regard, aestheTics is the image that reflects in the mirror of imperial/colonial aesthetics in the Kantian tradition. Once you delink, you begin to create a world in which decolonial aestheSis has delinked from aesthetics, which has become aestheTics" (2014, 201).[167]

In the abstract for his keynote address, "Decoloniality, Dance and the End of the Contemporary", Vázquez (2019) also invokes this "politics of re-membering" in relation to such a healing impulse in decolonial aesthesis:

Decoloniality calls for the end of the contemporary as a way of undoing the colonial difference. It challenges the dominance of abstraction in Western aesthetics and its temporal regime. In their practice, decolonial dancers are exceeding the temporality of contemporaneity by *re-membering* the silenced bodies, by bringing forth vernacular bodies, be *re-claiming* earth bodies, communal bodies, ancestral bodies that lie silenced under the oblivion of coloniality. Decolonial dance, is a dance that disobeys the performativity of the dancing body and its realm of abstraction and representation, a dance that refuses to forget…it helps us to re-member who we are, to recover the freedom of being earth, and to receive back the pluralities that we have been. (Vázquez 2019, abstract from his keynote address at Confluences 10 conference; emphasis added).

There are, I have posited, many different ways of practising freedom and while the FPTC project has not been part of a decolonial aestheSis in any articulated way, some of these contemporary currents of thought resonate profoundly with some of the practices of freedom I have explored in this thesis: "intimate revolt" (Kristeva 2002); "small acts of repair" (Bottoms and Goulish 2007); "pathologies of hope" (Kershaw 1999); or my notion of the "power of the small".

What emerges through my own re-membering of FPTC's archive is the fullness and excess of this artistic legacy and the myriad ways in which it is presently being *re-invented* as its reach expands in ways that dissolve its originary need for a self-articulated manifesto, a manifesto which, in its individual claims to a contemporaneous identity, now appears as part of an originary "colonial wound". I have argued that, through its particular legacy of artistic

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[167] Mignolo explains, for example, via an example of Rancière's book entitled *Aiesthesis* (which means sensing) that the "sensing" that Rancière explores remains the "sensing of the Western experience" (Mignolo in 2014, 201).

struggle, its search for a democratic practice in a participatory collaboration, and its commitment to incubating a creative crucible, FPTC produced an arc of influence through the impact of its pedagogy that continues to resonate and modulate in fascinating ways and in excess of its intended manifesto (or the contestation of that manifesto as "originary wound"). This energy of remembering, rediscovery and generative politics is evident in a younger generation of ex-FPTC performer-creators like Alan Parker, Gavin Krastin and Nomcebisi Moyikwa whose choreopolitics was forged in the *movement* that was FPTC. Gavin Krastin, FPTC collaborator, current FPTC artist in residence, and ex-Rhodes student, speaks to his training in Physical Theatre:

> For me, the rehearsal process is like a collaborative becoming, resulting in a *palimpsest*. This mode of working promotes slippages and leakages and sets up a wonderful playground for experimentation…When words, texts and logic fail, frustrate or aren't enough, Physical Theatre is a playground of provocation and rediscovery through posture, gesture, proxemics and touch, a process not mapped but instinctual and organic (cited in Sassen 2015, 87–88; emphasis added).

Krastin's reference to an organic body/process summons up the images of "silenced…vernacular… earth bodies, communal bodies, and ancestral bodies" referred to by Vázquez above.

Finally, through the body of questions explored in this thesis I have attempted to assess the nascent political promise of the embodied performance of FPTC's manifesto and repertory to become a space for a generative (rather than re-active) choreopolitics. The engagement in a dynamic field of possibility to perform questions within the raging political spasms that *is* contemporary South Africa continues to invite an epistemological challenge that performs difference and liberates difference, while keeping open an aperture for questioning the meaning of how and where the choreopolitical matters, and how its pedagogies can perform small moments of repair.

This interpretative, preparatory work delivers its corps to a present-day generation of Physical Theatre practitioners who appear poised to re-animate turbulence for change; who will continue to conjure up stirring practices of freedom at once *in the name of* and *in resistance to* somatic thresholds that retain an ambiguous presence which becomes visible, every now and then, as a nexus of lived power struggles enacted daily on bodies in a still revolting South Africa.

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SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCE MATERIALS

DVD Recording Performances

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Radio Voice Series

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Conference proceedings

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Confluences 1. Cross cultural fusion in music and dance. 16–19 July 1997. Hosted by UCT School of Dance.

Confluences 2. Articulating the Unspoken. 14–17 July 1999. Hosted by UCT School of Dance.

Confluences 3. From concept to concert. July 2001. Hosted by UCT School of Dance.

Confluences 4. Dancers, Congresses and Conventions. Date unknown. Hosted by UCT School of Dance.

Confluences 5. High culture, Mass culture, Urban culture: Whose dance?16–19 July 2008. Hosted by UCT School of dance.

Confluences 6. Physicality and performance. July 2011. Hosted by UCT School of Dance.

Confluences 7. Dance, religion and spirituality. 11–13 July 2013. Hosted by UCT School of Dance.

Confluences 8. Negotiating Contemporary Dance in Africa. 16–18 July 2015. Hosted by UCT School of Dance.

Confluences 9. Deciphering decolonization in dance Pedagogy in the 21st century. 11–14 July 2017. Hosted by the Centre for Theatre, dance and Performance Studies.

Confluences 10. Dance, (e)merge, Theatre. Hosted by the Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies. 28–31 August 2019. UCT.

First Physical Theatre Company Archives

Archival DVD's of the company's repertory: 1993–2015. Housed at New English Literary Museum. NELM. Now called Amazwi.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Masters By Coursework Chorelab 2014

The Power of the Small: Spasm!
In 2014 I designed a coursework module that examined the experience and idea of spasm as a catalyst for choreographic invention for our Masters By Coursework Choreolab students: *The Power of the Small: Spasm!*. I selected a few contemporary dance works to examine with the students and these included: Gary Gordon's *Shattered Windows* (1989; 1993; 2004); Paul Taylor's *Last Look* (1985); Jeremy Wade and Marysia Stoklosa's *Glory* (2003 and 2007); Meg Stuart's Damaged Goods Company – *No longer readymade* (1991) and *hunter* (2014) and De Keersmaecker's *Monoloog van Fumiyo Ikeda op het einde van Ottone Ottone*.

This is Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker's dance film in collaboration with Walter Verdin, and Jean-Luc Ducourt. 1989. 6 minutes 23 seconds. This was chosen because the entire film is essentially a dance of micro spasms of the face.

De Keersmaecker's and Stuart

The DeKeersmaecker film is a finely edited choreography which juxtaposes a film and sound score that keeps shifting the expressive possibilities of Ikeda's facial stutters and micro spams. Meg Stuart (cited in Lepecki's *Documents of Contemporary Art* 2012) notes that she is interested in the "uncertain body; one which is vulnerable and questions itself" – she is interested in the body's "states". She describes a state as "activity plus intention ... states are a window into a different reality ... think of blushing, tics, sweating, fever, shaking or hyperventilation" (137). Working away from representative narrative and through repetitive improvisations, she and her performers work with these "states" to formalise movement qualities and relations that are then shaped into form:

> In states you work with oblique relations. The body is a field in which certain mental streams, emotions, energies and movement interact, betraying the fact that actions and states are separate. This internal friction and rubbing creates unexpected relations and by-products, revealing and concealing, expressing how people tend to control their mind and reactions most of the time ... This partial opacity provokes the imaginations of both the performer and the spectator (Stuart, cited in Lepecki 2012, 138).

Cunningham and Taylor

Anna Kisselgoff's review in *The New York Times: Dance View* digitised archive is entitled *Taylor invents emotional colours in 'Last Look'* (April 28 1985). She says that the work has "the power of an Abstract Expressionist painting" whose integrated production, "perfect fusion" is reminiscent of Cunningham's *Winterbranch* (1964). She suggests that in *Last Look* the elements are

> meant to coalesce in an image of a doomed society. Yet the choreography here, too, is a formal experiment. If we saw it in daylight without the three-sided mirrored screens that Mr Katz has set up as mournful skyscraper-tombstones, we might think the dancers throwing themselves about so vigorously were immersed in some rite of spring (*The New York Times. Dance View*. 28 April 1985).

> She calls the work a "study in desperation" – "the emphasis is on blasts of raw energy, on key motor motifs that are equated with verbs such as writhe, slither, dive, whirl, quiver, toss and leap".

> When the dancers hurl themselves against the mirrors, they look deep into themselves (Kisselgoff 1985).

Winterbranch – the concept came from Cunningham's "facts of dancing" – falling and rising. La Monte Young's score entitled 2 sounds consisted of "the sound of ashtrays scarped against a mirror, and the other, that of pieces of wood rubbed against a Chinese gong" (Kisselgoff (Nov 11 1974) – a "high decibel screech level".

The healing Modality of TRE: Tension and Trauma Release

During this period of exploration, I was fascinated to discover a healing modality called TRE: Tension and Trauma Release Exercises. TRE was created by Dr. David Berceli, PhD. A certified TRE practitioner is required to hold this process.I managed to work with a TRE practitioner and explored this technique through a series of workshops. It is an alternative somatic process based method of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)

treatment and has been used to alleviate trauma for soldiers post war situations of trauma. The method consists of a series of simple exercises that are designed to assist the body in releasing structural stress – deep muscular patterns of tension and trauma. TRE activates a natural reflex mechanism of vibration or tremoring/shaking through the body which finally calms the nervous system.

Repertory and Tasks
In the creative laboratory sessions, we explored the possibilities of spasm as movement and gesture in the body. Some examples of tasks I constructed for this purpose include:

- Teaching the students short parts from the repertory: *Shattered Windows*
- A devised task entitled: *17 hesitations ... explorations in extremity*

APPENDIX 2: Works in *Manifesto* and *Declarations*

Inventory of works in the *Manifesto* and *Declarations* programmes.
Manifesto **(1993)**
Staff contributions included Gordon's mélange of
*Manifesto, On the light side of the Moon, River, Shattered Windows
and ... they were caught waiting ...*

Collaborative works included:
Toiling to the dance of the sun (Buckland and Gordon), *... an infinite
number of bounces* (Buckland and Gordon), *Surround her with
Water: An Epiphany* (Gordon's collaboration with Clare Baker from
the Laban) and Buckland's *Morgan and Ciao.*

Student contributions included:
Lulu Khumalo's *Africance,* which was explored the meeting of pantsula, gumboot and
Contemporary dancers having a conversation;
PJ Sabbagha's *Catacomb I and II* which
dealt with conscription and sexual repression,
Sarah Tudge's *as one
incapable of her own distress;*
Masters student Paul Datlen's
Terpsichorean Palette or Dance for Arts' Sake and *Together we go
out, sometimes looking back.*

Declarations **(1994)**
Gordon created *dialogue, Can Baby John Fit into Big Daddy's Shoes* and *Travellers II,* while Clare Baker
created *She has fallen and now she is awake.*
Student contributions included
PJ Sabbagha's *Catacomb III,* Athena Fatseas' *It was at the Laundromat,* Sarah Tudge's *Riots of Passage* and
Samantha Pienaar's *Triptych.*

APPENDIX 3: Summary of Fatseas' theoretical underpinnings

Athena Fatseas (2009)

In Chapter One, *Towards a Thinking Body,* the contributions from Zarilli's concept of the "aesthetic body", Growtowki's understandings of the "impulse" and Existentialist phenomenology's notion of the "lived body" as an experienced phenomenon become key to the discussion and for reconfiguring our understandings of memory and cognition/thinking. The various bodies of thought, from Hanna's somatics, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen's body-mind-centring approach, the rich cross referencing of Feldenkrais and Alexander's developmental movement re-education, Damasio, Merleau-Ponty, Pert and Gardner's theories of Multiple Intelligences all speak persuasively to the argument for the embodied roots of cognition or processes of knowing. Aligning with my claim for a "perceptual" training, Fatseas' discussion also finally proposes "perception" as a key concept for describing the integration of body and cognitive processes. Sheets-Johnstone's understandings of the "tactile-kinaesthetic sense" as a central organising role for perceptions argues for the ways movement brings our perceptions together and proposes movement as a form of cognition: a form of thinking. These arguments shape the conceptual terrain in her Chapter Two, *The Body as Archive* and Chapter Three: *Physical Theatre: Excavating the Archive,* that interrogates "somatic memory" through a constructionist perspective which posits a socially constructed and historically inscribed view of the body and its interrelatedness with power/knowledge.

APPENDIX 4: Classes offered in daily morning preparation sessions

Morning Class (later called Dance and Physical Performance Training or Body, Voice, Action)
Strategies explored by FPTC have over the years included, for example, the structuring of the daily morning classes for company members often with Rhodes postgraduate students which introduce a range of different physical experiences through different teachers and teaching styles. In the past, some of these classes have included: Ashtanga Yoga; Tai Chi; Butoh strengthening exercises; Laban; Horton; Cunningham; Gumboot; isiPantsula; Composition classes; Viewpoints, Vocal work; Somatics; Contemporary Dance, Ballet, Alba Emoting; Clowning; Gymnastics; Aerial Choreography; Creative Improvisation and Contact improvisation and partnering. These classes rely on what current facilitators can offer and the overall training is viewed as a process in which learners have time to respond physically to impulses suggested by their teachers who can also learn to know the physical contexts that shape their students' bodies. They would be supplemented and guided by workshops exploring the concerns of particular works via movement research.

APPENDIX 5: Madison's account of *Aesthetic reflexivity*

Reflection and Reflexivity

As Madison(2006) critically observes, there is a manifest difference between reflection and reflexivity and she describes this "labor of reflexivity" as a "dialogical performative" (2011 129). This concept is relational to Jill Dolan's concept of "utopian performatives" which speak to the performance of those "small but profound moments" where performance "acts" or does its work of creating an "affective vision of how the world might be better" (Dolan 2005 5 – 6). Dolan observes that the word, *utopia*, literally means "no place" (7) and her thinking can be seen as proximal with Kristeva's notion of art as a "small revolt", as an experience of continual process, becoming and renewal. Dolan argues that the effective "success" of utopian performatives lie in their ability to structure a place of "feeling" which she argues is "politics enough" (19) – they "debunk notions of ahistorical human essences" because their "gestures of feeling" don't last long enough to become transhistorical or essentialist (31).

Madison argues that she turns to Homi Bhabha and Jill Dolan by linking the performative to the *punctum* (322) – as she explains, "Barthes' punctum is that point at which the viewer is jolted or disturbed in way that s/he pays attention to an 'intractable reality' that escapes words" (2011 119). In a parallel disturbance, Madison suggests that the dialogic performative requires us to think about how we are thinking about our positionality as ethnographers:

> By way of a more fine-tuned definition of the dialogic performative as a generative and embodied reciprocity, first it can be described as encompassing reflexive knowledge, that is, the ethnographer not only contemplates her/his own actions (reflective), but s/he turns inward to contemplate how s/he is contemplating her actions (reflexive) (2006 322).

Why, she asks, does self-reference matter? In what ways is it generative and lasting and in what ways can the "I" of reflection become shared? As Madison observes, where reflection happens and provides interpretation, this is necessary but not enough to produce transformation, that "jolt" beyond language: "Like its enduring twin praxis, the performative does more than interpret and express, it initiates and incites" (2006 322).

APPENDIX 6: Background to *16 kinds of emptiness*

PRACTICE-AS-RESEARCH NRF PILOT PROJECT
16 kinds of emptiness
Contextual Information – I include below, (i) the actual programme which was shared with audiences and which shares details of the actual production and the collaborators, as well as my programme note as director/choreographer – in retrospect, possibly I should have called my role that of dramaturg; (ii) my framing document; (iii) my self-evaluation of the work for the NRF (National Research Foundation) P-a-R pilot project, which the work was part of; (iv) External Peer review.

(i)   Programme (July 2006)

Production Title: *16 kinds of emptiness*

Collaborations …

Concept Conceived by:	Leonhard Praeg
Direction:	Juanita Finestone-Praeg
Choreography:	Devised by Juanita Finestone-Praeg in collaboration with the performers
Design and Installation:	Tanya Poole
Pendulum Installation	Lindi Arbi
Script:	Leonhard Praeg and Dion van Niekerk
Lighting Design:	Guy Nelson
Performers:	First Physical Theatre Company's Richard Antrobus; Ricardo Daniels; Nicola Haskins; Sifiso Majola; Siya Mbambaza; Bailey Snyman;Tshego Tlhloe and Dumisani Zweni
Guest Performers:	Gary Gordon; Acty Tang; Sheena Stannard and Dion van Niekerk
Sound Recording	Corinne Cooper
Music:	Mozart; Amon Tobin; Arvo Pärt; Tom Waits; Braam du Toit; Anna Kaisa Liedes and Utua
Drumming	Siya Mbambaza

Vignettes

(i)	*Jug*	
(ii)	*Conversation*	
(iii)	*Empty Fuck*	
(iv)	*Inner Piece*	
(v)	*Empty Ritual*	
(vi)	*The Soul*	
(vii)	*The Empty Promise of Words I*	
(viii)	*Corpse I*	
(ix)	*The Fullness of Life*	
(x)	*The Empty Promise of Words II (Poole's animated installation: "Wait")*	
(xi)	*The Gospel According to Judas*	
(xii)	*Corpse II*	
(xiii)	*Consolation: Life goes on (adapted from Poole's "Consolation: Just think how lucky you are" video installation)*	
(xiv)	*She Took My Breath Away*	
(xv)	*Viewpoints (structured improvisation)*	
(xvi)	*The Ordinary*	

Collaborators

Leonhard Praeg lectures in Political Studies at Rhodes University. He has composed scores for many First Physical productions, notably *The Unspeakable Story*.

"Everything is empty: conversations may be, promises could be, words mostly are; old sweetie pies probably are too; my body is the corpse I dread. But emptiness can also be full: what is "it" in the sentence: "it is raining"? The ordinary is empty if you get it right".

Tanya Poole was the last recipient, with Philip Rikhotso, of the Brett Kebble Art Award. She is currently working towards a solo show in Cape Town and on work which will feature on a group show in Mumbai.

"As I worked on this production, the idea of emptiness in itself became less important to me than the ways in which we try to negotiate it. Certainly, making art, or performance, is one of these negotiations. In my own work, I am often preoccupied with the experience and fear of loss, which is one of the manifestations of emptiness. Working with so many other people expanded my ideas not only of emptiness, but also of fullness, of the range of experience of these things, and how they may be embodied: through humour, desolation, tenderness, pride, ritual, love, sex, anger, celebration. In reacting to emptiness, we create meaning".

Lindi Arbi has a Bachelor in Fine Art from Rhodes University (with distinction) and is currently reading her Masters. Her work has been recently included on the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum Biennial Exhibition and award 2006.

"What delight there is in finding a purpose for those material things in one's life that have lost their original purpose but still float like detritus in the eddies of one's intimate space. Certain objects become more imbibed as memory increasingly vaporises. Like the heirloom nutmeg grater or the favourite underclothes of a lost loved one. This pupa/cocoon was bound together with great handfuls of such attrition. As such it is the embodiment of dissipating memory. The object is made to the ratio of the human body, an empty container that swings like a pendulum. It is a re-construction, a conjuring up to fill a void – a web of containment".

Choreographer's note …

As I write this, I am aware that my proposed vision for this work may or may not have succeeded. Either way, the impulses driving the work were from the start, fuelled by a need to 'play', to question and shift my own aesthetic formulas and choreographic identity.

The choice of a new performance space in the Old Nun's Chapel seemed to provide an opportunity to deepen collaborations and to extend possibilities for a more intimate choreography. 16 kaleidoscopic episodes of reflective (a)musings on emptiness are devised as a series of interactive conversations between light, sound, space, image, animated installation and the body in performance. The challenge in the creative process was recognising that emptiness could not be directly represented but possibly only revealed by questioning the forms, the rituals, the ideas and beliefs that exist to persuade us that life is always meaning*ful*. The insights of theatre theorist and practitioner, Johannes Birringer, helped to sustain the shaky trust implicit in relinquishing the hold of familiar forms.

Our creativity in performance also depends on our physical awareness and critical sensitivity towards the media with which we translate each other's ideas, movements and images, and although the creative process draws on what we know, there are no rules that could protect us from the pressures of the social worlds in which we encounter the fearfulness and violence of transformation. In a sense, what I am addressing here are the limits of the aesthetic, the limits of the protection of forms. (Birringer 2000, 8)

In this sense the vignettes are an invitation to experience, not the unity/coherence of narrative, but the elusiveness of emptiness in its various forms.

(ii)   **My framing document as part of the P-a-R NRF pilot project that the work was part of (September 2006) Form 1:**

NOMINATION OF A CREATIVE PROJECT FOR PEER REVIEW

Please note that it is imperative that all sections be completed.

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1. Background:

1.1 Name of project: *16 kinds of emptiness*

1.2 Beginning date of the project: **2 May 2006 (rehearsals) and Performances start on 29 June**

1.3 Date of (proposed) completion of the project: **8 July 2006 ending performances at the National Arts Festival**

1.4 Name(s) of project leader(s): **Ms Juanita Finestone-Praeg**

1.5 Names of people involved (It is essential that the names of all people affiliated to University drama Departments be mentioned, to help us select independent referees)

Collaborations with: **Ms Tanya Poole (animated installation);**
                            Leonhard Praeg and Dion van Niekerk (text);
                            Guy Nelson (lighting);
                            Guest Performers: Prof Gary Gordon; Mr Acty Tang; Ms Sheena
                            Stannard; and First Physical Theatre Company performers

1.6 Name of contact person for this submission: **Ms Juanita Finestone-Praeg**

1.7 Contact address: **Drama Department; Rhodes University; Grahamstown**
1.8 E-mail: **j.praeg@ru.ac.za**
1.9 Tel: **082 967 0519**
1.10 Fax: **046 636 1582**
1.11 Web-site: **Rhodes Drama Department or First Physical Theatre Company websites**

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2. Referees:

2.1 Nominate someone from your region you would like to referee your work: Give full names and contact details please.
Mr Andrew Buckland will be away, so possibly
Ms Alex Sutherland: Drama Department: Rhodes University: Cell: 084 966 3798

(not from my region but possibly Jay Pather ? or Anton Kreuger – don't know him but he seems fairly open-minded from my reading of his reviews and one review on a past work?)

2.2 Are there any individuals whom you wish NOT to be used as referees for this project? Give full names (This will be kept strictly confidential).

Not really – just not an uninformed dance person and preferably someone with some understanding of dance/physical theatre/choreography.

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3. Nature of the project: (Give us brief but sufficient information to enable us to select the most appropriate peer referees. If necessary you may add extra pages.)

*This is only a **framing document**, not a **report** yet, and is intended to provide a basis for viewing and evaluating the project as research. Very important are:*

3.1. the statement of intent outlining the problem or question to be addressed;
3.2. the contextualisation of the enquiry in respect of the location or environment of the study within the discipline and a body of theory and in relation to the researcher's own work previous to the study
3.3. the outline of the method/process followed including ethical considerations
3.4. the plan for the dissemination of the research to the research community and other interested parties
3.5. any other supporting material deemed relevant can be added as appendixes.

Attached below.

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4. Category of evaluation: Indicate the category under which the work is being submitted for refereeing (choose only one):

4.1 Production-based work (**Yes**/No)
4.2 Process-based work: (Yes/**No**)

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5. Dates and venues of process and/or performance. (You must be *most specific* here, to enable referees to plan their attendance. If you have specific suggestions, particularly in the case of a process-based submission, please give details.)

Performances will be held at the National Arts Festival on the following dates:
29 and 30 June and 1 and 2 July @ 17h30 and 19h30
3; 5; 6 and 7 July @ 19h00 and 21h00 and Sat 8 @ 17h30
Venue: The Nun's Chapel (on Rhodes Campus near Eden Grove and the ISEA building)

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3. Nature of the project
(i) the statement of intent outlining the problem or question to be addressed

This framing document attempts to contextualize the central objectives of this research project. The project aims to:
- extend investigation into *practice- as- research* by contributing to a national initiative towards setting up assessment and evaluation criteria for practice-as-research outputs and ratings;
- *conceptualise, devise and produce a practice-based research project/work* that extends investigations into aspects of physical theatre and choreography.

Dr Fred Hagemann, in his report as External Examiner in October 2003, comments on the way that the Rhodes Drama Department has "pioneered the notion of Physical Theatre as both an educative strategy and a performance mode within the context of tertiary education".

The work is underpinned by conceptual thought and informed by theory… it is evident that the notion of praxis as the interplay of academic enquiry and performance is fully served through the structure and content of the above courses. (External Examiners Report: 2003)

The process of formalising, articulating and assessing this kind of work so it can be rated as research would be a next step. My hope is that this project can contribute meaningfully to such a process. The task is not that easy.

Theatre theorist and practitioner, Johannes Birringer, identifies some of the contradictions that complicate this research task:

While meanings are certainly deconstructed discursively, and the process of meaning making is ongoing, they are not constructed only in language or within the practices of repetitive signifying. Performance or art cannot be reduced to the discursive place of language, nor is it subject to the same constraints of repetition. Performance,

most obviously in the case of dance, is predicated on the limits or failures of language, even though it does not transcend, by its own volition, the context-bound, site-specific, and internal processes of its production". (Birringer: 2000 19)

Or, as Bella Merlin asks: "how are we to 'concretise the somatic?" (Merlin: 2004 44)

(ii) the contextualization of the enquiry in respect of the location or environment of the study within the discipline and a body of theory and in relation to the researcher's own work previous to the study

My proposal is to devise a new choreographic work that is specifically framed as research.
Questions to be addressed include:
   a. interrogating the notions of *performer presence* as viewed within contemporary performance/physical theatre by devising a work that engages with these issues performatively;
   b. exploring a process of **artistic collaboration** by creating a 'trans-disciplinary' work that employs a range of technologies (animated installation/set design by a visual artist; interactive lighting; sound; text and the performing body) in relation to the concept and vocabularies of the choreographic investigation

Biographical Context

Adrienne Sichel in *The Star Tonight* (3 August 2004) has commented on my body of work in the following way:

This unassuming icon of South African dance, a driving force in Gary Gordon's First Physical Theatre Company and a lecturer at Rhodes University has a track record as a charismatic performer, gutsy choreographer, sterling educationalist and researcher in dance and theatre performance.

Over the past few years I have researched the idea of memory (historical and personal) in relation to the body and its performance of memory. (see *Physical Imaginings: the translation of memory in the danceplays of First Physical*, a paper presented at the Confluences III Conference held at the University of Cape Town, 2001 and *Memory In Translation*, a paper presented at the Shuttle Dance History Research Skills Development Project and published in *Footsteps Across the Landscape of Dance in South Africa*, August 2002). Many of my works echo this fascination with bodily memory: (*The Passion of Judas*: 1997; *Diary of a Burning Tree*: 2003; *The Journey To Fez*: 2004; *I have danced with the spider*: 2005; *37 degrees of fear...* 2004).

Anton Kreuger, *Cue* guest reviewer, distils this concern in a review where he comments on one work:

astonishing and transporting ... *The Journey To Fez* embodies a haunting dream vision of the expulsion of the Moors from Europe in 1492, after the fall of Granada, along the themes of desire and the persistence of memory. The work charts expeditions into sub-conscious spaces where words disappear and Zeno's logical paradoxes are used to highlight the limitations of the mind, and the difficulties of recuperating meaning within liminal spaces. 1 July 2004)

Context of body of theory

Reflecting on my lecturing interests and new courses that I have initiated, I recently noted with some interest that many of research areas engage with a radical deconstruction of traditional performance hierarchies and strategies for performance: Dada and the Surreal Imagination; Theatre of Risk, Riot and Rite (performance art and events); Womyn in Performance: subversions and contradictions; a practical Drama III course on site specific performance. Reflecting on my own choreographic practice, I understood for the first time that the framings of the proscenium arch were perhaps never that well suited for the intimacies of my own choreographic constructions with body memory. These intuitions finally gave way to the realisation that I needed to work in other spaces.

Apart from the accumulated readings towards the abovementioned academic courses, one text has been seminal in structuring and generating a response to my intuitive questioning of my earlier working environment and method. Andre Lepecki's *Concept and Presence* (2004 172) notes as a trend within contemporary dance, a "radical recasting of dance from *a theatrical paradigm to a performance paradigm*", which he argues, is characterized by a distrust of representation, a suspicion of virtuosity as an end, the reduction of unessential props and scenic elements, an insistence on the performers presence and a "deep dialogue" with the visual arts and with performance theory. Lepecki draws these ideas together when he notes that the defining element behind

all these aspects is "an absolute lack of interest in defining whether the work falls within the ontological, formal or ideological parameters of something called, or recognized as, 'dance'" (Lepecki: 2004 173). Lepecki notes how this practice is described by a range of terminologies and suggests that "the very possibility of open and endless naming suggests that the truth of the work resides in its performance rather than its accommodation to previously fixed, established, hermetically sealed aesthetic and disciplinary boundaries" (Lepecki 2004 172). He also proposes that the names define a very specific semantic field for this dance: "it is a field where the visual arts, performance art, political art, meet performance theory and institute a mode of creation truly trans-disciplinary" (Lepecki 2004 172).

The term 'transdisciplinary' and the list of elements defining this interest seemed to resonate and trace many of the points of discomfort I am wanting to explore in *16 kinds of emptiness...* The notions of performer presence and artistic collaboration seem pertinent to my own investigation. The theoretical considerations around notions of 'presence' are complex and intricate. It is beyond the scope of this proposal to engage theoretically with this concept, but perhaps a starting point would be to articulate the image I connected to the work itself – *the image of emptiness*. The quite obvious play with notions of absence or presence seemed to be an inquisitive starting point for this work. Below is a programme brief that describes some of the impulses for the work.

"Everything is empty: conversations *may* be, promises *could* be, words mostly *are* ... but emptiness can also be full ..." (Leonhard Praeg)

16 kaleidoscopic episodes of reflective (a)musings on emptiness are the impulse for this unusual alliance which draws on the seasoned artistry of this eclectic group of collaborators. Conceived and scripted by Leonhard Praeg, and under the direction of Juanita Finestone-Praeg, the work is devised as a series of interactive conversations between Brett Kebble Award winner, Tanya Poole's animated installations, Guy Nelson's interactive lighting images, moments of choreographic play and improvised encounters with guest performers, Gary Gordon, Acty Tang and Sheena Stannard who partner First Physical Theatre Company's cast of performers.

Lepecki distils *reduction,* or minimalism (which reduces the scale and scope for movement) as one of the major modes of operation within European Contemporary Dance. He cites philosopher Jose Gil's (1996) notion of a 'microscopy of perception' and argues that by working the microscopic, one has to radically rethink the space where dance has been taking place. As Lepecki suggests, the proscenium arch or box no longer become the "ideal optical architectures" for a minimal dance (Lepecki 2004 179). The choice of a new performance space in the Old Nun's Chapel seemed to provide an opportunity to extend exploration into both collaboration and a different, intimate space within which to extend possibilities of the choreography.

Referencing these shifting trends, this work would like to investigate these notions through praxis and extend Ana Sanchez-Colberg's claim that physical theatre is not merely a "set of stylistic features of a production that is bodily-based":

> But rather one that extends discursive practices within the relative and tense relationship
> between the body/text/theatre reality which goes beyond mere representation of the body.
> (Sanchez-Colberg 1996 40)

(iii) outline of the method/process followed including ethical considerations

The rehearsal process will commence on 2 May 2006. Given my university teaching commitments it will be sporadic during May but will intensify during June when I will hopefully rehearse most days with the performers. This part of the proposal will deal with the **issues of collaboration** and the challenges specific to this collaborative exchange. I have included a description of the brief included in the Fringe Festival programme.

16 kaleidoscopic episodes of reflective (a) musings. 16 conversations between sound and bodies; image and light; animated installation. Finestone, Praeg and Tanya Poole collaborate in the Nun's Chapel.

Created on site in the intimacy of the Nun's Chapel, this offering/production initiates a fresh and exhilarating exchange between different artistic media. Deepening the collaborative exchange, this production plays with the collusions and collisions between light, sound, space, image, animated installation and the body in performance.

This brief description succinctly attempts to distil the vision for the collaborative process and hopefully, the final product. As I began to work on re-thinking collaborative relationships, I also began to respond to theatre theorists and practitioners that directly addressed some of the prickly issues raised by collaboration.

Johannes Birringer (2000) offers a wealth of theoretical insight and reflection on experiential processes and knowledges generated around the collaborative exchange. Using the term 'border work' to indicate processes of transcultural negotiation, he elaborates on the "fantasies and contingencies" of collaboration in performance work. He argues that the theatrical and performance discipline lacks "a performance theory of interdisciplinary collaboration altogether" and his text is written partly as a contribution to an evolving discourse around the collaborative processes that affect cultural practice and cultural politics (Birringer: 2000 10). Commenting on the collaborative exchange, he raises some of the ethical and contextual considerations that attend performance collaborations:

Our creativity in performance also depends on our physical awareness and critical sensitivity towards the media with which we translate each other's ideas, movements and images, and although the creative process draws on what we know, there are no rules that could protect us from the pressures of the social worlds in which we encounter the fearfulness and violence of transformation. In a sense, what I am addressing here are the limits of the aesthetic, the limits of the protection of forms. (Birringer 2000 8)

While his collaborative project embodies a larger context of transcultural collaboration, his insights, particularly his thoughts on "the limits of the protection of forms", are equally applicable to what Lepecki calls the "transdisciplinary" trends in contemporary choreography. In his article, *Concept and Presence*, Lepecki elaborates on the link that he posits between conceptual art and the shifting trends in European choreography by noting that

> traditionally, dance enters economy by escaping its ephemerality through an investment and reliance on precise techniques defined also as signature of the choreographer's personal style. This practice generates both a system of recognition (the audience recognizes the hand of the choreographer, through its signature technique; the dancer recognizes the familiar vocabulary of the master) and of reproduction (each dancer is initiated in a specific technique that allows the choreographer to enter into a fixed repertory and be transmitted along the generations and across borders with minimum of variation). (Lepecki 2004 177)

Lepecki poses that this dance is a radical challenge to the choreographic art object precisely at the level of its reproduction:

> not only does this object not rely on technique (which is different from saying it does not have one); it doesn't even concern itself with making the technique the specific signature of the choreographer ... it challenges the very 'saleability' of the dance object by withdrawing quite often from it what should be its distinctive (market) trait: dance (Lepecki 2004, 177).

I suspect that part of my own desire to collaborate intimately with a range of media has been fuelled by a similar concern to disengage dance/physical theatre from its usual moorings. It is also my attempt to shift from my own aesthetic formulas and projected choreographic identity. While many of these impulses and thoughts on dance have emerged quite spontaneously and intuitively, their thinking has become more rigorous through the research process encountered in preparation for rehearsal and the process of research for this proposal. Birringer's insights sustain this experience when he argues that the excitement of collaborative practice is

> the necessarily constant struggle to welcome the widening range of the unexpected, the unpredictable, and the transformative experience ... The excitement of creativity comes from those moments, as in good sex, when we may lose control or realize, during the play of experimentation, that the boundaries drawn by rules and the demarcations of difference can unexpectedly shift, and thus change our relationship to perceived or projected identity (Birringer 2000, 8).

My working process is already shifting. Although I have worked closely with collaborators in the past, and always tend to work through improvised process with the performer-creators in my works, I have never relinquished the role as sole conceptual presence or 'voice' of any creation. I conceive the narrative (albeit fragmented) flow of thoughts, words or images that will frame the final product. Narrative disclosure occurs through embodied images and experiences that I narrate (or structure) and which the dancers then interpret.

Through a series of task-related improvisations, I would clearly 'control' the process. In this work, I have tried to abandon the role of sole conceptual presence. Some examples may illustrate these ideas. The text, written predominantly by Leonhard Praeg, has also largely been conceived by him. To off-set some of his own predictable patterns, two of the vignettes are written by Dion van Niekerk and another two, co-written by both writers. In this sense, I have let to let go (already) of much of the ego-role of the choreographer as the prime 'voice' or presence of the performance text.

Given the attempt at deepening the processes of collaborative interplay, I am working consistently with Tanya Poole on the installations and she is interacting in the creative process through constructing workshops with me that extend the creative play with the performers. She will also co-direct two of the vignettes with me. Through discussion with her, I noted parallel interests with some her work. For instance, her own shift to animated installation portraiture was a response to what she terms "vanitas" and "posterity" in traditional portraiture. Her own deconstruction of these inherited traits in portraiture ("vanitas" as painting the subject in the best possible light, whatever that may be – grace, beauty, even idiosyncrasy; and "posterity" linking to the 'fixity' of that particular chosen moment to be passed down through history or generationally) seemed somehow connected to my own questioning of the "vanitas" and "posterity" of the traditional dancing body, always shown in the best possible light through technique (even in Physical Theatre) and through choreographic expertise. The need to explore the possibilities of performer presence and trans-disciplinary elements are embedded in this enquiry.

The lighting designer, Mr Guy Nelson, will be part of the rehearsal process for three weeks pre-production to ensure that the exchange remains integrated rather than simply conceptual and designed in isolation from the rehearsal process. For example, in the same way that I may set creative tasks for the performers to interpret, I will similarly set tasks for the designer that will be improvised through play and then crafted or set. He will similarly be responsible for a vignette that will only involve an exchange between sound and lighting.

(iv) the plan for the dissemination of the research to the research community and any other interested parties

The work will obviously be viewed by an audience at the National Arts Festival. First Physical Theatre Company usually undertake a marketing questionnaire with performances, which audiences are requested to fill in. It is possible to frame certain questions arising from the work that might reflect on their experience of the work. This may shed some light on the reception of the work by an audience. Hopefully the work will also be reviewed by critics, apart from the peer review panel for the research-as-practice process.

I envisage documenting aspects of the rehearsal *process and product* by filming it. Having this footage will aid the Post (re) viewing criteria for the review panel which would include devising
- a written self-reflection on the project;
- a report on the reception of the work in the public domain.

I have also submitted a research paper proposal for the Dramatic Learning Spaces Conference to be held in South Africa later this year. The paper is entitled, *Reflective (a)musings on 16 kinds of emptiness... : re-framing research for practice*, and will engage with this process and its outcomes. I am still awaiting confirmation of acceptance of the paper for the conference, but if it is accepted, it will hopefully become another way of disseminating this research within the research community in South Africa. I attach my brief abstract as Appendix II.

(v) any other supporting material: appendices

Appendix I

Practice-as-Research in Performance
Proposal
MEDIA INFORMATION

Production Title: *16 kinds of emptiness*

Collaborations ...

Concept Conceived by: Leonhard Praeg

Choreography and Direction:	Juanita Finestone-Praeg
Design and Installation:	Tanya Poole
Script:	Leonhard Praeg and Dion van Niekerk
Lighting Design:	Guy Nelson
Performers:	First Physical Theatre Company and apprentices
Guest Performers:	Gary Gordon; Acty Tang and Sheena Stannard

" Everything is empty: conversations *may* be, promises *could* be, words mostly *are* ... but emptiness can also be full ... " (Leonhard Praeg)

16 kaleidoscopic episodes of reflective (a) musings. 16 conversations between sound and bodies; image and light; animated installation. Finestone, Praeg and Tanya Poole collaborate in the Nun's Chapel.

16 kaleidoscopic episodes of reflective (a)musings on emptiness are the impulse for this unusual alliance which draws on the seasoned artistry of this eclectic, diverse group of collaborators. Conceived and scripted by Leonhard Praeg, and under the direction of Juanita Finestone-Praeg, the work is devised as a series of interactive conversations between Brett Kebble Award winner, Tanya Poole's animated installations, Guy Nelson's extraordinary lighting images, moments of choreographic artistry and improvised encounters with guest performers, Gary Gordon, Acty Tang and Sheena Stannard who partner First Physical Theatre Company's gifted cast of performers.

Created on site in the intimacy of the Nun's Chapel, this offering/production initiates a fresh and exhilarating exchange between different artistic media. Deepening the collaborative exchange, this production plays with the collusions and collisions between light, sound, space, image, animated installation and the body in performance.

Appendix II

Dramatic Learning Spaces
A South African Research Conference

Proposal Title: Reflective (a)musings on *16 kinds of emptiness...* : re-framing research for
                          practice

Proposal Abstract

This paper would like to offer a personal account of the critical and creative impulses experienced and the outcomes encountered through my involvement with the national initiative for recognising practice as research in South Africa. I have chosen to conceptualise, devise and produce a practice-based research project that extends investigations into aspects of contemporary performance and choreography with the dual purpose of being a case study for research into practice-as-research.

The project, specifically framed as research, will attempt to:
    c. interrogate notions of *site, collaboration* and *performer presence* as viewed within contemporary performance/physical theatre by devising a work that engages with these issues performatively;
    d. explore a process of artistic *collaboration* by creating a trans-disciplinary work that employs a range of technologies (installation/animation/lighting/script/body performance/site) in relation to the concept and vocabularies of the choreographic investigation.

Andre Lepecki, in *Concept and Presence* (2004 172) notes as a trend within contemporary dance, a "radical recasting of dance *from a theatrical paradigm to a performance para*digm" which he argues, is characterized by a distrust of representation, a suspicion of virtuosity as an end, an insistence on the performers presence and a "deep dialogue" with the visual arts and with performance art which he finally calls, trans-disciplinary. The new work would investigate these notions through praxis.

The process of formalising, articulating and assessing this work so it can be rated as research would be part of the process. My hope is that my paper would be able to reflect on both the process and product of my own experience as well as the responses to it within the context of the practice as research pilot project. The paper

would hopefully extend debate and discussion on this pressing issue of concern to those working within both the academy and as performance practitioners.

(iii)   My self-evaluation as part of the P-a-R NRF pilot project that the work was part of (September 2006)

Self-evaluation: perceived results and impact of the project

Indication of the project's reception in the public domain (by means of references to reviews, articles, public response etc.) – potential impact

Marketing the Project
Every attempt was made to market the work as effectively as possible. In this regard, I worked closely with First Physical Theatre Company who co-produced the work. Weekly production meetings were held with my collaborative team and Mr Calum Stevenson, Managing Director of First Physical, in order to effectively administer and manage the work – both financially and logistically. Distribution of flyers, posters, press releases, and the programme were planned well in advance in order to facilitate marketing of the work. I also worked with Projects Manager, Terri King, to streamline the Thumbnail Guide to Contemporary Dance and Physical Theatre (part of our audience education and development drive).

Reception in the public domain
The Fringe at the National Arts Festival is often a volatile and unpredictable enterprise and I was deeply excited by the overwhelmingly positive feedback the work received from numerous sources.

- The work was performed 17 times and apart from the first two shows which were almost full, every other show was sold out and we actually had to turn people away from the door. An article in The Herald (cites Festival spokesperson, Gilly Hemphill, as saying that **"the most popular shows this year included the Athol Fugard play** *Sizwe Banzi is dead, Hoot, 16 Kinds of Emptiness,* **a production by Juanita Finestone-Praeg and** *Ghetto Dust"*. Although the venue had an small capacity (only 50 people), the box office was the most lucrative of any First Physical production produced at a National Arts Festival.
- Although one does not expect to get substantial review coverage with Fringe productions, I was delighted to get three extremely complimentary reviews on the work. A *Cue Short Cuts* reviewer called the work **"a brilliant, ingenious collaboration. Innovative and remarkably moving".** I was also extremely lucky to get a front page review in the *Cue* written by Cue reporter, Lila O'Donovan. The headline read **"An emptiness full of life … Pushing boundaries to the end".** The third review in *The Herald,* by Alison Canter, described the work as *"challenging, sublime and exquisite … Finestone-Praeg excelled in her vision of exploring varieties of emptiness through various forms of intense physical expression, including original movement and inspirational texts …all 16 vignettes are gloriously breath-taking".* She also comments on the choice of venue and the intimacy that it generates. These reviews provide an outside evaluation/assessment of the work.
- **Cue TV and SABC** also filmed parts of the work and the Cue footage included an interview with me that was disseminated on their Festival screens and on their website
- Mr Malcolm Purkey and Ms Lara Foot personally commended me on the work and discussed the possibility of producing it at a chosen venue at **The Market Theatre** in the future. The proposal was informal as Mr Purkey indicated that sufficient funding would not be forthcoming from The Market and with the demise of First Physical (due to a funding crisis) this possibility cannot be pursued. Nonetheless, the discussion indicated a positive assessment of the work itself.
- **Public response** was overwhelmingly positive, with many people commending the work (both friends and the general public, as well as academics like Yvonne Banning, Tim Huisamen; Ron Hall and Janet Buckland, to name a few).
- **Collaborators responses** to the project: see letter from Ms Tanya Poole
- A **letter** was received form a British ballet teacher who contacted me after the performance and commented on the quality of the work.

Documentation and Archives (dissemination of the research)

- The work captured the interest of a Masters student at Rhodes University who requested to use the work as a case study for part of her Masters research on issues of collaboration and questions of

authorship/ownership in contemporary performance. She has gathered data in the form of a lengthy *questionnaire* which all of the performers and collaborators have responded to. I attach my replies and also note that an hour long *interview* with me on aspects of the collaboration process has been documented *on video*. I do not know what aspects of the work she will write about, but the fact that it produced a response in the field of performance research was for me another indication of the work's engagement with and stimulation of new research.

- I ensured that the work was filmed for documentation and archival purposes and am in the process of editing the footage with Paul Mills. When the footage can be edited with integrity and clarity, a *DVD* of the production will be produced and made available

- A *DVD of photographs* was also sent to me by a photographer (Monique Pellser) that requested permission to shoot the production. These images will also be placed in the First Physical archives, now housed at the Drama Department at Rhodes, but moving to NELM next year.

- The *original text* (although its embodiment altered many aspects of it) also exists as a document of the production.

- A *research paper* proposal for the Dramatic Learning Spaces *Conference* to be held in South Africa later this year has been accepted. The paper is entitled *Reflective (a)musings on 16 kinds of emptiness... : a personal response to re-framing research for practice*, and will engage with this process and its outcomes. It will hopefully become another way of disseminating this research within the research community in South Africa.

(iv)   External Peer Review

Testing criteria for recognising practice as research in the performing arts in South Africa with particular reference to the case of drama and theatre:
2006–2008

A report prepared by Mark Fleishman (UCT); Temple Hauptfleisch (Stellenbosch); Veronica Baxter (UKZN PMB); Alex Sutherland (Rhodes)

With support from the National Research Foundation (Knowledge Fields Development)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What follows is a detailed report on a research project which aimed:

- To test a set of criteria for evaluating practice as research (PAR) outputs in the performing arts (drama and theatre) on a number of test cases.
- To review the ways in which the criteria are applied by reviewers on these test cases.
- To evaluate whether this mechanism for reviewing practice as research outputs works and how it might be refined or changed in the light of experience.

The general conclusion drawn from this study is that the criteria identified by the research community in the discipline and revised through the process, and the peer review procedure followed in the project (with some suggested changes), do achieve the result of identifying acceptable PAR projects. However like all new systems it would need more time to bed down and would undergo revision through practice.

A summary of reviewers comments in relation to the criteria for the four complete cases

Case number 1: *16 kinds of emptiness* (Ms J Finestone-Praeg)
Juanita Finestone-Praeg directed/choreographed a multi-disciplinary performance event, billed as 'dance' under the National Arts Festival main programme, but was consciously attempting to dissolve the boundaries which might distinguish 'dance', 'theatre', 'performance art' etc. In her framing document she articulates a wish "to disengage dance/physical theatre from its usual moorings". The piece was structured around 16 vignettes, each dealing with the theme of 'emptiness' through different artistic media. The research goals concern the notion of performance presence and trans-disciplinary, artistic collaboration, where the traditional 'ego' roles of writer/choreographer are relinquished.

All reviewers agreed that this work was an accomplishment both artistically and as an example of practice as research, with one reviewer concluding that *"these questions are realized as well as challenged with such complexity in performance [which] points to a relationship between framing and performance that is powerfully and successfully realized"*.

One reviewer specifically comments how, *"The research goal of exploring artistic collaboration by creating a trans-disciplinary work, was clearly embedded in the work"*. This reviewer further argues a close relationship between the framing document and the performance piece:

> The intimate spatial positioning of the audience, and the run-way like nature of the performance space, as well as the interplay of various artistic texts, facilitated a playful engagement with the idea of representation and virtuosity.

Another reviewer comments on how the multiple texts of the performance reflect the research investigations concerning performer presence and artistic collaboration:

> The kinetic, affecting and non-literal vocabulary of contemporary dance, the myriad meanings in gesture together with the specificity of text (and not) as well as evocative visual elements all allowed for a constant journey in and out of meaning. There was at once a connectedness with performers and then a distance, an emotional involvement and then some cool assessment. The research questions that frame this submission lie not directly in this highly complex, rich and yet elusive representation of emptiness but somewhere else. Both research questions however, embody this elusiveness in that they foster highly subjective viewings of the work enhancing this self conscious search for authentic representation yet completely comfortable with disruption, dissolution and displacement and the inevitable elusiveness.

All reviewers pointed to the difficulty of focusing on performance presence as a research investigation. One reviewer comments that, *"I do feel that [the researcher] needs to be clearer or provide more insights when she writes about performer presence"*. Another comment about the final vignette that *"the performance levels were difficult to read ... the poignancy of felt presence was jarred by a self conscious wall that the performers put up."* This reviewer concludes that:

> Perhaps the framing needed to also points to the lack of resolution in the whole notion of performance presence and absence, the theatre ritual, liminality and life. Do we indeed fade out presence or go out with a bang?

A third reviewer comments that most but not all of the performance texts were able to achieve the goal of interrogating performer presence.

All reviewers agreed that the second goal of achieving a trans-disciplinary collaboration was strongly evident in the work, although this does bring up important issues regarding authorship. One reviewer states that:

> The question of collaboration was realized in several instances. As a whole the presence of several creative voices extended the notions of subjectivity and the elusive representation of 'emptiness' to the creators of the work in as much as this was made manifest in the receiving of the work through use of the site and audience configuration. As such there was a compelling symmetry between the myriad voices of creation and reception.

This same reviewer also alludes to a tension in the work, between the apparent seamless 'whole' of the work, and the inter-subjective nature of the work. Is the intention therefore:

> ... towards the presence of one holistic voice or a range of highly subjective voices? In dealing with the presentation of elusiveness through a range of media and subjectivities, seamlessness in performance can be either or a good or a bad thing.

In this case, two of the three reviews provided a detailed response to the practice, which was also facilitated by a rigorous framing document as well as extensive post-production evaluations and documentation provided by the researcher. As such, this particular case revealed a more complex engagement with the practice than perhaps the others could.

A further issue that was revealed through this case, concerned the question of whether putting already established theory into practice constitutes new knowledge. The reviewers generally agreed that the work did contribute to current practice and advancement of knowledge in the discipline. All reviewers commented on the effective use of the performance site as a means of reframing artistic practice.

> *16 Kinds of Emptiness contributes to the investigation of how the dynamics of space, power, artistic hierarchies, performer-audience relationship might play out when disciplinary boundaries are deliberately blurred, relinquished, and redefined.*

> *16 Kinds of Emptiness was billed as dance. The nature of its large scale collaboration with text, visual arts and architecture and its conscious manifestation of a physical and an emotional presence of the dancer challenges and advances the notion of what dance is. This is further extended in its development of dance vocabulary based on improvisation and collaboration with the dancers themselves. The placement of these performances in the Old Nun's Chapel extends notions of viewing and reception.*

> *I think what this work does is provide another viewpoint from which to interrogate the notion of Physical Theatre with its shift away from conventional performance space, its collaborative nature, use of text/s, range of performers and subject matter. I would like to have had more information about the reasons for this particular site as I think the choreographic challenges were fairly limited.*

All reviewers agreed that the work reflected theatrical accomplishment, a view that is supported through reviews and comments which the researcher provided as part of her post-production submission. However, this criteria does pose a problem for a collaborative work of this nature, with regards to the idea of 'creative signature': *"Theatrical accomplishment and creative signature is difficult to define in a collaborative artistic project of this nature, and one of the weaknesses of the work was the inconsistency across the vignettes, in terms of achieving the goal of interrogating artistic presence".* Another reviewer comments that despite the presence of several collaborators: *"The creative signature is singular in its overall manifestation... the work has a highly individual stamp".*

The question of impact was successfully addressed by the researcher, who presented multiple examples through reviews, audience numbers, etc., of the positive reception of the work in a highly competitive festival context. One reviewer commented that:

> *I would argue that this work was perhaps the most successful in exploring and interrogating alternative theatre sites. The piece challenged the audience to examine theatre, performance, and each other (in that the audiences was positioned to look at the other half of the audience) in a new way.*

Overall comments:
This research has successfully addressed the questions of performer presence and the interchange that trans-disciplinary collaboration provides. The work reflects a creative signature, although whether this can be ascribed to one individual is contested by the nature of the collaboration. If disciplinary boundaries are collapsed, the artist becomes a curator of sorts, and this may frame performer presence differently e.g. virtuosity may cease to become important. Performer presence is reframed and audience expectations unsettled through unconventional spatial arrangements: proximity of performers to audience, and audience to audience, placing the audience in view as performers. Identity is reframed and new identities advanced.
In this case, the researcher provided a very strong post-project evaluation and 'evidence box' of supporting literature and reflections from collaborators. This really strengthened her case, and allowed for a rigorous engagement with the work as Practice as Research.

APPENDIX 7: Experiences learned through teaching-as-research

Butoh – the Conditions
Condition II (the absence of a choreographed body)
21 May 2010. Will Frauke choreograph this absence or immediacy of presence? This became my daily fascination...how could Frauke shape these experiences and bodily perceptions into her choreographic universe? Clearly research was going to comprise a large part of the investigation. This was evidenced in numerous trips to the Albany museum to study their displays and records of both space and life forms. This research became part of the map through which to investigate the choreographic conditions (or 'Joh-tai') – the 'materials' for the choreography. These conditions and qualities have to be 'produced' through and in the body. For instance, a huge meteorite at Albany Museum provides concrete material explorations for Gary's solo which was examining the qualities of steel, sword, fire. He and Frauke visit a local welder to witness the alchemical transformations from one state of material to another. My own conditions of 'bone' and 'snake' are equally subject to investigation – we work in a dry quarry site one afternoon, I take Frauke to see a friend's corn snake to observe its movement moments and 'snakeness'. We are working each day to find detail that will help one to not represent 'bone' or 'snake', but to 'be' 'bone' or 'snake'.
Frauke spends hours examining the dung beetle – a new 'Joh-tai' or condition derived and devised from a first viewing of these South African creatures: "I saw them the first at Addo and I had just arrived here and this blackness – it was very beautiful and that's why I chose the dung beetle ... for the darkness" (Frauke: 2010). The dung beetle inspires conditions for **Scene 1: Darkness** and **Scene 5: Black Hole**. A dung beetle on loan from the museum is brought into the rehearsal room –its various hues of black (matt to shiny) embodied, its eyes, under its body, becoming the source for placement of consciousness and details for hands and body movement. The speed, the rhythm, the qualities of 'beetleness' were excavated and then produced in the body. Frauke keeps activating the intelligence of the mind-body, its ability to transcend the literal or the narrative – very often using poetic image or onomatopoeic sound to stimulate activation or transportation with the materials. She mobilises different strategies to get the body to generate new memories and trajectories for the conscious and unconscious responses to stimuli and impulse. "Each material will have a sound that will inform the body" (Frauke: 2010).
Part of this research process required taking detailed notes each day...the responsibility to find detail and clarity of the materials clearly lying with each performer...to take this experience and shape it into perception (Finestone-Praeg 2010, 288).

Condition III (the curious body)
4 June 2010. I notice a growing ease, release and confidence in the way the company respond to improvisational tasks and the rigor of repetitions in the training...my own personal judgements of myself grow less and exploration intensifies...a curiosity starts to grow and emerge but interestingly, this curiosity comes from the body itself, not the mind or emotions ...as with improvisation, being present or what Frauke calls 'available' – and this starts when the body itself starts to ask questions. Today I noted a shift from the performers' very first responses to solo improvisations which I had recorded on 15 May 2010: Gary – "space became vast...I was frightened"...and Levern – "we are used to showing off...you lose confidence" and Sifiso – "it's very hard...you have to talk to your body". Today I can see questions manifest in the performers' bodies (Finestone-Praeg 2010, 289).

Condition IV (the empathetic body)
28 May 2010. You cannot hold onto anything known. Yesterday we had a disastrous rehearsal where the company really revealed an extreme sense of despair. All are despondent and deeply uncertain ... Frauke is relentless in her pursuit of driving you to 'produce quality in the materials'. We are all feeling slightly humiliated and physically stupid.
At home my partner passes me a Zen Buddhist meditation on the nature of teaching and empathy. In Antony Osler's (2008: 62) account of his own experience as a Zen student, he is one day "stunned by the hostility" he encounters from the master in a personal interview. Later, alone in his room, he suddenly realises the gift the master has taught him:

> I understood ... the astonishing depth of his commitment to his students – that he had no interest at all in being liked or in making people comfortable: he had only one job in this life and that was to help his students see what he himself had seen. To that he gave himself without hesitation.

I hope Frauke trusts tonight that she has manifested this empathy. She looked rather vulnerable when I left rehearsal (Finestone-Praeg 2010, 290).

Condition V (the hungry body)
29 May 2010. The day after the disastrous rehearsal, Frauke gives us a poem:

> When we were born, our hunger began. This hunger makes us move. The baby looks for the mother's breast with the mouth, the hands, the legs, the belly – the whole body, the soul. Your dance began. Hunger is life energy. Not only meal for the body but also meal for the soul. In the daily life we forget and hide our hunger and our body. Are you hungry?

Frauke gives it to us saying that "in performance you need to produce something ... you need to be hungry" (Finestone-Praeg 2010, 291).

Condition VI (producing the body)
On questioning how this Butoh cosmology becomes manifest through performance, if it is not 'set', Frauke (2010) responds by suggesting:

> you create a certain structure and there can be certain poses...it can be quite set ...but in the moment you have to produce, you have to become...becoming is the true performance state and you have to create that every time...to get to lightning you have to have a cloud and if it is not there, things cannot be born...you really have to produce ...you have to work your body to do it...that makes it alive...you can't do it as a step because you have to work it consciously with layers (Finestone-Praeg 2010, 291-292).

Butoh Judgements
First judgement: Butoh as event-text
"Writing is a wager of solitude, flux and reflux of anxiety. It is also the reflection of a reality reflected in its new origin, whose image we shape deep in our jumble of desires and doubts". (Jabès 1996)

Jabès' suggestion that writing manifests a 'new origin' for an already reflected experience, and that this may indeed produce an 'unsuspected subversion' (derived from the book's title: *The little book of unsuspected subversion)* resonates some of the spectral anxieties of negotiating performative writing...
My own 'sayings' here are similarly an attempt to re-imagine and 'say back to' my encounter with Butoh in *Ama-no-gawa* (Finestone-Praeg 2010, 281).

Second judgement: The *Butoh-Tai* and *Ubuntu*
Toshiharu Kasai (200: 253) suggests that the Butoh body ('*butoh-tai*' in Japanese) refers to "a physical and mental attitude" which integrates dichotomised elements such as "consciousness versus unconsciousness and subject versus object". He conceptualises a crucial distinction between "expression" and "perception", arguing that the dancer who 'perceives' the mind-body rather than 'expresses' the mind-body is engaged in dance that is more authentically Butoh. South African dance critic, Adrienne Sichel (2010) details this perception in the following way:

> Butoh demands that the human being access and engage not only his or her physical being but be able to plug into a universal spiritual ethos and then reduce, internalise, localise and personalise that spirituality which is then fused with an organic, indeed primal, intelligence.

Indeed, the body's intelligence is central to the performative perception. This is what Frauke is trying to manifest: the body is the site where the material is produced for Butoh performance – not in the emotions of a personal imaginary. Within Butoh, the performer is trying to embody very different conceptions and constructions of a performing identity. Often Frauke speaks of the difference between a Western and Japanese sensibility – and the need for us as performers to transcend the "social body" with its constructions of self and ego. She says this "social body", which expresses personality through its rendering of personal and social histories and memories, has to be "erased" in Butoh performance. Kasai and Parsons (2003: 259) suggest that the Japanese have a far more "diffuse and permeable" conception of the body and that in this, a Japanese dancer would not aim to "express" who or what s/he is. They suggest that in the most "essential" Butoh performance, what the audience sees is not the performer's body but a "non-materialised world as if the performer's body becomes a prism and allows the audience to see something latent behind the performer". Ways in which these philosophies manifest in the Butoh form are through traces of bodily questionings: the lower gravity line placed

in the back of the body, the notion of emptying the body and erasing the self as well as a deep awareness of space and breath. The body and the choreographic conditions (or *"Joh-tai"*) similarly evoke nature and organic contexts.

These various "emptyings" of the self remind me of:
- (chance and the *I Ching*)

Avant garde choreographer, Merce Cunningham choreographed the logic of the *I Ching,* often using chance and indeterminacy as a methodology for his choreographic process and product:

> ... he feeling I have when I compose in this way is that I am in touch with a natural resource far greater than my own inventiveness could ever be, much more universally human that the particular habits of my own practice, and organically rising out of common pools of motor impulses. (Rockwell in conversation with Cunningham 2005, 3)
- (the African concept of *Ubuntu*)

Does *Ubuntu* not ask for an erasure of the personal ego through the prism of the group/commune? Elza Venter (2004: 151), in examining notions of *Ubuntu* and Communalism argues that in African culture the community always comes first. She cites Higgs and Smith (200: 55):

> This community is not simply the political community...The African community... shares some features with Buddhist ideas of the human community as being a vast, ever-expanding net of spiritual, psychological, biological and emotional relations. The African community, like the Buddhist community, shares the earth with the unborn, the living spirits of the dead, the earth, the mountain, the sky...African philosophy is a holistic philosophy stressing the importance of the human community and its place in the universe.

Adrienne Sichel's (2010) insights parallel this reading when she contextualises the following relation with Butoh and Africa:

> Butoh is very appealing to the African dancemaker mainly because of its spirituality, altering of consciousness, relation to the environment and its compelling theatricality. A form of Afro-Butoh has emerged here in the past four years thanks to three specific collaborations including First Physical Theatre Company's project with Sweden's Frauke.

Both in rehearsal and in performance I feel myself tapping into the energy of this original universe: the prism of the communal experience of *Ama-no-gawa:* the "heavenly river", the Milky Way (Finestone-Praeg 2010, 283–285).

Third judgement: On Butoh as Expressionism
Many questions asked by company members seem to be concerned with the idea of 'how to express' in Butoh. In what ways might Butoh be embedded in Expressionism? What understandings of Expressionism are embodied through Butoh? As Kasai (2000: 258) suggests in his study, Butoh is aligned with Expressionism given the historical links to German Expressionism via its originators Hijikata and Ohno. At the same time, Kasai (2000: 258) cites Waguri of the Kozen-Sha Butoh dance group who argues that he disagrees that Butoh is expressionist if "the expression means to show identity". Kasai (2000, 259) offers a more complex viewing of this:

> The Expressionistic dancer might be directing a good deal of attention to an external environment and concentrating on how to transform her internal experience into its visible manifestation. The Butoh dancer, in contrast, is not aiming to "portray" his/her perceived mind-body, but simply to experience it and allow this to arouse motion.

Kasai and Parsons (2003) describe this perception as manifest in a shift from "social time" to "body time". Perhaps "body time" is a pure Expressionism where the body is cleanly the medium, in the same way that a music note may be? Where the body doesn't "mean" but simply "is ... body as pure form. These are all questions (Finestone-Praeg 2010, 285–286).

Degrees of change (i) with performer, Alan Parker

Juanita: What has been the most intoxicating part of this experience for you as a performer?
Alan: I'm not quite sure if I know how to verbalise it. I think it's the performance space for the performer that I really like about the Butoh. I think I misunderstood Butoh before. I always thought it was far more internal ... not a trance or anything like that, but a very internal focus and what I realise now is that it's more like the blur between the inner and outer. So it's still projects for a viewer...
Juanita: In class one day, Gary spoke about a similar experience and called it a "liminal space" – the simultaneity of being inside and outside at the same time.
Alan: Yes, the space is neither the inner nor the outer, you are not "showing" yourself but also, you are not staring at your belly button and having a little private moment. I find it linked with the use of the eyes and with vision because the vision becomes a metaphor for that which Frauke talks about ... a blurriness...you are not looking at one thing or anything actually. But you can take that further if your eyelids actually close and then the opposite of that is when you open your eyes too wide...so it's that fine line between "seeing" and "not seeing".
Juanita: That's nice. It also becomes more about mystery perhaps...a questioning?... (Finestone-Praeg 2010, 283)

Degrees of change (ii) with Gary Gordon
Gary: I remember saying that and it was the first thing I noticed...it's very much a kind of visceral imagination...very liquid and I feel that sometimes there is a kind of watery place between the world that I'm moving in, the space that I'm moving in and my own internal space. It's so interesting because it's quite poetic to me...I really learned about duality through it...I have never worked like that before...where I am just part of the space as opposed to "here I am, look at me, look at what I'm doing".
Juanita: In my yoga practice, I have become fascinated with breath, especially the gap just before you breathe in and then just after you breathe out–in between breathings there's a quiet, empty space or rest, where the breath is neutral, where it is not active or passive...
Gary: That's quite lovely, that's quite a Grotowskian idea and Grotowski was inspired by yoga. That sense that you breath in and you swallow and then you breath out ... so there is a moment of being with the air but not breathing in, just inhabiting it.
Juanita: Yes, when you not acting on anything... (Finestone-Praeg 2010, 286)

Degrees of change (iii) with Masters student, Nadine Joseph
Nadine: I think it's a having to get rid of yourself and being completely invested in the work you are creating because sometimes I think what tends to happen is that people just put form to the content as opposed to actually really engaging and trying to put the two together... it is so removed from any emotion that I think that is the very reason why it is so emotive to watch (Finestone-Praeg 2010, 287)

Degrees of change (iv) with Levern Botha
Levern: I think the most difficult part and what makes it so different to everything else is that most other training processes are either internal (and even self- indulging) or so completely extravert (where you are telling a story, whatever that story might be). Whereas this needs to find a middle ground between the inside and the outside...So when Frauke says things like "the eyes are windows with shades of expression"... now you've actually have to put it into practice and its daunting. You actually have to embody that and I think that's what makes it different ... to empty out yourself like that is initially quite something emotionally (Finestone-Praeg 2010, 289)

Degrees of change (v) with Sonia Smit
you can bring stuff within the material, so I think perhaps the codes used are very strict but the material allows you to revolt or explore (Finestone-Praeg 2010, 291)

Degrees of change (vi) with Frauke
Frauke: Now the dancers have understood physically the qualities of the material – they understand you can't fake it...they know the seed now... (Finestone-Praeg 2010, 292)

APPENDIX 8: De Wet's biography with FPTC

Drifting: Reminiscing. Remembering. Reinventing. Reza

Reza de Wet passed away in 2012. In April 2013, the Rhodes Drama department decided that a fitting tribute to Reza de Wet would be to perform a homage/eulogy and so Drifting: Reminiscing. Remembering. Reinventing. Reza was conceived. In consultation with family and old friends and curated by various staff and students in the department that year, the eulogy "drifted" between episodic fragments or "nostalgic dialogues" (Cillier 2013) with De Wet. Indeed, the structure of feeling embodied through the production was a kaleidoscopic rendering of nostalgic memories about Remembering Reza. And in this process, perhaps Reinventing Reza. From inception, it was agreed that to merely construct a series of excerpts from De Wet's works would not honour her alchemical imagination – how, we kept wondering, would we trace the threads of her numinous mien and mercurial spirit? And so the title, drifting, evolved as a metonymic cipher of her enigmatic, mysterious presence in our Drama department, in the Rhodes Theatre itself, and in Grahamstown. de Wet's also drifted in and out of relation with FPTC. While her oevre of published playtexts are well established, her collaborations with the Rhodes Drama department, and particularly with FPTC are less known though they are now housed at New English Literary Museum (NELM) in the FPTC archive. Not only did De Wet script six works for Gordon's but she also toured and performed with the company for selected performances of the company's signature work, *The Unspeakable Story* (1995).

APPENDIX 9: Analysis of episodes in *Sensorial Manifestoes*

Sensorial manifestoes: a brief exhumation of the embodied dramaturgy in *The Unspeakable Story*

The Mirror

This episode explores a nostalgic journey: a mirror of memory into which the audience is swept. The young Magritte is watching his father shave in front of a mirror, while in the shadowy background, the dark figure of a woman sitting in a chair, embroidering feathers onto a hat, is barely discernable. Three figures dressed in formal black evening attire with black top hats are standing, motionless, their backs to the audience. Suddenly the popular 1940's band, The Inkspots, can be heard. They sing their hit song, My Echo, My Shadow and Me. The three dancers perform a routine reminiscent of a Hollywood entertainment routine, passing and juggling their hats with ease and slick comic timing. Their light and entertaining spectacle is echoed by the tapping of their feet which simulates the movements of a tap routine. As they turn around to join the Father, who has been seduced by the fantasy of his own nostalgia, and is mouthing the words along with the song, the audience is confronted with a myriad of reflections of the father's face. The trio all wear his mask: or aspects of his persona. These distortions resonate the play on representations: where is the truth of his identity? Or of artistic images? Which image or persona is real? In this episode, Gordon has again responded to his research on documented facts about his subject matter. He recalls a story from Magritte's early life:

> He loved to read all those cheap detective novels. So The Inkspots helped me put it back in a period giving the audience a sign of taking them back ... but then to have the actor mouthing the words of the song ... it's what we all do at home when a nice song comes on, you pretend you're the singer, so it was playing with that idea and also playing with Andrew Buckland who is a kind of a star. And debunking him slightly, seeing another side of him (Interview with Gordon 1995).

The House

The design and the choreography have collaborated to give us some clues about this woman. The first image of the woman prepares and paves the way for a journey that leads towards her house. As she enters, another veiled woman, in a ritualistic progression, lays down bricks in front of her. The bricks are placed in an upright position, and as she places each step on a brick, her journey, both physical and emotional, becomes a precarious one. Here, the use of single bricks serves, in an economical way, to deconstruct the image of a home: the bricks are the foundations, the structures that keep a house intact so in this sense we are being shown the unstable, unsteady nature of her home. As the woman makes her way, she is covered by feathers which suspend and flutter about her. Here, the designer, Lindy Roberts, has provided the audience with information about Magritte's mother. The feathers, in this instance, recall her trade as a hat maker. They also become confetti for the new bride as she enters the home of her marriage. Throughout the danceplay there are continual references to these feathers that contribute to an interpretation of her state of mind. For example, in The Funeral, a woman's voice reminisces about the equipment of the embalming room and recalls the "black plumes for the horses heads" like "dead hunted birds" (De Wet 1995). The walls of the box set shift to transform her home into a dream, the river, or a memory. We hear the distant, recorded voice of the woman speaking:

> From then on, my narrow house became a dream. It did. Yes, it really did. A house where everything would shift and change...I can simply walk through the walls (De Wet 1995).

The set design and choreography echo these displacements, these visible and invisible alchemical transformations of space. Like the surreal paintings of Magritte, nothing is inevitable or logical. For example, the walls are painted with Magritte's clouds and later, when the house opens to become the river, the clouds are on the floor. The design thus becomes a fluid functionary for the dance as Gordon suggests, it became important that the design did not remain static from beginning to end:

> It also moves...because I think Physical Theatre is dealing with motion, with emotion, with change...so it is important that the design elements also take the audience on a journey (Interview with Gordon 1995).

The confined space of the set and the intimate duet that it provokes between husband and wife captures the ambiguities, the desperate dependencies and the need for freedom that haunts all relationships. The damp cold of familiarity, of patterns that have lost consciousness are repeated through their movements. Bodies stories that have lost their words, and can only communicate intuitively. Roberts collaborated with Gordon to create a setting for this duet. When Gordon first began rehearsing, he took the two performers to a run-down old house

that had no windows or ceiling. There was glass on the floor and so as they improvised, their movements were of necessity cautious and tentative, as the space was small and dangerous. This improvisatory process thus had a direct impact on the emotional/physical landscape created, and the type of movements that were created for this duet. So in this sense, both Gordon and Roberts were taking cues from the performers themselves and responding to the creative material that was given to them. The box set re-creates the confined and dangerous initial rehearsal space and becomes a potent image of their emotional claustrophobia.

Figure 30. *The Unspeakable Story. The House.* 2004 re-construction. Photograph by unknown. Performers are Gary Gordon and Juanita Finestone-Praeg.

The River

This explores a more expressionistic vocabulary and narrative. The River becomes the emotional heartland of the dance, the mother's deepest oblivion into which she tragically plunges. Here, the sensorial dramaturgy layers image, body and sound to evoke this emotionality. The relentless motion of the River and the way it consumes this woman becomes a penetrating sadness that finds companionship in both the music and the choreography. The music's driving repetitions and surging circular energy is, like the River, an "deep incessant sigh" (De Wet 1995). The movement creates the illusion of being underwater, as the performers never stand up and rarely move above torso height. Also, the performers' rolling movements are close to the floor, and the passive body of the mother which they manipulate through falls and flows embody the way the relentless momentum of water journeys her towards her death.

The Funeral

This episode explores a more grotesque and macabre interpretation of the narrative – capturing the isolation and loneliness of the fractures between the personal and public woman. As Gordon notes:

> ...it seemed that no one worried about her, spoke about her...the mourners arrived, more concerned with who was there and what they looked like...like a fashion show. It was incidental to them whose body it was (Interview with Gordon 1995).

By the end of this episode, the audience have witnessed a duet performed with the speed, sensuality and power play of Latin American dance styles like the Tango and "dirty dancing"; a macabre fashion parade; a vaudeville act and a singer's floorshow each being stylistically different. For example, the comic relief in the vaudeville is brought about by the clowning antics and dialogue of two workers, who, on collecting the body, complain about the "terrible pong" of "floaters". In contrast, the dance, as Ilse van Hemert explains, is "too wild, too dangerous and too bruising" to merely be a pretty dance it makes us question their relationship (transcribed from the documentary DVD The Liberated Body by van Hemert and Fox 1996).

The Dream
This ushers the audience into a surreal landscape, the world of the unconscious, and of dreaming. In this episode the small boy walks to a projected black and white image of his mother's face. He tries to access his memory of her by touching the screen. The image is so close up that a sense of proportion is lost with the grainy texture distorting the individual features of the face. This distortion is echoed the text:

> Woman: He would awaken, always in the dark with the intense fear that the furniture, the objects, the room itself had become unfamiliar and menacing (De Wet 1995).

This conjuring of his mother's image assumes a surreality which is heightened by a host of ghostly women wearing masks who enter and as they surround him with dance, he is taken away from the mother's visage. The lighting in this scene utilises a strobe effect which further distorts linearity and contributes to the surreal feeling of unfamiliarity and menace.

The Cycle
A duet in the final Cycle section, and a parallel to the first duet in The House, this dance strongly resonates a contemporary relevance. The couple is now in modern dress and the confinement of the walls of the house have been replaced by bricks, which serve as physical or emotional obstacles that need to be overcome in their relationship. The bricks that they carefully manipulate in their quietly sensuous duet suggest the subterraneous danger and subliminal violence that underlies their relationship. It also intimates a delicacy with each other, a potential for caring and warmth. At one stage, the male dancer painstakingly carries his female partner over his neck, step by step, brick by brick, over an imaginary threshold – the immediacy of the danger and risk presented by the bricks is performed in real time creating a tension through anticipated failure and the audience experiences this. One could rehearse dancing on these bricks to perfection, but there is always the risk that they could topple at any time. And often they did. The dramatic suspense created through the use of these props also adds to the tension of the "thriller".

Figure 31. *The Unspeakable Story. The Cycle.* 2005 Reconstruction. Performers are Bailey Snyman (on the floor), Penni Gold (on the bricks) and Nonhlanhla Makhatini.

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Original Handwriting on the back of an old examination script.

Figure 32. *Lilith* – part of De Wet's handwritten script.

APPENDIX 11: Programme notes from the three case studies

(i)   The Passion of Judas (1996)
(ii)   Bessie's head (2000)
(iii)   Wreckage (2011)

Programme Notes: *The Passion of Judas*

Presented as part *of the* performance programme AbunDance

"The passion of Judas will always be contemporary, so too, the search for absolution and reconciliation."

Choreographed by Juanita Finestone (1996)

Performed by Gary Gordon. Craig Morris, Lanon Prigge

Designed by Lindy Roberts
Lighting by Guy Nelson
Music composed by Leonhard Praeg (original score)

Music performed by Itmar Cohen, Daire Hewitt, Carol Schutz (cellos), Gwyneth Lloyd (soprano)

Programme Notes: Bessie's Head

This work was created thanks to Rhodes University, The National Arts Council, FNB Vita Awards, Business and Arts South Africa, the Danish Center for CUlnn and Development, The Rhodes University Joint Research Committee and The Eastern Cape Department of Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture Gary Gordon was awarded 1999–2000 FNB Vita Special Award for Choreography and Dance in Cape Town for *Bessie's Head.*

"A documentary danceplay that dissects the events surrounding the birth of the writer born 1n South Africa: Bessie Head. Facts and stories – dance and drama ... words and songs music, design and imagination collude in this intenorviewing of an artist', private domain. A theatrical vision that reveals sights of passion, tenderness and power." (Gary Gordon. March 2000)

"The world has to change perhaps subtly, and the times of change are fascinating. The eyes that capture the new and unusual open many doors for others." (Bessie Head in a letter to Dottie Ewan. 30 September 1972)

Choreographed by Gary Gordon (2000)
Assistant to choreographer: Jenni-Lee Crewe
Performed by Juanita Fmestone, Martin Gylling, Zingisani Mkefa, Jane OConnell,
Daluxolo Papu, Helen Seaman, Tanya Surtees, and Acty Tang
Original text and lyics by Reza de Wet
Recorded texts performed by Andrew Buckland, Reza de Wet, Samantha Rankin,
Francoisle Roux, and Llndsay Reardon
Designed by Roux Engelbrecht
Assistant Designer: Jenni-lee Crewe
Llght1ng Design by Michael Carklin
Original Music by Leonhard Praeg
Original Music orchestrated by Leonhard Praeg and Corinne Cooper
Original Songs by Zingisani Mkefa
Additional Music by Cesaria Evora and Eric Satie

Programme Notes: *Wreckage*

Directed by: Brink Scholtz
Choreographed by: Athina Vahla

Designed by: Deon Van Niekerk and Barati Montshiwa
Lighting Design by: Guy Nelson
Text by: Brink Scholtz, Ilana Cilliers and Tshego Kutsoane
Performed by: Andrew Buckland, Ilana Cilliers, Thami Baba, Ntomoxolo Donyeli, Tshego
                             Kutsoane, Themba Mchunu, Sisonke Yafele, Thalia Laric, Ikalafeng Tigelo,
                             Siyabulela Mbambaza, Ntombizandile Nonyati, Alan Parker.

A brief narrative description of the production
The coastline of the Eastern Cape is the last resting place of many ships from Europe that brought settlers, soldiers, merchants, fortune seekers, missionaries and others to the shores of this unique corner of the African continent. The 18th and 19th Centuries saw a great number of these frail vessels shipwrecked and many of their crew and passengers cast ashore in very unfamiliar and often very hostile environments. The encounters between these castaways and the indigenous people of the Eastern Cape have spawned stories, fables, myths and 'histories' for hundreds of years and provide a rich source for theatrical adventure. Perhaps 'sauce' is better, since the stories range from the horrors of starvation and cannibalism to extraordinary feats of survival and compassion and cynical cruelty to the strangely comic and the universally human.

Figure 33. Press photograph from *Wreckage*.

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APPENDIX 12: Closing monologue of *Wreckage*

(All enter in darkness, Tshego with lighter. Ilana and Themba prepare to operate pin spots. Tshego begins monologue in very low light. When bodies start to drop, Ilana & Themba step in between them and shine pin spots on them)

Tshego: When the impact comes it is not as you expected and you think about the fact that it is not as you expected, and you ask yourself if that was it, (start music and light on Tshego's face) and you don't know yet which part of you has snapped and how it is that you are still standing or if you are standing or if you are just balanced upright for a moment before you will no longer be standing because certainly you should not be standing certainly you are on your way down or up or both and then you think that maybe that wasn't it, maybe it is still coming and you might still be bending because it certainly sounds like something is bending and you wonder how much can bend and how much can crack and how much can tear and snap and change shape, how much of his face will crack and tear and snap and change shape when the shovel hits my father's head one morning as he walks along Joza street and how long will it change shape just a few days or maybe forever because did you know or shall I tell you now that we are no longer recognisable as what we were before and so we will not have this shape we are not on this ship and he will no longer buy me presents because he lives in Algoa hospital in PE now and when he has walked a few steps he is tired and sits again and while he was thin like me before, now he is getting fat, because the shovels changed the shape of his brain. And I'd like you to tell me if that is me that is snapping and I'd like you to tell me if there will be any sign to recognise me by when this is over? Like when we thought we were on our way to King Williams Town and the venture made no attempt to stop for the stop sign at the Pedi turn off and it struck our right side. And I would like to know if after all these collisions there will be anything to recognise us by? After the first time when we met when you borrowed my fields and my cattle and I borrowed them back and neither of us had permission, and the boundary between you and me was drawn between the Fish and the Sundays, after the second time that we met and the boundary was moved west, after the third time that we met and the boundary was confirmed, after the fourth time that we met when you spilt no more blood than was necessary to impress on my savage mind a proper degree of terror and respect, after the fifth time that we met when I promised to turn bullets into water, after the sixth time that we met and you and I were both left homeless, after the seventh time that we met, and the eighth time that we met, and the time in between when I was only sixteen and I sacrificed everything to avoid another meeting, but my dead never came to kill you and my prophecy brought nothing but starvation and the beginnings of madness for both of us and the ninth time that we met that was the ninth of the Cape Frontier Xhosa kaffir collisions that had kept us far too busy for far too long and the tenth and the eleventh and 78th time that we met when I was wearing your shirt and the 123rd time that we met when you were singing my song. And the 300th time that we met and the 400th time that we met and that time that we didn't meet, but we spoke on the phone and the 600th time when we spoke on the phone and you thought that I was your sister so I looked in the mirror 103 to make sure I wasn't. And I'd like to know how many times we can meet, before there will be nothing to recognise us by. And I'd like to know how many times we'll meet, before the plates of the earth will have lifted again and shifted again, and new seas have formed, and others have retreated, and the rivers have changed their courses again and we are worn away by the impact of the water, like the plains between Grahamstown and Kenton, fissured like the cracks in a heel and we are worn away by the persistent collision that washes and brushes away over aeons so that only our hardest parts remain. And I'd like to know how much can bend and crack and tear and snap and change shape. And I'd like you to tell me if that is me in the mirror or if that is your sister. And I'd like you to tell me if after all these collisions to have lived will be enough for us and if that will be the last time that we meet.

(Ilana & Themba shine the lights on each other. Black out)
(A version of the *Wreckage* Script cited in Haxton 2014, 101 – 103).

APPENDIX 13: The Gatherings/Intlangano project 2014–2015

Drawn from the Lotteries funding September 2014 report.

Community Exchange Project: The Gatherings/Intlangano:

This project has been conceived by Nomcebisi Moyikwa in collaboration with the company and Mr Kamogelo Molobye, an Honours choreography student at Rhodes University and co-facilitator. The rationale for the exchange is expressed below by Ms Moyikwa.

The Gatherings/ Intlangano then aims to open a chain of dialogue that investigates and reinvestigates human social power and social conflicts.It is a project encompassing a group of Pantsula dancers from the townships of Grahamstown along with Rhodes drama department students – 6 panstula dancers and 5 Rhodes Drama department students. They are all male participants. The Gatherings take place every Friday from 15:00 – 17:00 and Saturday from 10:12pm. One gathering takes place in a school hall in Joza location and the other one takes place in the drama department movement room. Through the use of various methodologies, these gatherings aim for the participants to learn to think not only critically, but also creatively. No creative breakthroughs will be made in any discipline, however, without taking a leap into the unknown to actively explore a variety of solutions to any particular problem. This however is useless if done within 2 weeks. Therefore this project will be done in a period of 2 months which will include various threads of provocative events evoked by a question or discomfort that came out of the gatherings themselves. The Gatherings/Intlangano focuses on developing the second disposition of engaging and persisting, which involves committing to a project and ensuring that it is followed through to completion. It is through this process that we learn to move beyond our mistakes and envision a solution.

September Report on Gatherings
This pilot project for 3 months worked exceedingly well and we had a wonderful final showing which we pitched to the national Arts Festival Creative City project in a an attempt to get funding for 2015 to continue the project. T was well received by Ms Carolyn Steveson-Milln of the Creative City project and we have submitted a proposal for 2015 funding. We are awaiting

The Gatherings/Intlangano

"As artists, the most powerful weapon we have is our ability to play, dream and imagine. The oppressive forces fear this weapon because as long as we are able to imagine another kind of reality, we have the power to pursue it" (Moyikwa)

The Gatherings/Intlangano:

In my own journey as a theatre practitioner, teaching-artist and performer I have learned more things about myself; the society through the interactions, experiences and dialogue I have had with myself and my fellow performers in the process of making a production more than in any other social setting. The process of making is an experience that focusses on human subjectivity, experience and creativity: It starts with people living their lives, it investigates their talk, their feelings, their actions and their bodies as they move around in social world and experience the constraints of history and material world of inequalities and exclusions.

The Gatherings/ Intlangano then aims to open a chain of dialogue that investigates and reinvestigates human social power and social conflicts.

It is a project done with a group of Pantsula dancers from the townships of Grahamstown along with Rhodes drama department students – 6 panstula dancers and 5 Rhodes Drama department students. They are all male participants.
1. Mlondi Dubazane
2. Smangaliso Ngwenya
3. Rafe Green
4. Nceba Njadayi
5. Likhaya Jack
6. Damian Richard Van Selm

7. Molopo Lipali
8. Thanduxolo Kilana
9. Anethemba Bikitsha
10. Siseko Frans
11. Athenkosi Booi

The Gatherings take place every Friday from 15:00 – 17:00 and Saturday from 10:12pm. One gathering takes place in a school hall in Joza location and the other one takes place in the drama department movement room.

Through the use of various methodologies, these gatherings aim for the participants to learn to think not only critically, but also creatively. No creative breakthroughs will be made in any discipline, however, without taking a leap into the unknown to actively explore a variety of solutions to any particular problem. This however is useless if done within 2 weeks. Therefore this project will be done in a period of 2 months which will include various threads of provocative events evoked by a question or discomfort that came out of the gatherings themselves.

The Gatherings/Intlangano focuses on developing the second disposition of engaging and persisting, which involves committing to a project and ensuring that it is followed through to completion. It is through this process that we learn to move beyond our mistakes and envision a solution.

Figure 34. Rehearsal photograph. Photographer unknown.

APPENDIX 14: Press release: *Astronautus Afrikanus* **(2015)**

About the director: Mwenya Kabwe

Mwenya B. Kabwe is a Zambian theatre maker, performer, educator and mother. She has a Masters in Theatre and Performance with a focus on theatre making, from the University of Cape Town where she was a lecturer in the Drama Department for four years. She currently teaches performance studies and theatre making in the Drama Division of the Wits School of Arts.

Kabwe is a recipient of a number of awards including a Fleur du Cap, Naledi and the Handspring Award for Best Visual Theatre Production. Kabwe's original work has been showcased at the Drill Hall in Johannesburg *(Please Do Not Leave Your Baggage Unattended,* (2007), Out the Box Festival of Puppetry and Visual Performance (*for nomads who have considered settling when the travel is enuf,* (2007), *27 Windows, 4 Doors, 2 Taps,* (2010), *Migritude' Echo (*2011) and the UNESCO Chair International Festival of Theatre Schools in Barcelona Spain (*Afrocartography: traces of places and all points in between,* 2008). Kabwe is also one of the seven 2007 Spier Contemporary winners for a collaborative performance work titled *Unyawo Alunampumlo (The Foot Has No Nose)* with Chuma Sopotela and Kemang Wa Lehulere. In 2013 she directed a site-specific version of her autobiographical choreopoem, *Afrocartography: Traces of Places and all points in between,* in and around the Wits Theatre in Johannesburg. Later that year the production was reworked to feature at the Afrovibes 2013 Festival in Amsterdam. She has also been recently named one of 'Five female theatre makers in South Africa you should know', by AfriPop magazine:

http://afripopmag.com/2013/07/five-female-theatre-makers-in-south-africa-you-should-know/

Media contact | Katlego Gabashane

Through the creation of a dictionary of terms (Afroisms), and the imaginary characters (The Traveller; The Afropolitan; The Afrosettler and The Mapmaker) conceived and devised for her autobiographical choreopoem, *Afrocartography,* Kabwe invites us to share her surreal experience of the African diaspora. As a Zambian living in South Africa, Kabwe uses the personas of these Afro-travellers to embody responses to the myriad and kaleidoscopic fabrications of her memories of who she is and who she is becoming. She constructs an imaginary dream world for us to coalesce and float through with her. Writing about her work in a short peer review for an online arts journal, *ellipses,* in 2015, I compare Kabwe's work to the "liquid architecture" that digital art theorist, Steve Dixon uses to describe Merce Cunningham's use of chance and his decentralisation of stage space which, as Dixon argues, has long provided a model for the kind of "liquid architecture" one now finds in the world of hypertext (Dixon 2007, 127). This term, "liquid architecture", provides a visceral description of the fluid simultaneity of surreal logic and form where relation is preferred to causality, composition preferred to action-driven narrative that occurs in surreal performance work.

In 2015, theatre-maker, Mwenya Kabwe conceived and devised *Astronautus Afrikanus,* an immersive work which performed "in and around the Main Theatre in various rooms, corners, corridors, cupboards and nooks and crannies" of the Rhodes drama department building on 21 – 23 May. The work was conceived in collaboration with Lieketso Wa Thaluki (performance director) and Illka Louw (scenic designer), both staff at Rhodes drama and with various students from the Rhodes drama department. The work extends Kabwe's performance research into notions of Afro surrealism and the idea of thinking Africa through/in performance. Kabwe, in her director's note for the programme of *Astronautus Afrikanus,* speaks to the way in which 'now, more than ever it seems we are presented with the opportunity to remember ourselves and imagine ourselves, as Africans, differently'. She poses the following question in this programme note:

> Thinking about how we as theatre makers might do this in the face of oppressive legacies, opened up a host of questions that led us to (re)discover the Edward Mukuka Knkolso in all of us. We asked what happens if we start from the premise that we know; that we are full of knowing and our capacity for curiosity about ourselves, each other, and the world we share, is great. What happens if we consider indigenous African knowledge systems central rather than alternative; status quo rather than subversive; common practice rather than subordinate, sceptical, inferior and the domain of the 'less educated'? ...What happens if we float on the continuum between ancient African and future African worlds...

Edward Mukuka Nkoloso was the "creative and intellectual ancestor" of African aeronautics. Kabwe notes that he was an educator who was training a group of Afronauts at his Zambia National Academy of Science, Space, Research and Philosophy, to be the first Africans in space. She calls him a 'visionary who got on with the business of dreaming in to the future as one whole intellectual and creative agency did not need to be affirmed, validated or approved, and particularly not by the colonial emissaries of the day. A Griot from the future who did not need permission to dream, think, make, explore and experiment' (Programme note: May 2015).
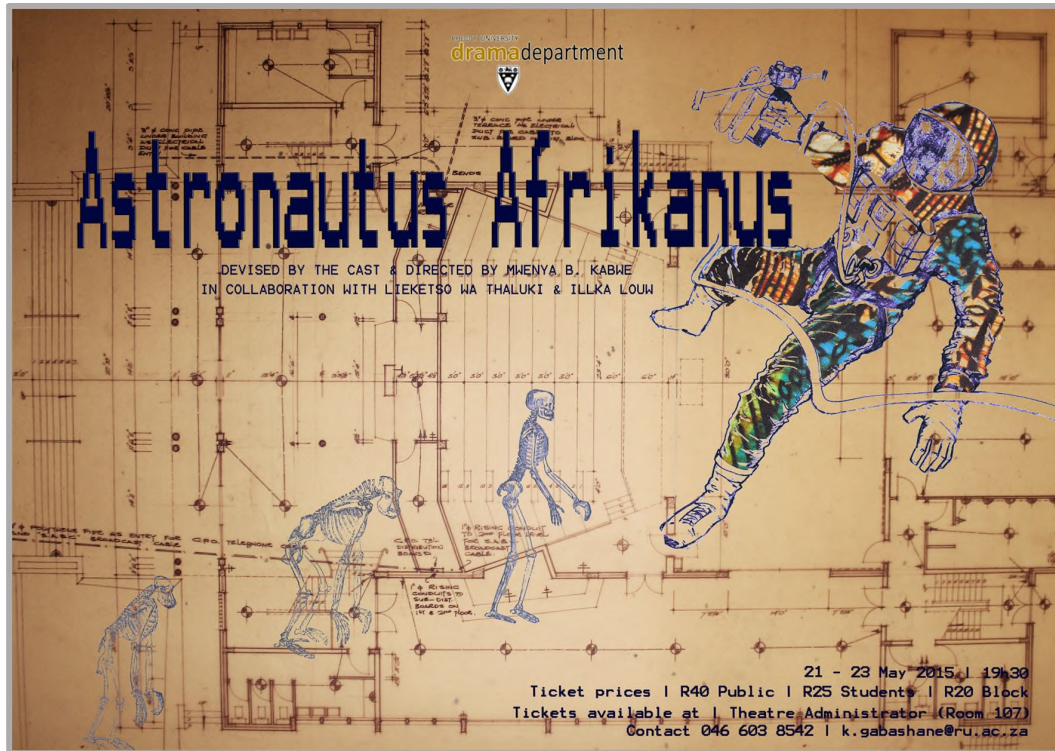

Figure 35. Poster for *Astronautus Afrikanus* (2015).

Mwenya Kabwe
Astronautus Afrikanus **(2015)**

is about a group of technicians who are building a spacecraft. They are decedents of Edward Nkoloso's first Afronauts and he is their creative and intellectual ancestor, as it were. This is an undercover operation that uses spaces like theatres when they are not in use and at night so as not to be discovered. This group of people who are constantly at work, even though us mere mortals rarely pay them attention. Their particular genius lies in the fact that they have evolved to have a deep curiosity for the hidden properties of things and they understand that there are multiple ways of knowing that draw from African knowledge systems (dreams, multiple levels of reality, worship, food, bodies, voices, sea water, the cosmos, plants, energies, symbiotic relationships, deference to nature, rituals, divinities, etc. They work to collect and preserve all that is essential and life sustaining through various collective and individual performance languages to collect, design, deposit, construct, map, transfer, and they use these discoveries to build the space craft (Director's Notes from the programme: May 2015)

APPENDIX 15: Programme note for *Inner Piece* (2009)

Choreographer Juanita Finestone-Praeg

Featuring First Physical Theatre Company with guest performers, Acty Tang, and trapeze artist, Shaun Acker.

Nine reflective (a)musings on the haiku form divided into three movements that explore (i) emptiness (ii) silence and (iii) light. The distilled economy of the haiku lends itself to an expression of silence and sound, movement and stasis, body and light. Devised as a series of stage(d) directions, the three movements use emptiness, stillness and light to weave new relationships between theatre, war, peace, torture and the body.

Venue	*Old Nun's Chapel*
Duration	*60 minutes*
Performances	*2,3,4,5,6 July and 9,10,11 July @9pm*

note from the choreographer: juanita finestone-praeg

One of the originating sources for this work was the Japanese *haiku*. The haiku is regarded as the shortest form of poetry, its 17 syllables – in a rhythm of 5, 7, 5 – being the exact length of an outgoing breath. Its brevity and reduction capture an economy of form that perfectly conveys the clarity of a distilled image and lends itself to the expression of silence and sound in movement: the stasis of body and light. Inspired by the clarity of its immediacy I have attempted to explore, in vignette form, different viewpoints on emptiness, stillness and silence. Each of these meditations engages notions of absence variously captured as loss, trauma, and more self-consciously, the idea of an absent director. The challenge in the creative process consisted in recognising that this absence could not be directly represented but possibly only revealed. In this sense the vignettes are an invitation to experience, not the unity/coherence of narrative, but the elusiveness of absence (silence emptiness darkness) in its various forms.

In addition, the "spectacle" was also of vital impulse for the work. The challenge of deconstructing the spectacle of the trapeze fascinated me artistically for it seemed to resonate incongruously with the more ethical and complicated questions generated by the visceral images of torture that came out of Abu Ghraib. Numerous critics and artists have responded to the absurdly theatrical dimension of these images. In trying to cite these images and respond with my own reflections on their meaning in a technologically matrixed global context, I found myself trapped in a curious logic that bespoke the contradictions of representation: in representing or performing to images of violence, one can so easily re-insert them into the logic of "spectacle" resulting in what McKenzie (2009) calls a "counterperformativity" that contributes to the violence it seeks to critique. McKenzie suggests that such risks are unavoidable when citing violent images or events but that while "the risks of producing them are great ... the risks of not doing so are greater still".

Devised as a series of stage(d) directions, I have attempted my own questioning or reflection on the relationships between theatre, war, peace, torture and the body.

inner piece
some sources i have drawn from:
monogram: 1. A picture drawn in lines without shading, or colour; a sketch. 2. A device composed of two or more letters (especially the initials of a person's name) interwoven together.

> knot: 1. *"there is always an air of tension around a knot"* (Camel du Plessis: workshop leader). 2.
> The unconscious can only be expressed in knots of language (Lacan).
> origami: "the Japanese art of paper folding ... 'Ori', to fold
> and 'kami', paper ... The origami crane has become a global symbol for peace".
> spectacle torture: "When I first saw the notorious photograph of a prisoner wearing a
> black hood, electric wires attached to his limbs as he stood on a box in a ridiculous
> theatrical pose, my reaction was that this must be a piece of performance art. The

positions and costumes of the prisoners suggested a theatrical staging, a tableau vivant, which cannot but call to mind the 'theatre of cruelty', Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs, scenes from David Lynch movies."
(Žižek cited by Perucci in Anderson and Menon: *Violence Performed: Local Roots and Global Routes of Conflict:* 2009)

haiku

Today, walked the dog;
Tomorrow I'll go to war.
Hope it will be different.
(by Leonhard Praeg)

collaborators

leonhard praeg lectures in the department of Political and International Studies at Rhodes University. He has composed numerous scores for many First Physical Theatre Company productions, notably *The Unspeakable Story*. He has also collaborated as dramaturge for selected works choreographed by Juanita Finestone-Praeg such as *Journey to Fez* and *16 kinds of emptiness*.

dion van niekerk is currently lecturing at Tulane University in New Orleans, where he received his MFA in Design and Theatre Production in 2006. No stranger to the Rhodes Drama Department, Dion is a Rhodes graduate and has lectured in the Drama Department for many years. He has also collaborated as dramaturg and performer with Juanita Finestone-Praeg in *Journey to Fez, Oh! The Places You'll Go* and *16 kinds of emptiness*

jenni lee crewe is currently design lecturer at the Wits School of Arts. She received her MFA in Design and Theatre Production at Tulane University in 2006. As a graduate from Rhodes University she has an intimate connection with First Physical Theatre Company and the Rhodes Drama Department where she has worked as a choreographer, designer and performer as well as Education Officer for First Physical Theatre Company. Jenni lee also has experience and interest in site specific and installation work.

guy nelson is a long time collaborator with First Physical Theatre Company and is the company's resident lighting designer and technical advisor.

inner piece
conceived and directed by: juanita finestone-praeg assistant director: dion van niekerk
choreography devised by: juanita finestone-praeg in collaboration with the
performers
performed by: first physical theatre company's richard antrobus
alan parker tshegofatso tlholoe
guest performers: shaun acker
tracy lewis
sifiso majola awelani moyo acty tang
design by: jenni lee crewe
script by: leonhard praeg dion van niekerk
lighting design: guy nelson stage
manager: jacques de kock
assistant stage manager: kutloano kunutu costumier: veronica
sham
music: arvo pärt, david darling, yoko kanno, amon tobin,
khomo, mgcina and boris kovak

Special thanks to the following for contributing to the project: gary gordon, james cairns, camel du plessis, penny haworth, rhodes drama staff, chris mann, rhodes venue organisers, vusiwe mnyobe and willie coombs.

APPENDIX 16: Brief analysis of selected images from *Home* (2016)

Nomcebisi Moyikwa

In *Home*, Moyikwa constructs a dreamscape of incongruously juxtaposed images, gestures/movements and noise to share the energy of the world of "home". Scenographically, many of the visual images play with this idea of contrast using size and proximity between incongruous objects/bodies in space to delineate, shape and question perspective. Moyikwa's own reflection on and description of the opening scene of *Home* captures the perspectival dream-like quality of an attempt to distort reality/memory through visual scaling:

> Description. Part 1: Unlimited mystery
> Home opens to a vision of a young man seated inside a house so small that it looked like it would restrict one from standing up tall...In procession, eight performers walk on stage, two of them cautiously holding a two-metre-long slingshot. What is normally a small hand-powered projectile weapon now appears larger and requires to be handled by two men, one end held by one and the other held by the other. On the projectile is a leafy green cabbage anticipating to shoot directly to the other performer handling the y-shaped frame. The two young men stretch the weapon wider to provide power for the projectile. They move away from each other while holding on to the ends of the weapon, they revolve in space while maintaining the stretch (Moyikwa 2017a, 12).

Figure 36. *Home* (2016). Photography by Stefan de Klerk: National Arts Festival 2016. Performers are, from the left, Mlondi Dubazane, Kamogelo Molobye and Nomcebisi Moyikwa.

The image above captures this child-like play with fantasy, wonder and the marvellous – an oversized catapult or slingshot, with a large, fresh cabbage as its projectile is held between three bodies, poised for some kind of take-off. The world of the child is conjured as an entire universe, evoking an image of the sun (cabbage) and planets (orbits of the slingshot) revolving around the small house. The image of the cabbage reminds me of Lewis Carroll's shape-shifting perspectives in *Alice in Wonderland*, specifically in the narrative poem, "The

Walrus and the Carpenter" in his book *Through the Looking Glass* (1871) where Tweedledum and Tweedledee are in conversation with Alice:

> "The time has come," the Walrus said,
> "To talk of many things:
> Of shoes – and ships –
> and sealing wax –
> Of cabbages and kings –
> And why the sea is boiling hot –
> And whether pigs have wings".

The image of children as "kings" in the world of play assumes importance for my reading of Moyikwa's use of "unprocessed physicality" as an improvised methodology for her movement research.

Moyikwa, performing at the end of *Home*, is left in a fading light, circling repetitively and waiting. Performing waiting. In relation to this image of circling and waiting, I asked Moyikwa two related questions: (i) what did it feel like to leave things open, unresolved and unmoored in this way?; and (ii) why did she choose to work in a theatrical space (rather than a site, for instance, which would likely problematise or deconstruct already the space of the colonial performative gaze)? She replied by articulating this link between the world conjured in *Home* and how this world brings together many of the epistemological queries her movement research is wrestling with:

> If you notice, the house never moves, it stays planted. My thing is that I am not waiting for the world to evolve...I am waiting for me to evolve and I am evolving in the staticness of this world that I am in. Even in terms of decolonising, it is not possible to bash these buildings down. It is in the newness in us and in our movement and what we do in everyday life...One of the reasons for constantly using the theatre space is not wanting to isolate – this is where you have read the black body as "the maid". The theatres are not going to move. I want to stay in that space and see what can happen...and theatre is what I love and what I want to do...it's the magic...I don't want to run away from it. I want to make it so bizarre...until we have to see something else (Interview, Moyikwa 2017).

Returning to Nguyen, at the end of his novel, *The Sympathizers*, he says that he leaves his text "unmoored" in that the closure of the novel is unresolved. Partly, he claims, this is because he doesn't have answers – that even though social revolutions have failed, the alternatives left for activists do not mean opting for a rabid individualism either (Nguyen, cited in interview with Tran 2015). So he is left circling, allowing ambiguities and unresolved tensions to remain.

CHOREOCHRONOLOGIES

This is a selection of some of the key contributors to FPTC's repertory that I have discussed within the body of the thesis. It is of its nature a cursory inventory as all of these contributors have substantial bodies of their own work, so this provides merely a brief overview of their interests, contexts and accolades, and some of their work as aligned with FPTC. They are partial and drawn from CV's and biographical information that each artist provided so there is also not an absolute consistency in their presentation. Most of these collaborators have websites which trace and track their bodies of work and which can be consulted for more detailed information. I have chosen to list their work in the order of analyses/discussions presented in the thesis.

I: THE TWO RESIDENT COMPANIES OF THE RHODES DRAMA DEPARTMENT

Based in "Africa's Festival Capital", Grahamstown, First Physical Theatre Company is one of two professional theatre companies in the Eastern Cape, the other being its sibling, The Ubom! Eastern Cape Drama Company. Both companies are associated non-profit performing arts companies of the Rhodes University drama department.

The First Physical Theatre Company (FPTC)

The First Physical Theatre Company was established in 1993. The Artistic Director and founder, Gary Gordon, is regarded as a pioneer in South African theatre, has worked internationally in the fields of performance, choreography, and education, and has received numerous prestigious accolades and awards. He has the reputation of having nurtured and trained a lineage of top theatre makers and choreographic innovators in the country. The company's legacy of producing innovative, original South African work that is experimental, cutting edge and contemporary has been well documented and acknowledged. Physical Theatre has become an important component in the performing arts industry, largely due to the influence of the FPTC.

The company, in its close liaison with The Rhodes Drama Department has become renowned for its choreographic invention. The company has produced over a hundred and fifty original theatre works including twelve major full-length danceplays. Many of these works have pushed theatrical boundaries in their unusual theatricality and performance style – these include a range of provocations from the early danceplays of Gordon like *The Unspeakable Story* (1995) and *Bessie's Head* (2000) to site specific productions like Finestone-Praeg's *16 kinds of emptiness* (2006) through to the Butoh work, *Amanogawa*, which received an Ovation Award at the 2010 National Arts Festival.

With a commitment to producing work for a South African audience, touring has included performances in Cape Town, Durban, Knysna, East London, Grahamstown, Hogsback, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, and Stellenbosch, Alice, East London, Bloemfontein, Lady Grey, Mdantsane, Pietermaritzburg, Botswana, France, Denmark, the United States of America, Hong Kong and the United Kingdom. Over the years, First Physical Theatre Company has been described in the media as:

"The masters of physical theatre in South Africa ... At the cutting edge of South African choreography" (Cathryn Pearman, *Jol Online*)

"Living South African artistic heritage in the truest sense" (Adrienne Sichel, *The Star)*

Ubom!

Trailblazing a path of inventive and effective artistic products, Ubom! Eastern Cape Drama Company is a non-profit company that aims to develop, grow, and maintain a thriving arts environment in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa – a region historically disadvantaged in this regard. Ubom! works to develop audiences, community groups and professionals in the area, creating performances that are dynamic, relevant, accessible, taboo-breaking and of the highest theatrical calibre. The Ubom! Drama Company was established under the leadership of Janet Buckland in 2003 with a full-time company of young theatre professionals. What makes this company unique is the blend of skills from local community professionals and from Rhodes University graduates. This combination places the company in a unique position to actively contribute to the development of a specific Eastern Cape cultural identity, and in its connection with Rhodes University, as an autonomous project, it maintains a high degree of professionalism.

Since 2003 Ubom! has created and toured at least fifty original theatre works.

The majority of them have a strong developmental/educational focus. Ubom! has dealt with a range of social and environmental issues, ranging from issues of racism, xenophobia, HIV/AIDS, disappearing indigenous knowledge and gender violence, to the destruction of the polar icecaps and global warming. Ubom! understands local idioms, issues, performance traditions and cultural codes.

In 2008 UBOM! was awarded a Gold Impumelelo Innovations Poverty Relief Award as well as Community Service Awards from the local Municipality and Cacadu District. Early 2010 saw UBOM! nominated for three Handspring Puppets Awards, at the Out The Box Festival in Cape Town, winning one for the production "The Adventures of a Little Nobody". Most excitingly for Ubom!, during the National Arts Festival 2010 the production "BREED" won a highly coveted Standard Bank Silver Ovation Award.

II: BIOGRAPHIES OF SELECTED ARTISTS

These are brief biographies that focus on the choreographies/collaborations of these selected artists who have contributed to FPTC's repertory and whose works I analyse in the thesis.

GARY GORDON
Gordon's reputation has assured him legendary status in South African dance, Physical Theatre and choreography. He has been called the "father of Physical Theatre" (Zingisani Mkefa. BASA Newsflash Podcast, 7 March 2010 Interview), the "guru of the innovative" (Claire Bezuidenhout, *Independent On Saturday*) and the "doyen of Physical Theatre training and stage creation in South Africa" (Guy Willoughby 17 October 2006. "Let's get physical". *Mail and Guardian Arts and Culture*). He has the reputation of having nurtured and trained a lineage of top theatre makers and choreographic innovators in the country. The country's most prominent dance critic. Ms Adrienne Sichel, has called the choreographic and theatrical work produced by Gordon's First Physical Theatre Company "living South African artistic heritage in the truest sense" (*The Star: Tonight*: 11 February 2005).

Gordon retired from the Rhodes University Drama Department in December 2017, having started his career there as a a Junior Lecturer in 1974. He is still teaching postgraduate courses at RU Drama in creative practice, choreography and physical performance and is still actively involved with the First Physical Theatre Company. Gordon studied in Natal and He received a Masters Degree in choreography from the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London. From 1989 to 1992 he was a member of the teaching faculty at Laban where he participated in a number of inspirational workshops facilitated by Lloyd Newson and this led to his commitment to Physical Theatre. During his years at Laban, he taught choreography, contemporary dance technique, classical ballet and dance history. He has extensive teaching experience including Voice and Movement at Lee Strasberg Studio in London (1991 to 1992) and Guest Artist in Residence, Department of Theatre and Dance, Tulane University, New Orleans (Spring Term 2009). From 2010-2014, he worked as the MFA Coordinator/Head of Academic Studies at the School of Dance at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. While coordinating, he worked with students from Hong Kong, Mainland China, Singapore, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Korea.

In 1993, he founded the First Physical Theatre Company in South Africa. Some of these first theatre collaborations were with playwrights, actors, designers and composers and lead to the award-winning danceplays: *The Unspeakable Story* (1995), *Bessie's Head* (2000) and *Ozymandias* (2008) which was a collaborative partnership with artists from Tulane University in New Orleans. Gorodn has enjoyed a long performance career, also delving into Ballet, Butoh and digital installations. He was also performer in one of South Africa's first contemporary dance companies, JazzArt Dance Theatre in 1982.

Gordon has received a number of national awards including 1989 Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Choreography; FNB Choreographer of the Year for *Shattered Windows* (1994) and FNB Most Outstanding Presentation of an Original Contemporary Dance Work for *The Unspeakable Story* (1996). In 2000 he received Rhodes University Vice Chancellor's Award for Distinguished Teaching. Other accolades include: a Standard Bank Standing Ovation Award for long-term significant contribution to the vitality and creativity of the National Arts Festival (2016); Rhodes University Vice-Chancellor's Award for Distinguished Teaching (2000); Eastern Cape Premier's Award for Choreographic Excellence (2000);FNB Vita Award: Special award for choreography – *Bessie's Head* (2000); FNB Vita Award: Most Outstanding Presentation of an Original Contemporary Dancework for *The Unspeakable Story* (1996); FNB Vita Award: Choreographer of the Year for *Shattered Windows* (1994); Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Choreography and outstanding contribution to Dance

in South Africa, National festival of the Arts (1989).

Selected works include: Choreography (since 1992) includes 36 original works as Artistic Direcor and resident choreographer for FPTC: 8 full-length major works; 8 FNB Vita nominations; 3 FNB Vita awards and 8 reconstructions.

Choreographies
Ozymandias (2008), *Standing, sitting, lying down* (2008), *Go* (2007), *Tread* (2005), *One long breath* (2004), *Travellers* (2003), *This beautiful house in un-made* (2003), *Ozymandias* (2002), *Lake... beneath the surface* (2001), *Rockabye for a Sleeping Man and a Barking Dog* (2001), *Bessie's Head* (2000), *Open Window* (1999), *membrane* (1999), *eye of the shadow* (1999), *dunes* (1999), *Lilith* (1998), *Change* (1998) *towards Golgotha* (1998), *woman gazing at old moon* (1997), *writing the body* (1997), *Resting in the Trees* (1996), *Dead-a slight history of one called Ivan* (1996), *The Unspeakable Story* (1995), *they dreamt of diving where the fishes fly* (1995), *... simmer and add a little orange...* (1995), *Travellers II* (1994), *Can Baby John Fit into Big Daddy's Shoes?* (1994),*River* (1994), *Dialogue* (1994), *Shattered Windows* (1993), *...an infinite number of bounces...* (1993), *... toiling to the dance of the sun* (1993), *...they were caught waiting...* (1993), *Surround her with Water* (1992) and *On the Light Side of the Moon* (1992), *Manifesto* (1992).
Reconstructions include *Bessie's Head* (2006), *The Unspeakable Story* (2004), *... toiling to the dance of the sun* (2003), *Resting in the Trees* (2003), *Money* (2003*), Surround her with Water* (2003), *On the Light Side of the Moon* (2003), *Shattered Windows* (2003).
Collaborations (with others and not conceived by Gordon) include *Player1.1* (2008, film performer); Film installation at Spier Contemporary (2007, performer); *Lady Anne* (2007, choreographer); *Vrypas* (2006, choreographer);*16 Kinds of Emptiness* (2006, performed).

ANDREW BUCKLAND
Andrew Buckland is an award winning South African playwright, performer, mime, arts activist and academic who studied and trained at Rhodes University, graduating in 1979. Working as a freelance actor between 1982 and 1992, his career included playing *Hamlet* for SABC, several feature film appearances and television roles as well as many leading roles in classical and contemporary theatre works. The privilege of training in movement and mime as a student provided the creative framework within which he attempted to engage in a theatre which drew sharp focus on the role of the body and of the physical presence of the actor. Andrew Buckland has worked with extraordinary teachers at the Rhodes Drama Department, genius collaborators including Soli Philander, Maciek Schejbal, Janice Honeyman, Jenni Reznek, Ilse van Hemert, Claire Stopford, Marthinus Basson, Barney Simon, Lionel Newton, Lara Foot, Sylvaine Strike and many others but principally his co-conspirator and life partner Janet Buckland.

Andrew and Janet Buckland, his partner, started their work in the Eastern Cape with their company, Mouthpeace Theatre in 1992. Some of their **collaborative successes** include *The Ugly NooNoo* (1988/1999), *Between The Teeth* (1991), *Bloodstream* (1992), *Feedback* (1994), *The Water Juggler* (1998), *The Well-being* (1999/2000). Later, their cycle of historical plays, located in local, Eastern Cape histories, include *Makana* (2001), which revisited the battle of Grahamstown/Makana in 1819 and works like *Phalo, Sandile* and *Maqoma*, were devised and performed between 2005 and 2006 and all referred to Xhosa leaders during the Frontier wars of the 1800's. *Kiss My Boot* (2006), a reworking of Maqoma, and was performed by the UBOM! Obutsha company. Other notable works are *Breed* (2010); *Wreckage* (2011); *Laugh the Buffalo* (2013); *Crazy in Love* (2014). As Veronica Baxter notes that most of these works involved Andrew as performer-creator and Janet as director. Works like the *Ugly Noo Noo* "became iconic of early physical theatre work in South Africa, and of the socio-political critique infused with comedy that is now typical of their collaboration...What distinguishes the Bucklands' work is a stylistic grounding in physical theatre, dance and mime-based movement, their sense of humour (sometimes scatological), their passion for telling stories about South Africa and Eastern Cape history, and their commitment to collaborative devising processes" (2015, 60). He has also performed with the Cirque du Soleil in their production of *Love* (2009).

In its first year of FPTC's repertory (1993), Andrew Buckland wrote the following texts for FPTC. *an infinite number of bounces...*; *Morgan and Ciao* and *Toiling to the dance of the sun* and *Dunes* (1999). Andrew performed with FPTC in works like *Dialogue* (1994) and later using this as original work as a source in *Drifting* (2013), a performed eulogy to the late Reza de Wet. He performed in *The Unspeakable Story* (1995 and in in touring life – including the tour to Nantes in 1998). He also performed in works like *Woman gazing at old moon* (1997), the South African Virgin airline launch (industrial theatre event) with FPTC . Janet and Andrew Buckland have concurrently been teaching at the Rhodes Drama department while continuing to develop their own work parallel to and integrated with the Drama department's pedagogical ethos. Janet established and grew the AmaPhiko Township Dancers project in 1993 and formed UBOM!, a resident theatre based company located in the Rhodes drama department, in 2003. UBOM was created with the intention of providing a platform and space for local community practitioners from the Grahamstown/Eastern Cape area and also draws strongly on graduates from the Rhodes Drama department. Andrew studied at Rhodes and though many people may not know this, Gary Gordon was his first mime teacher. Andrew has performed and co-created works with FPTC for over 20 years. He retired from Rhodes University in 2017 and continues to play a profound role in nurturing aspirant performers and working in the field himself.

JUANITA FINESTONE-PRAEG

Juanita Finestone-Praeg is an Associate Professor in Performance Studies and Choreography at Rhodes University. She has worked within the academy, professional theatre and community contexts for over 30 years. As the longest standing member of First Physical Theatre Company, Juanita has contributed to the company's vision and been actively involved in all its research, educational, community, performance and choreographic programmes. Her professional performance profile extends from the early 1990's where she performed with the all-female Vita award winning dance company, *Southern Women*, after which her performance work has primarily been with First Physical Theatre Company exploring corporeal imagination in many forms from Physical Theatre to Choreography-for-Camera and Butoh. Her choreographic signature has pursued collaborative exchange with a range of South African and international practitioners and artists in the making of original performance works. She has been Artistic Director for the First Physical Theatre Company from 2010–2019 and has an active practice-as-research profile. In 2011, she was recipient of the Vice Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award at Rhodes University and was appointed Head of the Drama Department at Rhodes University from 2013–2015.

Performance and Choreographic Profile

"Juanita Finestone-Praeg...has a track record as a charismatic performer, gutsy choreographer, sterling educationist and researcher in dance and theatre performance...mesmerizing audiences with (her) matured virtuosity" (A. Sichel. *Tonight*: 3 August 2004).

Selected works include: *The Journey to Fez* (choreographed in 2002 and re-constructed forFPTC: 2004 Dance Umbrella and National Arts Festival), *I have danced with the spider* (2003), *Slow Island* (2004), *Stage(ed) Directions* (2006) and *Oh! The Places You'll Go!* (2007), *Study For Crying Girl* (2009) and *Moment(um)* (2010), *shift* (2014). Her work commissioned for the Women's Arts Festival in Durban in 1999 was recognised with an FNB Vita Nomination for Most Outstanding Female Dancer. She was commissioned independently by the Dance Factory to create *37 degrees of fear ...* (2004) for the Women in Arts Festival. The work was reconstructed for 2005 National Festival of the Arts and played to acclaim and full houses on the Main programme of the National Arts Festival. As part of First Physical Theatre Company's Choreography-in-Camera series (Volume 1), *Breath* (2009) was choreographed by Finestone-Praeg and reworked for the film by Acty Tang. Other notable works include *Inner Piece* (2009) and *Monogram* (2008). Her collaboration and site specific work, *16 kinds of emptiness* (2006), was cited as one of the "most popular shows" (*The Herald*: Festival spokesperson, Gilly Hemphill) at the 2006 National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. *The Herald*, by Alison Canter, described the work as "challenging, sublime and exquisite...Finestone-Praeg excelled in her vision of exploring varieties of emptiness through various forms of intense physical expression, including original movement and inspirational texts ...all 16 vignettes are gloriously breath-taking", while a *Cue Short Cuts* reviewer called the work "a brilliant, ingenious collaboration. Innovative and remarkably moving".

Finestone-Praeg's professional performance profile extends from the late 1980's. Most of her performance work has been with FPTC and corresponds with the Festivals and tours cited under the company's extraordinary repertory of original choreographies. In performances of *The Unspeakable Story* in 2004 and 2005, reviewers have noted her performance in some of the following ways:

"Juanita Finestone-Praeg is magnificent as the brooding mother, with occasional flashes of manic energy ... her final fall, backwards from the height of her son's shoulders, into the outstretched arms of waiting dancers, is one of those defining moments in dance, and it's worth going to see this production just for that". (Heather Mackie: *Business Day: 11 February: 2005)*

"It must be mentioned that this production would not be as impressive if it weren't for the powerful presence and potent physical expressiveness of Juanita Finestone-Praeg". (Zingi Mkefa: Cue: 5 July 2004)

In 2010 her performance in the Butoh work, *amanogawa(2010)*, a collaboration with Swedish choreographer, Frauke, was called "a complete revelation" by dance critic and specialist writer, Adrienne Sichel.

> *Juanita Finestone-Praeg's performance was a complete revelation. I thought I knew what the capabilities of this consistently excellent artist as a performer, researcher and choreographer are but it took me a few a minutes to realise that the human figure whose flesh and bones dissolved before my eyes, transforming into an epic tragic scream, was Juanita* (personal correspondence).

Other performance projects include: Choreographic and performance collaborations with Southern Women (1990-1992). This Cape Town based, all-female company won the A.A. Vita Award for Contemporary Choreography at the 1991 FNB Vita Dance Umbrella for the work, Wild Honey. This work was toured extensively in major centres in South Africa; Bear

Facts: Conception by Lingenfelder and directed by Mark Graham: Standard Bank National Arts Festival (1993): collaboratively choreographed and performed by Charl Johan Lingenfelder, Illona Frege and Juanita Finestone; International Tour of The Unspeakable Story: Fin de siècle Festival: Nantes: France; songs that seep into forgetfulness…; choreography by Acty Tang for Daimler Chrysler Choreography Award; Dance Factory; Johannesburg; November 2002

Collaborations: In the long history of working with FPTC, she has explored many collaborative exchanges with designers, musicians, choreographers and performers: Clare Baker (London); Jeanette Ginslov (Scotland and South Africa); Portia Mashigo (South Africa); Guy Nelson; Acty Tang, to name a few. She has worked closely within the context of collaborative projects with Ms Tanya Poole (joint winner of the Brett Kebble Award 2004). Some of these include: Performances for video installations: Matrix; Anenome; Chrysallis and Ghost; Console Exhibition: 27/06 03 – 5/07/03: Performance of video installation for Consolation: Just think how lucky you are and Ms Poole has also designed sets/installations for four of her own works: Diary of a Burning tree; Slow Island; 37 Degrees Of Fear and 16 kinds of emptiness

Her work *16 kinds of emptiness* was accepted for the Practice-as-Research National Initiative and received excellent peer review.

PJ SABBAGHA

PJ Sabbagha received his Honours degree from Rhodes University, and was a founding member
of FPTC. His *Catacoomb* triptych with FPTC championed the start of his choreographic career.
He took a lecturing post at WITS University from 1995 – 2003 where he co-founded The
Forgotten Angle Theatre Collaborative (FATC) in 1995. FATC has worked to acclaim in South Africa as one of its leading dance organisations and has produced a profound body of work dedicated to questioning critical personal and social issues in South Africa. Sababaga has a long history of working collaborations with a host of choreographers and institutions, some of which include international commissions to present residencies and works in Mexico, Tanzania, Amsterdam, France, Russia, Europe, Mali, Mozambique, Maputo and the US.

His work with a variety of HIV AIDS projects has been wide ranging from Artistic Director of and Manager for the 1st Annual HIV and AIDS arts, film and media festival (2003) and subsequent renditions of this Festival to creating works like *Deep Night* which premiered in JHB in commemoration of World Aids Day (and was nominated by critics as best Dance work for 2009). He was Artistic Director of the 2008 *When Life Happens*: HIV and AIDS arts and culture Festival and invited to and attended the 2007 International Visitors Leadership program on HIV and AIDS and other infectious Diseases by the United States of America Department of State for 5 weeks through out the US. In 2017, he was Guest of the French Ministry of Culture and Communications on 10 day seminar focused on Arts and Culture in Service of Communities. FATC is regarded as South Afica's leading contemporary dance company in engaging the HIC AIDS pandemic. FATC's commissions from key dance platforms like The Dance Factory and The Dance Umbrella have extended over many years.

Sabbaga's *accolades* are extensive and some include: 2008 MEC Award for Most Outstanding
Presentation of a New Work for *Macbeth;* Nominated for the 2008 Gauteng MEC Awards for Best Choreography and Most Outstanding Presentation of a new work for *Macbeth* and *Back*; awarded the 2006 Arts and Culture Gauteng MEC's Award for Choreographer of the Year and Best Choreographer for *Still here*; 2005 Standard Bank Young Artists Award for Dance Recipient of the FNB Vita Award for most Outstanding Presentation of an Original South African Contemporary Dance work for *The Double Room*; finalist for the Daimler Chrysler Award for Choreography; nominated for F.N.B. Vita Award for Choreographer of the year and most Outstanding Presentation of an Original South African Contemporary Dance work for *Canto Hondo, Just You Just Me, and Noah's Phobia.*
FATC relocated to Mpumalanga in 2015 and established the Ebhudlweni Arts centre, with an articulated focus to address issues of public art in rural communities. Sabbaga has been Artistic Director for the "My Body My Space: Public Arts Festival" (2105 – 2019) in Emakhazeni Mpumalanga, a project which is ongoing.

See the forgottenangle.co.za website for detailed information

JEANNETTE GINSLOV

Jeannette Ginslov's work in the field of dance, choreography and somatics has been prolific and extensive. Her current interest is in Dance on Film for AR, Installation and Screen and creating performances with Interactive Biosensor Technologies. She has curated Screendance Africa (Pty) Ltd and been a workshop facilitator of Screendance, Augmented Reality, Interaction Design, and Alba Emoting. She has also been a lecturer and researcher for many years at various institutions, including Rhodes University as Artist in Residence and Temporary Senior Lecturer, (2013 – 2014).

Ginslov originally studied at University of Natal, Durban, South Africa prior to receiving her MA Drama/Choreography by Coursework in 1999 from Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. "The Dance Factory

-Newtown Johannesburg 'a site of resistance'". In 2009 she received an MSc Screendance – School of Media Arts and Imaging Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee, Scotland – "the concrete and the digital – emotional and kinaesthetic amplification of the authentic and digitalized body in screendance". She is currently completing her PhD in Creative Technologies Candidate London South Bank University entitled "Re-visualising embodied, lived and situated human movement with biosensor technologies".

Jeannette has a long list of accolades including FNB Vita Award (Durban region) Best Choreography 1998/9 *Walking Against The Wind;* Winner of the The Second National Choreographic Competition or *written in blood;* FNB Vita Award Nominated for the Most Outstanding Female Dancer Contemporary Style for *sandstone II (1995);* Foundation for the Creative Arts Award Commissioned by composer Phillip Miller *Women with Big Feet Take Big Steps;* Foundation for the Creative Arts – Senior Bursary for Artist in Residence at Rhodes University, First Physical Theatre Company 1994); and A.A.LIFE VITA AWARD Nomination for Best Performance by Female Dancer *Darkroom Clichés (1989)* to name just a few.

Ginslov's early successes include her *Sandstone I* (1998) and *sandstone II* (1994) series for which she received a FNB Vita Award Nominated for the Most Outstanding Female Dancer Contemporary Style for *sandstone II (1995).* Ginslov's liasons with FPTC have been many and traverse different time periods. Some of these collaborations include: *Transluscence* (2015), a screendance by Jeannette Ginslov and Acty Tang screened at the Philadelphia Museum of Dance at the Barnes Foundation http://www.philadanceprojects.org/; a commission to co-direct, shoot and edit *Night Flower* (2014) for Juanita Finestone, FPTC *Exploding Room* (2103) a techno-visceral Contemporary Performance work for Rhodes University Honors Students; P(AR)take (2014) Director, Curator and Interaction Designer of an Augmented Reality Virtual Dance Archive highlighting South African Contemporary Dance on the Main Programme National Arts Festival Grahamstown. Highlighting 10 SA Choreographer's works. SA Screendance Africa & National Arts Festival July 2014 Co-Production http://jeannetteginslov.weebly.com/partake.html
Early works commissioned with FPTC include: *Part One: Fear and Laughter* (2005). FPTC
Commission for *Red Crushed Velvet* NAF & tour SA; *Women With Big Feet Take Big Steps*
(1996); *Hinterland* (1998).

Selected dance videos and films made in South Africa include: *freedom* (2008); *Karohano* (2008); *Anatomy of loss* (2007*); Mountain Waters & Screwed* (2007); *Breaking the surface* (2005 – for which Leonhard Praeg created a score).

For further exploration, see her details below.

Email jeannette.ginslov@gmail.com
Website http://www.jginslov.com/
YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/WalkingGusto
Vimeo: http://vimeo.com/jeannetteginslov

ACTY TANG

Acty Tang studied and trained in drama and dance at the FPTC and Rhodes University, South Africa. He completed his Master of Arts degree in 2006 with distinction. He describes his teaching as based on crossing the disciplines of theatre and dance, with emphases on postdramatic and experimental aesthetics. He maintains his eclectic practice draws from contemporary dance, Laban/Choreology, improvisation, contact improv, Michael Chekhov, butoh, voice and text work, visual theatre and site-specificity; and that his current teaching practice is centred around the training of the performer-creator using Choreology as creative framework and tools, and also poststructuralist epistemology for interrogating meaning-making in theatre directing. Tang has a prolific practice that spans the creation of original choreographies, dramaturgy, his own solo performance and ensemble performance works, direction, video dance and student production. He has made over 20 solo, duet and ensemble works since 1999. These include Physical Theatre works on stage and site-specific interdisciplinary works, shown at major arts festivals in South Africa and in regional / university settings. He has also performed in a number of dance theatre works, and have served as director / dramaturge for dance theatre productions. In recent years in Hong Kong, he has have performed for Y-Space (dance theatre), On and On (drama), Katsura Kan (butoh), several collaborative projects at various South-east Asian locations, a physical theatre production for the Hong Kong Repertory Theatre, and he has presented a solo in Beijing. He has taught variously at Rhodes University (2012 – 2014); Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (2012 – 2019); at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (2012 – 2019); and Po Leung Kuk (Charity Organization: 2012 2014).

Accolades include: Winner of Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Dance (2007) and nominations for Handspring Award for Best Visual Theatre Production (2010); Gauteng MEC Award for Dance and Choreography, Best Male Performer (2008) and the DaimlerChrysler Award for South African Choreography (2003).

Solo performances include: *Unforgettable She* (2014); *Hong Kong Piece #2* (2012); *Inscrutable* (2010); *Male Variations: Let Me Entertain You 400 Times Over* (2007); Protect (2007); *The Silent Wail of Melisande* (2006; 2008). Ensemble performances include: *Disappearing: butoh-inspired trio at Spier (2008); Chaste* (2007; 2008) – ensemble physical theatre work, inspired by Oscar Wilde's *Salome*. Rhodes drama department: *Hunger: ensemble physical theatre* (2014); *Listening to the Rain: programme of Anthony Minghella plays* (2009); *Bessie's Head* (2000; 2006) danceplay by Gary Gordon.

Dramaturgy and direction include: *White Blaze of the Morning (2015)* for the Hong Kong Repertory Theatre Company; *Ozymandias* (2008): ensemble multimedia dance work. Co-choreographed by John Allen (USA) and Gary Gordon (SA); *Bessie's Head (2006)*: danceplay by Gary Gordon. Video dance includes: *Translucence* (2014) – co-created with Jeannette Ginslov (Denmark) and selected for 9th São Carlos Videodance Festival, Brazil; *A light heart* (2009) – as director and editor, supervised by David Hinton (UK), at Cinedans workshop, Cape Town; *Breath*(2009)- as director and editor, based on Juanita Finestone-Praeg's choreography and *Textures (2008)* – as director, editor and co-choreographer. Montage Video Dance Festival, Johannesburg and Grahamstown, National Arts Festival

Tang has a long and vital collaborative relationship with FPTC which is ongoing.

ATHENA MAZARAKIS

Athena Fatseas-Mazarakis graduated from Rhodes University with an Honours degree (1995), specialising in mime, choreography and Physical Theatre. She stayed in Grahamstown performing with the first FPTC repertory and touring from 1993 – 1997 before relocating to Johannesburg. She graduated with a Master in Dramatic Arts degree from the University of the Witwatersrand (2010). She has been a Lecturer at 2004-2007, Dramatic Arts Division, Wits School of Arts and has taught at WITS and Rhodes University(as leave replacement in 2010) throughout her teaching career. She has continued to collaborate worked closely with two ex -FPTC members – PJ Sabbaga and Craig Morris, creating innovative and unusual dance and Physical theatre production. She also worked with Eric Bouvron (ex Rhodes student) at Les Odes Bleues, Paris, France in 1998. Her work with PJ Sabbagha as Development Manager at The Forgotten Angle Theatre Collaborative & The Ebhudlweni Arts Centre (2016 – 2019) has been extensive. She has a keen interest in the interfaces between live and digital performance. She has also worked in television and film.

Accolades include: Silver Standard Bank Ovation Award for *elev(i)ate 2* (2010*); Kanna award (2007) for the most prestigious achievement in Dance Theatre for *Attachments nos 1 – 7;* Gauteng MEC Award (2006) for Most Outstanding Female dancer in a contemporary style for performance in the works *Petra* and *Attachments nos 1 – 6;* Naledi Theatre awards Nomination (2007) for Best Original Choreography in a Musical or Review for the Market Theatre Production of *Ain't Misbehavin (*2006); Naledi Theatre awards Nomination (2004) for Best Original Choreography of *Beyond Words and the Big Red Lollipop*; Kyknet Fiesta award Nomination (2012) for prestigious achievement in Dance for *Flicker* (2011).

Selected own choreographies *include, Forel Paradys* (2017); *Portal* (2016); *Portal: a Prequel* (2015*); Human Remains* (2014); *Inter.Fear* (2012); *Standing By* (2012); *Beside Myself* (2012*); Urban Fragments* (2011); *Smoke and Mirrors*(2011*); Flicker* (2011); *elev(i)ate* and *elev(i)ate2* (2010*); Everyday Falling* (2010*); Blow* (2010); *Animal farm* (2010*); Breaking news* (2003); *My back to the bells* (2000). Fatseas-Mazarakis is a prolific performer and her work can be followed on the links below. She performed in Juanita Finestone-Praeg's *37 Degrees of Fear* (2004) as well as numerous works choreographed by PJ Sabbaga like *The Double Room*(2002); *Seroconversions* (2002); *Dislocation*(2001) and collaborations with Gerard Bester and Craig Morris.

ATHINA VAHLA

Athina Vahla graduated from the State School of Dance in Greece. After winning the national Greek choreographic competition, she furthered her studies at Laban Centre for Movement and Dance where she first met Gary Gordon. She worked in London for twenty years as a choreographer and teacher and used her practice as a vehicle to discover the world. Athina holds an honorary research post at Rhodes University in Grahamstown as Associate Lecturer for the Rhodes Drama department (2012 – 2019). She has an MA in Arts from Middlesex University and has lectured extensively in London and in Europe.

She has produced a steady stream of critically *acclaimed work* in collaboration with a range of artists. Her large scale promenade events include: *House of Kurtz*, the Master Shipwright's House in Deptford, *Wrestling An Angel* for two sites – an Old Operating Theatre and an abattoir, *Spaces Between* for the re-opening of the Royal Festival Hall, *Windows were walled,* for the Royal Greenwich Hall and a movement response to the exhibits of the London Science Museum. She was commissioned work for the 2012 Olympics in London and created *Arenas,* eighteen experimental projects based

on risk. Since 2001, Athina has concentrated on large scale, site-specific work that creates evocative environments for performers and audiences to inhabit and explore. She is particularly interested in the historical elements of site and how traces of the past inform the making of new work. Underpinning her process is a concern with humanism and contemporary society.

Athina was invited by the *Infecting the City Festival* in Cape Town to create public performances for two years. For the Rhodes Drama Department Athina conceived and curated a series of monthly events, *Interdisciplinary Encounters,* investigating the performativity of knowledge. She has had three commissions from First Physical Theatre Company. She was awarded a *SAHUDA* fund to create *Agon-Conflict in Boxing and Performance,* a hybrid performance form of sport theatre. *Deadringer* was one part of the original boxing project and then reworked as a solo for FPTC commissions.

Her working career has been prolific and she continues to freelance internationally. Other notable works include, *By Your Leave* (2005); *In Praise of Folly* (2006); *Objects of Friction and Fact* (2008); *Fight Club* (2009); *Meet Market (2010) – Infecting the City, Church Square; Topos* (2011) – curated by Athina for the Arts Lounge: Drama and Fine Arts. 10 vignettes, one for each day of the NAF; *Wreckage* (2011) – FPTC and UBOM! Collaboration; *Polis* (2012) – a series of interdisciplinary collaborations between Rhodes departments questioning the 'performativity of knowledge'; *Alchemy – he falls a third time* (2012); *Interdisciplinary Encounters* (2011 – 2013) – Athina conceived and curated 11 interdisciplinary events – lecture demonstrations, displays, discussions: disciplinary encounters: 2011: Playing Dirty (Suspension lecture); 2012: Beyond Fighting; Man At Play; Synesthesia; Objects of Desire; Know Your Place; Retellings; Write the Moment; 2013: Materials Matter, Boxing Is; *Agon: In The Ring* (2014) – Athina's research on sport and performance. 4 parts – the boxing training session; A series of works with FPTC occurred between 2012 – 2019 including *Taller than Liberty* (2014); *Deadringer* (2014) *Myths, then and now* (2014). *I-Archive (2014); O00!* (2014); *dna (2018).*

Website: Athinavahla.com

ALAN PARKER

Alan Parker studied at Rhodes University for both his undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, receiving distinctions for all his courses, including his Masters dissertation in Choreography(2008). He is currently completing his PhD in Live Art, Interdisciplinary and Public Arts, University of Cape Town, which will completed by the end of 2019. His interest in contemporary choreography and performance as spaces for disruption, rethinking and critical revolt of established knowledge systems is embedded in his own practice and fascination with an archival creative research strategies, embodied knowledges and strategies for performing the archive of live performance.

After his studies, Alan worked as an associate lecturer at Rhodes University (2008 – 2012) while simultaneously managing FPTC (2009 – 2012). From 2011 – 2012, he held the position of In Assistant Artistic Director/Company Manager, of FPTC. He was a part time performer, choreographer, teacher and researcher for FPTC (2005 – 2007) and full time performer, choreographer, teacher and researcher for FPTC (2008 – 2012). From 2013 – 2107, he lectured part time at the University of Cape Town School of Dance, the University of Cape Town College of Music and at AFDA, The South African School of Motion Picture Medium and Live Performance, Cape Town. He has currently taken up a permanent lectureship at Rhodes University/UCKAR (2018 – 2019) and is part of the FPTC collective.

Parker's *accolades* include: Institute for Creative Arts (ICA) Writing Fellowship (2107); Silver Standard Bank Ovation award for *Sacre for one* (2016); Silver Fringe Fresh Creative award for *Sacre for one* (2016); Standard Bank Ovation award for *Detritus for One* (2105); Theatre Arts Admin Collective Emerging Theatre Directors Bursary (2103) and MEC Gauteng nomination for "Most Promising Male Performer in a Contemporary Style" (2007).

Selected choreographies works include:
Arcade (2019: Dramaturg and co-curator); *Sometimes I have to lean in... (2018: Collaboration with Gerard Bester); Ghostdance for* one (2017); *Sacre for One* (2016); *Detritus for One* (2015); *On Seeing Red and Other Fantasies* (2015 collaboration with Gavin Krastin); *The Leftover Sacre* (2014 collaboration with Gavin Krastin); *Epoxy* (2014 collaboration with Gavin Krastin). His works with FPTC include the earlier, *Cellardoor* (2012 and 2013); *Detritus* (2013); *Discharge* 2012); *Retrospective – Altered Daily* (2011); *Problems of the Inner Ear* (2011); *Ekspedisies II* (2011); *Liefdesverhaal vir Drie Volstruise* (2010) and *Moment(um* (2010 – co-choreographed with Juanita Finestone-Praeg); *Major/Minor* (2009); *The Brightness of Beige* (2008); *Between* (2008); *Ekspedisies* (2008); *Play! Don't Stop* (2008); *Details of an Unfinished Journey* (2007).

GAVIN KRASTIN

Gavin Krastin completed his Masters degree at Rhodes University with distinction (2012) whereafter he pursued work as a freelance artist in Cape Town. Krastin is an award-winning multidisciplinary artist and curator working predominantly in live art performance. He lectured at the University of Cape Town's Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies, and is currently lecturing at Rhodes University Department of Drama/UCKAR while also fulfilling the role of Project Manager and Artist in Residence for FPTC. Krastin has a long history of collaboration with FPTC as researcher, administrator, teacher, archivist and artist.

He describes his performance interest as inhabiting "time-based art to occupy and subvert notions of presentation and representation, often resulting in artworks that are full of beauty, but not always easy to stomach" www.gavinkrastin.com). His multifaceted practice aims to nurture and inspire an inventive and imaginative ethos in the realisation of artistic production, education and curation that feeds the performance industry and our communities. He has showcased his work across South Africa and in countries such as USA, Canada, England, Wales, Scotland, Czech Republic, Germany, Netherlands, Brazil and Switzerland. In 2017/2018 Gavin founded *Arcade*, a nomadic platform and "invisible curriculum" for young multidisciplinary artists with interests in experimental durational and site-based performance.

Selected Works include: *Yet to be determined* (2018); *Nil* (2017); *collapsing into representation* (2107); *Pig headed* (2016); *Trophy* (2015); *On seeing red and other fantasies* (2015); *Epoxy* 2014); *#omnomnom* (2104); *I live here* (2014); *Rough Musick* (2103); *Discharge* (2012); *The Misses/Missus* (2012); *Sub* (2011)

See www.gavinkrastin.com for more detailed information

NOMCEBISI MOYIKWA

Nomcebisi Moyikwa formally joined FPTC as a performer–facilitator in 2013–2017 and completed her Masters degree (with Distinction) at Rhodes University/UCKAR in 2018, specialising in Choreography. Her first performances with FPTC were in Gary Gordon's *Go* (2007) when she was still at school and dancing with the Amaphiko project in Grahamstown. From 2005 she has performed annually at the National Arts Festival in works by various FPTC. In 2013, Nomcebisi joined The Forgotten Angle Theatre Collaborative as an intern. It was in 2013 that she started choreographing in a professional setting. She choreographed a solo work titled *A letter to* which was her response on her aunt's death and the theatricalisation of sexual violence and rape cases in South Africa. She is currently lecturer at the University of Natal, Howard campus and doing freelance performance/choreography projects with the artistic hub/collective called Unknown Assets which she founded and is Director of. They explore the fields of dance, theatre, visual art, photography and videography.

Accolades include: Ovation Awards for both *Inqindi* and *Waltz* at the National Arts festival in Grahamstwon in 2015. In 2019, she was nominated for the ZKB acknowledgement prize and the ZKB audience prize. She has received commissions to perform her work nationally at the ICA Live Art Festival in Cape Town and the FATC My Body My Space annual festival. Her work *Caught* has been performed at the Bayimba festival in Uganda (2015). She is receiving a host of invitations to perform her work internationally.

Selected works include: *N.H.I* (No. Humans. Involved)(2019); *Imilingo* (2019; Moyikwa and Qhawe Vumase at the My Body My Space Festival); *One Big Blink* (2017); *Qash Qash* (2017); *Inqindi* (2015); *Waltz* (2015) *Caught* (2014); *A letter to* (2013).

III. SELECTED INVENTORY OF FIRST PHYSICAL REPERTORY

A full repertory of all FPTC's productions and community engagement projects is available at NELM/Amazwi under the annual "Achievments to date" for the years, 1993 – 2018. Each entry provides detailed information on productions, co-productions, touring programmes, residencies, workshops, training programmes, posters, programme notes, reviews and photographs. Below I have selected works from these "achievements to date" production entries, including titles of works, date of creation and the choreographer/s who authored the work/s.

1993

Africance	Lulu Khumalo
… an infinite number of bounces …	Andrew Buckland & Gary Gordon
As one incapable of her own distress	Sarah Tudge
Catacomb I	PJ Sabbagha
Catacomb II	PJ Sabbagha
Manifesto	Gary Gordon
Morgan and Ciao	Andrew Buckland
On the light side of the moon	Gary Gordon
River	Gary Gordon
Shattered Windows	Gary Gordon
Surround her with Water: An Epiphany	Gary Gordon & Clare Baker
Toiling to the dance of the sun	Andrew Buckland & Gary Gordon
Terpsichorean Palette or Dance for Arts' Sake	Paul Datlen
… They were caught waiting …	Gary Gordon
Together we go out, sometimes looking back	Paul Datlen

1994

Can Baby John Fit into Big Daddy's Shoes	Gary Gordon
Catacomb III	PJ Sabbagha
Dialogue	Gary Gordon
It was at the Laundromat	Athena Fatseas
Riots of Passage	Sarah Tudge
She has fallen and now she is awake	Clare Baker
Travellers II	Gary Gordon
Triptych	Samantha Pienaar

1995

Bluewater Bay	Jeannette Ginslov
Like Icarus from the Ashes	Juanita Finestone
Simmer … and add a little orange …	Gary Gordon
They dreamt of diving where the fishes fly	Gary Gordon
Two episodes of leaving in four parts	Athena Fatseas
The Unspeakable Story	Gary Gordon
Wallflowers	

1996

After the flood	Samantha Pienaar
Dead: A Slight History of one called Ivan	Gary Gordon
Nokeanu	Nathalie Gmur
The passion of Judas	Juanita Finestone
Resting in the Trees	Gary Gordon & Clare Baker
A Suitcase of Stories	Collectively Workshopped
The Untouchable	Craig Morris
Women with Big Feet take Big Steps	Jeanette Ginslov

1997

The Brittleness of Bone	Andrew Cameron
Elvis has left the Building	Jenni Davies
Woman gazing at old moon	Gary Gordon
Writing the body	Gary Gordon

1998

Change	Gary Gordon
Etude	Angela Smith
From ashes, An Autobiography	Andrew Cameron
Hinterland	Jeanette Ginslov
Lilith	Gary Gordon
Liverspread	Bevan Cullinan
Parfum	Angela Smith
Strings	Angela Smith
towards Golgotha	Gary Gordon
Under the Pomegranate Tree	Juanita Finestone
Weifeling	Werner Marx

1999

A funny thing happened on the way to the theatre	Andrew Cameron
Chameleon	Angela Smith
Dunes	Gary Gordon
Eye of the Shadow	Gary Gordon
Gathering Glass	Andrew Cameron
Knowing it was a mirage made no difference	Juanita Finestone
membrane	Gary Gordon & Shane Manilal
money	Gary Gordon
Open window	Gary Gordon
The warmth I feel	Acty Tang

2000

And the empty space of his shadow	Acty Tang
Bessie's Head	Gary Gordon
Ground under	Jenni-Lee Crewe & Mike Wiblin
Inability to remain calm in a room	Jenni-Lee Crewe & Mike Wiblin
Paused hanging, between sky and ground	Jenni-Lee Crewe

2001

Chess Piece Face	Tanya Surtees
Rock-a-Bye for a Sleeping Man and a Barking Dog	Gary Gordon
Lake...beneath the surface	Juanita Finestone & Gary Gordon
On the Lake	Reza de Wet

New Voices

Ground Clues	
This Broken Place	Jenni-Lee Crewe
Ground Under	Jenni-Lee Crewe
She Lives While I Sleep	Bailey Snyman
Wasp Factory	Tanya Surtees & J-L Crewe

Bessie's Head video	Company

Mmino Fest

2002

Birds	Zingisani Mkefa
Crossing heavy water	Jenni-Lee Crewe
Dairy of a burning tree	Juanita Finestone-Praeg
In the puddles of the moon	Bailey Snyman
One long breath	Gary Gordon
Songs that seep into forgetfulness	Acty Tang
Split skin	Jenni-Lee Crewe
The man behind the canvas	Bailey Snyman

They dreamt of diving where the fishes fly	Gary Gordon
Through the glass darkly	Nicola Haskins
Ozymandias	Gary Gordon & Jenni-Lee Crewe
Café	Bailey Snyman
Speculating Altitude	Jenni-Lee Crewe

New Voices

Featherwater	unknown
Through the glass darkly	Nicola Haskins
In the Puddles on the Moon	Bailey Snyman

2003

This beautiful house is unmade	Gary Gordon & Juanita Finestone-Praeg
Unforeseen	Elsabe van Tonder (Photographic Installation)

New Voices

Re-Collections	Programmeof works
This Beautiful house in un-made	Gary Gordon & Juanita Finestone-Praeg
In the puddles of the moon	Bailey Snyman
Because you're not, no I'm, no you're…	Zoey Lapinsky
Departure Lounge	Bailey Snyman

2004

The Unspeakable Story	Gary Gordon
Breathing In	Marthinus Basson
Expeditions	Heike Gehring
She had a sinking feeling	Bailey Snyman
Journey to Fez	Juanita Finestone-Praeg

New Voices

Silent Movie for 2	Bailey Snyman
The Easter Paper, Orange Juice and a dead body in my bed	FPTC performers

Fizz Theatre

Slow Loris	Juanita Finestone-Praeg

2005

Red Crushed Velvet

Tread	Gary Gordon
Part One: Fear and Laughter	Jeanette Ginslov
Straits	Bailey Snyman

New Voices

Moments from this Place	Bailey Snyman
The day I got my body back	Penny Ho Hin
Fevered Letter	Nicola Haskins
En Route	Noni Makhatini
Notes from Life	Bailey Snyman
Splintered	Noni Makhatini
The Unspeakable Story	Gary Gordon
37 degrees of fear	Juanita Finestone-Praeg

2006

Bessie's Head	Gary Gordon
Vrypas	Gary Gordon & Heike Gehring
16 Kinds of Emptiness	Juanita Finestone-Praeg

Player 1.1	Film Director: Mark Wilby. Choreography: Gary Gordon
The Guide to Impulsive Dressing	Acty Tang
Inner Piece	Juanita Finestone-Praeg
Breath	Film by Acty Tang
	Choreography by Juanita Finestone-Praeg
New Voices	Joni Barnard, Kyle de Boer, Sonja Smit, Tshegofatso Tlholoe
2010	
So loop 'n Volstruis	Gary Gordon, Juanita Finestone-Praeg, Alan Parker, Nicola Elliott, Sonja Smit
amanogawa	Frauke and FPTC
New Voices	Gavin Krastin, Danielle Bowler, Nicole Theunissen, Levern Botha, Sifiso Majola, Siyabulela Mbambaza, Nadine Joseph.
The Cycle – from The Unspeakable Story	Gary Gordon
Things I learnt from Gary	Alan Parker
So Long Mister	Siyabulela Mbambaza
Night flower	Juanita Finestone-Praeg
DirTweny-ten	Levern Botha
I Thank you	Sifiso Majola
Flight, Fight or Fright	Alan Parker
Everyday Falling	Athena Mazarakis
Do what you can	Siyabulela Mbambaza
2011	
Everyday Falling	Athena Mazarakis
Move It	Ikalafeng Tigelo and Siyabulela Mbambaza
Sitting Standing Lying Down	Gary Gordon
Retrospective – altered daily	Alan Parker
Mole – a look at being looked at	Sonja Smit
Standing, Sitting and Lying Down	Gary Gordon
Wreckage	Dramaturge: Brink Scholtz and Choreography by Athina Vahla
Propeller	
The Cycle of things to End	Zingi Mkefa
Problems of the Inner Ear	Alan Parker
Made in Order to Fly	Nicola Elliott
New Voices	
The Goat Song	Sonja Smit
Sleeper	Siyabulela Mbambaza
Elasekhaya	Siyabulela Mbambaza and Thalia Laric
Litany	Thalia Laric
Ways of Exposure	Nicola Elliott
Ekspedisies	Directed by Heike Gehring and Choreography by Alan Parker

2012

Discharge	Alan Parker, Gavin Krastin
Villain	Sonja Smit
Celladoor	Alan Parker

2013

Surfacing the Self	Nomcebisi Moyikwa and Maipelo Gabang
Celladoor	Alan Parker

2014

Nightflower Film	Choreography by Juanita Praeg Directed and edited by Jeannette Ginslov
Caught	Nomcebisi Moyikwa
Hunger	Acty Tang
Agon	Athina Vahla
Nedbank Winter Campaign	Nomcebisi Moyikwa
Deadringer	Athina Vahla
Standing taller than liberty	Athina Vahla

2015

Pam Golding Gold Club Event	Curated by Gary Gordon
Caught	Nomcebisi Moyikwa
Inqindi	Nomcebisi Moyikwa
Waltz	Nomcebisi Moyikwa

2016

Home	Nomcebisi Moyikwa

2017

Qash Qash	Nomcebisi Moyikwa

2018

Pam Golding National Event	Curated by Gary Gordon
Yet to be determined	Gavin Krastin
Dna	Athina Vahla

2019

Arcade	Curated by Gavin Krastin Dramaturgy by Alan Parker

SELECTED PROGRAMMES
Manifesto I and II (1993)
Manifesto III (1994)
Declarations I (1994) and II (1994)
Danceplay I (1995)
Abundance (1996)
New Moves II (1997)
Icons (1998)
Portraits (1998)
Autographs (1999)
A Suitcase Of Stories (Suitcase productions for Schools) (1996)
Adult Movement Programme (1998–2000)
The Chameleon Project (1999)
ABET Programme (2000) Adult basic Education and Training
Red Crushed Velvet (2005)
New Voices (annual event at the National Arts Festival)

SELECTED FESTIVALS
FNB Vita Dance Umbrella
FNB Vita Dance Umdudo
Fin de siècle à Johannesburg (17 – 25 October 1997, Nantes, France)
Mmino Fest (2001)
Dance Theatre and Theatre In Motion (2002 – 2018)
National Arts Festival (1993 – 2019)
Bayimba Festival, Uganda (2015)
Dance Fest
Fizz Theatre (local Grahamstown Festival held in November)
JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Festival (1998 – 2019)
Maitisong Festival; Gabarone; Botswana (2006)
Cape Town International Festival (2006)
Baxter Dance Festival (BDF) (2004 – 2018)
Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA) (2016 – 2019)
Icons (1998)
Local and national Schools festivals (1993 – 2015)

POSTER AWARDS
The Ideas Group: *The Unspeakable Story* (1995) at National Arts Festival, South Africa
The Ideas group: *woman gazing at old moon* (1997) at National Arts Festival, South Africa

Choreography-for-Camera series
The FPTC choreography-for-camera series includes a few works: *Breath* (2009) Film by Acty Tang with choreography by Juanita Finestone-Praeg; *Player 1.1* (2009) Artist and Film Director Mark Wilby with performance and choreography by Gary Gordon; *Mole* (2009) Choreogrphay by Sonja Smit; *Blue Flower* (2009) Choreography my Nicola Elliott and Acty Tang; *Night Flower* (2014) Film by Jeannette Ginslov with choreography by Juanita Finestone-Praeg;

Transdisciplinary or Inter-disciplinary Works

Works by Allen, Tang and Gordon, Gordon; Finestone-Praeg, Ginslov, Krastin, Parker; Vahla and Moyikwa, to name a few. *Ozymandias* (2008) – A "Transatlantic Collaboration" (Sichel) between New Orleans and Grahamstown – John Allen, Gary Gordon.

This shaping of the company's repertory continues.