

POP MOVES

Amplifying Movement: New Directions in Popular Dance Studies

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Record of presenters, contact details and abstracts

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Breaking in Fortaleza: Body from the margins

Fortaleza is a Brazilian town, which the youth is inscribed in a global phenomena of musical culture expansion. Thus, the reggae, the heavy métal but also the hip-hop find in the Fortaleza youth, a big contingents of aficionados which their styles does not deal with the folkloric ambiance which is generally used to define this city, especially with the famous forro music.

The « rodas » of breakdance are the scène of rituals fight where the violence is under control, in the content, they express everything that make the everyday life of the inhabitants who live in the suburbs, the so called « periferia »: an unstructured everyday life but also a profound desire of existing. Because of his poetry and his practice, hip-hop and specifically the breakdance find an important écho and an important dynamic in the youth of the « periferia ». It allows to the dancers to acquire acknowledge, in their neighbourhood as activists from the hip-hop movement, and in the same time as artists performing his art in the noble places of the town. As a consequence, the hip-hop allows to a forsaken youth to affirm a diferencial identity, inspired by the daily life in the suburbs, in the same time practicing an ethic, which permits to keep them out the violent trajectories of the street such as the gangs and the drug traffic.

This kind of phenomena can be observed more clearly the Saturday nights near the Cultural Center « Dragão do Mar » where the heterogeneous youth of Fortaleza love to exhibit their different styles. My presentation would begin by an ethnographical description of the biggest breakdance battle of Northeast Brazil named « Planeta hip-hop ». Secondly,

I will explain by an historical point of view how the hip hop practice and particularly the breakdance found an important écho in this town. Finally, I will bring us into the specific location of hip-hop in the suburbs of Fortaleza, I will show how the practice of a « conscient hip-hop » allows strategies which permit the identity affirmation of the dancers and give them an alternative to the violent world of their everyday life.

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Men, Music and Mayhem or How To Dance Alone in Music Video(s)

Dancing in music videos is nothing new. From Michael Jackson to Madonna, the act of dancing to accompany a popular song has become a trademark of many music videos. However, what happens when only one male body, particularly a white male body, dances? Why is it met with such novelty (Thom Yorke dancing in Radiohead's *Lotus Flower* is a recent example and has more than 12m views since debuting seven months ago)? Dance historian Ramsey Burt's seminal essay, "The Trouble With The Male Dancer," addresses the role of the male dancer in Western stage dance and suggests that male sexuality was under scrutiny when men danced. This paper looks to Burt yet shifts the focus from the stage to the screen, from ballet to popular dance and questions the activity of the white male body dancing. Rather than focus on sexuality, I seek to establish a genealogy of the dancing white male body in music video and connect it to the neo-liberal democratic narrative about individualism and consumer capitalism. Ultimately, I would like to suggest a reading of this collection of videos as a way to consider choreographically how these dancing bodies either compose or contest white first-world masculinity. In so doing, I hope to elucidate what social theorist and dance scholar Randy Martin means when he writes that "dance generates a sense of being in the midst of a crisis, a break, a rupture, even a loss and a prospect at the same time" (*Critical Moves*, 1).

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Global Bollywood and the dance performances of Shahrukh Khan

This paper examines the construction of global culture and the wide-ranging appeal of film

stars such as Shahrukh Khan through a selection of the Bollywood films of the 1990s and the new millennium. Using an analysis of Khan's appearance in the dance sequences in *Dil Se* (1998), *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998), *Asoka* (2001) and *Om Shanti Om* (2007), I question how the Bollywood dancing body is constructed and how appeal and desire are managed and controlled for global consumption. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork carried out in Bollywood dance classes, I analyse the effect of Khan's performances on both male and female audiences and dancers and seek to draw some conclusions about the mixed discourses at play in his films as well as the potential ability to cross prescribed and perceived boundaries. How is the diasporic imagination fed through his films? Is there a 'double' exoticism at play here? The paper attempts to unpick the 'local negotiations of historically shifting relations of image production and consumption' (South Asian Popular Culture, 3, 2: 79) in the complex context of Bollywood film and Khan's performances and asks whether he is now perceived as the personification of Bollywood itself.

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From *Beat Street* to *Street Dance 3D*: Representations of B-boys and B-girls on Screen

Street dance films, as a sub-genre of dance films, represent a dance movement which itself has a symbiotic relationship with those films. Breakers who started dancing in the 1980's recall learning from moments in the early street dance films such as *Beat Street* (Latham 1984) and *Flashdance* (Lyne 1983). Later films have involved new generations of professionalized street dancers, though these later examples of the sub-genre have elicited rather different responses from the culture they portray. This talk will cover the nature of this symbiotic relationship, and in doing so, analyse the way sound and music are used in representations of b-boys and b-girls on screen.

To disentangle what 'street dance' has come to represent for b-boys and b-girls ("breakdancers") and why this matters sociologically and aesthetically, I have corresponded with some of the practitioners who have performed in recent films such as *Step Up 3D* (Chu 2010) and *Street Dance 3D* (Giwa and Pasquini 2010). In doing so, the street dance film genre will be examined from a phenomenological perspective offered by key b-boys and b-girls who describe what the movies have meant for them as both cultural artifacts and as records of their performances.

My argument here has less to do with substantiating judgments offered by b-boys and b-

girls and more to do with what these judgments mean for the study of the dance film genre. I argue that b-boys and b-girls have used street dance films in ways that contribute to a new theoretical foundation for the study of sound and music in moving-picture dance, one that blurs the lines between reality and fiction and challenges the conventional role of dancers as 'extras' and 'stunt doubles'.

Beat Street. 1984. Film. Directed by Latham. USA: MGM. 105 min.

Flashdance. 1983. Film. Directed by Adrian Lyne. USA: Paramount Pictures. 95 min.

Step Up 3D. 2010. Film. Directed by Jon Chu. USA: Touchstone Pictures. 107 min.

Street Dance 3D. 2010. Film. Directed by Max Giwa and Dania Pasquini. UK: Vertigo Films, BBC Films. 98 min.

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Addressing the “Dance” in Dance Music: methodology, format and the idea of performance

This lecture-demonstration-workshop will facilitate a dialogue on the value of systematic, formal analysis of dance within popular dance studies. In addition, through content and format, the workshop will contest existing divisions between music and dance scholarship. The workshop will be broadly structured around three related topics. First, I will explore the methodological question of how to most appropriately analyse dance movement in the context of the contemporary nightclub, rave or dance music event. A short series of activities will give delegates opportunities to scrutinise various methods of dance analysis, including notation, text-based descriptions and use of visual media aides such as photography and video. The second section of the workshop will investigate the usefulness of standard research dissemination formats to the study of movement in popular dance phenomena such as clubbing. I question whether using descriptive or written language alone is the ideal form through which to present research on dance, an activity or art form which is fundamentally based on use of the whole body and use of multiple senses. Finally, inspired by the title of this conference „Performance of the Popular...“, notions of how „performances“ take place within the nightclub or rave setting will be explored. This section will draw on dance studies literature and primary ethnographic research to compare contemporary popular dance music forms with choreographed and/or staged dance forms.

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Heterocorporealities: a methodology for the analysis of contemporary popular dance practices

In this paper I explore the construction and performance of identities in electronic dance music (EDM) club cultures through popular dance. In particular, I focus on how the dance practices found in contemporary UK drum 'n' bass club culture suggest evidence of cultural hybridity and a socially orientated intertextuality. The research project from which this paper is generated has included significant empirical research in this specific area of EDM club culture. However, I suggest that this methodology can also be applied to research that analyses movement practices in other EDM styles, and may be useful in understanding performances of identity in other contemporary popular dance practices.

Whilst drum 'n' bass has been described as a 'black' musical form (Huq, 2006), 'white' audiences dominate contemporary drum 'n' bass club culture (Hall, 2009; Gilbert and Pearson, 1999; Reynolds, 1998). Observational and participative fieldwork data demonstrates how drum 'n' bass club cultural identities draw heavily on socially and historically constructed representations of 'black' expressive culture, sexualities and style. In addition, interview accounts suggest that drum 'n' bass clubbers are attracted to identities constructed around ideas of a marginalised, dirty 'Other'. This research data could be argued to demonstrate a 'participatory Orientalism', a phrase used by Bannerjea (2000, after Said, 1978) to describe 'white' participation in 'black' dance cultures as a form of 'carefully constructed exotica'. In addition, Gottschild (1996) describes the use of African diasporic style by 'white' performers as acts of appropriation. However, I argue that such arguments that infer the racial ownership of cultural forms, such as music or dance, reify difference and fail to account for the creation of new subject positions that occur at moments of inter-raciality and cultural hybridity. In this paper I argue that drum 'n' bass club cultural identities, which are constructed and performed through dance movement, speak with traces of anterior (racial, gendered and class-based) signs but are replete with new meaning and significance. I use Bakhtin's (1981) theories of language and communication to theorise these intertextual dance practices and to reveal the hybrid nature of contemporary identity performance in popular dance practices.

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Tangoing Intersubjectivities

The key interest of this lecture is to intertwine tango as a practice of postcolonial bodily subjectivization inbetween ideology and emergence of intersubjectivities. This interweaving is linked to the paradoxical feature of the global movement - and danceculture Tango Argentino as a culture of difference *and* a transcultural practice.

Being a sociologist and a dancescientist I'd like to show with video-analysis the structural materiality of the globalized dance Tango Argentino. These analyses work out the different kinds of principles of movement that can be found in tango (e.g. closed position, rituals of proximity) and how bodyknowledge in dance is used.

One first key issue is that tango should be describe as a practice, and not as communication, interaction or action – all these sociological concepts are always anticipating the result of the analysis. The advantage of a concept of tango as a practice allows us to focus on the results of the analysis and to understand the dancepractices in tango as an implicit bodily knowledge, which is to be revealed.

In the case of the tango the structured materiality shows the *contingent order* of the practice tango and coincidently its pervasion with postcolonial discourses of gender, otherness and exoticism. The methodology of my work links discourses and practices to one another and is located in a theory of practice (Pierre Bourdieu).

The context of a postcolonial ideology around the bodily subjectivization in tango as a practice is also related to what Judith Butler calls bodily subjection – the process of becoming a subject (=subjectivization) in processes of subjection (Butler 1997:2). In this process of bodily subjection the possibility of another kind of subjectivization occurs: intersubjectivities. This concept of intersubjectivities as a phenomenon in danceculture is the main research area of my PhD thesis, which I will finish within the next months.

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Dark Matter & Diaspora in B-Boying Cyphers

Within the practice of b-boying (breakdancing) improvisational and competitive dance circles, known as cyphers, many practitioners have described feelings of euphoria, connections to a spiritual or more liberated selves, and even relationships to long gone friends and family. This ethnographic study of b-boying (breakdancing) practices focuses analytically on a combination of the seen and unseen aspects of the practice, which includes for example a dancer's aesthetic style, issues of difference, and notions of a spiritual, psychic, or even ancestral force experienced within the circle. This paper draws comparisons between these latter experiences in particular and other African diasporic circle practices in the Americas. These unseen elements of cyphering are its most substantive and tell a story of Hip Hop history and philosophies through embodied practices. This in fact parallels the ways that Hip Hop's Africanist qualities are often invisible to people though they are at the foundations of breaking, thus playing a fundamental role in notions of belonging within b-boying culture. Drawing out these elements reveals persistent anxieties around blackness, sometimes a disavowal of any Africanist influences at all, and a general ignorance about the Africanist dimensions of American pop culture, which is disseminated worldwide. Dark matter is my metaphor for the force that compels a sense of connection across differences, described as an effect of the "energy exchange" amongst those comprising the cypher. The concept comes from physics and describes the non-luminous matter that holds galaxies together by way of its

invisible yet powerful gravitational influence on visible matter. As a metaphor, it captures the discursive, psychic, and spiritual dimensions to cyphering that act as invisible *material* forces on the culture, holding together the literal and broader social circles of b-boying communities.

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Ecstatic Edgelands: Dancing Beyond the Limits of the Theatre in Free Party Culture

Jean-François Lyotard posits the theatre as a paradigmatic structure that connects the space of representation, the architecture of the city, and the form of conscious subjectivity. Drawing on Freud, he proposes that prior to the formation of this structure desire is at play in a qualitatively different space – a topological surface which is indifferent to time and contradiction. The theatre is created when this surface is folded, producing interiority, and expelling the unassimilable elements of desire to a space which is “obscene”, both as off-stage (*ob scaena*), and as coming from filth (*ob sceanum*). Lyotard calls for the constitution of another kind of theatre, a “pagan theatrics”, to resist the closure of identity-thinking. This would leap over the frontier of the theatrical enclosure, allowing for the simultaneous affirmation of both inside and outside.

This paper examines “free party” culture, arguing that the urban squat-rave environment unworks the theatrical paradigm on a number of levels:

- Free parties tend to occur in neglected, semi-derelict edgeland locations. This movement towards the crumbling limits of architecturally structured space reflects the disintegration of the theatrical enclosure, which allows heterogeneous elements to enter the “stage”.
- The parties are organised according to a de-centred and non-hierarchical social model. This generates a fluid, carnivalesque experience of social space, where there is no differentiation between “actors” and “spectators”.

In this fluid space, dance produces a corporeal experience that is rhythmic and proprioceptive, which exceeds the ocular logic of the theatre. This experience of embodiment, ecstatic in nature, constitutes a movement outside of time which touches the exteriority of the self, opening the enclosure of subjectivity. It is argued that through dance, free party culture constitutes a pagan theatrical environment, an affirmative space in which self and other become indistinct, thereby unleashing the force of collective desire, and

allowing a new kind of social relationality to come into being.

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Sound, Light, Queerness on the New York Dance Floor, 1980-84

This paper will explore the intersection between sound, light, queerness and the dance floor in New York clubs across the first half of the 1980s. Seven venues dominated the period in terms of sonic innovation, cultural influence, communal intensity and basic longevity--Better Days, Danceteria, the Loft, the Paradise Garage, the Pyramid, the Roxy and the Saint--and aside from the partial exception of the Roxy, all were framed as queer or queer-friendly. In addition to the employment of DJs with distinctive tastes, techniques and affinities, each embedded a specific version of queerness through the configuration of sound and lighting systems that embodied ideas of race and class, as well as alternative ways of being queer.

Developing the “sonic dominance” paradigm set out by Julian Henriques, the paper will explore the way in which New York clubs established a wide range of environments in which sound was the dominant source of affect, and will pay particular attention to the way in which contrasting dance experiences were formed in these settings. In addition, the paper will also outline the tensions that emerged between those who were set on establishing a democratic and inclusive form of dance floor queerness, and those who aligned themselves with a more overtly materialistic and exclusive formation. The research presented grows out of interviews with DJs, dancers and party promoters as well as extensive documentary research.

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Commodification of Female Caribbean Identity in Rihanna's *Rude Boy* Music Video

In this paper I will question the extent to which the racial, national and gender identities produced in Rihanna's *Rude Boy* music video are made into an accessible commodity for the consumption of white Western audiences. I will look at whether a neo-colonial 'Othering' of Rihanna takes place in the music video. I will discuss the implications of this

'Othering'; looking at whether the cultural production and performative intention of the dance style of *dancehall*, which Rihanna's choreography draws from, becomes modified in Western cultural spaces.

Firstly I will provide information about the background of dancehall as a dance practice, particularly looking at females in performance. I will then identify Rihanna as a transnational artist who mediates between different national identities. This information on dancehall and Rihanna's transnational identity will together provide contextual information for the investigatory focus of the paper.

The historical background to the subject matter of this paper will be discussed by looking at the colonial relationship between black and white peoples. This section will use critical race theory concerning the racial 'Other' from Dyer (1997) and Pieterse (1992). Theory from Mercer (2005) and Desmond (1997) will then be employed to discuss the neo-colonial commodification of the black identity in contemporary society and its consumption by white spectators and practitioners.

To identify the significance of the cultural production within *Rude Boy* I will look at the adaptations made to the dancehall dance style within the music video. Using Vernallis' (2004) theory surrounding the aesthetics and cultural production within music videos, I will study the potential cultural impact of *Rude Boy*. This will involve an analysis of the signifiers used to convey racialised feminine identity. This information will be used to question whether the identity produced in *Rude Boy* adheres to a colonial perception of the Caribbean female as an economically valuable commodity.

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Dancing outside the box: Kathak's dialogue with Hip-hop

The transformation of the South Asian classical dance kathak beyond its origins into an increasingly globalised form arises in part from interactions with new communities. Integrating dance analysis and ethnographic research with sociologically grounded analysis, this paper interrogates multiple functions that the diasporic dance exhibits in diverse settings in Britain and abroad. Birmingham-based Sonia Sabri blurs boundaries in innovative stage and community-based versions of kathak, while retaining her standing as a prominent classical soloist. Sabri's Kathakbox collaborative production mixes beatbox and spoken word with tabla to produce innovative soundscapes to accompany kathak's

intersection with hip-hop, contemporary and African-Caribbean dance styles. Supported by rapper and hip-hop guru Jonzi D, Sabri's 'urban kathak' presents an urbanised and globalised production that transcends sub-cultural identity markers constructed through diverse dance practices. Associated outreach projects link the dance sources to individual narratives of the marginalised communities with which they engage. Such workshops contest media representations of alterity while offering alternative and transformative modes of expression. The use of text with vocal and gestural rhythmic play provides a meeting point of accessibility between the different dance forms and their accompaniment. Counter-hegemonic in multiple ways, the project-related Khoj workshops with Muslim women also strive to move beyond 'tick box' funding and political agendas, challenging preconceptions around race and faith as strategies evolve in order to respect cultural imperatives around representation of the body. Kathakbox workshops in Abu Dhabi and Dubai offer diverse geopolitical contexts for exploring such cultural negotiations. The investigation is informed by Claire Dwyer's (1997) research into negotiating diasporic British Muslim identities, linked to the commodification of fashion (Dwyer, 2004) and Lynn Hamera's (2007) conceptualisations of dance technique as bodily inscription. Rupa Huq's *Beyond Subculture* (2004) provides frameworks to discuss sub-cultural expression linked to music and sound.

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'Finding your groove' – The importance of the social/party dances within hip hop and street dance practices

This presentation/workshop aims to explore the importance of the 'groove' within UK hip hop and street dance practices. In musicology terms, the 'groove' produces 'the characteristic rhythmic "feel" of a piece, a feel created by a repeating framework' consisting of rhythmic patterns (Swiss 1999 p.143). Historically, there is a vast collection of party dances associated with hip hop dance that were practised socially in the 1980's and the 1990's and can be described as 'fad' dances, such as the 'Steve Martin', 'Running Man' and 'Cabbage Patch' which are traditionally danced to funk music. Through part workshop and part presentation format, the importance of the party dances and the grooves that underpin them will be explored in terms of their potential to produce a connection and understanding of music and rhythm, body control and awareness, and

enjoyment and commitment to 'the dance'. During the presentational part of the paper, the roots of the party/social dances will be explored in order to provide a historical context for the style of dancing. This will be considered in relation to current presentations of hip hop and street dance, where often 'the groove' is completely absent altogether, and the issues surrounding this in terms of the authenticity of hip hop dance.

The Workshop (practical element):

The Workshop will consist of firstly learning the foundation 'up' and 'down' grooves, in order to gain a basic understanding of the pulse of the music and how a response to this is created through moving the body. A selection of party/social dances will then be taught individually in order to break down the movements and consider different parts of the body. Finally the party/social dances that have been taught will be put together to form a sequence, where individual style, and interaction between participants will be encouraged in order to create a performance of 'the groove'.

Through the workshop and presentation, I aim to prove the importance of 'the groove' and therefore the party/social dances, as important foundations when studying and learning hip hop and street dance styles.

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Fashion in Motion: contemporary dance bodies as machinery in fashion advertising performance

Motion is integral to fashion advertising. Many photographers capture images of the models at the peak of their energetic performance. Post-production techniques such as

blurring are also employed to amplify dynamism in the campaigns. Moreover, wind machines are often incorporated in the photo shoot to heighten motion in fashion merchandise.

By looking at motion in fashion advertising, there are cases when a contemporary dance body become a fashion body hired for the purposes of selling garments through dance. Focusing on the performance exchange between fashion and dance, this paper questions what does the hired body informs at the intersection between art and commerce in relation to its training, experience, and transference of performing skills? Moreover, in its final outcome, how do movement vocabularies in contemporary dance feed into the socio-political economy of luxury fashion particularly the interrelationships between moving bodies and mobility in fashion products?

Methodologically, I employ Rudolf Laban's approach to effort and shape to investigate movements in fashion merchandise. I then place this notion of motion in fashion in comparison to the effect it achieves when contemporary dance bodies perform their movements whilst wearing the garment. Data will be collected by sampling strategies in fashion advertising (e.g. visual materials of photographs and video recordings of the performance). This includes interviews from the choreographers, artistic directors and dancers regarding the intention and outcomes of the promotional events.

By employing this methodology, I argue that fashion merchandise has mobility in its materiality. When contemporary dancers become fashion models, their bodily techniques and skills trained in art dance context further activate movements within the garments to the fullest potential. This advancement of selling fashion products through dance precedes the capability of the walks and poses that a fashion model can provide.

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