Editorial: Research in Dance Education, Special issue: intersectionality and identities in dance

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EDITORIAL

Editorial, special issue: intersectionality and identities in dance

Welcome to the ninth special issue of *Research in Dance Education*. This special issue presents original research on *Intersectionality and Identities in Dance*. I am grateful to associate editor Doug Risner for all his work in developing this special issue and to the authors and peer-reviewers. Peer reviewers offer their expertise and time in a voluntary capacity. This issue is timely and we are sure it will offer challenge and stimulate deep thought and response. We would normally present an article as the winner of the New Writer's Prize as part of the annual special issue. The New Writer's Prize was developed as a legacy to the founding editor Linda Rolfe as an open competition for previously unpublished authors. We have decided to broaden the reach and potential of the New Writer's Prize and are now able to invite submissions across all issues within the year, including the annual special issue. The collection of submissions for the New Writer's Prize will be considered by the board and the winner will be announced annually.

Theme-based special issues aim to inform, improve and enhance the quality and provision of dance education through lively inquiry and critical debate in order to fulfil the journal's mission to nurture, stimulate and promote research in dance education around the globe. The journal sets out to include contributors from a wide and diverse community of researchers and scholars, extending to all aspects of dance in education and its research.

Since the journal's inception, special issues have examined myriad topical themes including technology and dance (2008), creativity in dance (2009), best practice in dance making (2011), the life and legacy of Linda Rolfe, founding editor (2012), practising research in dance (2015), dance pedagogy in theory and practice (2016), dance futures (2017) and dance and work (2019). Interested readers may access all special issue content in the journal archives on the *Research in Dance Education* website. We are also excited that, by invitation from Routledge, the dance and work special issue has been developed into a book: Dance, Professional Practice, and the Workplace (Pickard and Risner, 2020), the full reference can be found at the end of the editorial.

An assumption, or an idea that is widely accepted as true without evidence, often emerges as a stereotype, bias or dominant ideology. In response, intersectionality refers to the complex manner in which different forms of discrimination, marginalization and social inequities, such as racism, sexism, classism and homophobia among others, overlap, blend and fuse in increasingly cumulative ways. Intersectionality, a term coined by legal and critical race theorist and imminent scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), recognizes how a person's overlapping identities (race, gender expression, ethnicity, sexuality, class, ability, among others) affect her or his experiences of discrimination, marginalization, as well as social, economic and racial injustice and oppression. As disciplines, dance and dance education are not immune to these numerous inequities and injustices.

Engaged teachers skillfully confront myriad student assumptions and points of intersectionality every day in their classrooms, studios, schools and community programmes (Berg and Risner 2020).

As a theoretical framework, intersectionality examines the intersecting and overlapping identities of people and power relationships within social groups (Risner and Schupp 2020; Pickard 2015). Intersectionality acknowledges that many social and racial justice problems intersect, such as racism and LGBTQ+ discrimination, creating different types of, or levels of injustice. Intersectional understanding and vantage points require moving beyond strict 'identity politics' focused only on one type of social category or identity, such as racism or sexism, and to examine how social oppression is multi-layered and multiply experienced (Mitchell 2014). Intersectional and identity applications to dance and dance education provide numerous opportunities for scholarly, applied and practice-based research.

With these aims, our special issue's call for papers invited contributors to address issues, problems, developments, and questions related to dance education: What is the current impact of intersectionality in dance education and what does it look like? How might we transform/change systems that marginalize and oppress in dance? What are possible agendas to navigate and critically engage intersecting identities in dance pedagogy and teaching methods? How might intersectional understanding and approaches to dance and dance education reduce social, racial and economic injustice in the field and beyond?

Prospective contributors were asked to consider intersecting identities in dance education related to curriculum, pedagogy and artistic, choreographic and performance agendas; we invited exploration of overlapping identities (race, ethnicity, gender expression, sexuality, social class and ability) and experiences of discrimination, marginalization and oppression in dance and dance education cultures. Potential authors were encouraged to examine power relationships in dance education through philosophical, social, artistic and pedagogical lenses and analyses and to engage intersectionality with socio-political, economic, educational, employment and workplace inequities in dance and dance education. We welcomed discourses on intersecting identities and collaborative, interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary practices, knowledge exchange and impact, as well as analyses of liberal, inclusive synergies and opportunities for dance education across different ages, stages, contexts, institutions, and economies. Numerous wide-ranging and international submissions were received, and we are pleased to present this collection of original papers from China, Canada, India, and the United States addressing intersectionality and identities in dance education.

This special issue opens with Aadaya Kaktikar's article *Choreographing Decolonization: Pedagogical Confrontations at the Intersection of Traditional Dance and Liberal Arts in Higher Education in India*. As an Odissi dancer trained in the traditional guru-shishya parampara of dance, as well as work in higher education institutions in the United Kingdom and the United States, Kaktikar reflects upon her embodiment and identity as a performing artist and educator while teaching dance in an undergraduate curriculum within a liberal arts paradigm for the first time in India. Kaktikar demonstrates how assumptions, perceptions and legacies of colonialism in India can be challenged through critical and emancipatory possibilities in dance and education. She argues that traditional, classical Indian dance and the modern university 'have deep-rooting,

colonising impacts that are impossible to ignore or erase' as contradictions and co-constructions or 'double bind' (Spivak 2013). However, she argues that there are possibilities for criticality through a decolonizing pedagogy as a generative process of critical discourse and embodied knowledge from an understanding of post-colonial histories.

From Canada, Tanya Berg takes an autoethnographic approach to examine challenges of integrating new technologies in private sector dance education. Her paper, *Manifestations of Surveillance in Private Sector Dance Education: The Implicit Challenges of Integrating Technology*, investigates the formation of mediated identities in adolescent female dancers resulting from surveillance facilitated by live-streamed closed-circuit television and social media use. Berg notes that the emergence of technology-mediated identities of dancers came to realization during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, while nascent online identities continue to evolve as the world proceeds to chart a new normal. The author describes how systems of western concert dance education represent institutional forms of discrimination present in structural intersectionality. In seeking to begin intersectional dialogues, the author equates western concert dance training, as well as dance competition culture, with structural systems of oppression that exclude marginalized groups and maintain the status quo by reflecting the values of the dominant class. Berg asserts 'the imagined audience produced by social media, plays a role in reinforcing dance's established exclusionary aesthetic, as dancers create online identities to meet perceived audience expectations and build cultural capital.' Dance teachers and students, Berg concludes, will negotiate new dimensions in dance education produced by manifestations of online surveillance, as technological mediation will continue to be the norm in our post-pandemic world.

The Chinese Dance: A Mirror of Cultural Representations by Lui Shaohui examines dance as 'world-making' and as embodied identity, incorporating personal, social and cultural identities. Today, there are 56 ethnic groups recognized in China, most of which have their own dances. This article explores levels of awareness of Chinese dance using a survey with 500 female (52%) and male (48%) students, between the ages of 20–21 years, undertaking four-year Bachelor degrees at Russian universities. Students were studying various subjects representing the technical and humanitarian such as medicine, journalism and engineering. Findings suggest that awareness of Chinese dances and culture was limited. The students viewed the Chinese dance as something exotic and intended for entertainment purposes. Furthermore, despite many students from China currently studying in Russian universities as well as many student exchange programmes, Shaohui suggests that awareness and integration of Chinese culture is lacking in Russian universities. Cultural cooperation between Russian and Chinese universities with special events, lectures and dance classes as exchange cultural experiences may be an effective way to raise awareness and understanding of Chinese cultural practices into world culture.

As a figure skater, modern dancer, choreographer, educator, feminist, and the mother of two daughters who dance, Heather Harrington employs cultural analysis, dance studies, and psychology to investigate how the intersecting vectors of consumer dance serve to objectify and commodify dancers while at the same diminishing appreciation for dance generally. Defined as an amalgam of competition dance, televised dance shows, and social media, Harrington's 'consumer dance body' results from a complex intersection of the disembodied forces. In her paper, *Consumer Dance Identity: The Intersection between Competition Dance,*

Televised Dance Shows and Social Media, Harrington argues that hegemonic constructions of gender and beauty populate consumer dance, giving rise to identities predominately reliant on the sense of sight due. She argues that recent technological advancements have produced a nonstop visual world of endless screens and elaborates her concerns about how the consumer dance body may negatively affect dancers' actual bodies and psyches.

In her article *Identities, Academic Cultures, and Relationship Intersections: Postsecondary Dance Educators' Lived Experiences*, Ali Duffy acknowledges that as a white, able-bodied, heterosexual, cisgender woman with tenure, she has a position of power and certain privileges not afforded to others. She argues that problematic and discriminatory practices continue to exist in academia. Often, in an effort to demonstrate diversity, equality and accessibility, US post-secondary institutions and departments, rely on faculty members who hold minority status in relation to their ethnicity, race, sexuality, gender expression, social class, or ability to provide diverse representation on a number of committees, legislative bodies and in administrative leadership. There is potential for overloading and exploitation as 'cultural taxation' (Burns 2019; Guillaume and Apodaca 2020) and this can have an impact on the faculty member's capacity to undertake necessary job responsibilities for tenure and promotion. Duffy's study of the perspectives and interpretations of how power, privilege and identities affected the paths of 50 Faculty members as they worked towards tenure in post-secondary institutions revealed ongoing practices of discrimination.

We complete this special issue with competitive dance scholar, Karen Schupp's paper, *Performing Whiteness on the Competition Stage: 'I Dance All Styles,'* in which she interrogates systemic racism in dance competition culture in the United States. Schupp reports most participants in dance competition culture are White, middle or upper-middle class young girls and adolescent females, who spend hours perfecting their 'technique' to display on the competition stage as they compete for awards and peer recognition. Technique in dance competition culture stems from values and expectations of ballet technique and is thought to apply across 'all styles,' regardless of the dance style performed, thereby promoting whiteness as normative. Using an intersectional approach, Schupp exposes how normalizing whiteness functions to reinforce systemic racism on the competition stage, allowing ample space to examine the ways in which overlapping race, gender, and class identities operate in dance competition culture. Schupp skillfully exposes racial power dynamics embedded in policies and practices, particularly competition circuit rules, regulations and judge commentaries – all of which demonstrate how whiteness, white privilege, and white supremacy continue to be performed in competition dance.

Each of the papers in this special issue provides dance educators with new ideas and diverse intersections for considering the future of inclusive dance education and reminds our vibrant field of its ability to imagine future dance education approaches, curricula, technologies and pedagogies.

We are pleased to announce the call for papers for the next special issue, *Dance, Health and Wellbeing* at the end of this special issue.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Choreographing decolonization: pedagogical confrontations at the intersection of traditional dance and liberal arts in higher education in India

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ABSTRACT

When the traditional (dance) and the modern (university) intersect within the Liberal Arts,the pedagogical dynamics produced opens possible pathways to approach decolonization as an ongoing praxical pedagogical process. This un-archival unruly lived experience of decolonization proposes a possibility of evoking Indian pasts against the misuses of the present. Arguing for an un-archival response which mediates the insertion of traditional oral mnemocultres into academia, enables knowledge production through heterogeneous modes of practice sustained by an embodied relation with generativity. Examining the relationship between the curriculum, the teacher and the student created in this context, this paper theorizes decolonization as an epistemological move towards understanding, living and moving beyond the colonial translation.

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Introduction

My appointment as a Dance faculty at India's first Liberal Arts philanthropic private university led to much confusion and discussion amongst my peers; both within the university and outside it. The academic departments questioned dance's ability to engage with the rigor and discipline of academia. Some interestingly felt that esoteric structures of traditional Indian dance forms were best suited for a spiritual pursuit rather than the critical discourses of the School of Humanities. There was skepticism about the suitability of the university space to teach a revered, ancient, sacred traditional art form. The professional dance world perceived my appointment either as an opportunity to propagate my guru's style or dilution of my dance practice. Positioned at this intersection of traditional dance and higher education in India, this paper explores the critical and emancipatory possibilities presented by this situation for both dance and educational discourses in the country.

As an Odissi dancer trained for almost three decades in the traditional *guru-shishya parampara* of dance as well as in Higher education spaces in the United Kingdom and the United States, I embody this intersection of traditional dance practice and the modern university systems. As will become evident in the analysis presented in this paper, the

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modern university system and the classical dance discourse represent two of the most enduring legacies of colonialism in India. While exploring the nature of this colonial legacy through the voices of various scholars in the field, this paper performs two critical gestures. Firstly, through my personal experiences of setting up and teaching dance in the undergraduate curriculum within a Liberal Arts paradigm for the first time in India, the paper illuminates the ways in which the continued colonization of dance and educational discourses in India have mirrored each other. The intersection of traditional dance and the modern university system makes the continuous colonization of one visible through the structures of the other. And secondly, again through personal experiences of navigating the simultaneous insider-outsider space in both academia and dance in India, this paper attempts to envisage embodied possibilities for the decolonization of both dance and higher education in India.

My position as a dancer-educator makes me acutely aware that traditional dance, as well as the modern university, have deep-rooted institutional colonizing impacts that are impossible to ignore or erase. The pedagogical dynamics produced at the intersection of traditional (dance) and the modern (university), opens possible pathways to understand decolonization as an ongoing praxical process. Using the tension generated between tradition and modernity as a critical identifier for new possibilities that subvert the colonial impact on our epistemological conditioning, this paper neither celebrates nor condemns the 'post' condition. Instead, it explores the concept of decolonization as a process of living through a colonial legacy rather than an attempt to return to a golden past.

Theoretical framework and methodology

Given that dance, unlike theatre, music or the visual arts, has so far not been part of academia in the country, dance education is a nascent field with no scholarship of any note. However, important work has been done in the field of education, dance and post-colonial studies in India by scholars like Krishna Kumar, Janet 'O' Shea, Davesh Soneji and many others whose work I have referred to in this paper. This paper performs an intersection of this work with my ongoing lived experience of designing and sustaining a culturally relevant dance curriculum within a School of Humanities in India.

Refractions of my personal experiences of creating and sustaining a dance program in higher education in India are the foundation of this paper. The process of refraction goes beyond reflection to frame experiences in new light in a way that allows personal experiences to uncover assumptions, biases and issues that would otherwise remain hidden (Pagano and Roselle 2009). The paper uses this refraction, on my teaching processes as well as learning experiences, to craft a narrative, as an experience that is storied both in the living and the telling and can be understood alongside other interpretative texts. I frame this paper along three dimensions of narrative enquiry: the personal and social (my interactions with my students and my peers) along one dimension; past, present and future (the post-colonial history of dance and education in India) along a second dimension and place (a Liberal Arts university as the site of this intersection) along a third dimension (Clandinin 2006). This three-dimensional narrative inquiry space highlights the relational dimension of narrative inquiry. In other words, drawing upon Dewey's criteria of a narrative view of experience (Clandinin and Connelly

2000), narrative enquiry emerges from the personal which can be understood only in relation to a social context. Personal experiences 'grow out of other experiences, and experiences lead to further experiences. Wherever one positions oneself in that continuum – the imagined now, some imagined past, or some imagined future – each point has a past experiential base and leads to an experiential future.' (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, 2). In mapping this three-dimensional space of enquiry, this paper argues for the possibility of a decolonizing pedagogy emerging from the site of post-colonial histories of dance which are experienced through personal experiences.

Theoretically, my personal experiences of the pedagogical tensions and questions generated by the intersection of the modern university structure and a traditional dance pedagogy are framed by Gayatri Spivak's (2013) concept of the 'double bind' and Makarand Paranjape's (2018) concept of *svaraj*. Spivak describes the double bind as 'learning to live with contradictory instructions (3).' In other words, a double bind is a continuous shuttling between two binary epistemological positions that co-construct yet oppose one another. Conceptually, the double-bind illustrates how traditional dance pedagogy simultaneously illuminates and pushes back at the colonized aspects of the modern university and how the continued colonization within traditional dance systems becomes visible through the pedagogies of the Liberal Arts paradigm.

The continued colonization of both traditional dance and education systems in India, as discussed later, is a result of the colonial translation that was imposed on both these sites of knowledge to situate them within the epistemological boundaries of modernity. Therefore, I argue that the decolonizing impetus comes from within these sites themselves. Drawing upon Makarand Paranjape's concept of *svaraj*, a move towards self-dependence (Paranjape 2018), this paper argues for decolonization as an epistemological strategy for understanding, living, and moving beyond the colonial translation that emerges from the site of colonization. This move delinks sites of knowledge production, dance and higher education, from the Eurocentric project of modernity by recovering possibilities engendered at the intersection of traditional dance practice and the university. In arguing for *svaraj*, this paper claims decoloniality as a right to 'constitute one's own world and horizon with dignity and autonomy' (Vazquez 2018, 4). This decolonizing move emerges from the socio-historical experience of coloniality. The colonial history of both traditional dance and education in India cannot be overlooked or erased; it needs to be confronted and accepted. Situated at the intersection of traditional dance pedagogy and a Liberal Arts paradigm, this paper works through the double-bind of tradition and modernity, of the past and the present, of my position as an insider and outsider to both dance and academia, to propose an enabling, mnemocultural decoloniality where heterogeneous modes of practice and are sustained through an embodied relation with generativity.

The colonial translation

Culturally, colonialism saw itself performing a civilizing agenda, demonstrating how traditional modes of knowledge production were incapable of participating in a modern, civilized, and rational social order. The colonial translation, morphing into nationalism at the time of India's independence (Chatterjee 1999), reconfigured traditional modes of knowledge production to enable the newly formed nation to participate in the modern

geopolitical world order. Philosopher J. N. Mohanty (2001a, 57) has observed that 'modern Indian's perception of his own culture is determined by the West's perception of India . . ..'. This colonial translation was evident in educational institutions as well as in the discourses around dance in India.

The modern university, one of the most visible products of the colonial encounter in India, was introduced to deliver access to a rational scientific education system to create an Indian civil society. The creation of a metropolitan, English speaking secular Indian intelligentsia enabled India to modernize. Educational institutions (the public school and the University), the most comprehensively adapted British establishments, became the sites for the formation of the urban post-colonial Indian identity (Srivastava 1998). Contesting the imperial belief of a priori good of colonization, D. Venkat Rao argues that the institution of the modern university was grafted into local cultures without any regard for the host culture. He argues that the 'European implant of the university functions on the premise of disregarding and denying any promise or potential to the regenerative pulse or tissue of the host culture' (Rao 2014, 3). J.N. Mohanty (2001a) adds that while the Sanskrit literary traditions suffered institutional violence, cultures of memory or mnemocultures from the Indian societal formations disappeared from knowledge production systems.

Concepts of universality and objectivity continue to masquerade as relevant knowledge in the Indian university system, concealing the historical specificity of Eurocentric research (Cupples 2019). This epistemic violence (Spivak 1990) leads to a continuing failure in conceiving ways for the host culture to speak through the saturation of colonial violence. The modern Indian university's emphasis on disciplinary boundaries, expertise, and focus on textual knowledge production, is indicative of a state of post-colonial inadequacy. By continuing to ask questions that are constituted through Western philosophical contexts in the university space, all possibilities for affirmation of the traditions of thought of the host culture are repudiated, and we are already mourning our 'glorious' past, seeking a proper burial of the dead (Spivak 2000, 15–16).

Drawing on the work of various dance scholars like Davesh Soneji, Urmimala Sarkar Munshi, Janet 'O Shea, Veena Oldenburg, Avanthi Meduri, Uttara Asha Coorlawala, Mathew Harp Allen and others, the colonial translation of dance practices in India can be summarized into four crucial aspects. First, it created a need for revival and cleansing of indigenous dance practices (Srinivasan 2010; Dalidowicz 2010). Second, it fashioned an authentic, homogenized, and standardized dance discourse (Allen 2008; Meduri 2010). Third, it institutionalized systematized and regularized dance production so that a pan Indian authenticity could be preserved (Cherian 2009; Pillai 2002). Finally, it created a pedagogical practice suited for producing dancers as custodians to a golden, ancient past of the Indian nation (Weidman 2006; Chakravorty 2006). Ironically, the revival of dance and music traditions of India was spearheaded by Indian intelligentsia cultivated within the imperial university systems. Transmitted through an oral, caste-based, practice-centric pedagogy, the dance of traditional performers was, for the revivalists, idiosyncratic, heterogeneous, hybrid and vernacular. The nationalist discourse revived these as authentic traditions to commensurate with the most celebrated classical traditions worldwide. Multiple traditions of performing arts were codified, canonized, and standardized; re-cast as classical arts; refined traditions that were ancient, sophisticated, systematic, and sacred (Allen 2008).

Multiple performance practices were braided together to create a seamless, homogeneous, classical cultural artifact that was an adequate representation of the nation's past. The ' idea of the classical had multiple connotations of antiquity, of lineage, of textual rigor, and above all resonated with the essential spirituality of India's tradition' (Subramanian 2008, 60). Ironically, the modern notion of spirituality used to translate the traditions of India van der Veer (2014) contends, is a derivative of Western concepts of spirituality, secularity, religion, and magic.

Pedagogical moves of colonial translation

The impact of the colonial translation of artistic and educational practices in India has permeated national policy, infrastructure, pedagogic practices, funding agencies, and political economies. Pedagogical practices in both dance and higher education have helped internalize these colonial translations to the degree that the colonial influences are no longer discernible.

A defining facet of the colonial translation of both dance and higher education in India has been that both are geared to the need for 'nation-building'. Experiences of citizenship, production of legitimate knowledge, the construction of the national self and the performance of this national identity have been the dominant guiding agenda for policy-making and patronage. Elaborating on the impact of this colonial translation, Partha Chatterjee comments,

> … (a) generalized diffusion of a school-mediated, academy- supervised idiom, codified for the requirements of reasonably precise bureaucratic and technological communication. It is the establishment of an anonymous, impersonal society, with mutually substitutable atomized individuals, held together above all by a shared culture of this kind, in place of a previous complex structure of local groups sustained by folk cultures reproduced locally and idiosyncratically by the micro-groups themselves. (Chatterjee 1999, 6)

Instead of heterogeneous practices that drew sustenance from the populations that they served, education and dance were standardized and codified within the modernist agenda.

State control over the curriculum taught in schools and institutes of Higher education though government bodies like NCERT, CBSE and the UGC implies centrally dictated curriculum and teaching methods (Kumar 2005). The idea of education in 19th century India, firmly rooted in British essentialism, led to a gap between indigenous knowledge and acceptable content for teaching in school, leading to isolation of the curriculum from real life (Kumar 2005). In the case of dance too, the State has been the dominant patron of the arts through government bodies like SNA. Through a system of grants, awards, and state-sponsored dance academies, the State has dictated and directed modes of cultural production, aligning it firmly to the idea of performing the Indian identity (Cherian 2009).

The second defining feature of the continuing colonization of traditional dance practice and higher education is the emphasis on reason and rationality, as understood in the Enlightenment era, to inform the basis for valid learning. The university system's priority is given to scientific, technical, and factual learning, as is evident in a large number of technical public government-funded universities. India has a total of 233

universities, and 46 universities are Centrally Funded Technical Institutions (CFTIs) (SHIKSHA 2017). Emphasis on factual learning through a textbook implies to the extent that everything outside the textbook is invalid. The textbook in the indian context represents codified, replicable and controlled knowledge. The phenomenon of state-recognized classical dances in India is a reflection of the same emphasis on rationality. Eclectic dance practices were cleansed of their colloquial elements and elevated to a classical status by aligning them to scriptural (Natyashastra) and sculptural (temple) texts. The idea of an authentic, codified tradition was promoted by the state and requires faithful replication in order to qualify for State funding. Any deviation from the 'norm', as in the case of Aditi Mangaldas (Narthaki. com 2013) is considered problematic. Uttara Asha Coorlawala (2004) has called this textualization of dance a 'Sanskritization' of India's dance traditions. Therefore, in both education spaces and in dance pedagogy, entire cultures of indigenous society represented by folklore, folk music, and crafts were considered inappropriate for teaching and are relegated to secondary status.

The third defining feature of the continued colonial translation is the recasting of the relationship between the teacher and the student. In a predominantly oral culture like India, the *guru-shishya parampara* was the primary mode of knowledge transmission in all spheres of knowledge. The aim of this system of teaching was to ensure continuity of knowledge across space and time through complex mnemonic structures. In this system of training *Shruti* (that which is heard) and *Smriti* (that which is remembered) are preferred modes of learning over the written notation. The *Upanishads* are possibly the first documentation of the dialogic nature of this pedagogy where learning was seen as a result of the student's capacity to question and the teacher's capacity to answer. The ancient Indian concept of the *guru-shishya paramparaw*as appropriated through the colonial translation in a manner that cast the teacher as an authoritative, distant, unquestionable fountainhead of all knowledge. As Amanda Weidman has observed,

> At the turn of the twenty-first century, the term has acquired a certain semantic density; not only does it refer to a specific sense of fidelity, that of the disciple to the guru, but the enactment of gurukulvasam signifies at a broader level, a fidelity to "tradition"(Weidman 2006, 226).

Pedagogically this implies that within educational spaces and in dance practice, the teacher becomes a mode of transferring 'absolute' knowledge and the student becomes a receptacle for this knowledge.

Within educational institutions, the colonial system of education alienated the teacher from the community and fostered a close relationship between the teacher and the administration as a humble servant. Kumar (2005) calls the teacher in India, the 'Meek Dictator,' implying that the teacher is simply a medium of delivery. The low status of teachers accompanied by low pay and inadequate training facilities continues to ensure powerlessness in the face of governmental authority. In the field of dance training, while the guru-shishya parampara has been responsible for the continuity of many dance forms, the relationship of the teacher and student is embedded within a power matrix and 'embroiled in a complex economy of material and symbolic exchange.' (Banerji 2017, 99). Association and complete submission to the guru confers the privilege of access and social networks to students. In the production of the Foucault (1979) docile body, the *guru shishya parampara* in its current avatar 'constrains individual expression and

discourages interrogation of standardized aesthetic and political directives' (Banerji 2017, 100).

The decolonizing the double bind and finding *Svaraj*

The Liberal Arts educational paradigm is new to India; till about eight years ago, it was entirely unheard of. Higher education in India, since independence, focus on skill-based technological education, geared towards producing engineers and doctors to fuel India's growth (Zakaria 2015). 'Pre- independent India did not recognize dance as an academic discipline and in the British system of education; in fact, the subject was taboo' (Vatsysyan 2011, 12). Dance as an academic discipline is still marred by social stigma and the label of extra-curricular in school curricula. Inspite of the 'standardization' of dance technique and the creation of a somewhat formal syllabus of study post-independence, dance in higher education does not have a 'commonly' agreed dance syllabus due to the plurality and heterogeneity of dance forms across India. The purpose of dance in higher education is also not clearly defined and there is a scarcity of qualified professionals who can teach dance at university levels. Departments of dance have restricted themselves to provide an institutional setup for 'traditional' pedagogies and have failed to integrate other allied disciplines like history, philosophy or sociology (Vatsysyan 2011, 13). These universities by and large house traditional masters who find it difficult to fulfill the requirements of an academic curriculum. Dance has a place but not a role in higher education in India today.

However, I argue, the inclusion of dance in the undergraduate curriculum of India's first liberal arts university is an important moment in the decolonizing move for both traditional dance discourse and modern university systems in India. This is an intersection that is both embodied and experienced by me as a dancer and as a dance educator. Traditional dance forms are knowledge systems that by being verbal, visual, acoustic, and gestural, trouble the masculine, rational epistemic stand of the university. Perpetuated through an embodied enacted pedagogy, oral traditions such as dance, engender questions echoing Rao's concerns. He asks,

> How do cultural formations receive and respond to these inheritances of embodied memory? What is their epistemic status in the context of the university? Does this response implicitly or explicitly relate to any sense of responsibility among these traditions? How does one configure mnemocultural responsibility in our contexts of teaching and research in India? (Rao 2014, 9)

The confusion that the inclusion of a traditional dance form in the university system that I began this paper with, hints at the beginning of a mnemocultural response to colonial textual, rational, scientific inheritances. On the other hand dance scholarship in India has been, unlike the West, driven by dancers themselves. Dancers have controlled the production of discourse on dance, often leading to an uncritical examination of the field and the reinforcement of hegemonic ideals within the field. As Kalpana Ram states

> … the very tightness of the embrace between the dancer and the discourse means there is virtually no space for potentially unsettling questions of social theory, those that concern the wider social, political and historical horizons within which these traditions are shaped and

> reshaped. The world of "the arts" becomes the defining and taken-for -granted world (Ram 2010, 3).

So even though dance is an important part of the social fabric of this country, dance and other disciplines do not speak the same language in academia. Dance remains a matter of highly individualized, specialized training outside the institutional framework. Dance and its performative traditions do not sufficiently inform the epistemologies and methodologies of the social sciences and therefore remain at the fringe of academic discourse. The cumulative effect of these factors on the place of dance in higher education in India can be summed up in Vatsyayan's words, 'The result is that, in a normal educational system, departments of dance have not produced great performers or, for that matter, great scholars.' (Vatsysyan 2011, 16)

I propose that the intersection of dance and higher education in India operates in a double bind (Spivak 2013), co-illuminating colonized practices and co-constituting decolonizing possibilities. The analysis of this intersection, as I have argued before, oscillates between the personal and the social, where micro-experiences (re)constitute and are (re)constituted by larger discourses. Decolonizing practices emerge along three axes: approaches and construction of the curriculum, the role, and position of the (dance) teacher and the power of the student as the co-constructor of dance discourse. These sites are not separate and any shift in one impacts the other. The decolonizing strategies that emerge here are situational and are still in process. The process, however, is not painless or straightforward. It necessitates a constant questioning and examination of colonial pedagogical practices, as discussed earlier, that have become invisible by their internalization.

'You are lying' a student stood up in class and accused me. 'I studied with my guru for more than a decade. And he never told me all this. What you are saying is an insult to him,'she said, walking out of the Dance and National Identity class that I was teaching in my first semester at my university. Apart from the trauma of being told that in the first teaching semester ever, this incident highlights the beginning of a decolonizing moment for dance education through a reconfiguration and rethinking of the process of curriculum formation within the university space which necessitates the interruption of existing discourses of traditional dance pedagogy.

Within the *guru shishya parampara* the teacher is limited by what he/she knows and the aim of teaching often becomes to replicate the guru's worldview rather than critically examine it. In a typical dance class, the process of teaching is such that the student learns, in a hierarchical manner, body movements that range from simple to complex. The aim is that the student should master the repertoire and imbibe the stylistic nuances of philosophy and etiquette of the guru. Requiring long periods, often ten years or more, of sustained training with a complete dedication to the vision of the guru, the trained body is seen as a repository of lived tradition. The emphasis on the rigor of practice to prepare the body for the physical demands of the profession obscures the importance of the study of the historical, philosophical, scientific, and intellectual aspects of the dance form. The traditional dance class works on a powerful disciplinary pedagogy, reproducing certain types of identities, constraining and rejecting others.

Since the success of a guru is dependent upon the success of the student as a performer, which as discussed earlier is mediated by the State, this pedagogical

model ensures that the nationalist agenda within which the traditional dance forms were classicized, perpetuates its political and cultural ideology. A large body of scholarship now exists which discusses at length the connection between the performing arts and the performance of national identity in India. However, traditional dance pedagogy, which valorizes performance and focuses on the creation of a performing artist alone, remains uninformed by this this work. For students who have trained in the traditional dance forms, sometimes for almost a decade, the university is the first time that they encounter works of scholars like Ananya Chatterjea, Davesh Soneji, Chandralekha and others discussed earlier. The responses of students to this scholarship shifts from being outright insulted, then dejected and unsure about their identities and finally finding courage to assert agency and voice from within their forms. Having gone through this cycle myself, I believe that the critical discourses of the Humanities within the modern university serve to make visible the continued colonization within dance practice by necessitating a rethinking about what the dance curriculum looks like and what is worth teaching within dance.

'Curricula and pedagogies are for someone,' Ellsworth (1997) argues, and so have intended, desired and imagined audiences and consumers. Curriculum assumes consciously or

unconsciously who the students and the teachers are, what they know, what they do not know, and what they need to know. The curriculum is the defining framework of educational practice frames: the teacher, the student, the audience as well as the artist. David Scott (Scott and Hargreaves 2014) argues that learning is an epistemic activity that involves producing knowledge. The basis of curriculum design is a process of recontextualization of knowledge so that it becomes accessible and transmittable. Therefore, by framing what is taught (and not taught) within specific contexts, the curriculum is a powerful tool for creating, sustaining and subverting power relations across society and history. Outside the university, traditional dance practices are taught within a mytho-historical framework. The position of dance as a part of the undergraduate curriculum in the Humanities necessitated the inclusion of courses which place dance within critical historical and social discourses. Instead of remaining a cultural artifact, the space of the university transforms dance into an embodied methodology for knowledge production.

The irrefutable indivisibility of word, meaning, matter and movement that Indian aesthetics (Nair 2015) are built upon, implies that movement and thought are always intertwined and are constantly in the process of becoming. What if the relationship between the curriculum and student learning is not a linear one-way street? What if learning outcomes depend on the way the teacher and the students subvert, resist, retexture, and extend the curriculum? What does a curriculum that has space for memory and intuition look like? Are there ways of making learning visible through methods other than writing? How can the curriculum enable the teachers and students to ask questions that are relevant to them and arise from personal historical, social contexts and worldviews? These are some of the questions that the confrontation of an oral, embodied pedagogy like dance and a largely written logocentric pedagogy of higher education engenders.

While an interdisciplinary approach is a given in most dance programs in the world, in India, it is changing the dynamics of the field by challenging the very basis on which

pedagogical aims for the university and traditional dance were constituted within modernity at the time of India's independence. The dance curriculum that is being developed at my university requires students to grapple through an embodied practice with questions of articulation of power as well as representation and modes of circulation of knowledge. Rather than aiming for pre-defined, known and recognizable learning outcomes, students are forced to contend with inconsistencies, uncertainty, and ambivalence, allowing the text of dance to be read fluidly between the shifting relations of the teacher, the student, and the dance form. By enabling an interdisciplinary interweaving of the written word and mnemotic practices, critical enquiry and felt experiences, by finding space for fluid curriculum structures that are informed by a critical engagement with existing indigenous practices, the intersection of dance and university systems provoke a rethinking of the curriculum in ways which do not stultify who the teacher is, who the students can be and what is learnt in the classroom.

Creating a curriculum which does not adopt a fixed position of the teacher and the student in class implies a curriculum which moves beyond remaining a contract between the teacher and the student on paper. My guru would say that if knowledge were a big buffet, what each one of us took away from the feast depended on our individual capacity and taste. In inherent orality of dance prioritizes learning through *Shruti* and *Smriti* (discussed earlier) and therefore changes the way teachers and students negotiate the 'buffet' of learning offered in the classroom. The power that the students and teachers have over what is taught and learnt in class is antithetical to the standardized objectives and accountability measures of a university classroom. This process as Bell Hooks (1994) insists, is critical to allow students and teachers to see and understand interdisciplinary connections within their bodies. As a vantage point that allows students to take ownership of their bodies and artistic processes, I argue, a relational approach to teaching can prevent pedagogy from being completely closed, permanently othering, lifeless, repetitive and often passion killing.

Decolonization emerges as a strategy of a formative movement forward fueled by relational aspects of pedagogy that build on belief and memory rather than an external, documentable prescriptive process. As a gesture using kinesthetic responses of living in the double bind (Spivak 2013), such praxis of pedagogy becomes a springboard for a disruption of the politics of polarity between the traditional and the contemporary, the national and the global, the past and the present.

Pedagogy as praxis, when it works, is unrepeatable and cannot be copied- it is worthless to the economy of capitalist educational accountability. That is to say that the teacher and the student are irreplaceable in class and that learning is not replicable across individuals and contexts. Very often, and particularly in university spaces, learning is seen as a product of the curriculum, and it is expected that different teachers can deliver the same learning outcomes. What it does not account for is the hidden, often unconscious learning outcomes that are a product of the modes of address between the teacher, student, and the curriculum. This mode of embodied address is what traditional dance practices in higher education enable. Traditional dance systems, by their mnemonic nature, trouble the codified disciplinary nature of the modern university. It is through these unaccountable, unpredictable, and unmanageable learning outcomes that the indigenous epistemes break through and speak through the colonial graft.

It is never entirely done

The work is never entirely done; always in a state of becoming, it is a continuous praxis of thinking through and acting on the questions that living with a colonial legacy and needing to participate in the challenges that a globalized world throws up. In this paper I have argued how traditional dance practices and the modern university are sites of a continued colonization. They are also therefore the sites from within which culturally relevant strategies of decolonization emerge in a pedagogical moment positioned at the intersection of these two enduring legacies of colonialism. The legacies of nation building, prioritizing rational codified replicable knowledge and the distortion of the relationship between the teacher and the student become the threads which begin to unravel the tight weave of colonial modernity in the decolonizing moment. Arguing for a curriculum that is fluid and flexible and yet enables criticality and a generative embodied process of knowledge that is not replicable and is dependent on the dynamics of the teacher student relationship, I propose that the double bind within which the intersection of dance and the modern university operates enables the emergence of svaraj and overcoming the normativity of dominant discourse so that indigenous epistemes can reclaim dignity and validity (Vazquez 2017).

A few years ago, inspite of having been a performing artist for more than two decades, I would not have been in a position to write this paper. The intersection of critical discourses with embodied practice which I encountered within the university space, and the accompanying discomfort with both the dance that I performed and the academia that I constantly inhabit has been the source of this paper. This discomfort, much like the indignation of the student who called me a liar, often makes me unsure of my next steps. But I have come to believe that this discomfort is productive because it has become an embodied methodology that decolonizes the modernist aesthetics within which I have been framed as an artist and as an educator. At the intersection of the traditional and the modern, of the past and the contemporary, of embodied practice and critical theory has been generated a site where the negation of multiple pasts, of multiple histories and the erasure of other worlds of meaning can be addressed in culturally specific ways.

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ARTICLE

Manifestations of surveillance in private sector dance education: the implicit challenges of integrating technology

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to illuminate the challenges of integrating new technologies in private sector dance education and explores the formation of digitally mediated identities in adolescent female dancers. Autoethnographic research is supported by Foucauldian theory as well as surveillance and social media scholarship. Research examines how the imagined audience, produced by live-streamed closed-circuit television (CCTV), perpetuates the status quo in systems of Western concert dance education and creates new dimensions in dance competition culture. The values of the dominant class are embedded in institutional systems of training. Structural systems of oppression exclude marginalized groups and maintain the status quo. The argument is extended to include how the imagined audience produced by social media plays a role in reinforcing dance's established exclusionary aesthetic, as dancers create online identities to meet perceived audience expectations and build cultural capital. The discussion explores ways in which the imagined audience exacerbates current concerns in the field of dance education. Existing socioeconomic and institutional barriers perpetuate patriarchal values and reinforce gender expectations. In a post-pandemic world, teachers and students will negotiate new dimensions in dance education produced by manifestations of surveillance as this technological mediation will continue to be the norm.

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Introduction

The matrix of in-studio embodied relationships in dance education conventionally relished by dancers, teachers and choreographers is changing with the use of new technologies. Traditionally, the dance studio is a panoptic environment where expectations are well defined and dancers are taught to self-regulate behaviour through constant surveillance by teachers and peers, as well as self-surveil through the use of the mirrors (Barr and Oliver 2016; Berg 2015; Ritenburg 2010; Zeller 2017). However, the addition of closed-circuit television (CCTV) used in private-sector studios, which can be live-streamed, causes the level of dancers' performativity in the traditionally panoptic environment to be amplified in response to the ever-present digital extension of self through media (Berg 2015). The somatic experience of dancing is being extended through dancers' exposure to surveillance, including CCTV as well as participation in social media (also knowns as social networking

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sites-SNSs) where users create and share content with other users (Saiphoo and Vahedi 2019). Findings will show how these modes of surveillance cause adolescent dancers to consciously adjust their self-presentation to gain cultural capital through constructed representations during dance classes, competitions and on social media. SNSs represent 'a range of self-surveillance processes and practices, where individuals deliberately monitor and manage their own actions and behaviors' (Nemorin 2017, 239). This self-regulation is in response to the 'imagined audience' created by SNSs (Fox and Vendernia 2016).

In this study, lived experiences of young competitive dancers are illuminated in a population shown to consist of 'White, upper-middle class, female adolescents and children' participating in 'dance competition culture' (Schupp 2018). Autoethnographic research investigates how new technologies in dance education affect existing power relationships and influence personal identity formation of adolescent dancers in exclusionary institutional and social systems functioning at the intersection of middle-classness and Whiteness. First, this paper investigates how the imagined audience facilitated by live-streamed CCTV perpetuates the status quo in Western dance training creating new dimensions in dance competition culture as it limits progressive approaches to dance education in private sector studios by reinforcing traditional pedagogies. Second, this paper extends the argument to include how the imagined audience produced by social media plays a role in reinforcing dance's established exclusionary aesthetic as dancers adapt their images to meet perceived audience expectations and build cultural capital. The discussion section explores the ways in which the imagined audience created by CCTV, as well as 'various interpersonal electronic techniques' (Nemorin 2017), add a new dimension to already existing concerns in the field of dance education by perpetuating commodification of dance education, perpetuation of the status quo, and the operation of Whiteness (Barr and Oliver 2016; Berg 2015; Davis 2018; Saiphoo and Vahedi 2019).

The enculturation of young dancers into a digital world is shifting the landscape of dance education as teachers have new dimensions of identity formation and social pressures for students to negotiate are unescapable. For instance, in the private sector competitive dance studio, dataveillance is facilitated by dancers' exposure to vertical surveillance of live-streamed CCTV, as well as continual horizontal surveillance as a result of smartphones and participation in digital technologies. Dataveillance governs behaviour through systematic monitoring and storage of data (Nemorin 2017; Simon 2005). Participation in any online activity such as interaction with computers and cell phones through data entry or biometrics including facial recognition software creates a biometric double or 'data double' (Simon 2005, 15). Traditional vertical techniques of surveillance such as CCTV have given rise to horizontal forms, such as social media, where is it is argued that power hierarchies are 'more or less flattened' due to self-surveillance to self-regulation necessary when subscribing to societal parameters for participation (Nemorin 2017, 239).

The amassing of datapoints in computer databases to create biometric identities results in the replacement of the embodied, grounded dancer with their biometric double, which becomes their public identity. Are there negative repercussions for adolescent dancers who engage with, and conform to, identity-forming behaviours online to attempt to control their digital representation? How will this change post-pandemic? During the revision phase of this paper, Canada went into emergency lockdown to slow the spread of the novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). On 11 March 2020,

COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (French and Monahan 2020). Lockdown is significant to this research, as every aspect of the dancers' lives moved exclusively online and their biometric double suddenly became the only identity representing them outside of their homes, as lockdown included the closing of all non-essential businesses and group gatherings such as schools, universities, dance studios, dance competitions, sports events, theatres, etc. Essential services such as hospitals, groceries stores, pharmacies and the construction industry remained open. However, in public, people were required to remain six feet apart (labelled social or physical distancing). The conclusion of this article discusses the implications of COVID-19 on dancers' digitally mediated identities as this topic is now of unprecedented significance and the trajectory of dance research will be permanently altered by unavoidable technological mediation.

Theoretical underpinning: surveillance, power and identity in dance competition culture

Michel Foucault used philosopher Jeremy Bentham's prison architecture of the panopticon as an analytic tool to examine surveillance as a method of deploying power to enact discipline, and shape and manage docile bodies (Nemorin 2017). In so doing, he created a metaphor that captures underlying power relations regarding how surveillance directs docile bodies and forms identities (Nemorin 2017). To Foucault, 'people under surveillance tend to internalize the surveillance gaze, modify their behaviour and question their identity in order to conform to a given social norm' (Dryburgh and Fortin, 96). The use of CCTV in private sector dance studios enhances the already asymmetrical power relationship that exists between the stakeholders including studio administration, parents/clients, teachers and students, as well as the panoptic environment of the dance studio (Berg 2015; Ritenburg 2010). Dance students' identities are formed as they modify their behaviour to conform to studio expectations that are amplified by the imagined audience. Additionally, the once *closed* circuit used as a mechanism of power within the studio building is now extended by the internet through live-streaming. The internet allows the computer to become a mobile watchtower in the panoptic mechanism (Nemorin 2017).

Foucault sees power as a technique or strategy that produces subjectivity; as power circulates, individuals are simultaneously able to exercise and undergo power (Levine-Rasky 244). Theoretically, power not only operates from the top-down but also laterally, and from the bottom up; therefore, power can act as a site of resistance. Additionally, power is magnified in experiences that are 'both about and through the human body' which occur in body discourses that are often gendered shaping embodied subjectivities (Webb et al. 209). Sociology professor Cynthia Levine-Rasky (2011) advances the understanding of power by applying the black feminist analytic framework of intersectional theory to Whiteness and middle-classness to illuminate the power often denied by those at this intersection. In an interview, critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw addresses how intersectionality calls attention to unrecognized power imbalances, stating: 'Intersectionality draws attention to invisibilities that exist in feminism, in anti-racism, in class politics, so obviously it takes a lot of work to consistently challenge ourselves to be attentive to aspects of power that we don't

ourselves experience' (Adewunmi 2014, 2). Additionally, Crenshaw is clear that intersectionality accounts for structural identities of 'race, gender, sexual orientation or national origin' by which groups of people are categorized (Cooper 2016, 390). Structural intersectionality includes institutional forms of oppression which are embedded in systems of Western concert dance training.

Structural systems of oppression exclude marginalized groups and maintain the status quo by reflecting the values of the dominant class. The established commercial dance studio system and curricula for competitive dance in the Toronto, Canada area, is an education system that perpetuates the Eurocentrism of Western concert dance as participation in ballet is often required as a basis of dance technique. Required participation in ballet perpetuates a 'special designation' that confers White privilege and elevates the form above all others (Prichard 2019, 172). The affirmation of White ideals in competitive dance environments constitutes a Foucauldian notion of racism in which 'White normativity plays a role' (Prichard 2019, 270). In my extensive experience in competitive dance culture, classes in this environment are traditionally structured to reflect the dominant class, constituting students' conception of the dance world as a whole which subsequently perpetuates a long-established hierarchy placing Western concert dance above all other forms. Dance professor Schupp (2019a) explains that dance competition culture 'is a multi-layer phenomenon centered around dance as entertainment, competition as a vehicle for improvement, and consumption of dance' (59). Schupp (2019a) explains how traditional gender expectations are reinforced and normative practices are enhanced by the appropriation of non-white dances.

Reiterating the population in private-sector studios is mostly White, upper-middle-class female youth, Schupp (2018, 2019a, 2019b) posits that this environment reflects 'competitive, conservative and capitalistic social and cultural values that are spreading in and beyond the United States . . .' (33). Findings in this Canadian-based research support Schupp's suggestion that competition culture extends beyond the United States, and the population is equally homogenous. To illustrate the level of disposable income required to access competitive dance in Toronto, I will draw from my expertise as a competitive teacher, choreographer and, possibly most relevant, my experiences as a competitive dance parent. At its most basic, a competitive routine danced at four competitions in Canada costs approximately 1000 CA. This includes custom choreography, costume and entry fees. Specific shoes, wigs, props or possibly a small set may comprise additional costs. This estimate does not include tuition for ten to twelve months of competitive training classes to support participation in competitions. I have recently taught ballet training classes to competitive dancers who perform as many as 25 competitive routines in one season.

In this population, socio-economic class norms are such that every student has access to technology and most often their own personal device including tablet, cellular phone and/or laptop. In the article, 'Children, Intersectionality, and Diversity in a Digital Age,' the authors explain that upper-income families, make different choices about engagement with media that enforce the family priorities, and upper-income families place emphasis on 'individual achievement sometimes at the expense of family togetherness' (Alper, Katz, and Clark 2016, 111). Competitive dance rewards individual achievement in both rehearsal and performance which maintains patriarchal and authoritarian underpinnings. Authoritarian qualities are preserved by competition dance culture's perpetuation of

traditional Western dance pedagogy including a vertical mentoring style in which teachers demand silence and obedience, and the mentor is seen as an all-knowing guru (Keinänen and Gardner 2004). Despite competitive dance groups often being called teams, which by nature denotes support and collaboration, there is often intense individual competition and a clear hierarchical structure based on idealized aesthetic and physical capacity.

In the last five competitive dance seasons, my daughter and son participated in competitions that live-stream the events on their websites which are available to the public. During those seasons, my children also attended a studio with CCTV, which allows parents to watch the classes in real-time from the waiting room, and additionally allows the administration remote online access. Scholarly interpretations of Foucault's concept of panopticism are abundant and the relevance of the topic in today's society is debated as new surveillance is pervasive and invisible, as fluid and implicit forms of discipline are embedded in the practices of everyday life (Nemorin 2017, Simon 2005). Professor Koskela (2003) of the University of Helsinki states, 'It can be claimed that through surveillance cameras the panoptic technology of power has been electronically extended: our cities have become like enormous Panopticons' (293). In today's society, surveillance and the power it wields has become accepted and expected. Communications professor Emily West (2019) echoes this sentiment as she discusses the various levels of surveillance in online platforms such as Amazon, which not only optimizes customer experience through data collection, but offer 'surveillance as service' in products such as 'Ring doorbell' home monitoring that allows consumers to monitor their front door from their mobile device (West 2019, 28–29). In light of this ubiquitous connectivity, it is no wonder that the clients at the commercial dance studios expect to monitor their children constantly as part of the service they are purchasing. This is a new dimension in the commodification of dance education and dance competition culture.

Unlike the general population under surveillance by CCTV on the streets, the dance class and stage are contained and isolated with well-defined expectations of behavior becoming self-regulating over time. As in Foucault's panopticism, the subjects are quarantined and enclosed allowing for the mechanism to function. Sociology professor Bart Simon (2005) explains that 'routinization and training homogenizes the population giving individualized agents the shared ability to recognize and conform to the rules . . .' (9). The agency of those under surveillance is a mitigating factor in the functioning of panopticism. Resistance is no less a function of panoptic power than the control of the population (Simon 2005). However, in dance, unlike other institutional systems, students are generally eager to conform as they have opted to participate and therefore, have little reason to employ strategies of resistance. Findings in this research show that generally stakeholders enculturated into digital society through online activities and consistent surveillance are fully invested when it comes to interaction through social media and exposure to CCTV. However, strategies of resistance are present, exemplified by bottom-up relations of power.

Method: positionality, data collection, and analysis

Echoing recent studies in Western concert dance education, this paper employs autoethnographic research strategies (Schupp 2018, 2019b; Zeller 2017). My positionality results from 20 years of teaching and choreographing for multiple competitive private sector studios with CCTV as well as various research projects that included analysis of my own field experience (Berg 2017, 2016, 2015). I have spent years as what Robert Merton

calls 'the ultimate participant in a dual participant-observer role' (cited in Anderson 379). Prior to the last two decades of teaching and choreographing for commercial studios, I participated in dance competition culture as a dancer. Additionally, while training at Canada's National Ballet School, I learned about the institution of ballet from an insider perspective. This embodied experience is the basis for the autoethnographic strategies used in the research. As performance studies professor Tami Spry (2009) explains, 'Autoethnography in particular carries important methodological implications for how the body is sited in what constitutes knowledge, evidence, and the evidence of knowledge' (603). Research methods strongly resonated with analytic autoethnography as described by Leon Anderson (2006), in which the researcher being a visible member of the community, as well as a visible member in published texts, and is committed to fostering a theoretical understanding of broader social phenomena through critical analysis.

As a feminist ballet teacher and researcher, my pedagogy includes well-established approaches to teaching in a holistic way. As dance professors Barr and Oliver (2016) explain, feminist pedagogy has become 'a vibrant and influential strand within education' through the work of various feminist pedagogue scholars addressing topics such as intersectionality, interrogation of authority and engaged teaching and learning (100). It is my dedication to speeding ballet's slow institutional change toward these feminist ideals that first prompted me to look at the limiting effects digital surveillance has on the progression of private sector dance education. I wondered how surveillance potentially limits dialogue, inclusivity, democratic teaching and ultimately the disruption of relations of power that exist in Western concert dance training. In the 2018–2019 season, the realization of my complicity in perpetuating the norm of self-regulation in response to surveillance was another reason for revisiting my research, conducted and published five years earlier, and extending the results by including a previously omitted dancer perspective representing lateral and bottom-up relations of power.

Furthermore, the extension of the research to horizontal online surveillance reflects my student-centered, inclusive teaching philosophy that includes a strong principle that all students should be able to achieve technical proficiency to whatever degree their physical capacity allows without feeling that their bodies are somehow not suited to a perpetuated classical ideal. Upon reading dance scholar Crystal Davis's (2018) article, 'Laying New Ground: Uprooting White Privilege and Planting Seed of Equity and Inclusivity,' I was overwhelmed with the enormity of what she calls the 'systematic phenomenon' of the operation of Whiteness in the field of dance education (120). Any resistance that I might have enacted to hierarchy or patriarchy entrenched in ballet training seems insignificant when considering the larger picture of racial bias in dance education. However, at the conclusion of the article Davis (2018) states, 'Allyship includes disrupting microaggressions, White privilege, and racial and cultural biases that present themselves in dance classrooms, curriculum, and assessment models' (125). Her statement fuels my various research projects, as I am empowered by the tangible idea of disrupting, interrupting, or altering perpetuated hierarchical and patriarchal practices in the institution of ballet training and performance that continue to create barriers for inclusive environments.

Supported by Foucauldian theory (1977), this paper re-visits my graduate school research published in RIDE (2015) and draws on new data resulting from direct observation and field notes recorded in the 2018–2019 competitive dance season. During this

season, I held a unique dual role as ballet teacher/competitive choreographer to my then 12-year-old daughter. Data collection consisted of detailed journaling reflecting six hours of teaching ballet on Tuesday evenings, and one to two hours of choreography or rehearsal for a competitive ballet solo during weekends. Field notes reported the first-person perspective of an adolescent dancer via one on one interaction multiple times during the season, as well as documented discussions after each of four competitions. The student perspective was omitted from the 2015 study due to time constraints; therefore, these data add a fresh perspective on the effects of different manifestations of power relations including the lateral configuration of power relations between students.

Upon analysing the data, there where both preconceived themes as well as those that emerged during the categorization process. Performance studies scholar D. Soyini Madison (2012) supports the inclusion of both *a priori* themes for categorization as well as emergent themes, as she describes coding or logging data in ethnography as grouping information under themes and categories accumulated during fieldwork, further suggesting that coding might be done in response to the anticipated audience. Considering these criteria, the results are reported using preconceived overarching themes. First, vertical surveillance including pedagogical alternations made in response to the panoptic mechanism. Second, horizontal surveillance including identity formation. Themes emerging from fieldwork include: how surveillance affected the relationships of the students, the student awareness of the director's gaze as well as self-objectification and upward social comparison. Data is placed in conversation with recent surveillance and social media scholarship to explore a new dimension in dance education (Alper, Katz, and Clark 2016; Fox and Vendernia 2016; Simon 2012; Nemorin 2017).

Background: results of previous study

Autoethnographic research, with findings from field notes from the 2018–2019 season, illustrates the cognitive dissonance prompting this research subsequent to my renewed participation in an environment that caused me to revert to more traditional approaches to teaching ballet. Upon returning to the competitive private sector studio after a three-year hiatus, and I was immediately reminded of the 2015 findings, as I was hyperaware that I was being monitored by CCTV. The purpose of the previous research was to 'explore how video cameras in the dance studio environment may intensify asymmetrical power relationships already present in the commercial studio setting, as well as how surveillance may impact feminist pedagogical strategies' (Berg 2015, 231). The participants in the previous study were limited to studio administration, teachers, and parents, which left the first-person accounts from the students for future studies. In the current research, my insider perspective is augmented by interaction with my daughter as my own competitive student which offers a student perspective on CCTV surveillance in the context of dance competition culture in private sector dance education.

The qualitative methods from the earlier study included seventy-one parental surveys, two semi-structured audio-recorded interviews, one email interview, and data from my field notes regarding six teaching hours per week for eight weeks. The findings of the earlier study offered various perspectives including that of the office manager who interacted with all members of the studio and received feedback regarding the newly-installed CCTV on almost a daily basis (Berg 2015). Findings are significant because they

illustrate all studio participants altered their behavior in reaction to the power of the panoptic mechanism. Specifically, teachers felt that they increased their self-regulation in reaction to the expectations of the unseen audience (in the current research the term imagined audience is used). Findings from the earlier study support the findings sections of this paper as the current research works from evidence that CCTV has the ability to alter behavior of the observed, and therefore functions as a mechanism of power in the studio environment.

Findings

Thematic categories that emerged from data analysis are grouped under *a priori* themes of vertical surveillance and horizontal surveillance. Within these overarching themes, there are examples of various manifestations of power. In the findings for vertical surveillance (CCTV), there are top-down, lateral and bottom-up power dynamics. Vertical surveillance is exemplified by data focused on the administration watching the teacher, clients watching the teacher, the teacher watching the student, as well as administration watching the students. Within these configurations, the findings show how the clients, including parents and students, watching rehearsals can then affect lateral configurations of power present in student to student relations. Additionally, the bottom-up configuration of power is explored by the students as they are aware of the mechanism of power and test the boundaries of its power. In addition to the biometric double existing as the dancers' online identity facilitating continual surveillance, the findings for horizontal surveillance (SNSs) illustrate how self-objectification and upward social comparison are extended by the use of social media which serves to reenforce dance's exclusionary aesthetic perpetuating the status quo.

Vertical surveillance: configurations of power

First, this research argues that the imagined audience created by live-streamed CCTV perpetuates the status quo in Western dance training and creates new dimensions in dance competition culture and training. In qualitative studies, dance teachers and physical activity instructors under surveillance worry that progressive teaching strategies including dialogue, and creative dance that explores improvisational movement, may not appear to be productive in a traditional sense when viewed on screen (Berg 2015; Webb, McCaughtry, and MacDonald 2004). Teachers altered their pedagogy by limiting dialogue because conversation in a physical training environment maybe interpreted by the imagined audience as non-productive. Teachers also reverted to authoritarian strategies to make it appear to the imagined audience that all the students were physically participating and, therefore, learning in an accepted/expected traditional sense (Berg 2015; Webb, McCaughtry, and MacDonald 2004). For example, dance teachers demanded movement during creative explorations and physical activity instructors reported feeling anxious about students with poor behaviour keeping students busy in order to give the appearance of learning (Berg 2015; Webb, McCaughtry, and MacDonald 2004). The examples of teachers adapting their pedagogy illustrate the functioning of power to regulate behaviour. In a largely female dance population removing dialogue further enforces societal expectations of women and children to be

silent and obedient, as well as perpetuating 'traditional authoritarian paradigms based in hierarchical systems of privilege, or the "demonstrate and do" model' in dance (Dragon 2015, 26).

Similarly, when teaching with CCTV, I was acutely aware of the gaze of administration facilitated by monitors in the office. Administration included the director, office manager, and multiple associates working at the front desk and dancewear boutique. I admittedly adjusted my strategies to meet the studio expectation and serve the imagined audience of parents in the waiting room. For instance, I limited student-teacher dialogue and rehearsed exercises for memorization, which led to physical conditioning and technical efficiency rather than fostering critical thinking through movement exploration and dialogue. This self-regulation and subsequent change in behaviour reflects the experience recorded five years earlier. Adaptations to pedagogy continued to occur despite the persistent negative self-reflection it created as I realized that I was complicit in the perpetuation of surveillance as the norm and subjugated by the mechanism of power. Field notes (Sept 2018) showed how I felt that I was 'giving up' forms of resistance and conforming to the institutionalized ballet curriculum that is inherently racist, gendered and authoritarian.

In October 2018, I was made aware of the complexity of the situation by my daughter, whom I will call Jane. These data illustrate the multiple workings of power including top-down, lateral, and bottom-up configurations. In an effort to save the cost of choreography ($550 CA), I created Jane's competitive ballet solo which was rehearsed weekly after ballet class. It is relevant to note that Jane was granted the privilege of having a solo because she was deemed talented enough by the studio administration to warrant a special routine; the criteria for this privilege is subjective. Furthermore, Jane was only permitted to accept the offer of the solo once I (as her parent) agreed to allow her to participate in a ballet group dance ($289 choreography, 325 USD costume fee and approximately 240 USD entry fees).

The pressure of the surveillance from the imagined audience affected my usual mode of communication and process of creation by limiting dialogue and movement exploration as these strategies can appear less rigorous in a traditional sense. Although I was conscious of my resistance to change feminist pedagogical strategies to perform for the imagined audience, I admittedly was adapting anyway. For instance, in October 2018, one particular rehearsal with Jane began to follow what education philosopher Paulo Freire termed the banking method of education, in which the teacher deposits information into their students with no collaboration or dialogue (Freire [1970] 2011). During this rehearsal, I reverted to a 'teach as I was taught' mentality from my competitive and conservatory training by giving Jane choreography and having her imitate, memorize and practice it. Immediately after rehearsal, I reflected on the shortcomings of the interaction. Heightened awareness of my altered behaviour prompted me to attempt to make amends for the interaction the following day by telling my daughter that her solo looked good during the last run through. This conversation revealed the workings of lateral power dynamics, as she replied flatly, 'Yeah, that's what Chantal said.' My mind went blank and I unthinkingly asked how Chantal knew about her solo. Chantal is Jane's classmate and competitor for her ballet solo. Both Chantal and her mother stayed after class to watch Jane's rehearsal on a regular basis.

This conversation was an epiphany that reveled a previously omitted lateral configuration of power involving student to student relations. I had been unaware of how the imagined audience affects student relationships in the context of dance competition culture. When interviewed, Jane revealed the observations given to her by her classmate/competitor. Chantal compared Jane's work to her own, predicting how both pieces maybe received by judges at competitions. They agreed that Chantal's livelier music and fast footwork maybe more impressive to competition judges with little or no ballet background when compared to Jane's controlled gentle movement. Although judges may have excellent commercial performance and choreography experience, this does not enable their ability to judge all genres (Schupp 2019b). Lateral relations of power in this example of student to student surveillance served to undermine Jane's confidence in the choreography despite her belief that she was a stronger dancer than Chantal. Ultimately, the results of four competitions ranked Jane higher than Chantal, but Jane always questioned the potential outcome of the competition until the results were revealed.

In addition to lateral power configurations, students were also affected by top-down surveillance from administration as an undeniable distraction in the studio was the telephone mounted to the wall. The telephone allows communication between six studios, the front desk and office areas. Most evenings, during six hours of classes, the phone rang at least once. Subjects of incoming calls included, student absences and late arrivals, administration requesting to see students regarding payment or costuming, injury or health-related information for students attending classes that evening, etc. However, the content of the telephone calls was not shared with the students which evidently heightened the students' awareness of surveillance and the ability of the director to communicate in real-time with the teachers. For example, one evening when the phone rang, I listened to the message and hung up. One of the 13-year-old students looked at me with round eyes communicating her anxiety and asked if that was the director. This question was revealing and surprising as I had not considered that excluding students from communication amplified the asymmetrical power dynamics. Students' perception that the surveillance had the ability to affect instant change in the studio via the telephone was another manifestation of top-down power facilitated by CCTV.

Student behaviour was also affected by the potential for bottom-up configurations of power. Resistance for one of the 13-year-old dancers came in the form of altering the required uniform. In a ballet class with a specific dress code, attendance notes showed that one student wore an alternate colour leotard for six classes between September and December 2018. The first time this occurred, she was asked why she was not in uniform and the conversation was left open ended. The following time this occurred, she was more sternly asked to wear proper attire and she was blatantly reminded that the director and administration were clearly able to see the infraction. In resistance, the student continued wearing the alternate colours every few weeks. I did not speak to her about this infraction after the second occurrence.

Arguably, ignoring the behaviour is a questionable response based on studio rules and the traditional environment of a ballet class. However, after many years of analysing my own pedagogy, I know that when I have a negative reaction to student behaviour, it is a potential moment for personal growth. I reflect on what is inciting my negative reaction to a young individual challenging what I perceive as my authority or the requirements of

a ballet class. Many times, this instance included, I realize that the ingrained authoritarian teaching of my childhood still influences my reactions as asymmetrical top-down relations of power are deep-rooted in traditional ballet pedagogy (Berg 2017; Dragon 2015; Zeller 2017). However, power in Foucauldian theory is a site of resistance and due to its multidirectional workings can be both productive and repressive (Webb, McCaughtry, and MacDonald 2004). I realize that my willingness to observe how this situation unfolded was a result of my curiosity about the power dynamics created by the CCTV. I wondered about the realization of oppression in this commercial environment. Is it possible for the administration to force students, who are actually clients, to conform to guidelines for dress without the teachers re-enforcing workings of the mechanism of power?

Similarly, parents use surveillance to be involved in their children's dance education which shifts power dynamics and facilitates resistance. CCTV is 'a big selling feature' when clients register for dance classes and they are glad to be able to constantly see their children (Berg 2015, 234). The commodification of dance education has moved into a larger arena, as Schupp (2019a) explains, as of 2012, dance competition in the US 'generated 486.6 USD million in revenue' (66). Revisiting one of my fondest memories recorded in this research illustrates my own enculturation into this new dimension in dance competition culture. In a hockey dressing room in April 2018, immediately after winning the championship game, my 10-year-old son and his teammates gathered around my phone to watch my daughter compete in ballet via live-stream CCTV from Niagara Falls, New York. As the mother of a male dancer/hockey player, seeing 15 sweaty 10-year-old boys, with crazy helmet hair, voluntarily watching a ballet dance while 'We Are the Champions' by *Queen* blasted from a speaker, was admittedly a dream come true. As far as I was concerned, this constituted a significant cultural shift in the male-dominated context of Canadian hockey culture. However, it also solidified my status as a competitive dance mom in full support of vertical surveillance when it benefits me. Despite my knowledge of the subject matter and my positionality in the research, I am both a teacher under surveillance and a consumer dance-parent using surveillance to support the commodification of dance education.

Horizontal surveillance: flattening the hierarchy

Extending the first argument from vertical surveillance of CCTV to the constant horizontal surveillance created by dancers' interaction with social media, the second argument explores how the imagined audience plays a role in reinforcing dance's established exclusionary aesthetic, as dancers adapt their images to meet perceived audience expectations. As part of a long-established tradition in Western concert dance training, self-objectification is used as a teaching strategy including using the mirror for self-correction as well as upward comparison to peers (Barr and Oliver 2016; Ritenburg 2010; Zeller 2017). Online horizontal surveillance is equally Foucauldian in its fundamental ability to facilitate various asymmetrical relations of power and cause identities to form in response to self-regulation. Self-regulation and the internalization of the gaze allows the dancers to modify their identities and behaviours toward the established norm whether in the studio or on social media. In the general population, communications professors Jesse Fox and Megan Vendemia explain that outcomes including depression and eating disorders have

been tied to self-objectification theory in which women take a critical outsider's perspective of their self-worth based on societal standards and in social media: 'women and girls feel pressured to conform to gender and beauty norms and post attractive pics' (Fox and Vendernia 2016, 593–594).

For dancers accustomed to self-regulation in the studio facilitating adherence to behavioural and aesthetic expectations, the addition of social media amplifies their awareness of the representation/identity they are creating. Studies show that there are reciprocal relationships young people foster between their interests and technology. New terms such as hanging out and geeking out 'represent fluid, often convergent ways that young people's engagement infuses how they pursue their interests and invest in their technologies' (Alper, Katz, and Clark 2016, 110). Additionally, studies show that cameras on mobile devices produce online content that is self-focused because the goal of sharing on social media is to 'garner social approval or positive feedback, these photos must reflect optimal traits, including physical attractiveness' (Fox and Vendernia 2016, 593). When the desire to exhibit optimal traits such as physical attractiveness is taken in a Western concert dance context, and applied to a dance photo posted online, it stands to reason that dancers are choosing photos for the imagined audience that adhere to well-established aesthetics perpetuated in dance competition culture with a basis of ballet training.

Ballet's privileged position in competitive dance training gives weight to the physical attributes valued in a dancer including 'long limbs in relation to the torso; flexible ankles, hips, and backs; reduced weight; and pale skin' (Zeller 2017). The status of ballet being considered a technical base for training other competitive styles, regardless of the historical roots of those styles, reinforces racial bias inherent in Western concert dance systems of training (Davis 2018: Prichard 2019: Schupp 2018, 2019a, 2019b). Emphasis on certain coveted physical attributes, and a hierarchy of dance genres placing ballet at the top, lends to the systematic marginalization of people of colour in Western concert dance training and competition. Communications and media professors Chua and Chang's (2016) social media study on adolescent girl's self-presentation and peer comparison in the context of beauty discusses how adolescent girls ages 12–14 seek to present a 'good image' of themselves and are 'anxious about how other people perceive them' (190). The authors explain that online, the actor not only performs in real-time, but leaves artifacts of the performance to be viewed in exhibition spaces by the audience (Chua and Chang 2016). In a dance specific context, former Dance Theatre of Harlem dancer Theresa Ruth Howard (2018) explains that dancers use of Instagram reduces desired physical attributes to extremes that 'border on grotesque' (4). She explains, 'What seems like harmless visual candy is setting new standards for young dancers as they seek to emulate their Insta-heroes and "likes" are validation' (5). Fantasy images create a comparison that does not foster self-esteem in dancers and the validation that they seek from 'likes' cannot be realized (Rizutto 2019).

At 13 years old, Jane fits the demographic for this Chua and Chang's study as well as Howard's population of adolescent dancers influenced by Instagram images. Direct observations show that Jane is being enculturated into the use of social media, while being socialized into dance culture (Aalten 2005). As of December 2018, Jane had 400 followers on her Instagram account where she rarely posted photos, as she stated that her age group prefer to post stories that disappear after 24 hours. When she does post a dance

photo, it is taken to represent her best physical attributes as a ballet dancer. Jane fits the image of a typical competition dancer, she is White, 'long and lean' and she is able to perform athletically and passionately (Schupp 2018); among her most ideal physical attributes for Western concert dance are her feet, flexibility, and flat turnout (the extreme range of lateral rotation of her femur in the hip socket). Jane's highly arched, lean, strong feet earn her cultural capital related to ballet and she is happy to bask in the glory of 'likes' and positive online feedback. The beauty of Jane's feet is measured in the context of the exclusionary Eurocentric ideals of ballet.

Fox and Vendernia (2016) suggest users of social media 'enact selective self-presentation' where they edit photos to conform to societal ideals (593). For instance, one photo posted to Instagram in 2018 consists of Jane's lower legs located in turned out fourth position *en pointe*. In the photo, the front foot was in a pointe shoe and the back foot was bare, illustrating the strength and traditional beauty of her ideal ballerina feet. Chua and Chang state that 'tools' including followers and likes are 'used to measure and grant peer approval of physical beauty' (195). With an imagined audience filled with female adolescent dancers, Jane was rewarded by her peers with likes and positive comments.

Validation offered by the use of SNSs and various platforms available on electronic devices can have devastating effects on the young female dancers when results do not fulfill their expectations. In 2018, Jane experienced negative effects of lateral power relations resulting from unrestricted access to technology. Competition students are chosen by choreographers for specialized routines based on physical capacity and the subjective notions of talent, artistry and physical appearance. If an individual is not chosen for a particular routine, that student is excluded from a sub-group of peers. Jane experienced the effects of this competition dance hierarchy when she was, not only excluded from the choreography but omitted from a group chat (via text) for that particular dance. Within this group chat, her peers shared the bond of practicing, discussing and video messaging regarding the choreography while Jane sadly observed as an outsider. However, Jane explained that one day there was one teammate who noticed that she was excluded from the conversation and championed Jane's position forcing a change of subject and dynamics. Power dynamics between students are amplified by the reach of digital media as these conversations are extended beyond the studio walls and after classes are long finished for the day.

Lateral power relations in horizontal surveillance and digital media play a role in competition dance culture. Teachers and administration may be unaware of, or unable to influence students' behaviour via digital media as the socioeconomic class that has access to competition dance also has access to often unrestricted personal electronic devices. However, as an example of new dimensions in dance education that studios must consider, Jane now attends a smaller commercial studio where there is CCTV, but student cell phones are placed in a box at the front desk upon arrival. Students are allowed digital access between classes, but must remain in view of the administration while using the device and it is returned to the box immediately. Additionally, unlike the studio in this study, there is no Wi-Fi access which is central to SNS use and messaging software accessibility for students without a data plan. The studio offering Wi-Fi advertises this access to clients as a selling feature (Berg 2015). Private sector studios have new

digitally mediated dimensions to consider for their financial success and the health and wellbeing of their student population.

Discussion

Findings illuminate how new technologies in private sector dance studios influence digitally mediated identity formation for the young participants through vertical and horizontal surveillance. This discussion considers technologically digitally mediated dimensions in dance education regarding the commodification, the perpetuation of the status quo, and the operation of Whiteness within Western concert training and culture (Barr and Oliver 2016; Berg 2015; Davis 2018; Saiphoo and Vahedi 2019). As evidenced by my own participation in competition dance culture and Schupp's (2016, 2018, 2019a, 2019b) ongoing research, both private sector studios and competition organizations are selling the dance experience, which works to marginalize groups of people who do not have the financial capital to participate at the level needed for success. The qualities present in this system of training and performance reinforce the operation of Whiteness and gender expectations (Schupp 2016, 2018, 2019a, 2019b). Internet influence amplifies White middle-class values enacted through dance competition culture as they become ubiquitous through mediation. For example, when students are exposed to isolated extreme tricks displayed online to impress audiences, they demand to be taught these skills and studio owners feel pressured to conform to the new ideals otherwise they risk losing clients (Howard 2018). Looking at private sector dance education through a commerce lens, it becomes apparent that studio owners must give clients what they demand or risk losing their business (Risner, Godfrey, and Simmons 2004; Howard 2018). Studio owners walk a fine line between artistic and educational integrity, and financial sustainability (Risner, Godfrey, and Simmons 2004).

The studio must compete for clients by remaining relevant and appealing to clients' values and expectations, many of which perpetuate the status quo. For instance, the hierarchical placement of ballet as a basis of training competition dancers depicts the institution as valuable because it perpetuates 'narrative of elitism' in which the 'construct of high art and low art is an exclusive, predominantly White aesthetic' (Davis 2018, 122). Dance teachers in these environments have the ability to disrupt this narrative, if not by changing the curriculum overtly, then by raising dancers' awareness of racial bias implicit in the curriculum. This manifestation of Whiteness in competitive dance culture is amplified by technology as websites for competitions present privileged bodies for promotion. Socioeconomic and institutional barriers that exist perpetuate the status quo promoting the patriarchal values of competition, vertical mentoring styles, and reinforcing gender expectations.

The imagined audience created by various technologies adds a new dimension to the existing issues that dancers have traditionally had with body image and the quest, or longing for, the ideal dancer's body (Barr and Oliver 2016; Ritenburg 2010; Zeller 2017). This new dimension for students in private sector studios is the result of a combination of limiting feminist pedagogy in the digitally surveilled studio and the addition of participation in SNSs fostering new standards of beauty. Self-objectification resulting from SNSs affects female psychological well-being and has been linked to body dissatisfaction (Fox and Vendernia 2016). Participation in SNSs and exposure to online images is an

extension of the role media has traditionally played in negatively affecting female body image and mood state as woman. Fox and Vendernia (2016) state that online 'women are more likely than men to engage in upward comparison and likely to be more self-critical based on those comparisons' (594). In a population of female dancers, this style of self-critique, comparing oneself to a dancer who is perceived as technically or artistically superior is built into the traditional dance class and used as a pedagogical strategy. Upward social comparison online has been associated with negative outcomes such as 'diminished self-perception, negative emotions, depressive symptoms, lower life satisfaction and disordered eating' (Fox and Vendernia 2016, 595). Instagram fosters upward comparison; however, photos are not an accurate representation of reality as they are often taking by professional photographers with 'ideal lighting, framing and composition' that ultimately serves to create a fantasy that is impossible to replicate (Rizutto 2019).

In addition to influencing the psychological formation and physical well-being of the students, how does surveillance influences the privacy of minor children in a dance studio? In society and in private studios the mechanism of CCTV is often promoted as a safety precaution. In the 2015 study, the director claimed that the installation of the cameras was for the security of the participants and he stated that the studio insurance would be lowered if they were installed (Berg 2015). However, that was a time when only the administration could access the online feed. Presently, there is a studio in the Toronto area that not only uses CCTV within the building to observe classes in real-time but allows clients to access those classes from personal devices. The issues of privacy, consent, and personal boundaries are beyond the scope of this paper, but is an issue that is central to surveillance scholarship and recently discussed in regards to ethical decisions in dance education (Berg and Risner 2020a, 2020b; Nemorin 2017; Simon 2005; West 2019). However, as a parent, teacher, and dancer myself, I have an adverse reaction to the idea of the imagined audience extending from the waiting area in the studio to people's homes or cars. The audience in the waiting room can be compared to the audience in the theatre, whereas a lone person watching me, or my children, from their car is a new type of audience.

Conclusion

This article aimed to initiate a discussion regarding the integration of new technologies in dance education, investigating how the imagined audience created by manifestations of vertical and horizontal surveillance perpetuates the status quo, creates new dimensions in dance competition culture, and reinforces dance's established exclusionary aesthetic. However, during the COVID-19 lockdown, the implications of technology in dance education have shifted irrevocably. The emerging digitally mediated identities of dancers everywhere have come to realization during the lockdown and nascent online identities continue to evolve as the world proceeds with a new post-pandemic normal. During lockdown, online dance experiences of the White, upper-middle-class dancers reflect their status and privilege. Brick and mortar dance studios closed at the beginning of competition season, but through their access to technology, many of these dancers continue to train and even compete online. Dance classes are streamed and attended using various platforms such as Instagram Live, Facebook Live and Zoom.

The face of dance competition has changed but the industry continues. Competitions take place online through submission of pre-recorded dances, meetings of dance teams happen remotely, and judges sell services of recorded feedback on dance routines as a means of preparing for when in-person competitions resume. Intersectional dialogue regarding such online resources will undoubtedly highlight questions of equity and accessibility. The system of oppression embedded in Western concert dance education is made potentially immobile as dancers' online presence is required to exist in the field.

Suddenly, the vertical and horizontal surveillance, digital footprints, and digitally mediated identities discussed in this research expanded and transformed in unprecedented ways. The hierarchy of vertical surveillance has been irreversibly altered as every dancer using the internet to train and perform has further assumed the identity of their biometric double. The changing digital landscape will undoubtedly continue to impact dance education and as such, there are many possible topics for future research. Teachers and students will have to negotiate the new dimensions in dance education offered by manifestations of surveillance in society, as mediation will continue to be the norm and strategies of resistance will have to be consciously implemented to give voice to the subjects in the mechanism of power. How will dance educators negotiate this new terrain with their students? Horizontal surveillance preserves dance's previously ephemeral movement and performances through the nascent archive of SNSs which are perhaps comparable to dance repertoire. Do posts and/or hashtags constitute a new form of notation or archiving? Does this digital contextualization offer new perspectives for dance history? With all its complexity, new technologies integrated into Western dance training and competition culture offer dance researches a new area of study where current issues are amplified, magnified and altered by the imagined audience, and where positive progress can be manifested with consciousness rising.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

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ARTICLE

The Chinese dance: a mirror of cultural representations

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ABSTRACT

Dance is an important part of Chinese culture. Chinese dance is also part of the world's cultural heritage. However, this cultural practice may be insufficiently illustrated in other countries. The purpose of this article is to determine the level of awareness about Chinese dance and the extent to which it is integrated into the world culture. A survey in this study involves 500 fourth-year students of Russian universities (in particular, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Higher School of Economics, Moscow State Institute of International Relations, and the Lomonosov Moscow State University). Findings show a lack of awareness, a weak interest in and incomplete understanding of Chinese culture. These problems are addressable through cultural cooperation with Chinese universities, through lectures on Chinese culture, through thematic events, and through the arrangement of dance classes.

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Introduction

Chinese dance culture

For many people in Russia, the culture of Chinese dance remains unknown, and its importance in the development of ethno-national unity and aesthetic education of the younger generation remains an insufficiently studied issue. Consideration of the research plan will help to better reveal the essence of the problem – why do we need Chinese dance and its study. Firstly, it is necessary to understand what the culture of Chinese dance is in historical and sociocultural aspects. Further, the author considers the forms of Chinese dance art development as an internal expression of people's national identity. This requires studying this issue in the context of its understanding as a way to preserve historical memory of people through Chinese dance and its transfer to the next generations.

At the same time, Chinese dance also plays a very important role in positioning and disseminating knowledge about Chinese culture in other countries of the world. To study this cultural and ethnographic phenomenon, a survey should be conducted in another country about the attitude of the young generation to Chinese dance, its significance in their lives and understanding of its philosophy. Russia is the best suited as an object of study of the culture of Chinese dance. Since Russia and China are connected by centuries of difficult relationships and at the same time dense cultural cooperation.

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Chinese dance is an original and integral historical and cultural direction of the development of national dance art, which has developed over many centuries from its diverse forms of different ethnic groups. Familiarization of people with Chinese dance in different countries promotes the formation of tolerance to other cultures, aesthetic education and humanization of interpersonal relations, the development of mutual understanding between peoples and the reduction of xenophobia.

Dancers and dance representations are amongst the most popular themes of Chinese art. They appear on prehistoric rock carvings, famous bronze vessels, and on all sorts of jewelry. Dance in ancient China was part of important state rituals as well as an element of popular culture and entertainment. Dance activities are known from the oldest literary sources. They were described by ancient historians and admired by Han and Tang dynasty poets (Zuchowska 2014).

Chinese identity and dance were studied from different angles. On the one hand, Asian identity is assumedly perceived through dance movement and performance (Wilcox 2012). In America, on the other hand, where inter-ethnic conflict has taken place between Chinese migrants, Chinese dance is considered a central element in building a common Chinese identity in America (Wilcox 2011).

In socio-cultural terms, Chinese dance is a special aesthetic art of expressing certain thoughts and feelings through rhythmic and sophisticated organized body movements, which have many different forms of manifestation.

A variety of forms of Chinese dance art

Historically, Chinese dance is a special kind of art, consisting of many varieties of modern and traditional dance genres. This dance expresses the cultural uniqueness and originality of the Chinese people, their desire for harmony and balance. Dance in China is a highly varied art form, consisting of many modern and traditional dance genres. The dances cover a wide range, from folk dances to performances in opera and ballet, and may be used in public celebrations, rituals and ceremonies. The best known Chinese dances today are the Dragon dance and the Lion Dance (Selase 2019).

Throughout times, Chinese civilization knew several dances that left their footmark on history. Among them: Seven Plates Dance, Long Sleeves Dance and The jiangsu dance. These dances are examined in more detail.

Seven Plates Dance

According to ancient sources, this dance was usually performed by gracefully stepping between the plates or quickly and lightly stepping on them. At the same time, a dancer was signing and beating the drum with a leg, creating the musical accompaniment to his/her performance. Most often, this dance was performed at funerals, and the dancers were dressed in long sleeved apparel (Zhang 2009).

Long Sleeves Dance

This dance was also a popular motif in funerary art, and it was usually performed with musical accompaniment from one or several instruments. Both *Seven Plates Dance* and *Long Sleeves Dance* originated and developed in southern regions of China.

The jiangu dance

This is the only kind of dance performed with a drum. Usually the drum was mounted on a pole with decorations. The dancers, holding drumsticks in their hands, were dancing on either side of it and beating it in tune with the dancing movements. This dance was particularly popular during court festivals (Han 2008).

The most popular and massive form of traditional dance is the so-called *Lion Dance*. There are two types of this dance – the northern and the southern.

Costumes of the northern lions resemble Pekingese dogs, typically consist of gold-painted heads and shaggy yellow or orange fur and cover most of each performer's body. Red colors on the head represent a male, and green – a female. The dances are regularly performed with one or two lion costumes, but there are also performances with adult lion costumes and several smaller child lion costumes. There are usually two performers in the adult lion costume, and one in the child lion costume. With adult lion performances, there is usually a 'warrior' character, who leads the lions in their movements and does acrobatic choreography. Similar to Southern lion dance, the Northern one follows the rhythms of cymbals, drums, and gongs. However, the Northern lion dance is more playful than the Southern one and tends to focus on displays of kindness and agility (Anholt 2013).

Compared to the Northern lion costume, the Southern one depicts longer tail and larger head with a variety of colors and patterns. The heads are usually made of papier-mâché, bamboo and rattan. Common colors include gold, red, orange, black and green. The Southern lion is one of the most inclusive artifacts of Chinese culture. The heads and dances draw direct references to Buddhism and Taoism. The lions symbolize themes like seniority, mourning, prosperity, and youth. The dance is often accompanied by a 'Buddha' character with a fan who ushers the lions along (Chang 2013).

Chinese civilization exists for thousands of years, and folk dance is one of its most important parts (Zhax 2017). Chinese dance is associated with a long and continuous Chinese civilization. Today, there are 56 ethnic groups recognized in China, most of which have their own dances, which make modern Chinese dance very diverse (Wang 2004).

Folk dances are important historically in the development of dance in China, some of the earliest dances in court rituals and ceremonies may have evolved from folk dances. Rulers from various dynasties collected folk dances, many of which eventually became court dances. However, at various times there had also been antipathy towards some folk dances and some emperors attempted to ban them (Selase 2019). Folk dance is a cultural phenomenon that has always been regarded as the spiritual foundation of Chinese culture (Yin 2015).

Thus, Chinese dance art is known in its various forms, each of which is a unique manifestation of the ethnocultural diversity of the Chinese people.

The basis for choosing this research topic was the idea of the need to use new modern approaches to the study of Chinese culture and its important component – the stage art of dance. These approaches include the preservation of Chinese cultural heritage, determining the level of awareness of Chinese culture and its integration in other countries of the world.

Chinese dance between past, present and future

Dance is the earliest manifestation of the cultural identity of the Chinese people. This direction of art is essentially the longest in history and widespread, as well as accessible

for expressing internal emotions and aspirations. This is the most visual form of art, representing the ethnic and cultural characteristics of all nations that are part of the Chinese super-ethnos, and at the same time traditionally expressing the national character of the people, passed down from generation to generation, as a symbol of the continuation of Chinese civilization.

As an ancient civilization, China enjoys a wealth of cultural heritage. The nation's rapid economic growth and social progress in recent decades have presented both challenges and opportunities for the conservation of its heritage resources (Shi 2019).

In the case of Chinese dance, one feature that has contributed to the resilience of this form is its emphasis on constant renewal and change. From the genre's beginnings, practitioners of Chinese dance have insisted that research and innovation are essential processes in the construction of a national dance form, and they have treated this project as always ongoing and unfinished (Wilcox 2019).

In the current study, the author considers Chinese dance as a necessary element of students' world culture studies. It will help them develop humane and aesthetic skills necessary in the future for the formation of national identity and a tolerant attitude towards other cultures. At the same time, Chinese dance should be perceived not only as a certain type of stage art that has arisen in the process of social development, but also as a more complex element of traditional culture. Chinese dance is a way of maintaining a historical connection between the past, present and future of Chinese civilization. It is also a spiritual basis for transmitting intangible culture and its moral values from generation to generation.

Chinese culture is diverse and a dance is one of its most important elements. Chinese dances are known in the world community but it is impossible to exactly say how well, since the culture of a given country is rather isolated. From this perspective, this article aims at studying (through a survey) to which extent respondents from another country are aware of Chinese dance and how they perceive another culture. It it also important to determine the respondents' perception of Chinese dance integration into world culture in the context of preserving cultural heritage. It is also necessary to consider scientific substantiation of possible ways to deepen the integration of Chinese dance into world culture and the practical aspects of its popularization.

Materials and method

Research design

The model for the study was the study of scientific approaches to understanding this issue from the point of view of kinesthetic nationalism – the idea that Chinese dance as a genre is distinguished by its aesthetic form and not its theme, as well as where and by whom it is performed (Wilcox 2011, 2019). According to the theory of kinesthetic nationalism, what makes Chinese dance 'Chinese' is that its forms of movements, techniques, and rhythms develop through constant research and adaptation of performance practices in Chinese cultural communities.

Based on the research goals, this study was chosen to be empirical for data collection via a student survey. To collect and analyze interpretations and survey answers, this study used a quantitative method.

The author made a decision to formulate these research questions based on personal interest in the study of Chinese civilization, its culture and dance art. In Russian society, Chinese culture has traditionally raised keen interest and attention. However, very little attention is paid to Chinese dance and its role in preserving the cultural heritage of the people and passing it on to future generations.

In studies related to the study of ethno-choreography, self-reflexivity inevitably arises, during which personal views, understanding and positioning affect the perception and analysis of the issue being studied (Barbour 2013).

The personal experience of acquaintance with Chinese culture determined the choice of the topic of studying Chinese dance. That is why the general method of ethnographic research has been partially changed. The personal experience strongly influenced views, provoked new ideas and contributed to a more systematic comparison of the previous experience in studying Chinese dance communities with a new understanding from the standpoint of kinesthetic nationalism.

Participants

The survey was conducted among the purposive sample of 4-year full-time bachelor students of Russian universities. The number of respondents was 500 people aged 20–21 years. The number of men and women was approximately equal (48% men and 52% women) (Table 1).

These students are majoring in 'Medical Care', 'Russian Language and Literature', 'Engineering Technology', 'Computer Science and Management Systems', 'Culture-Oriented Linguistics and Intercultural Communication', 'Journalism', 'Philology', 'Mechatronics and Robotics', and 'Power Engineering'.

The participants' selection criterion

The main idea of this survey is to study the opinion of respondents who have not directly studied this dance, and thus obtain new data on the attitude towards Chinese dance culture among the modern young generation of students of higher educational institutions. Therefore, the author aimed to assess the impact of Chinese dance in the context of globalization of world culture.

The survey involved 500 bachelor students enrolled in various majors, from technical sciences to humanities, assuming that representatives of different kinds of activity might differ in cultural awareness and interest in other customs and traditions.

The choice of respondents in Russia to assess the awareness of Chinese dance culture in the world was due to the following fact. Russia, unlike other countries in Europe, the Americas and Asia, does not have a large Chinese diaspora that brings its culture to these countries. That is, the level of penetration and familiarization with Chinese culture in

Table 1. Students in the survey.

No. of students	Age	University
135	20–21	Peoples' Friendship University of Russia
110	20–21	Higher School of Economics
130	20–21	Moscow State Institute of International Relations
125	20–21	Lomonosov Moscow State University

these countries is higher than in Russia. Therefore, this was important for the survey, since it allowed the author to objectively study this issue.

The inclusion of Russian students as respondents to the survey regarding the determination of their level of knowledge of Chinese dance made it possible to impartially study the degree of their perception and tolerance towards culture other than their own.

Research instruments

The survey involved a mini-survey and a main survey. The main survey followed the mini-survey and respondents were asked to choose those statements that, in their opinion, could be attributed to Chinese dances. The mini-survey included two questions: one offering six adjectives to choose from, and another offering seven phrases regarding the dance itself. The answer options are below, in the Tables 2 and 3.

The main survey included single-choice questions to determine the awareness of Russian students of Chinese dances and culture in general. The first and second questions were to determine the general attitude of respondents to other cultures, specifically Chinese. Additionally, the interest in other culture might branch out into interest in dancing. The third question was aimed at assessing general awareness of students about the Chinese culture. It cannot be denied that traditions of this country and other Asian countries are very distinctive and multifaceted, which is crucial to remember in related studies. The fourth question had a rather general goal – to determine the significance of dancing for respondents. Speaking of various cultures, it is crucial to mention dances, as they are an important part of national heritage. The fifth question was to evaluate the importance of dances in this context. Various festivals are an important part of Chinese culture and most often they include a variety of dances. The sixth question assessed the awareness of respondents in this field. Because of Lion Dance popularity among Chinese dances, one of the survey goals was to find out the students' awareness of this phenomenon. Their answers could also speak about their general awareness of Chinese culture. To better assess the degree of integration of Chinese dances in the cultural environment of Russian students, this survey was supplemented by questions No. 8 and 10 (see Table 3). The last question aimed to assess respondents' awareness of the link between

Table 2. A mini-survey form.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHINESE DANCE
1. What words do you think can best describe Chinese dance?
• Bright/vivacious/colorful
• Strange
• Acrobatic and skill demanding
• Distinguished/unique
• Hard to do
• Boring
2. What, in your opinion, are the main goals of Chinese dances?
• Entertainment
• Self-expression
• Expression of cultural identity
• Stage performance
• This is their job
• Tourist attraction
• Physical development

Table 3. A main survey form.

AWARENESS OF CHINESE CULTURE AND DANCE
1. Are you interested in other cultures? • Yes • No
2. Are you interested in Chinese culture? • Yes • No
3. Do you think of Chinese culture as diverse and multifaceted? • Yes • No
4. Is dance an important part of people's lives? • Yes • No
5. Is dancing an important part of country's culture? • Yes • No
6. Are you familiar with traditional Chinese festivals, part of which are dance performances? • Yes • No
7. Do you know about the Lion Dance? • Yes • No
8. Have you ever seen live Chinese dances? • Yes • No
9. Are you interested in other cultures? • Yes • No
10. Do Chinese people express their cultural identity through traditional dance? • Yes • No
11. Is Chinese culture, especially dance, well imparted in our country? • Yes • No
12. Would you like to know more about Chinese culture? • Yes • No

traditional dance and cultural identity. The final question showed the relevance of Chinese culture popularization for Russia.

The survey was conducted after agreement with the leadership of the selected universities. The ethical principles of the survey were agreed upon in advance. Among these principles there is the correctness of questions in the questionnaire. The questions were designed in such a way as to reveal the objective opinions of the respondents and reduce the influence of subjective factors. Besides, before the start of the survey, the persons responsible for its conduct were identified. The principles of reliability and competence in the collection of information were observed. Key survey limitations – a ban on the use of received information for purposes other than for research purposes. The norms of confidentiality and respect for an individual were adhered to.

At each university, a curator was identified who was responsible for conducting a survey among students. The survey involved students aged 20–21 years. The choice of this age group was determined initially from the point of view of obtaining more objective answers. The choice of respondents was random. The main selection criteria: age, gender neutrality – when choosing respondents no preference was made for any gender.

The survey was conducted using paper questionnaires. 1 month was allocated to organize and conduct the survey. At the beginning of the survey, interviewers were trained to work with respondents and to process data. Then, the correctness of the application of the technique was checked, as well as to ensure that only sample participants were interviewed. The results of the survey passed the coding stage – the conversion of the collected data into a numerical form. After this, the data were prepared for analysis and reporting.

Data analysis

Statistical data analysis was carried out. Diagrams were made for convenience and clarity. The error was 3%, about 13 questionnaires were incorrectly filled in (some respondents did not answer all the questions or chose more than one answer).

Research limitations

This study involves only students of Russian universities. Moreover, all respondents are in one age group. This does not allow judgment regarding the attitude to Chinese culture and dance among schoolchildren and older generation. Quantitative data may be general.

Results

The perceptions by Russian students of Chinese dance were studied. The findings indicate that they are interested in it as an exotic form of manifestation of a culture different than the Russian one. This is of interest for a more in-depth study of the role of Chinese dance in shaping the image of Chinese culture in a different cultural environment.

As can be seen from Figure 1, respondents refer to Chinese dances mostly as to vivacious, strange and unique art, as to something that is exotic. It may be considered positive that only 7% consider Chinese dances boring. Thus, there is currently a sufficient level of interest in Chinese culture (Figure 2).

When conducting the study, it has been important to find out respondents' understanding of Chinese dance and its goals in the cultural and aesthetic education of a person. Answers to the second question in the mini-survey, regarding the goals of Chinese dance performance, show that students may not fully understand the purpose of these dances. The most common opinion is that Chinese dances are for stage performance and tourist attraction. Thus, Chinese dance is viewed as something entertaining and drawing attention to the country. A rather large portion of respondents view Chinese dances as a way of self-expression. However, only 11% considered Chinese dances as a way to express cultural identity.

The role of Chinese dance in intercultural communication. Answers in the main survey show an unexpectedly low awareness among respondents. Only 43% report interest in other cultures. Noteworthy is that humanities students demonstrate a greater interest than technical students do. These data may indicate that among Russian students, there is a low level of intercultural communication, which entails little interest in other countries.

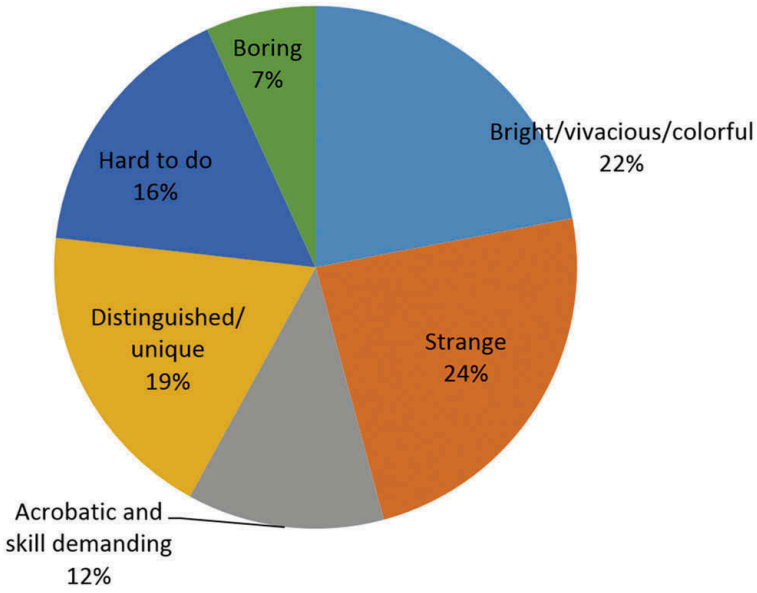

Figure 1. Characteristics of Chinese dance.

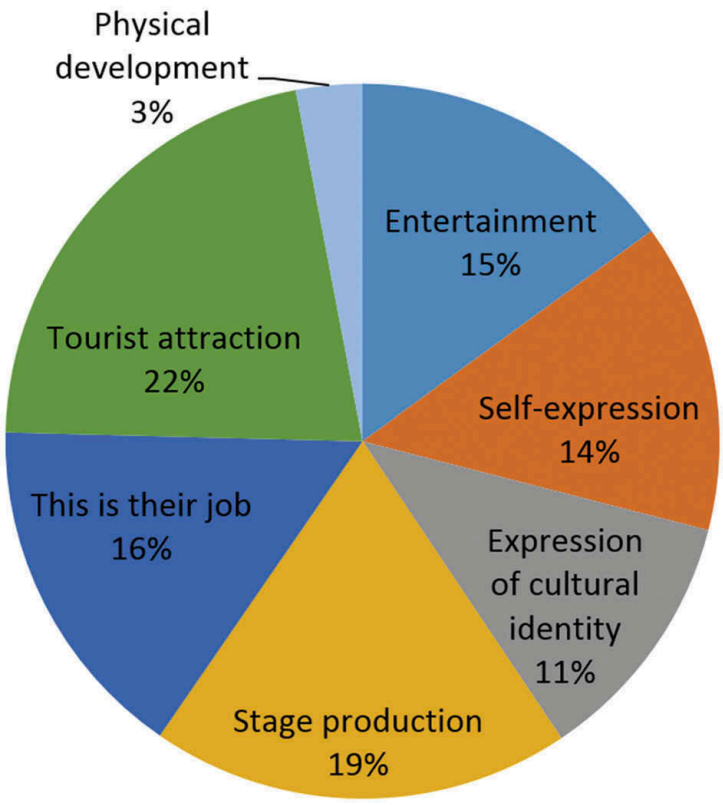

Figure 2. Possible goals of Chinese dance performance.

As expected, answers to the second question also show low interest – only 40% have expressed interest in Chinese culture. The anonymity of both surveys does not allow tracking the correlation between them. However, these results lead to the conclusion that Chinese culture is not sufficiently illuminated among Russian college students.

Despite the low portion of positive aspects in the previous question, 63% of respondents agree that Chinese culture is diverse and multifaceted. This suggests that, despite

the low interest, students are to some extent aware of the peculiarities of this country's culture. This may be considered positive, as this proves that there is space for further broadening of outlook.

A rather large portion, 54%, agree that dancing is important. This suggests that students are aware of the role that the dance art has. Such a result may be considered positive, despite the fact that it is rather general. 68% consider dancing an important element of any culture. This suggests that, in general, students are aware of the origin of cultural traditions.

Many respondents, 61%, acknowledge that they have an idea of traditional Chinese festivals. The general nature of the question does not allow assessing the deepness of this knowledge but even this level of awareness may be considered positive. Even with minimal ideas about this element of culture, students are able to acquire additional information on the topic better and more easily.

Only 33% are aware of the Lion Dance. This portion of respondents is likely to be larger because student may just not know the name of the dance. However, the description was intentionally not added to obtain a more accurate number of truly knowledgeable students.

More than a half of respondents, 58%, have attended a live performance, which suggests that students somehow have come into contact with Chinese culture.

An unexpectedly large number of respondents, 71%, agree on that Chinese people express their cultural identity through traditional dances. This may indicate that, despite the rather superficial awareness of the country's culture, students understand that dance occupies a very important place in it and is not only for entertainment.

The majority of respondents, 77%, notice a lack of Chinese culture representation in Russia. This suggests that, despite good political relations with China, inhabitants of Russia are little aware of a friendly country's culture.

More than a half (67%) are willing to learn more about Chinese culture. This suggests that, with necessary information, students may care more about the subject, which will allow better integration of Chinese culture, including dance, in Russia.

The data obtained from a statistical analysis of the survey results show that Chinese dance is an almost unknown cultural phenomenon for many respondents. At the same time, many of the respondents do not understand its important cultural mission, which is to establish a connection with the past and preserve the cultural heritage for future generations.

Summing up, the problem discovered in this study is multidimensional. Firstly, there is a lack of interest in Chinese culture, which implies a slight awareness of related matters. Both surveys suggest that students understand the cultural importance of the Chinese dance but not completely. Despite this understanding, students still view the Chinese dance as something exotic and intended for entertainment purposes, so its cultural aspect fades. This may inhibit the world integration of Chinese culture. Therefore, this problem requires a systematic approach towards its solution.

Discussion

According to studies, additional cultural knowledge acquired by students has a positive effect on them learning dances of a particular nation. Learning not only dance movements but also traditions, culture and attitudes helps learners to immerse in other culture

and therefore, better understand it. This in turn contributes to better learning (Giguere 2015).

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, Chinese artists and intellectuals have grappled with the dual problem of how to overcome the limitations of traditional culture and create a modern society while inheriting cultural foundations that support collective identities and build meaningful links to the past (Wilcox 2019).

The magnificence of Chinese classical dance represents the Chinese nation's traditional culture, and embodies the style of dance culture, artistic value and the aesthetic rhythm. Chinese classical dance is the combination of power and gentleness, exquisite and mellow, normative and rigorous, and has the aesthetic characteristics of harmony and unification of the form and spirit (Chen 2018).

In 2011, there was a study examining the relationship between dance and cultural identities of Chinese immigrants in the United States (Wilcox 2011). The author observed over 300 hours of CDG's (Chinese Dance Group's) dance classes, rehearsals and performances, from 2000 to 2002. She danced in or attended CDG's major dance performances from 2000 to 2010, and collected visual and textual documentation.

Studying the culture of Chinese dance helps to better understand how the Chinese people express their identity through dance, preserving and transmitting the cultural heritage of the past to the modern generation. At the same time, it is important to study this experience not only in China, but also in immigrant communities around the world.

For the current study, it is important to study the role of Chinese dance in maintaining national identity in foreign diasporas, which is reflected in the work of several authors, for example, Buckland (2006).

According to the study, Chinese dance plays multiple roles in the construction of immigrant communities and identities. First and foremost, dance allows Chinese immigrants in the US to appropriate familiar cultural symbols in order to cultivate collective identities. Dance is said to play a key role in forging immigrant community cohesion (Buckland 2006).

Identity and Chinese dance art are the link in overseas Chinese diasporas, as Kibria (2002) draws attention to.

Recent Chinese immigrants frequently link their identities to primordial factors such as common ancestry (Kibria 2002); at the same time, they engage in the practice of reinventing collective identities that allow for group cohesion among Chinese immigrants of diverse national origins and ideological persuasions.

The author's argument is supported by the fact that very often immigrants use dance as a tool to build a collective identity in their communities. This is confirmed by the results of the Portes (2003) study.

These studies suggest that the primordial contents of ethnicity, such as ancestry and homeland, are indeed socially constructed. The latter, in turn, shape immigrant identities and communities, as they evoke deep-seated emotions. Considering how Chinese dance is charged with cultural and historical meanings, one should not be surprised that immigrants seize on dance as an embodied tool for collective identity construction (Portes 2003).

Although immigrants and their host societies tend to see dance as an apolitical activity, politics is an inherent aspect of cultural production and practices. When Chinese immigrants produce a dance concert, they have to negotiate the politics of

representation: 'What kinds of stories should we tell? How should we tell the stories?' etc. It does not matter if the immigrants are unaware of the politics behind these decisions. Making Chinese dance in the US, much like making identity claims, is a political act (Ram 2000).

Another argument that confirms the results of the current study is the statement by Farnell (2004) that Chinese dance is a transnational cultural practice.

According to the study, dance is a transnational cultural practice and constitutes an embodied site of identity formation among recent Chinese immigrants. Both the cultural Movement in spaces of liminality performance of dance and social performance surrounding dance serve to reiterate and reproduce what is important for the community: being in each other's presence and appreciating embodied aesthetics evoking 'home' (Farnell 2004).

Another scientific approach regarding the importance of Chinese dance in the life of modern society can be found in the work of Yang (2014), which essentially differs from the results of the current study. This study focuses on the communication functions of dance. For a better understanding of the communication process of Chinese folk dance, it is necessary to consider its artistic information. The object of dance art is its basic artistic information. Effective transmission of artistic information cannot be separated from the means of communication. When using different means of communication for communication with folk dance art, different features are manifested. If a live performance can evoke an inspired feeling and a sense of reality, then the communication effect is limited, and the space of the live performance is also limited. Thus, only a limited audience can be affected. With the development of science and technology, new means of communication, such as newspapers, television and the Internet, constantly appear, and the scale and speed of spreading the art of folk dance are improving, but it is difficult to obtain objective feedback from the audience.

In a word, in an era of mass media, the corresponding changes have also happened in the communication of folk dance art; meanwhile, there are certain requirements proposed to folk dance art. Only the art which is closely linked with the public and conforms to the public's aesthetic opinions can be better spread. Meanwhile, in communication process, it is also required to make full use of various kinds of media and exert their respective advantages so as to jointly promote communication of Chinese national folk dance (Yang 2014).

In the multicultural environment brought by globalization, the author (Zhax 2017) has reviewed and combined the development course of folk dance in China, and deconstructed and analyzed the aesthetic form and cultural connotation.

The author agrees with the opinion of Selase (2019) that dance is a form of cultural expression of people. Dancing is a natural method for learning and a basic form of cultural expression. Dancing embodies one of people's most primal relationships to the universe (Selase 2019).

Chinese dance in many countries has become part of their national culture and unity for a multicultural environment, which can be observed in Malaysia. The Malaysian lion dance has overcome identity entanglement as a purely Chinese cultural practice. People of all ethnicities now perform it. The Malaysia concept successfully appeals to the ideology of unity for a multicultural country (Ying and Chiat 2016).

A two-stage survey involving 4-year students of Russian universities, which has been conducted to identify problems that may be associated with the Chinese dance, displays

the attitude of students to the Chinese dance and the extent to which this dance has been imparted to Russia.

These findings may be a good start to formulate recommendations on deepening the knowledge of Chinese dance in Russia. They [findings] may be complemented and improved for special courses for students engaged in international and language majors.

The study shows that the knowledge about Chinese culture, in particular Chinese dance, in Russia is not deep, which may be an issue. Firstly, there is a lack of interest in Chinese culture, which implies a slight awareness of related matters. This may inhibit the world integration of Chinese culture. Therefore, this problem requires a systematic approach towards its solution. In the first place, this requires cultural cooperation with Chinese universities with the involvement of special events to exchange cultural experiences. A good way to raise awareness is to provide elective lectures on Chinese culture for everyone, regardless of major. Thematic events can also have a positive impact on awareness. Such events can be confined to specific Chinese holidays and held in the form of concerts. Additionally, universities may want to organize dance classes to ensure immersion into culture and better understanding of how Chinese people express their identity through dance.

The findings can be used for a broader research with respondents of other age groups; from schoolchildren to the working population. This study can be used as a framework for further research of the attitudes of citizens to Chinese dance in other countries in order to more fully assess the situation, given that attitudes may vary greatly depending on the culture of respondents.

The global problem of the modern world, which is characteristic of China and Russia, is the acceleration of cultural changes, the significant penetration of Western culture of music and dance, as well as the strengthening of its influence on the younger generation. In this context, the study of Chinese dance and its role in preserving and transmitting cultural heritage to the younger generation is an important direction in the development of national identity in the modern global world.

Awareness raising strategies

Weak cultural exchange between countries prevents the full integration of the world heritage of humanity, of which dance is an important component. This problem can be solved in several variants and in various forms, which will be discussed below.

Cultural cooperation with Chinese universities

Despite many students from China who study in Russian universities and many student exchange programs, the cultural aspect needs more interaction. Intercultural communication that takes place between students during the learning process is not sufficient to popularize Chinese culture. To enrich knowledge about traditions of China, Russian and Chinese universities, apart from participation in exchange programs, can also hold special events to exchange cultural experiences of their countries. This is an opportunity not only to increase student awareness of China's culture, but also to strengthen relations between countries.

Chinese culture lectures

Those universities that are not able to participate in the program of cultural cooperation with Chinese universities may want to hold special lectures on the culture of this country. These lectures can be for students majoring in any field as electives. This will not only help to broaden the outlook of students but can also raise interest in Chinese culture.

Thematic events

The interest in Chinese culture and dance can be enhanced through the organization of thematic events. They can be held once a year and be confined to, for example, the Lunar New Year. Students and, if possible, invited guests can prepare various performances related in one way or another to Chinese culture.

Dance classes

China is a civilization state with a long history. It not only has the convergence of the whole culture, but also has the unique national culture, showing a mixed style. As different culture, customs and habits of different nation create different styles of dance, the dance art has its own characteristics (Liu 2015).

Dance is one of the most important elements of Chinese culture, so it should be in focus when imparting Chinese heritage into the world community. It is true that theoretical knowledge may increase the interest of students but a practical approach seems to be more effective. Thus, one may want to organize dance classes for all comers, which can take place both in educational institutions and in a studio. This will enable the immersion into the culture and better understanding of how Chinese people express their identity through dance.

Conclusions

Chinese dance is an example of the preservation of cultural heritage in today's digital world. It should therefore be studied, especially in countries that face problems of preserving collective identity and building national identity.

Chinese dance combines folk traditions, opera, court dances, elements of martial arts based on the philosophy of harmony and balance with the outside world.

This dance is not only a reflection of individual emotions and feelings, but it also symbolizes the national character of the people and the identity of Chinese civilization. Through the image of the dancer, the inner perception of the surrounding world is reflected, while with the help of a combination of forms and body movements the spiritual world of the dancer is revealed. Thus, the Chinese dance, reflecting the complex inner world of the soul and body of the dancer, conveys the thousand-year history of a unique culture and civilization, providing people with the opportunity to express their feelings and experiences.

The study has found that the majority of Russian respondents, 77% say that there is no significant attention to the development of Chinese culture in their midst. This suggests

that, despite good political relations with China, many people still know very little about the culture of a friendly country.

Studying the experience of familiarizing Russian students with Chinese dance should contribute to the formation of tolerance towards other cultures, aesthetic education and humanization of interpersonal relations, and the development of mutual understanding between peoples. Despite the modern realities of modernizing and accelerating cultural development, Chinese dance contributes to maintaining the traditions of the past, strengthening social cohesion and helping to maintain cultural identity.

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ARTICLE

Consumer dance identity: the intersection between competition dance, televised dance shows and social media

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ABSTRACT

This article employs a theoretical framework, utilizing cultural analysis, to explore how the intersection in the United States between competition dance, televised dance shows, and social media (which will be defined as consumer dance) is affecting the embodiment, pedagogy, and appreciation of dance, and contributing to the objectification and commodification of these dancers. Hegemonic constructions of gender and beauty populate consumer dance, giving birth to identities that are predominately reliant on the sense of sight due to technological changes that have plunged society into a nonstop visual world found on a screen. Engaging with the scholarship of Karen Schupp, Susan Foster, and Alexis Weisbord that examines competition dance, the current consumer dance model is analyzed for how it shapes the dancer's body and psyche. As a researcher, I see an intersection of my identities as a figure skater, modern dancer, choreographer, educator, feminist, and the mother of two daughters who dance informing the trajectory of my research. This scholarship draws from different lenses delving into philosophy, dance studies, feminism, and psychology in order to reveal the complexity of the forces that create consumer dance.

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On the competition stage, a dancer moves in front of a backdrop that advertises the sponsor; on the commercial stage a dancer plays backup to the main focus – Beyoncé; on the televised dance show, a dancer has ninety seconds to 'dance for their life;' and on the social media stage, a dancer must grab attention with the most extreme movement so that the viewer's scrolling finger will linger for a moment and maybe press 'like.' How do dancers see themselves? As bodies eager to please the virtual world of subscribers and followers, the judges, the industries that sell products, and the American public that wants to see the ultimate in emotion and physicality? As life migrates to being online more and more, the question of how a dancer exists on a screen is pressing. Dance as a lived experience is contrasted by the concept of dance as a product. A dancer who takes on the identity of being a product manufactured with expediency and emphasis on the external, loses internal mechanisms of process and feeling. In terms of pedagogy, what is not seen; critical thinking and kinesthetic sense, is not valued – it does not sell. Dance educators who are entwined in the consumer sector will be inclined to teach to the external versus the internal.

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This article employs a theoretical framework, utilizing cultural analysis, to explore how a new dance identity is being constructed out of technology and consumerism colliding with the competition circuit, social media, and televised dance. A new embodiment, pedagogy, body, and appreciation of dance is emerging. Competition dance, televised dance shows, and social media are viewed as circles in a Venn diagram intersecting, with shared areas defined as consumer dance. Hegemonic constructions of gender, sex appeal, and beauty populate consumer dance, giving birth to identities that are predominately reliant on the sense of sight due to technological changes that have plunged society into a nonstop visual world found on a screen. Present socio-cultural forces are identified in order to evaluate whether they are reducing a dancer to the external, thus discouraging somatic intelligence in the push to look and move a specific way. French femininst philosopher Luce Irigaray's analysis of sight in society specifically in terms of gender informs the examination of the relationship between sight and ballet, modern, postmodern, contact improvisation, and consumer dance. Engaging with the scholarship of Karen Schupp, Susan Foster, and Alexis Weisbord that examines competition dance, the current consumer dance model is analyzed for how it shapes the dancer's body and identity, exploring who engages in it, reasons why they participate, and what they may gain or lose through participation. As a researcher, I see an intersection of my identities as a figure skater, modern dancer, choreographer, educator, feminist, and the mother of two daughters who dance informing the trajectory of my research. This scholarship draws from different lenses delving into philosophy, dance studies, feminism, and psychology in order to reveal the complexity of the forces that create consumer dance.

Sight, the body and society

As society has become more visually dependent with the encroachment of technology into every facet of life (Armitage and Roberts 2002), visual consumption has taken center stage while touch and feeling have receded. Objectification is facilitated when no time is taken to examine the unseen. The real self competes with a virtual self that consists of captured staged moments. American historian and social critic Lasch (1979) in *The Culture of Narcissism* commented on the profound effect of recording devices on the perception of social life;

> Cameras and recording machines not only transcribe experience but alter its quality, giving to much of modern life the character of an enormous echo chamber, a hall of mirrors. Life presents itself as a succession of images, of electronic signals, of impressions recorded and reproduced … Modern life is so thoroughly mediated by electronic images that we cannot help responding to others as if their actions – and our own – were being recorded and simultaneously transmitted to an unseen audience or stored up for close scrutiny at some later time (47).

What would Lasch think of our present society where every moment in life is recorded and 'performed' on the public stage of the internet? Social scientist Goffman's (1969, 1972, 1973) theory of the performing self and Feminist scholar Judith Butler's theory of performing gender (1997) are taken to an extreme with the backstage of one's carefully curated personal life becoming center stage for the public to devour. Philosopher Foucault's (1977) ever-watchful panopticon model of society has been realized,

magnifying self-surveillance and surveillance by others via the mirror of the internet. One becomes aware of reactions from others to their appearance in the form of likes, followers, subscribers, and comments, along with engaging in the constant comparison to others. Clicking 'like' on Instagram references Sartre's (1984) concept of the gaze; the power of the look to reduce a person to an object. Film critic Mulvey (1975) coined her own term, Male Gaze theory, tapping into Jacque Lacan's psychoanalytic theories of the mirror stage to explain how film framed a woman as a sexualized object for the heterosexual male. The gaze in the virtual world is practiced by a myriad of identities beyond the heterosexual male. Anyone can make another person into Mulvey's and Sartre's object in the mirror adhering to normative definitions of gender, sex appeal, and beauty. The power struggle between the viewer and the viewed is played out continually on the screen.

French feminist philosopher Irigaray (1985a, 1985b, 2011) perceives the sense of sight as being gendered. She identifies an uneven relationship between females and males to sight;

> Investment in the look is not privileged in women as in men. More than the other senses, the eye objectifies and masters. It sets at a distance, maintains that distance. In our culture, the predominance of the look over smell, taste, touch, and hearing has brought about an impoverishment of bodily relations. The moment the look dominates, the body loses its materiality. (Irigaray quoted in Owens (1985), 70).

Art critic and poet John Berger made the observation,"men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at" (1972, 47). Women historically have been objectified, but in the current virtual world, men can also find themselves reduced to their image. Irigaray (1993) explains, 'Vision is effectively a sense that can totalize, enclose, in its own way' (175). It does not matter how you feel or what you think, only how you look. Sociologist Turner (1984) states,

> In interaction, I begin to experience my intimate inside as an impersonal outside. The body – for itself becomes objectified and alienated. What is my body is, through being observed by the other, simply a body. (53).

Philosopher Widdows (2018) in her book, *Perfect Me*, suggests with the rise of social media, the aesthetic of being thinner, firmer, smoother, and younger, has become global and ubiquitous. Widdows (2018) states that people view this 'improvement' of the physical self as a moral imperative for both sexes. Why not become the best you could be? Is this drive to appear a specific way for one's own pleasure or satisfaction? Irigaray (1993) states, 'We look at ourselves in the mirror to *please someone*, rarely to interrogate the state of our body or our spirit, rarely for ourselves and in search of our own becoming' (65). In this reductive visual world that resides on a screen, a person does not matter beyond their reflection to others or to themselves. Lasch (1979) described a society that sounds scarily prescient to today's reality; 'All of us, actors and spectators alike, live surrounded by mirrors. In them, we seek the reassurance of our capacity to captivate or impress others, anxiously searching out blemishes that might detract from the appearance we intend to project' (92). You can always improve and transform, only apply yourself. Then you can post a highly edited photo and receive a like or the comment – beautiful! Journalist Sales (2016) researched the effects of social media use on the identity of young girls and found that self-esteem was built on likes to their hyper-

sexualized images. Their identities were built upon comments on their external appearance reflecting hegemonic constructions of gender, sex appeal, and beauty. They recognized that their worth was weighted towards how they looked. The more that they are complimented, the more they will have to monitor their appearance.

Shifting identities of the dancing body

Dance can embody cultural, religious, social, self, or political expressions, but the focus of this article is dance as performance. Since performative dance is populated mostly by females, a sensitive relationship between the body and sight emerges since the female body has been heavily objectified and commodified in society. Dance studies scholar Copeland (1993) has suggested that 'dance has often been regarded as a "mute" art of pure physical presence in which women are reduced to (and equated with) their bodies' (143). The challenge arises of how performative dance might involve more than the sense of sight, integrating the body and mind for both the mover and the viewer. Dance's relationship to the sense of sight can be revealed in ballet throughout its inception, the early modern dance of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the postmodern dance and contact improvisation of the 1960's, and the current emergence of consumer dance. How each dance form utilizes sight sheds light on the likelihood that the dancer is perceived as a felt experience versus a presentational product.

Ballet dancers, both male and female, are always in front of a mirror, even if that mirror is not in the room or stage with them. Anthropologist and former dancer Cynthia Bull (Novack) (1997) explained that ballet dancers may pay attention to 'the flow of movement' but ultimately they will utilize 'sight as the primary process of artistic conception, perception and kinesthetic awareness (272).' Movement is presentational and towards the audience.

Psychologists Gray and Kunkel (2001) used Suzanne Gordon's (1983) book *Off Balance* as source material for a theoretical investigation into how ballet dancers embodied the form. They compiled comments from ballet dancers and categorized them into headings. One of the headings was 'Mere Machines' (Gray and Kunkel 2001, 13) with subcategories of not being an individual, and 'the person gets lost in the physical qualities' (13). Former dancer turned scholar Summers-Bremner (2000) explains the disconnect that a dancer can feel towards their image; 'the self she sees from a distance in the studio mirror – body as passive instrument, an object of her labors'(94). The dancer tries to be an ideal, while the physical reality of their bodies is either negated or criticized. Summers-Bremmer's insight is connected to Foster's (1997) theory of the 'two bodies: one perceived and tangible; the other, aesthetically ideal' (237). The ideal image is always out of reach and thus a person is destined to fail.

The comment from *Off Balance* (1983), 'Only when you're noticed do you exist' (Gray and Kunkel 2001, 16) encapsulates the idea of only finding self-worth through validation of the external. A dancer may be valued for possessing an arabesque that can go to the desired height and appear the same way as the arabesques of 30 other dancers. Psychologist Abra (1987) who has studied creativity states, 'the dancer's body provides an object on which others impose, and express, their creative ideas … in which the choreographer says, "Jump," and the dancer asks only, "How high?"'(34). Abra (1987)

sees a level of masochism in a dancer that uncritically accepts any directive from a choreographer while never seeking to find their own agency. Dance studies scholar Adair (1992) observes that in ballet 'the hard work, repetition and structure of the daily class frequently results in "unthinking" dancers, trained to accept unquestioningly the professional requirements' (15). Rarely is the ballet dancer asked to improvise and thus rely on their own creative power. Adair (1992) adds that 'for women this structure mirrors women's expected role as passive rather than active in society' (15). Lose weight, do this movement that may be putting a strain on your hip, and repeat again and again. Summers-Bremner (2000) wants further exploration into why many ballet dancers participate in self-denial. Are they willing to pursue an absence of self in the pursuit of 'perfection'?

Dance historian Daly (2002) chronicled the displeasure from the 1860s to the turn of the century from dance writers with 'the current state of the art: acrobatic entertainment, ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay skirt dancing, and the ballet, with its ever-shortening tutu' (263). Dance scholar Tomko (1999) states in the late 1800s, 'dancers aspiring to vaudeville employment developed tricks of coordination and strength such as dancing while whirling a chair clenched with teeth' (67). Some women started to defy this embodiment of dance with the emergence of modern dance. Daly (2002) explains that Isadora Duncan 'did not construct herself as a visual spectacle, as her contemporaries did, performing a string of steps in mechanical time in some thematic costume, complete with backdrop. They operated in a pictorial mode, striking pose after pose or performing trick after trick' (312). Daly (2002) viewed Duncan not achieving a pose but moving through her movement – not allowing herself to be pinned down but instead always in process of depicting a journey through her physicality.

Dance studies scholar Kolb (2009) believed that the early modern dance pioneers were rebelling against the idea that they could be simply looked at by a spectator who 'would devour them visually while remaining detached from the performance (38).' They were choreographers searching their bodies for a creative language, experimenting and exploring movement based on how they felt, not based on what they were told to do. Early modern dancers were demanding to be viewed as more than a body in the mirror; they wanted to communicate and be felt.

'The "male" arts of music and drama commandeer the space of mind and spirit: the female-identified art of dance is relegated to the nether regions of an unthought and unthinking body' (Dempster 1988, 38–39). A group of dancers (categorizing themselves as postmodern) in the 1960's choreographed dances that depicted a mind and a body (Adair 1992), while not wearing make-up or gendered costumes. Dance historian Banes (1999) explains 'Choreographers presented alternatives to what they perceived as the over-emotionalized female roles in the dance tradition. And an important alternative was the intelligent body, sometimes signified by the talking body' (219). Trisha Brown created *Accumulation with Talking Plus Water Motor* (1979) smashing the idea that the dancing body was not one that thought, spoke, and created from an analytical place versus an emotional, intuitive one (Copeland 1993). Brown analyzed her creative process verbally as she danced. Her focus was not outwards but directed towards her movement which addressed the spectatorship of the performer. She moved like a stream of consciousness, ever-elusive to a captured pose or a count of eight.

Another dance movement which many would call a social movement (Foster 1997) in the 1960s was contact improvisation. Novack (1990) viewed contact improvisation as reflecting the desire to break down gender stereotypes and hierarchies in society. In contact improvisation, both genders play interchangeable roles, dress similar, and do not present themselves in a sexual manner. They touch constantly, but it is not erotic. Amongst the dancers, collaboration flourishes with no one leader. The body does not have to be mastered; the belief is that it possesses its own intelligence. Contact improvisation prioritizes touch and feeling over sight. A mirror has no place in the studio because the focus of contact is to move through sensing, and not to move in order to achieve a shape or look. A person trusts the internal over the external. When the external is prioritized, as seen in competition dance, televised dance shows, and social media, a person can be reduced to the body in the mirror. In all three spheres, a socially constructed image is encouraged and only those that exemplify it are rewarded.

Competition dance

Daly (2002) asked 'How can a dancer – who fundamentally displays her *(his)* body for the viewer – avoid being objectified? Does some dance create a literal and metaphorical space in which spectator and performer can share the dance together, on equal terms, rather than the one serving her/himself up for the other?'(301). Early modern dance, postmodern dance, and contact improvisation answered her by prioritizing feeling over sight. Competition dance answers her in its reliance on how dance looks. This emphasis just as in ballet, can create a body that is an object that is disconnected from the self, that is in search of perfection, and is valued for embodying a set aesthetic, being 'correct,' and following orders. This body seeks approval through scores.

Foster (2017) traces the competition dance scene developing in the 1980s with conventions hosting competitions and classes run by 'for-profit corporations, some founded by dance studio owners and others run by business executives from completely other professions' (57). Competition dance is a money-making venture: participation fees, classes, costumes, travel, and choreographic services (Guarino 2014). Dance scholar Schupp (2019b), a former competition dancer, noted that the total 2017 budget for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) was $148 million (Kennicott and McGlone. 2017) and as of 2012, the competition dance circuit generated $486.6 million in revenue (Kaczanowska 2012).

Foster (2017) believes the financial success of these conventions changed the pedagogy found at private-sector dance schools, who may have both a recital and participate in competitions, but the competition work is a priority. Foster (2017) states, 'In place of the dance recital format that supported a notion of public good through its collective presentation of shared understanding about dance, the dance competition substitutes a machinery of the marketplace that privileges individual accomplishment, replacing public with private values' (64). Social understanding, critical thinking, embodied learning, or growth mentality are not valued. Schupp (2019b) observed that many classes are geared towards practicing the competition piece, with technique sprinkled in. Dance is being taught to produce a number-one finish since this will bring in new dance customers who want to be winners and famous. Former competitive dancer Weisbrod (2010) reports that most dance students enrolled in a private-sector dance studio are involved

with the competitive model of dance. Schupp (2019b) points out that 'according to the National Dance Education Organization (2017), there are an estimated 32,000 private-sector dance studios in the US ... and 6,000 K–12 schools that offer dance as a part of their curriculum' (66). For the most part, these private-sector studios are shaping how dance is taught, performed and appreciated.

According to Foster (1986) the meaning of a dance can be discerned by examining '(1) the frame – the way the dance sets itself apart as a unique event; (2) the mode of representation – the way the dance refers to the world; (3) the style–the way the dance achieves an individual identity in the world and in its genre; (4) the vocabulary – the basic units or "moves" from which the dance is made; and (5) the syntax – the rules governing the selection and combination of moves' (59). By defining what competition dance means, a clearer picture evolves whether the dancer is vulnerable to objectification and commodification.

The frame of dance in the competition circuit creates a place in which, 'the dawn of a new day' occurs (https://www.revolutiontalent.com/), but the dancer must pay. The competition may be located at a convention center, a hotel lobby, or a ballroom. The contestant walks onto the stage, with no curtain or blackout, in front of a backdrop that advertises in large font the competition corporation such as True Talent, Nexstar, or DreamMaker. Most often, the same lighting plot is used for each dancer – -a general wash for all numbers, or sometimes specials and side lighting. The dancer signs up in a specific category with time limitations according to age, level, and genre. Sociologist Hilary Levey Friedman (2013), who focuses on beauty pageant culture, sees financial benefits in the category system, which allows studio and competition owners to increase the flow of money by providing multiple entry options. The genres range from tap, baton, liturgical, photogenic, musical theater, modeling, hip hop, modern, acro, jazz, ballet, lyrical, pom/drill team, contemporary, dance team, ethnic, musical theater, or 'open' when the category cannot be defined (https://energyndc.com/rules/). However, as Weisbrod (2010) points out, all of the genres of dance are divorced from their historical and cultural roots and made to fit the competition aesthetic. A clear hierarchical relationship between the viewer and the performer is established with the performer striving to please the judges. The dancer will find out during the awards ceremony if they were deemed 'good' by the panel of judges. Schupp (2019b) explains that appearance, ability to represent the music, and audience appeal pay a large role in achieving a high score.

The mode of representation is imitative; the dancers are literally acting out the lyrics of a song that they are dancing to and judged by how well they do this. With imitation, commodification becomes easier, because nuance is hard to sell, but simple, catchy expressions are not. Dance studies scholar Fisher (2014) explains that 'Those bodies have to draw attention with quick leaps, collapses, and sexy or unusual poses that are hit quickly and held to be admired.' (321) or with, as she calls them 'eye-catching jolts-per minute' (325). Dancers may copy movement and produce it without analyzing how they meet the movement and make it their own. The awareness of being scored by judges who sit in the front row encourages a frontal spatial orientation. Most of the movements travel from side to side in a narrow, flattened corridor of space that loses its depth and spiral. Flexion and extension are widely used, while movement in the transverse plane is not. The dancer moves with limbs flying out into space, often past the normal range of a joint, without knowledge of the spatial paths. Suspensions, shifts of weight, and oppositional

pulls are not possible because the dancer is not inside the movement. As a result they are unable to play with the unknown. The regular timing with a burst quality, creates no subtleties, no valleys or peaks, only one dynamic hit again and again.

Schupp (2017) reports that students in the competition circuit are overwhelmingly female. Some of my students from a competition background have complained that a male will receive 'penis points' for simply being a male at the competition. Male dancers in group numbers are often placed downstage center, surrounded by female dancers. LaRocco (2012) and Schupp (2017) see competition dance as a uniquely American invention portraying the social construction of gender. Schupp (2017) found, 'There is a connection between the presumption that girls should perform in a "flowy" and graceful way and bodies that are long and toned, just as there is a connection between the expectation that boys have athletic bodies that move in a hard-hitting way' (92). Schupp (2017) views competition dance as enforcing heterosexual 'desirability' culture and a view of how to be attractive to the opposite sex.

The vocabulary comes out of a combination of gymnastics (including rhythmic), jazz, hip hop, modern, and ballet. A stock vocabulary of movement is passed along in the competitive circuit with a loop occurring between televised dance shows, social media, and private-sector studios. The syntax includes utilizing pop songs that are catchy and emotional, mimicking the lyrics of a song, wearing costumes that project femininity or masculinity, and performing movements exhibiting extreme flexibility, hypersexuality, and acrobatic feats. Movements must fit the rhythmic structure of the music and not stray. Fisher (2014) called the dances 'pop-song visualizations' (319). The focus of the sequencing of movement is to display technical exploits, not choreographic craft.

The visual dominates competition dance with the mirror dictating training, performance, and worth of predominantly the female body. The dancer can be described as a visual spectacle who executes shape after shape, who is a hard worker, overtly emotional, determined, focused, virtuosic, and plays backup to the music and technical steps. The dancer is judged by how entertaining they are within the set aesthetic and how well they embody a socially constructed gendered body. A clear hierarchical relationship exists between the dancer and the judges; the dancer is there to please them and has paid to be there in the hopes that the identity of being a 'good' dancer can be validated.

Televised dance shows

Dance found a new platform in 2005 with the airing of *So You Think You Can Dance, SYTYCD* (which just had its 16th season 3 June 2019). *SYTYCD* made dance accessible to a large audience who might have never been exposed to dance before. But what kind of dance is this? It is dance on a screen, which becomes Irigaray's controlled, captured specimen pinned down in the visual realm with a fixed perspective that can be paused, fast forwarded, or rewound. Feminist scholar Peggy Phelan believes that performance possesses 'an independence from mass reproduction, technologically, economically, and linguistically' (1993, 149), but dance on the screen does not.

The audience is lured in by screen dance that does not demand much of them beyond watching a flurry of movement accompanied by heavy production values and plenty of backstory filled with emotional biographical information – gushing tears about a sick mom

or tales of a rough childhood. Elswit (2012) examined a performance, *This Woman's Work*, from *SYTYCD's* season 5, episode 18 that exemplifies the idea that dance does not have to mean anything. For this piece, the backstory of a cancer struggle gave the dance meaning and significance; any dance would suffice, just slap an emotional story onto the movement and the tears will fall. Most pieces are 90 seconds long, because the dance needs to be edited for easy consumption. The audience knows that what they see is good because the camera pans to the judges that gasp in amazement. The dancers gush and hug after the performance to show how deserving they are of a good score. Many of the dancers are skilled movers and performers, but in the end it is not about the dance. The dance is secondary to the theatrics of competition which keep people tuned into a version of the American dream; if you work really hard you can succeed. *SYTYCD* uses dance as its subject, but just as in the other reality shows, all is interchangeable; baking the best cake, losing the most weight, singing the best song, it only matters who wins. As the years have progressed, contestants are interviewed about how they grew up watching and dreaming about becoming 'America's favorite dancer.' Dance is marketed with advertisers and ratings in mind, and no one is left to ponder or think; it is all easy to digest.

The *SYTYCD* dancer must be versatile and able to skim all dance genres. The dance aesthetic seen on *SYTYCD* – fast, literal, flashy – is embedded in the American psyche. The comments from the judges solidify how dance should be appreciated. Judges tell dancers before they perform their solos to 'dance for your life.' Laying your soul on the floor is all that matters because you are seen as an object that serves the audience. Host Cat Deeley introduced episode 10 with, 'meet the top five guys and top five girls chosen to perform for your votes.' The image of the Roman Colosseum comes to mind with the performers offering themselves up as a spectacle for others enjoyment, both in pain and exultation.

Sociologist Featherstone (1991) discussed the body in the consumer culture as being 'dominated by the existence of a vast array of visual images. Indeed the inner logic of consumer culture depends upon the cultivation of an insatiable appetite to consume images' (178). The dancer serves themself up as a diversion. The idea of exposing dance to a wider audience to build knowledge and appreciation of the art form may not impel people to support dance outside the comfort of their screen, especially if the dance does not look like what they have seen on the show.

Social media

The American dream can be found on social media. One can become an instastar, go viral, or be an influencer. Laos (2019), who has been a commercial dancer for the past 19 years, wrote his thesis 'Social Media and Its Effects in the Commercial Dance World' to examine changes during his dance career. According to him, social media has become a place to promote your brand. Dancer, writer, and educator Howard (2018) states 'Today, every social media account is technically a press outlet.' Laos (2019) spoke about his experience in 2016 auditioning to be a backup dancer for Paula Abdul. He was surprised when he approached the sign up table that they asked him how many followers he had on social media. Laos (2019) believes that since 2016 the image that one cultivates on social media has become more important than the real you. 'Dancers' social media profiles must represent them in positive ways; their number of followers on social media, e.g. Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, must show a continual

rise if they are to be seen as competitive' (Laos 2019, 2). Social media profiles represent the manufactured perfect self. Dance writer Rizzuto (2019) explains, 'Influencers often have professional photographers shooting them, meaning they're working with ideal lighting, framing and composition.' The comparison of oneself to the doctored has negative consequences. One can never attain the ideal, just as in the pursuit of the ideal ballet or competition body. Charlotte Markey, professor of psychology at Rutgers University, explained to Rizzuto (2019) that self-esteem built on validations to one's best posts is false. The fragile foundation built on a sandcastle of likes and followers becomes insatiable – one needs more and more likes for their best photos. The image will be forgotten, and new images and videos will be edited in hopes that it too will be liked. If the next image does not garner as much attention, one's self-esteem falters. Featherstone (1991) explained, 'Within consumer culture, which approximately coincides with the culture of narcissism, the new conception of self which has emerged, which we shall refer to as the "performing self" places greater emphasis upon appearance, display and the management of impressions' (187). With everyone as a 'performer,' dancers feel an increased pressure to project a 'successful' self on social media in order to garner attention in this competitive landscape.

Writer and dancer Feidelson (2017) wrote an article for the *New York Times* about the competition circuit. She explained, 'Many competition dancers are drawn in by social media, where popular competition dancers and teachers have millions of followers.' Feidelson (2017) reported on a girl named Angelina who had 20,000 followers on Instagram and over 800,000 followers on musical.ly (now TikTok). Angelina searched through the popular tags and added them to her posts for months. Angelina ended up being featured on the homepage of musical.ly, acquiring 30,000 new followers overnight.

Perusing through the Facebook Page of 'The Wonderful World of Dance,' one sees a string of wow moments – spinning like an ice skater or stretching a body into a contorted shape. The extreme wins in this flattened world; dance is fetishized into a trick. All of this exposure online can turn into real opportunities with financial gain. Howard (2018) explains,

> Having an outsized level of visibility can earn these Insta-stars money, as they get sought by dance organizations and other brands to become "ambassadors." Though most schools won't admit it, having Insta-celeb attend your summer intensive or year-round program and post about it is free advertising.

To be visible online is to matter in terms of finances and self-esteem. Currently, a person may spend more time online cultivating an image than being a real life dancer.

Consumer dance identity

Competition dance, televised dance shows, and social media bleed into one another acting either as a springboard into another sphere, reaching into all three concurrently, or circling back for reference. Both teachers and students from competition studios watch and emulate what they see on televised dance shows in terms of movement, costumes, music choice, and performance quality. In turn, competition clips of popular numbers are shared on social media and often analyzed by other dance competitors in order to keep an eye on rivals (Feidelson 2017). Contestants on *SYTYCD*, many who have come from the competition world, go back into the competition circuit to teach, becoming draws at conventions as the circle continues. The dance competition corporation

ShowStopper advertises that 'Our faculty can be seen on the sets of *SYTYCD, America's Got Talent, American Idol, Dancing with the Stars*, and *World of Dance*' (https://www.goshowstopper.com/dance-convention/instructors/). Many convention teachers have strong connections to the commercial world whether it be TV, film, music industry, or Broadway and can act as talent scouts (Levin 2016). Weisbrod (2010) views the competition circuit as supporting American values of capitalism. Dance competitions sell an experience, with dancers willing to pay in order to market their body as a commodity and maybe get a taste of fame, or be near it. To appear on or even watch the televised dance shows amplifies the desire for fame (Reiss and Wiltz 2009).

Televised dance shows and social media put dancers on screen. Visual consumption is quick. Competition numbers, televised numbers and social media clips are rarely longer than two minutes, with some clips being mere seconds. A dancer becomes the body in the mirror, or more precisely digital data comprised of ones and zeros. Even though competition dance may be live, its performance is conducive to a captured image, going from one pose to another with a flattened two-dimensional orientation, where all movement is frontal towards the judges. Video clips from the competitions are used in marketing and social media. By placing dance on screen, a dancer is a commodity who is widely accessible and distributed. Marxist economic geographer David Harvey (1990) coined the term 'time-space compression' (31) which can describe the social media dance clip that can be easily watched on device, erasing the shared investment in space, time, and effort that is needed to view and perform a live dance piece. Accessibility means the loss of the physical body and space that dance exists in, the audience-performer and audience-audience connections, and the joint exploration in present time between performers and audience into the unknown during a live performance. Screen dance is ultimately the loss of dance; screen dance is a record of dance.

Competition dance, televised dance shows, and the reinforcement of the images on social media feed into the identity of the dancer as a product. The fit, young, body can sell products and dreams of being accepted in society as beautiful and sexy. Schupp (2019b) has found an interconnected relationship between competition dance and commercial dance; dance for film, cruise lines, Broadway, theme parks, Las Vegas, resorts, TV, and the music industry. Higher education has begun to embrace commercial dance. Rhonda Miller, founder and co-owner of L.A. commercial dance studio The Edge (http://performingarts.pace.edu/faculty/rhonda-miller), runs the BFA in commercial dance at Pace University, NYC which began classes in the fall of 2011. Mandi Moore is on faculty at Pace, a choreographer on *SYTYCD* and *Dancing with the Stars*, and immersed in the commercial dance scene in L.A. Courses created by Miller in 2015, dance for camera and choreography for camera, along with branding and agent workshops, emphasize dance on screen. (Pace University Facebook page). Lauren Wingenroth (2018) writing for *Dance Magazine* explains how Studio School, Los Angeles and Pace University are preparing dancers to be successful in the commercial dance by including 'marketing and social media as part of their curriculums' because of the importance of image and online presence.

Joe Lanteri created the dance convention company New York City Dance Alliance in 1993 which hosts regional competitions in cities all over the country, along with hosting Nationals and dance intensives in NYC. Some award categories are Good Sportsmanship, Cover Model Search, and Class Act. Lanteri (2016) implores, 'You don't need a trophy to tell you are talented,' but this is exactly what his organization is encouraging with the

competition model. The company has given scholarships to colleges and dance schools not embedded in the competition circuit; Steps on Broadway, Peridance Center, and Broadway Dance Center; Marymount Manhattan College, NY, Point Park University, PA, Montclair State University, NJ, The Hartt School, CT, University of the Arts, PA, to name a few. According to the NYCDA website both Dance Magazine and the Henry Bull Foundation have helped to make well over $2,900,000 in college scholarships available from the NYCDA Foundation since 2010.

In addition to being executive director of NYCDA, Lanteri since 2018 has been the co-owner and executive director of Steps on Broadway (Stahl 2017). Lanteri has forged relationships with Miller from Pace, Complexions Contemporary Ballet (Dance Magazine 2019), and the numerous colleges that he awards scholarships to cementing the bridge between competition dance and dance in college. When money is involved, values and focus may shift.

In both the competition and televised dance worlds, and the social media that covers these worlds, a heterosexual idenitity reigns with stereotypical roles played by each gender (Cardinal 2013, Schupp 2017; Weisbrod 2010), resulting in appearance and movement that is deemed sexually attractive; make-up, pulled back hair, glittery tight-fitting costumes, or a seductive smile. In the competition circuit, young girls are rewarded for hypersexualized movement and costumes, learning that their worth depends on this embodiment (Roberts 2015, 2013). Comments about being more masculine (Broomfield 2011) or feminine are plentiful on *SYTYCD*, cementing socialized gender roles, specifically in the ballroom category. Women are encouraged to be soft, wear heels and revealing clothes, and show their vulnerability while men are encouraged to be strong, leading, and macho.

Social media sears hegemonic constructions of gender, sex appeal, being a 'good dancer,' and beauty seen in competition dance and televised dance shows into the social consciousness. Young people are learning movement, a way to appear, and a dance aesthetic from social media. Common Sense Media (Rideout and Robb 2019) reported 'On average, 8- to 12-year-olds in this country use just under five hours' worth of entertainment screen media per day (4:44), and teens use an average of just under seven and a half hours' worth (7:22) – not including time spent using screens for school or homework.' (Rideout and Robb 2019, 3). 'The video-sharing site YouTube – which contains many social elements, even if it is not a traditional social media platform – is now used by nearly three-quarters of U.S. adults and 94% of 18- to 24-year-olds.' (Pew Research 2018).

The consumer dance body

How is the consumer dance body constructed? The body can be reconfigured online or manufactured in the studio; erase cellulite, blemishes, and flesh. How is the consumer dance body monitored to see if it will be a commodity? Does it fit into the costume or does some flesh seep out? Might the quest for the hired body or perfect body lead to an anorexic body or injured body? Does the mirror weaken the physical sensation of the body?

In order to adopt the identity of a commercially viable dancer, one needs to be young, perform their gender correctly, be heterosexual, hypersexual, beautiful based on societal standards, and embody a set dance aesthetic and technique. One of the main feeders into the consumer world is the competition circuit which tends to be white and female (Feidelson 2017), but dancers of any race and either gender can become the consumer

body. The female competitive artifice – the costumes that glitter, the fake eyelashes, the make-up, and the tiara given to a winner, all reinforce a stereotypical feminine persona. Young girls are put into dance as a rite of passage most often by their mothers who may be living vicariously through their daughters in a kind of 'achievement by proxy' (Cartwright 2012, 1105). Their daughters are judged and valued for their appearance and if they move in the ordained manner. They are taught to reflect the stereotype of the female in society: 'graceful, obedient, worried about their appearance, flexible, svelte, fluid, and possessing a body that does not go through puberty, get pregnant, or age' (Harrington 2019). These young girls are internalizing that this is the niche that they can exist in society and this is how they gain validation; they must give up their own power and rely on others to score them. They may lose control of their body because it becomes an object that must be mastered in order to conform to an image set by others. This niche can provide a sense of belonging, bring out qualities of determination, discipline, resiliency, focus, and pride. However they need to pay for this validation (financially, mentally, and physically) and conform to the norm. The pressure to consume in order to make it as a commercially viable dancer includes participating in numerous conventions and competitions, learning more impressive tricks, buying costumes, beauty regimens, and consuming images on social media and televised dance in order to be current. If the girls continue in dance, financial benefits may materialize with paying jobs. But they must constantly surveil their external image that they project, in real life and online, if they want acceptance, attention, or a job. And this image cannot age. They are in a nonstop beauty pageant.

The consumer body thrives on uniformity, the visual, and obedience. Dance reviewer Anna Kisselgoff in 1978 proclaimed the Rockettes were part of 'the dying art of precision dancing.' However the mass production of the female form performing unison movement as seen in the ballet corps or the Rockettes (inspired by the Tiller Girls from England) is seen in the competitive categories of dance teams, pom pom, and drill. Synchronized ice skating, synchronized swimming, rhythmic gymnastics, and drill team are increasingly popular among females. There is no equivalent for males.

The current technical feats in the dance consumer model are putting strains on the young body. Reporter Levin (2016) quoted Kathleen Bower, a Miami physical therapist specializing in dance medicine, 'We're seeing a lot more chronic and overuse injuries in these dancers … that we didn't used to see until much later.' Feidelson (2017) explains how the level of difficulty has risen, 'In the 1990s, a triple pirouette was considered impressive on the competition circuit. Now 10-year-olds can do eight or nine.' Feidelson (2017) states, 'The children who enter these competitions train up to 30 hours per week, primarily on weekends and after school.' Levin (2016) reports, 'American Orthopedic Society of Sports Medicine has recommended that the number of hours children train each week should match a child's age, so a 9-year-old, for instance, would train nine hours a week.' With the increase in technical difficulty, how much money and time a family has becomes a defining factor in how far a child will go in the circuit, and this will be reflected in both the class and race of the participants.

Judging artistic expression, gendered, showy, literal numbers that display a string of technical elements are characteristic of gymnastics, competitive ice skating and competition dance. Journalist Joan Ryan (2000) examined the bodies that young females needed for ice skating and gymnastics,

> To survive in the sports, they beat back puberty, desperate to stay small and thin, refusing to let their bodies grow up. In this way the sports pervert the very femininity they hold so dear. The physical skills have become so demanding that only a body shaped like a missile – -in other words, a body shaped like a boy's – can excel. Breasts and hips slow the spins, lower the leaps, and disrupt the clean, lean body lines that judges award (6–7).

The dance consumer model is producing a specific body similar to the body type explained above by Ryan – hyper-flexible, thin but strong enough to meet the high technical demands of propelling the body through gymnastic contortions. Growing bodies that go through puberty must be closely monitored for the sake of being competitive. The drive to perform technical exploits seen in competition, televised dance shows, and social media is not built on a foundational knowledge of how the body works. Therefore, these bodies may be prone to injury and damage. They copy what they see in order to win. Just as with the ballet body, the focus is outwards towards the image in the mirror, emphasizing how the movement looks and not how it feels. A dancer's focus on how the body looks in the mirror leads to a preoccupation with weight and self-surveillance (Dryburgh and Fortin, 2010; Pollatou, Bakali, Theodoakis and Goudas 2010; O'Flynn, Pryor & Gray 2013). Body dysmorphia and a disconnection from the self can occur in the pursuit to become America's top dancer because the person is focused on embodying the accepted prototype that wins. The mirror is the teacher and the judge. Kinesthetic sense is not encouraged. Dance kinesiologist Fitt (1996) described kinesthetic sense as 'a perception of both motion and position' (276) made possible by the proprioceptors and the sensory organs. A dancer can reach inside instead of looking to the mirror to sense how much of a contraction they are using, assess the angle of their joint, and determine how much tension they are using. All the emphasis on the external creates a body that does not feel, sense, or breathe. It is a body that does not acknowledge when it is tired, hungry, or injured. The body needs to push through in order to win, get the job, keep the job, or be correct. Carol Lessinger (1996), a practitioner of Feldenkrais method, explained that using a lot of effort masks sensation and the drive to perform a movement correctly with a lot of effort disrupts the somatic experience. Only the end result, not the process, is valued. In this product driven push, self-discovery, experimentation, ownership, and creativity is lost.

Paige Edley, Teresa Heiland, and Darrin Murray (2008) examined the 'cult of slenderness' in the Los Angeles dance scene. They interviewed dance students at a private University in Los Angeles, a city that is known to be the epicenter of commercial work because of the influence of Hollywood. 'Living in LA, the center of the cult of slenderness and the entertainment conglomerate of the world, could likely mean that dancers are under even more pressure to self-scrutinize how they act, eat, dress, socialize, and move' (Edley et al 2008, 260). The dancers, who were predominantly in commercial jazz, realized that if they did not fit the standard, they most likely would not land a job. Edley, Heiland, and Murray (2008) found that many dancers experienced some form of body dysmorphia and disordered eating. Since commercial dance is about selling a product, it only makes sense that the product, the body, would need to fit strict visual parameters.

According to Foster (2013) it is an 'industrial body' or 'hired body' (Weisbrod 2010) that can do any kind of movement that skims the surface of the different genres with no deep understanding. Fisher (2014) sees the connection between the 'event-filled competition dances meant to garner points from judges' (23) and the body that the dance

company Complexions Contemporary Ballet produces. Fisher (2014) quotes Roslyn Sulcas's review of Complexions's describing the dance as 'hyperkinetic, flashy exhibitions' and 'bouncy, pumped-up dance of no point whatsoever other than to get the audience members revved up and cheering,' and imploring 'Look at me up here with my fabulous body doing fabulous things!' (23). Complexions exemplifies the dance of the moment; the company has been featured on *SYTYCD*, at New York Dance Alliance's conventions, and at Pace University.

Over the years I have witnessed in my composition classes a strengthening of a set aesthetic that many of my students from a competitive background are afraid to break from. Often, I do not see them dig into their own bodies to find movement. Instead I observe them using stock movements that they have seen on social media, televised dance shows, or in the competitive circuit. Contact improviser Nancy Stark Smith said, 'Where you are when you don't know where you are is one of the most precious spots offered by improvisation. It is a place from which more directions are possible than anywhere else. I call this place the Gap' (Smith 1987, 3). In the consumer dance world there are no gaps to be explored because everything is neatly scripted; hit the movement, hit the mark, and then receive hits on Instagram. The dancer loses their sense of self, and has only learned to copy and mirror movement, not create it. Imitation stops agency.

Conclusion

The current consumer dancer lives in an immersive virtual world with 'mirrors' everywhere. The fetishization of winners and losers on screen is an addiction. Our society is colored by instant gratification and a quest for fame. A necessity to sell one's image online is forceful. The 45th President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, speaks in superlatives, hosted a reality show and owned the Miss Universe pageant.

Dance can be about technique, entertainment, self-expression, cultural identification, spiritual transformation, sex, art, or transcendance. However, consumer dance possesses the disproportionate power of shaping young minds and bodies of what 'dance' should be in terms of embodiment, pedagogy, and appreciation since it is how most young people in the U.S. will be taught dance (Weisbrod 2010; Schupp 2019b). Young people, specifically females, are learning that their worth is based on the external. Current cultural forces encourage a fetishization of extremes of technique, the creation of an aesthetic that relies on social constructions of being female and male, and an emphasis on image and brand, erasing somatic awareness. Further studies are needed to examine how consumer dance is affecting young bodies in terms of injuries and body dysmorphia, and their psyches in terms of self-esteem, creativity, and agency. Parents, educators, and dancers should question costume choices, body biases, treatment of gender, music choice, movement, and pedagogical approaches. Our lives, including dance lives, are now intertwined with a screen and this new relationship to time, space, movement and the senses needs to be examined. There is still time and space for a body to breath, sense, and feel.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

Heather Harrington received her BA in psychology from Boston University and her MFA from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She has been on faculty at Kean University, Seton Hall University, and Drew University. Harrington danced with the Doris Humphrey Repertory Company, Martha Graham Ensemble, Pearl Lang Dance Theatre, and Bella Lewitzky Dance Company. She ran her own modern dance company in New York City for 9 years, performing nationally and internationally. As a figure skater, Harrington has performed, taught, and choreographed for The Ice Theater of New York, and coached for Sky Rink, NYC and Figure Skating in Harlem. Her artistic and scholarly collaboration with dance artist and educator Nadra Assaf from Lebanon has led to performances and conferences in Sweden, Beirut, Malta, and Geneva, New York. Her scholarship has been published by Dancer Citizen, Nordic Journal of Dance, Journal of Dance Education, Beauty Demands, and Dance Education in Practice.

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ARTICLE

Identities, academic cultures, and relationship intersections: postsecondary dance educators' lived experiences pursuing tenure

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ABSTRACT

The political hierarchies and assumptions built around tenure and promotion processes across U.S. postsecondary institutions are fraught with complexities and have a significant effect on eventual outcomes. A tenure case's success or failure could depend on many factors, possibly including circumstances out of a candidate's control such as the institution's geographical location, dominant cultures and systems in operation, ineffective mentorship, unclear policy, and, most relevant to this article, faculty members' identities. Faculty who hold minority or underrepresented status in relation to race, ethnicity, gender expression, sexuality, social class, age, or ability can face marginalization, bias, and work responsibilities unrelated to professional goals and personal needs. In this article, I describe how tenure-track dance faculty perceive their experiences working toward tenure through analysis of 50 participant survey responses. The participants' interpretations of how power, privilege, and identity affect(ed) their paths to tenure highlight problematic, sometimes discriminatory practices in academia and provide rich ground for cultivating improved mentorship practices and creating institutional and departmental policies that promote diversity, inclusion, and equity, while also supporting each individual's strengths and goals. Further, the participants in this study offer useful strategies for understanding and/or establishing work–life balance, setting boundaries, and prioritizing tenure responsibilities.

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The political hierarchies and assumptions built around differing tenure and promotion processes across U.S. postsecondary institutions are fraught with complexities regarding expectations and may have a significant effect on eventual outcomes. A tenure case's success or failure could depend on many factors, possibly including factors out of a candidate's control such as the institution's geographical location, dominant cultures and systems in operation, ineffective mentorship, unclear policy, and, most relevant to this article, faculty members' identities. In dance, faculty members negotiate assumptions about the validity and rigor of creative research and department-specific biases toward differing areas of the dance discipline, on top of unique identifying factors contributing to each faculty member's workload and research, teaching, and service output.

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It is well known that postsecondary institutions and the tenure track in particular have been a breeding ground for marginalization of women, people of color, people who have caregiving responsibilities, and people with disabilities (Welch 1994, Hooks 1994; Ward and Wolf-Wendel 2012; Flaherty 2016; AAUP 2020). For example, faculty members who hold minority status in relation to their race, ethnicity, gender expression, sexuality, social class, or ability can face an overload of responsibilities that may be misaligned with their professional goals and their personal needs. In effort to illustrate inclusivity, diversity, and accessibility, some postsecondary institutions and departments rely upon a diverse representation of faculty in particular circumstances such as on search committees, university-wide legislative bodies, and in positions of administrative leadership. The potential for exploitation abounds as faculty members who maintain minority or protected identities overwhelmingly are called on for an overload of service assignments. Often referred to as 'cultural taxation' (Guillaume and Apodaca 2020; Burns 2019), this extra work faculty and staff of color take on as unofficial diversity consultants or representatives on committees works to the detriment of other job responsibilities expected for tenure. While the university benefits from these perspectives and voices, the additional (mostly uncompensated) labor adds stress and responsibility to these tenure-track faculty members. It has also been documented that professional women who have children face motherhood penalties such as being overlooked for raises, promotion, and advancement to leadership positions (Kittelstrom 2010; Ward and Wolf-Wendel 2012; Ghodsee 2014). Additionally, ignorance, bias, and abuse based on discriminatory practices at the institutional, departmental, or even personal level could marginalize and oppress faculty members on their way to tenure. Identities, those presented outwardly and experienced internally, potentially put faculty members at risk for exploitation and overwork, making it more difficult for some faculty members to rise through the ranks of academia.

To add fuel to the fire of these already formidable professional circumstances, graduate students and faculty members find themselves negotiating their work in a culture that grows ever more hostile to the idea of academic tenure (Vedder 2020; AAUP 2018). Even before the Great Recession of 2008 and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, universities and colleges facing budget deficits began adopting a business model in which tenure-track positions were eliminated in large numbers to make way for contingent faculty positions which are paid less and include less academic freedom (Vedder 2020; Scott 2018; McKenna 2016). As postsecondary institutions continue to commit to the business model and as tenure-track positions decline, opportunities for faculty to obtain job security, academic freedom, and even a living wage are rare. Importantly, non-tenure -track faculty members concerned with job security might consider the ideas of expressing dissenting opinions and calling out systemic biases and injustice too risky, leaving the door open for these issues to persist (AAUP 2018). I argue in this article that senior faculty and administrators hold key authority and responsibility for modeling and advocating for a changed culture.

As a discipline and art form, dance holds a unique place in the academy. Although dance departments and programs have increased since the early 1900s, the dance discipline has long faced misperceptions and assumptions, being labeled anti-intellectual *fluff* by those who don't understand or appreciate it as a rigorous academic pursuit (Hagood 2000; Posey 1988). Unique among tenure-track academics, dance faculty members develop research agendas that may be scholarly, creative, or a mix of research methods. The National Association of Schools in Dance (NASD) expects each

department to develop rigorous and fair evaluation processes for tenure-track dance faculty members based on the institution's and department's missions and identification as a teaching, research, or other specializing institution (NASD 2019). Further, NASD requires that 'creative production and professional work in dance should be accepted as equivalent to scholarly publication or research as a criterion for appointment and advancement in all institutions' (NASD 2019, 63). However, creative activity is not universally as highly regarded as scholarly work, nor is it well understood across disciplines. Further, differing from many other disciplines, the work required of dance faculty often involves excessive time and effort. For example, dance faculty are often required to rehearse and be involved in the production elements of shows during evenings and weekends in addition to their weekday teaching and service loads. Also, they are sometimes required to take on additional mentoring of student artists and they may have to commit to significant travel throughout the year to pursue creative research opportunities. While these requirements are consistent with those in other performing arts disciplines, tenure-track faculty outside of the performing arts may *choose* to increase their workloads outside of traditional work hours, but do not face the same rehearsal and performance-related job requirements, time commitment, and multiplicity of skill sets.

An overview of many postsecondary dance program tenure guidelines and perspectives from tenure-track dance faculty in my previous research indicates an overall lack of clarity and consistency in guidelines about what kind of and how much work is valued across the areas of teaching, research, and service, and how to evaluate and mentor tenure-track dance faculty effectively (Duffy 2018). The complex contextual issues surrounding academia, the tenure-track system, and the dance discipline converge for dance faculty members and are at the heart of my reasons for conducting this study.

As a researcher invested in positioning myself transparently within my research, I offer a brief disclaimer: Whereas it is my goal as a researcher to support the voices and perspectives of people who are in marginalized or oppressed positions, I do not aim to speak for or on behalf of anyone but myself. As a white, non-disabled, heterosexual, cisgender woman artist and academic with tenure, I acknowledge my own position of power and that my identities afford me certain privileges not afforded to others. My intention is for this research to invite participants' experiences and perspectives to be heard – that I can serve as an advocate for those with less authority or voice than me by writing about their experiences expressed to me. The study featured in this article was constructed on the tenets of qualitative research and is interpretive in nature in order to reflect my openness to critical questioning of dominant narratives and to properly represent participants' perspectives using their own words.

This research stems from my recent writing on faculty experiences of working toward tenure in universities and colleges in the United States. My article, titled 'A Delicate Balance: How Postsecondary Education Dance Faculty in the United States Perceive Themselves Negotiating Responsibilities Expected for Tenure' (2018) reveals much about the work required to achieve tenure in U.S. postsecondary institutions, including how faculty members craft innovative strategies to achieve tenure, meet their career goals, and aim for balance in their work and personal lives. I learned in this study that 'maintaining balance among the areas required for tenure is a difficult and ongoing process' and each faculty member carves out her/his own process and develops innovative strategies for achieving tenure.

While my 2018 article revealed important information about dance faculty experiences on the tenure-track, the results of this earlier research pointed me to gaps in my data collection and analysis. One of the major limitations of this initial study is that I did not gather demographic information about the participants. Had I known, for instance, how many of the participants were female or how many of the participants were faculty of color, I may have been able to sense different connections between participants and noticed similarities or differences based on identifying factors. While these associations may not have provided any conclusive answers about any one population of faculty members, it could have presented new ideas about how potentially marginalizing or discriminatory practices may have shaped participants' experiences.

In this article, I describe how tenure-track faculty perceive their experiences working toward tenure through analysis of public scholarship and the perspectives of 50 surveyed participants. The participants' interpretations of how power dynamics, privilege, and identity affected their paths to tenure shed light on problematic and discriminatory practices in academia and provide rich ground for cultivating improved mentorship practices and creating institutional and departmental policies that promote diversity, inclusion, and equity, while also supporting each individual's strengths and goals. Further, the participants in this study offer useful strategies for understanding and/or creating work–life balance, for setting boundaries, and for prioritizing tenure responsibilities.

Data collection processes and methodologies

This research design calls on qualitative approaches because it is important for me to highlight the uniqueness of each participant's experience. This inquiry, therefore, was designed to clearly support the interpretations emerging through the participants' voices, which, in qualitative design, should remain at the forefront. This interpretive inquiry seeks to gain a sense of the circumstances and accounts of faculty members' paths to tenure. Therefore, it contains elements of a narrative research approach. These faculty members do not exist in isolation; they live and work in specific communities during a particular time in history and have individual values and beliefs that shape their perceptions of experience. Their stories and the social and cultural contexts in which they live and work are important to include in this research. In process, narrative researchers 'situate individual stories within participants' personal experiences (their jobs, their homes), their culture (racial or ethnic), and their historical contexts (time and place)' (Creswell 2017, 74). Therefore, I sought to develop a narrative approach, which helped me bridge the participants' described experiences with theoretical conversations about some of the main themes that emerged from the data.

To sense how dance faculty across the country experience their work leading up to tenure, I collected online questionnaire data about faculty's experiences of either working toward or achieving tenure and incorporated coding as the main data analysis method. Participants could choose to remain anonymous, they could skip questions they did not wish to answer, and they could stop taking the survey at any time. I chose these methods because I believed the options for anonymous participation and for choosing to answer questions they felt were more relevant to them would invite candidness from participants about their tenure experiences.

The survey included 10 questions, some in multiple choice format and some in written response format. Participants were asked to provide demographic information and were prompted with open-ended questions about their experiences on the tenure track. Demographic information I gathered includes participants' gender, race/ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, social class, academic rank, when they earned or will earn tenure, and in what areas they are required to illustrate effectiveness for tenure. Please reference Table 1 of demographic data on the following page for details about the participants. Open-ended questions involved prompting participants to describe their paths to tenure, identifying any challenges, privileges, obstacles, and other circumstances that affected their experience. Participants were also asked to discuss how they balance the differing areas required for tenure at their institutions. Reference Appendix A for a complete list of

Table 1. Participant Demographic Information.

Demographic Information Category	Number of participants (n = 50)
Gender	
Female	40
Male	10
Age	
30–40	11
40–50	20
50–60	10
60–70	5
70–80	4
Race/Ethnicity	
Caucasian	42
Black/African American	4
Asian American	1
Jewish	1
Latina	1
Tri-racial	1
Sexual Orientation	
Heterosexual/straight	38
Gay	6
Fluid, leaning straight	1
Social Class	
Middle class	34
Upper/middle class	9
Academic Rank	
Assistant Professor	14
Associate Professor	14
Professor	14
Professor of Practice	1
Adjunct	2
Other	10
When Tenure was Obtained	
Within last 10 years	18
More than 10 years ago	11
Next five years	11
In tenure year/non-tenure appointment	5
Areas Expected for Tenure	
Teaching	46
Research	44
Service	41
Community Engagement	15
Funding/Grant Writing	5
Administrative Duties	10
Professional Development	7
Academic Advising	4

survey questions. I sent the survey link to my network of professional contacts in postsecondary dance education and posted to my social media accounts and online National Dance Education Organization forums. The link was kept active for one month in 2020 during which participants could volunteer responses.

Once I closed the survey, I analyzed data from all 50 participants by coding their responses, which helped me perceive themes and categories emerging from the data. Coding was an important data analysis process because the themes emerging from the data helped me make connections between participants and supported me painting a portrait of their shared experiences. I conducted three rounds of coding, aiming to notice the similarities, differences, and frequency of certain ideas within the participants' responses. Since this research expands on earlier research I conducted on a similar topic, and since the coding methods I used in my earlier

study yielded fruitful results, I chose to use the same coding methods in this study. The first round was an *Initial* or *Open* coding in which I sought a general sense of the responses overall and looked for repeating sentiments, ideas, or themes running through the data. Some of the topics and themes that I annotated throughout the data include: overwork, exploitation, balance, communication, clear expectations, bias, best practice, mentorship, colleagues, and prioritizing.

The second round, *In Vivo* coding, uses the participants' own words as codes. I selected In Vivo coding because I wanted to 'honor the participants' words' (Saldaña 2015, 66) by quoting them in this article. Their emotions and opinions are most clearly and accurately expressed through their own words and the dynamic shifts in tone between my voice as the author/researcher and their voices help the reader sense the complexities of their experiences more fully. Finally, I conducted a round of *Values* coding, which helped me perceive the participants' 'values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing [their] perspectives or worldviews' (Saldaña 2015, 91). For example, some of the participants, I learned, hold tensions around authority and rules; some value and even praise the idea of overwork; some seem distrustful of their colleagues and academic systems overall; and some approach work assuming that they will face marginalization or biases. I would not have explored these themes as completely had I not completed a round of Value coding and this round helped me sense connections between participants' identities and backgrounds with their professional experiences. These coding methods assisted my exploration of the participants' described experiences working toward tenure in their differing institutions and with their different backgrounds and other identifying factors in mind.

Once coding was complete, I began grouping data themes together in order to develop a written research product that outlines my findings and positions this data within the context of larger societal circumstances and other theoretical discussions. This helped me paint a representative portrait of trends and themes in writing and supported the way the data is structured in this article. Having conducted a review of literature prior to collecting questionnaire data, the themes I noticed in literature began to reappear in this data, which helped me to sense the relationships between the experiences of participants in this pool relative to representations in other research and scholarship.

Overview of participant pool

It was important for me to gather demographic data about the participants so that I could make connections between their identities and their shared experiences. This pool of participants comprised of 40 women and 10 men and a relatively even spread of ages ranging from 30–80 years old. 42 participants identified as white or Caucasian, four as Black or African American, one as Asian American, one as Jewish, one as Latina, and one as tri-racial. Other identifying factors were not universally answered, however, of those who responded with their sexual orientation, 38 identified as heterosexual, six as gay, and one as 'fluid leaning straight.' Of the 41 participants who identified their social class, 34 identified as middle class and nine as upper/middle. The participants were also invited to write in additional important identifiers. 15 participants added the following as important: able-bodied, privileged, educated, retired, feminist, mother, grandmother, single, married, and 'small in stature, big in personality.'

In addition to collecting demographic information about the participants, I also felt it was important to get a sense of what positions these faculty members fill in their institutions and at what point in their careers they each are working. Of the 50 survey responses I received, 14 of the participants self-defined as Assistant Professors, 14 as Associate Professors, 14 as Professors, one as Professor of Practice, two as Adjunct Faculty, and 10 as 'Other.' (These participants used the following titles: Associate Dean, Director, Vice Provost, Professor Emerita, Lecturer, and Artistic Director.). When asked at what point in the tenure process they are in, a majority (18 participants) earned tenure within the past 10 years, 11 earned tenure more than 10 years ago, 11 expect to earn tenure within the next five years, and three do not expect to earn tenure at their current institutions, either because they are not in a tenure-track line or for other unknown reasons. Additionally, two participants stated they are currently in their tenure year or semester upon completion of the survey, but do not yet know the outcome of their bid.

Upon initial analysis of these data sets, I acknowledge some limitations in this pool of participants. The first limitation is that it does not represent a large portion of the entire population of dance faculty in the United States. However, there are enough responses to warrant an analysis for the purposes of this study. Also, I asked a limited number of specific questions related to participants' backgrounds and did not ask about their geographical region and size of their institution. Given the added complexity this information could potentially add to the study data, I chose not to include it. My reason for not including this information is that, in this study, I am most interested in making connections between dance faculty members' perceptions of their tenure-seeking processes and their described identifiable factors. Adding too many details about the nature of their positions could diffuse the impact of the participants' described experiences. Finally, while I did not specifically ask participants to define the scope of their institution, whether it is a research university or a teaching college, for example, I did ask participants to describe the areas expected for tenure in their positions, which provided me a sense of institutional values and the particularities of each participant's job requirements. Nevertheless, I acknowledge this as a weakness of the study; a follow-up study that explores these more complex factors will be an important next step.

Faculty reflecting on balance and perception of tenure achievability

Following a survey of demographic information, I asked the participants to respond to two important questions: one asked whether or not they felt they had found a successful and achievable balance of responsibilities in their academic positions and the other asked them to rate the level of ease or difficulty in their ability to achieve tenure. These were important questions to ask because I felt they could give me a sense of how positive or negative these participants felt about their job responsibilities and their own ability to be successful in their positions.

While a majority of the participants claim to have struck a successful and achievable balance of responsibilities, 15 participants (or 30% of the participant pool) stated that they had not found this balance. Some of the participants also included qualitative comments that further emphasized a culture of overwork, stating that 'it was and is constant work,' that the administrative and service work 'always wins' [over other responsibilities], and that the responsibilities are 'overwhelming.' One participant stated, 'I never feel I am doing enough and good mentorship is greatly lacking particularly for aspirations to achieve full professor.' Other participants stated they had found balance after a certain number of years spent on the job and another found balance by 'lowering standards in certain areas' so as not to give in to a culture of overwork and in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

When asked to qualify their perception of the ease or difficulty in achieving tenure at their institution, 47% (n = 23) of the participants landed somewhere in the middle, stating that tenure was neither easy nor difficult to obtain. Another 42% (n = 21) stated that tenure was either difficult or extremely difficult to obtain and 11% stated that tenure was relatively easy to obtain. None of the participants described tenure as extremely easy to achieve. Critical to the integrity of my initial research questions is my analysis of how demographic information and perceptions of tenure interrelate. Therefore, it is important to reflect in writing how differing demographically distinct groups within my participant pool perceive their own paths. Of the 42% of the pool that found tenure either difficult or extremely difficult to obtain, only 2 of the 10 men (20%) expressed that tenure was difficult to achieve, whereas 20 of the 40 women (50%) expressed difficulty. Six of the eight participants of color (75%) expressed difficulty obtaining tenure. All of the participants who identified as parents (100%) found difficulty in obtaining tenure. Of the seven participants who identified their sexual orientation as something other than heterosexual, five of them (71%) perceived difficulty in obtaining tenure. This data clearly paints a portrait of difficulties in the tenure seeking process for those participants who embody underrepresented and/or marginalized populations.

Based on these responses, obtaining tenure and negotiating balance throughout the tenure-seeking process are not easy, overall. As a researcher, I am interested in possible ways faculty members' experiences working toward tenure or their reflections on their past tenure experience are affected by their identifying factors such as gender, race, or sexual orientation. Further, I am interested in getting a better sense of how the intersections of those identities create space for success in academia or else prevent some faculty members from feeling and/or being successful in their bids for tenure.

As has been documented in other studies (Lisnic, Zajicek, and Morimoto 2019; Arnold, Crawford, and Khalifa 2016; Perna 2001), the tenure process and work in

postsecondary education overall are made more complex and can be more challenging for people who hold less power and whose identities may be treated as a liability in academic culture. For example, multiple texts discuss how the history of tenure in the academy ignores the needs of faculty members who are not white, childless, able-bodied men (Benard, Paik, and Correll 2007; Dolmage 2017; Guarino and Borden 2017; Mamimseishvili and Lee 2018).

As several participants of color describe in the following, racist practices and institutional policies and structures have a negative impact on tenure-seeking experiences. Additionally, working women, and, in this study, mothers in particular, describe facing marginalization in an academy built for men without childcare responsibilities. Scholars suggest that in some organizations, where men define the workplace culture, women with children face a 'baby penalty' (Mason, Wolfinger, and Goulden 2013). The baby penalty is illustrated in mothers' difficulty in being promoted and achieving because of the expectations that all employees should sacrifice family and personal needs, and are always available and always working, thus embodying the 'ideal worker' (Ward and Wolf-Wendel 2012). The participants who identified as mothers in this study underlined biases and lack of support for working parents as important to the negative perceptions they hold of the tenure process.

Faculty members discuss their paths to tenure: privileges, obstacles, and biases

Privileges

The next set of survey questions asked participants to describe their paths toward tenure, identifying any privilege from which they perceived benefitting, obstacles that threatened their productivity or overall experience, and how they experienced this path specifically in relation to their identities as educator/artist/scholars. A few faculty member participants seemed to be keenly aware of the advantages that were helpful to them along their path to tenure, including the privileges that they held. For example, several participants noted being grateful for the privilege of a graduate education that prepared them for the rigors of an academic profession. Others noted the privilege of working in a department that values creative research and that features a large faculty to spread the wealth of the department's service work. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of participant comments centered on obstacles, biases, and competing demands that prevent professors from creating balance and working effectively toward tenure.

Biases

Some of the most compelling comments from participants described discrimination and bias they have felt in their academic and artistic roles. One participant, a 45-year-old African American male, stated only 'racism' as the response to a question about perceived obstacles he faced. Another participant, a 47-year-old black woman, contended that ''racist and sexist practices created more work for me because I kept having to prove my worth. I represented on every committee." Another participant claimed she 'overcame the old boys club' mentality that pervaded her department – a physical education department – after

Dance was added. Another faculty member asserted that 'differences in ideology impact tenure.' These comments indicate deep-seated and pervasive racist and sexist practices still dominate many programs and affect faculty members working toward tenure.

Faculty members also discussed issues that arose during their tenure process that involved life stages, family status, bodily changes, and age. A 47-year-old female participant claimed that 'bias against faculty with children caused tension and obstacles' in her department. Another participant stated that she was 'worried because [she] was visibly pregnant at the time [of going up for tenure] and thought people might be thinking [she] wouldn't be able to get back to the studio after having a baby.' Another suggested her faculty colleagues were worried that as she aged, she wouldn't be able to teach the same courses she was currently teaching. Since dance faculty negotiate extensive physical demands on their bodies throughout their careers and since physical activity is often required for the line of work, further research should address the measures in place (or not) for supporting pregnant women, new mothers, and aging and injured dance faculty as they negotiate bodily changes and challenges throughout these important life stages.

Perceived biases against the dance discipline were expressed by several faculty members, giving me a sense that the discipline, in addition to individual faculty members, may face bias and marginalization. The expectation of one participant as the sole dance faculty in a department of theatre and dance 'was that [she] would choreograph musicals and stay in [her] corner.' Instead, she says she 'expanded the [dance] program over 400% in 5 years. [She] was talked to with extreme disregard, shaming, and blaming, and told by men in power to "learn your place" and that [her] work was invalid.' These kinds of comments most often came from colleagues in theatre programs paired with dance in a departmental structure, so could be related to internal competition for resources and reputation. Nevertheless, participants also mentioned colleagues across disciplines being ignorant of the rigors of the dance discipline and, thus, discounting its relevance in committee settings.

In addition to conflicts involving distribution of workload, the research expectations of dance faculty were unclear for many of the participants on their paths to tenure. Some expressed concern that tenure committees would not understand or respect creative research, so they felt pressured to produce scholarly research as well, which to them, felt inequitable related to other faculty members' expectations across discipline. A 39-year-old untenured white female participant pointed out that 'there is a challenge in defining what "dance scholarship" is to non-dancers at my institution. Because of this, I tend to spend more time engaging in writing and producing papers and conference presentations as I know that will be acknowledged by the tenure board when I resent my dossier.' A 42-year-old white male Associate Professor asserted that 'even though I am in a creative field, there was still an expectation that I work toward scholarly publication, especially since the tenure committee was to be made up of faculty in the sciences and humanities.' From these participants' comments, it seems as if some institutions pander to the spheres of knowledge understood by other disciplines, which reinforces, rather than counteracts, ignorance about or rejection of creative activity as research.

Obstacles

Multiple participants discussed how their colleagues influenced and affected their path to tenure including how the lack of important mentorship affected their perceptions of the

tenure process. A 51-year-old Latina woman contended that 'the primary difficulty [in achieving tenure] was lack of mentorship within my department and initial lack of clear research benchmarks.' Other faculty members asserted that colleague/mentors relying on dated models or personal experiences regarding expectations and evaluation were less helpful, one participant stating that 'the mentorship [I receive] is too specific to the mentor who may have received tenure under very different circumstances.'

Multiple instances of bullying, intimidation, and dysfunction toward tenure-track faculty by colleagues and administrators as described by the participants painted disturbing portraits that demand an expanded future inquiry. One female participant, for example, a white 41-year-old dance administrator, described experiencing 'significant bullying by two senior faculty members at a previous institution, but despite that, managed to still be promoted before I left that university.' Another participant, a 46-year-old female, white, heterosexual Assistant Professor described a particularly disturbing environment:

> I work in a department that extremely dysfunctional, with the majority of tenured faculty completely disengaged with the broader world, and who passive-aggressively retaliate if I make any attempt to change our curriculum or activities to better serve our students. Additionally, my Chair is in my discipline and will steal my research and teaching methods and then claim ownership of them as [his] original ideas. Once this was learned, I kept to myself and have worked toward tenure completely without mentorship or guidance.

In addition to several cited instances of bullying, intimidation, and lack of mentorship from senior colleagues and administrators, some faculty members described changes in administration at the department, college, and upper administration levels as having a negative impact on their opportunities to be guided by strong mentors.

Some of the participants of color expressed feeling particular pressures and expectations related to their race or ethnicity. For example, one participant, an African American male Assistant Professor, stated the he 'has a strong voice in the area of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in [his] department' and that he 'works tirelessly to promote access to people of color to [his] program along the tenure-seeking path.' Two other faculty members, both Associate Professors, stated that racism and 'racist practices and traditions' made achieving tenure more difficult. While I hoped to follow up with these two participants to ask for more information, they did not choose to identify themselves in this research. However, I believe future research should unpack the racist implications of the ways certain faculty members, departments, and institutions operate.

Many of the difficulties the participants expressed seem related to a persistent culture of overwork, the 'ethos of more is more,' and extremely, sometimes unrealistically, high expectations for junior dance faculty who have different responsibilities and foci than do faculty in other departments and disciplines. One participant exclaimed, 'with a 3/3/load it's hard to maintain an R1 research agenda.' Some faculty members express that unclear expectations for tenure 'led to over working to make sure everything was covered' once the tenure dossier was viewed by those in and outside of the department and discipline. Overall, the faculty members expressed that research/creative activity was the most difficult component of their position to keep up with due to heavy teaching and especially service loads.

The small number of faculty in many dance programs, according to the participants, creates an environment in which faculty members working in them are overworked and face burnout. Because dance is a rather new discipline in the academy compared to other disciplines and because the arts are less supported than STEM fields, there are often few or even only one faculty member responsible for an entire dance program. One participant stated that 'when I am the only person in my discipline, there is no one to accurately evaluate [my work].' Additionally, many participants discussed having to serve on more committees than faculty in other departments because there are fewer faculty available in dance to share that workload. Another important circumstance that many faculty members of color negotiate is that because they hold minority status on their campuses, they are often overworked, even exploited, in the area of service in institutional efforts to increase diverse representation on committees and in university governance (Guillaume and Apodaca 2020; Perna 2001).

Faculty member successes and strategies

Inspiring success stories and strategic tips for working toward tenure were shared by most of the participants in this study, suggesting that dance faculty are overwhelmingly insightful and enterprising. Some faculty members take care in prioritizing the differing areas required for tenure, however, this strategy sometimes backfires for them. For example, one participant, a 44-year-old white female Associate Professor who identifies as 'gay sometimes, queer sometimes,' describes a way she prioritizes research that is required by her institution and the unexpected challenges this strategy has created:

> I almost always do my research first in the day to know that I've tended to that (even for a short time) before all the other tasks overwhelm me – it's a technique I learned to keep the research moving forward … I often just have to shut my [office] door [to focus], [but] as a consequence, I am told that colleagues feel they "don't know me" or "I'm private" or "I'm not around." But this is what I have to do to get the work done.

This quote epitomizes the damage that can be caused in academic environments in which trust and independence are not fostered. In this faculty member's account of the way her approach to work is perceived by her colleagues, it seems clear that unsupportive colleagues can have a significant negative impact on one's ability to be productive on the tenure track. This example also suggests that dance faculty members who prefer to work in solitude may face judgments. As a researcher, I am curious to know if this perception spans academic disciplines or, if because dance is an art form which requires physical presence, dance faculty members may face harsher critiques from peers when they engage in independent work. Because the processes of developing artistic works and training dancers in the studio involves physical and sometimes emotional closeness, dance faculty members create a sense of intimacy and community among their colleagues and students which may not manifest in the same way or with the same intensity in other academic disciplines. Additionally, unlike in other academic disciplines, dance faculty members are often required to work on productions 'after hours' in the evenings and on weekends and thus may create a false expectation that they should always be on duty.

Multiple participants describe 'setting reasonable expectations' and 'learning to say no' to projects and assignments that would add 'quantity, rather than quality' to their

workloads and achievements. One participant articulated her approach succinctly: 'I cannot promise to be extraordinary at everything nor can I feel pressured to say yes to everything.' A few mentioned 'beginning' or 'starting' to prioritize a healthy and manageable work/life balance, however all of these participants are at the Associate or full Professor level, indicating that prior to earning tenure, this was not an option for them. One participant, though, a white male 42-year-old Associate Professor, suggested that those in positions of power or authority should 'encourage junior colleagues to work toward saying "no" to things that will not make a large impact in their tenure file.' Importantly, this participant identifies a way for senior faculty members to better mentor junior faculty.

Every strategy considered by a faculty member should be weighed against the context of his or her departmental and university cultures. Setting goals and defining boundaries, for example, can be tricky terrain to navigate for faculty members trying to prove their worth as scholars, artists, teachers, and good citizens of the university in the years leading to tenure. As discussed above, some of the strategies employed by participants in this study were met with disapproval or outright hostility, some of which may be due to factors unrelated to faculty members' work. The mothers in this study, for example, described a harsh reality of feeling 'bias against faculty with children' and some of the women faculty members in this pool described their working environments as 'old boys clubs.' These prejudices create academic atmospheres in which some junior faculty must deny or try to make invisible parts of their identities in the workplace. When attempting to work differently than their colleagues, junior faculty are often advised to tread lightly and not make waves, but this only creates the opportunity for long-held ignorance and inequality to continue. This discussion brings forth a task for mentors – to actively support and promote tenure-track faculty members who personify underrepresented populations within the department and within the university at large. Since it is well known that postsecondary institutions and the tenure track in particular have been a breeding ground for marginalization of women, people of color, people who have caregiving responsibilities, and people with disabilities, senior faculty and administrators hold key authority and responsibility for modeling and advocating for a changed culture.

Best practices and possibilities in mentorship

Some of the participants in this study emphasized critically important measures either they or their colleagues have taken to ensure the path to tenure was as supported and clearly defined as possible. One participant, a 34-year-old Associate Professor who identifies as a Caucasian heterosexual woman, expressed that 'I felt my college did a good job of preparing faculty for tenure, through workshops, annual review feedback, and faculty mentoring.' Another stated that she achieved tenure at three institutions and that having a mentor at each was critical to [her] success. One faculty member, a 47-year-old, black female Associate Professor, discussed that 'senior mentors addressed gender and race informally' when providing pre-tenure guidance, but that it was never openly discussed among colleagues. This comment makes me curious about how much underground mentorship happens at colleges and universities to prepare tenure-track faculty for possible issues they may face involving their race, gender, or other identifying factors.

Mentorship ideas arose often in participant responses, which may prove useful to those currently serving as mentors or supervisors to faculty on the tenure track. For example, one participant expressed:

> I am a believer in mentorship, particularly for young new tenure-track hires who might be new out of their MFA programs or professionals who haven't been in academia for a while. Senior faculty (now speaking to myself) need to support their new hires; chairs and deans need to assist new tenure track faculty in developing a clear research agenda; and [they need to] SUPPORT, financially and in leave time, the research that needs to get done in order for a candidate to achieve promotion and tenure.

This participant's ideas provide initial practical and important steps that any department could take in ensuring its tenure-track dance faculty are guided, that they are provided necessary and clear information about expectations for tenure, and that those expectations are met with support. To tease out this point even further, as a member of the academy myself, I perceive some administrators at the chair and dean level not having an understanding of their own faculty's areas of expertise and their individual research and teaching needs, which may differ from person to person. Further, chairs and deans should be responsible for knowing inside and out, the tenure and promotion policies of the university, college, and department so that they can best support their junior faculty. I, therefore, advocate for leadership training, evaluation measures, and consistent mentorship for chairs and deans so that they hold more responsibility for the tenure outcomes of their faculty employees.

Fostering positivity and acceptance

Because working on the tenure track requires sustained and tireless effort and recalibration, dance faculty members face an onslaught of negotiation and the fight for balance and achievement can lead many to doubt themselves and/or the profession. However, some of the responses from these participants indicate a deep sense of self-regard and positive approach to their work. For example, one participant, tries 'to focus on rewards, not hardships,' which can have the great effect of changing the narrative we faculty members repeat to ourselves day in and day out. If we define ourselves based on our successes, there is potential for joy and perhaps, great confidence in work. Another participant, a 46-year old Director of Dance who identifies as a gay, white male, contends, 'I believe that your work speaks for itself. If you are continuing to do an outstanding job in your field, tenure is easily attainable.' A 51-year-old Associate Professor who identifies as a white, heterosexual woman asserts that 'the circumstances that affected my path [toward tenure] were not life changing in a negative way. Everything I did I would have done on my own outside of the academic setting.' Having ample support 'all the way up from my [faculty] mentor to my dean to the administration made this path a positive experience' for another participant, who identifies as a 48-year-old white, male Associate Professor. As a researcher, it struck me that the faculty members who emphasized tenure being an easy or positive experience were overwhelmingly male and/or white. This makes me ask questions about how these identifying factors contribute to perceptions of certain faculty members as more legitimate, better supported, and/or holding more authority.

When considering work–life balance, which many participants brought up in their responses, they overwhelmingly felt it is a constant battle and one not easily conquered. One faculty member, described eloquently her approach which emphasizes daily compartmentalization and acceptance:

> I work to find a sense of closure on a daily basis. I don't endorse a notion that we should be concerned with a consistent balance in our work and non-work lives because I think that's an idea that is promoted almost exclusively to women and I think it serves to suggest that women who are not 'balanced' are somehow not successful. My goal is to find closure (whatever that means to me) each day.

Possibilities for reframing how work and life intersect for different people with diverse needs and desires crystalizes in this participant's comment. Supervisors, administrators, faculty mentors, and faculty members may benefit from considering that each faculty member is distinct and differs in the ways they approach work and what they value. Further, the ways work and non-work lives are discussed in concert with each other might be approached from a place that makes fewer assumptions about people, providing unique possibilities for the intersecting demands and wants of each employee.

Lack of balance, overwork, and professional burnout

One of the dangers lurking for faculty members experiencing a lack of balance in their lives due to unclear or unreasonable expectations and pressures is burnout. The occupational health field defines academic burnout as 'a prolonged state of chronic stress that leads to symptoms in three dimensions: emotional and physical exhaustion, cynicism/detachment, and feelings of ineffectiveness/inefficiency and lack of accomplishment' (Holly 2018). One third of the participants in this pool described themselves as 'working all the time' either because they sensed that was expected of them or else because they were so overloaded with work, that constantly working is the only way to accomplish assigned tasks. Several participants expressed feeling fear about the possibility of burn out, while others describe already feeling effects of it. One participant, a 36-year-old white, female Associate Professor contends she 'does too much in all of the areas [required by the institution] and feel exhausted and burnt out. I do not want to do anything.'

While the sample size of this participant pool is too small to substantiate causation, there appears to be correlation in this study between identity and burnout. For example, all but one of the participants who described feeling overworked and burnt out are female, half of them are non-white, and a third of this group are parents. Scholars have argued for decades that the academy was initially designed to support the careers of white men unencumbered by the demands of childcare or household duties (Ward and Wolf-Wendel 2012; Ghodsee 2014; Mason 2013). Additionally, recent literature supports the idea that academic burnout is experienced more often by women and faculty members of color (Malesic 2016). The data in this study suggest that dance faculty members face specific difficulties related to balance and overwork while negotiating their positions in the academy; these challenges may affect people differently based on their backgrounds and identifying factors, thus reinforcing notions about who academia is built to support.

Signs of hope: departments and programs working to counteract systemic issues

Based on the perspectives of this pool of participants, I immediately sensed a great need for systemic institutional changes to occur in order to improve working conditions for tenure-track dance faculty. I conducted a preliminary search of dance departments and programs that seem to be aware of and are working to counteract those issues identified by participants such as systemic bias and inequality, professional overwork and burnout, and power dynamics and hierarchies leading to bullying and intimidation of tenure-track faculty members. Interestingly, while the need for programmatic and systemic changes has been at the forefront of nonprofit organization and professional company initiatives in recent years (Dance Studies Association 2020, Gibney Dance 2020; National Dance Education Organization 2020), academia seems to lag behind in addressing much needed policy and structural change. While further, more expanded research is needed to outline how specific methodologies and practices operate and whether they are successful in creating improved working environments, the following offers a precursory survey of ideas and implementation strategies.

One of the ways some dance departments appear to be responding to some of these issues is by establishing innovative curricular content. For example, the University of Texas at Austin recently developed a new MFA in Dance program that emphasizes 'the interdependence of artistry, pedagogy, and critical dance studies as platforms for critical civic engagement and social justice . . . Students and faculty in our program demonstrate a strong commitment to innovation, leadership, community, equity and social justice. This commitment informs the curriculum' (University of Texas at Austin 2020). Additionally, multiple dance programs and individual faculty members across the country centralize arts activism and social justice in the emphases of their missions, programmatic foundations, and degree requirements (UCLA 2020; University of Minnesota 2020; University of San Francisco 2020). In a 2020 interview, Ananya Chatterjea, Professor of Dance at the University of Minnesota described her goals for creating intersections of social justice and choreography: 'I'm interested in how we can liberate our imaginations, so we can imagine what life would be if we didn't have the hierarchies that put us on one level or another' (University of Minnesota 2020). Infusing her teaching with these ideas creates opportunities for dance students and professionals to develop better relationships, built on trust, respect, and mutual learning. These pedagogical practices, I believe, can have great positive impact in any working environment.

In addition to implementations at the departmental level, many universities and colleges have established on-campus offices and committees related to workplace issues, equity, diversity, and interpersonal relations. Examples of these could include committees related to campus bullying, gender equity, LGBTQIA, and a dedicated faculty ombudsperson. Additionally, many institutions maintain centers related to teaching which can offer helpful resources for faculty members across campus grappling with the issues described in this article. These resources, in addition to those available through campus human resources and Title IX departments can provide additional support to faculty members and, if effective, can create improvements in campus culture.

However helpful these strategies are in certain dance programs, arguably the most powerful way to initiate change may be in advocacy and mentorship efforts at the

individual level by senior faculty members and administrators across campus. These efforts are typically not documented or advertised by universities, but are nonetheless critical for improved experiences for tenure-track dance faculty members.

Main takeaways, recommendations, and areas of future research

From the descriptions of tenure-seeking processes provided by this pool of 50 postsecondary dance faculty members, I identify four main takeaways: 1) Privileges, both acknowledged and unacknowledged, known and unknown, give certain faculty members professional advantages over others. Participants mentioned the opportunity for advanced education and training and advocacy and mentorship from colleagues and superiors as primary privileges, and I also sense their gender, race, sexual orientation, and age play into the potential advantages they each enjoy; 2) Biases against faculty members of color, women, people with disabilities or the elderly, people who identify as anything other than heterosexual, and faculty members with children have significant impact on their colleagues' perceptions and assumptions about them, their ability to achieve tenure, and their perceptions of their own work. Additionally, biases against the dance discipline, against creative research, and, I suspect, against certain dance practices and genres, in part, determine whether a dance faculty member successfully achieves tenure and how difficult the path is to obtain it; 3) Mentorship and advocacy play significant roles in every faculty members' journey to tenure and often determine whether or not a faculty member feels confident and secure in their position and in their ability to earn tenure; and 4) dance faculty members experiencing bullying, harassment, or disrespect establish means of protecting and defending themselves on their paths to tenure, including neglecting or denying the oppressed parts of themselves and buying into a culture of overwork and eventual burnout.

While the pool of participants in this study is not necessarily representative of all the tenured and tenure-track dance faculty in the United States, the data collected here is compelling enough to necessitate a significant plan outlining areas in which senior dance faculty, chairs, deans, and other administrators could be more proactive and supportive of their tenure-track dance faculty members: 1) Establishing clear and consistently applied guidelines for tenure is critical to the success of faculty members. Further, as dance programs and departments grow and evolve, so should the tenure guidelines. If, for example, the department shifts to begin including an additional dance form or a new mode of research, it is likely that department would hire new faculty members who would then need guidelines that apply to their areas of specialty. 2) Assigning at least two senior mentors to each tenure-track faculty member, one in her/his area and one in another department is the bare minimum to ensure faculty members understand the expectations and processes related to tenure. Further, ensure that the mentors are willing to serve in this role and that they respect junior faculty and the tenure process. 3) Department leaders should always serve their faculty from a position of advocacy, working collaboratively with faculty to champion their accomplishments and to fight for their needs and ambitions, which will likely be different for each faculty member. Administrators should support, in financial support and in release time, the work tenure-track faculty members must prioritize in order to achieve tenure in that institution. Creating space for course releases and reduced service load in the first few years of a faculty member's term and offering travel and other research funding would benefit most faculty working toward tenure.

Because this research was limited in scope for the purposes of this article, the data I collected evidences the need for more in-depth questions and diverse topics for future research inquiry. Several of the participants in this study referred to instances of racism, sexism, ageism, and other biases. In future research, I would like to explore the specific institutional and individual practices, policies, and beliefs that contribute to underlying and pervasive biases in academic dance. Another necessary area of future research involves the cited instances of bullying, intimidation, and demoralization experienced by these faculty members. While this is a timely topic overall in studies of higher education and organizational culture, the dance area faces unique challenges in regard to how professionals relate to each other and how, historically, dance has evolved as an academic discipline. Specifically, dance comprises mostly women participants, but, historically, it has been mostly men who achieve the most funding, prestigious awards, and leadership roles. Could this point to inequities or social dysfunctions between men and women in the dance workplace? Also, recently, a multitude of accounts of sexual harassment, abuse, and bullying have been revealed in news reports and as roundtable discussions at the nation's top dance conferences, so I wonder how dance professionals relate to each other. Further, since in U.S. culture, there is a preoccupation with bodies and since the dance discipline is not well understood across postsecondary academic disciplines, faulty assumptions are often made in academic circles about the purpose and rigor of dance in postsecondary institutions. I want to know how these factors could play into stereotypes and marginalization of dance as a discipline and dancers themselves. Finally, I would like to study specific dance programs and departments comprehensively, perhaps as case studies, that are actively working to counteract some of the biases and inequalities brought to light through the voices of the participants in this study in order to glean and implement their best practices.

Conclusion

The multiple interweaving and intersecting complexities each postsecondary dance faculty member faces as they work toward tenure create opportunities for subtle (and not so subtle) power dynamics, oppression, marginalization, and discrimination to shape that faculty's experience and perceptions of the tenure seeking process. Relational aspects of dance faculty work, such as negotiating microaggressions, bullying, and exploitation coming from colleagues and/or administrations; learning to set goals and boundaries; and managing multiple spheres of work and non-work life make some faculty members' bids for tenure incredibly demanding if not, impossible. Unpacking some of the historically situated and current cultural contexts for understanding how intersections of identity and work are enmeshed makes clearer the relevance and impact of the participants' experiences. The participant experiences and perceptions featured in this article make clear the hard conversations that need to happen and the work required to cultivate academic dance spaces that truly embrace diversity.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

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Appendix A. Participant Survey Questions

(1) How do you define your: (1) gender, (2) race or ethnicity, (3) social class, (4) sexual orientation, (5) age, (6) other important identifying factors
(2) What is your academic title?
(3) When did you earn tenure or when do you expect to earn tenure at your university or college?
(4) Describe the important areas in which you are expected to participate in order to earn tenure and/or promotion at your institution.
(5) Overall, I feel I have found a successful and achievable balance of responsibilities in my position. (1) True (2) False
(6) My impression is that obtaining tenure at my university or college: (1) is/was extremely difficult, (2) is/was fairly difficult, (3) is/was neither difficult nor simple, (4) is/was fairly simple, (5) is/was extremely simple
(7) Describe the circumstances or elements that affect(ed) your path toward tenure either positively or negatively and/or your work as an educator, artist, and scholar. How do you interpret or perceive any obstacles and/or privileges you experienced along your tenure-seeking path?
(8) How do you balance your work in the differing areas required for tenure and/or promotions at your university?
(9) Which professional responsibility or set of responsibilities (if any) would you choose to eliminate in order to make your position more fulfilling and/or relevant to your abilities/talents? Explain.

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ARTICLE

Performing whiteness on the competition stage: 'I dance all styles'

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ABSTRACT

This article seeks to reveal and problematize the multi-layered construction of whiteness in dance competition culture by illuminating assumptions about technique embedded in 'all styles' competition dancers perform on stage. The phrase 'dance all styles' is a shorthand of sorts for those in dance competition culture, as what they really mean is they dance all styles represented in competition dance. In dance competition culture, technique is key in 'all dance styles,' and over time youth unknowingly come to equate the idea of technique with the attributes of ballet inherently reinforcing whiteness as normative. Policies and practices such as competition organizations' rules and regulations, judges' commentary, and choreographic content are examined in relation to critical race theory to demonstrate how whiteness, white privilege, and white supremacy are performed on the competition stage.

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Introduction

When speaking with youth from dance competition culture, they will often state that they 'dance all styles.' This phrase 'dance all styles' is a shorthand of sorts, as what they really mean is they dance all styles represented in competition dance. In general, the phrase 'I dance all styles' is problematic as no one person could possibly dance *all* dance styles. Within the context of competition dance in particular, it is additionally troublesome because of the unstated yet clearly embodied prioritization of ballet technique embraced across *all* dance styles within dance competition culture. In competition dance culture, technique is key, and youth unknowingly come to equate the idea of technique with the attributes of ballet inherently reinforcing whiteness as normative. The irony of course is that ballet as a stand-alone dance style is not a primary dance style performed on the competition stage even though it is highly valued and dances are judged by this standard.

The phrase 'I dance all styles' hides the appropriation of African diasporic dance forms that were created by Black communities in the United States, as well as dance styles developed in the LGBTQ+ and Latin communities, within dance competition culture. These dance forms are blended or juxtaposed with ballet standards on the dance competition stage; ballet provides the measure of technique, and the appropriated dance forms are used to leverage dances as 'contemporary.' The annexation of cultural

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content also applies to choreographic themes, music selections, and costume choices. Put together, the multi-leveled appropriation has come to drive the focus on entertaining storytelling via the display of technique on the competition stage.

For the purposes of this article, it is important to define how the term 'technique' is used and coded as White, ballet informed technique. In dance competition culture, the term technique assumes neutrality, meaning that it (technique) can be applied in the same way to all dance forms, while in reality the markers of 'good' technique stem from ballet training–dancers with long, lithe bodies and lifted, bound postures who can perform multiple pirouettes, execute 180-degree tilts, and complex variations of grand jetés are thought to possess good technique (Schupp 2017; Weisbrod 2010). Ideals from ballet, a dance form that originated in European courts, holds tremendous value on the dance competition stage, even when dancers perform styles appropriated from the African diaspora. In this way, the term technique functions to promote the performance of whiteness as normative in dance competition culture.

Because dance competition culture is a significant site for youth dance training in the US with most participants being White girls, the invisibility of influences and the unstated naming of technique as ballet raises concerns about the prevalence of white privilege in dance competition culture. Previous work has problematized and contextualized how the competitive framework of dance competition culture sells competitive kid capital while also providing meaningful performance experiences for youth (Friedman 2013; Schupp 2019a). Examining dance competition culture through a critical race theory framework that incorporates intersectionality offers yet another means to unravel and reveal the interplay of capitalism, privilege, and education in dance competition culture that leads to the performance of whiteness on stage.

From an intersectional approach, this article seeks to reveal and problematize how whiteness operates in dance competition culture to promote the persistence of racism, sexism, and classism by analyzing publicly available materials, particularly in relation to how technique is defined, performed, and evaluated. First, an analysis of the rules and regulations, including descriptions of dance forms, for five notable dance competition organizations is provided to illustrate the stated yet behind-the-scenes expectations of dance competition culture in relation to technique and performance. Second, judges' commentaries sourced from social media are examined to capture information about what the judges reinforce in the moment of performance. Collectively taken, these data streams provide a contextualized description of how whiteness and white supremacy are performed on stage.

For full disclosure, I am a White woman who grew up in dance competition culture in the 1980s and early 1990s. While I was not aware of systemic racism inherent in dance competition culture during my participation as a child and adolescent, I can clearly see it now. My white privilege meant that 'flesh tone' tights, worn with almost every costume of mine, matched my pale, white skin.[1] It meant that my race was reflected in every teacher or guest choreographer I worked with while in dance competition culture. It meant that I was not asked to question whether or not it was appropriate for me, as a cisgender, straight, White girl from the suburbs, to perform to House music of the late 1980s early 1990s without understanding the cultural contexts. It meant that rehearsal and class schedules were built to accommodate the holidays and cultural norms that my family valued. These are but a few ways that my White privilege allowed me to thrive in dance

competition culture. The retrospective realization of systemic racism in dance competition culture raises questions for me, both as a scholar and former competition dancer, about how to make visible these systems of oppression to ignite critical conversations about white privilege in dance competition culture. Because dance competition culture's impact can be felt throughout the ecosystem of dance education, these systems and practices need to be examined and rethought through an intersectional lens if equity is truly desired.

Dance competition culture background

When they began in the 1970s, dance competition events were small, regionally run events with an explicit focus on education. From the onset, African diasporic dance forms were a central part of dance competition culture. Jazz and tap, both which traditionally embrace friendly competition as a means of gaining respect for a dancer, were featured categories in the first private dance competition events in the early 1970s (Schupp 2018b). At competition events in the 1970s and 1980s, students performed in high school auditoriums and the occasional performing arts venue with limited production support (Guarino 2014 and Schupp 2017, 2018a, 2019a). At the end of each category one adjudicator publicly gave feedback to the contestants and awarded a clear first, second, and third place award for each category.

Today, dance competition culture is a multibillion-dollar enterprise in the US. While still offering a place for youth to perform with (and against) each other, the educational component has been reduced as dance competition culture becomes more professionalized and profitable. Gone is the public adjudication and clear placement of awards, which have been replaced with audio recorded feedback made available to teachers (not students unless the teachers share it) and a point-based awards system that allows everyone to walk away with some type of recognition. Youth no longer dance on low tech stages; now they perform in stage spaces flanked with sidelights, LCD cycloramas, and real time video playback.

The choreography in dance competition culture has always been driven by a desire to showcase a dancer's technical proficiency in tandem with creating and performing an entertaining dance routine. Another constant is the development of soft skills, enjoyment of performing, and development of community among ones' peers in dance competition culture (Schupp 2018a, 2019a). In dance competition culture, ideas about technique are shaped and developed through a complex relationship of influences, stakeholders, and power. Ideas about dance reflect trends in commercial dance and social media; are exchanged and advanced as participants view each other on stage; and as teachers, students, and parents negotiate expectations in the studio classroom.

As a uniquely US phenomenon, although it is expanding to include an international presence, dance competition culture reflects dominant social and cultural beliefs and practices. Previous work has theorized how dance competition culture allows for the performance of the 'American Dream' mythology (Schupp 2018b) and dance competition culture's connections to capitalism as embodied in the prioritization of competition as a means of innovation and education (Friedman 2013; Schupp 2019a; Weisbrod 2010). Given the connections between American capitalism and systemic racism (Kendi 2016, 2019), an

analysis of dance competition culture in relation to critical race theory is needed to fully investigate the values and beliefs of dance competition culture.

Intersectionality and dance competition culture

Seeded in the Black feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s (Harris and Leonardo 2018), intersectionality acknowledges the intersecting positionalities of a person and how they cross and contribute to oppression (Crenshaw 1989; Mitchell 2014). The value of an intersectional approach is that it allows for an analysis of how power and privilege converge and diverge in relation to a person's holistic identity. Intersectionality recognizes 'the gap between social categorization and the complexity of intersubjective experience' by highlighting that no one social label can accurately incapsulate a person's experiences in the world (Harris and Leonardo 2018, 5). Intersectionality allows for an analysis that moves beyond broad sweeping generalizations of what is experienced solely as a result of one identity category (e.g. gender) and considers the multiple layers of oppression and privilege that a person experiences. Through this framework, layers of privilege are revealed when the intersections of race, gender, and class are examined in dance competition culture.

Nearly all competition dancers are White girls with many coming from middle and upper-middle class backgrounds. Dance competitions are designed for youth, with many allowing competitors as young as four but few offering categories for dancers over the age of 19. The teachers, judges, and organizers are adults. The judges, many of whom have careers in commercial dance and are not primarily dance educators, include both men and women at about equal numbers. This means that although girls may not encounter many boys on stage, they are certainly familiar with encountering men as judges and master teachers. The fact that most dancers are young, White girls may make them more impressionable to the ideas that adult teachers and judges implicitly and explicitly offer them. Especially given that dance competition culture tends to cultivate an externally focused approach to dancing and learning dance where the goal of pleasing others is inherent, White girls likely do not realize the power dynamics inherent in their learning and performing dance.

Given the predominance of White participants and teachers, with the majority being White girls and women, it is more likely that attention is readily given to addressing gender dynamics, particularly around increasing participation of boys, rather than racial dynamics in dance competition culture policies and practices; this is where the intersectional approach becomes critical. White participants' economic status privileges them to be able to afford competition entry fees; monthly tuition; additional charges for costumes, choreographers, and rehearsals; and travel costs associated with regional and national competitions. White participants readily see their race and culture reflected in dance competition culture's marketing; predominant dance aesthetics; teachers, judges, and other adults in positions of authority; and among their peers. The majority of participants in dance competition culture operate from positions of privilege primarily stemming from their race and secondarily from their class. While the gender and age dynamics place White girls in a precarious position, they still maintain a great deal of privilege through seeing their race and culture elevated and normalized within dance competition culture. An intersectional approach makes more transparent how

oppression and privilege operate simultaneously for White girls in dance competition culture. However, their racial status still affords them greater advantage on multiple levels than BIPOC[2] competition dancers.

Racial power dynamics and dance training

Critical race theory provides a framework for examining systemic racism through analyzing racial power dynamics, particularly in relation to laws and policy (Delgado and Stefancic 2017). This framework can be applied to the dance competition world as a means to assess how systemic racism functions within the structures, policies, practices, and expectations of dance competition culture. Critical race theory is concerned with revealing and dismantling policies and practices that create racial inequities as it is the policies and practices that enforce and shape racist beliefs, prejudices, and practices in society; it examines how white supremacy is maintained over time and how whiteness is continually normalized to elevate the status of White people over people of color. As a US cultural phenomenon, dance competition culture, like many aspects of dance education and the arts, has been complicit in upholding white supremacy through the normalization of whiteness.

Dance competition culture's embedded systemic racism comes into sharp focus when viewing stated and assumed expectations and practices through a critical race theory lens. To understand how the polices, practices, and expectations of dance competition culture lead to the performance, and normalization, of whiteness on the competition stage, the concepts of white supremacy, white privilege, systemic racism, and whiteness as property first need to be defined for the purposes of this article.

White supremacy is the belief, conscious or unconscious, that white practices, ideals, and values are naturally of higher value or importance than the ideals, practices, and values of other cultures, and stems from the normalization of whiteness. Relying on a 'constellation of processes and practices rather than a discrete entity (i.e. skin color),' whiteness is relational, constant, and in service of maintaining white privilege and supremacy (DiAngelo 2011, 56). Acknowledging white privilege requires White people to not only acknowledge how discrimination places people of color at a disadvantage, but to see how systems of discrimination provide an advantage for White people.

White supremacy manifests through systemic racism as well as individual racist acts. Systemic racism refers to the ways in which ideas and practices of white supremacy are embedded into everyday assumptions, policies, and laws–the big picture of how society functions. Systemic racism persists because racism, particularly anti-Black racism, is a 'permanent component of American life' (Bell 1992). Overtime, White values and practices have become viewed as neutral, and as such provide a means to systemically discriminate against people of color. The assumption of neutral standards and practices are so deeply embedded in daily life that they go unquestioned by many, allowing white supremacy to stealthy infiltrate and shape ideas and practices.

From a legal standpoint, whiteness can be conceptualized as property in that 'the law has accorded "holders" of whiteness the same privileges and benefits accorded holders of other types of property' (Harris 1993, 1731). Whiteness as property functions in in four interrelated but distinct ways: rights of disposition (i.e. whiteness is an inalienable right to those who possess it), right to use and enjoyment (i.e. those who possess

whiteness can take advantage of privileges granted to whites), reputation and status property (i.e. possessing whiteness elevates a person's status), and the absolute right to exclude (i.e. those who possess whiteness can determine who is and is not white) (Harris 1993). The manifestations of whiteness as property allow white supremacy and systemic racism to dynamically shift to better advantage whites by discriminating against people of color.

Within dance education research, notable scholars interrogate how white supremacy and privilege operate in dance education and training practices through a critical race theory lens. Nyama McCarthy-Brown (2018) examines how dance in the US is the property of Whites and offers counter narratives to question long held assumptions about dance technique, including the often stated yet highly problematic statement 'ballet is the foundation of dance' (470). Julie Kerr-Berry (2018) demonstrates how the concept of whiteness as property within US postsecondary dance history courses allows for the exclusion of contributions of BIPOC dancers and choreographers, leading students to believe that development of western concert dance hinges on the contributions of White dancers and choreographers. Crystal U. Davis and Jesse Phillips-Fien (2018), also using the concept of whiteness as property in relation to their own experiences as a Black woman and a White woman in dance, demonstrate how whiteness determines dance education's terminology, curriculum, and assessment methods. Ideas and frameworks with European origins, such as Laban Movement Analysis, are conventionally considered to be objective and neutral means of evaluating movement from all dance forms; adjectives such as 'Black,' 'ethnic,' and 'world' dance are used to describe categories of dance outside of the White canon; and ideals of colonial elitism are linked to assumptions of professional training (Davis 2018). Taken collectively, these interrogations of long-standing, often unquestioned practices point to the prevalence of white supremacy in shaping dance education, including dance competition culture.

When applied to dance competition culture critical race theory permits an analysis of how the structures of dance competition events, teaching practices, choreography, and performance reinforce and create systemic racism in dance competition culture. Like any subculture or community, there are implicit practices that develop overtime in relation to explicit policies. In dance competition culture, these explicit policies include rules and regulations for competitions, criteria/scoring guides, and dress codes aimed at promoting 'professional appearance' in dance studios to name a few. Practices and implicit behaviors that shape expectations about dance and race include what dance forms are valued and visible on stage and in the studio, the judges' commentary and responses to what they see and reinforce on stage, teaching practices that develop overtime in relation to what is valued at competitive events, and choreographic and movement content. When examined collectively, the racial dynamics are revealed.

Methodology

In order to examine how whiteness is performed, attention needs to be brought to both the unconscious biases that may exist for various stakeholders as well as institutional practices that may perpetuate systemic racism. Therefore, the approach to sourcing and analyzing data is layered to include information that is explicit and implicit in dance competition culture. The materials analyzed are publicly available, meaning they provide

clear examples of how dance competition culture presents itself in the larger US culture and society.

Each competition organization maintains rules for each of their events. In most cases, teachers need to acknowledge they have read and understood the rules prior to registering students for an event. The rules determine what is seen on stage, in what category a dance belongs, and offers descriptions of each dance form that can be included in the competition. Rules for five well established dance competition organizations were analyzed to determine how values of technique, choreography, showmanship, and overall appearance are communicated to teachers and judges prior to competition events. Each competition organization includes their rules and regulations on their publicly available website. The competition organizations include Groove, LA Dance Magic, Showstopper, Star Dance Alliance, and Tremaine Dance Conventions and Competitions.

Social media content, including videos and photos, can be thought of as found data similar to photographs in a newspaper and, due to the high level of social interaction on social media, provide insight into how others interact and experience posted content (Pennington Rasmussen 2018). It is increasingly common for dancers and teachers to post videos of competitive performances on social media sites, with some of these posted videos including judges' commentaries. To gain an understanding of both what is presented on stage and what the judges say and respond to, five videos of competition dances with judges' commentary found on YouTube were analyzed. Institutional Review Board approval was granted to include the selected videos in the research.[3] The selection of the videos was purposive, balancing the highest number of views and the dance forms of the videos. The videos observed include: a contemporary solo, a contemporary group, a jazz duet, a tap group, and a hip hop group. The dancers in the video appear to range from about age 7 to age 17, and each dance was performed in a well-established dance competition event.

Both the rules and the videos underwent qualitative content analysis to determine conscious and unconscious messages embedded in the text, comments, and movements (Julien 2008). When analyzing emerging themes and discussing them, language that is consistent with the documents and videos is used to reflect and resonate with the values and priorities of dance competition culture.

Data and interpretations

In dance competition culture, technical ability informs choreographic content. The duration of competition dances is relatively brief (solos, for example, are typically under three minutes in duration). The choreography is in service of featuring the dancers' abilities to perform movement that has value on the competition stage. What is performed on the stage is learned in the studio, and what is learned in the studio is inspired by what young dancers and their teachers observe as valuable on the competition stage. Although nearly all of the dance forms performed on stage stem from African diasporic roots, the data that follows demonstrates that White artistic values dominate the stage. This is in alignment with the findings of Carlos Jones (2014) who observes that codified jazz dance in twentieth century 'blurred or completely erased movement that does not emanate from White ideas of artistic value' (236). Beautifully executed movement from ballet, such as jetés, pirouttes, and battements are markers of excellent

technique rather than 'the precise execution of rhythmic and intricate footwork, intensely articulated hips, and three-dimensional rib manipulation'–movements from African diasporic forms (Jones 2014, 236). This is clearly seen in the choreographic pattern that has developed overtime in dance competition culture, particularly for contemporary, jazz, and lyrical. Choreography prioritizes dancers' abilities to turn, leap, and demonstrate flexibility and control (Schupp 2017, 2018a, 2019a, 2019b) in a way that is entertaining to both the audience and the judges. The resulting dances are dense with movement, where every second is utilized to firstly demonstrate dancers' technical ability and secondarily to feature their personality and presence. Analyzing rules and regulations and the judges' critiques each reveal how systemic racism works within dance competition culture. Taken collectively, they provide insight into the implicit and explicit expectations of dance competition that contribute to the performance of whiteness on stage.

What the rules tell us

When analyzing the rules and regulations of five dance competitions, values about technique, what that term means and what it does not mean, and the importance of technique was immediately revealed. The rules and regulations provide a wealth of information about how to register for the competitions, the rules for each category of dance, and how to determine an age level, as well as descriptions of the dance forms that can be performed in the competitions. Some rules and regulations also provide information about the competition's scoring system, a rubric that the judges are supposed to use to determine their scores, and how ties will be broken. It is the descriptions of the dance forms and information about scoring dances where ideas about performing whiteness are initially seeded in dance competition culture.

Of the five sets of rules and regulations analyzed, four of them included descriptions of the dance forms performed in their competitions. When describing dance categories conventionally performed or influencing how dance is performed on the competition stage, such as ballet, the definitions are often self-referencing and either directly use the word technique or list skills thought to be technical to outline expectations. For example, Showstopper describes ballet as: 'routine must consist of ballet technique. Must include classical steps and movements' (Showstopper, 2020). This definition is built on the presumption that participants understand what is implied by 'ballet technique;' assuming that ballet technique is understood by all normalizes whiteness and sets the conditions for situating technique as race-neutral. Showstopper goes on to define lyrical jazz as 'routine should demonstrate balance, extension, isolations and control utilizing the words or mood of the lyrics' (Showstopper, 2020). On stage, lyrical dance prioritizes the inclusion of developpes, pirouettes, and complex turns; balletic and acrobatic leaps; and gestures and facial expressions that convey the meaning of the music. When Showstopper's description of lyrical is situated in relation to how it is performed on stage, it is revealed that three out of four of these characteristics, extension, balance, and control, come from ballet, whereas isolations come from jazz dance. Although the word jazz is used in the category 'lyrical jazz,' in practice the performance of lyrical jazz relies heavily on ballet technique. The dominance of balletic elements in a style that derives from African diasporic roots is an act of white supremacy, supporting Jones's (2014) analysis. In

both of these descriptions, race-neutral assumptions that normalize and elevate whiteness about technique abound.

Assumptions about technique are further complicated when examining how dance competitions describe dance forms that are invited but not often included on the competition stage. Although rarely performed on stage, many dance competitions offer a 'folkloric' category. Star Dance Alliance, which operates five major dance competitions, uses the following definition of folkloric: 'routine incorporating ethnic styles of dance such as polkas, Hawaiian, Spanish, etc.' (Star Dance Alliance 2019). The problems with this are numerous. First, given the prevalence of the word technique and/or descriptions of technical skills in the descriptions of other dance forms, the absence here falsely implies that these dance forms do not possess their own conceptualizations and practices of technique. The absence of the word technique in the definition of folkloric fortifies the assumption in dance competition culture that ballet informed technique is the epitome of dance movement–if a dance form does not utilize ballet informed technique then that dance form does not possess technique. Whereas the descriptions of other dance categories do not include the word ethnic, it is used prominently in the definition of folkloric. This points to an 'othering' of dance styles that do not adhere to performing whiteness through the incorporation of ballet informed technique and White aesthetics. The use of 'etc.' indicates that folkloric is a catch all, umbrella term, further invisiblizing and displacing dance forms practiced globally and within the US from the competition stage while also advancing the perception that all dance stems from ballet. The use of the terms folkloric and ethnic in dance competition culture clearly 'signal[s] a culture other than traditional [W]hite American' (Weisbrod 2010, 211) which has less value on the competition stage. The absence of the word technique as well as the relative absence of these forms on competition stage demonstrates how white supremacy operates within the description of folkloric. Using the theorization of whiteness as property, it becomes evident how whiteness is possessed and embodied in dance competition culture: The elevation of a ballet-based technique that stems from whiteness allows the right to exclude dance forms perceived as lacking in that specific construct of technique on the dance competition stage.

While nearly all competitions implicitly value ballet technique as the foundation and basis of all dancing seen on their stages without directly naming it as such, these elements are made explicit in Star Dance Alliance's rules and regulations for their compulsory category. In this event, dancers are required to demonstrate certain technical skills in order. While a dance genre is not designated, the terminology and movements that outline what is required to demonstrate technique are overwhelmingly from ballet. The 'scoring breakdown' starts with large general categories that reflect expectations of dance competition movement. Dancers are expected to execute turns, leaps/jumps, control/balance/flexibility, and 'bonus' movements. However, when each of these categories are explained, a ballet expectation becomes immediately visible. For example, in the Age 11 and Under requirements, dancers are required to execute twelve movements (four each in the categories of turns, leaps, and control). Of those twelve, ten are explained using ballet vocabulary; dancers are expected to perform a grande battement, not a high kick, for example. Even the required attire for this contest, which again is purely based on 'technique,' points to balletic values: 'Contestants MUST wear black, form-fitting apparel (NO Costumes). Hair must be pulled back away from the face' (Star Dance Alliance 2019,

np). While not all competitions have a compulsory event where dancers must execute movements in a required order to demonstrate 'technique,' the rules for SDA's compulsory event illustrate the fact that ballet technique is what is meant but not named as such in dance competition culture's use of the word 'technique.'

The prioritization of technique as a framework that applies to 'all styles' is further revealed when observing how the importance of technique sits in relation to the other criteria judges consider when determining a dance's score. While not all competitions provide information about their score sheets online, many do. The scoring rubric typically includes technique, execution, choreography, and overall, or similar criteria. The distribution of points for each criterion changes some from competition to competition surveyed for this project. What remains the same, however, is that in the event of a tie score, the technical score is used to determine the winner. This demonstrates that technique is of higher value than the other categories, which is not surprising given that technique drives the other criteria: execution likely refers to the execution of technique, thereby making the category redundant, choreography is driven by a dancer's technical ability, and the entertainment or overall value of a dance is likely correlated to the dancers' perceived technical ability. Given that technique stems from ballet technique, regardless of the dance form as evidenced in the descriptions of dances and outlining of skills that demonstrate technique in Star Dance Alliance's compulsory event, dancers who can embody the values of ballet are privileged in dance competition culture; they win more awards. However, because technique is not directly named as ballet, technique is positioned as a neutral term. Similar to how whiteness often goes unnamed because it is assumed as the norm, the repeated privileging of ballet technique leads to normalizing expectations of whiteness on the competition stage.

What the judges tell us

While the rules and regulations outline expectations prior to the event, what the judges respond to and how they respond also outline expectations for dance competition culture. It is generally agreed that the judging of competitions is subjective, yet there is an implicit, collective understanding of what makes a good dance (Schupp 2019b). The videos observed for this project reveal a direct connection between how technique is presented in the rules and regulations and what and how the judges critique a dance. Overall, in the videos observed, the judges did not offer contextualized suggestions for improvement but tended to respond viscerally to what they liked and to offer generic pointers, primarily about how to improve technique.

When considered collectively, the judges' critique on the five dances viewed for this project indicate that judges are prepared to critique movement that stems from a ballet aesthetic but are hesitant, or perhaps underprepared, to critique movement that stems from African diasporic dance forms. The judges provided the highest frequency of commentary on the contemporary dances, and were able to offer suggestions for improvement such as telling a soloist 'beautiful high demi-pointe, beautiful feet,' and 'okay, land in more plie.' For the jazz duet, the judge was able to offer feedback on the elements that stemmed from ballet movement, such as 'nice control of that battement, stage left' and 'nice control on that pirouette, stage right.' However, although the dance is in the jazz category, the judge does not reference any of the quintessential elements of

jazz dance; there is no feedback offered on isolations, syncopation, or musicality outside of critiquing whether or not the movement is performed in unison. For the tap and hip hop routines, judges offered very little feedback of substance. In her critique of the tap dance viewed, the judge does not mention the sounds of the dance, any of the tap movements by name, or any information about rhythm and musicality. Her feedback focuses solely on the enjoyment of the dance. Of the dances reviewed, the hip hop dance was offered the least amount of feedback, most of which was saying 'nice' or laughing when humor was used. There was no critique of the actual movement, and no information provided that would assist the dancers' growth within hip hop.

When examined in aggregate, the judges' comments for this project point to white supremacy in numerous ways. By giving a higher frequency and more informative critiques to dancers in contemporary dances and by reinforcing balletic values through their responses and language, they are elevating whiteness. Dancers performing whiteness on stage through the embodiment of ballet technique are privileged as they are given more information about how to progress whereas dancers embodying forms with African diasporic origins are given little information about how to progress. Using ballet terminology to assess dances outside of the ballet genre reinforces the white supremacist notion that ballet is the foundation of all dance forms.

Analysis

In critical race theory, the maintenance and shifting construction of whiteness is theorized as a means of maintaining racial superiority or dominance (Castagno 2014). Policies, which outline the distribution of power, are the root of racist assumptions (Kendi 2016, 2019), often determining who has ownership of ideals, assumed practices, spaces, and property. Whiteness as property extends to dance as asserted by McCarthy-Brown (2018), Davis and Phillips-Fein (2018), Kerr-Berry (2018) and others. In relation to dance competition culture, the question becomes who owns technique? What cultures and communities are affirmed through the display of 'technique'? And what voices and perspectives are privileged?

To be clear: dance competition culture stems from white supremacy.[4] White people figuratively and literally run the show: The majority of those in positions of authority and power as well as the participants are White, and the aesthetics and dance forms, as well as the performance venues, stem from White dance and cultural practices. Dance competition culture is a White space, a space dominated by White bodies and ideals (Anderson 2015). The assumption that technique stems from ballet neutralizes the term technique in a way that assumes whiteness, laying the foundation for whiteness to manifest as property on the dance competition stage. Similar to how professional appearance in the workplace and 'proper' English stem from white values and expectations, what is seen on the dance competition stage reinforces white supremacy by normalizing whiteness. The prioritization of ballet ideals is something everyone should regard as the (White) standard. This allows for the exclusion of anything outside of this norm, such as 'folkloric' dance, which is considered other, is less visible, and is assumed to be lacking in the foundational elements (i.e. technique) that determine a dance's value on the competition stage. Those capable of possessing ballet informed technique have earned the privilege of performing that on stage and are rewarded with awards and peer recognition. While the participants

performing on the dance competition stage are becoming more racially and ethnically diverse as the demographics of the US shift, dancers remain largely White, privileged girls from middle and upper-middle class backgrounds, and primarily perform White techniques and aesthetics on the competition stage.

The judges' critiques examined for this project further reinforce the expectation of performing whiteness on stage. In the early phase of dance competition culture, the events were framed as educational where a skilled adjudicator was expected to publicly provide thoughtful feedback on each dance. While the educational component of the events has been repurposed in the last 20 years (Schupp 2019a), the advice and reactions of the judges still hold much power. If the judges are only able to provide informed commentary on ballet-based technique and only use vocabulary from those forms, students, and as a consequence their teachers and parents, learn to view dance from a ballet-based lens and problematically come to equate excellent dancing only with the performance of White dance and cultural ideals. Because technique is not named as 'ballet' but situated as a race-neutral idea that works across all dance forms, White ideas and practices gradually take root and ownership across the spectrum of dance forms present in dance competition culture.

Technique drives choreography. The normalization of a Eurocentric dance form as the foundation of technique for most if not all dance forms performed on the competition stage is an act of white supremacy. Once whiteness is established as the norm, appropriation of aesthetics and contributions from dance forms created by communities of color happens without a second thought and has for decades. In US dance competition culture, this is seen through the unacknowledged use of movement from African diasporic communities, as well as the LGBTQ+ and Latin communities, to supplement or flavor but not replace, the demonstration of ballet technique on the competition stage. It is seen as contemporary, ballet informed choreography is performed to music by BIPOC artists about culturally specific experiences. It is seen as costume choices reify stereotypes about racial and ethnic groups.

The middle and upper-middle class, White girls that participate in dance competition culture are subject to sexism, as seen in the perceived privileges boys possess and expectations about how gender is displayed (Schupp 2017). Practices of sexism are intertwined with white supremacy in dance competition culture. The body type conventionally associated with ballet technique is long, lean, and feminine; the neutralization of technique in dance competition promotes a White ideal of the dancing body. Dance competition culture is often criticized for its use of sexually provocative costumes or choreography for youth. Most often these moments relate to movements or content appropriated from BIPOC communities that have been stripped of their cultural context and purposely amplified to make a dance more exotic, unique, or 'contemporary.' The capitalist functions of dance competition culture make dance a commodity, further allowing for the continued commodification of cultural, ethnic, and racial differences to be 'offered up as new dishes to enhance the white palate' (hooks 1992, 39) of dance competition culture, with perhaps the most notable example being the rise of a whitewashed version of hip hop practiced in studios and performed on stage. Those with the financial means to buy a place on the stage advance their white privilege through appropriating and commodifying African diasporic dance forms. From an intersectional

perspective, the performance of whiteness on the competition stage needs to be dismantled if equity is the goal.

Closing thoughts

In other spheres of dance education, most notably tertiary education, the call for anti-racist approaches in combination with intersectional approaches is increasing. While credentialing is not required to teach in private sector dance studios, including those that participate in dance competition, increasingly more dance competition teachers are attending college dance programs. As they become exposed to a larger range of dance forms and the abilities to critically interrogate power dynamics in dance, this may seep into dance competition culture.

Taking an intersectional approach within dance competition culture could drastically diminish the belief that those in dance competition culture 'dance all styles.' Currently, in dance competition culture, this means 'all styles that employ a balletic foundation.' From an intersectional perspective, teachers and choreographers in dance competition culture hold tremendous power in how they shape the ideas of youth and how that informs what is performed on the dance competition stage. Dance competition culture is largely a White, female space, with many parents enrolling their daughters so that they can acquire soft skills and a sense of empowerment (Schupp 2017). This approach is not inherently intersectional, but it could be if some of the following questions are addressed with regard to dance competition culture: What would happen if teachers named technique as ballet-based and recognized that all dance forms have their own technique? What would happen if influences from BIPOC communities were recognized, contextualized, and named? What would happen if judges offered feedback outside of ballet vocabulary when critiquing performances? What would happen if dance studios and dance competition organizations recognized and addressed how economic status influences access to dance competition culture and dance training in general? Would bringing increased visibility to dance forms from BIPOC communities weaken the presence of ballet-based technique and White aesthetics on stage? And would that change the dancing that is seen and valued?

My being White combined with my ability to perform whiteness allowed me to thrive in and benefit from dance competition culture. My first competition jazz solo at the age of 8 in the early 1980s drew heavily upon isolations and syncopation, and I was not required to take ballet to perform a solo. My senior jazz solo at the age of 17 relied on displaying my ballet-based technique–pirouettes, extensions, and leaps–performed to jazz music, and I was required to take ballet three times a week to perform in competitions. My success with my senior solo, the result of my effectively learning to perform whiteness on the competition stage, led to scholarships to master classes, conventions, and college programs. In this way, dance competition culture reinforced my own white privilege, not only by reflecting my race in costuming choices, teachers, and cultural expectations, but by also giving me an advantage in continuing my dance education.

In society, policies and sociocultural practices are deeply intertwined and dynamic. In the US, White nationalism is increasing and at odds with the country's growing cultural diversity (Carpenter 2019). Similarly, in dance competition culture, the dominance of whiteness on stage runs contrary to the demographic diversity in US youth. Just as laws

and policies can either stoke the fire of xenophobia or create opportunities for equity in the larger culture, to approach equity in dance competition culture, explicit policies, such as competition rules and regulations, and implicit practices, such as choreographic and teaching/learning expectations and approaches, need to both change. Until then, the youth who first encounter dance through dance competition culture will believe that they dance all styles and will be unable to see the systemic racism embedded to uphold white supremacy in their dance training.

Notes

1. Dancewear companies have recently started manufacturing tights and shoes in a range of skin tones, however, during my time in dance competition culture, 'flesh tone' tights only came in one shade.
2. BIPOC is an acronym that stands for Black, Indigenous, and people of color.
3. Because the performers in the videos are youth, the IRB approval does not allow for the inclusion of video links or detailed descriptions of the video's content beyond what is provided.
4. For a scholarly examination of how dance competitions reinforce white nation building, see Weisbrod (2010).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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CALL FOR PAPER

Dance, health and wellbeing special issue

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Research in Dance Education – Innovations in Arts Practice aims to inform, stimulate and promote the development of research in dance education and is relevant to academics, dancers, teachers and choreographers. The desire to improve the quality and provision of dance education through lively and critical debate, and the dissemination of research findings is uppermost. The journal sets out to include contributors from a wide and diverse international community of researchers, extending to all aspects of dance in education.

Dance, health and wellbeing special issue

Dance, Health and Wellbeing is about understanding and enhancing the practice of education, training and performance of dance artists for health, well-being and longevity in the profession. This is underpinned by scientific and medical developments that inform teaching, training and pedagogical methods that are applied to dance. Dance, Health and Wellbeing is also about widening participation and inclusive practice for all populations in all settings and contexts and all ages and stages in Dance Education.

Work in dance medicine and science (e.g understanding anatomy, physiology and psychology) has investigated and contributed to knowledge in, for example, models of screening for dancers, supplementary training to enhancing fitness and reducing fatigue, pain and injury as ways to develop optimal performance and physical and psychological health in dance.

Dance has benefits for wider populations. Evidence suggests that physical activity of any kind has beneficial effects such as development of greater strength, fitness, co-ordination, confidence, motivation and an increase in adrenaline and endorphins from being physically active. Health and wellbeing effects of recreational dance interventions with children and young people include opportunities for expression and creativity, enhanced self-concept, confidence, optimism, hope, a sense of agency and capacity for resilience. There is work developing to enhance inclusive dance environments for all ages, stages and abilities. Dance-related reviews of evidence have examined the effectiveness of dance on psychological and physical outcomes in, for example, cancer patients, for schizophrenia and on depression. There is also a developing knowledge base in relation to dance for Parkinson's and dance for dementia with wider populations of older people.

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The impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic on Dance Education are complex and far-reaching. Researchers in dance education play a key role in understanding and addressing the unfolding impacts of the pandemic. For example, dance is social but social distancing practices challenge the physical proximity of dancing. Yet dance communities have cleverly and creatively embraced video technology to develop on-line dance participation and social engagement.

This special issue Dance, Health and Wellbeing calls for papers in three main areas:

(1) professional dance training,
(2) health and wellbeing benefits and inclusive dance,
(3) impact of COVID-19 on dance education.

We ask:

- What constitutes a healthy dancer today and how have perceptions, knowledge and understanding been informed/transformed over time?
- Do notions of the healthy dancer differ internationally, according to, for example, technique/choreography/performance/culture?
- How can advances in dance science inform dance training and education practice, to enhance dancer longevity and optimal performance?
- What contradictions may exist between artistic and health/pedagogical priorities and practice?
- What are the risk factors, prevalence, management and implications of musculoskeletal pain and injury amongst dancers?
- What are the health and wellbeing benefits of dance for different populations and communities?
- How does embodied identity as a dancer affect physical and mental health and wellbeing?
- How has COVID-19 impacted on and influenced dance education?
- In what ways has technology influenced dance health, wellbeing, participation and social engagement during the global pandemic?

We invite papers addressing issues, challenges or concerns that may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Examination of inclusive dance research, knowledge exchange and practice in school-based and/or community-based settings and with different ages and stages of development.
- Engagement with historical, social, political, economic structures and/or educational policy, pedagogy and practice relating to dance, health and wellbeing.
- The healthy dancer, aesthetics, culture(s) and performance.
- Exploration of dance, health and wellbeing outcomes relating to, for example, dance and social diversity, widening participation and/or mental health.
- Critical discussion of the impact of positive, enabling, motivating, environments for dance through philosophical, social, artistic, psychological and pedagogic lenses and analyses.

- Integration and implementation of dance science research and/or somatic practices into the studio teaching environment and/or choreography.
- Consideration of pain, injury and implications in dance training and performance.
- Analysis of the impact of inter/multi-disciplinary health and wellbeing practices.
- Exploration of the digital innovation on dance health, wellbeing, participation, inclusion, community and social engagement during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Discussion of impact on mental health of restricted public access to and interactions with dance under 'lockdown' during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Theoretical, empirical, mixed-method and practice-based articles using varied modes of enquiry will be considered.

Deadline for paper submission is 4 January 2021

We seek contributions of ideally 5000–8000 words addressing any of these suggested issues and focussed on Dance, Health and Wellbeing. When submitting please click the special issue tab on ScholarOne so that the submission can be considered for the special issue. The papers will be blind reviewed by two reviewers. A decision will be returned that may require major or minor amendments or the paper may be accepted without further work or rejected if the paper is deemed unsound or unsuitable. The process of review until acceptance can take up to 6 months. If there are more papers submitted than exceed space to print within the special issue, these will be considered within the reviewing process for publication in the main issue.

Papers by previously unpublished authors may be submitted to be considered for the Linda Rolfe New Writers Prize. The New Writer's Prize is an open competition across the issues published within the year. Two/three articles will be shortlisted but only one prize will be awarded by the board. The winning article will receive a prize bundle. Please indicate if you wish to enter when you submit your paper by selecting 'New Writers Prize' as the manuscript type.

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