

Abstracts

RAY MILLER *CORD Awards Panel Award for Outstanding Scholarly Research 2014: “Celebrating the Scholarship of Deidre Sklar”*

This panel honors the work of Deidre Sklar, the 2014 recipient of Congress on Research in Dance’s award for Outstanding Scholarly Research. Panelists Ketu Katrak, Ann Cooper Albright and Miriam Phillips, along with panel moderator, Ray Miller, discuss the impact of Sklar’s work on their own research and teaching as well as its impact on the contemporary scholarship in the field of Dance Studies.

Invited Panelists: Ray Miller (Moderator), Ann Cooper Albright, Ketu Katrak, and Miriam Phillips

KETU H. KATRAK *CORD Awards Panel 2014: “Celebrating the Scholarship of Deidre Sklar”*

My remarks are part of a panel honoring Dr. Deidre Sklar, the 2014 recipient of the CORD Award for Outstanding Scholarly Research. I discuss the impact of Sklar’s work in the field of Dance Studies in general and on my own scholarship in particular.

DEIDRE SKLAR *CORD Awards Panel 2014: “Celebrating the Scholarship of Deidre Sklar”:
Rigor: A Personal Essay*

This talk was given at the panel in honor of the author who was recipient of the CORD 2014 Award for Outstanding Scholarly Research in Dance. Having been encouraged to continue in the tradition of “thoughtful, rigorous and engaging” work, the author takes on the concept of “rigor,” reframing the word to apply to the rigorous pursuit of intellectual, aesthetic, and inherent passion, curiosity, and learning grounded in academic discipline that drove her own research, fieldwork, and writing.

RAY BATCHELOR *Uncovering the Histories and Pre-Histories of Queer Tango:
Contextualizing and Documenting an Innovative Form of Social Dancing*

Attempting to uncover and document the history, or rather histories and pre-histories, of queer tango is difficult. Superficially, the history ought to be easy. The term “queer tango” barely existed before 2001 when it was first used by LGBT dancers in Hamburg, Germany. It was perceived of by them as a riposte to “hetero-normative” leader-follower relationships in mainstream Argentinian tango, proposing instead women as leaders, men as followers, same sex couples and “active” rather than passive followers. Queer tango has subsequently been characterized by the emergence around the world of queer tango organizations, of international festivals, and an international community of dancers, thriving by contact through social media. Yet as the author, who is collaborating with writers and dancers Birthe Havmøller and Olaya

Aramo in editing *The Queer Tango Book*, an online anthology of writings about queer tango, has found out, there is still no settled agreement as to what, precisely, the term means; there is disagreement about the premise that “hetero-normative” tango was quite as oppressive to women in the ways it was originally made out to be, and there is no agreement—indeed so far, precious little discussion—as to which dance practices in Buenos Aires and beyond from the late nineteenth century onward might legitimately be enlisted as forming the pre-history. Were the men-only *prácticas*, which ran for decades, a part of it? Or women teaching each other at home? When so little was written down, how is one to find out?

KRISTA BOWER *Mississippi Stories in Motion: Authorship and the Construction of Meaning in a Museum-Based Movement Installation*

In February of 2014, a contemporary dance company based in Jackson, Mississippi, created a movement installation within the Mississippi Museum of Art. This paper examines how words shaped the experience of the participant-researcher as a docent spoke over the performers, as the dancers physically responded to words spoken by spectators, and as the performers recited text found on the museum walls. Through a process of critical reflection, the author considers how the presence of text within the museum performance space functioned to create meaning and to awaken the awareness of the performers and spectators.

CAROLINE SUTTON CLARK *Ballet and Beer: Discursive Multiplicity Mediated by Text*

Through the focus of historical inquiry into the monthly performances of Austin Ballet Theatre in Austin, Texas, a local amateur company, at the Armadillo World Headquarters, a psychedelic and “outlaw country” music hall, from 1972–1980, this paper explores an example of dance phenomena surviving outside of normative discursive support through the textual mediation provided by specific newspaper reviewers. The frequency and unique nature of these ballet performances created the circumstances that generated a more open, reciprocal, and diachronic conversation between the participants involving dance and text—a conversation that generated functioning narratives of identity.

EMMA DAVIS AND NIC CUSTER *Intersections of Dance and Poetry in Post-Industrial Michigan*

In post-industrial Michigan cities of Flint and Detroit, there is a need for art that brings residents together while addressing community issues. Collaborations in dance and poetry engage both traditional and nontraditional audiences while creating a unique visual and audio performance. Separately, the art forms receive less interest. Performing together outdoors, dance and poetry receive more viewer attention, while in traditional dance settings, the message of the two forms is reinforced by one another. “Intersections of Dance and Poetry in Post-Industrial Michigan” examines five collaborations in Flint and Detroit that address community issues while reaching across divisions of class and culture.

KATHRINA FARRUGIA-KRIEL *Dancing/Writing Transmodernism: Toward a Theorization of Recent Choreographic Histories*

In this paper, I explore recent theoretical offerings on transmodernism in literature and critical studies and its appropriation and transference into the field of dance studies. Through writing transmodernism in dance, I offer a model that is timely and necessary. This framework is articulated through historical trajectories focused on a case study, notably through the work of French choreographer Angelin Preljocaj. Drawing upon *Annonçiation* (1995), the concept of dancing/writing transmodernism reflects the epistemological values from the interstitial transference of composite/nonlinear/scaffolded texts, including the rethinking of the biblical narratives, musical textures, and corporeal/physical textures.

SWARNAMALYA GANESH *Writings as Operations of Disenfranchisement, Investigating Manuscripts, and Choreographer's Notes from the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Centuries: Advantages and Problems in Reconstructing from the Papers*

Bharatanatyam has manifold systems of writing/documentation. They are in the form of sculptures, paintings, inscriptions, and treatises. They are also in the form of personal notes by dance masters (*Nattuvanars*), notated descriptions by scholars, by wealthy merchants, travellers, and the court and temple dancers (*Devadasis*) themselves.

The female mind, body, and voice were used to embody the choreographies envisioned by the male *Nattuvanars*. But the qualitative fulcrum of this dance remained in extempore exposition. Every repertoire had a pedagogy that was fundamentally dynamic in its transfer and performance but also written and preserved. The *Devadasi* envisioned compositions as a representation of her psyche each time, both in practice and performance. Therefore the same repertoire gets reinterpreted every time by her, but within the structured pedagogy accorded by the composition and the choreographer. Let us investigate if the term choreography is useful in representing this unique process.

KATE GRIM-FEINBERG AND MONICA F. A. W. SANTOS *Labanotation and the Study of Human Movement in Anthropology*

This paper discusses the ways in which Labanotation contributes to the analysis of human movement in anthropology. It is based on the experience of the authors, who, as graduate students in anthropology, were involved in research projects where they used Labanotation for the collection and analysis of data. We argue that the ability of Labanotation to accurately represent body movements and gestures, as well as the spatial relationships between moving agents, makes it useful for analyzing different dimensions of social life as enacted by moving bodies. It also records action from the moving person's point of view, which conforms to the ethnographic practice of taking into account local meanings attached to particular kinds of social action. As such, it can be used at different stages of ethnographic research and for different analytical purposes. To illustrate, we present topically diverse ethnographic projects where Labanotation was used: (1) documentation of the New Year ritual of the Lahu Na Shehleh from Northern Thailand for the purpose of preserving the dance and teaching it to younger members of the community, (2) understanding local meanings of ballet dancing in the Philippines, and (3) identifying tacit learning of social norms among children in Ayacucho, Peru.

RUTH HELLIER-TINOCO *Mexican Trilogy/Trilogía Mexicana: Writing Bodies Through Five Hundred Years*

Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century *Mexica* writing utilized a largely pictorial system in which bodies undertaking actions (pictorial-iconic presentation) and hieroglyphic text were used to both document and communicate information. Between 2006 and 2010, one of Mexico's most renowned innovative and interdisciplinary performance ensembles, La Máquina de Teatro, worked with *Mexica* documents and sculptures in the creation of its *Trilogía Mexicana* (*Mexican Trilogy*). I discuss fragments of the performance and studio-based creative processes as they translated from the wordless fifteenth- and sixteenth-century writing into an embodied, corporeal, moving form for a twenty-first-century performance stage, specifically aiming to explore notions of memory, temporality, history, and postdramatic theatre.

PETRI HOPPU *Rewriting Skolt Sámi Dance History*

The paper examines the role of traditional couple and group dances of the Skolt Sámi in negotiating their history and identity. The research is based on archival and literal material from Finnish folklore archives as well as ethnographic fieldwork among the Skolts in 2014. It is

addressed that the Skolts, despite their dramatic history, have been able to revive and preserve their dance traditions in many ways, and today they are reflecting their dance history from new perspectives, rewriting it and integrating it to their contemporary hybrid identities. Having lived between many different cultures for centuries, their identities are characterized by many points in their social and personal histories, and dancing is a part of the routes they have traveled within these experiences. Today, dancing provides them a strategy to negotiate both with their history and identity in contemporary society.

HARMONY JANKOWSKI *Writing Bodies: Isadora Duncan, Movement, and Metaphor*

Building on the work of interdisciplinary literary and dance scholars from Frank Kermode to Carrie Preston, this paper attends to depictions of Isadora Duncan appearing in novels, poems, and portraits by modernist writers such as Max Eastman, John Dos Passos, and Gertrude Stein, among others. These diversely experimental texts hold in common a preoccupation with Duncan's perpetual motion, emphasizing shifts in her personal life, choreography, and performance quality over time. "Writing Bodies" theorizes the different expressive roles her image takes on, arguing that the texts use Duncan's image to query the relationship between embodied movement and its literary representations.

RACHAEL RIGGS LEYVA *Texts, Bodies, Multimodality: Dance Literacy in Context*

Crossing between texts, bodies, and the senses, dance literacies bring fresh perspectives on how new literacies can function, especially non-alphabetic or non-text-based literacies. Reading and writing in an expanded understanding of literacy are interpretive means of interacting with texts, of embedding and discerning meaning, of making sense of movement or choreographic information, of composing and performing, and of creating documentation and archive. Makers and viewers of dances act as readers, and writers, and authors. These roles are permeable in dance literacy, shifting with the context of the dance phenomenon or artistic practice. This paper engages with the dance practices of two dance companies to explore issues of shared-authorship, documentation, multimodality, body-text relationships, and reader-writer permeability: the Bebe Miller Company during their creation of *A History* and RikudNetto, who composes through Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation. What literacy events and practices are present in the studio? What range of written literacies are used and how? Where and how were these literacies learned? In what ways might they cross the so-called literacy-orality divide? Drawing from questions and frameworks of the New Literacy Studies, this paper invites a critical look at dance literacy in context.

ANN E. MAZZOCCA *Inscribing/Inscribed: Bodies and Landscape in the Ritual of Embodied Remembrance at Souvenance Mystique*

There are many ways in which Haitian Vodou ceremonies defy Western binaries of ritual and performance, sacred and profane, and choreography and improvisation. Vodou, a danced religion, is an embodied practice. Souvenance Mystique refers to a place and an event. Eponymously named, it is a mystical remembrance that occurs annually in a weeklong ritual of Vodou ceremonies in the Artibonite Valley outside of Gonaives, Haiti. At Souvenance, the reference to memory and remembrance is embodied, and therefore Souvenance greatly reflects what Diana Taylor refers to as a repertoire of embodied memory. As a scholar, choreographer, and practitioner of Haitian folkloric dance, I have read this ritual in terms of its significations occurring through various signs such as the practitioners' clothing, their proximity to one another, movement, gesture, and ritual choreography.

Souvenance is a site where the multiplicity of histories and bodies signify in relation to one another. While arguably an embodied history in itself, Souvenance also writes. The practitioners enacting the several-days-long ceremonies inscribe upon the surface of the earth. Repetition reinscribes ritual pathways, while a particularly important and meaningful pathway is traversed only twice—at daybreak toward a site and then at sundown returning to the central peristyle. It

is the landscape that is inscribed by the practitioners. However, they also become written upon by sweat and sacred blood. In this paper, I will explore the ways in which the rituals at/of Souvenance write history annually and how, simultaneously, the history of Souvenance is being written.

RACHEL MEHAFFEY *Exploring Rhetorical Agency in University Dance Students*

This paper details the theoretical frameworks, methods, and preliminary results from a year-long study of rhetorical agency in undergraduate dance majors. Over the course of two semesters at a BFA Dance Performance and Choreography program, I facilitated a series of extracurricular dance labs for a group of five first- and second-year students. Throughout the academic year, I interviewed the dancers, recorded the lab sessions, and collected free-writes from the participants. This wealth of data can shed light on the relationship between conceiving dancers-as-authors and the emergence of agentic personal narratives in university students. This study offers implications for future research on rhetorical agency as a pedagogical or compositional tool, as a lens for hearing and sharing dancers' narratives, or as a means to explore authorship in other disciplines.

FANGFEI MIAO *Here and Now—Chinese People's Self-Representation in a Transnational Context*

This paper is part of my dissertation that examines Chinese modern dance choreographers who have learned modern dance from American teachers. In it, I investigate a key topic in my dissertation—self-representation in a transnational context. By studying a Chinese documentary film *Dance with Farm Workers* (2001), I argue that farm workers, the marginalized group in contemporary China, are further alienated and marginalized in art. The choreographer Wen Hui and the film director Wu Wenguang fail to speak for the farm workers in the film's international tour. In *Dance with Farm Workers*, dance and film constitute a double-layered representation that silences Chinese farm workers. Also, this presentation arouses a question I must consider in writing my dissertation: how should I position myself, as a Chinese PhD student in American academia, in order to write about Chinese dance?

MARIKO MIYAGAWA *Kazuo Ohno's Dance and His Methodology: From Analyzing His Butoh-fu*

Kazuo Ohno is considered as a dancer of improvisation, and it is not clear what kind of methods he used for creating his butoh. This is because Ohno did not establish his choreographic language or systematize his methods. However, the notations or notes for creation called "butoh-fu" are an important object for revealing the secrets of his butoh because he wrote them each time he created a new performance. How did these notes work in his dance, and what kind of process was there between notes and his movements? I aim to find his methodology from this relation of words and movements by analyzing his process of making pieces.

NONA MONAHIN *Writing for Posterity: A Reassessment of Arbeau's Orchésographie (1589)*

Many of Arbeau's step descriptions lack the embellishments described in Italian treatises, leading to the assumption that his instructions are incomplete and need to be augmented in reconstructions. However, arguments that may apply to other manuals—that certain elements were taken for granted by the dancers of the time—are not necessarily applicable in Arbeau's case, for he was not writing for a contemporary audience alone. In my paper, I reassess Arbeau's manual in terms of his claim to optimal transparency and comprehensiveness, and show how taking him at his word affects our understanding of the dance movements he describes.

KATHLEEN NASTI *The Shape and Form of South Korea's Twenty-First Century Dance Landscape*

The twentieth century Korean dance landscape began in a state of near eradication following perennial unrest that spanned a thirty-five year Japanese Annexation, the Korean War, and eighteen years of dictatorial rule by President Park Chung-hee. However, despite these years of turmoil, oppression, censorship, poverty, war, and isolation, the last quarter of Korea's twentieth century prompted a dance renaissance. This paper explores the archival modalities used to import Western dance forms and ideals to Korea, the cultural changes in Korea that created an opening for different philosophies and aesthetics in dance, and the new interest in dance scholarship and science, and supposes ideas for Korea's dance future.

REBECCA PAPPAS *The Show Must Go On: A Participatory Rewriting of Euro-American Folk Dance*

My participatory paper considers Jérôme Bel's seminal work *The Show Must Go On* as a rewriting of folk dance tradition, drawing from and reinventing popular tropes of the Euro-American relationship to pop music and the popular body. I look at both the piece, and also Bel's methods of restaging it worldwide, as a means of regularizing, reinventing, and reperforming popular dance. I compare his practice to that of national folkdance ensembles that choreograph indigenous traditions for theatrical performance. I am fascinated with this process of fixing "cultural dance" for recognition and consumption by an audience. Bel's work depends on the audience's ability to recognize themselves within its music, imagery, and performing ensemble. Does this make it folk dance? My paper mines the category of "folk dance," asking whether there is, in fact, a distinction between folk, social, and popular dance and arguing that in the recognizability and participatory nature of his work, he has inadvertently created a contemporary Euro-American folk dance. In addition, I will develop the presentation choreographically, directing the bodies of the listeners in ways meant to evoke Bel's participatory community.

MICHAEL SAKAMOTO *blind spot: Media, Memory, and Performing Resistance*

This performative lecture explores artistic, social, cultural, and philosophical issues embedded in interdisciplinary dance theater artist Michael Sakamoto's latest solo work, *blind spot*. Combining film, video, and photography, dance, and theatrical performance, *blind spot* attempts to tell a story of looking without seeing, yet with sudden, ephemeral flashes of insight. Using his own history and perception-projection as a racialized, "Asian-American" body practicing butoh, an "Asian" form, Michael speaks of self-contradiction, code switching, and embracing both socialized and subjective identity. Inspired by the Buddhist conception of impermanence and ontological questions of embodied truth in media-based art forms, *blind spot* is rooted in the belief that every moment is an instance of not knowing, simultaneously revealing our fear and desire, making life a circuitous, nonlinear journey of mapping such "blind spots."

From Michael's artist statement on *blind spot*: *The fear of not seeing is the same as that of not knowing. From implosive desire, we give primacy to sight at the cost of vision. Within and without language-delineated, behavioral paradigms, we alternate between embracing our passion/obsession and holding ourselves at arm's length in the third person. Our mediated image—dead to the world but with a life of its own—becomes both bulwark against and support for the tenuous, febrile cord connecting us to heredity and lineage in the ways we both speak and act.*

RICHARD SEMMENS *A Sorcerer's Apprentice John Weaver's Comic Muse*

This paper examines John Weaver's *Essay Towards an History of Dancing* (London, 1712) and his *History of the Mimes and Pantomimes* (London, 1728). The paper will argue that comic pantomime dancing was critically central to Weaver's agenda as practitioner and writer, theorist,

and historian. Modern scholarship has privileged his admittedly considerable contributions in the serious mode in ways that compromise our understanding of his important work overall.

SUSAN EIKE SPALDING *Written Out of History: Black Square Dance Traditions*

Old time square dancing (in a big circle) was an early-twentieth-century home- and community-based recreation among all ethnicities in the Central Appalachian region. It disappeared in most places by the 1940s, re-emerging in white rural communities in the 1960s. By contrast, one Virginia African American community continued square dancing until the early 1970s, much longer than others. Their last dances were held just as square dancing again became popular in white communities. The movement of the dance itself, its context and meaning to the dancers, and elements of regional and national society and culture may have contributed both to its longevity and to its demise. The presentation is based on interviews and movement analysis as well as on bibliographic research. It is based upon research for the author's book *Appalachian Dance: Creativity and Continuity in Six Communities* (University of Illinois Press, 2014).

NATALIE ZERVOU *Bodies of Silence and Resilience: Writing Marginality*

Since 2009, the financial crisis in Greece has brought about a need to revisit the past and challenge previous historical assumptions in order to understand the socio-political present more effectively. Dance, and performing arts in general, have reflected this urge by giving voice to marginalized events and perspectives in Greek history, and by challenging the dominant rhetoric of ancient Greek lineage and continuity that often overlooked the significance of ethnic minorities. As such, the focus has shifted away from a sense of unity toward a fragmented understanding of Greek identity that is re-envisioning history and documenting the present by taking into consideration under-represented communities, such as ethnic minorities and immigrants.

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