

Subjectivities and Identities in Contemporary Dance

-Cultural studies perspective-

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What I am going to investigate in this paper is the enlargement of the corporeal body into the dancing body in the contemporary dance. My assumption became that the individual subject in its personhood might be the base-material for the construction of movement behaviour. This last stance geared me to seek my answers not directly in the specific field of dance and performing arts but rather in the cultural studies, psychology and social anthropology fields. From this perspective, if the socio-cultural environment is the participant in the process of subjectivation and identification of the individual and its body, this socio-cultural environment will be simultaneously enticing the physical manifestations of individual's corporeality. Therefore, both subjectivity and identity of the individual become the principal producers of dance discourse and potentially producers of a dance system.

MASTER THESIS

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

I.1 Motivation

As a young dance student in 90's Argentina, contemporary dance was my passport to freedom and creativity, because the contemporary dance of that time enhanced and prioritized the performer's internal world emotions, psychology and the subject. By contrast, the cultural standards in the Argentina of the 70-80's had privileged the ballet, folkloric forms and the massive commercialization of the musical genre.

One of the things that triggered me the most about dance discipline was the amazing capability of one body to be different (and versatile) from another body in the same physical position. How two or more bodies executing the same movement, either dancing the same phrase with precise synchronization or performing in perfect unison, could behave corporeally and physically so differently from each other. I also observed how dancers' bodies loaded with certain dance trainings could be able to move in certain ways but not in other ways, meanwhile bodies with no training or coming from other disciplinary backgrounds have been able to understand and to mirror movement organically¹ and with comprehension. Those observations had been disclosed from a social appreciation of the historical dance phenomena and from the field-work of my own dance practice: taking training, giving workshops, attending to performances, cultural events and following choreographic processes. Those observations raised questions about body (dancer's body) types of physicality and movement behaviour within a specific social and cultural context I was living at that moment and those questions raised inquiries about the dancing body.

Those questions about the *difference*² and *versatility*³ of the body had followed me during my study program at the dance academy in Argentina. There I heard for first time about the notion *cuero cultural*, which translates literally from the Spanish as *cultural body*.

That notion *cultural body* was introduced to my dance fellows and myself to entice us to reflect about the relation of body, society and culture. The point was that we, as dance students, did not find an answer to what makes the corporeal behaviour of a dancer particular and how it is made. Therefore, if the particularity of dancer's movement came neither from a technique nor from a disciplinary system, from where did it come?

¹ Denoting or characterized as a harmonious relationship between the elements of a whole: the organic unity of the integral work of art It is not addressing the meaning 'organic movement' in the sense of the early moderns. Source: *Oxford Dictionary of English*. (1998). University Press

²I will use this term during the entire thesis. I will give the definition in the next item.

³ I will use this term during the entire thesis. I will give the definition in the next item.

My colleagues and I were dance scholars of an Euro-American oriented dance school. Any observation done about other movement practices -as Fedora Aberastury method, Tango, or Argentinian folklore⁴- fell out of our constitutive aesthetic regime of appreciation. I discovered that my observations referred to theories on the fields of developmental movement studies and developmental psychology. Those developmental movement studies and Developmental psychology theories had geared me to the questions why and how movement, first in the person and later in the dancing body, appeared to be manifested in certain ways and modes through different mediums either socially, culturally, geographically, performatively or theatrically. To give an example, I remember that at that time I used to be rather impressed and curious about the Afro-Yoruba dance tradition from Brazil.

The Afro-Yoruba form is a sort of cultural performance that fuses movement, dance, ritual and singing voices. Conceptually, the Afro-Yoruba - as cultural performance- does not divide 'public' and 'audience'.⁵ That black dance may be defined as a ritual where the whole dancing community participates in the exotic and extravagant movement behaviour and I, as a young disciple of the modern dance tradition, was fascinated with that free and unprejudiced mode of the Afro Yoruba, which I could not imitate. I curiously looked at how movement emerged in the Afro Yoruba dance in a way I had not seen before in the modern and ballet trainings, also not in improvisation dance classes. At the same time, I also realized that alternative European practices like Euthony or Feldenkrais,⁶ among others, and popular dances like Folklore, Tango or ethnic dances- were conceptually not considered within the 'high art regime' by the dance academy. Particularly the folklore, Tango or ethnic dances had been seen by educational high art institutions only as a patriarchal national legacy that dance students mandatory should follow.

At that point my questions about *difference* and *versatility* of movement and the *cultural body* had exceeded the scholastic statements of the contemporary dance studies at the dance academy. I thought that there might be another engine of movement that was not a disciplinary system model, but rather which might influence the disciplinary system of dance as well. In this new constellation, my previous questions were slightly or silently displaced from the scholastic inquiry of the dance field towards the domain of the body itself. Here I want to stress that when I write about the body itself, I am referring to the body as a corporeal subject and physical identity, a potential producer of movement as behaviour and expression of the individual. Additionally, I want

⁴ Argentinian Tango and folklore are both classified as the popular folkloristic representative dances of the Argentinian nation. Historically Tango refers in the metropolitan cities and big urbanizations in the country and the folklore comes out from the inner country-side and distant provinces. In the music, dance and literature expressions, the tango is mixed with the European element whilst the folklore remains 'creole' and closed to the native Indian roots and to the type of the *Gaúcho*. The forms of folklore may vary from province to province from South to North and from East to West side of the country.

⁵ Soares, I. *Afro Yoruba* (1991) In: *Danzario Americano Journal N 1* (ed). Danzario Americano: Buenos Aires Argentina, p.14

⁶ Those that appeared in Central Europe in the early 20th century had been used at the dance academic level as part of the practices but were not registered in the curricula. Actually many dance schools accepted those as part of their curricular programs in Argentina in the 90's.

to make a clear differentiation between the 'body as corporeal subject' with the 'dancing body', although those notions are intrinsically connected in the dance studies field, but both have two different meanings. The 'body as corporeal subject' is referring to those psychic, physical, mental, organic, racial, social, educative and geographical features that compose human personality in its physical existence. The dancing body might be defined as the conjunction of physical modifications that a (dancing-person) body accepts, hosts and trains in order to achieve certain shapes and figures or in order to develop certain movement qualities, abilities, or performative structures. Thus there is in the characteristic of the dancing body a clear intention to modify the corporeal body. What I am going to investigate in this paper is the enlargement of the corporeal body into the dancing body in the contemporary dance. Specifically, the reader will find these items in chapters 3 and 4.

In those years, I listened for first time from Professor Carlos Moretti the term *cultural body*. Carlos Moretti was a doctor in medicine, psychoanalyst and anthropologist, who used to teach anthropology courses at the dance academy in Buenos Aires where I studied. The notion of *cultural body* -a term that comes from cultural Anthropology and not from dance in the Argentina of that time, was the topic that made me infer the intertwined relationship between the fields of contemporary dance studies and cultural studies. That notion *cultural body* was, as well, that enlightened my suspicion about the relation among these different and versatile features of the motional manifestation of the subject -its bodily emotion, its physical identity, and its behaviour- and to an extent to the 'dance language'.

Historically, the construction of dance language in dance practice had been dealing with those matters, which were not exhausted in scholarship at institutions for dance training. Those other matters acknowledge the corporeal manifestation of the subject within the dance discipline and indicated that the consistence of movement was not purely technical. On the contrary, the professional dance training and education at that time in Argentina had a tacit tendency to accent the neutral activity of moving,⁷ in the exercise of certain physical qualities and obvious explicit effort attempting the official cultural production (accepted and promoted in scholarship) of 'dance'.⁸

Indeed, everyone moves and movement does not belong to a learned discipline neither in dance and nor in other movement disciplines. That means that behind the trained dancing body there is another body: a body that is neither learned at school nor at the dance academy. Thus if there is a body that is *a priori* of the dancer's body, a body which is claiming for itself as subject and individual but, at the same time, a body which is absorbed and modified in the 'identity' of a dancing body. That body *a priori* will entail the concerns about the types of physicality and about the sources from where movement as discourse would emanate.

⁷ However, often in professional dance training in Argentina at that time, especially at the dance companies like Ballet *Contemporáneo del Teatro General San Martín* o el *Ballet del Teatro Colón*, the accent in the curricula is given to the proficiency of the dance technique.

⁸ Of course, as in any culture, there were other counterpoints of dance formations, groups and companies which attempted other exposures of dance in other styles, but those were not recognized as representative movements in the academy and especially not recognized by the state.

My assumption became that the individual subject in its person-hood might be the base-material for the construction of movement behaviour. This last stance geared me to seek my answers not directly in the specific field of dance and performing arts but rather in the cultural studies, psychology and social anthropology fields. From this perspective, if the socio-cultural environment is the participant in the process of subjectivation and identification of the individual and its body, this socio-cultural environment will be simultaneously enticing the physical manifestations of individual's corporeality through behaviour, language, movements, voice and actions. Therefore 'subjectivity' and 'identity' of the individual are part of the human capability to generate dance discourse; to be the contents and facilitators of movement. Both 'subjectivity' and 'identity' of the individual become the principal producers (when not the main providers) of dance language, which does not start in the introductory dance courses at the dance school, but rather earlier in human existence. This last conclusion gears me to infer that the 'subjectivity' and 'identity' of the individual enable the origination of a specific mode of moving in the person through the features of *difference* and *versatility*. This specific mode of moving I believe, might eventually become a dance language which could one day be able to generate a dance system.

I.2 Research question

In the second page of this chapter, I stated that the intertwined relationship between the features of *difference* and *versatility* of movement in the dancing body to the concepts of 'subjectivity' and 'identity' of the individual. Hence, those are the main nutrients that come out of the construction of movement behaviour. This stance leads me to the following assumption: that there are effects of the 'subjectivity' and the 'identity' of the individual within the origination of movement which might be responsible for the production of dance language.

Hereby, I am going to explain briefly how I use *difference* and *versatility* in this paper in respect to dance. I am attempting to define the term *difference* as a kind of physical, material, existential way of presence of the mover's dancing body that is not representative, nor imitative of a form, a movement or an action, but rather is self-identical, is different in itself and from which can emanate some variations or derived other differences. *Versatility* became a gesture, a nuance of the character of *difference*. This is a mark that enhances and highlights the fluctuation of contemporary dance discourse -movement, space, soundscapes, theatricality, performativity - and its capability to embrace a variety of subjects, fields and skills inside its domain. *Versatility*, as a gesture of *difference*, enables contemporary dance to turn back and forward, up and down, swing freely, and/or be variable and reversible.⁹

⁹ This definition is inspired on the bases of lectures about Jacques Derrida, by Bojana Cvejic during the course Dance Repertoire 2009- 2010 and on the article by Laura Cull *How do you make yourself a Theatre Without Organs? Deleuze, Artaud and the Concept of Differential Presence* (2009)

In the beginning of this chapter, I mentioned that I had been observing the differences from one body to another body in the same physical position or the differences of bodies executing the same movement, phrase or moving in unison and behaving corporeally different from each other. Now, contrarily to those examples of formalized movement, I decide to invert the perspective of my observations. I propose to approach the movement not from the formalized, scored, sized, measurable perspective but rather from within the subjective, social, organic body perspective before arriving at any formalization of movement, namely chorographical or structural.

Therefore, I question whether the 'subjectivity' and 'identity' of the individual dancer may enable the origination of a specific mode of moving, which might become a dance language, which eventually might generate a dance system.

Contemporary dance in itself is a difficult concept that is borne from its differentiation with ballet. Traditionally, the academy has referred to contemporary dance as the 'Western theatrical dance', which belongs to the institution of theatre 'mastering the narrative' and excludes or greatly limits the influence of the 'non-European'. In this thesis, I refer to Western contemporary dance in terms of a specific movement discipline inside the performing arts studies field. Today, contemporary dance interlaces with the theatre discipline, and is embedded in many types of techniques and schools from ballet, (post) modern dance, and eventually integrating and absorbing other movement disciplines such as Yoga, Aikido, ritual dances and uncountable theatre resources. Following Hans T-Lehman, the emergence of a post-dramatic theatre in current times is a need to accept the coexistence of different theatre forms and concepts in which no paradigm is dominant. The body text, for instance, became an aspect of the post-dramatic theatre: body, gesture, voice, the movement and, the choro-graphy. This is a principle of interdisciplinarity that today in performing arts has extended to dance, accentuating that the features of Western contemporary dance aesthetics that have remained underlined by a sort of abstract character. I will come back to those observations later in chapter 3 of the thesis.

I want to revisit the first part of my main question that sustains the hypothesis about the 'subjectivity' and 'identity' of the individual person relating and delivering the truly distinctive possibilities to generate dance language. This last stance makes me infer some sub-questions which I will introduce briefly. Before approaching those sub-questions, I would like to present some traces about the definitions of the 'subjectivity' and the 'identity'. Those definitions are key-points that I will use along this thesis and which I will broaden and expand upon later in my paper.¹⁰

Four hundred years ago, 'subjectivity' became the concern of avant-gardist intellectual circuits in continental Europe.¹¹ The core of those reflective concerns related the recognition of 'the

¹⁰For the sake of the reader I will develop and elaborate on those definitions in them in the chapters 2, 3 and 4.

¹¹Source:[Online],[Accessed 15th January 2011 12:36]. Available from World Wide Web:<<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kierkegaard> >
Source:[Online],[Accessed 15th January 2011 17:42]. Available from World Wide Web:<<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/schopenhauer/#7>>

subject', who becomes a central locus of human existence and its subjective matter which could not be framed, rationalized and stratified. Hegel, Kant's most important successor, had based his definition of the subject at a standpoint derived from Aristotelian physics: "the unmoved that is also 'self-moving' " (Preface, pgph. 22).¹² That is, what is not moved by an outside force, but which propels itself, has a *prima facie* case for 'subjectivity'. However, Hegel's definition identified this power to move, this unrest that is the subject as 'pure negativity'. This statement was later revised and further developed by other philosophers such as Arthur Schopenhauer, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger and Emmanuel Levinas and in the 20th century was definitively unfolded by feminist theoreticians. "The unmoved that is also 'self-moving' " following Hegel is the inner locus of the person that unites its experiences, senses, perceptions, emotions and the cognitive defining the 'immaterial inner being' with the 'physical (material) being' delivering its human identity.

On the other hand, the concept of 'identity' according to Andréé Grau is "...In popular thought 'identity' is first and foremost a set of information that allows us to recognize someone as an individual (surname, first name, affiliations, date of birth, physiognomy and so on). 'Identity' is what makes one; the being one is. It is made of all those attributes that make one person unique as an individual and different from others, indeed unlike anyone but her/himself ...".¹³ Later in her essay Andréé Grau emphasizes: "...Each human being is unique but never, it seems, in isolation. Individuality is often invoked in relation to other terms, such as idiosyncrasy composed from the Greek *idios* (peculiar) and *sunkrasis* (mixture). The "I" is bounded to the "we". One cannot be unique alone. The self can only be achieved through others; one can understand the self only through a process of alienation".¹⁴ I will dig into those definitions in chapter 2, chapter 3 and chapter 4.

I will continue with my sub-questions.

First, what do the 'subjectivity' and 'identity' of the individual mean within a socio-cultural perspective?

Second, what do 'dance subjectivities' and 'dance identities' mean in the Western contemporary dance scholarship?

In this last regard, I like to stress that the terms 'dance subjectivities' and 'dance identities' are relatively new definitions in the dance field, having emerged in the 80-90's. Several authors like Helen Thomas (1998) and André Lepecki (2000) had been writing (based on cultural studies,

Source:[Online],[Accessed 15th January 2011 15:01]. Available from World Wide Web:<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1308494/continental-philosophy/274642/The-retreat-from-reason>>

¹²Hegel takes it from Aristotle Physics book: Preface, pgph. 22

¹³ Grau, 2007 p189

¹⁴ Grau, 2007 p190

feminist theory, sociology and anthropology) about the intrinsic aspects and features of dance, which they define as 'dance subjectivities'. At the same time, the concept of dance identity is closed and parallel to the one of dance 'subjectivity'. Both concepts are internally connected but have different locations in the dance discipline itself as a matter. The concept 'dance subjectivity' refers to those features that cause dance to be recognized as a material fact; namely, the body and the movement organized on the space and in a time-line, body's presence, and the performance of movement. The dance identity seek the profile of body, a type of presence or types of movement which might be or could be, identified, reproduced and imitated or isolated. I will come back to those definitions in chapters 3 and 4.

Third, I question how the 'subjectivity' and the 'identity' of the individual (personal history, geography, experience, culture, language and gender) affect the origination of movement.

Fourth, I question how the 'subjectivity' and the 'identity' of the individual affect the development of dance language and to some extent entail the production of a dance system.

Hereby, I stress the differences between dance language and dance system. I am referring to dance language¹⁵ as the inner orientation or tendency in the movement that a mover or a dancer performs. I define dance language as the mode or the manner that a movement is being shown, exposed and executed. The dance language involves the quality, consistence, time-line, design and internal inputs of movement and it is not directly related to a pattern or to a form. Rather, dance language refers to how the movement vocabulary (its forms, shapes and nuances) is behaving, including differences and particularities of the dancer's physicality. The active and creative participation of the performer is essential in the elaboration of a dance language because necessarily, that elaboration of movement (dance) language involves and requires individual performer's features and skills in order to be developed.

On the other side a dance system encloses the production of movement language in a kind of structural organization. A dance system discloses repetition, rehearsal and training of the choreographic practice and/or improvisation method as discipline. The latter becomes necessary to reach to the realization of that organization and defining the mode and shape of movement language within a frame that enables its reproduction and post-production. Dance system applies directly to the construction of canons and styles and enables them in scholarship. I will approach those concepts closely in chapters 3, 5, and 6.

Fifth, I ask: May the 'subjectivity' and the 'identity' of the individual be recognisable in

¹⁵ In the encyclopedia Britannica 'dance' is defined: " as a form of expression that uses bodily movements -rhythmic, patterned, and improvised in silence or with sound or music within a given space, for the purpose of expressing an idea, a emotion or a concept, releasing energy, or simply by pleasure. This form of expression may be found in every culture and is performed for many purposes ranging from the ceremonial, liturgical, and magical to the theatrical, social, and simply aesthetic. Dance may be defined primarily as a powerful physical and energetic impulse. The two concepts of dance as art and dance as a powerful impulse are sustaining any consideration of this subject. In dance, the connection between the two concepts is stronger than in some other arts, and neither can exist without the other. Self-expression and physical release may be seen as the two basic motives for dance. Dance itself, however, takes a wide variety of forms, from simple spontaneous activity to formalized art or from a social gathering where everyone participates to a theatrical event with dancers performing before an audience". Source: [Online].[Accessed 20th July 2011 13:32]. Available from World Wide Web:< <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/150714/dance/25671/Dance-as-a-nonverbal-language>>

dance discipline?

Sixth, I question how the ‘subjectivity’ and the ‘identity’ of the individual are observable and measurable in dance discipline.

Seventh, what happened in dance history of Western culture with those movement forms coming from other cultures or disciplines?

Eighth, I ask: is that possible to systematize ‘subjectivity’ and the ‘identity’ of movement and to transfer it to other bodies. Whether is that the case what happened during this transference of a subjective movement to another body? Are there alterations or new embodiments? What are the consequences for dance making and cultural production?

When I face those topics mentioned above a problem appears: historically dance subjectivities and identities have been posited as the generators of actual Western contemporary dance practice -in terms of language and systems- for example, the Martha Graham technique; Mary Wigman and Dore Hoyer developments in the German Expressionist school; Judson Dance Theatre in the pedestrian approach to dance together with the raise of the Release technique and Pina Bausch in her endeavours combining the traditional dramatic theatre techniques and German modern dance technique.

The conflict emerges whenever the topics ‘dance subjectivity’ and ‘dance identity’ are seen as universal topics and those universal topics are analysed from a cultural studies perspective. Hence, there will appear a tacit methodological attempt to considerer 'Other' movement dance systems like as possible contemporary dance discourses. The last stance may imply the inclusion of diverse cultural dance forms in the context of dance contemporaneity, de-centring the Euro-American contemporary dance statements and entailing a transformation of standardized contemporaneity concepts held by the Western dance academy.

The latter will infer, therefore, the secularization of Euro American contemporary dance entitlement, as primary master model, in the actual international and inter-cultural landscape of dance proposals. Therefore, the hypothesis that ‘subjectivity’ and ‘identity’ of the individual would enable the origination of movement as possible dance language within contemporary dance field, to a certain extent, might affect the bases of universal contemporary dance own domain.

Regarding the methodology I will use in my response to my main question, I am going to focus on four of the sub-questions formulated above in my inquiry. Those sub-questions will be number one, two, three and four which I will use in order to structure the text of my thesis and develop the topics posited in the inquiry.

I will disregard the rest of the sub-questions five, six and seven which require a different type of research and methodology much more practice-based and with clear and progressive follow up of specific cases and which responsive magnitude will exceed the main purpose of this thesis.

I.3 Methodology

The assumptions drawn above in my research questions involve topics that are not exclusively related to the field of performance studies. Those topics gear me to unfold that identities, in their inward subjectivities (within a cultural and social understanding), became a constitutive element of the movement expression and consequently of dance language. For the purpose of this paper I have decided to respond to sub-questions one, two, three and four because those directly address the main question of my inquiry and those lead me to where I can provide the necessary theoretical and practice-base material.

At this stage and before starting the description of my method, I want to stress that the endeavors of chapters 2, 3 and 4, which will be the theoretical standpoints of this paper, are somewhat based on from previous essays done during my Master study courses at Utrecht University.

To answer my first sub-question, what do the 'subjectivity' and 'identity' of the individual mean within a socio-cultural perspective? I will approach as a first topic the matter of 'subjectivity' and 'identity' of the individual within a socio-cultural perspective; therefore I will use sources from the sociology, cultural anthropology and feminist theory studies developed during the 20th century. I will attend principally the perspective of the feminist theoretician Elizabeth Grosz presented in her book *Volatile Bodies* (1994). Elizabeth Grosz is the most highlighting theoretician in the subject 'body' and she has introduced the widest study to date about the emergence of body and 'subjectivity' in Western society within feminist theory.

As well I will regard to other specific notions from the Frankfurt School of Cultural Critique, particularly the work of sociologist Norbert Elias, founded in the books *The Norbert Elias Reader* (1998) by Goudsblom & Mennell. I have used as secondary readings articles by Martin Jay from the book *The dialectical Imagination, A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923-50* (1974) and articles about *Social Epistemology* from the plato.stanford.edu online Encyclopedia. Norbert Elias appeared to be one of the main sociologists concerned with the subject 'body and society' within the members of the Frankfurt School of Cultural Critique of Cultural Critique in Germany before the empowerment of the Nazi movement in the 1930's.

Other relevant consultation bibliographies include the book by Wilhelm Reich, disciple of Freud during the previous period of the II World War (as Norbert Elias), *La Revolución Sexual* (1984) and the book by Helen Thomas, *Dance, modernity and culture: explorations in the sociology of dance* (1995).

In the context described above and linking to the Anthropology sciences I am interested to

introduce the concept *transculturation* formulated by the Cuban Fernando Ortiz in the first part of the 20th century. *Transculturation* is a term that in the Western academy is associated with 'acculturation' and has still not been accepted as a valid academic term when in Latin American culture and many other countries, is term accepted as valid result of the post-colonial domination. *Transculturation* means a racial, educative and philosophic standpoint. That can be traced in the book by Le Riverend Brussone *La República: dependencia y revolución* (1973), articles from the book by Ortiz *Contrapunteo Cubano del Tabaco y el Azúcar* (1963) and in the book *A Scientific Theory of Culture* by Bronisław Malinowski (1944).

Bronisław Malinowski and Fernando Ortiz belong to the times where the Anthropology emerged as a new science in confrontation to the discovery of the 'other world'. Those theoreticians, who belonged to different generations and geographies, have clearly defined and highlighted the relation among body, society and culture through their work. Bronisław Malinowski writings developed extensively the notion of culture in the beginning of the 20th century in his concept through his concept functionalism. The Cuban Fernando Ortiz initiated an exhausting study about the cross-cultural identity and the 'mestizo'¹⁶ body in the post-colonial Cuba achieving his first new theoretical frame about the space of body in the inter-cultural society which is the actual concern of post-colonial theories.

In the same period the Frankfurt School of Cultural Critique started manifesting the issues about body when psychoanalysis (with Freud and Reich) emerged before the Second World War Norbert Elias' enormous contribution about the physical behaviour and manifestation of emotions and impulses in different groups and societies also addressed the construction of the subjective being interlaced with the social.

Elizabeth Grosz appeared in the late 80's and 90's emergent from the feminist theory and contesting the wave about the cyborg body.¹⁷ Elizabeth Grosz's perspective has an integrative and holistic character of recognizing the subject as corporeal being. I find it important to stress how the concepts of 'subjectivity' and 'identity' of the individual do not belong only to the exclusive individual awareness or consciousness. Rather, they are socially constructed notions that relate Western history in a certain manner.

To respond on the second sub-question: what do dance subjectivities and dance identities mean in

¹⁶Any person of mixed blood. In Central and South America it denotes a person of combined Indian and European extraction. In some countries—e.g., Ecuador—it has acquired social and cultural connotations; a pure-blooded Indian who has adopted European dress and customs is called a mestizo (or cholo). In Mexico the description has been found so variable in meaning that it has been abandoned in census reports. In the Philippines "mestizo" denotes a person of mixed foreign (e.g., Chinese) and native ancestry. Source: [Online]. [Accessed 1st August 2012 12:32]. Available from World Wide Web:< <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/377246/mestizo>>

¹⁷Donna Haraway published a *Cyborg Manifesto* in 1985: "Cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction. [...]The cyborg is a matter of fiction and lived experience that changes what counts as women's experience in the late twentieth century. This is a struggle over life and death, but the boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion." In this manifesto she entices feminists to engage in a politics and to take distance of ideologies and tendencies coming out from naturalism and essentialism. She also uses the cyborg to confront Oedipal and Christian cultural sources in the West. She is considered a postmodern feminist. (Haraway,1991 pp149-181)

the Western contemporary dance scholarship? I will base my readings on Andre Lepecki's book *Exhausting Dance* (2000) and on Bojana Kunst's article *Subversion and the Dancing Body: Autonomy on Display* (2003). I want to approach the topic of dance subjectivities and identities from the perspective of early modern dance to the actual contemporary dance in the Western context. I have chosen those writers, known thinkers in contemporary dance writing, who have been concerned with developing the notion of dance subjectivities and identities, while at the same time presenting different angles of definition about the contemporariness of dance.

As secondary complementary literature sources for this chapter I will use the articles by Helen Thomas, *Do You Want to Join the Dance?* (1996), Andréé Grau's article *Dance, identity and identification processes in the Post-colonial World* (2007), Amy Koritz's article *Re/Moving Boundaries* (1996), Elizabeth Dempster's essay *Women writing the body* (1995), and notes from the *Hired Bodies* series of lectures by Susan Leight Foster, which I attended at the Spring Dance Festival in Utrecht in 2011. Those articles relate to, respectively, an anthropological perspective of dance, the definition of identities in the case of Andréé Grau and Elizabeth Dempster and references to corporealities, as well as body and choreography in the case of Susan Leight Foster.

In response to my third sub-question: how do the 'subjectivity' and the 'identity' of the individual (personal history, geography, experience, culture, language and gender) affect the origination of movement? To respond to this question, I choose the readings of developmental psychologists, physiologists and neurologists specialized in movement development, and cognitive processes. Those scientists have applied their theories to sport, dance studies and psychomotor system and physiology: Henri Wallon, which I downloaded from the online library: *Genetic Psychology and The Psychological Development of the Child* (1951- 1956) with his entire work, and some particularities by the developmental cognitive psychologist Jean Piaget in the book by John H. Flavell *La Psicología Evolutiva de Jean Piaget*, I have based my writing on a previous reading of the chapter *(Syn)aesthetics* by Josephine Pechon (2009) and Susan Leight Foster essay *Movement's contagion: the kinaesthetic impact of performance*(2008).

The studies about the psychomotor system and physiology by Henri Wallon and cognitive system by Jean Piaget had been referential main sources in my previous dance studies as an educator at the academy. The developmental psychologists' contributions apply directly to disciplinary fields where 'movement', as matter, is involved. The study of movement development is the study of human physical, spatial, material and environmental pathways to the development of the 'subjectivity' and 'identity' of the individual in any culture. Movement -in relation to cognitive-developmental studies- is a crucial point in any kind of scholar or academic education and very particularly in dance education, dance training, basic education, sports, martial arts, and to an extent, the creative field of improvisation and choreography.

To answer the fourth sub-question, how do the ‘subjectivity’ and the ‘identity’ of the individual affect the development of dance language and to what degree do they affect the dance system? I will organize my response in the following two chapters 5 and 6. In chapter 5 I will gather the outcomes from the first three chapters 2, 3 and 4 with the results and operation instrumentation. Consequently, in Chapter 6 I will use some findings by Janet Adshead- Landsdale in the article *Creative Ambiguity: Dancing Intertexts* (1998) in an attempt to map and depict one current study-case: Dutch- Hindustan choreographer Kalpana Raghuraman, actually working at Korzo Theatre, a production house in The Hague, Netherlands. Kalpana Raghuraman is a relatively ‘new’ young emergent in the cultural cross-over of contemporary dance. My choice lies on my experience to trace the choreographer work-mode through my internship practice as dramaturge assistant during the project *Door de ogen van mijn stad* in 2011. Choreographer Kalpana Raghuraman exposed theoretically in her artistic fund-raising statement that in her choreographic practice the 'engine of movement' comes from different sources (rather than the academic dance). However, Kalpana Raghuraman, in her statement, applied to the notions of dance contemporaneity, whilst presenting radically different approaches to the emergence of body identities and dance identities. Kalpana Raghuraman’s theoretical response to 'Other' -social, religious, ethnic or racial and political- factors to produce dance, was the key-problem posited in the introduction of chapter 1. In this last paragraph I mentioned the expression the 'Other'. In a relational cultural difference, this term has often been used in post-colonial theory to define the outcoming dialectic relation of power and domination between two different cultural worlds: West and East. I have approached the term based concepts by Edward Said and Homi Bhabha. I will use it rather often in this thesis to refer to the non-European or non-Western element. This term 'Other' is used in post-colonial theory.

I.4 Procedure and structure

Regarding the methodology I have described directly above, I will proceed to organize the structure of this thesis dividing the very subject of my main question along seven chapters. Though, Chapters 2, 3 and 4 are composed to be read as sole essays; in that way every chapter might be read practically apart from the other chapters but without losing its interconnectivity with the rest of the chapters through the entire paper.

In the second chapter, I address my response to sub-question one and I aim to establish a link among different theories in the fields of philosophy, anthropology, sociology, psychology gathering notions of body, ‘subjectivity’, society and environment. I will write about what the ‘subjectivity’ and ‘identity’ of the individual mean within a socio-cultural perspective and I will analyze the relation of environment in the notion of body in our society, approaching the concept of

corporeality by Elizabeth Grosz.

In the third chapter, I answer the second sub-question that seeks to reveal the meanings of dance subjectivities and dance identities in the Western contemporary dance scholarship.

In the fourth chapter, I answer sub-question three regarding to bond the concepts of movement and cognitive development to the emergence of body identities and the dancing body. I will approach how the subjective body and the identity of the individual (personal history, geography, experience, culture, language and gender) affect the origination of movement and motion of the individual. This chapter focuses on the bio-mechanics of movement and how the notions of motion and movement are developed physiologically, neurologically and psychologically.

The fifth chapter, based on the findings of chapters 2, 3 and 4, has operational means, and will revisit the theoretical body of previous chapters. In doing so, it will articulate and operate the notions: body-society, dance subjectivities/ dance identities and subjectivities and identities in the dancing body and will come back to the main question posited in chapter 1, and approaching the study-case Dutch- Hindustan choreographer Kalpana Raghuraman.

In chapter sixth, I explore the study- case Dutch- Hindustan choreographer Kalpana Raghuraman. This is a case emerged in the inter-spaces of the encounter between the transmission of Western academic dance forms and the socio-cultural phenomenon -geography, race, religion, social class and sex. I approach the production of movement language of the choreographer Kalpana Raghuraman. I attempt to depict her movement resources, the intrinsic 'subjectivity' of her dance endeavour and what lies under those articulations regarding a possible new dance identity. I look at it from a socio-cultural perspective and not purely as a dance analyst, and I attempt to interlace the different elements from the outcome from the first theoretical research done in the three first chapters. I aim to posit this case-study in order to discover another way to think about the means of contemporary dance answering sub-question four and formulating my first approximation to the main research question.

Chapter seventh provides a summary of the previous chapters together with its conclusions. Chapter seventh intends to be a return to the main research question and to oversee the results of the previous achievements in (chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6), as well as to posit a discussion and reflection of the results obtained in that research. I aim in this chapter to entice dance scholars, teachers and academics about the understanding about the location of the subjective bodies and identities that come from 'Other' socio-cultural sources and systems as valid proposals for dance. My intention is also to elucidate how subjective bodies and dancing identities will contribute to the current 21st century contemporary dance scenario. I seek to achieve a reflective conclusion that unfolds the difference between the 'subjectivity' and 'identity' of the individual in relation to the expansion of

contemporary dance tendencies in Western culture. This reflective character of the chapter will question if dance scholarship should re-think and enlarge the perspectives of what contemporary dance might eventually become.

CHAPTER 2:

THE BODY, ITS SUBJECTIVITY AND IDENTITY

“...Thus if there is a body that is a priori of the 'dancer's body', a body which is claiming for itself as subject and individual, that body will entail the concerns about the types of physicality and about the sources from where movement discourses would emanate...” (Chapter 1)

2.1 Introduction

The concepts of subjectivity and identity in the Western philosophy first appeared in Europe during the 17th century. But curiously, they were scarcely linked to any notion of the physical body.

The body, as a matter, was folded and protected over centuries in the archives of pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial territories of -Jewish and Christian- Western history. Rene Descartes (1596–1650) -progenitor of the modern spirit of philosophy, was, along with Bacon, the founder of modern empiricism and rationalism. Descartes has been one of the few -known- thinkers who spoke directly about the body, just to undermine it and to state its position of sensuous, corporeal, and inferior to the superiority of the mind, the spirit and the ratio. The dualism between body and mind existed for centuries in the collective socio-historical consciousness of Western European, society which associated the concept of body with sin, immorality and the mortality of the soul. Elizabeth Grosz (1994) defined this trace of Western philosophy as of “...a profound somathofobia...”¹⁸. The body had been conceptualized as simply one biological object, for reproduction and perpetuation of the human race. According to Grosz, the notion of the corporeal in the human being has been related to a wide range of topics, from the inconstancy of movement and the unpredictable change, to the ephemeral and the finiteness of existence, to the deprivation and the disorder of the emotions which have to be controlled by the serenity of reason, mind and virtue. This stance is what had underpinned the appearance of contemporary dance in Western history, repressing and molding its evolution and identity as expression. Helen Thomas, in her argumentation about the sociology of dance, cites Hanna: “...one of the central problems in analyzing dance from a sociological perspective is that, like other arts, dance expresses itself non-verbally; and that the dance and the dancer cannot separate” (Hanna 1980)[...] “Body is the primary instrument, means of expression, and representation in dance. The very reason why sociology

¹⁸ I took the term 'somathofobia' from the introductory chapter of Elizabeth Grosz's book (1994). From Elizabeth Grosz's perspective, the fundamentals of Western philosophy in Ancient Greece are based in a profound 'somathofobia'. For the Greeks the body had been the source of interference that denigrated the operations of reason. Plato sees matter as an imperfect vision of the idea. The body is betrayal of the soul and the mind and reason must rule over the body and its irrational and appetitive functions of the soul. Aristotle had regarded maternity as a mere housing, receptacle and container rather than co-production. He associated it with the -matter-body from form, in the case of reproduction. He believed that the mother provides the single, shapeless matter while the father will give the form, the shape, features and attributes that complete it. Here had been already stated the binarization of the sexes (male-female) and the dichotomization of the world and knowledge. In the Jewish- Christian tradition there had existed the correlation between the separation mind- body with immortal and mortal.

neglects dance lies in the way that the body and the dance have been perceived in Western culture.” (Thomas 1995, p6)

The whole history of Western European society revolved around repression of the sensuous body and of self-uncontrolled emotions and sentiments. In this context, when I mean ‘sensuous’, I am referring to sensory and perceptual information and appreciation that might become object of knowledge. Although from ancient to modern times in Western culture, the history of body -clothing, behavioral manifestation, manners, sexuality, healing or medicinal approaches- had been changing; the social control of body with its manifestations had been exercised by institutions -church, religion, familiar patriarchy, class and social hierarchies-. Those institutions had impaired and regulated canons and norms about body behavior, customs, dressing and forms. Those institutions had being the dominant power under the alignment creed of Western 'civilized superior culture'.

2.2 Cultural anthropology, sociology and the Frankfurt School of Cultural Critique

When sociology emerged at the early period of the century, it was still part of the anthropology science. Anthropology¹⁹ and her sister science, sociology,²⁰ presented the first drafts about the performance of body and its behavior from non-Western cultural contexts. As a science, anthropology examined human differences. It was born after the Age of Discovery or Age of Exploration opened up societies that had remained outside the technological civilization of the modern West. In the very beginning, the study-fields of Anthropology science²¹ had been those target groups (tribes and civilizations) considered primitive by atavism,²² or simply undeveloped. These ‘Other’ societies and communities were considered different and absolutely foreign by the

¹⁹ Anthropology is the only humanist science that explains human beings on the basis of the biological and cultural characteristics through time, their differences, variations of populations, and involving other concepts such as race, geography and religion. Anthropology science has, in fact, gradually divided itself into two major spheres: the study of man’s biological characteristics and the study of his cultural characteristics. Cultural anthropology, then, set out to analyze the totality of human culture in time and space. But by assuming a linear conception of history, it too often neglected the discontinuities and interferences of concrete history.[...]In the beginning of the 20th century, Cultural Anthropology developed in different schools as the culture history school founded the German-born American Franz Boas from where he inspired Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead and Edward Sapir [...].In a similar way, Marcel Mauss, in France, influenced a whole generation of European sociologists and cultural anthropologists that included Claude Lévi-Strauss, the recognized social anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski, [Online]. [Accessed 9th June 2011 16:12]. Available from World Wide: <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/337917/Claude-Levi-Strauss>>

²⁰ Social anthropology is devoted especially to the study of institutions considered systems of representations in the Durkheimian sense of beliefs, sentiments and norms common to the members of a society. Cultural Anthropology is devoted to the study of techniques which implement social life (and sometimes, also to the study of institutions considered as such techniques). Lévi-Straus, 1986 p3

²¹ The concept of evolution existed even before Charles Darwin had published his celebrated *Origin of Species* (1859). This concept, arising in strong debates, provided the starting point for anthropology [...]. Almost to the end of the 19th century, evolutionism determined the complexion of the new science. A major task of cultural anthropology was thought to be that of classifying different societies and cultures and defining the phases and states through which all human groups pass—the linear interpretation of history. Source: [Online].[Accessed 9th June 2011 16:12]. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/337917/Claude-Levi-Strauss>

²² Both history and ethnography are concerned with societies ‘other’ than the one in which we live. Whether this otherness is due to remoteness in time (however slight), or to remoteness in space, or even to cultural heterogeneity, is of secondary importance to the basic similarity of perspective. Lévi Straus, 1986 p3

anthropologists at that time when anthropological researches were executed mainly by Europeans or by North Americans.²³ The reaction and confrontation of scientists and academics towards 'bodily' actions, habits and costumes of other ethnical groups enticed them to posit inquiries about 'the body'. Anthropologists developed different schools like the Culture History School (Franz Boaz) and the Functionalist School (Marcel Mauss). The common important characteristic of Boas and Mauss schools, for instance, was to consider the integration of 'culture' and 'personality'—that is the interlacement of two fields of science: cultural anthropology and psychology. This was a huge step towards the integration of the physical and the non-physical in the humanities field and in Western thought.

Applying anthropology science to dance studies, Thomas explains that “the contention that body is a symbol of society that stemmed from Durkheimian²⁴ tradition of thought (Polhemus 1975) which situated the body firmly in the domain of culture and as a site for sociological inquiry”.²⁵

The significance of the relation body-culture-society appeared in the transition to the 20th century as a huge concern for research. It is interesting to observe that during the 20's and the 30's, when the Frankfurt School of Cultural Critique emerged in Germany, the term *Körperkultur* flowered in that society. The term *Körperkultur* had been applied to sports, the cultivation of the physical body and dance practice as an expressive form; this last has been well investigated by Mark Franko in the context of the relations among dance, work, labor, production, class genre and the conformation of body identity and dance identity in Germany in the 30's²⁶. Critical theory was a movement in social and political philosophy originally associated with the work of the Frankfurt School. Drawing particularly from Marx and Freud, critical theorists maintain that a primary goal of philosophy is to understand and to help overcome the social structures through which people are dominated and oppressed.²⁷ Since the 1970's, critical theory has been immensely influential in the study of history, law, literature, and the social sciences.²⁸ Marcuse²⁹ critiqued what he perceived as

²³Claude-Levi-Strauss, [Online]. [Accessed 9th June 2011 16:12]. Available from World Wide Web:<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/337917/Claude-Levi-Strauss>>

²⁴Emile Durkheim. 2012. [Online]. [Accessed 1st August 2012]. Available from World Wide Web:<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/174299/Emile-Durkheim/1963/Analytic-methods>>

²⁵Thomas, 1996 p65

²⁶This is a reference from out of the book *The Work of Dance, Labor, Movement and identity in the 1939s* by Mark Franko and from the article the article *Ausdruckstanz* by Susana Franco about the history, memory, expatriation and transmission of the German dance tradition before and after the World War II.

²⁷Believing that science, like other forms of knowledge, has been used as an instrument of oppression, they caution against a blind faith in scientific progress, arguing that scientific knowledge must not be pursued as an end in itself without reference to the goal of human emancipation.

²⁸Most of the institute's scholars were forced to leave Germany after Hitler's accession to power (1933), and many found refuge in the United States. The Institute for Social Research thus became affiliated with Columbia University until 1949, when it returned to Frankfurt. In the 1950's the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School diverged into several intellectual directions. Most of them disavowed orthodox Marxism, though they remained deeply critical of capitalism.

²⁹Marcuse enjoyed unexpected influence in the 1960's among the younger generation.

capitalism's increasing control of all aspects of social life; Jürgen Habermas³⁰ tried to open critical theory to developments in analytic philosophy and linguistic analysis, structuralism, and hermeneutics. The members of the Frankfurt School tried to develop a theory of society that was based on Marxism and Hegelian philosophy but which also utilized the insights of psychoanalysis, sociology, existential philosophy, and other disciplines. They used basic Marxist concepts to analyze the social relations within capitalist economic systems. This approach, which became known as "critical theory," yielded influential critiques of large corporations and monopolies, the role of technology, the industrialization of culture, and the decline of the individual within capitalist society. Fascism and authoritarianism were also prominent subjects of study. Much of this research was published in the institute's journal, *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (1932–41; "Journal for Social Research").

The two World Wars were a turning point in those thinkers' orientation within the humanistic sciences. In the first decades of the 20th century, the concept of 'functionalism' by Bronislaw Malinowski and the concept of *transculturation*, term coined by the Cuban Cultural Anthropologist Fernando Ortiz Fernández, were born. The latter was introduced later in the 40's by Malinowski in the Western academy.

Decades prior to the foundation of the Frankfurt School of Cultural Critique in Germany, the first approximations to the body were delivered through the study of sexuality and psyche by pioneers Sigmund Freud and Wilhelm Reich. The studies about sexuality done by Freud and Reich in the fields of psychoanalysis and neurology respectively had been foregrounded by the earlier Frederic Nietzsche philosophical contributions. Nietzsche had been the first philosopher in Western European culture in the 19th century who had attempted to point to 'the physical body' as a matter of philosophical concern.

Freud and Reich had established -although through different approaches- the relationships between sexual behavior and society. Their research material was later absorbed into the endeavors initiated by the scientists of Frankfurt School of Cultural Critique in Germany.

Reich (1807-1957) came from an Austrian background, and was a radical exponent in the history of psychiatry. A disciple and follower of Freud, Reich had done important researches regarding the field of sexuality in children during his medical practices of hygiene in Austria and Germany. He started his research from the first years of the October Revolution in the Soviet Union, exiled member during the times of Nazism; he was in Austria and Germany throughout the revolutions in the 30's. Wilhelm Reich had stated, for example, that the misleading of biological energy, namely the Freudian 'libido', blocked the emotions and generated sexual repression which might lead to mental illnesses and neurosis (neurosis become in a 'physical and 'body' performance of the human behavior) and which might manifest in itself in the community and in the social and

³⁰Habermas emerged as the most prominent member of the Frankfurt School in the post-war decades.

political sphere (for instance the legacy of World War II, an example of mass hysteria overwhelmed by racist and extreme nationalist political movements). Wilhelm Reich's research was sharp, scandalous and direct for those times; he referred directly either in his writings or in his speech to the sexual body in its performance in society.

As I have mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the Frankfurt School of Cultural Critique acknowledged the topic of body grounded on Reich and Freud studies legacy. One of the most notable contributions from the Frankfurt School of Cultural Critique has been the one of the sociologist Norbert Elias. Critical theorists believe that science, as any other type of knowledge, became in society a tool of oppression of the 'civilized superior culture'. The latter is the topic that interestingly sociologist Elias was researching about and which he analyzed in his first sociology masterpiece *The Civilizing Process* (2000). Norbert wrote about the court society as a legible sociological and inherited problem. Norbert book offered to revise the concept of *kultur und civilization*, analyzing the bodily behavior considered typical of civilized people in the Western vision. He did an exhausting analysis of the affective life in Western culture from the middle Ages to Early Modern times; approaching it as a process of civilization of a society.³¹ Following Elias' achievement, the topic of body is posited in a central place in sociology – and humanistic- sciences. He describes the change of table manners, shame and violence in the courts, the changes of the standards about what a society demands and prohibits, the threshold between social displeasure and fear of moving, and the emergence of sociogenic fears as one of the main problems of civilizing process.³² Elias studied sport as a sociological issue, in order to understand the violence in the sinuosity of the construction of civilization and its trend to pacification. He made his insights on the public and individual control of strong emotive actions through the leisure physical activities as social area for “...loosening non-leisure restraints...” of social groups during history in the civilizing process. He focused on the genesis of sport as a sociological problem that involves the drives and impulses of groups in relation to pleasure- displeasure and senses of inferiority or superiority. All emotions that transformed over the centuries had been undergoing and mirroring the cultural behavior phenomenon of a society.³³

The history of body carried with the acknowledgement about its self- oppression in relation to the environment and the construction of its own material (physical) and immaterial (psychological-spiritual) identity. That has been and still is the legacy about the notion of body in Western culture.

³¹ Elias, 2000 pp47-182

³² J. Goudsblom- S.J. Mennell, 1998 pp13-74

³³ Elias, N.- Dunning, E., 1986 pp1- 62

Thomas, inspired by C. Wright Mills (1970), stressed in that

“...one of the valuable things sociology teaches is that those very issues and concerns which we think of as personal and individual, for the most part, are much more in common, shared and/or structural than we imagine and therefore, can also be said to reside within the bounds of the sociological imagination which emerged as part of the work of the traditional sociology”. (1996 p63)

2.3 *Transculturation, culture and the body*

In the introduction of this chapter I stated the importance of acknowledging the inquiry into the concept of culture by the first anthropologists from the times of Darwin to the emergence of the Frankfurt school in early 20th century. In that scientific context of discussion in the West, either the concept of culture or the concept of civilization addressed a very biological determined body submitted to the Jewish- Christian canons. In the same period, anthropology as a new science gave, contrastingly, birth to the concept of *transculturation* (in analogy to the concept of culture), which was intimately linked to the discovery of the non-Western European 'Other' cultures. The concept *transculturation* appeared as a new counterpoint in Western science and thought. The discovery of 'Other' primitive cultures first, through the exercise of the commercial domination to the Americas, Asia and Africa, later through the academic colonization³⁴, the evangelistic actions, and finally through European-promoted scientific commissions of exploration. The Western discovery of 'Other' cultures arose in the Western Academy motivations, whilst mirroring reactions, projections and finally inquiries about the meaning of culture not only about the others³⁵ but rather also about themselves as Western culture. One of the critical counterpoints of disconcertment had been the 'Other' manifestation of body, which meant the Europeans' own cultural shock during colonization. As I mentioned in the previous section, the concept of body in Western European culture suffered (and still suffers) the caesura of the Cartesian dualism between body and mind (spirit), which is religiously linked – in Jewish- Christian tradition- to sin, immorality and the mortality of the soul. Therefore, the 'Other' manifestations of the body in foreign cultures could apply to contrary meanings. Because those other body manifestations in the new continents differed so much from Western habits, religion and costumes, they created the necessary condition for the Western observers to posit the inquiry about the body. The latter raised at the same time a dis-contextualized, unpaired criticism about culture and body, which unfortunately in the generality only scaled to highlight the superiority of Western values.

The transformations and implications of Western features in 'Other' geographical contexts towards the gestation of one 'new' culture from two cultures appeals to the empirical and phenomenological side of science. This was the birthplace of the concept of *Transculturation*, a

³⁴ Western academic colonization occurred through educational institutions, language heritage, customs, etc

³⁵ I mean: the foreigner, the stranger, the unknown.

concept coined by the Cuban cultural anthropologist Fernando Ortiz Fernández (1881-1969) and introduced by Bronislaw Malinowsky (1884-1942) in the Western school of anthropology later during the 1940's. Ortiz Fernández introduced the word *transculturation*. Translated into English it means *acculturation*, the phenomenon of confrontation of two cultures and its influences in the consolidation of a new culture. In the light of Ortiz Fernández, the word means that the origin of science is privileging the 'high educated countries' (colonizer countries)³⁶ for whom the native (Senegal, Nigerian, Vietnamese, Argentine, Cuban) must participate in the civilization of the colonial power as a passive benefactor. For Ortiz Fernández, this cultural transmission disclosed two elements: on one hand the cultural interpenetration and on the other hand the result that it is not the assimilation of one to another, but rather a new agent with its own characteristics, affirmations and rejections, problems and possibilities. The word *transculturation* started drawing a tendency to decolonize the social sciences from Western influence. Ortiz Fernández approached the study of cultures as a totality. That is a perspective to look at scientific knowledge in a society, where he emphasized the topic of the super- structures. Marxists see Ortiz Fernández as the highest expression of a radical aptitude that brings the best of scientific revolutionary thinking, but Ortiz Fernández was never a Marxist himself. The work of Ortiz Fernández is considered 'functionalist' as a legacy of positivism. Functionalism was developed from the ethnological, sociological and anthropological studies. Starting at the beginning of the 20th century, all those sciences had received the highest positivist influences. The functionalist school emphasises the interrelation of phenomenon- individuals or collective- in a society. Ortiz Fernández followed the traces of the French Grasserie and in Ortiz book *Contrapunteo Cubano del Tabaco y del Azúcar* is borne the concept of culture that emerged in his ideological battle against traditional historicism between the borders of the national and the politic affairs among nations. Following Ortiz Fernández, that concept of culture did not succeed because it attempted to deny the traditional position of bourgeoisie without defining its own territory. However that concept of culture was very useful and had been achieved, partially, by the excessive tendency of Social sciences to study the matter of 'primitivisms' as a counterpoint of the 'superior colonialist societies'. Ortiz Fernández exposes in his observation of Cuba during and after World Wars I and II, the intricate relation between the internal economy of a society and its international policy. Any government could make him a partner of the governance. Ortiz Fernández had close contact with Malinowsky in Havana in 1929. Malinowsky, at that time, wrote the introduction for Ortiz treatise *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* where Ortiz Fernández described, as a good functionalist, that labor, economic and ecologic problems have to be treated. Ortiz Fernández also stressed his awareness of the actions, aesthetics, beliefs and feelings associated with those two products (tobacco and Sugar) and what provokes the factors of consumption, commerce and elaboration of products.

³⁶ Fernando Ortiz Fernández is talking about the European countries and cultures.

In that occasion Ortiz Fernández announced to Malinowsky that he was going to introduce a new technical term (in Spanish) *transculturación* to replace many expressions such as (in Spanish) *cambio cultural*, *aculturación*, *difusión*, *migración* or *ósmosis cultural*.³⁷ Malinowsky was very positive about the new neologism *transculturación* and he promised the author to appropriate the new term in replacement of the term *to acculturate*.³⁸

Malinowsky stressed the importance to realize the real comprehension of the 'transcultural phenomena' and he added that this is a process where both parts are modified: that person or group that migrate and the society or community that receives the immigrant. *Transculturation* is a process from which a newly composed and complex reality may emerge that embodies no mechanical agglomeration of features, but rather is a new and independent phenomenon. Malinowsky denied that the contact, encounter and transformation of cultures can be conceived as the simple acceptance of another acculturated human group by a dominant group and he stressed that the cultural exchange is not a mechanical fusion of borrowed elements of the 'Other'.³⁹

Transculturation is one of the most visible phenomena where the environment and body are displaying openly and visibly, and where it is possible to observe the very reasons of what changes and influences may address so directly what it is to be human and to its body physical existence. To some extent it is also to take the concept of *transculturation* to a stage in the learning process within a culture where environment, education and biology set processes and developments of bodies' subjectivity and identity. In almost all the colonized countries, there were central subjects, such as the colour, the irregularity of the form, the rusticity, and the black body or the native body as opposite to the European white body.

Transculturation (coming out of the concept of functionalism) could be seen as a progenitor's standpoint in relation to the development of subjectivity and identity of the individual in its environment. The concept of *transculturation* by anthropology science would regard, in an analogical approach, to the politics of location and citation. This would later be endeavored in the 20th century within Feminist theory.

³⁷ Cultural change, acculturation, migration, cultural fusion

³⁸ To acculturate had been use quite often at that time especially by North American anthropologists and sociologists, but that word contained some etymologic implicancias with a moral signification that referred to the submission of the immigrants, natives, pagans, barbars or wild to the Majesty of Western Culture. According to Bronislaw Malinowsky, the preposition 'a' applies to the "un terminus ad quem": "...El < inculto > ha de recibir los beneficios de <nuestra cultura>; es <él> quien ha de cambiar para convertirse en uno de nosotros..." Malinowsky, B. (1940) Yale University, p. XII)

³⁹ In the 1950s Ortiz Fernández contributed two more decisive volumes: *La africanía de la música folklórica de Cuba* (1950; "The Africanness of Folkloric Cuban Music") and *Los bailes y el teatro de los negros en el folklore de Cuba* (1951; "*The Dances and Theatre of Blacks in Cuban Folklore*"). Throughout his life Ortiz was involved in the foundation of institutions and journals dedicated to the study of Cuban culture. He was the co-founder of the Cuban Academy of the Language in 1926, as well as of *Surco* (founded 1930) and *Ultra* (1936–47), both journals that provided information on foreign journals. In 1937 he founded the Sociedad de Estudios Afrocubanos (Society of Afro-Cuban Studies) and the journal *Estudios Afrocubanos* ("*Afro-Cuban Studies*"). In 1995 the Foundation Fernando Ortiz was created in Havana for the preservation of his legacy and the continuation of the studies that he started, especially those of Afro-Cuban culture. Article by Roberto González Echevarría. [Online]. [Accessed 2nd August 2011 15:46]. Available from World Wide Web: < [http:// www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/848801/Fernando-Ortiz](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/848801/Fernando-Ortiz)>

2.4 Feminist theory, culture and the body

The 80's has been 'characterized by a series of crises of representation' and feminism, post-modernism and post-structuralism has involved a variety of approaches and political instances. Post-modernism represents a cultural break and shifts in sensibilities, practices, and discourses that have taken place in Western cultural formation since the end of World War II. That is what enabled a big swift of perspective in respect of the notion of body and its surroundings and the construction of the subjective.⁴⁰

The politics of location may be expressed differently by three feminist thinkers and additionally address the conceptualization of body, self, person, identity and subjectivity in terms of both structure and agency. The feminist/ postmodernist Linda Nicholson explored the problematic of politics of location focusing a number of intersecting critical questions: the epistemological constitution of knowledge, the ontology of the question subject, and the conjectural question of where and how we may speak. She translates it respectively in locale, location and local. Adrienne Rich argues that bodies are marked not only by gender, but also by age, ethnicity and sexuality, and that these multiple points of location define the 'speaking subject'. Those are the elements that produce the sense of being 'me'.⁴¹

Donna Haraway, another feminist thinker, has discussed a 'situated knowledge', that for her means a 'partial knowledge', since nobody can transcend their location. That entails acknowledging the way one person is located in terms of power and structural privilege.

On the other side, politics of citation means the referential socio-structural canons. Those canons determine a power relation which ensures the continuity of the social mechanisms, as Michel Foucault had already stated in his theory. In this last case, Rich argues that heterosexuality is a political institution; heterosexuality is cannon to which women are referred and framed by the male into a power-relation of control in the social, economical, and sexual field. This concept of Politics of citation can be transported to other axes like race and class for example, and establish the interconnections of canon of power and control in every country.⁴² For example, in the Netherlands, the connotation of *allochtoon* has its determinations about the borders and closures to a person who

⁴⁰ Thomas, 1996 p65

⁴¹ Nicholson, L. and Rich, A. (1999). Article *Subjectivity & the Politics of Location*. [Online]. [Accessed 26 February 2011]. Available from World Wide Web:< [http:// www.eng.fju.edu.tw/Literary_criticism/postmodernism/postmo_urban/location](http://www.eng.fju.edu.tw/Literary_criticism/postmodernism/postmo_urban/location)>

⁴² In United States until the late 70ties, the black population did not have the same rights and life standards as the white Christian population. In Israel the civil life of the citizens (marriage, birth, and schooling) is regulated by the synagogue and the rabbi; there is no difference between the state and the religious hierarchical institutions. In this sense politics of location and citation bridge together because as long as a person is 'located' and situated in a context at the same time, he/she is going to be subject of a 'citation policy', which is not chosen for that person but rather is socially applicable to him/her/other.

does not belong to the native Dutch culture.⁴³ That can be seen as an example of politics of citation.⁴⁴ The definitions of those three terms: politics of location, politics of citation from the feminist theoretician and the term *transculturation* from positivists' cultural anthropologists, are bouncing and appealing to the definitions about corporeality exposed by Grosz.

I find it important to stress this conceptual triangulation, and examine which definitions belong to different sides of humanist and natural sciences during different periods of time. Politics of location, politics of citation and *transculturation* apply to the means of subjective and identity of the individual in relation to the cultural environment. This conceptual triangulation enables one to place the concept of body at the side to the concept of subjectivity and identity of the individual in appealing its eligibility in science to what would be defined as the 'body identity'.

2.5 Elizabeth Grosz' concept of corporeality

For first time in the history of thought, the voice of the body appears direct and explicit through female voices. In the fifties, Simone De Beauvoir was the pioneer feminist who openly revealed and exposed the topic of the 'body' in her book titled *The Second Sex* (1949). She based her findings on other phenomenologist philosophers like -Merleau-Ponty and Jean Paul Sartre-. From her feminist perspective, Beauvoir recognized that "to be present in the world implies strictly that there exists a body which is at once a material thing in the world and a point of view towards the world" (*The Second Sex*, p39). During the sixties, the feminists claimed that 'body as subject', had been associated for centuries to the bipolar form 'nature/woman' and 'man/ mind', when the latter was a synonymous of superiority of the intelligence. In the 70's there was a second attempt by feminists in revising the concepts of biology in Western science facing the bipolar opposition: 'nature/culture' - 'native/ civilization', thereby endorsing the gendered socio- cultural representation 'woman/ man'. In the playground of socio-cultural-historical dominant empowerment, the biological-physical- sensual-gendered constitutive of the body, became acknowledged and the sense and awareness of corporeality started growing in the cultural studies and as part of the individual, collective and social awareness in Western society.

Feminists have achieved the most important enhanced advances respecting the body

⁴³For example in the Netherlands, the connotation of *allochtoon* has it rewards determining (or trying to determine) the borders and closures to somebody who does not belong to the native Dutch culture, a definition that within the social sphere brings uncountable legal and official consequences and side effects: classification of the Tax number, ID number, non-priority for health care, discrimination in education and at work, and so on. That can be seen as a draft of politics of citation in the case of an *allochtoon*, which may have variations if the *allochtoon* is a white American, from the Caribbean or Latin America and consequently if that person is man or woman, young or old. However, the *allochtoon* can define and situate him/herself socially and geographically as *allochtoon* or not; can relate to the system or be far away from the system or not, can integrate within his/her possibilities or not, can hamper what is socially and legally imposed or just submit him/her to the situation or not. We mean, both politics are interconnected and the person will operate together inside those frames.

⁴⁴M.G.Coggiola *Portfolio Gender, Media and Cultural Critic* (2010). In: *Course Gender, Media and Cultural Critic*. Prof. Eva Midden, University of Utrecht.

awareness and the construction of corporeality, thus, endeavoring gendered performativity of the body. In the post-World War II period, during the fifties and later in the sixties, voices of prominent researchers, progressive scientists and the feminist movements could be heard. Those claimed and developed through different fields of health care, education and social work, the relevancy of the body, its individuality and the matter of the 'subjective'.

Grosz's book *Volatile Bodies* is a perspective about corporeality and subjectivity; those have been introduced and integrated through a versatile compilation of philosophic and scientific visions about the body. Grosz's perspective means the intersection of scientific and humanist disciplines in terms of what is constitutive of human corporeal subjectivity. Her proposal is the most complete approach that had attempted to introduce within science an inversion of categories, where the centrality of the mind, the psyche, the interior, conscious and unconscious in the whole conception of the subject is displaced. Subject inferiority's depth can be explained by Grosz in terms of the inscriptions and transformations of the subjects' corporeal surface, which is the body. She aims to explain the effects of subjectivity from the individual corporeality and in her writing she gathers the terms associated with subject's psyche or interior and the physical. Her conception escapes all types of binary concepts of subjectivity that could eventually equalize the mental with the material or the conceptual with the physical. Grosz searches other ways of understanding corporeality, sexuality and the differences between sexes. In her terms, the body is the ally of sexual difference which is re-mapping and re-figuring the terms of the subjectivity by the corporeal, giving the primacy to the corporeal; not in regard of the depth of the interior but on the surface (which is body's surface). She acknowledges the role of skin, senses and perceptions beforehand the rational, analytical and non-sensual information. The last point relates to Wallon's studies about movement and motoric development.

Grosz seeks through her writing to create a new perspective inverting the primacy of a psychological interiority by demonstrating its necessary dependence on a corporeal exteriority. She tried to avoid associations, metaphors and images that address some type of 'embodiment', which for Grosz meant that she remains committed to Cartesian dualism. Her writings revolve around sexuality, in its ambiguity, broadness and potentiality to cross boundaries that are not from body's own but from our Western cultural view. She states that sexuality is mobile and flexible.

When Grosz writes about sexuality, she describes four different senses of the term 'sexuality': sexuality as a drive, directing a subject towards an object; sexuality as an act- a series of practices and behaviors involving bodies, organs and pleasure but not necessarily involving orgasm; sexuality in terms of identity (commonly described as gender addressing the binary position male and female); and sexuality referring to a set of orientations and positions and desires that implies that there are particular ways in which the desires, differences, and bodies of subjects can seek pleasure. In this way Grosz introduces the term 'body' equal to or the same than 'sexual difference'.

The later becomes a key term in questioning the centrality of a number of phallogocentric presumptions which have hidden the development of women in Western history.⁴⁵ Grosz' perspective resists, on one hand, the tendency to attribute human nature to the subject's interior; and on the other hand it resists tendencies towards dualism, which splits subjectivity into two mutually exclusive domains.

She stresses that, historically, the body has been colonized through the natural science practices-biology and medicine⁴⁶ (what we have already seen already in the emergence of anthropology and humanistic sciences in this chapter) regarding always its naturalness, biological and pre- cultural status, but denying that the separation between the real, material body and its various cultural historical representations on the other. She claims that the body is not 'ahistorical', that there is no 'real' material body and those representations and cultural inscriptions (images, definitions, models) constitute bodies and help to produce them as such. Therefore, when she refers to bodies, she refers to culturally, sexually, racially, specific bodies, which are mobile and changeable terms of cultural production. The social order is bodies' productive nucleus and its essential internal condition of 'human body'. She asseverates that part of bodies' own nature is an organic or ontological incompleteness or lack of finality, an amenability to social completion, a social ordering and organization.⁴⁷ Grosz calls Cartesian dualism responsible for all the forms of elevation of the mind above the body. She explains that this separation body-mind proposed by Descartes is not only responsible for displacing mind outside its body that it is its nature, but rather the mind will be also removed from its socio-cultural community. Thus to a degree, all consciousness can be sure about its own self-certain existence. The existence of other minds must be inferred from the apparent existence of other bodies. If minds are private, subjective and invisible, there is no way to guarantee the inferences about the others, so consciousness becomes an island and its relationships with other bodies and with the world are the mediated judgments and inferences. The latter has been its cultural frame for four centuries of domination in Western thought. Grosz asseverates that in Cartesian dualism, the mind was the thinking substance, the mind or consciousness which has not a natural place on the world. This exclusion of the mind and soul from nature is the prerequisite of the founding knowledge and the sciences, which will have the supremacy to explain nature. She stresses that scientific discourse aspires to impersonality that is an

⁴⁵ Feminists of 'sexual' difference questions as well universalistic assumptions of earlier humanism, through which women's- and all other groups'-specificities, categories and positions are rendered or redundant.

⁴⁶ She is referring to the classical medicine and classical sciences, and to the biologic determinism, which has been argued before by Bronislaw Malinowsky.

⁴⁷ Grosz defines body as "a thing and is a non-thing"; body as an object that somehow contains and coexists with an interiority, an object able to take itself and others as subjects, and which is not reducible to other objects. All animate bodies are objects that differ from other objects, because they are the centre of perspective, reflection, agency and anxiety. Bodies are material sites that are uncontainable in the physical sense alone and that try to attempt to extend the physical framework that contains them. That is because bodies cannot be viewed exclusively from their tangible effects because bodies function in action, interaction, reaction and production in unpredictable ways. In this sense the question about sexual difference, demarks 'uncontainability' within a particular domain and refuse to respect boundaries between private,-public, inside-outside, knowledge-pleasure, and power-desire.

equivalent to objectivity and that the major problem facing Cartesian dualism over the years had been to explain the interactions between the subjects of this dualistic body and mind in everyday life, like behavior manifestations and responsible psychological actions.

Grosz states three lines inside Cartesianism in contemporary thought. The first line of investigation is that where body is regarded as an object of natural sciences -medicine and biology- and as part of the human sciences -psychology, philosophy and ethnography. The body, in all those cases, is understood as organic and as an instrumental, functioning physical extension. This concept correlates to the Jewish-Christian concept of body as part of a natural order. Body's sensations, activities and processes become 'lower-order' or natural phenomena. The second line of investigation regards body as metaphor that construes it as an instrument, a tool or machine at the disposal of consciousness a container occupied by an animating subjectivity. For Locke and the liberal political tradition, body is seen as a possession of a subject, who is disassociated from the physical and who can make decisions and choices about the body and its possibilities and powers. This trend of thought about the body emphasizes its characteristic of inertia and passivity coerced by external forces. The body as a tool and instrument can be conditioned, disciplined and trained. The third line of investigation shows that the body is considered a signifying medium, a vehicle of communication to the public that is essentially private (ideas, thoughts, beliefs, feelings, affects). On one hand it is a way of transmission of information from the outside organism conveyed through the sensory apparatus; on the other hand it is a site of expression of the interior. And it is through body that one can receive code and decode the external world. According to this concept, corporeality is reduced to a predictable knowable transparency. The Cartesian dualist tradition has been more influential than any other in setting the structures for reflections, considerations and definitions- positively or negatively- for later concepts of subjectivity and knowledge.

Grosz defines three 'anomalous' philosophers Spinoza, Nietzsche and Vico who self-consciously questioned the terms of the Cartesian dualism, and who also regard the physical material of body as part of human existence.

Feminist thought has accomplished different types of feminism which considers body from different feminist perspectives, namely: Egalitarian,⁴⁸ Social constructionism⁴⁹ and Sexual difference.⁵⁰ Either Egalitarian feminists or social constructivist assume the notion of body as

⁴⁸ Egalitarian feminism was first generation feminism lead by Simone De Beauvoir, among others. It approaches the female body (and particularly female nature) as an inherent limitation on women's access to the rights and privileges patriarchal culture accords to men. In another way, body is seen as a unique access to knowledge and ways of living, where women's bodies, experiences and insights are able to provide contributions that the men lack. Egalitarian feminism has observed a conflict between natural motherhood and the civic political being of women and radically sees the female body as limiting women's capacity for equality and transcendence. The equalization of relations is possible only in the public sphere, while private sphere remained sexually polarized.

⁴⁹ Social constructionism represented by Juliet Mitchell and Julia Kristeva, among other Marxist feminists and psychoanalytic feminists. All of them committed to a notion of the construction of subjectivity. Thus group has a more positive attitude towards body approaching the mind-body opposition between the realms of production/reproduction -body- and ideology -mind-... This approach is not correlated with the opposition man-woman, hence clearly both sexes participate in material and ideological realms, but within each of these domains the positions of men and women are different. Within the ideological domain women are produced as passive and men as active.

⁵⁰ Feminists of sexual differences address the body as crucial to understanding women's psychological a social existence, but the body is no longer

predetermined, biological and ahistorical and the retention of the body-mind dualism. The notion of mind is regarded as social, cultural, historical and as a product of an ideology. Social constructionists make a distinction between the 'real' biological body and the body as object of representation and hold the belief that what oppressed women is not biology but the meaning that the organization of social system gives to biology.

Grosz's broad, complete and integrative perspective possesses a holistic character of recognizing the subject in its physicality. She creates an extraordinary link through the history of philosophy from the ancient establishing an interrelated pathway with philosophers of the 19th and 20th century whilst interlacing different scientific fields, like psychoanalysis, to reach an entire concept of the 'subjective-body'. Whether this concept may be used in philosophy or other fields of humanistic studies would entail as well a vision not (only) about what the subjective is, but rather about the world we are living in.

We can see that the perspective of Grosz engages the concepts about the politics of citation and location mentioned before by other feminist theoreticians and absorbs in its theory the earlier concept of *transculturation*, which has been gained as a matter by the post-colonial theory.

All those concepts address directly the emergent identity of body in western society and respond to the notion of the 'cultural Body' that I have formulated in my introduction. At the very end, the body we have is the body we are and the body we are is the body that is able to perform addressing its differences that we can 'represent'. In this last respect, the crisis of representation that alluded to body identities emerged in the 70's and 80's from sensing and addressing the perspective of body with its *differences*, *versatilities* and corporealities.

2.6 Conclusion

In this thesis, I aim to rework, reinforce and reformulate the contents of those theoretical basements and argumentations about the recognition of body as part of the conception of the 'subject' as substantial standpoint that hosts the assumptions stated in my hypothesis.

In the theoretical research above, we may see how the recognition of 'body as corporeal subject' (1.1) claims its conceptual enlargement towards what is the subject identity in its inter-

understood as an ahistorical, biological given, an acultural object. This group of feminists is concerned with the lived body, the body insofar as it is represented and used in specific ways in particular cultures. The body for them is interwoven with and constitutive of systems of meaning, signification and representation. On one hand is a signified and signifying body; on the other is an object of systems of social coercion, legal inscription, sexual and economic exchange. There is a refusal to the body-mind dualism, the body is regarded as the political, social, and cultural object par excellence, not a product of raw, passive nature that is civilized, overlaid, polished by culture. The body is a cultural interweaving and production of nature. This group commits to the notion of the fundamental, irreducible differences between the sexes, without addressing essentialism and valorizing differences (class, race, social position, geography). The body cannot be understood as a tabula rasa onto which masculine or feminine will be projected. The concept of the social body is a major strategy in this notion: a body as social and discursive object, a body bound up in the order of desire, signification and power. "...There is no body as such: there are only bodies- male, female, brown, black, white, large or small- and the gradations in between..." (Grosz, 1994 p19). Bodies can be understood as a field, a two-dimensional continuum in which race (and possibly even class, caste, or religion) form body specifications.

relation among the physical- biological body within its environment. The last enunciate had been adjacent to other developments in the scientific field that can be traced from the early birth of anthropology, sociology, psychology and the feminist theory within cultural studies, very particularly the Grosz perspective. Those developments in the scientific field are correlated as well with the rise of the early modern dance at the start of the 20th century that I will analyse later in the chapter 3.

In my description above I declare that the notion 'physical body' linked to the notion of the subjectivities and identities is a delayed conceptual achievement in the history of humanities. I want to point out for the reader the three icons in the socio-historical development that are coincidental and correlated in this respect.

The first important historical icon to be mentioned is the appearance of anthropology science and its subsequent sister sciences as social and cultural anthropology in the middle of the 19th century. Those social and cultural anthropology sciences had been, at the same time, intrinsically connected to the discovery of the 'New World' by Western Europe. In this historical context, I remarked that the influence of the discovery of the 'non- Western World' by European colonizers entitled an association to the primitive, the wilderness and the uncivilized 'Other'. The discovery of the New World reaffirmed and reinforced the superiority of the European Western patriarchy imposing its economical and cultural patterns as a monopolistic model of superiority. The notion of the 'biological body' had to confront the boundaries of biological determinism drawn by Darwin. From that confrontation of concepts and ideologies, new inquiries about the physical body were entailed which became standpoints in further development in cultural studies, feminist thought and post-colonial theory.

A second historical icon that addresses the concept of 'body' in its inter-relation to society has emerged out of the Frankfurt School of Cultural Critique in Germany in the 1920's and 30's. The investigations made by the members of the Frankfurt School of Cultural Critique did not last long before the German Nationalist movement overtook the school and compelled to all the scientists to expatriation. Some decades earlier, sociology emerged as still part of the anthropology science. Several members of the former Frankfurt School of Cultural Critique were sociologists, including Herbert Marcuse, Theodor W. Adorno, Erick Fromm, Max Horkheimer and Norbert Elias, among others. They discovered and highlighted the significance of 'body behavior' in relation to society.

The last important historical icon to be mentioned is the big contribution of feminist theory in the 70's that entailed achievements in the field of women's rights, gender, race, cultural critique and post-colonialism and the achievements about corporeality by Grosz. On one hand, the women's movement had its main engagement with the matter 'body' and was the main contributor concerning the issues of body and its subjectivity in Western cultural critique. Grosz is a great exponent of this

subject, as are other feminist theoreticians like Nicholson, Rich and Haraway, who posit issues regarding identity and its sexual, physical, representation, sex, race and cultural domination related to the presence and performativity of body in the society.

On the other hand, Grosz says that the history of the concept 'body', about corporeality and subjectivity in Western culture could be summarized in few points: the division between the physical from the non-physical, the superiority of the mind and the reason, and the spirit as part of the reason. From the body, the neglect of the phenomenology of body (sensation, perception, feelings) in the knowledge process: any knowledge could belong to the empirical and phenomenological world, which is the Cartesian and Kantian legacy. But in regard to the superiority of the ideas world and the late recognition of psychology, physiology, and neurology, anthropologists and sociologists have endeavored to acquire information and acknowledge the relation of the physical with the behavior.

As conclusion of this chapter, I would like to summarize some emerging points about body that concerns the field of dance.

The first is about that the experience of physicality as human beings is main source for a person and for a mover to develop, in a bigger extension as dancers and performers. This point I will analyze in chapter 4 when I go into movement development and sinaesthetic- kinaesthetic system.

The second important point applies directly to dance: the new generations of dance scholars have been interested in drawing on feminist analysis of representational systems part of the cultural studies field that have been influenced by psychoanalysis, semiotics, post-structuralist, and post modernism (Thomas, 1996). Those representational systems of analysis present some representational problems that address performance studies. Some of those representational problems are signalled by some scholars like the male gaze in the representation of the feminine body, the western gaze (problem raised by Bojana Kunst that we will see in chapter 3), and the notion "to-be-looked-at-ness".⁵¹ Those representational problems that allude to the either to the identity of body or to the identity of dance. I will come back to these points in chapter 3 and chapter 4.

⁵¹Concept by Laura Mulvey that is used by Thomas and Dempster in their writings.

CHAPTER 3:

DANCE CONTEMPORARINESS, SUBJECTIVITY AND IDENTITY

“...Thus if there is a body that is a priori of the 'dancer's body', a body which is claiming for itself as subject and individual, that body will entail the concerns about the types of physicality and about the sources from where movement discourses would emanate...” (Chapter I)

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will focus on the actual concepts of dance subjectivities and identities from the 1990's within the contemporary dance field. I seek here to establish a different comparison with the concepts of subjectivity and identity of the individual drawn in the chapter 2. There I recognize the subject in its own physicality connected to the environment and the sensual, perceptual experience from where its identity and its affiliations would be defined.

The study about subjectivities and identities in dance are anchored in the fields of philosophy, metaphysics, and the sociological and anthropological sciences that opened to develop understanding about the subjective body, the dancing body and its identity. In the last three decades, there have been several concerns for theoreticians about those issues, such as the different perspectives and focuses they use to approach those notions.

Contemporary dance is a difficult concept to define, a concept that is borne historically from its differentiation with the ballet and that has been continuously evolving from the earlier Euro American modern dance through remarkable historical, political and social icons. In the last two decades, contemporary dance has been expanding its aesthetics within the choreographic field while confronting other difficulties in other fields, including education, professional training and production management. Rather, this broadness has enhanced the trend for experimental and creative work gearing contemporary dance scene into an uncertain floor of possibilities and definitions. Especially since the post-modernist movement in the 70's and the later *Manifesto for a European Performance Policy* in the 90's, this broadness of contemporary dance has been officially sharpened. During that meeting in Vienna in October 2001⁵² the voices of several choreographers stated the instability of the common ground as the basis for actual contemporary dance. That instability meant the crossing over the borders of what has been consider 'contemporary dance

⁵²Therefore in Europe, contemporary dance practice has been defined in the congress in Vienna with the Manifesto for a European Performance Policy in October 2001: “It is a field where the visual arts, performance art, political art, meet performance theory and institute a mode of creation truly trans-disciplinary[...]erasing completely the vestiges of modernist influences.”[...]“...European dance's unstable ground is a common ground stretching across disciplines, whether aesthetic, theoretical or performative...” and “...European contemporary choreography sees the past as a common ground, as a surface it is inevitable to wander on...” (Lepecki, 2004, p172)

discipline' going beyond movement styles and embracing other theoretical or performative instances.

In order to develop the writing of chapter 3, I have chosen to base my readings on the work by André Lepecki *Exhausting Dance* and on the article by Bojana Kunst *Subversion and the Dancing Body: Autonomy and Display* as a departure point to elucidate the means of dance subjectivity. Both theoreticians are innovative, relevant, current, and highly appreciated in dance scholarship. Both have developed a considerable and detailed body of work concerning the definitions of the Western dance contemporaneity, and address explicitly and remark at the same time differently about the homogeneity of the Western dance domain. I will also locate some specificities on reference to articles by other authors, such as Helen Thomas, who since the 80's has been working on a sociological framework for analysing dance in the west. Andréé Grau is a dance anthropologist who has been focusing on the dance identities from the post-colonial perspective. For some particularities I will address to the notions of identity by Elizabeth Dempster. I find important in this section to explore the different contributions to the notions of subjectivities and identities through dance history under the influence of different cultural and political traces. The fact that Lepecki and Kunst come respectively from West and from East Europe, for example, already frames the context of their discourses in radically different perspectives, although, they share some commonalities in the philosophical field.

In their own evolution in dance writing, both Kunst and Lepecki have been attempting to define the very matter of the dance subjectivities and identities in history. Kunst and Lepecki interestingly converge; Lepecki depicts and Kunst reflects, to define what the intrinsic consistence of the 'subjective' in dance is and to its extent of the 'identity' in dance.

Lepecki's concerns revolve about a revision of the Euro-American dance context: what is the subjectivity of contemporary dance today is being seen by dance scholars as unavoidable from the Western academic context. On the other hand, Kunst address the particular situation of emerging dance identities in East Europe related to the political/ economical system in those geographies in its differentiation with the Western world keeping a mourning reminiscence of what contemporariness of Eastern European dance should be in comparison to the Euro-American West. I will initiate my introduction with Thomas's dance sociological approach about the definition of aesthetics and identities from off post-modernism to post-structuralism. As follows, Dempster takes the stance, when she locates the issues about the body in parallel relation to the development of identities in dance during early modern, modern and post-modern dance. Grau claims a return to humanism and revises the values of modernism in attempting the definitions of dance identities.

As introduction, I start presenting the battlefield where dance subjectivities and identities occurred to take place in order to developing as actual concepts which are the terrains of post-modernism and post-structuralism from the 80's to today. Both lines of thought have been centred

on 'the critic of the real'. Thomas says with reference to this last case that the authentic truth or logic in the Western rationalist tradition becomes “a fiction that operates in the guise of truth” (1998 p68). From her sociological perspective, Thomas points out a contradiction in the choice of some thinkers who celebrate post-modernism because it opens up ironies, inter-textualities, differences and new views. She states that those thinkers land on a sort of 'conclusive patron' or a 'model' of post-modernism which dangerously attempts to universalize a tendency. Thomas also highlights that cultural post-modernism rejects traditional grand or meta-narratives and within a wider cultural sense, she explains that “...modernism is seen as the culture of modernity and post-modernism as the emergent culture of post-modernity...” referenced in Featherstone (1988).” There are certain commonalities between both philosophical tendencies (post-modernism and post-structuralism) like the critique of the cogito, the concept of the formally free and the rational thinking, acting and the unified self⁵³ that have been registered in the records of our Western philosophical tradition. Here I refer to those commonalities mentioned in the chapter 2 of the thesis exposed by Grosz, in depicting the insights about philosophical standpoints of the Western tradition in addressing the construction of corporeality and subjectivity of the individual.

3.2 André Lepecki's concerns about dance subjectivities

Lepecki's *Exhausting Dance* introduction chapter mentions several icons where dance identity could be defined 'ontologically' based on the union of dance and movement (2006). Lepecki is a follower of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze; his writings in dance are completely based on the alignments of post-structuralist and deconstructivist thought. Lepecki's approach, dance, as a subject, is always “imbricate to movement” (which is a principle in classical philosophy: the stance *motion- life* and the categories of *animate- inanimate*)⁵⁴ and only when accepting this strict relation between dance and movement it is possible to address certain practices of what Lepecki defines as “choreographic practices of betraying dance”. Lepecki means that the betrayal of dance is equated to the betrayal of movement. In this last concern, he refers to John Martin, who earlier had stated that “...only with the advent of modern dance (did dance) finally find its true, ontologically grounded, beginning[...] that was the discovery of the actual substance of the dance which it found

⁵³ All those are cornerstones of the Western humanist rationalist tradition of thought since the Enlightenment. Post-structuralism rejects the idea of a fixed subjectivity in favour of a dislocated, fragmented subjectivity which is not fixed but it is constituted through language on each and every occasion we speak of. The subject is, in post-structuralist theory, constructed in and through language (Thomas, 1985 p15)

⁵⁴ My idea is that when Lepecki refers to dance subjectivity as a “way of existing” tacitly he is alluding to a classic ontological Aristotelian principle that homologates the stance *motion- life* for the animal-human world. The stance *motion- life* is what creates the categories of 'animate and inanimate'. Any type of animal life grounds itself in a movement principle. As movement is uncountable, seamless, and unrepeatable by nature (because it is never possible to repeat exactly the same movement or the same physical action), it is indeed from movement where the quality of difference and versatility may emerge. Thus the very reason of dance subjectivities are not the stances to be created artificially; those already have their bases in the human constitution to enable this level of subjectivity enhancing the individual, the difference and the creative in dance. Website. [Online]. [Accessed 1 August 2012 15: 00]. Available from World Wide Web: < <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-natphil/#5> >

to be movement...”⁵⁵ Lepecki adds that John Martin acknowledges the early modern dance when he explains “... it was not until Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey in USA, and Mary Wigman and Rudolf van Laban in Europe that modern dance discovered movement as its essence.” John Martin stressed that “...it is only then that dance became for first time and independent art...(1972:6)” within the Western culture. Lepecki cites dance historian Mark Franko who had explained that “... in the Renaissance choreography defined itself only secondarily in relation with movement” (Franko 1986:9)” and that John Martin had stated that after the antique times, “we find it concerned little if at all with the movement of the body (1972:13)” quoting the approximations of scholars Susan Foster (1996), Lynn Garafola (1997) and Deborah Jowitt (1998) that “...Romantic ballet was to present dance as continuous motion, a motion preferably aiming upwards, animating a body thriving lightly in the air. Such ideology shaped critical standards for evaluating dance’s value”. Lepecki cites as well Peter Sloterdijk who has proposed that modernity is a pure “being toward movement (2000b:36)” and that dance accesses modernity by its profound ontological alignment with movement as the spectacle of modernity's being.

In Lepecki’s perspective of modernity and subjectivity there are two key-terms in the contemporary dance definition. Lepecki stresses that subjectivity must be not confounded with this conception of a fixed subject⁵⁶ “...rather subjectivity is to be understood as a dynamic concept, indexing modes of agency (political ones, desiring ones, affective ones, and choreographic one) that reveals.” In this way he is gathering, linking and amalgamating what is the choreographical process to the process of subjectivation of the mover. Quoting Deleuze, Lepecki stresses “...a process of subjectivation, that is the production of a way of existing and that can be equated with a subject... (Deleuze 1995:98)”. Hereby Lepecki’s Deleuzian bases to define subjectivity as a performative power, “...as the possibility for life to be constantly invented and reinvented, as a mode of intensity, not a personal subject” (Deleuze 1995:99); that possibility for life, that mode of intensity is what may be recognize as a process of active becomings, of forces, energies, and potencies. The latter stance attempts a dynamic of existence where “...one cannot neglect the destructive effect of hegemonic forces that constantly try to dominate and prevent the creation of subjectivities of binding individuals into reproductive mechanisms of subjection, abjection, and domination.” He emphasises that process of subjectification are not necessarily related nor to discipline of the body neither dance training in order to achieve the choreography. I infer that when Lepecki speaks about subjectivity in dance, he is also talking about the isolation of the individual dances (or that should endeavour a level of democratization and consensus in a dance (movers) group, enabling to develop dancers’ individuality at the creative level.

⁵⁵ “For John Martin ballet was dramaturgically too tied up with narrative and choreographically too invested in the striking pose, while Duncan’s dance was too subservient to music...” (2006 p3)

⁵⁶Following Dupré (1993: 13-17) and Ferguson (2000: 38-44), André Lepecki in this case is applying the concept of the notion of Dupré and Ferguson that states that a subject associated in the reification of subjectivity in the legal figure of a person, with assertion of the person as a self-enclosed, autonomous individual bound to a fixed identity, and with the identification of a full presence at the center of discourse.

Lepecki defines the actual constitutive elements of Western theatrical dance: solipsism, stillness, the linguistic materiality of the body, the toppling of the vertical plane of representation, the stumble on the racist terrain, the proposition of a politics of the ground, and the critique of the melancholic drive at the heart of choreography. All those definitions, following Lepecki's trend of thought, become the core of the processes of subjectivation and identity of the contemporary dance of today in the 21st century. He defines interestingly four features that we might see in Grau's socio-anthropological concepts as the "principles of affiliation and differentiation" (2007 p191) already mentioned in chapter 2, which would be profiling the identity of the dancing body in the Western world.⁵⁷ I am going to described here: *solipsism*, *stillness*, *toppling of the vertical plane of representation* and *the critique of the melancholic drive or the post-colonial spectral*.

Solipsism may be defined as a philosophical state where principally thoughts, notions, concepts and the world of ideas stay outside our own experience. Here Lepecki takes the example of three male performers' choreographical work, Bruce Nauman, Juan Dominguez, and Xavier Le Roy, who in their male solitude gain a prominent place in the dance world, male choreographers in modern dance and to some extent to post-modern dance history. To explain this philosophical state, Lepecki's proposal is to isolate this use of solipsism and to define its use for choreographical purposes as an introspective re-treatment, a sort of metaphysical room of dance makers. With this he intends to dismantle those modernist mechanisms in Western culture that create the hegemonic forces and conditions of subjectivation.

The *stillness* is another way to subjectivate dance discourse because expatriate the conservative adherences to the compulsive movement of dance (here he is referring once again to that early association of dance with the compulsive movement of our modern times) when at the same time he is attempting to reflect and re-signify the representation of body and movement. In this case, he posits as example Jérôme Bel's work as an embodied exemplary critic of Western choreographic representation, making his target through a metaphorical inquiry about the economy of mimesis in the West. Jérôme Bel exposes how Western concepts of mimesis are enclosed in performance, questioning the production of dancer's subjectivity in the space of representation (the stage or proscenium) and consequently the choreographers' representation. Finally, he shows how does choreography work through reproduction in the need of framing 'subjectivity' inside the 'representational'. Bel addresses all those questions in the use of the material for his performance *The Last Performance* by exposing those questions, exaggerating them, subverting them, complicating them, uttering the official 'sign' of choreography (in the traditional sense or classical organization of movement, time and space) and reversing, on my view, the classical performative meaning of the theatrical space –

⁵⁷ Andréé Grau, in this case, is writing about identity in everyday life that individuals can belong to a virtually unlimited number of categories, which will contribute to the makeup of their identities. Individuals can have as many identities as affiliations, were it not for the fact that these affiliations are rarely autonomous, that they generally overlap, and that they are, above all dynamic and over changing (2007 pp191).

and to certain extent of music- for the spectator. Bel reveals, or intends to create in this way, new associations between visibility, absence and invisibility.

The toppling of the vertical plane of representation refers to the downfall of the vertical plane notion of dance language where the natural reference is gravity, so the choreographer, dancer or mover replaces this classical reference by other spatial planes and attempt to generate other (performative) options to conceive the space rather horizontal than vertical. In this case on my view, Lepecki is addressing once again to the association 'dance and movement' dismantling that traditional notion. What Lepecki is proposing here is to open the material place of performative representation of 'dance' and the 'body' of the dancer into new performative fields, namely other disciplines like video, lecturer-performance, installation, etc.

On the other hand, from dance scholarship it would not be difficult to argue that the vertical plane (in reference to the physical gravity) has already received attempts of disruption, from the early moderns to post-modern dance. There has been a constant intention to ground the dancer in other spatial, sound, virtual and environmental levels like Yvonne Rainer and Trisha Brown started in the 70's. Thus, the attempt of Lepecki here would be limited to the relation to the performative.

The stumble on the racist terrain that is the association of movement, colonialism and racism grounded its roots for the questions of presence, visibility, and the Western performance. Lepecki bases his metaphysical endeavors siding the concepts of philosophers Heidegger (1889–1976)⁵⁸ and Fanon (1925-1961)⁵⁹ exploring the discursive way of 'being present' and 'appearing' in the Western performance. He takes as departure point the figure of the dance performer Pope. L. Lepecki's argument that Heidegger's work (1889–1976) "...aims at the destruction of the old assumptions in Western metaphysics aligning being with a fully self-present visibility; Fanon aimed at the dismantling of the psycho-political-philosophical alliance that sustained the project of Western colonialism and racism..."(2000, p87) and Lepecki is considering Pope. L's work as a starting point for opening the room to choreographic discussions about bodies, subjectivities, and movement. Pope L's work not only performs a critique to whiteness and blackness and of verticality and horizontality, but also exposes "... a kinetic dimension of our contemporaneity, and a general critique of abject processes of subjectivation and embodiment under the racist-colonialist-machine." (2000, p87). When quoting Bhabha, Fanon identifies the black in a belated relationship to

⁵⁸Martin Heidegger took phenomenology in an entirely new direction, in the process transforming it from the study of consciousness to the philosophical investigation into the nature of existence, or being. His approach is named 'fundamental ontology'. Heidegger began the work by posing the *Seinsfrage*, or question of being: what is the meaning of 'being' ? According to Heidegger, the conception of human beings as isolated, reasoning subjects is derivative rather than primary. Logically (or ontologically) speaking, human beings are involved in myriad relations with things in the world well before they are, or can be, reasoning subjects. Website.[Online].[Accessed 15th May 2011 15: 01]. Available from World Wide Web:<
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1308494/continental-philosophy/274642/The-retreat-from-reason>>

⁵⁹Frantz Fanon is a West Indian psychoanalyst and social philosopher, known for his theory that some neuroses are socially generated and for his writings on behalf of the national liberation of colonial peoples [...]The publication shortly before his death of his book *Les Damnés de la terre* (1961; *The Wretched of the Earth*) established Fanon as a prophetic figure, the author of a social gospel that urged colonized peoples to purge themselves of their degradation in a "collective catharsis" to be achieved by violence against their European oppressors. He was also the author of *Pour la révolution africaine* (1964; "For the African Revolution"). Website.[Online].[Accessed 25th August 2011 12:29]. Available from World Wide Web:<
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/201572/Frantz-Fanon>>

whiteness and whiteness means, in Lepecki's language, the emblem of modernity. It is not possible to be outside colonialism because there is no society out of it-- that is the sustenance of the colonialist-racist-project that forces through a discourse of being 'kinetically visible'. This equation is posited through the triangle Heidegger, Fanon and Pope L, and presents a statement of "... ontological instability, a kinetic uncertainty that disrupts the unity of presence, and the old association between presence, unity, being and visibility..." The latter notions are reflected on the notions of actual post-dramatic theatre stated by Hans Lehman.

The *critique of the melancholic drive* or the *post-colonial spectral* is at the heart of choreography. Lepecki's departure for his definition refers in first instance to what Brett Berliner has called dynamics of 'colonialist melancholia' in the twentieth-century and in a second instance he appeals to what Anne Anlin Cheng better describes, within the scope of racial determinations as "... 'the racial moment' happens precisely within a social field of 'mutual invisibility' " (2001:16). Lepecki analyses a contemporary choreographic reflection done by Portuguese choreographer Vera Mantero on current European racism and European forgetting of what has been an important recent colonialist legacy in Europe. Mantero's work achieves this object by the strategic use of melancholia against racial and colonialist abjection. In Lepecki's definition of 'European melancholia' is "... a mode of subjectivity structured around oscillating feelings of loss and anger, as suggested by Cheng and Judith Butler [1997a]..." [...] "... the historical cohort of living and dead colored, colonized peoples, condemned to subjectivity in which deep grief must always be transformed into a moving spectacle for the colonizer by colonialism's melancholic imbalance..." (2000, pp107-108).

This is the way for Lepecki that movement takes place embodying his reflections about 'the spectral'. What is at stake here is the melancholy of the post- colonialist subject, a concept within the field of critical theory and political thought⁶⁰.

"...that the feeling of 'loss' of Europe's 'beloved colonies' creates a morbid melancholic subjectivity that gets energized as rage in contemporary European racism. Melancholia – that incapacity for the subject to let go of the lost object and to accept loss – establishes an odd and perverse symmetry in post-colonialist European affection and racism..." [...] (2000, p112). Lepecki explains this feature as the "... European's incapacity to overcome colonial loss..." that creates a mental state, a social mood that turns Europe into an empty geography where anonymous types of specific 'non-encountering' take place. He addresses this mood to the lament of the colonized (singing, dancing, or performing) the loss of its native land and meets the correspondence in the colonizer's own (antithetical, racist, angry) sense of loss. That is what situates melancholia as one of the subjective cornerstones of European dance discourse that moves towards a complex desire to

⁶⁰ Recent critical theory and political thought, after Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx*, has legitimated the spectral as critical concept, the term has recently emerged as instrumental for race studies as well – particularly through the works of Gordon and Cheng. Critical considerations of the spectral, the invisible, the absent-present, 'the disappeared' have also allowed for important developments in critical, political, and philosophical readings of performances. (2006 pp108)

reinvent and recreate the white dance body mirroring the racist colonialist altered topography of the 'Other'. Those are the features that define the subjectivity and identity of contemporary dance in Europe nowadays.

3.3 Bojana Kunst: definitions about the autonomy of the dancing body

Kunst describes in her article *Subversion and the Dancing Body: Autonomy on Display* that bodily autonomy is one of the basic aesthetic utopias of early modern dance which was deeply connected to the political concept of autonomy in general. In her writing there are pictorial references to the 'fleshiness of body' that was bonded to modern philosophy in its beginnings and was also referenced in the picture of the dancing body': the body of dance is the original body, a body that refers to itself, it was separated from discourse and intellect. This type of autonomy (self-referent identity of the modern dancing body, self-re-created awareness of the physical) has been body's main feature.

Kunst states that their common denominator (bodily autonomy and the political concept of autonomy in general) is the strong awareness of bodily autonomy and that was the strategy employed by the body to step into modernity. Kunst's reflections let us see that in the beginning there was not only an aesthetical strategy but rather a philosophical, political and ideological utopia of articulating subjective embodiment. The latter was an upgrade of modern rationalization that meant an employment of artificial tactics and at the same time, a return to nature.

Through recent history of dance, different articulations of bodily autonomy came to surface. "...The real autonomy of the body lies in the modernist deconstruction and minimalist dispersion of hierarchical body ..." not in the relations and not in its connection with the outside world, as had been advocated by Martha Graham and Mary Wigman through emotionalism and essentialism. Contradictorily, the pluralist and pedestrian vision of autonomy that the Judson Dance Theatre and others presented became an elitist privilege and that the problem of the autonomy of the body returned constantly disguised during the history of contemporary dance of the 80's and the 90's in the last century. She describes that many authors attempted that there has been a 'bodily subversion' in recent decades: there was a body that in early modernism had been associated with the authentic, the original, and natural substance of the body on one hand; that body articulated through techniques and methodologies that privilege the artificial of the abstract movement, namely Graham, Horton, Müller and Cunningham techniques on the other hand. This process of deshierarchicalization, in Kunst's terms, was referenced to the ideal of a democratic body, its daily movement and performance.

Kunst points out that an autonomous body is extremely fragile. Autonomous body has been always miss threatened by power, exclusiveness, institutionalization, organization, formalization, stylization and...the disciplinary regime. She stresses that "...autonomy gets easily trapped in its own enthusiasm over self-sufficiently..." (2003, p64) which I will explain as: trapped into the different ways of representation and consequently several types of identities "...and the image of the autonomous body gets inscribed in the achievement of total manipulation, predictable and exclusivity" (2003, p64). Kunst's problematic relates similarly to Thomas's argumentation about the identity of body and the fragility of its autonomy due to the issues of representation pointing out the political and the aesthetical; when Thomas is referencing Dempster's text: "However, as modern dance become more codified into a set of techniques, so the specificity of the natural female body was erased and it became 'vulnerable to colonization'(ibid:51)" and I would like to re- interpret or re-write Dempster's words as: that the natural subjective female body has been erased.

Those issues of representation started in the 30's and presented, folding a sinuous interlace of libertarian and nationalist ideologies within the concepts of body, where body's autonomy became the style of the 'authentic' and where dance became an exportation product of contemporary 'free (North) American culture'.

In this last regard, I would like to consider to be important the example of an article by Amy Koritz (1996), "*Re/Moving Boundaries*" where she explains very well that the condition of Martha Graham being a female artist, did adopt the mask of masculinity and acceded to the conception of a United States 'national subject' as essentially a masculine model in order to cross the social and political artistic thresholds. Martha Graham disassociated herself, first from womanhood but also from anything African⁶¹ (early Graham's work was highly influenced by African rhythms from Shimmy to the Charleston). In this way Martha Graham was able to posit an aesthetic articulation of modernism as a United States form of representative national (universal) subjectivity. Similarly, Kunst stresses quoting Pervots that the United States government planned by the NEA,⁶² introduced post-modern dance in the international artistic world "...as a democratic and cultural body of capitalism (Pervots 1998:88)".

Kunst emphasizes that at the same time the autonomy of the body is always being constructed through the paradox of the Hegelian concept of 'self-actualization'.⁶³ For the biggest problem of the representational process is that, paradoxically, autonomy is also a self-rotating process: the 'Other' is represented only when the self is able to be autonomously performed.

⁶¹ Here I make reference to the huge impact and influence of African culture in the United States due to its expanded slavery background dating from the early British colonies and prolonging during the civil war that ended in 1864.

⁶² The National Endowment for the Arts in the United States. [Online]. [Accessed 5th August 2012 12:08]. Available from World Wide Web:<
<http://www.arts.gov>>

⁶³ Kunst explains that the subject has a capacity to let himself go, to deliver himself to what is not himself, to remain himself only in relation with the other. Autonomy is not static neither essentialist concept. It has nothing to do with originality. (p64)

Otherness in Western culture is always perceived by the opposite, for what is not, namely in its negativity, so that the self is able to step into the moment. "...when the representation does take place, Otherness will inevitably be performed as negativity (cf. Žižek, 1993)".

This paradox is explained by Grau from her anthropological perspective when she remarks about the so-called primitive contemporary societies are presented as levels or periods through which Western civilization is supposed to rise in its ascension towards the top of cognitive and intellectual human development. She describes that dance history books usually include chapters normally named the 'savages' or 'social and folkloric dances', 'ethnic dances' concluding with Western concert dance where the ballet is highlighted and where the illustration show a clear difference between what is considered 'art dancers' whilst those who perform are 'non-art-dancers'. This argumentation by Grau where she exposes the display of the 'Other' negativity in the dance forms and homologous to Kunst will create the abysmal for the Western gaze perception in the reception of the 'Other's body'; a body that is constantly condemned to cultural submission in comparison with the visibility of Western body and Western dance.

Kunst refers to a "...Western dancing body completely equipped for the present; and on the other side, the body⁶⁴ almost without contemporariness, that of the other unarticulated body with a dark, closed and incomprehensible attraction to the past" (2003, p65). Here Kunst denounces that the Western contemporary dance has appropriated the political 'potentiality and autonomy' of the body as its own privilege in the Western perception of body mirroring the 'Other'. Western gaze sees the 'Other' as a sign of incompleteness, 'still no there', Other's body is romantic and narrative for the times being, carrying on with a delayed physicality that can be framed in the spheres of what is known as traditional, local or ethnic. The latter point that Kunst declares does not mean that the Western gaze sees the 'Other' as incompleteness, but rather seeks to transfer it, teach it and state it as incomplete in its evangelic action of cultural domination.

According to Kunst, the mode in-between does not apply for the 'Other', neither do questions about body senses or presence. Western contemporary dance has reversed and appropriated the notion of the potentiality of autonomy of body, as well as the discovery of body, making from it its label and privilege. She emphasizes the definition of autonomy of the body as: "Autonomy is not about the exclusiveness of the moment, but about different possibilities of presence and being in the present." (2003, p66) and states that "...contemporary dance from Eastern Europe entered the Western production market as such a spectacular commodity, and we (Eastern European dancers) are expected to produce 'Otherness': being exotic and different, with no right to the universality and exclusivity of Western contemporariness. Paradoxically, this 'Other' could not gain its visibility or even be politically recognizable if not displayed as spectacular commodity" (2003, p66) and she questions "So how might contemporary performance and dance –unable to

⁶⁴ Kunst is referring again to the Eastern European body and dance.

avoid the fact that itself, too, is a spectacular commodity- develop parallel, digressive ways of performing?"(2003, p67)

3.4 Conclusion

In the beginning of chapter 3, I referenced the difficulty in defining the concept of contemporary dance, as well as the enlargement of contemporary dance discipline into the experimental field. This difficulty is based in its own instability that seeks beyond movement styles and embraces other theoretical, performative or theatrical forms.

This is precisely what Lepecki and Kunst are exposing with their aims to dig deeper into the subjectivities and identities of actual contemporary dance: the instability to define, the uncertainty to address a personality, a character to the subject; because 'undefinedness' in itself is a very airy and broad matter to posit as the definition of a discipline.

As my conclusion of chapter 3, I am going to gather and remark on a few considerations about the issues posited by both philosophers.

In first instance, I find it significant that Lepecki is talking from his Western (Euro-American) tradition and Kunst from her Eastern European tradition. Both philosophers have historical and political backgrounds that lead them to perceive the reality of dance subjectivities and identities from different angles. Lepecki is traced by the new Euro-American dance tendencies, while Kunst surely heired a dance history based in Russian ballet that grew and was pampered by the social and economical alignments of the Communist regime. Therefore their perceptions of contemporary dance are different, though not incompatible. When Lepecki writes that there are certain practices of betraying dance in order not to fall into the oppression of hegemonic forces, he still acknowledges the modernist project that John Martin wrote about. When Kunst describes the 'bodily autonomy' and the 'bodily subversion', she is addressing a supposed negativity of the Eastern European dancing body generated by a non-capitalist sector of the world. Thus both philosophers are enunciating observations about the actual Western Contemporary dance from their own sensible perspectives within the society they have been living in. However, Kunst, like Lepecki, bounced coincidentally into the homogeneity of 90's European models of contemporariness, such as Xavier Le Roy, Jérôme Bel or Vera Mantero. Those choreographers attempt to step out of their own moment and connect us to different histories and different ways of being present using different strategies. These strategies expose contemporary subjectivity as a process of performing, always confined within a complex network of potentiality and relations. At the same time, those choreographers attempt dangerously to unify a tendency in contemporary dance as a model or standard, something that has been quoted by Thomas in the beginning of this chapter.

My first consideration concerns Lepecki's standpoint to define subjectivity in dance as a performative power that may be recognized as a process of active becomings, energies and potencies alert to neglect hegemonic forces of subjection to mechanisms of movement reproduction. He emphasises that the process of subjectification in dance is not necessarily related to a movement discipline, whereas I infer that the viscosity of the dancer here may take the main place using the *solipsism* and isolation as conditions for research. *Stillness* becomes a counterpoint against the tempting compulsiveness of movement.

The second consideration relates to how Kunst and Lepecki note above the 'Other'. The 'Other' is depicted by both philosophers in three interlacing features which conform a mode of subjectivity: 1- the association of movement to the colonialist and racist phenomena; 2- the European melancholia, a mood that gathers the feeling of 'non-acceptance' of loss by the colonizer and the deep grief by the colonized, both making of Europe a terrain of cultural-racial non-encounter; 3- The negative form of 'Otherness' seen by the Western gaze in its incapacity to appreciate difference.

These three features mentioned above are interlaced as a mode of subjectivity within the contemporary dance folding the colonial project and the post-colonial phenomena. In this mode of subjectivity, an aspect of contemporary dance has been veiled; an aspect of dance that either cannot come out in its completeness or that cannot be acknowledged in its integrity and therefore cannot be validated fully. I like to define the latter as a sort of obscurantism in the contemporary dance field.

This type of subjectivity also reveals the attempt to encounter with what is 'difference' (item 1.2). Difference, in this case, is either taken in its integrity or it is drawn into a process of absorption and homogenization. This type of subjectivity speaks about level of vulnerability of dance discipline and of the dancing body.

The third consideration applies to issues of invisibility and visibility of contemporary dance, which deal with the encounter of representational problems of identity in the field. In Kunst's quotation, visibility is only possible through the colonialist project, meanwhile for Lepecki, visibility (or presence) is linked to colonialism and racism opening an ontological triangle within the dance studies that is reinforcing what is kinetically visible. In both philosophical endeavors, the colonialist project is what enables visibility to be bonded to modernity in terms of accountability, movement, speed and alternatives. The colonialist project is what states the ways of exposition, and as well as the ways of representation which will contain issues of power, oppression, domination and submission. That is what respects the construction of body identities, dance identities and the concept of contemporary dance.

Kunst addresses the invisibility of the 'Otherness' of Eastern European dance perceived as a negative feature by the Western gaze. Her statement denounced a type of visibility that is not available from the perception of the Western gaze.

Those considerations are what underpinned and defined the actual constitution of subjectivities and, to some extent, identities applying to the homogeneous character of the contemporary dance concept in Western culture.

CHAPTER 4:

MOVEMENT DEVELOPMENT AND DANCE IDENTITIES

“...If the particularity of dancer's movement did come neither from a technique nor from a disciplinary system, from where did it come?” (Chapter 1)

4.1 Introduction

It is my aim in chapter 4 to give an entire perspective to the reader about the development of movement and movement mechanics in the human being and to its relation with its corporeality in appealing to the subjectivity and identity that will enable the ‘dancing body’.

The character of this chapter is slightly different than the first two chapters because it lies on practice-based work as response to the theoretical applications of the body performance. Therefore it is my aim in this chapter to establish the relations of inter-dependence among the body motor system, the neurological system and the psyche. After establishing these relations, I want to focus on the transformations and mutations of those systems as related to the social- cultural- geographical environment, as we have already seen into the chapter 2. Secondly, I aim to link these relations with the concept of dance subjectivities and identities in contemporary dance approached in chapter 3.

At this stage of the paper I would like to meet the sources from where movement originated in the body *a priori* any other further conceptualization, formalization or structuralization of movement that may take place in the dance field. My intention is linked to the earlier assumption inquired by my research question in chapter 1 (1.2), which argues about the effects of the subjectivity and of the identity of the individual in the origination of movement that might be potentially producer of dance language. Those effects could possibly be channelled into an identity as a subjective body and as a dancing body, and here I am going to explain why.

The very reason of the third sub-question posited in my inquiry is grounded primarily on studies and researches about synaesthesia, kinaesthesia, motoric⁶⁵system and developmental psychology done during my studies as dance educator at a dance academy in the 90's. I have chosen those readings concerning topics such as sensation-perception, kinaesthesia, the construction of physical schema, development of neuro- motoric system, automatisms and movement techniques. Hence, those are going to be related in a later step to issues about the construction of identities in dance and dance education. Literature for this chapter is going to be based on readings about *Genetic Psychology* and *The Psychological Development of the Child* by Henri Wallon (1951-

⁶⁵ Medical dictionary (Physiology): medical term relating the muscular movement. (2010) *Oxford dictionary of English*

1956); for some few references about the cognitive development I look at *La Psicología Evolutiva de Jean Piaget* by John H. Flavell (1988). Henri Wallon has been highly concerned about the importance of the conformation of the synaesthetic, which includes sensory and perceptual experiences, enables the development of synaesthetic memory, affects perception and cognition and highlights the power of imagination (the later is an important issue in arts studies and creative development). The synaesthetic system involves the kinaesthetic system and Henri Wallon, Jean Piaget and other psychogenetic scientists have acknowledged that the perceptual- physic- motoric development is crucial in the human being from the very beginning of its existence.

It is necessary to remark that the field of developmental psychology has given important tools to dance, sport, martial disciplines, physiotherapy, and performance studies. In addition to the psychogenesis theory, which relates marvellously with notions of corporeality by Grosz (2.5), I am going to apply other readings from the articles *(Syn)aesthetics* (2009) by Josephine Machon, *Movement's contagion: the kinaesthetic impact of performance* (2008) by Susan L. Foster. Both articles apply directly to the fields of dance education and training. And lastly, the article by Elizabeth Dempster: *Women Writing the Body* (1995), which refers to issues surrounding dance techniques and dance identities.

4.2 Notions about the synaesthetic- kinaesthetic system

The synaesthetic- kinaesthetic system generates the interactive construction of inner motion in the individual, motoric system and mechanism that will prepare the body and the mind for daily and/or exceptional actions. Machon states that the experiential nature of synaesthesia is present from the beginning of human life and that it is deeply intertwined with the so called “intuitive knowledge” (2009, p17). Machon quotes Cytowics, who writes about synaesthesia as a form of intelligence; she says that all human beings are synaesthetic but only few people are aware of the “holistic nature of perception (1995, p8)”. Cytowics also points out that most human beings filter out synaesthesia, the use of sensorial and perceptual abilities, as a form of intelligence and that only a minority group develop the use of those abilities.

There are two important observations here. One, that only through the development of synaesthesia and perception may people enhance movement and motoric abilities and, in some fields like dance or sports, to reach to certain movement qualities and skills. Two, the use of synaesthesia and the use of sensorial and perceptual abilities are neglected during the learning process (particularly during primary school and in higher education), thus separating the sensual experience from the cognitive action. This last point converges on what Grosz would stress as the Cartesian dualism that, I already approached in chapter 2. The mechanisms of intelligence are

understandable and applicable not only to the practical and abstract cognitive phases of the psychological development process in a person (if the person can read, write or do ordinary mathematical operations, for example), but also to those learning phases that engage the physical and motoric in the person (musicality, coordination). The latter implies entails that perceptual sense and kinaesthetic capabilities are vulnerable and, at the same time, depending on many environmental factors in order to be developed. It is important the acknowledgement of this by dance scholars, educators and makers at this stage. Those development principles that apply to movement, motion and actions of the individual assuming the comprehension of the intimate nature of the synaesthetic- kinaesthetic system in relation to the conformation of the movement and physical subjectivity and identity of the person.

Foster regards the construction of kinaesthesia in the human being as “...the sense of body movement and the notion of internal bodily sensation...” (2008, p47). Her definition is based on all the mentioned interconnected phases of synaesthetic development- sensory and perceptual experiences- which are anchored in the individual’s history of cultural traces. All those convergences of phases that engage the sensual and the emotional exchange with the environment as a primary information source for progression of the cognitive phase are intertwined during the long-life development of the human body. These phases provide the kinaesthetic sense and enhance physical development. This last relation may converge with Grosz’s notion of corporeality (2.5) entailing person’s subjectivity.

Indeed, there are several ways to approach the independence of the physical from the psychological and the emotional in the conformation of the perceptual system and the sense of corporeality. In fact neurology, physiology and psychology approach them separately for their studies. However, regarding the difference between sensory input and bodily action, as well as the difference between perception and action or between afferent and efferent systems, still derives the interrelation that intertwines one with the other in the conformation of the perceptual system.⁶⁶ Foster cites in her article Alain Berthoz approach, where he enunciates that the “...external senses as systems rather than channels and as interrelated rather than mutually exclusive...”. Foster describes about Berthoz that he sees kinaesthesia as “...organizing all the senses...” which embodies a high level of sensibility and perceptibility and also remarks that “each individual may perceive the world quite differently based on cultural and gendered differences” (2008, p53).

⁶⁶Notes: 1- Sherrington, together with other scientists, upheld the separation between perception and action. Afferent systems process incoming stimuli and efferent systems convey the command for bodily movement. Perception requires both from afferent and efferent systems. 2- Gibson: For Gibson, sense organs contribute to a continuous sense of one’s orientation with respect to gravity, motion, space and generalized bodily disposition. An act of perception depends on the detection of the difference between sensory input and bodily disposition, and is equated to the perceptual system. That is the real experience of sensing the world around. 3- Cage asserts the primacy of the physical activity as distinct from any other psychological experience. Dance offers its viewers the opportunity to perceive bodies in motion and viewers can focus on whatever parts or aspects, having everyone his/her own experience. (Foster, 2008 pp50-51)

4.3 The origin of motion following psychogenesis theory

Psychogenesis is based on studies in psychology, compared anatomy and physiology and appeared as a science in the beginning of the 20th century with Wallon.

Wallon dedicated to the study of the newborn child's development. In their empirical researches those scientists studied and later described the consecutive phases and stages of movement and motoric development towards adult life, as an integrative phenomenon of functional maturity and learning. The field of genetic psychology is the study of the formation and transformation of the psyche and the physical body; it may apply, as a science, to the living world as a whole, to the human species, or to the individual human being.⁶⁷

Wallon divides the relation of phases in the development of the motoric system from childhood to the youth describing the development curve of movement, coordination, physical control and balance.

Psychogenesis theory discerns between two important primary conditions for movement development. The first condition is an organic condition, the physical body, and the second is an external environmental condition.⁶⁸ In any case, a child's motoric development is neither automatic nor necessarily progressive. The maturation of the nervous system is gradual and clears the way for different sorts or levels of psycho-motor activity, but maturation has to be complemented by different types of practices and experiences which, in this context means: an interaction with the environment. Herewith, the interlocking of both psycho-motor connections within phases and connections with the outside world are the very reason for the psychogenetic progression, because in psychogenetic theory, there are no original connections.

The histories of culture and psychogenetic theory are closely related but they are not one and the same. Each individual bears the mark of the culture that governs his/her existence and imposes itself on his/her activity. The verbal language a person acquires from his/her culture will trace his/her thoughts and will structure his/her understanding. The person's movements will be governed by the instruments of his/her language, family organization, relationships between children and adults, between the sexes, as well as between the individual and the collective group. Those instruments will all impose more or less rigid frameworks upon the individual's affectivity. Those will impose imperatives and prohibitions that can profoundly influence the individual's constitution. The history of cultures concerns itself with the different milieus in which the individual of each period and region of the world has had to develop. Psychogenetic studies seek

⁶⁷ Wallon, H. (1956) *Genetic Psychology* [Online]. [Accessed 8th November 2010 17:35]. Available on the World Wide Web: <<http://www2.cddc.vt.edu/marxists/archive/wallon/works/1956/ch3.htm>>

⁶⁸ The role of environment then comes into play. Environment is the function's indispensable complement. Without it, the function would have no object and would remain a mere potential or atrophy altogether. At first, the environment may be a purely playful one, in which function seems to discover itself, try itself out, or simply practice without any useful or necessary purpose in view. *Genetic Psychology* [Online]. [Accessed 8th November 2010 17:31]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www2.cddc.vt.edu/marxists/archive/wallon/works/1956/ch3.htm>>

either in movement or in intelligence development, to show the effects of these milieus on individuals. This task is a difficult one, for while deductive procedures must be avoided, the evidence from observation is scarce.⁶⁹

One of the most important achievements of developmental psychologists is the acknowledgement of the intertwined relationship between the muscular and the emotional development through the basic emotions: fear, love and pain in the newborn child. That is closely related to the field of dance education, and to an extent to sports, martial arts, music and performance.

These emotions respond by correspondence of interoceptive - proprioceptive stimuli and sensory physical impressions. The latter interrelationship will constitute a first set of conditioned associations, which will be the bases of evolving a synaesthetic- kinaesthetic system. Synaesthesia and kinaesthesia are the foundations in the construction of the psychomotor system, which will evolve through the basic developmental phases of the neuro-physical system in the body through life. The synaesthetic- kinaesthetic system, the main pillars of a mover, dancer, sport, actor or performer body, will appeal in order to build up their awareness and performative sense into a sensorial- cognitive primary platform.

Those basic developmental neuro-physical phases are interlaced with the emotional side, following Freud, and intellectual or cognitive side, following Piaget.⁷⁰ Wallon had many points of agreements with Freudian studies, regarding the conformation of emotionality in the human beings. This can be traced through the relationship of emotional, physical and motoric development, which in itself will forward the synaesthetic- kinaesthetic system development through different phases from early childhood to adult life and the successive modes of relationship to the environment.

What Henri Wallon described in his book the *Psychological Development of the Child* (1951) is that the first stage of development in the human being -that is the lowest level of psychomotor activity- is the musculature's predominant response to interoceptive⁷¹ and proprioceptive⁷² stimuli and as well as to external excitations. That response is a simple non-directed discharge with no object besides resolving a tension as yet unrestrained by an inhibitory mechanism. In this first stage there is a total absence of inhibitory mechanisms and there is impulsiveness in its pure state. The sensory impressions that result from circumstances that generally accompany the satisfaction or frustration that I mentioned before- fear, love, and pain- of the early child's essential needs become

⁶⁹Wallon, H. (1956) Genetic Psychology [Online].[Accessed 8th November 2010 17:31] Available from World Wide Web:< <http://www2.cddc.vt.edu/marxists/archive/wallon/works/1956/ch3.htm>>

⁷⁰ Jean Piaget was contemporary colleague of Henry Wallon and he did many studies in genetic psychology approaching the cognitive development. He had many points in common with Wallon, but in his theory he considered that the evolution of the process could not be regressive.

⁷¹ Relating to, or being stimuli arising within the body and especially in the viscera. [Online].[Accessed 10th May 2012 16:28]. Available from World Wide Web:< <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/proprioceptive>.

⁷² Relating to, or being stimuli arising within the organism <a proprioceptive sensation>[Online].[Accessed 10th May 2012 16:28]. Available from World Wide Web:< <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/proprioceptive>>

bounded to the manifestations of these needs, and therefore constitute a first set of conditioned associations, which will make the bases for the rest of one's life. It is also important to acknowledge that the absence of any of those developmental phases might cause a broken link in the chain of development, especially when that happens in the first and second childhood.

The interlocking of both connections of systems mentioned above, with the outside world is the key of progression of synaesthetic-kinaesthetic development and the psychomotor activity.

However, stated already by Wallon, that there is no previous structure in the conformation of those systems, which depend at the same time on the environment for its development. I wonder: how is the body capable of relating to different environments and how does corporeality develop under different cultural conditions?

I have found an interesting relation to the trend of thought of the philosopher Spinoza, who, in his book *Ethics* posits 'body independence of the mind', stating that body is not determined by structure and that body 'encounters and transforms' in the environment. Spinoza bases this separation on the stance of the body itself, simply from the laws of its own nature. "...A body that can do many things which its mind wonders at. A body that can surprise the mind..."⁷³ This stance somewhat resembles the points of psychogenesis theory mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, which mentions: '...because there are not original structures...!'

On the other hand, re-visiting chapter 2, where I introduced Grosz's terms about 'corporeality', I am going to attempt to re-write or re-define Grosz's term corporeality within the terms of the dancing body. Hence, I would attempt to explain that 'corporeality' for a mover or a dancer becomes the materialization of its physic-psychological interconnectivity (with its phases and stadiums in a person's life) into movement development and body's motion. It is at the same time conformed by independent afferent and efferent systems that enable the movement and consequently a type of specific subjectivity in motion.

The last point must be certainly from the interest principally of dance teachers, trainers or movers, performers and practitioners who are standing for any learning process in movement techniques or disciplines that may take place in the professional, amateur or vocational level.

The primary processes between sensation- perception and experience- environment, the culture where the body (the person) and its subjectivity emerge, must be understood and acknowledge. Curiously, psychogenesis is applicable to any movement process that could be initiated in any field and those processes will be gendered and culturally influenced. Particularly in dance or sport education the maturity of certain 'motoric phases' in the individual are essential in order to achieve the entire motoric skills. Additionally, the development of certain motoric skills, abilities and coordination processes remained concerned to previous motoric achievements. A

⁷³Cvejjic, B. 2nd Lecture (2010). In: Writing Dances I, course. 11/2010. Theatre and Media Department, Faculty of Humanities, University of Utrecht

simple example would be if, for any reason, a young child was unable to run or to jump (due to religious beliefs, social manners or simply lack of education or social contact) that prohibition or inhibition might impact that child's movement development. Certainly the child's movement skills would present deficiencies if the parents did not give it attention. In my life I have witnessed a couple of such cases. The first was the experience of a close friend and colleague of mine, who due to her religious background, coming from a conservative Jewish family, she was not allowed to run and jump during her early and late childhood. Later, when she became an adult and started attending dance movement improvisation lessons, she showed to have a lack of strength in her inferior limbs and in relation with her upper body. During the physical conditioning classes, where we have to respect schemas: walking-running-jumping. She presented as well the same type of difficulties. One day our training teacher asked her directly: "Were you allowed to run when you were a kid? And she answered categorically "No". For that time my colleague was already 25 years old and despite that fact she did not stop to go to disco and or to follow improvisation dance classes.

Another example to be quoted was the case of a dance student of mine during the introductory courses at the National Dance School *Jorge Donn*, Buenos Aires, where I used to work 15 years ago.

She was a girl of 9 years who could not coordinate the travelling and jumps in the diagonal during dance lessons. There was something strange in the coordination of arms and legs and difficulties in the rhythmic during the travelling. I consulted with the director of the school and further I decided to talk with the girl's mother. There were other factors like: constant distraction and lack of focus, but still the girl showed motivation during class. The conversation with the mother led to her explicit manifestation about: firstly, the girl's lack of natural abilities (flexibility, speed, etc.) and second the mother admitted trying to keep the children at home for practical reasons. The mother was not fond of allowing the children to go out, and the two kids had little space to play and to hang around because the family lived in an apartment. In this last case, either the emotional environment (familiar and social) or the physical environment of the girl (a club, a park, the neighbourhood, a cultural centre) showed lack of support, social contact with other children, playfulness and personal space. What kinds of behaviour can the child develop and what kind of inner movement and motion can the child develop under those conditions?

The influence of the social environment over the movement development might be larger than normally is considered. A good 'formal' education does not mean necessarily that the movement development of a child (and later in the adult person) would be integrated and that the child would achieve certain physical abilities. Sport and dance is a 'type' of movement that the child might be able to develop and far from being the only way to develop, it might inhibit other sources of movement that come up in daily life experience without undermining the importance of 'movement' in the basic education. On the other side, the type of motoric that certain social groups

may develop are far from been achieved by other groups. For example, the sense of rhythm in Brazilian or Cuban cultures is a communication tool of those communities intimately connected to social and daily life.

I have a testimony of a dance teacher, a colleague of mine, who used to teach dance at different primary schools in Buenos Aires. She worked for private schools and as well for state schools, both joining from a lower to upper middle class target group. One of those schools was a marginal basic school in the outside of Buenos Aires, close to the Riachuelo zone. The child population that attended her classes was made up of kids from very poor families, unemployed parents, or single mothers. The last group was crossed by a marginal surrounding, most of those children belonged to the largely unprotected working class (lack of parenting, guidance) and, when not, criminal circuits (robbery and addictions). Those kids learned from very early age to steal, to hide the parents from the police, to pick pockets or assault supermarkets and to run away with amazing speed where nobody can find them. During the dance class, of course, those kids presented very particular hectic movement behaviour out of the expectation of a dance teacher. However, amazingly those kids developed an incredible level of mobility in their bodies and a very fast natural reaction (that was survival instinct). Therefore, my colleague concluded that those kids developed better motoric skills, movement abilities and physical condition than those kids coming from caring middle class families attending private and official schools.

How do psychogenesis theoreticians apply those theories to the dance development and to the cognitive processes? Coming back to the sub-question, how do the subjectivity and the identity of the individual affect the origination of movement and how it is appealing to the dance field? How does the engagement of the mentioned progression of synaesthetic-kinaesthetic development and the psychomotor activity apply to the dancing body? Those are the matters that concern equally educators, trainers, creators and the heads of dance schools who need to foresee processes and progresses in the field which can be reflected fruitfully and healthily in the students' achievements as vocational and professional dancers. In the last case, that awareness and achievement of the situation will enable the balanced coexistence of truly different and versatile (1.2) dancers and possible dance-makers in a semi-democratic dance environment within a society. Contrarily, the traditional static vision of 'dance education' which addresses only the learning of certain skills and high level abilities, disregards many other nurturing, rich and unique aspects of dance discipline to be become developed in the movers and dancers.

4.4 Psychomotor activity, the dancing body and its identity

There is an emerging point that concerns the field of dance: it is about the acknowledgment of

dance as a feeling and that inside the dance field, it is important to recognize the ‘historized corporeality’ that makes a body to move. Foster, in a conference about *Choreographic Empathy* in Utrecht in 2011, mentioned that the society in 17th century “...did not feel body as we do nowadays...”. I want to remark that the experience of physicality (which is defined as kinaesthesia in medical terms) as human beings is main source for a dancer to develop in a bigger extension as movers and performers. I will come to this point later in the paper in chapter 4, when I will discuss movement development and the sinaesthetic- kinaesthetic system.

Dempster tries to establish the location of the dancing body as a location of signifying practices and the relation between dancing/speaking subject and the dance/language. She writes that “...bodies and dances are not only legible but comprehensible”[...] “...dances have no existence except through body/bodies which produce and reproduce them, they can be considered as texts written of and through precisely inscribed bodies.” [...] “...ideologies are systematically deposited and constructed on an anatomical plane, that is, in the neuromusculature of the dancers’s body...” she adds “...and a precise reading of this body can only proceed if the reader/spectator’s gaze is not deflected by, but penetrates beneath, the brilliance of the body’s surface...” (1995, p23). The last point relates to the representational side of the dancing body, something I have already addressed in chapter 3 of this thesis.

Coming back to my question about the subjectivities and the identities of the individual that affect the origination of movement, I find that the latter is evolving in a new question: how is it appealing to the dance? I would respond that the 'generation of movement' has been the main essential concern of early modern dance by Martha Graham, Isadora Duncan and the German expressionists. Every one of them created technical devices or work-modes to achieve specific movement skills to reach that authentic 'movement source'. All those techniques apply a structural model that must emerge from within the movement; every technique has its own standpoints from where the development process of a dancing body develops an identity. The one whose methods really open the door, to me, in terms of enabling the natural, gradual movement process in the human being towards the dance was Rudolf van Laban (although now his methodology has been further developed by other successors). He stated a methodology to develop movement rather than a technique aiming to reach certain positions and forms.⁷⁴ That is essentially the difference in the approach to movement systems -speaking in terms of dancing methods- and makes how the person, the mover, the dance- performer, learns and discovers how to manifest through those. That is the impact on a dancer’s education, which would be possible to trace later in chorographical work.

⁷⁴There is a difference between a technique and a method in the dance learning systems. Every technique from ballet to Release possesses a method to reach specific detailed goals (also in Martial arts or sports). The movement method that Laban proposed (with the exception of the chorology that is the writing of the movement) is about discovering ‘movement’ and achieving qualities and conditions inside a personal frame of the mover. That is the core of Laban impact in dance history and that is because his method is applicable to so many fields as improvisation and creation and very particularly to educative dance for children.

Post-modern dancers like Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown and Steve Paxton emerged in the 70's and attempted to reconsider, within its experimental methodologies, the whole movement scale that human beings could produce. The core of that position lies in redrawing the technical and therefore aesthetic models of early modern dance. Thus post-modern dance rescued, for example, the sobriety of the human pedestrian movement as a 'dance language' like the motoric basic actions: walking-jumping-rolling-sliding actions (I must stress that those were already presented by Laban early in the century).⁷⁵ The motoric basic actions tacitly follow the demarcations of the psychogenesis theory I mentioned in the beginning of the chapter. Release technique or the Flying Low technique achieve the training through the exercise of physical actions that respect the evolutionary movement phases in the kid during its early and late childhood, for example. This post-modernist minimalist view of 'reducing the movement scope' to a language that is sober and pedestrian enable the apparition of masters as Lisa Kraus and David Zambrano.

The post-modern dance delivered as well the implementation disciplines like Feldenkrais method, Alexander technique, Eutony method, Body-Mind Centering, Laban Barthenieff (although influenced by other Eastern disciplines as Yoga, Tai Chi and Aikido)⁷⁶ and the 'body awareness'. This was radically one of the most important subjects achieved in formal dance education after the 70's. The 'body awareness', a term originated by Rudolf Laban's work and centrally used in Sherbone's Developmental work⁷⁷ (a disciple of Laban), displaced the hectic stress of dancers' physical actions by the stand point of dancers' own physical awareness. The 'body awareness' had been a matter in dance education which applies to a number of disciplines and prioritized and made tribute to the relevance of the synaesthetic development in relation to the psychomotor activity, breaking the classical learning system via automatism and memory, which is the traditional classical way of instruction in most of sports, dance schools and dance companies.

Most of the dance school systems have been implemented on a conceptual basis of instructive systems. This means, introducing the dance student into a systematic and rigorous trajectory with a very specific structure of training-techniques in a way that the dancer can achieve specific goals and repeat to perfection certain visual forms and/or reproduce aesthetic tendencies.

⁷⁵ All those movement actions have been presented early during by Laban in his methodology in the 30's.

⁷⁶ Feldenkrais and Eutony method, Alexander Technique, Body-Mind Centering and Laban Barthenieff started to be developed through the first half of 20th century and had bloomed during the Post-World War II. All those systems had their background in different sources and disciplines, like the acting technique, music, dance, Eurhythmics and on therapeutic practices. Almost all those techniques, methods and systems had an aim towards a 'unity of body-mind', integrated functional movement -daily actions, habits and postures- regarding movement's freedom -flexibility and adaptability-. Those techniques, methods and systems may vary in their aims and goals as work systems, but rather share a holistic philosophy with some common basic principles like: the mind-physical health; acceptance and self-awareness of the physical body; sensorial knowledge of the anatomy; the use of introspection, visualization and body awareness techniques; developmental movement, the recovery of individual freedom of the mover; the incorporation of playfulness towards the development of creativity. 1) Feldenkrais method prioritizes the relation movement-thought and the creative body-mind exploration. 2) Eutony works on the muscular tone and the economy of effort in the adaptation to the state of physical- activity. 3) Alexander Technique is a self-training, it aims that the students learn to use the freedom and to make choices beyond the conditioning every day actions. 4) Body-Mind Centering is a system which study the developmental movement and it approaches the re-patterning -like Alexander technique- of the experiential anatomy, perceptions and psychophysical processes. 5) Laban Barthenieff is a framework based on the Laban analysis that works on the observation, participation and understanding of movement by students. It is a system to recognize, both the structure of movement and its potential meaning.

⁷⁷ Preston-Dunlop, V. (1995). *Dance Words*. Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, p71

That is the very reason for such instruction of the discipline. In every dance education the student will be evolving in certain movement system and his/her body will suffer modifications in order to achieve that. Operatively, this last stance would apply equally either to classical ballet, most of the modern techniques or even to Cunningham. Early modern dance included the enticement to work towards the expression of emotions, the subjective and the personal through the movement and involving the personal side of the dancer. Still, that was constrained to the structure of the technique and certain specific forms of movement like in the German Expressionist School. In traditional dance techniques the movement evolves as long as the technical work evolves and in a very clear aesthetical alignment: every movement technique works in a logic system in itself and every action produced by the dancer reacts into that movement system.

The Laban methodological movement system works from a perspective of major freedom for the dancer because it gears the dancer towards a place where he/she has to explore in order to achieve a goal rather than a place that a dancer has to practice in order to perfect. That creates a difference in how subjectivity is acknowledged and incorporated in the dancing body; how the processes of subjectivation and individualization are enabled during the movement development.

In Martha Graham's technique, the core was the internal movement to the outside produced by the contraction, extension and release of the spine. Other schools also move from one principal core to search for the source of movement organizing a technical routine. That has been always based on a previous form or a previous movement and the justification of that has come through intensive repetition, training and high performance in terms of getting accurate results. The norm had always been established from the idea that the model and the dancer will grow in perfection as soon as he/she can achieve that model at an acceptable level.

To raise a mover, dancer, and performer with a more open and democratic method, like the Laban intended earlier in the thirties and the post-modernist intended later in the 70's, meant to take another approach towards the dancer person, its 'inners side' as Grosz should respond, the domain of the body itself (1.1) as I wrote in the introduction of this thesis. It means to take another approach towards movement from where the dancer and his/her body is totally in its own responsibility and where there is room to create difference and room to accept difference.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter draws three points in relation with the origination of movement and motion in the person and in the dancing body stated in chapter 1. The points approach synaesthesia- kinaesthesia, the motoric system, movement development and to a certain extent, the rise of a dance identity.

What is clear through the notes of Machon and Foster is that the synaesthetic- kinaesthetic system is the crucial standpoint of movement origin and the only way to help its development and functioning is simply to acknowledge it. Regarding the psychogenesis theory and developmental movement studies, it is possible to observe the development of the / a synaesthetic- kinaesthetic system interrelated to the different evolutionary phases of movement in human life which are in constant exchange with the socio- cultural- geographical environment. Those are the sources for the rest movement resources of a person and to some extent of a dancer. Therefore, the origination of movement will be always connected and related to the environment and it would be nurtured by life history and by emotions.

I do believe that either the early modern or the post-modern dancers were seeking to reach this primary state of the body and of the individual; to enhance the sensorial intelligence to dig into what was the essential movement appealing to new identities.

In this last regard, I have chosen some quotations related to the body identity and the conformation of dance identities. A dancing body always endeavours to construct the previous history of a body identity, whatever that would be. As body identity is not only a philosophical matter or a theoretical standpoint in performance theory, it is a life reality and it is grounded in the materiality, physiology, neurology and practice of its evolution through the entire bodily existence. Therefore a dance identity, similarly, would imply being rooted in that body identity.

The construction of a dance identity is not something exclusively intelligible and voluntary. It is realized and constructed by cognitive processes and muscular development, but constructed by something that movers, dancers and performers acknowledge, develop and reinforce as a sensorial intelligence (coming back to the notions about synaesthesia- kinaesthesia and the concept of movement development). This sensorial intelligence would develop into the physicality of a mover or of a dancing body through years of learning, experience and practice.

The acceptance of a dance identity means the investment of physical energy effort and time and it might lead to the realization of a specific or particular dance aesthetic.

CHAPTER 5:

REFLECTIONS AND OPERATIONALIZATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter contains three phases.

First, I will summarize briefly the emerging theoretical points from chapters 2, 3 and 4 in response to the first three sub-questions inquired in chapter 1 that attempts to answer the sub-question four: how do the subjectivity and the identity of the individual affect the development of dance language and to what extent do they entail the production of a dance system?

Second, I will come back to the main research question: May the subjectivity and identity of the individual dancer enable the origination of a specific mode of moving which might become a dance language, which eventually might generate a dance system? And I will formulate my first approximation to it and in a second step I will formulate the respective conclusions.

In a third instance, I will gather and articulate the previous conclusions of those results, obtained in the first three chapters, aiming to narrow the focus of my object: the particular case-study of choreographer Kalpana Raghuraman. I will do this by creating a setting where I use my conclusions in a method to approach chapter 6.

5.2 Outcomings - Conclusions chapters 2, 3 and 4 –

- *5.2.1 Conclusions chapter 2*

The first outcome of chapter 2 shows that ‘historized corporeality’, traced by its socio- cultural- geographical zones, is what makes a body react, behave, manifest and move.⁷⁸ In anthropology and the social sciences, behavior and movement are closely related terms. Our sensing of the body and the experience of physicality as human beings are the main source for the individuals to develop as ‘movers’. The manifestation of culture, in its functionalist sense, is a basic standpoint in bodily manifestation. A body cannot escape its material (geography, political system, education) and immaterial surroundings (family, spiritual values, social codes, gender and beliefs). Those material/ immaterial surroundings are the borders that make a body identity respond with its flexibility to changes, transformations and its vulnerability to the environment, regarding body transformations

⁷⁸Foster, S. (2011) Conference *Choreographic Empathy*, conference. 4/2011. Theatre and Media Department, Faculty of Humanities, University of Utrecht

and mutations following the feminist theory. Hence, the first notions of *difference* came to light, fore-grounded by the colonization of anthropology science, the *transculturation* phenomenon and the critic by sociology science; all of them stigmas, result of colonization, de-colonization and post-colonization processes actually on display.

Second outcomes are Grosz's contributions in feminist theory which point out more than the influence of the environment, based on the feminist concepts of politics of location and citation that address the locus of the being. The latter is a disclosure of personhood, physical (and spiritual) subjectivities and individual identities. Rather, those are signs of the interlock between the psychical plane, the emotional (and spiritual) plane and the physical plane. That is what Grosz defines as 'corporeality' in reference to the subjective. In fact, as persons, we are all corporeal beings following her trend of thought.

A third result signals issues about the representation of body, drawn on feminist analysis of representational systems, which are part of the cultural studies field influenced by psychoanalysis, semiotics, post structuralism, and post modernism. Those representational systems of analysis have been at the same time used for the new generations of dance scholars to address some representational problems in the performance studies field, and particularly in dance studies (Thomas, 1996). Those problems are signalled by some scholars, such as the 'male gaze' in the representation of the feminine body, which has been homologated as 'the western gaze' problem raised by Kunst (2003, p65). Another example is the notion "to-be-looked-at-ness", a problem announced by Thomas (1996, p70) in reference to Laura Mulvey's concept of the 'male gaze'. 'To-be looked at-ness' has been used by the new generations of dance writers⁷⁹ to allude either to the identity of the female body in performance regarding its extended deflection to the concept of identity in dance studies.

Therefore the topics about a "historized corporeality", a 'sensible, located, situated and/ or transculturated body' constantly encounter new problems and questions that converge in different fields of humanistic sciences. My conclusion is that the body as a notion, a corporeal, behavioral manifestation or as an entity of representation reverberates in many different planes and layers of humanistic disciplines and directly addresses dance and performance studies, because the body is the first and main locus of performativity. But it is a performativity that engages with its socio-cultural-historical context, responding and displaying that.

The recognition of body as matter of the conception of the 'subject' is a substantial standpoint hosted in the assumptions stated in the introduction (1.1) of this thesis. This recognition of 'body as a subject' claims its conceptual enlargement towards what is the subject identity in its inter-relation between the biological physical-psychical body within its environment. Those

⁷⁹ Dance writers Elizabeth Dempster, Marianne Goldberg, Ann Cooper Allbright and Ann Daly

developments in the anthropology, sociology, and psychology sciences, feminist theory, neurology and physiology sciences have correlated as well with the rise of the early modern dance at the turn of the 20th century. There are three icons in the socio-historical development of the notion of physical body that are coincident in respect to subjectivities.

The first important historical icon to be mentioned is the appearance of anthropology science and its subsequent sister sciences as social and cultural anthropology in the middle of 19th century, all intrinsically connected to the discovery of the 'new world' by Western Europe. In this historical context, I find it necessary to remark that the influence of the discovery of the 'Non Western World' by European colonizers entitled a pejorative association to the primitive, the wilderness and the uncivilized 'Other'. Whilst the discovery of the New World reaffirmed and reinforced the superiority of the European Western patriarchy that imposed its economical patterns and cultural academic transfer as a monopolist model of superiority. The classical notion of the 'biological body' had to confront its own boundaries longing from the biological determinism drawn by Darwin, raising new inquiries about the physical body in anthropology science.

A second historical icon addressed the concept of body in its inter-relation with the society. That has emerged out of the Frankfurt School of Cultural Critique in Germany during the 1920's and 30's. Several members of the former school were sociologists, Norbert Elias among others, and they discovered and highlighted the significance of 'body behavior' in relation to society.

The last important historical icon to be mentioned is the contribution of the feminist theory in the 70's. The women's movement had its main engagement with the matter 'body' and was the main responsible contributor to the issues of body and its subjectivity in Western cultural critique, positing issues in relation with the identity and its sexual, physical, representation, sex, race and cultural domination related to the presence and performativity of body in the society.

Within this historical mapping I wish to highlight:

- The relevancy of the socio-cultural environment in the construction of human subjectivity, identity related to the notion of body in the Western culture in opposition to the elder classical notion of a unitary, autonomous Subject, divided from the body held in classical Western thought.

- The knowledge that lies beyond the social awareness of body and underneath the notion of physicality regarding the dancing body.

This engagement attempts to map the relations that coexist between the subjectivity and the identity of the individual and the emergence of dance subjectivities and identities in the 20th century.

- *5.2.2 Conclusions chapter 3*

The outcomes of chapter 3 highlight primarily the difficulty on defining the concept of contemporary dance due to its ontological instability. That instability is propelled and emphasized as the grounds from where the crossing over of the historical borders and limits of what has been considered the 'contemporary dance discipline' is taking place. That instability goes beyond movement styles, forms and it seeks other theoretical, virtual, performative, or/and technological spaces. Those spaces may dress some of the features of contemporary dance. However the excitement, the climax of its nature may still reside in its instability to be defined, often named 'in between'. Nevertheless, this contemporary dance definition of 'undefinedness' traces some clear lines where actual discipline can be unexpectedly framed; at the same time, this philosophical unstable grounding of Western contemporary dance upheld an open door for foreign elements that traditionally would have come into divergences, such as the inscription of popular or ritual dances into it or the re-write of certain canons in modern dance or ballet and the acceptance of 'no-movement' or stillness, defined by Lepecki as practices of "choreographical practices of betrayal" (3.2), which are actually attempting to reach the essential core in Western theatrical dance and perhaps to some extent to all the forms of world-wide dance as well.

I believe that is precisely from this current unstable definition of Western theatrical contemporary dance where the concept of discipline starts liking and filtering, disappearing (as it attempts to be) and perhaps transforming or being absorbed into some other forms than what has been historically known and academically transferred as dance.

It is precisely from this exclusive dominant point of homogeneous pretended instability from dance scholarship, what Kunst defined so melancholically the "independent, autonomous body that is a privilege of the West". The entire current Western contemporary dance field is sticking to instability, but instability is an ontological movement principle. Does that mean that all movement phenomena are part of the Western contemporary dance?

Lepecki and Kunst base their grounds for depiction on the philosophy and metaphysics. Both authors converge, with different angles and perspectives, in four important key points about the definitions of subjectivities of Western contemporary dance that I describe generally as:

- 1- The union of dance and movement as part of the Neo-liberal modernist project of this era: which Lepecki endorsed as part of a technology-advanced society within a Neo-liberal political model and he is applying this to the early modern and post-modern dance model; whilst Kunst is referring to the "autonomous body" also, as a model of freedom proposed by a Western society, in contrast with the classical balletic tradition that was held by the soviet union in the Eastern European countries. The autonomous body, from a dance perspective, is a body vulnerable to colonization by the delights of the consumption society.

2- Questions about presence and visibility that are structured in the subject of the 'Other'. Lepecki address European melancholia (structured on feelings of loss and anger by the colonizer with the counterpoint of the deep grief by the colonized) and the kinetic visibility as a racial-colonialist project;⁸⁰ and Kunst address the topics about presence, visibility and invisibility to the neglect of the 'Other' body, of the 'Other' dance form that is unveiled to the eyes of Western culture.

3- The autonomous, self-sufficient independent body and its vulnerability to colonization, which is actually a problem traced in dance anthropology and presented already by Elizabeth Dempster.

4- The isolation of the choreographer in its creative process that in some cases may infer alienation, Lepecki defines as *solipsism*.

6- The resistant actions of betrayal of movement, translated as seeking "stillness" and for other alternative performative instances like video, lecturer-performance, installation. Those are considered disruptive revolutionary forms against the modernist conception that associates movement to choreography or movement to dance, all legacy from the modernist, kinetic, colonialist project. The actions of 'betrayal of movement' address directly to resistant positions that enable to protect the subjective against the submission to the canon and to the mechanisms and strategies of mass movement reproduction.

All these features mentioned above are attempting to demarcate the terrain of contemporary dance subjectivities following Kunst and Lepecki, which can be absorbed and involved into the problematic of cultural representation mentioned by Thomas in the beginning of chapter 3. Following the stances approached in chapter 2, we can observe how the political- socio environment may enable specific, individual, cultural constructions of body identities which may endorse the construction of subjectivities in dance and very possibly generate dance identities.

To conclude the summary of chapter 3, I would like to come to the considerations of Lepecki about dance subjectivities (3.2) and the one by Dempster about dance identities. For Lepecki, in dance subjectivities, the process of subjectification are not necessarily related neither to discipline of the body nor a dance training in order to achieve the choreography. When he refers to dance subjectivity as a "ways of existing"(3.2), ways of being, he speaks about the force of inner life that is manifested in the individual mover's body.

The issues about dance identities have a different *coloratura* than those ones in the light of Dempster (3.1). Dance identities are related to practices of technical construction and de/construction of movement language, motoric abilities and notions of performativity in a dancer in all dance styles and forms. In Dempster's vision, post-modern dance is the only dance that "... acknowledges the specificity of every dancing body..." (1995, p35). In my criteria, a body may

⁸⁰ Legacy that comes from the racial-colonialist project which is linked at the same time with the concept of modernity.

have several dance identities but it is still equally vulnerable, therefore a dance identity may mutate to another identity, may change and may be permeable to host *difference* and *versatility* in some cases. The instrumentation of training, practice, movement strategies or routines is not discussable in the field of dance identities: there is almost always a movement practice, and when not, it is necessary to articulate that.

The concept of instability is an ambitious concept and it should be assumed with care in defining contemporary dance.

- **5.2.3 Conclusions chapters 4**

I will summarize the outcomes of chapter 4 about the synaesthetic- kinaesthetic system as the basic sensorial, perceptual system that enables:

- 1- The construction of inner motion in the individual,
- 2- The development of neurologic and muscular systems
- 3- The development of the motoric system and mechanisms that enable mind and body to act and to react in daily, extraordinary and/or exceptional actions.

The synaesthetic- kinaesthetic system is the main pillar (and is responsible) for the origin of motion in human beings following psychogenesis theory in developmental psychology, which draw two important primary conditions for movement development:

- 1- An organic condition, the bodily- physical,
- 2- An environmental condition.

The conformation of psychical and emotional planes, in individuals, has its locus as well in the synaesthetic- kinaesthetic system, a form of intelligence following Cytowicz (quoted by Machon in item 4.2), disclosing its extension to the motoric plane, another form of intelligence following Wallon theories.

It is important to remark and indeed to emphasise that the synaesthetic- kinaesthetic system is entirely linked to sensorial and perceptual imputes which are intertwined with the emotional plane from the early beginning of life in all human beings. Emotions (in the borne child appears as fear, love and pleasure) are located in the organic, muscular system (the locus of the sensible) and are manifested (primarily in the first evolutionary phases) through unarticulated physical impulses. The motoric system develops parallel to the cognitive system and through different phases of evolution in an ongoing process through life. Those phases would be gendered, social-culturally influenced or transculturated, manipulated, interrupted (by accident, sickness or trauma) and modified depending of the environment, conditions and circumstances.

Western dance discipline has no existence outside of these organic and environmental conditions. Dance discipline, in itself, has no existence except through the body/bodies which produce and reproduce them. Dempster says that dances can be considered "...as texts written of and through precisely inscribed bodies..."(4.4) and she describes bodies as corporeal sites where ideologies are systematically forged and constructed on an anatomical plane, that is, in the neuromuscular system of the dancer's body. Hence, this is the link that connects the body identity that, in relation to the environment and the development of the synaesthetic- kinaesthetic- motoric systems in order to develop a sort of dance identity. It also shows that it is dance in its range of approaches, techniques, schools, methods, and languages that develops systematic structures to reach a specific identity and carry subjectivities of the dancing body.

- **5.2.4 Points of convergence - chapters 2, 3 and 4-**

To summarize, the outcomes of the three chapters converge on the phenomena of socialization of the body, a phenomena of cultural colonization and post-colonization of the body and to an extent to the subject of the 'Other' in its bodily approach. These conjunct of those phenomena would deflect into the construction of the dancing body, its subjectivity and the dance identity, enlarging itself to the problematic of presence, visibility and invisibility. These phenomena have been described through the three chapters from different angles; I will depict here the highlighting points of convergence in each chapter:

In chapter 2, where I approached the sociology of the body, the acknowledgement of the 'Other' appears in the recognition of the body as subjective entity, chronologically showed through:

- First as a feature of scientific colonization and *transculturation* result of the scientific anthropologic research.

- Second, as a social object of investigation, from the turn of the 20th century.

- Third, as a feature of female visibility in the claim of feminist theoreticians. Female visibility has always been a feature of dance. Although female visibility historically has laid under the patriarchal domination of the male-gaze, it was reinforced with the apparition of the early moderns. Feminist theoreticians propelled the discussion about the female body which involved the dancing body, generating new questions.

In chapter 3, I focused on the dance subjectivities and identities, where it appears three associations in relation with the 'Other' like:

- The formula movement- colonialism- racism delivering the questions of presence and visibility.

-The 'melancholic drive' and/ or the 'post-colonial spectral' in choreography resemble the loss of the colonies by the colonizers and the deep grief of the colonized groups drawing a social and human situation of 'non-encounter' and generating a feeling of melancholia in the subjectivity of dance in the West.

-The Eastern European 'dancing body' seen as the 'Other' by the Western gaze. Not recognizable as a possible contemporary dancing body because of its image of 'exoticism', its attachment to ballet tradition and to the political regime of the Soviet system.

-The resistance to the modernist model was a political aptitude in actual contemporary dance to subvert the canons and standards of mass production and cultural reproduction. For that choreographers and makers create new strategies of not being fixed or nailed to a specific aesthetic. Here the topics of presence, visibility and invisibility cease to be questions and become topics for performance making and production.

Chapter 4, where I centred on the relation between movement and motoric development related to human the subjectivity, shows the effects of the colonial/ post- colonial environment (following Lepecki, we cannot be outside this environment) that must be seen as factors of influence in the conformation of synaesthetic- kinaesthetic system.

5.3 The answer sub-question four

How do the subjectivity and the identity of the individual affect the development of dance language and to its extent entail the production of a dance system?

The outcomes of chapter 4, following Wallon, indicate that the sources of movement and motion in the human being are rooted in an organic condition, the bodily- physical, emotional and in an environmental condition (4.3); those two conditions have as their intelligence pillar the perceptual system (sinaesthetic- kinaesthetic) described in the notes by Machon (4.2) and Foster (4.2) which is the crucial standpoint of movement origin in every human body. All sensual, perceptual and emotional information is located and cited in a body that is channelled through this intelligible sinaesthetic-kinaesthetic system. The psychical interiority of a body is necessarily dependent on a corporeal exteriority in the words of Grosz (2.5), emphasizing the surface of body, the role of skin and perceptions beforehand the rational, analytical and non-sensual information, similarly to Wallon. Therefore, the human body as corporeal site is creating the process of subjectivation during its evolutionary phases and periods in life as we have read in chapter 4 (4.3). That is the body 'a priori' which is claiming for itself mentioned in chapter 1 (1.1), the one that entails the concerns about the types of physicality, mobility and the emanations of movement discourses in dance.

The process of subjectivation of body may be transported as the process of subjectivation of dance, in the mover, as ‘becomings’ as a ‘way of existing’ defined by Lepecki (3.2). Dance subjectivity may be seen as the visceral life-impulse that is manifested in the dancing body of a mover. That is not affiliating necessarily to a disciplinary routine. According to Lepecki, it is an inner force located in the psychical and emotional interiority of a body, mentioned by Grosz, which is the source and core of movement. That visceral life-impulse is in interrelation with the different evolutionary phases of movement in human life and it is in constant exchange and transformation with the socio-cultural-political- geographical environment. Therefore, the origination of movement will always be located and cited to the existing environment, in reference to feminist theory about the politics of location and citation (2.4), and is going to be nurtured by the history and emotional life, resident in the organic- physical body. The latter resembles my previous notion approached in chapter 1 about the notion of *cultural body* (1.1).

Indeed, there is a body with a sensible emotional history incarnated, who is an active producer and facilitator of dancing language, enhancing and affecting different and versatile ‘ways of becomings’ in the motional manifestation, confirming my assumptions drawn in chapter (1.2). The point is that “the body *a priori* of the dancer's body”(1.1), is a body which will be, unavoidably, absorbed and modified in the environmental conditions of its scholarship, training, venues and markets (disciplinary conditions, discursive conditions, groups or ensembles, productional conditions). The subjective body *a priori* gives allowance to the dancing body which would be moulded, pronounced and forge through imitation, physical empathy, resemblance (and repetition), stressing the identity of a dancing body in Western theatrical dance. Nevertheless, that subjective “body *a priori* of the 'dancer's body'" already makes its inscriptions, locations and citations in the body's surface and body's organs about its own historicity. This is the way that the subjective become visible and legible in the dancing body, enabling it to deliver language, text or discourse. Therefore the subjective body of the 'dancer's body' may appear repressed, constrained or may appear alive and expanded. That assevered by Lepecki's argumentation that the process of subjectification in dance are related neither to discipline nor to dance training (3.2) and may be channelled through the identity and self-sufficiency of the dancing body.

5.4- Approximations to the main question

I would now like to come back to my main question: May the subjectivity and identity of the individual dancer enable the origination of a specific mode of moving which might eventually become a dance language, and might that dance language generate a dance system?

The subjectivity and identity of the individual enable the origination of a specific mode of moving in the person through physical topographic differences and versatile “ways of existing”, using Lepecki’s Deleuzian expression (3.2). This is a specific mode of the motional, behavioural manifestation in the personhood of a mover. Those become language and discourse of the physical manifestation. Not all the movement languages transform in movement systems; neither do all the movers create a movement or dance system.

“All the bodies may move the same but those are not the same...” (1.1) as I have mentioned in my introduction. At this point, there is the possibility to catch -ontologically- the subjective which might be translated in movement or in dance language. But what are the pathways to becoming a dance system?

Dempster and Kunst have posited similarly that the dancing body is vulnerable as a mode of identity that could be a victim of colonization through disciplinary systems or through many other imposed identities. That may indicate that the individual subjectivity at this point of colonization of the body is lost or re-configured under a dancing identity. Probably we need to consider this vulnerable quality of dance, which is transported to the body, as a truly intrinsic feature of dance. Improvisation strategies or other methods may become a better custody of the dancer’s individual subjectivity rather than classical or traditional modern dance techniques as trainings.

I do believe that the subjective of the individual may overcome that colonization of the dancing body, that could be possibly to conquer a true space for difference and versatility that is through a politic of resistance or what Lepecki defines as a ‘choreographic practices of betrayal’- I will come back to this point in chapter 7. Nevertheless, (unfortunately) this is not the concern for many mainstream dance companies and dance groups who only can work either under patrons of cultural re-production or mainstream dance forms.

The topics about presence and visibility or invisibility will be always linked to the aesthetic of representation of the body and the cultural literacy of the body by the viewer. The representation of body will always be crossed by the environmental, social and cultural alignments of interpretation; from there will be reactions and responses. An environment always intervenes (or interlaces) the coming out of the subjective (we have seen that in chapters 2 and 4) which might enable and disable either the representation of the subjective body or the representation of the dancing body.

On the other side, environment is responsible for the fact that the subjective may emerge but rather is also responsible for learning and absorbing the different views about body.

In chapter 1 (1.2), I wrote that a dance system encloses the production of movement language in a kind of structural organization involving repetition, rehearsal and training choreographic practice and/or rigorous improvisation method as discipline. Issues about production, reproduction and post-production are crucial here because of the search for proficiency; high

performance and virtuosity (in any level) are political companions of dance systems, which in one way or another regard the construction of canons and relate to some extent to the institutionalization and standardization of dance styles and forms. That was approached in chapter 3.

Issues of presence and visibility are, in a dance system, not any more a point for discussion than they are objects of development with a clear methodology or strategy and a goal.

There are choreographers who have tried the implementation of a dance system through the foundation of the subjective dancing body, like Martha Graham, but since the moment that the subjective is individual and since it belongs to the body identity of the mover, it is very difficult to implement it in a structural systematic body work without stepping into standardization and homogenization.

Historically, many choreographers posited to work with the deepest of the dancer, with that subjective of dancer. Pina Bausch has been the most known highlighting case in Western Europe, Alvin Ailey was another case, Trisha Brown could be seen as a case as well. The Judson Dance Theatre tried to keep the subjective aspect of movement in seeking a democratic body: all the bodies can dance, trained and untrained, young and old. All of them took different departure points to achieve that dancing subjectivity.

It is important to recognize that those choreographers' work enclosed different phases of previous disciplinary regime to achieve a dancer's body, first and in some choreographical endeavors those choreographers applied methods that may work 'as systems'. Their working method gave allowance to some subjectivities and identities of the dancers. Unlike movement language or dance language, a dance system attempts to be 'artificially' written even when based on improvisation, with very rare exceptional cases and the individual subjectivity and identity of the dancer is not the main condition of that system.

However, many dancers build up dance systems from their dancing body, from what is their way of moving. They have constructed a system that can be followed by other dancers by kinaesthetic sympathy. Here the subject about dance identities comes into the game once again. It is through a dance identity that a dance system is flowering and that it may have its enlargement and may be repeatable, imitable and transferred. Nevertheless I would like to highlight my point in the paragraph right above in this section, where I stressed that the subjective of the individual may overcome the colonization of the dancing body (through technique, system and training). Only in that overcoming, may the subjective in the dancer be found.

5.5 Notes for the next chapter

This last section aims to operationalize the outcomes of the conclusions of chapter 5, regarding specify the focus of my research on the particular case of one single choreographer. Thus the use of my conclusions will bring new signifiers in order to have an instructive look at the case-study. In chapter 6, I will approach a very specific case-study in order to narrow the focus of my object: the particular case-study is of Kalpana Raghuraman, an Indian-Dutch young generation dancer and choreographer.

I am going to apply the theoretical achievements from chapters 2, 3 and 4 and look at the work practice base study, dance project *Door de ogen van mijn stad* by Kalpana Raghuraman, focusing on the development of dance language and the production of a dance system. That means revealing how it worked the issue of individual subjectivities and identities into the formulation of a dance language and the generation of a dance system in the specific case of a transculturated choreographer who has exemplary conditions of (post) colonial production in the writing of her dance and how her production displays inside the cultural and political Western context of contemporary dance in The Netherlands.

From the depicted results in response to the sub-questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 in chapter 5, I have selected some operative points to analyze her work in the next chapter.

- **5.5.1 Operative points for analysis of Kalpana Raghuramn's work 'Door de Ogen van mijn stad', Korzo Theater 2011**
 - a- Topic about the subjective and identity standpoints Raghuraman's work following Grau and Grosz definitions.
 - b- The means of subjectivity in her body work or training on the light of Lepecki and Kunst.
 - c- The issue about the 'environment' that has surrounded Raghuramn's work and its identity, following outcomes chapters 2, 3 and 4.
 - d- The concepts of dance identities and dancing bodies used in Raghuraman's work. Issues about the meaning of dance language, following Lepecki, Kunst, Dempster and Grau.

e- The movement development and the dancing body. The evolution of movement and abilities in performers during the dance process following Dempster, Foster and Wallon in chapter 4.

f, g and h- Locus, instrument and tools in the construction of Raghuraman dance language and dance system: technical standpoints and choreographical systematization following the outcomes of chapter 5.

- **5.5.2 Completion and connection to the chapter 6**

The assumptions drawn in my hypothesis involved topics that are not exclusively related to the field of performance studies. At the same time, those topics led me to assumptions that addressed the entailment of identities, in its inward subjectivities within a cultural and social understanding. I pursued an integrative and interdisciplinary theoretical framework from where contemporary dance could be considered that privileges cultural studies, psychology and performance studies. That interdisciplinary framework supported the foundation of my research in chapters 2, 3 and 4 regarding the engagement intertwined by the construction of subjectivity and identities of the individual in appealing to movement language and dance endeavors observed in the conclusions of chapter 5.

My aim for the next chapter is to articulate the topics out-coming from the theoretical frame drawn in chapters 2, 3, 4 and the conclusions and results obtained in chapter 5 with the empirical frame of the case-study of Raghuraman's work *Door de ogen van mijn stad*.

This case-study is located in the European contemporary dance field where foreign and cross-cultural influences can be clearly observed and depicted on one side and the intervention of the Western contemporary dance cannons and standards in 'Other' types of dances can be seen on the other side. This case-study enlightens issues, problematic and questions that rise from the interdependence between 'Other' dances in relation to the Western dance developments as it has been presented in the item (5.2.4) 'Points of convergence', above in this chapter.

CHAPTER 6:

CASE- STUDY KALPANA RAGHURAMAN DANCE- WORK

DOOR DE OGEN VAN MIJN STAD

“I question how the ‘subjectivity’ and the ‘identity’ of the individual affect the development of dance language and to some extent entail the production of a dance system.”(Chapter1)

6.1 Introduction

My aim in this chapter is to map and present possible elements that belong from the subjective movement which eventually may address the conformation of a dance language which consequently can establish a dance system. In an attempt to achieve a complete response to the research question, I provide an overview of the particular case- study *Door de de ogen van mijn stad* dance creation, by the choreographer Kalpana Raghuraman.

I will proceed by applying the theoretical bases developed in chapters 2, 3, 4 and chapter 5. Unlike the previous chapters, the character of chapter 6 is from a rather practice-based tendency belonging from empirical resources collected while I attended the movement- performance research and practices of the dance project *Door de de ogen van mijn stad* by Kalpana Raghuraman in my internship position as dramaturge. All the approximations to the performative material described here comes from absolute personal observation and direct experience during the rehearsals throughout the entire production process with the choreographer, the dramaturge, the dancers and the production house. The production house enabled the performance realization, production and programming. The entire process and the general production that I observed took two months.

During my internship as dramaturge at Korzo Theater Productiehuis in The Hague in 2011, I was commissioned to assess and to research Raghuraman project, which was held as one of the main productions at the production house of the theatre. *Door de ogen van mijn stad* seemed to be an ideal project for this type of research base, where I, as candidate dramaturge, could be fully available to trace Raghuraman’s work over 27 rehearsals (not counting the technical rehearsals and try outs).

The reader must trace the case-study of Raghuraman and her dance-work *Door de de ogen van mijn stad* in the context of my main research question that was posited in the chapter 1: if the subjectivity and identity of the individual dancer may enable the origination of a specific mode of moving which might become a dance language, might it also eventually generate a dance system?

I want to consider how the subjectivities and identities were related to the development of Raghuraman's dance language of the production *Door de de ogen van mijn stad* and eventually how she pursued its construction.

I must stress that during my observation of Raghuraman's research and production process, I was not sure that the choreographer was attempting to build up a working dance system.

Thus, this last stance must be read as a trial of my own research to reveal that possibility of a new dance language and dance system under those particular circumstances rather than as an explicit purpose of the choreographer to achieve that goal.

There are specific contexts and frames for this case-study, which I will explain in the next item 6.2. Those contexts and frames have to be taken into consideration by the reader as the framework (before going into the very matter of the subjectivities and the identities) that applied to Raghuraman's work. The topics of observation to be mentioned:

- The production and production conditions
- Artistic aims as language and dramaturgy
- Political field

-Dance-community: Because the project *Door de ogen van mijn stad* was conceived as a community art project⁸¹ unlike other projects of Raghuraman, one of the points at stake here is her build-up of that dance community in relation with the subjectivation process of her work in this specific case-study.

- Structure of Raghuraman's work

From these mentioned contexts and frames that I will describe in the item 6.2, I will step into the raising problematic of Raghuraman's work in item 6.3, where I will formulate a specific inquiry profiled to Raghuraman's work *Door de ogen van mijn stad* submitted to the results and conclusions of previous chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5. Those will make up my perspective to approach a depiction to *Door de ogen van mijn stad* dance- work.

In item 6.4, I will attempt to respond to the question formulated in item 6.3.1 and I will formulate the approximation to the research question in the case of Raghuraman.

For some particular specificities and a deeper depiction of this case- study, I will also use as a companion resource the article by Janet Adshead- Landsdale *Creative Ambiguity: Dancing Intertexts*.

⁸¹ Community Arts is a very complex and vulnerable subject within the arts sector. Community art (in all disciplinary fields) prioritizes the development of the common expressions of specific groups in local, national or transnational levels. Community art initiatives, often, take distance from commercial, institutional or literary theatres and develop work in economic collectives. Identitarian and sometimes nationalist values foreground initiatives of this nature. From the perspective of Nicolas Bourriaud, community art approaches a field where "artistic activity is a game, whose forms, patterns and functions develop and evolve according to periods and social contexts; it is not an immutable essence." (Bourriaud, 1998 p1)

6.2 The problematic of Kalpana Raghuraman's work: contexts and frames

Met twee handen in de Lucht, Met twee Voeten en Den Haag... (2012-2012) was a two-year subsidy project that consisted of/included a complex net of several implications in different stratus: artistic expression, dance-work, social, local-national policy. Hereby I will introduce the Raghuraman case-study and approach the topics of observation. From my observations in relation to Raghuraman's dance material I have elucidated four important topics:

- **6.2.1 The production**

From 2004 until 2009, dancer Raghuraman had been traditionally trained in Bharatanatyam dance form. Previously in her life, she received former education in the Indian classical form since she was a child. Some years ago she started a research about the Bharatanatyam as a form of dance through different research phases and different performances, some of them: *re-set*, *Ontzet*, *In Between Skin* and *J' ai perdu mon francais*. Korzo Theater hosted her dance researches and productions. The production *Door de ogen van mijn stad* was a production by Korzo Theater, productiehuis. The production was framed in the context of a community arts project that was conceived by Raghuraman to be realized by the Hindustan community in The Hague; the second biggest Hindustan community in Europe after London in United Kingdom. The production was a part of the two-year plan subsidy *Met twee handen in de Lucht, Met twee Voeten en Den Haag...*

During the development of the research project *Met twee handen in de Lucht, Met twee Voeten en Den Haag...*, Raghuraman had worked through different time periods and previous production in cooperation with dancer and choreographer Serge Aimé Coulibaly.⁸² Coulibaly had a background in the international contemporary dance company of Alain Platel in Belgium and who, from African background, is specialized in working with traditional ethnic (and folkloric) African dance forms to transform them into modern dance forms. He also develops several community art projects within the African communities and as well exchange projects.⁸³

- **6.2.2 Artistic aims as language and dramaturgy**

In the concept *Met twee handen in de Lucht, Met twee Voeten en Den Haag...* Raghuraman declared her aim to revise and to re-write the traditional form of the Bharatanatyam form, transforming it (or

⁸²[Online].[Accessed 11th May 2012 19:33].Available from World Wide Web:< <http://www.creativeafricanetwork.com/person/25740>>

⁸³ Additionally, Kalpana Raghuraman followed an internship with choreographer Ann van den Broek and master classes with Hari Krishnan, Jonathan Burrows and Eva Recacha. She has worked in artistic co-productions with dancer and choreographer Pedro Goucha Gomez (NDDT Co) for the Cadance festival 2011. Raghuraman, K. (2009?) *Met twee handen in de Lucht, Met twee Voeten en Den Haag...* (April-May 2011).The Hague, pp.2-18.Unpublished.

aiming to) and refreshing it into a ‘contemporary Bharatanatyam form’. There were particularities of the dance that she wanted to rescue in this process of re-writing Bharatanatyam. She aimed to use the tradition of the physical dynamic (fluid hands and feet, the gesture and face expression) in the modality of the Western modern dance tradition. She intended to rescue the emotional engagement and the spiritual dimension of the Bharatanatyam form. At the same time, she attempted the break of the dance spatial symmetry, to skip the direct religious meaning and those specific codes as a cultural or religious representation⁸⁴ of the Bharatanatyam.

Raghuraman’s proposal was ambitious as a choreographic art statement; her aims were not exclusively of an artistic enlargement, apparently, but rather from a social and communitarian nature and, to a huge extent, a political nature. That laid on the subjective body as a young modern Dutch woman raised and educated in a traditional Hindustan family and community. From a cultural perspective, there is a political side that stayed her dance identity of Indian classical dancer and underneath her transculturated corporeality that hosted two different localities following the feminist theory: two cultures and two life styles: Dutch- Hindustan, and two philosophies Eastern and Western. Raghuraman’s proposal was hosted and propelled from the production department of the theatre and it was subsidized by the city council The Hague. In her choreographic art statement *Met twee Handen in de Lucht, Met twee Voeten in Den Haag...*, Raghuraman claimed an innovative ‘up-to-date’ of the Bharatanatyam form, an experimentation with the tradition in order to renew that one in the context of the (Dutch) Western society.⁸⁵

There are several aspects of her work that will be analyzed with the goal of interpreting her dance construction. I want here to highlight: the research of the Bharatanatyam form, the experimentation with contemporary dance principles in approaching the Bharatanatyam dance and a tacit, intuitive search for a type of dramaturgy which could have also different layers of meaning and systems of signification. In that sense, the movement discourse and the performance text addressed a considerable level of inter-textuality of the work. The mentioned points will be approached in item 6.3.⁸⁶

⁸⁴The style of movement in Indian classical dance is very different from that of Western ballet. In ballet the emphasis is frequently on the action of the legs—in jumps, turns, and fast traveling steps, which create ballet’s characteristic qualities of height, speed, and lightness—while the body itself remains relatively still and the arms simply frame the face or balance the body. In Indian dance, however, the legs are usually bent, with the feet flat rather than lifted and pointed. Jumps are usually low (though light), and the dancer rarely covers much ground or performs intricate steps, the complexity of the footwork lying more in elaborate stamping rhythms. (These stamping rhythms enhance the musicality of the dance; many dancers wear bells around their ankles, supplying their own accompaniment as well as counterpoint to the rhythms beaten out by the musicians.) The torso, face, arms, and hands are extremely active. The head is quite mobile, with subtle changes of direction and a characteristic side-to-side movement emphasizing the dancer’s changing facial expressions. The movement of the torso is graceful and fluid, shifting from side to side or turning on the axis of the spine, while the movement of the hands and arms is subtle and elaborate, every gesture having a narrative function. Indian dancers have a vast repertoire of gestures through which they express complex events, ideas, and emotions. There are, for example, 13 gestures of the head, 36 different glances, and 67 mudras, or hand gestures, that can, in various combinations, yield several thousand different meanings. [Online]. [Accessed 17:55 4-5-11]. Available from World Wide Web: < <http://www.britannica.com> >

⁸⁵Raghuraman, K. (2009?) *Met twee Handen in de Lucht, Met twee Voeten in Den Haag...* In: *Meerjaren Plan 2010-2012 Korzo Theater*. (April-May 2011) The Hague, pp.2-18. Unpublished.

⁸⁶ For the purpose of this thesis, I am meaning ‘inter-textuality’ in terms of crossing languages and crossing texts. Language is the main communication tool among human beings and among human relationships to transfer a meaning, content or signification and language is based on text. The text can be formatted in different ways or structures: verbal, written, sound, visual (symbols, digital or virtual images), movement or bodily texts (codes or actions). The interaction between two or more text structures might deliver a new text.

- **6.2.3 Political field**

Here I can recognize two tendencies or lines. The first one has never been one of an explicit point of discussion.

- The recognition of a canon is here at stake in terms of performing arts policy which enhance the acceptance of a popular, local and ritualistic dance form as a canon within the Western performing arts circuit. In the political arts field, there is an aim from the choreographer (which is hidden by her in my view, also hidden for the production house so far as I have observed) that bridged what is a professional dance proposal with an amateur proposal (and to some extent a popular dance form) looking forward to gather and to bring them both together to a professional development within the dance field in The Netherlands. In her commitment to this last aim, Raghuraman was attempting to cross the boundaries to what is classed as non-professional and/or amateur dance within the art politics in the country.

Referencing what Kunst considers the ‘exotic’, the Bharatanatyam form is a traditional ritual dance and in Indian culture and or in the Hindustan community is assumed to be high art. Definitively, it does not have the same connotation in The Netherlands. Nevertheless, Raghuraman, through her statement and her actions, sought to enhance the Bharatanatyam as a valid dance form within the professional sector and to empower the Hindustan community in The Netherlands.⁸⁷

- Internal policy: Local cultural policy wise (city council, province, theatre, cultural organizations), there was a common interest to support some multicultural (to some extent, social) popular development that could reach a big target group like the Hindustan community in The Hague. This social character of this community (in terms of familiar unions, friendship and networks) had the ability to gather an important amount of Hindustan groups and communities together whilst prognosticating a possible marketable and successful phenomenon either in terms of the dance project rentability or in terms of multicultural local political alignments.

6.2.4 Dance community

The communitary and social projection of her project looked to claim and to re-position the profile of the Hindustan community in The Hague; to bridge it with the modern Dutch world, gathering the artistic aims of the choreographer and a growing dance community development, as well as the voice of expression of the Hindustan groups in The Netherlands.

⁸⁷The latter had been a rather hidden huge ambition that had been the goal and aim of many choreographers in the country (Het Kabinet collectief, Don't Hit mama, Helma Melis). At the same time, this is a fragile point in the cultural sphere in The Netherlands because during more than twenty decades traditionally the professional field of dance have been strictly distinguished and separated from the amateur field of dance. Source 1: (Ribbers, C. and Van Herpt, N. 2009, pp. 220-233). Source 2: Widschut, L. (2009-2010) Lecturer. In: *Dance Dramaturgie Lijn Traject* Course. Theatre and Media Department, Faculty of Humanities, University of Utrecht.

The Raghuraman discourse of empowerment towards the Hindustan culture and community in The Netherlands, specifically in The Hague, was a political key point along the project, which has gravitated in the concept of the project.

6.2.5 Structure of Kalpana Raghuraman's work

The whole creation of the dance-work production contained several important instances that are necessary to mention and that the reader has to take into account before approaching the analyses of Raghuraman's work. To guide the reader through this depiction, I will facilitate the structure cornerstones used by Raghuraman to build up her work *Door de ogen van mijn stad*, divided in: 1- research process and production, 2- the role choreographer- dancer and the communication process, 3- dramaturgy and advice from the production house.

1-Research process and production.

- Most of movement material belonged to the classical Bharatanatyam form.
- The application of contemporary dance principles during trainings and compose.
- Fragmentation and dislocation of the Indian classical forms.
- The use of contemporary Western music in combination with the inner particular rhythmic of the Indian classical dance.
- The theme about the identity of the Hindustan community in The Netherlands.
- The use of unison combined within symmetrical and or asymmetric sequences.
- Production program composed by two parts, in total five dance pieces.
- Production program posited as site-specific.
- For the making off of the performance Raghuraman adopted as well another type of dance resources like rap, hip hop and Bollywood styles.

2- The role choreographer- dancer and the communication process,

- *Door de ogen van mijn stad* was a community art trajectory intended to participate the Hindustani community in The Hague.
- The participation of the group in the creative process inside a 'community event'.

3- Dramaturgy and advice from the production house,

- The supervision by the German dramaturge Klaus Jürgens who applied a dramaturgical analysis based on the dramatic model Gustav Freytag's form.
- The complex level of inter-textuality in her work, since the Bharatanatyam form had several levels of significance in the context to a Western theatrical structure.

- Performative communication and cultural difference.

6.3 What kind of problematics does Kalpana Raghuraman's work

Door de ogen van mijn stad raise?

I might summarize the problematic of Raghuraman's work as follows.

Firstly, there is question about the type of dance identity she is aiming for which remained, from my point of view, during the entire process and post-production. I am referring here to an identity that applies either to choreographic issues in terms of language production or in terms of dancing bodies and dancing communities. The real affiliation of Raghuraman's work as a choice for dance development is inferring, timidly, the desire for a new language. This affiliation had been declared in her work statement but until some extent to her dance practice and achievements.

Secondly there is a point about the place for development that Raghuraman's research process got within the particular productional circumstances and conditions of the production house that propelled the reachability of her proposal.

Thirdly, there is an issue about the gravitation in her work, independently of her dance background and choreographical experience, given by the dance community.

Under below and on the light of the results in chapters 2, 3, 4 and conclusions in chapter 5, I am formulating a more specific inquiry about Raghuraman's work and drawing my approximations to the research question in item 6.3.2.

a- What are her subjective and identity standpoints following the definitions of Andréé Grau in chapter 1 and Elizabeth Grosz in chapter 2?

b- How has the use of subjectivity in her body work or training followed the means of Lepecki and Kunst drawn in chapter 3 and the conclusions of chapter 5?

c- What does the 'environment' in Raghuraman's work- process mean, and how did it influence the identity of her dance-work, referencing chapter 2 and 4, and the results of chapter 5?

d- What concepts of dance identities been used in her work? What concept about dancing bodies was she seeking? Did she choose special bodies, did she aim to prepare or train the bodies looking for a specific profile?

e- Looking at the movement development and the dancing body: how have movement and abilities evolved in performers during the whole process? How did the dance process affect dancers' bodies and performers' identities through Raghuraman's work?

The questions below intend to realize some approximations to the main research question in the specific case-study of *Door de ogen van mijn stad*.

- f- What is her main instrument or tool in the construction of a dance language? Does she try to generate a dance language? What are her standpoints for that?
- g- Does she seek to achieve a system in her dance-work?
- h- Has the dramaturgical advice affected the construction of dance language in her work?

- **6.3.1 Responses to questions ‘a’ to ‘e’**

a- What are her subjective and identity standpoints according to the definitions of Andreé Grau in chapter 1 and Elizabeth Grosz in chapter 2?

Grau defines the concept of identity as “...a set of information that allows us to recognize someone as an individual...” (1.2). It can be also defined as affiliations and adherences where Raghuraman is introducing herself with her own personal Hindu-Dutch background (in all the extension), including her dancing experience as an Indian classical dancer. During her project she attempted intentionally to re-write or reformulate a purist dance form (Indian Classical), which is generally classified as popular, ethnic, folkloric or ritualistic within the Western Dutch theatrical context, her second adoptive culture and actual environment. At this point it is important that Grau mentioned that the identity (The self) can only be achieved through others in, what she called a “process of alienation” mentioned in item 1.2. Thus, social and communicative factors are the cornerstones in the process of identification of Raghuraman, which she is using consciously (until some point) and strategically for the development of her dance-project in this case-study.

Grosz defines 'corporeality' in reference to the subjective of the individual, also resembling on the feminist concepts of politics of location and citation; those address the locus of the being, which is physical, visceral and flexible. In this particular case we should see Raghuraman's body inscriptions and traces, as dance-maker- leader of *Door de ogen van mijn stad...* She is the spoken (representative) person in this enterprise. She does not escape her material surrounding with its geographical, political and educational boundaries, which are actually Western and which she tried to absorb in her dance-work. Nor does she avoid the immaterial surroundings that are her familiar-spiritual values, social codes, and beliefs summed in her dance expression. As person and dance-maker, she is assuming, accepting and performing her corporeality and identity in contemporary society. The specific case-study in this first instance presents an issue that is a clear example of *transculturation* in dance-work revised in items 2.3 and 2.4, and which I will address later at the end of the chapter.

b- How does the use of subjectivity in Kalpana Raghuraman's body work or training follow the means of André Lepecki and Bojana Kunst drawn in chapter 3 and conclusions of chapter 5?

In this case-study the process of subjectification of Raghuraman dance-work is strictly related to the discipline of the Bharatanatyam dance training contrarily what Lepecki mentioned in his book *Exhausting Dance* (2000) and I quoted in the item 3.2 that process of subjectification is not necessarily related to discipline of the body to achieve the choreography. The process of subjectification in Raghuraman dance-work is intimately linked to the idiosyncratic concept of dance community, and so to the concept of dance identity.

On the other side the process of subjectification of Raghuraman dance-work resembles Lepecki's definition about dance subjectivity as a dynamic concept, that indexes "...modes of agency (political ones, desiring ones, affective ones, and choreographic one) that reveals..." And he gathers what is the choreographical process to what is the subjectivation process of the dancer (3.2).

Far from being a Western contemporary dance project, Raghuraman in *Door de ogen van mijn stad...* is still adhering to the union of dance and movement that both Kunst and Lepecki referred to in their articles and I stated in item 5.2.2. That adherence opens certain room for discussion because 'the union of dance and movement' has been stated as a modernist principle in dance and the Bharatanatyam form is not a modern dance form precisely. We need to remember that from Lepecki's perspective modernity and subjectivity are two key-terms in the contemporary dance definition. In the light of Kunst, Raghuraman's bodily autonomy would be built up on completely other bases, because the Bharatanatyam body is conceived as a poetic body by nature. Nothing is out of the relation physical body/ natural environment, that is the soul which connects with the supreme soul, God. Culturally, the Bharatanatyam body is ephemeral and ethereal, similar to the Yoga body. The Bharatanatyam body is connected to the world and addresses through a type of spirituality⁸⁸ unlike the Western body with all the problematics of Cartesian dualism and other adherent connotations that I described in chapter 2, like: sexual repression, "somatophobia..." (2.1) and bipolar concepts such as nature/ culture, native/ civilization and woman/ man.

The mechanisms of disruption, mentioned either by Lepecki or Kunst in items 3.2 and item 3.3, had been used in Raghuraman during the research process but those were not mechanisms against the movement production or against a hierarchical body. Rather, those mechanisms had been used creatively to open, to refresh and to recycle the classical Indian dance form. From the perspective of the Western dance critic, those mechanisms do not disrupt movement production, for what the dance-work *Door de ogen van mijn stad* will not score dance contemporariness but for the

⁸⁸The Bharatanatyam is a mystic manifestation of the metaphysical element of fire in the human body. The body, in Hindu philosophy, is composed by five elements of nature: water, fire, earth, air and aether like in the Yoga. The spiritual symbolism of the Bharatanatyam manifests the eternal universe through the expression of the beauty of the material (physical) body using much elaborated gestures of movements and limbs, sentiments, emotional states and actions. The Bharatanatyam is performed by female bodies.

Eastern Indian and Hindu culture Raghuraman dance piece does present disruption, indeed, of the dance form and an alteration in the symbolic meaning of the dance.

Ultimately, there is an issue about subjectivity in relation to the means of presence and visibility in Raghuraman's work, that can be defined on the subject of the 'Other', topic mentioned in chapter 5, item 5.2.2. Bharatanatyam dance can be read as the 'Other' dance in this case-study and it had been indeed displayed under the racial-colonialist-project patron (3.2) mentioned by Lepecki. On one side there has been, during the research period, a process of unveiling that body that addresses the Bharatanatyam form. On the other side there has been a process of making that body 'kinetically visible' in a very obvious way through the application of a Western dramaturgy.

c- What does 'environment' mean in Raghuraman's work- process and how did it influence the identity of her dance-work, referencing to chapter 2 and 4, and the results of chapter 5?

In chapters 2, 4 and 5, I presented different approaches to defining environment mentioned by anthropologists, sociologists, and by developmental psychologists in reference to the social cultural, geographical context that surrounds a body identity, a dance identity and therefore a cultural production like this is the case. Lepecki refers to the environment where modern dance emerges as the 'modernist project'. Kunst says that Eastern dance, therefore Eastern Europe,⁸⁹ entered the Western market (that environment) as a spectacular commodity expected to produce 'Otherness' and extravaganza presenting a 'type of visibility' unknown by the West. However developmental psychologists address much more positively to the environment as the necessary factor for development. Although developmental psychologists are talking in the order of the motoric, the emotional or in the order of the cognitive, their stance can be applicable to other orders, which I will simply define here as 'change' or 'adaptation'.

I can say that in this specific case-study, there have been two highlighted environments actively gravitating on Raghuraman's work- process and final composition. Those environments have been classified in the introduction of this chapter (6.1) as contexts and frames of this work: one is the structural role of the work-place, namely the theatre and production house. That has been the main provider of productional conditions, program organization and technical structures. Second are the Hindustan dance communities, the human *materia* and earth of the project.

In the last decade, Korzo production house has bounced on different political, financial and finally... aesthetical references. For example: ... Those references had been loaded with Western cultural production conditions⁹⁰ given by the alignments of the Dutch cultural policy.⁹¹ At the same

⁸⁹ I homologate the term here as valid for India, the Far East.

⁹⁰ VERSLAG KORZO theater en productiehuis 2010.(2010). The Hague, pp. 1-25. Unpublished.

⁹¹ VERSLAG KORZO theater en productiehuis 2010. (2010) The Hague, pp. 1-25. Unpublished.

time, Korzo production house gave frame and contained those aspects of productions that can be considered accountable and marketable within the professional dance field, scoring one of the main quality points of what Lepecki defined as the ‘modernist project’(3.2). The production house as representative agent had been responding generously to that kinetic model of modernism asserted by Lepecki. Lepecki inspired in the words of dance historian John Martin; a model of modernism for professional dance in The Netherlands which had (and still has) a patriarchal role within the social structure of the dance sector in the country.⁹² Raghuraman’s project addressed Korzo’s interests with two important highlighting points. One, she targeted becoming a kind of representative icon for the Hindustan community in The Hague, which actually was a big community to make impact on progression in cultural policy. This Raghuraman project, unlike than her other projects, was not only scoring the conditions of internationalism and (multi) interculturalism that profile the production house conditions.⁹³ Rather strategically, *Door de ogen van mijn stad* was tuning with local policy alignments of social- communitarian developmental policies (minorities, and amateurs groups) for city council.

My personal appreciation lately is that there was an ambiguous hidden aim of ‘cultural integration’ in Raghuraman’s statement, which can be read from an anthropological- sociological perspective as a recognition and absorption by the Hindu community of the second (Dutch) culture as the dominant culture. That is what I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter as innovative 'up-to-date' of the Bharatanatyam form, experimentation with the tradition in order to renew that tradition in the context of the (Dutch) Western society.

The context of the dance community, whose dancing bodies have contributed and collaborated in the project *Door de ogen van mijn stad* composed a second environment. *Door de ogen van mijn stad* was a community art trajectory participating the Hindustani community⁹⁴ and for that Raghuraman has realized a workshop as a kick-off for the Hindustan groups.⁹⁵ From those workshops she had recruited the cast that was going to participate in the production *Door de ogen van mijn stad*. All of them were amateur dancers with the exception of a few who were semi-

⁹² Korzo, as a patriarch of dancers in The Netherlands, used to take care of material and financial conditions for the realization of projects and productions and now mediates within foundations and governmental organizations in the line to get the projects financially funded. There is a reasonable amount of lobbying and public relations with local and national authorities in this regard.

⁹³ Korzo Theatre hosts yearly international and local choreographers from The Hague city.

⁹⁴ This two year plan has an aim to re-position the profile of the Hindustan community in The Hague- one of the largest Hindustan communities in Europe-. At the same time there is an aim to link artistic development and community work regarding to bridge a professional proposal and the amateur dance group in order that the latter might achieve a professional level in the dance field. Source: Coggiola, M.G. (2011) *Rapport Korzo 2011*. Theater and Media Department, Faculty of Humanities, University of Utrecht. Unpublished.

⁹⁵ Workshops with two variants: a workshop for trained dancers in the Hindustan dance forms (Bharatanatyam and other Indian forms as Bollywood dance) and other workshops for dancers who do not have this specific training but rather other types of dance background, like Hip Hop or Jazz.

professionals with a broad knowledge about the Indian dance forms. A very few of those semi-professionals dancers have some background in ballet or modern dance.

In this frame-work, the communication factor among dancers of these communities has been the main support of the texts that lie beyond the dance-work⁹⁶ *Door de ogen van mijn stad*. The complexity of the choreographical material has been reasonably managed by the group because almost everyone had the same code acknowledging the Bharatanatyam form. In this sense, communication among the members of the group had been a positive cultural factor of identity that enabled the realization of the project.⁹⁷ I will approach this last subject in the point 'd' when I will talk about the dance identities in Raghuraman's work.

I must consider the Bharatanatyam dance form as the common verbal, physical and cultural language of this dance community, the main disposal for communication in the group and, in performative terms, the main communicative vehicle audience-spectator. First, it was closed to the culture of the dancers and big part of the audience. Second because of the Bharatanatyam becomes, as Kunst described, an exotic and attractive product for the Western gaze. During the research-process, I have been observing some 'dramaturgical sense' out of the choreographer's task, which laid on a common dancing text and a common vocabulary that appealed to their dancers cultural identity as individuals and as dancing bodies within a community in a foreign land.

All this compose the environment from where Raghuraman's work had been emerging, composing and circulating.

d- What concepts of dance identities were used in her work? What concept about dancing bodies was she seeking? Did she choose special bodies, did she aim to prepare or train the bodies looking for a specific dance profile?

Raghuraman used, for the construction of her dance piece, dancing bodies that were profiled. Most of them were profiled at least close to the Indian classical dance identity, trained in the Bharatanatyam tradition, though some of those bodies would be able to command other type of dances. Thus, the Bharatanatyam dance was the 'common dancing text' (movement) and main vocabulary (verbal code) of the group. That addresses their affiliations and adherences as group identity. The theme of the research- work revolved about the identity of the Hindustan community and immigration process in The Netherlands and as *Door de ogen van mijn stad*, conceptually a community art project.

⁹⁶ Observations: The dancers and the choreographer relate in a confident and respectful way. The goal of the choreographer with the group challenges the group technical conditions. A part of the group has a very positive reaction in front of the proposal and they are aware –in a way or another- of the importance of the project for themselves and for the theater. Another part of the group is not strongly supporting the project although they are obedient and follow the leader. (I find important differences among them age, background, education)

⁹⁷ Observations: Dancers are collaborative, they help each other and they rehearse by themselves. They feel to own the project.

Nevertheless, as a choreographer and leader, Raghuraman behaved within the democratic model for the construction of her dance-work where she had the control of the concept and structure of the piece being clear about authorship of the project. She guided and geared the dancers who were contributing to it.

During the research period she divided her work-structure in two parts. One, she had settled an amount of choreographical sequences with clear patterns, cores and figures; those sequences had been evolving in spacing, timing, rhythmically and dynamically during the research period. Two, she developed through improvisation other parts of the piece where the Bharatanatyam form was the main core and within other Indian and non-Indian styles.

The dancers group had a divergent reaction through the content development, which happened basically from a content improvisation and responding to tasks of the choreographer. In some very specific dance pieces, the dancers also became the creator, under the guidance of the choreographer through tasks for improvisation and composition, and the choreographer became only a leader and support of the process.⁹⁸ Whether the Bharatanatyam material became more complex or whether there were contemporary dance elements in the piece, the choreographer commanded the whole session.

Though the group had all the same communication code acknowledging the Bharatanatyam form, there was not a type of body or a type of physicality as a model. However, all the dancers (with more or less background, with more or less aptitudes) were trained, during the time of the project, in the same way. The training consisted of some warm-up movements in combination with Bharatanatyam sequences and those were directly oriented to the production. That is actually a quite effective way to work in amateur performance, but it diminishes possibilities for enhancing development of movement in the dancing body, particularly when the dancing body has not too much training.

Nevertheless, I think that Raghuraman was seeking, tacitly and intuitively to reach to dance language as part of her endeavour grounded on the Bharatanatyam identity, although she never manifested that openly in this specific project and I do not think that all the dancers of the community were prepared to execute such a commission.

e- Looking at the movement development and the dancing body: what was the evolution of movement and abilities in performers during the whole process? How did the dance process affect dancers' bodies and performers' identities through Kalpana Raghuraman's work?

The inclusion of all type of amateurs and not amateur participants with different levels and backgrounds in the Bharatanatyam tradition was the common dancistic ground, basic physical

⁹⁸ Butterworth, J., 2009 p186

training, and strongest score of the group during the research and production process. Since the moment the project was oriented from the early beginning towards a production, there was no room for a progressive, methodological and serious movement development of the dancers, neither in scholarly nor in professional terms. Achievements and improvement were gained in the weekly rehearsals. Thus, basically the dancers worked with what the body and the conditions they have for the specific task meant for this project. There was also some room for a creative exploration and dialogue.

In the very end of the research process and entering the production period that lasted few days, the final structure of *Door de ogen van mijn stad* project would be composed in two parts, in total five dance pieces (or dramaturgically could be seen as acts) of different length including the main ensemble that gathers all the dancers at the end of the evening at the *Grote zaal* of *Korzo Theatre*. Those five pieces are intended to be presented as a site-specific performance, implicating that the audience has to move through the location to watch every dance.

A setting of two introduction sets made of two pieces each was planned to start the performance program and one last set with one dance piece after the break and at the end of the program.

In the introduction part of the piece there were sets of two dance-pieces each. There was one set with a solo and one set with a duet that took place at two different dance studios in the upper floor of the theatre which had an open traditional character with the youngest dancers of the group. The other set was composed by two dance pieces with two ensembles that played one after the other presenting two traditional performances to take place at the studio on the ground floor. The first performance was an 'urban mechanic dance' that enclosed the use of *mudras*⁹⁹ and symbols embodied in a contemporary dance composition. The second performance was one religious dance, accompanied with a traditional *Song to Shiva* including a singer and a music player in life. This last dance piece was performed by the most experienced dancers in traditional Bharatanatyam dance.

After the presentation of the four dances there was a break. After that the main and biggest ensemble of the whole performance took part at the major stage of the theatre.

This last dance piece (and the longer) would get a certain post-modernist theatrical character and would take place at the big theatre. It had been composed by seven different scenes or entrances in the first part and five ensembles more for the second part. That big ensemble enclosed a trio, a quartet, two solos, and a dance for seven female dancers, and two Bollywood dances. For the making of the performance, Raghuraman adopted well other types of dance resources like rap, hip hop and Bollywood styles.

Unavoidably, there was a major handicap to the group between a relatively careful and supported research process and the group dance process during the production period. The latter has

⁹⁹Specific symbolic language articulated with hands, gestures and eyes in Indian dances.

an effect in performers' identities in terms of their expressive means inside a dance community and Hindu community, I believe. I am not so sure about how dancers identified with the last result of the performance production.

Out of the excitement and the success to achieve the completeness of the performance program, I perceived there were some disconcertment about the dancers' roles and choreographer's choices made within the cast. Further, there were some timid questions about the final composition and how the performance had been shaped. I had a talk afterwards with a couple of dancers who found some performative elements in the piece were not totally recognizable and that did not belong really to them. There was also an important issue of discussion between choreographer and dramaturge about how Bharatanatyam dancers are not used to the concept of a 'fourth wall'¹⁰⁰ which at a performative level created a gap when the performance had to be advised and prepared for a Western theatre.

Raghuraman's democratic working-mode thus was able to raise, during this trajectory, some qualitative differences among bodies; however not all the bodies could tune technically together at the same time and at the same level. The latter required adaptations from the choreographer in the later stadium of the research process and requested changes and interventions from the dramaturge and the theatre director during the production work in order to achieve certain goals of the performance.

- **6.3.2 *Approximations to the main research question in the specific case study of Kalpana Raghuraman's work 'Door de ogen van mijn stad'. Response to questions 'f' and 'g'***

In attempting to respond to my main research question about the subjectivity and the identity of the individual affecting the development of dance language and potentially entailing the production of a dance system, I believe that Raghuraman's work disclosed three new other questions. I posit them here as questions 'f', 'g' and 'h'.

f- What is her main instrument or tool in the construction of a dance language? Does she try to generate a dance language? What are her standpoints for that?

Within the structure of Raghuraman's work (6.2.5) the construction of dance language occurred primarily during the research process and it had some adjustments during the production period and,

¹⁰⁰ Theatrical concept emerged out from Naturalism and applied to the actor's acting. The 'fourth wall', particularly used in Western dramatic theatre, is a non-visible wall to the audience. The 'fourth wall' means the theatrical and performative distance that separates (invisibly) the audience from the actor and the world of the 'real' from the world of the 'non-real'. It may be defined as a 'code' in Western theatre. Actually the 'fourth wall' is a concept in discussion within post-modern and post-dramatic theatre. Bharatanatyam dancers do not have this concept of separative 'fourth wall' because it is a ritualistic dance executed in the here and now.

secondly, within the communicative process between choreographer and dancers. The third instance mentioned in item 6.2.5, namely, the dramaturgy and advice of the production house do not address in my opinion the choreographer's trial in attempting to construct a dance language.

The symbolic and discursive Bharatanatyam code was the main choreographic *motto* commanded by the choreographer and by the participating dancers, despite the important technical differences and backgrounds among them. Nevertheless, the entire group shared a common general cultural knowledge of the Bharatanatyam form, its meaning and its traditions. The latter played the most sensible and meaningful role both in the group communication and in the understanding among them in relation to the choreographer. That had also conformed the performative expression as a common language owned by them, hence the core from where the project *Door de ogen van mijn stad* could evolve.

In this type of project, communication can be submitted into two levels. One communication level was unilateral from Raghuraman position of artistic leader towards the group. At this level, she worked on discipline, tasks and clarity in the commissions and deadlines with the group. There was another communication level at the same time that the choreographer needed to build up with the group in order to construct the dance-work. This last type of communication was built up on a mode of interaction among members of a group, in this particular case, the participation of the group in the creative process inside a 'community event'. Conceptually, the 'inter-communication', leader- group/ group leader, and the 'intra-communication' 'among all the members of the group including or excluding the choreographer.

There are other communicative aspects that also apply to performance itself, like the performers in relation to the choreographic language, the setting and dramaturgy of the piece, when the group aim was to interpret the piece. But necessarily, the first type of communication mentioned above influences the second type of communication, which is a very sensitive point in an amateur community project of this nature. But what I want to highlight here is the role of communication as a potential generator of creative material and supporter of a performative aptitude.

The group communication respecting the management of the choreographical problems or technicalities that had emerged during the work had its limits. In this sense, the communication among dancers in order to reach to the 'common goal of a choreographical work' was neither simple, nor fast. The level of the group was rather unbalanced and, as I have mentioned before, the choreographic material of the Bharatanatyam form was complex in itself and in addition to that were the modern dance principles.¹⁰¹

In this respect I have two observations. The first is about the leading of Raghuraman of the dancing bodies her monitoring and awareness of what sort of dance group was in order to reach to a

¹⁰¹ Personally I think, at that moment, there was a sort of unawareness on the part of the choreographer, who seemed to be overwhelmed by the entire magnitude of the production, about the true capabilities of the group to reach to the choreographic productional proposal she was aiming for, especially in the second part of the program.

goal. This last point has to be either with the selection of the participant dancers or if there would not be such a selection, with the approach and strategies as choreographer-teacher articulate to reach to certain bodies (amateur, no trained or trained in other way than the required) to enable to reach an object. The dancing bodies may reach a target and to pass through a learning process as a dancing community. There cannot be both process and the demand for an immediate result. In reference to chapter 4 about the evolution of movement, development in a dancer has its phases and thresholds, but it is necessary time and room for that the process can obturate instead of staying open.

My observation highlights that most of Raghuraman's movement material (the dance language) belonged mainly to the Bharatanatyam form seen in the static pose of the body as 'the base' and in 'the transition' from one pose to another pose, the use of expressive hand gestures with a variety of hand symbols, the basic rhythmical unit of the 'beat of the foot' and the elaborate neck and eye movements accompanying all the movement flow. In most of the choreographical sequences I observed, there was a predomination of gesture and physical details so characteristic of the Indian classical dance. Those detailed motifs (hands, feet, head, and gesture, part of the Indian classical dance) required time to become dense, visibly and important – in terms of movement quality – during the learning process of the dancers. The motifs addressed to several meanings that the choreographer intended and at the same time, I believe that the choreographer had certain hidden dramaturgical intentions with the dance discourses but she did not have cleared enough what was the dramaturgy to follow in her personal work process.

In this case-study, there is certainly an application of contemporary dance principles – not the technique itself but rather some principles, like floor work, launches, rolling, for example – which had helped choreographer Raghuraman to spatially open and enlarge the traditional choreographical constructions of the Indian classical dance form. That enabled her to free slightly those ancient forms from the structural Indian classical performative structure. Choreographically, she used as strategy the multiplication of those forms (which traditionally are performed in solos and rarely in duos with music in life), spacing them through different formations of ensembles into a flexible, mobile and plural Bharatanatyam form. In the final production process those forms would be knitted through the unusual use of the music.

In her choreographical research, Raghuraman had attempted to fragment and to dislocate those classical forms. Those processes of dislocation, fragmentation and alteration are resources bounced on the post-dramatic theatre,¹⁰² (like the *choro-graphy* or the concept of the *metonymic*

¹⁰² Following Lehman the post-dramatic theatre is a theatre of states and of scenically dynamic formations. The main characteristics of post-dramatic theatre are: the capacity of isolation of the object touched by the aesthetic function, which plays different from imitation and the liberation the formal, that means the whole spectrum of movements and processes that has no referent but are present by heightened precision. Raghuraman is applying some few aspects as the 'chorography'. The chora-graphy is the deconstruction of a (dance) discourse orientated towards meaning and the invention of a space that eludes the laws of *telos* and unity. I can say that perhaps, she tried to apply the concept of the metonymic space as well, that is the use of the space highlighted as part and continuation of the real theatre space.

space) similarly used and applied by choreographer Ann van den Broek,¹⁰³ although the work of Raghuraman was far from being post-dramatic in the Western theatrical sense. Raghuraman had juxtaposed and bridged those classical Indian dance forms with pedestrian movements and with some scarcely contemporary dance movements aiming a kind of loose airy modernist influence in the forms and spacing of the dance formations.

Another important dislocation point in her work was the use of contemporary Western music in combination with the rhythmic of the dance that stayed within the traditional organization of the Bharatanatyam form. Thus the original musicality of the dance, which is precise, synchronizes every movement with every note and is accurate, performatively wise. The musical construction of the Bharatanatyam form remained a tool for composition and organization of her choreographical work. With the exception of the music for the dance *Song to Shiva*, played and sung in life according to the ritual Hindu tradition, and a couple of original themes played in the two first dance pieces; the rest of the musical arrangement was done on the base of combining Hindustan music with electronic based music of an absolute uniformity, either in the rhythm or in the phrasing and measures accompanying every scene of the piece.

In the composition of second part of the program that was the *grand finale*, the movements were not strictly respecting the musical phrase, which they should do in traditional Bharatanatyam. The movement phrases are coordinated by the group through a common rhythmic and counting (not always succeeding during rehearsals) geared towards symmetry, but independent of the music.

I have observed in the composition material the use of several groups and formations that interact in unison combined with symmetrical and or asymmetric sequences. Every choreographic phrase (or scene) of the piece enclosed several sub-parts with its correspondending choreographic variations. The unisons interact in two or three or four groups, either with the same symmetric sequence or in different unisons with different sequences at the same time. The directions that each formation had in the space and in the total organization of the ensemble were not totally clear until the very end of the research process. That fact had to be, on one hand, with the choreographer modality to compose based on tasks towards a final setting; on the other hand it had to be with the dramaturgic advice of Raghuraman's work that took place at the extreme end of the production work.

I found that those sequences (gathered in phrases or scenes) could be seen as 'small scenes' with a high level of metaphoric symbolism, which had been articulated among each other as 'transitions'. That was for me the 'Eastern' characteristic which Raghuraman decided to reduce in her

¹⁰³ Relevant aspects of the Flamish contemporary choreographer Ann van der Broek dance-work relays in post-modern and post-dramatic aspects and signs. Van der Broek has explored the dislocation of the physical actions and shapes as a dance forms, she applies in her work a kind of reduction of the movement intensity. She is recognized as a minimalist choreographer. Raghuraman has been influenced by the teaching of Van der Broek. Source: Coggiola, M.G. (2009). *Analysis ' I SOLO MENT ' by Ann van den Broek*. Paper. In: *Theory and Analysis of Theatre & Dance, Course 11/2009*. Theatre and Media Department, Faculty of Humanities, University of Utrecht. Unpublished.

piece at the end of the process and which for me meant one of the most distinguished points of her research work. That in dramaturgical terms would have raised several endeavours, different readings and interpretations due the level of inter-textuality those small scenes disclosed.

Another aspect I noticed, during the creative process was that the choreographic material neither seemed to have nor beginning neither an end. The sequences appeared and disappeared from the sides, the backstage or the front-stage. During rehearsals, there were no finishing movement and no finishing poses, nor freezing scenes for a transition. The transitions between one sequence to another were vague. Curiously, the Bharatanyam form seemed to possess its own systematic logic of re-production for what all dance sequences were re-created constantly in a sort of *hostinato*.

All these aesthetic tools and choices about resources were displayed in different levels of experimentation and try-outs delivering endeavors that approached eventually a type of dance language during the research process.

g- Does Kalpana Raghuraman seek to achieve a system in her dance-work?

I think Raghuraman has achieved important elements during her research process for the goal of moving towards a dance language construction, but I do not think she has reached a serial systematization of her endeavours at that stage of her work during the time being.

There was no systematic organization of the movement material in the specific case-study. There was a structure towards the composition of choreography and, in that trajectory, there was a certain progression towards the creative development of movement and, to a certain extent, at the dramaturgical level. I have witnessed, neither during the research-process nor during the production process, a consistent method neither behind the approach, nor to the simple technicalities of the movement, nor the style of movement neither to the physicality of dancers' body.

In the concrete example of this case-study and under the current productional conditions there was no room for the choreographer to make any kind of formulation about it.

h- Has the dramaturgical advice affected the construction of dance language?

In my view, Raghuraman's choreographic was outside the boundaries of Western dance critics and specialists, simply because her dance vocabulary remained in that field of the unknown and it was completely foreign to us.

The choreographic work had the supervision by the German dramaturge Klaus Jürgens, ex leader of the dance group *Hans Hof Ensemble*, who applied a dramaturgical analysis based on the dramatic model, Gustav Freytag's form.¹⁰⁴ The application of that Freytag model to Raghuraman's

¹⁰⁴ In 1863, around the time that playwrights like Henrik Ibsen were abandoning the 5-act structure and experimenting with 3 and 4-act plays, the German playwright and novelist Gustav Freytag wrote *Die Technik des Dramas*, a definitive study of the 5-act dramatic structure, in which he laid out

work at a critical point of her research process re-structuring, reframed and geared Kalpana's movement language (and her novice and hidden dramaturgy) towards a Western dramaturgic tendency and aesthetic. Klaus Jürgens was fascinated by the mobility, the purity of the form and the good command of the Bharatanatyam by the dancers and particularly of the spontaneity of the dancers. But in his analysis perspective about Raghuraman's dancing text, her piece revealed a 'failure' in its dramaturgical construction.

The level of inter-textuality aimed at in her work, due to the fact that the Bharatanatyam form had several levels of significance in terms what is metaphoric, symbolic, ritualist and strictly technical of the dance. Raghuraman's dancing text had been re-composed into new discursive theatrical parameters or this new 'construction' of the Bharatanatyam form. In a later step, this form should be legible for a Western audience, which in one way or another would eventually create; otherwise following Jürgens would create a communicational gap in her dramaturgy.

At that phase of the research work and in terms of performative communication, those motifs which belonged from the Bharatanatyam form and which became choreographic objects through the Raghuraman's research work with the group could not be –in my view –read and appreciated by the dance critic in its entire meaning due to a cultural difference.¹⁰⁵

From my point of view, there has been a double process of re-writing the Indian classical form through the work *Door de ogen van mijn stad*. One was the process that Raghuraman explored by herself during the years and during the research before the technical production. The second one is Jürgens and the theatre director, through the re-framing of original Raghuraman draft version into a Western theatrical dramaturgy legible for the (Dutch) European audience.

This double process influenced the composition of the specific dancing language outcome from *Door de ogen van mijn stad*. This double process had influenced the performative identity of the dance and the meaning of the posterior dramaturgical construction after the research period, which later showed to carry on with issues about authorship, legibility and intervention that I am not going to address in this thesis.

In my opinion, the application of Freytag's model had been forced through the original Raghuraman dance discourse and text outcoming from the research work. I could argue that the first traces of Raghuraman's choreographical work revealed a natural dramaturgy that was evolving in a very cyclical time-line, which is a characteristic of Hindu philosophy. That had been elaborated on a pseudo improvised tasks by the choreographer with a dance community with a common background who could (relatively) manage during the communication process. The dance discourse itself had an

what has come to be known as Freytag's pyramid. Under Freytag's pyramid, the plot of a story consists of five parts: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and revelation/catastrophe.

¹⁰⁵ Probably Western (Dutch) audience need to be introduced to that cultural difference very particularly and Klaus Jürgens was not out of that group.

aesthetic tendency towards the ethereal to the ephemera, which is not strange because the Bharatanatyam dance has a strong religious connotation in Hindu culture.

At the same time this dramaturgy was based on a movement aesthetic and on a body language that was unusual for the 'Western gaze'. This last quotation address to what Mulvey's analysis of the 'male gaze' which Demster used as a theoretical framework of the 'Western gaze' criticizing the notion “to-be-looked-at-ness” of the appearing female body in dance performance (1988). In Mulvey's analysis there is a comparison between the spectators in its 'male gaze' equated to the 'Western gaze'. The analysis proposes that all “gaze was male and heterosexual and that men are not objectified through the look”. It does not take into account of ‘difference’ (except on the lines of Lacan binaries division). Mulvey’s issue goes about her “interest in the relation between the image of woman on the screen and the ‘masculinization’ of the spectator position” (1989a p29).¹⁰⁶ There is where appears the materialization the intention of Raghuraman as the female voice of a choreographer to upgrade her development as a voice of a community project.

On the other side, for Julia Kristeva the feminine is, in the deconstructionist sense, not in the biological sense, located in the semiotic dimension of language and it is from this site that the potential arises to disrupt, contest, break through or displace the symbolic order.¹⁰⁷ The repressed feminine finds a voice in the marginal discourses of the literary avant-garde.

In the Western dance legacy of the Dutch culture, the Bharatanatyam as any 'Other' foreign dance form that becomes the marginal, the exotic, following Kunst’s words. Therefore, tacitly, the dancing text material of *Door de ogen van mijn stad* would request to be re-written by the white dramaturgical alignments in order to be ‘understandable’, enjoyable, comfortably accepted by the values and standards of the society we live in.

6.4 Conclusions

I could see an attempt of Raghuraman to construct from her inner subjectivity an original language, which I believe she keeps in her own body.

In an early stage of my observations, I noticed that Raghuraman’s dance material in itself as dance language needed to be worked out in a very specific way, taking care of its details, nuances and qualities, like the complicity in the communication among dancers, the absence of the 'fourth

¹⁰⁶ She sees that the identification of the woman in the audience with the 'active' male gaze could speak to the rediscovery of the lost aspect of her sexual identity; i.e. the loss of the 'active' phallic phase and thus the female spectator 'oscillates' between the active/male and the passive/female subject positions. The consequence of this is that the possibility of bringing women to the position of an active knowing subject depends not on her identity but on what she lacks. (Thomas, 1998 pp.69-77)

¹⁰⁷ Kristeva rejects Lacan’s all-encompassing view of the symbolic order and the subject is more fluid and multiple. Kristeva proposes two modes of language, the semiotic, which is rooted in the pre-Oedipal, maternal body, and the symbolic, which is constituted through the rules of language. Like Lacan, Kristeva sees that the feminine, whose meanings are to be found outside language and sexuality, is represented by the phallogocentric symbolic order. Because it cannot be contained by the rational structure of phallogocentrism, the semiotic of feminine signification is pushed to the margins of the symbolic (1985:11-13). The feminine is, in the deconstructionist sense, not in the biological sense, located in the semiotic dimension of language and it is from this site that the potential arises to disrupt, contest, break through or displace the symbolic order. The repressed feminine finds a voice in the marginal discourses of the literary avant-garde. (Thomas, 1998 pp.69-77)

wall', and the sequential continuity of the movement. I did observe interesting achievements during the development of some dance ensembles, specifically in the second part of the piece. Unlikely, the choreographer has not seen those 'achievements' as 'dramaturgical pathways and thresholds' that could be developed.

I observed that the choreographer was expecting to have a solution about the dramaturgy of her piece, like it is something apart from her own work, when she did produce the dramaturgical elements from the very beginning.

In my opinion, her approximations to a dance language had become partially disrupted by the environment and by the (un)necessary concessions made by her with the production house in relying on others the expertise of writing her dance-work and the setting and montage of 'her dramaturgy'.

I think the choreographer could have attempted to develop those dance texts differently and with more versatility in reference to my concerns mentioned in the introduction (1.1). That *difference*, that *versatility*, curiously, might have delivered the 'Otherness' that Kunst was referring to in her article; it might have produced a *cultural body* impossible to be submitted to the canons of certain type of visibility, dynamic, excitement and voyeurism, that in my view, an urge from the Western need of legibility.

The most highlighting issue in this case-study is the double phenomenon of *transculturation* knitting the strings of Raghuraman's historical body and locating her individual Indian dancer's body in a critical cross-cultural situation of necessary and conditional affiliations and adherences which went underneath her dance proposal. That *transculturation* phenomenon played the main role in the development of the entire project and had placed the identity of her dance-work, for that period being, in a political border line of cultural negotiations with the environment and adaptations, aesthetical concessions (especially dramaturgy wise) and certain ethical determinations.

The *transculturation* phenomenon worked as a disposal, in the process of *Door de ogen van mijn stad*, that reveals the struggle of Raghuraman seeking a new aesthetic (mentioned already in her two-year subsidy plan), which is basically founded in her implementation of Western strategies of disruption to the traditional Bharatanatyam dance form. This disposal unveiled three sides: one is the cultural (subjective) location (2.4) of Raghuraman's visceral body of a dance maker, from where she is drawing her artistic aim and objects as choreographer; second is the citation (2.4) of Raghuraman's project *Door de ogen van mijn stad* into the structural context of a Western Dutch theatre local policies, its market with its conditions, demands and requirements; third are the politics of location and citation of her dance group as a dance community and as individual dancing bodies, considering that the Hindu dance community was one of the main key-points for the subsidy request and it was the one which received less consideration. But where is the Raghuraman political discourse of empowerment towards the Hindustan culture and community in The Netherlands?

Where is the intended participation in a community art trajectory for the Hindustani community in The Hague? Where is the location and citation of that group and under which conditions?

The last point is about the construction of dance system in Raghuraman dance language that I have mentioned in item 6.1 of this chapter. I was not certainly sure that she was trying to build up a dance system like the early moderns, Merce Cunningham or Trisha Brown did. What I do believe is that she was truly based in the Bharatanatyam system, which possesses a very organized structure, to build up her choreographic work. She was implementing, besides, technical dance resources where the sustainable core was the Bharatanatyam form as a training, expressive language and to certain extent a containable dance system. That containable dance system enabled the dancing bodies to move towards some choreographic development; in summary, she used a structural (traditional) disciplinary system in combination with some (post) modern Western dance resources to approach an aesthetic of the Bharatanatyam dance form. The use of other techniques, resources, contemporary dance principles and improvisation devices mainly complemented her creative choreographic work. I have not seen during my observations the emergence of a particular dance system because she used and relayed the traditional Eastern and Western dance systems both to build up a performance. In this regard is important to acknowledge that Kalpana was not constructing a specific dance language, at that point, although she was geared to that, but rather a new performative aesthetic of the Bharatanatyam. When I mean 'performative aesthetic' I am referring to the capacity to employ representational content in the expression and exposition of a form, an idea or an attitude (in the case of dance, it manifests through the body). It is the way the expression is manifested to the immediacy of senses to the public performance and to the viewer.

In this way she did not to re-write the classical Bharatanatyam form in a new organized choreographic system but rather to re-inscribe its Bharatanatyam aesthetic in an actual social context. She, as choreographer, had tried with this choreographical proposal to browse her work as choreographer into the contemporary dance programs in the Dutch dance market.

The analysis of Raghuraman's work from the perspective of dance language and system is less extensive than what her artistic aim appeared to be at first sight through the two-year subsidy concept *Met twee handen in de Lucht, Met twee Voeten en Den Haag...*

In fact, Raghuraman's work was submitted to a very conservative dance system of a dance form classed as local, ethnic, ritualistic and/or folkloric to apply to a contemporary vision of art work. Hence she aimed with *Door de ogen van mijn stad* to be registered in the renewal of the authentic Bharatanatyam dance tradition, applying in her dramaturgy a narrative Western theatrical (traditional) revision that Mulvey would define as the 'male gaze of the western'.

I think her work brings many controversial points of political discussion to dance politics, body politics, and *inter-(dance)-textuality*. I believe definitively that Raghuraman's work proposal

is still in progress, and as well its dramaturgical research, being disguised as a conclusive production work. In my vision, I was attending an ongoing dance development in progress.

CHAPTER 7:

CONCLUSIONS

“At that point my questions about difference and versatility of movement and the cultural body had exceeded the scholastic statements of the contemporary dance studies at the dance academy...”
(Chapter 1)

7.1 Summary

Throughout this thesis I have made several advances in order to achieve the results and responses to the research question presented in chapter 1. During the process I have achieved:

1- Creating an integrated framework, which the reader could find in chapters 2, 3 and 4, from developmental psychology, cultural studies and dance studies perspectives where contemporary dance, in terms of phenomena of cultural production, may be observed as emergent of the subjectivity and identity of individual body. Thus, from that framework I have been able to respond to sub-question 1 about the body’s subjectivity and its identity, to sub-question 2 about subjectivity and identity in contemporary dance and to sub-question 3 about subjectivity and identity in the origination movement.

2- Bridging and gathering the outcomes delivered by those three chapters and finding the conceptual points of convergence in them. The reader could find that in chapter 5, in response to sub-question 4 where I presented my formulations about dance language and dance system and introduced my first approximations to the main research question.

3- Formulating, based on the previous results, operative points for analyses and approaching a new inquiry focusing specifically on the case-study of Raghuraman’s work *Door de ogen van mijn stad* in chapter 6.

4- Depicting the case-study of Raghuraman’s work *Door de ogen van mijn stad* in chapter 6, looking at the frames, context, social perspectives and structure of her work, in relation to the emergence of subjectivities and identities in dance as a result of environmental and cross-cultural Western and non-Western influences.

5- To formulate, based on the specificities of Raghuraman’s work *Door de ogen van mijn stad*, a new approximation to the main research question.

In chapter 7, primarily I aim to bring a response to the main research question and to come back to my first concerns posited in my introduction when I mentioned the notion of ‘cultural body’ and the features of *difference* and *versatility*. I aim to bring light and reflection to the interdependence of

environments and dance subjectivities and identities and those dance developments that arise from cross-cultural phenomena.

At the same time I aim to reflect and discuss ‘the Other’ alternative dance proposals that can be correspondent or similarly equated with contemporary dance but which do not belong to the Western academy.

In this last regard I am acknowledging that the concept of contemporary dance historically belongs to the cultural and economical patrimony of the Western academy domain. It is my intention to consider and to raise critique about the position of Western contemporary dance in relation to other dance-fields (like popular dances or ethnic dances) within the current international and intercultural context and to entice reflection as well about the possible enlargement of the term ‘contemporary dance’ to those dance fields as well. This point I will address in item 7.5.

7.2 Response to the main research question

Previously I made attempts to approximate the response to my main research question in item 5.3 and item 6.3.2 from two different angles. In my first approximation my response resulted from an coming out of the theoretical research and in the second instance my response was a narrow outcome concerning the depiction of a case study.

Following my first approximation in chapter 5, the conditions for the conformation of a dance language of a mover are potentially laying on the subjectivity and identity of the individual enabling the origination of a specific mode of moving through physical topographic differences and versatile ways of becomings, to use Lepecki’s expression.

Those bodily topographies would become into a specific mode of the motional, behavioural manifestation which would be defined as language and discourse of the physical performance in the personhood of a mover. It is important to remark that not all the behavioural, physical and movement languages would transform in dance language, however that potential exists equally in the mover’s personhood and consequently in the dancing body.

In the particular case-study of Raghuraman, the cultural knowledge of the Bharatanatyam dance, in all its extension of significance, is what played the most sensible and meaningful role during the research process of the work *Door de ogen van mijn stad*. The role of culture, in this case, was not only the mastering of that Bharatanatyam dance form, but also an entire communication pathway that emerged from the Hindu dancers group and from the choreographer with a common background as sole code of community. That is what made the Raghuraman conceptual difference in her approach to the performance project and consequently to her trial to construct a dance language.

In this sense my assumptions about what is *difference* and *versatility* in the movement of the dancing body related to the emergence of the individual subjectivity and identity are indeed confirmed. In this case-study it is the location of the cultural identity of the Kalpana Raghuramn body and her dancing community within a shared ground of identification in language, history, parenting, religion, life style, philosophy and...the dance. However, there are pathways to materialize those features of *difference* and *versatility* in the movement upcoming from an individual identity towards a dancing body.

That materialization of those features of *difference* and *versatility* in the movement is hosted by the conditions of vulnerability, visibility and invisibility of the dancing body in accordance with the definitions by Lepecki, Dempster and Kunst (5.2.2), who stated vulnerability as a quality and intrinsic feature of contemporary dance. In my view, the condition of vulnerability addresses mainly to the identity of the dancing body deflecting, which the three thinkers define in different ways as the phenomenon of 'a colonization of the body' (3.2, 3.3, 5.2, 6.3) that occurred normally through disciplinary systems or through many other haired imposed dance identities.

In the specific case of Raghuraman, the sustainable core of her disciplinary system was the Bharatanatyam dance, a containable and structured dance system that enabled her creative work. There were also traces in her work from other (post) modern Western dance resources, which were not used in the completeness of the disciplinary regime. But the Bharatanatyam form as a movement system was used by the choreographer, technically, expressively and formally.

The concept of identity of the dancing body, whose characteristic of vulnerability would be materialized through the performative stances of visibility or invisibility (also considered as quality and intrinsic feature in the outcomes item 5.2.2) is the inner matter that will be always linked to issues of representation. The identity of the dancing body will be submitted either to the representation of the body (the repression of the body's meaning, body matters, signification or identity of body) or to the aesthetics of the body representation (the content or meaning of the body when is being exposed) that will have their bounces and responses to the viewer receptivity. That representation of the dancing body entices the cultural literacy, the background and historical traces of the body itself, according to Grosz, which will be crossed by the body location and citation, namely, the environment.

The environmental factor addresses the body geography, psychogenesis and performative situation, but rather addresses in the case of the dancing body, the environmental factor directly to the body's performance. In the case of Raghuraman, there were two environments: her dancing community and the production house undergoing the project. I have seen Raghuraman trial to construct from her inner subjectivity an original language, though influenced by traditional systems of movement, which I believe she keeps in her body memory and in the dance community cultural memory. The second environment conformed by social, political and cultural alignments of

interpretation appeared in the dancing bodily interaction of the choreographer and her community with the viewers, namely, the theatre, the production house, the dramaturge, the public and the Hindu community. As I have described in chapters 2 and 4, environments always intertwined, intervened and interlaced the outcome of the subjective and becoming incarnated in the subjective of the individual. That environment, in the case of Raghuraman, regarding my conclusions exposed in chapter 6, is described as a ‘double phenomenon of transculturation’ that is dressing up underneath her project. That phenomenon of transculturation made to locate Raghuraman individual Indian dancer’s body and leader of a dance community, in a political situation of confrontations, aesthetical negotiations, radical ethical determinations, and discussions about her choreographer-leading position of a community and performative choices; all those might have enlarged or diminished her artistic dance work.

Coming back to my main research question, I want to complete the inquiry about the possibility of dance system existence from out of the subjective and identity of the individual. I want to asseverate what I already prognosticated in chapter 5 that, unlike movement language or dance language, a dance system attempts in the first place to be artificial. Its artificiality is held in the historical persistent trial of perdurability and continuance of a dancistic structure in a stable and fixed organization by choreographers, dance teachers, scholars and dancers. That structure facilitates movement organization, to gear the logic of movement fluid in a certain way; those systems may enable the production of dance identities or dance languages. Nevertheless, movement or dance systems are arbitrarily written even when those can be based on improvisation bases. Therefore, in very exceptional cases of dance systems production, the individual subjectivity and identity of the dancer would not be the main condition, because the dance system is an abstraction that belongs to previous dance languages; it has a hidden aim of being objective, repeatable, sizeable, countable and metric in any way possible. The example of the particular case-study in Raghuraman did not generate a particular dance system *per se*, rather her work-mode relied on the traditional Eastern and Western dance systems, both geared to build up a performance aesthetic.

7.2.1 New questions

What exactly is the role displayed by the subjectivity and identity of the individual dancing body in the conformation of a dance system if the dance system does never address the subjective of the individual?

I am not saying that subjectivity and identity of the individual dancing body are not assumed in the construction of a dance system, but rather that they are not essentially the core of the system unlike could be the core in the conformation of a dance language, because as I have mentioned

before in a dance system there is a tendency towards 'objectivity' because it may be used by many bodies, many types of physicalities, many corporealities.

It is important to make a distinction whenever there is an explicit construction of a system, like Vaganova, like Graham or Cunningham techniques, whenever the system is being reproduced by others due to training or other developments like the case of Raghuraman that she uses systems to create an aesthetic. In this sense, I am stressing that the natural tendency of a dance system (as any other system) is to be neutral and in a way or another is a medium, in the case of dance, that enables movement development to be.

I do have still another two questions relating the subject of this thesis, which I will leave open to the reader:

How may the subjectivity and identity of the individual dancing body be located in the intertwined relation between dance language and dance system?

How can I make the relations between dance language and dance identity more explicit?

7.3 Recapitulation and concerns

Hereby I want to bring a recapitulation and some reflections as outcomes from my response to the main research question.

In the beginning of this paper, one of first assumptions was that the features of *difference* and *versatility* in the movement of the dancing body could be related to the emerging subjectivities and identities of the individual. Subjective body addresses, acknowledges and constitutes and identity of body and accepts its transformations. Subjective bodies (our bodies) are loaded with cultural information, physical traces, affective layers, social manners, emotional backgrounds, transculturated stratus, spiritual experiences, playful, unpleasant, active, passive, sexual, transgressive and non transgressive, respectful and disrespectful organic, physical and motoric experiences. All those endeavour the neurological system and motoric behaviour, actions and reactions. Those emerging subjectivities are part of the processes of mutations and transformations of the individual which Elizabeth Grosz defined and explained so beautifully as 'corporealities'. The concept of corporeality in performance and dance studies is been equated to the body identities.

Those features of *difference* and *versatility* part of the subjective individual body composed the identity of body which can inform the characteristics of an individual dancing body. Those body identities had been able to create language and also to apply, to become a dancing body and to affiliate to dance identities. The notion of body had been evolving in the Western Culture, the recognition and acknowledgement of body and of the subjective enabled the apparition of early modern dance.

Dancing bodies had built up dance identities over history. Some dancing bodies had generated and developed themselves into dance identities. Some of those dancing bodies had applied and submitted their physicalities to other dance identities. Historically, since the beginning of 20th century, one of the main particularities of contemporary dance discipline was the prominence of its different and versatile character (1.2) within the dance community, namely; the soloists, dance companies and independent groups. Modern dance communities -from Isadora Duncan (20's), then the disciples of German expressionism (30's) and later the post-modern dancers (70's) - had been moving around the world seeking their 'own language of expression' and identities. Those communities have been joining followers and disciples who have been obeying the sacred white principles of their masters and choreographers. That search of that own language of expression, that sense of oneness, had been the distinctive feature in the behaviour of those contemporary dance communities in opposition to the ballet ensembles characterized by the exemplar virtuosity of its forms. Contrarily, contemporary dance had been enlarged out of the boundaries of ballet tradition, first, and out of the modernist parameters of the 30's, later, emphasizing and accentuating the distinction with ballet and generating varied nuances among contemporary dance ensembles. There is borne the historical appropriation of *difference* and *versatility* characters which had been learned in dance scholarship as icons of definition in contemporary dance discipline, and which had preserved its state of being distinctive from other dance forms - Folk-dances, ethnic dances and ballet in terms of movement varied structure, composition and texture. Those states of *difference* and *versatility* of contemporary dance spoke tacitly about the subjective and about the corporeal which started already with the early modernist statements of the first dance identities generated by Martha Graham and Isadora Duncan. Those subjective notions of the dancing body had been producing changes and effects over Western dance history that has reflected its character and identity through the years.

From an anthropological and sociological approach, the subjectivity and identity of the individual are related to the inner matter that makes bodies and subjects produce a dance event as an observable fact known through the senses rather than thought and hypothesis: those aspects of human subjectivity which generate behaviour with its identity and its distinctive traces, as in the conformation of dance language, discourses and texts.

Since contemporary dance studies become a very broad field, especially since postmodernism in the 70s and the later Manifesto for a European Performance Policy in October 2001, mentioned in the introduction of chapter 3. The broadness in dance became more acute. Nevertheless, the primacy of contemporary dance aesthetics remains underlined by a sort of abstract character. That is what generates the homogeneous concept of contemporary dance in Western

culture that had covered when not unified those features of *difference* and *versatility* that I have mentioned before under the appropriation of contemporary dance scholarship in the academy.

Western contemporary dance had owned, since the early moderns, this notion of the subjective in dance, undermining tacitly the recognition and validation of other possible notions of dance subjectivities as legible codes of aesthetics of representation. That is what Lepecki mentioned as the exclusion of the 'other different' and I could say 'the other versatile' that cannot be seen and be recognized facing the request of presence and visibility in Western performance. Lepecki mentions the cases of Pope L. and in the case of Vera Mantero (2000, pp48-49). Kunst referred to this as the display of the 'Other negativity'.

I would argue that the 'other cannot be visible' in its representation but rather that Western contemporary dance had not been able to learn to see the 'Other'. In that case, many other dance texts could be seen as contemporary. That may produce the dislocation of Western contemporary aesthetic values, a revision that can request a movement of resistance against this "homogeneous" force that Lepecki mentioned before.

The case of Raghuraman illustrates a perfect example of a choreographer borne in the 'Other' culture (with other disciplinary background) and, who is being raised and educated in a Western cultural-social system. Here she intends to work from her subjectivity, her personal background and her identity positioning the Bharatanatyam form inside a definition of contemporariness. Contrarily, what happened is that the environment absorbed the identity of her work, delivering a Western legible dance text.

In this regard, a serious reflection and re-thinking in dance scholarship about what is actually contemporary dance scope should be argued; what has its enlargement to other sectors of the dance field been that have not been scoring the perspectives of what contemporary dance might be?

The last point of reflection is the possibility to consider the extent of dance language development and the dance system endeavours. The dance language flowers from the identity of a dancing body, but the dance system comes from the need to reproduce that identity. A dance system requires method, structures and organization and in some point will lose identitarian position because the rigour of the dance system creates in many cases homogenization. Hence, it is important to broaden the insights about the current diversity of the contemporary dance discipline as part of a cultural practice and manifestation rather than a specifiable topic in dance scholarship of Western academy. It is important to create reflection about how contemporary dance has been conceived, transferred and written until now and how to unfold possible perspectives from where contemporary dance might be seen, perceived, appreciated and created.

My position is that I want to avoid and resist the social commonly accepted Western understanding of contemporary dance as autonomous art form abstracted from its grounding

environment and surroundings which is often promoted through the academy, media, and globalized mainstream theatre. This common Western understanding of contemporary Dance has been overwhelmed by the demands of the cultural industry that have emerged since the late 80ties in Europe and that find a fertile ground in the dancing body that Kunst defined as the autonomous body is vulnerable to colonization. Actually, since globalization, internationalization and multicultural politics are the headlines of national and international policies had contributed to frame identities of dance languages and systems in very 'objective' compartments of our Western dualism, forgetting, repressing or alienating what is subjective.

7.4 Discussion and further questions

At this phase of the thesis I am going to re-think some aspects of the work I have done and re-consider some points of my analysis made before.

My discussions here have to be with the role and influence of environment: contexts, communities and structures in the development of dance subjectivities, identities and language during the production period, in reference to the theoretical frames drawn in chapter 2 (2.2, 2.3, 2.4) and chapter 4 (4.3). I am looking back to my asseverations about the environment that make up the subjective of the mover personhood, the dancing body and therefore a dancing language... I would like to discuss first my approximation in item 6.3.2 question 'h' that is applying the double process of re-writing the Bharatanyam form. Second, I would like to discuss item 6.4 where I mentioned that Raghuraman's trial of constructing a dance language was partially disrupted by the environment. My concern here is why cannot I consider the outcome of the result of the production as a conclusive finished product in this context? Am I analyzing the product or am I analyzing the process? Suddenly I found myself in the dialectical situation of seeking the very true of the matter about the language in Raghuraman's work. From my perspective, in the project *Door de ogen van mijn stad* (independently of other previous projects of Kalpana) the elaboration of her dance language did not finish its process, did not exhaust the possibilities she aimed for with her group. What I mean is that the language did not finish processing is because a dance text, in its subjectivity, is not only a question of forms, shapes and designs but rather 'becomings' in Lepecki's words, qualities, ways of existence, dynamics, what requires maturity of the dancers group, time and accuracy, especially when it is an amateur proposal and still more when it is a community art project where the significance of learning processes resembling the developments of Wallon and Piaget: as dancing bodies, as performers, as dance community, as Hindu community.

The second point of discussion is about the performance of the dance community in a hypothetically presented community arts project. Where is Raghuraman's political discourse of

empowerment towards the Hindustan culture and community in The Netherlands? Where is the intended participation in a community art trajectory for the Hindustani community in The Hague? Where is the location and citation of that group and under which political conditions? In a specific moment of the production process of *Door de ogen van mijn stad* there is a contender between the dancers and the theatre director and dramaturge. At that stage, the dancers were not keen on making changes and skip their own creative material, as it was requested by the direction in certain parts of the piece. Anyhow they are obliged to admit the intervention of someone who is not their artistic leader. At this critical point, the consistence of the project (as community art project) and the core of the project are being, in my view, weakened and the language endeavor of Raghuraman is being affected and added to my view a double issue about the aesthetics of representation and about the ethics of representation. At the same time that the environment is claiming certain aspects of the representation of the piece, what is understandable, nice, hot, dynamic, and effective, structured, is placing at stake a whole previous group creative process of a community with their leader and choreographer. Aesthetics of representation, as well in terms of what have been the true achievements of choreographer Raghuraman with her group to certain instance and my question will be in this specific case why not work dramaturgically with the truly choreographical material that the choreographer achieved with the group, why not go deep into that performatively instead of creating an artificial performative setting? The latter step into what might define as issue about ethics of representation. How far and in what terms is a project of this nature conceived, geared and leaded?

The third discussion is about the transculturation phenomena in one of the environmental sites, namely, the theater, its organization, the dramaturge and the director. I posit my question: are the theatre, dramaturge and production department assuming truly Raghuraman culture? In chapter 2 item 2.3, Malinowsky in the 40's already denied that encounter and transculturation of cultures can be conceived as the simple acceptance of another acculturated human group by a dominant group and also rejected the concept of cultural exchange as a mechanical fusion of borrowed elements of the other. That is precisely the turning point in this whole project, attempting to construct language, which is argued from a community art project policy and from a multicultural policy and perspective and from where the artistic development of Raghuraman should have been the result of that process. Here I am stepping again on the terrain of aesthetics of representation (in this case: body/ies, language, text, dramaturgy of Raghuraman and her dance community) and that is requested to be seen by a dominant group under the cannons of the Western theatre aesthetics, which are not able read the legible results of a work in progress and therefore are not able to facilitate the pathway to a proper dramaturgy, giving room only to a process of re-writing the inner dramaturgy of Raghuraman from a Western perspective; absolutely influenced by the dominant culture.

7.5 Reconsiderations of my method

In terms of methodology, I think I got the privilege to be able to follow the whole process of a dance maker in a particular situation like *Door de ogen van mijn stad*. I do believe that I might have not reached to the same results if I had not had the hundred percent conditions of attendance to the creative research process of the choreographer, production process and post-production. To witness a process of this kind brought the maximum of the vital material for the research. I think also I should have given still more results and differences in the situation that the observation of the choreographer process could have been followed by two intern dramaturges, for example. In that situation I can infer that there should have been some variations in the considerations and critiques about this project.

But, I may not say that the results of Raghuraman's case are applicable to all case-studies with a similar profile. That should be a vain generalization. However, the theoretical frame formulated in the first three chapters 2, 3 and 4, I estimate may be applicable to other dance cases, and also to cases that do not belong strictly to a multi (inter) cultural environment.

I am particularly focus on the definition of contemporary dance and how that is displaying within specifically from a post-colonial perspective. I believe I have been rather closed to the subject post-colonialism and that the results of this thesis might be considered a preamble of a bigger research in the future. In that case, I think that I would need to widen the extension of a research of the cases; the research of study cases should be considered on the bases of minimal a following process of 10 cases with a similar profile and perhaps in different geographies or different dance communities.

I am rather satisfied with the method I have used in thesis. Although I think that in the future if I should come back to this subject, I will adjust some structural points in the theoretical frame. In that respect, I believe that the theoretical frame can be broadened to more authors and more considerations in the particular concepts about corporeality, dance contemporaneity, body identity, dance identity and ethics of representation and, for instance, the definitions of *difference* and *versatility* or the concepts of transculturation, politics of location, citation, and post-colonialism.

I think the thesis reached an important number of notions and concepts that are defined for this purpose very specifically, which I have to narrow the way regarding the research of the specific case. I would aim, in the close future, to further explore and expand those definitions, digging into the subject about subjectivities and identities in the dancing body from a post-colonial perspective. I think the subject is not exhausted yet, but still is underdeveloped and I think it presents much more challenging questions and real possibilities for new endeavors either in the practical or in the theoretical field that it shows at first sight.

7.6 Some thoughts for the future

The entire goal of this thesis was to expose how the subjective and identity of the individual may be manifested in contemporary dance in very different modes and with different types of information, and how the results of the environment are influenced from a cultural perspective.

The intention of my last reflection is to broaden the insights about the current diversity of the contemporary dance discipline as part of a cultural practice, conceived, transferred and written until now and I aim to unfold its manifestation and reformulation about the variety and versatility of contemporary dance canons rather than a specifiable topic in the dance scholarship of Western academy. Coming back to a revision about the considerations of environment in the gestation of subjectivities and dance identities seen through chapter 2, 3 and 4, I would like to enlighten some new considerations and thoughts.

Regarding Lepecki's remarks, where he mentions the acceptance of the strict relation between dance and movement (which he criticizes), that similarly shows to be analogical to the one of mobility and displacement, location and relocation of dancers' bodies in different geographies and situations. I find it appropriated as analogy to the relation that has occurred through the mobility of dancers and the impact on scholarship and the formulation of new dance languages. In any case, dancers' mobility through history has altered, re-figured and transgressed dance scholarship as a result of the colonization, decolonization, and transculturation processes and lately by globalization processes, which had an impact in the actual outcomes of dance production.

In this context, it will be interesting to remember the Diaspora of dance practitioners overseas along different periods of the 20th century. The emergence of subjectivities in Western contemporary dance history has been absolutely linked to dancers' Diaspora of the 20th century entailing two side-effects, one hand an effect of colonization and another contra-effect of appropriation, assimilation, re-interpretation and transculturation of the Western dance legacy by the colonized dancers. Those migration flows have created the grounds for the development of subjectivities in dance.

Dancers' Diaspora in the beginning of the 20th century had been viewed as a romantic 'international exchange case' where the Western dance legacy could impregnate other geographies, other mentalities other bodies towards a 'new' cultural direction of modernization and progression. What happened had shown two side-effects. On one hand, there has been a successful evangelization by modernist dance scholars -whatever dance tendency could have ever been- to 'other bodies'. On the other hand there had been the appropriation, assimilation, re-interpretation and transculturation of the Western dance legacy by the colonized dancing bodies. The very early newcomers of the Expressionist legacy that had immigrated to Argentina, Chile in South America and the United States between the end of the 40's and the end of the 70's are an example. Those

dancing bodies resulting from Diaspora phenomenon is as sample of my assumption in chapter 1 as the one that *difference* and *versatility* in contemporary dance. Those diasporic dancing bodies relate to the emerging subjectivities and identities which have belonged as part of the processes of mutations and transformations of the discipline -in terms of technique, aesthetics, contents, norms and forms-. Those processes of mutations and transformations have been produced when Western academy and discipline have taken contact with different cultural and geographical latitudes through processes of immigration, emigration, domination, commercial exchange, inter-cultural exchange, colonization, decolonization and exile. Therefore it has influenced the origination and conception of movement regarding the construction of the contemporary dance discipline.

Unlike Lepecki when he speaks about the racist-colonialist project or the postcolonial spectral, and unlike Bojana Kunst inspired in the words of Žižek, who mentions 'Otherness as negativity' I prefer to talk about the dancers' Diaspora as a socio-historical factor that enable the emergence of the other dance and contemporary dance renewal. The Western dance academy has owned this notion of the 'subjective' in contemporary dance undermining, tacitly the recognition and validation of other possible notions of dance subjectivities as legible codes of aesthetics of representation.

It is paradoxical that when everyone is stating the instability of the common ground as the bases for actual contemporary dance (in reference to the Manifesto for a European Performance Policy in the 90's mentioned in the introduction of chapter 3), and the crossing over the borders of what has been considered contemporary dance discipline going beyond movement styles and embracing performative instances, I like to stress that, contrarily; that late event is what has underpinned once again the homogeneous character of contemporary dance concept in the Western culture unifying its different and versatile features in a kind of universalistic statement for the whole world.

The latter is a political point in dance history that has sustained the primacy of the Western academy on appropriating every movement, code and disciplinary model that can provide and feed the open Euro American concept of contemporariness. The latter privileges, however, a dance universal homogeneity whilst, silently neglecting the capability of those disciplinary models and systems (Yoga, Bharatanatyam, Butoh, folkloric forms, etc.) to come to 'contemporary' standard by themselves within the Western world without falling into mainstream expressions. Like this has been the case of the American Denishawn School Company, founded in 1915 by Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn. The philosophy of Denishawn both School and Company was based in the idea that all dance techniques were valid and instructive, therefore they offered classes in Oriental, Spanish, and primitive dance within their own innovative techniques. But they had read and re-written those 'other non-white' techniques from a 'white' Western vision. This is a crucial phenomenon that will be repeated in several phases of dance history and as Lepecki mentions, nothing is out of the post-

colonial world the attributes 'universalistic' and 'international'. Concerned deeply, the professional contemporary dance field embedded globalization, internationalization and multicultural politics, which are the topics of national and international cultural policies.

This level of 'inter-cultural' homogenization of contemporary dance has delivered important questions about contemporary dance source and identity, but suspiciously, those questions have been not usually exposed as a problem or a topic in dance scholarship, contrarily becoming one of the main nutrients of the contemporary dance discipline and system but folded as a feature of 'inter-cultural heterogeneity'.

Looking at this context, it seems necessary to go back to the main standpoints of the contemporary dance discipline in the Western culture since the earlier Euro-American modern dancers in the 20's and late the postmodernists in the 70's as those have been subjectivity and identity. The way those concepts are linked to contemporary dance and the way dance subjectivities and dance identities have emerged, manifested and reacted on specific socio historical-cultural environments, communities and societies - exposing an interesting paradox that regards possible re-definitions or re-considerations of what the very matter of contemporary dance might be. This paradox entails rethinking the grounding origination of contemporary dance languages and possibly systems that we scholars, dancers and choreographers still are not able to approach or to acknowledge in a frontal confrontation out of the dominant borders of the Western academy.

Although, there are some attempts of infiltration to destabilize those systems (like the case of Raghuraman could have been one of them), the ongoing tendency of the hegemonic forces keeps absorbing and re-reading the 'other' forms rather than accepting its *difference* and inclusion within the contemporary dance field.

Maria Gabriela Coggiola, 1 August 2012

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