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Studies in/and the Humanities

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Dialogue





Inside/Beside Dance Studies: A Conversation

Mellon Dance Studies in/and the Humanities

With Michelle Clayton, Mark Franko, Nadine George-Graves, André Lepecki,
Susan Manning, Janice Ross, Rebecca Schneider

Edited and introduced by Noémie Solomon
Transcribed by Stefanie Miller

Introduction

by Noémie Solomon

The conversation that follows is excerpted from two public roundtables that took place at Brown University in June 2013, as part of the Mellon funded initiative Dance Studies in/and the Humanities.¹ Titled respectively “Inside” and “Beside” Dance Studies, the roundtables featured

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Mark Franko is professor of dance, Coordinator of Graduate Programs at Temple University (Philadelphia), and professor of visual and performance studies at Middlesex University (London). His publications include *Martha Graham in Love and War: The Life in the Work*, *Dance as Text: Ideologies of the Baroque Body*, *Dancing Modernism/Performing Politics*, *The Work of Dance: Labor, Movement, and Identity in the 1930s*, and *Excursion for Miracles: Paul Sanasardo, Donya Feuer, and Studio for Dance (1955–1964)*. He is editor of *Dance Research Journal*, and founding editor of the Oxford Studies in Dance Theory book series. He edited *Ritual and Event: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* and co-edited *Acting on the Past: Historical Performance Across the Disciplines*. Recipient of the 2011 Outstanding Scholarly Research in Dance award from the Congress on Research in Dance, Franko’s research has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Getty Center for Research into the Arts and Humanities, The American Council of Learned Societies, the American Philosophical Society, and the National Endowment for the Arts. He has taught at Columbia University, Princeton University, Purdue University, and at the University of California–Santa Cruz, where he is currently emeritus; he was Valeska Gert Visiting Professor of Dance and Performance at the Institut für Theaterwissenschaft Freie Universität Berlin, and visiting professor at Bard College, Paris 8, Université de Nice, and the Catholic University of Leuven. His work has been translated into French, Italian, German, and Slovenian.

scholars who exchanged thoughts on a series of vital issues at stake for the practice and study of dance in and beyond academic contexts.² The event was located halfway through the course of a weeklong summer seminar that gathered nearly thirty scholars at different career stages—late PhD students, post-doctoral fellows, early-career and senior faculty members—and which unfolded through a series of research presentations, the sharing of pedagogical tools, discussions on publication and professionalization, and reflections on the “state of the field”—what dance studies might need, want, or do in the current critical conjuncture. Through the speakers’ distinct experiences and vantage points, the public platform addressed a constellation of themes immanent and adjacent to that of Dance Studies. This edited conversation, an abbreviated and reorganized notation of sorts, seeks to outline some of the key questions that were discussed that day around dance research: the specificities associated with dance as an object of research and methodological lens, and how choreographic practices and theories might operate as an aperture, triggering a series of new roles and functions for the performing body across broad epistemological and political fields.

Many of the contributions take to task the delimitation of what might sit *inside* versus *beside* dance studies. Invoking dance practices’ ongoing engagement with and redefinition of questions of movement and stillness, locations and borders, inclusion and exclusion, the discussants remind us not only of the inherent challenges brought forth by dance’s institutionalization or incorporation within academia, but also some of the potentials it may open up in regard to current crises—particularly

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André Lepecki is associate professor at the Department of Performance Studies, New York University. Selected curatorial work includes chief curator of the performing arts festival IN TRANSIT (2008 and 2009), Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; and co-curator of the archive Dance and Visual Arts Since 1960s, for MOVE, Hayward Gallery, London (2010). Selected awards and fellowships include AICA Award Best Performance (2008) for co-curating and directing the authorized re-doing of Allan Kaprow’s *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* (Performa 07); and Resident Fellow Institute of Advanced Studies Interweaving Performance Cultures, Freie Universität, Berlin (2009). Edited publications include *Dance* (2012), *Planes of Composition: Dance, Theory, and the Global* (2009, with Jenn Joy), *The Senses in Performance* (2007, with Sally Banes), and *Of the Presence of the Body* (2004). Single authored works include *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement* (2006).

Susan Manning is an internationally recognized historian of modern dance who has presented her research in Germany, Great Britain, France, Japan, and Argentina, as well as in the United States. She is the author of *Ecstasy and the Demon: The Dances of Mary Wigman* (1993; second edition, 2006) and *Modern Dance, Negro Dance: Race in Motion* (2004); curator of *Danses Noires/Blanche Amérique* (2008); and co-editor of *New German Dance Studies* (2012). She is a professor of English, theater, and performance studies at Northwestern University and principal investigator for the Mellon-funded initiative Dance Studies in/and the Humanities. In 2013 she received an award for “outstanding scholarly research in dance” from the Congress on Research in Dance.

those sweeping the arts and humanities in the U.S. Here, dance's constitutive, restless motions can make forceful and timely interventions in reorganizing regimes of knowledge and perception. And yet, dance's precariousness as a field or a discipline often prompts anxieties—has it any indigenous methodology? what is the nature of the knowledge it produces if any?—questions to which a series of choreographic, administrative, and political measures respond. Hence the drawing of a distinct territory and the tightening of dance's borders: its strategic partitioning to the space of the body and the physical, and to that of the studio and the theater. In this light, that which is given to be seen of dance and of the dancing body is utterly political, in a similar fashion to that which is positioned as inside, beside, and outside its study—distinctions that too often seem to reiterate the dichotomy between practice and theory. Not only is dance, since the very inception of the modern discipline of choreography, a battlefield for the shaping of the political body, but it also constitutes a laboratory for subverting and re-assigning the ways in which the body relates to fields of visibility. A series of choreographic experimentations and research gestures thus challenge and re-imagine the relation between that which is *inside* and *beside* the dancing body: through emptying out its depths and interiority, or by prompting a series of affective connections between heterogeneous bodies, these acts address and re-function dance's many techniques, vocabularies, codes, affects, and histories.

The participants also note the ambivalent function of the slash in relation to dance and humanities—Dance in/and the Humanities. What is the nature of the relation at work? Is dance performing an alliance, a critical intimacy, or a gesture toward interdisciplinarity? Does it signal its inclusion and swallowing, as it is disseminated across the humanities? Or might we imagine the slash like that of a slant, as dance falls onto the humanities—a destabilization of sorts requiring skillful negotiations and re-balancing? The slant might here figure an angle, an affective vector that prompts

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Rebecca Schneider is professor of theater arts and performance studies at Brown University. She is the author of *The Explicit Body in Performance* (1997) and *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (2011). She is co-editor of *Re:Direction* (2001), an anthology on twentieth-century Western directing and co-editor of a special issue of *TDR: A Journal of Performance Studies* on Precarity and Performance. She is the author of numerous essays on performance and visual culture, including “Hello Dolly Well Hello Dolly: The Double and Its Theatre,” “Solo Solo Solo,” and “It Seems as if I Am Dead: Zombie Capitalism and Theatrical Labor.” She is co-editor of the series *Theatre: Theory/Text/Performance* with University of Michigan Press and consortium editor of *TDR*.

Noémie Solomon is an Andrew W. Mellon postdoctoral fellow in the English department at McGill University, and was awarded her PhD in performance studies from New York University (2012). She is currently researching the Québécois choreographic scene around issues of unworking and minoritarian practices, and editing a critical anthology on theories of contemporary and interdisciplinary dance across French and English languages (Les Presses du Réel, 2014).

directionality and helps us reimagine gestures of the past as they intersect with trajectories yet to come. One way of reading this conversation, then, might be through transversality, cutting across borders, practices, and theories, while creating new frictions and relations for dancing bodies to make sense in academia—within and without.

Susan Manning: I want to start by troubling the distinction between inside and outside, because it is possible to work both inside and outside dance studies, and I have spent my career doing exactly that. My publications and my professional service have placed me inside dance studies, while my institutional placement—I have been paid by an English department for the last twenty-five years—has placed me outside dance studies. I was hired into a modern drama line with a modern dance dissertation, and I teach across drama, theater, performance, and dance studies. I'm making this point up front because my own institutional position has been relevant to the conception of the Mellon initiative. So first I want to outline how the Mellon project developed, and then I'll talk about how last year's summer seminar has altered my vision of the field.

Serving as president of the Society of Dance History Scholars from 2004 to 2008 started my thinking toward the Mellon proposal. As the outgoing president of SDHS, I delivered a keynote titled "Looking Back," which was published in the *SDHS Proceedings* for 2008. The lecture surveyed dance studies in the U.S. over the last eighty years, starting in the 1930s, when modern dance first found patronage in college and university dance and physical education departments. The lecture highlighted the 1970s as a period of consolidation and change, as a new range of postmodern artistic practices and intellectual trends impacted the field. That keynote had several purposes. First, I wanted to challenge the widespread misconception that dance studies only became interesting or viable since the postmodern turn. Second, I wanted to show how deeply embedded was the divide between "Western theater dance" and "world dance" in what we have come to call the Bennington model and the Wisconsin model of dance in the academy from the 1930s on. The Wisconsin model understood dance in the university curriculum as a way to create an integrated self. The Bennington model understood the university as a training venue for aspiring modern dancers and literate spectators. It is no surprise that National Endowment for the Arts studies have shown that dance-goers are more highly educated than any other arts constituency: after all, modern dance audiences are trained in universities and colleges.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the divide between "world dance" and "Western theater dance" became problematic to many of us. Over the last two decades, the distinction between historical, ethnographic, and theoretical research in dance studies has blurred, to the point where there no longer are distinct subfields but rather interrelated approaches. Certainly, the research presented at last year's and this year's seminar have demonstrated an ongoing conversation between these three perspectives. This seems to me a profound—and a very positive—change in the field. When I now reread the proposal submitted to the Mellon Foundation three years ago, it already seems out of date.

By the end of last summer's seminar, it seemed that we had defined three different models for dance studies in the U.S. academy. The first is a model that I associate with the reforms that Susan Foster brought first to University of California–Riverside, and now to UCLA, where the MFA and PhD students take the same set of core courses in dance studies. This model understands dancing, and especially the organization of dancing that we call choreography, as a mode of theorizing. Thus dance studies aims to illuminate how dance practice theorizes the body, self and other, collectivity and divinity. This model posits that dance studies differs in kind from other inquiries within the humanities and the humanistic social sciences and proposes performative writing as a way of marking that difference.

Another model could be called integrationist or assimilationist model. This is the model that I've most often deployed in my career. This model promotes dance studies as an established subfield within a range of departments in the humanities or humanistic social sciences. An integrationist model posits that dance studies differs not in kind, but in degree from other fields in the humanities

and humanistic social sciences. As I once wrote, it is no more difficult to recover historical dance practices than it is to recover how actors performed at the Theater of Dionysos in ancient Athens or at the Globe in Shakespeare's London: scholars have to make educated guesses on the basis of fragmentary evidence. This model seems to have taken hold in some graduate departments of theater and performance in the U.S., namely, Northwestern, New York University, Berkeley, and Texas-Austin.

However, at last year's summer seminar, it became clear that the integration of dance into performance studies has created some tensions in the field. Several of my senior colleagues believe that performance studies has erased or undermined dance-specific methods of movement inquiry. In response to this critique, Rebecca at last year's seminar challenged the group to continue engaging in a performance studies approach, without necessarily living under the rubric or being colonized by the field, in order to examine not just dance as culture, but culture as dance. And I applaud her stance.

My final point is that these three models do not exhaust the possibilities for working inside and outside dance studies. In fact, one can move between different models and blend parts of different models. Just as scholars can work both inside and outside dance studies, so too can scholars work in radical and integrationist ways.

Rebecca Schneider: In the *New German Dance Studies* excerpt that you circulated, Susan, you wrote of *Kulturwissenschaft* that: "cultures of the body have contributed to this new kind of research both as text-like objects for study and as alternative models to the textual paradigm" (Manning and Ruprecht 2012, 2). We mentioned the inside/outside problematic earlier in terms of talking about the slant between the words, and I think your notion of a "new kind of research" helps us think about the both/and: *both* text *and* alternative to text. How can we think more rigorously about research that allows, always, a both/and—both inside and outside, both disappearing and remaining, both live and nonlive, both text and nontext, both . . . right and wrong? In fact, perhaps dancers are more comfortable with both/and? This is a question. Think of a *plié*, both movement upward and downward, simultaneously. How can scholarship learn from the body and overcome our habits of rendering relations as mutually exclusive opposites?

I also really appreciate Susan's essay "Looking Back Moving Forward." (By the way, my favorite thing about that title is the lack of a comma—you can't place yourself exactly in that construction.) Here, Susan you write of another duality, and question the both/and, writing about the duality of "dance as art" and "dancing as culture." This is sometimes positioned, of course, as practice/theory, and, as you say, "that duality persists." You ask: "is there a defining parameter of the field, like the overlap of historical and theoretical approaches to literary studies? Or is it a binary that unnecessarily fragments the field?" (Manning 2008, 6). In other words: can we have the both/and? And I'm interested in this question of an unnecessary fragmentation, or a necessary fragmentation. I wonder: do we have to decide? Or can we be in a position of deep unknowing at the site of the slant? Can this be a productive and undecidable ambivalence?

So, in my own work I've negotiated my own both/ands. André circulated his terrific essay "From Partaking to Initiating: Leadingfollowing as Dance's (a-personal) Political Singularity" (Lepecki 2013). There, "leading/following" is clearly a question balancing on the slant. Of thinking/doing things that are usually mutually exclusive—you know, it's hard to think right/wrong! Can we think these things as im/balance? As a kind of dance? It's not entirely easy within habits of scholarly discourse, regimens of writing dissertations, no matter how Derridean any of us claim to be. In my own work, the bothand (like André's "followlead") has been ephemeral/remaining, as well as then/now. Donna Haraway has called this a politic of simultaneity. And that politic of simultaneity is difficult, she has argued, for the academy. How can something be both partial and complete, for instance? Partial and complete-as-partial, or wrong and right-as-wrong, or right and wrong-as-right. Carolyn Dinshaw quotes Haraway calling for "*simultaneously* an account of radical

historical contingency for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects, a critical practice for recognizing our own 'semiotic technologies' for making meaning, *and* a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a 'real' world" (Haraway quoted in Dinshaw 1999, 14).³ Now, these are things that seem impossible together. You know, how can the "real" be both radically contingent and allow a "faithful" account via "semiotic technologies"? Dinshaw goes on to write, still dancing with Haraway, that

... a queer history, not denying the desire for some sort of recoverable past, attempts to provide such an account of the production of knowledges that seeks as well to account faithfully for the "real." The queer history I develop ... does so by what Haraway calls "partial connection"—"The knowing self is partial in its guises, never finished, whole, simply there and original; it is always constructed and stitched together imperfectly, and therefore able to join with another, to see together without claiming to be another." (Ibid)

Dinshaw says this is what Michel Foucault calls, elusively, vibration. And I think we've heard this in a lot of work across the last couple of days. Vibrant, or vibratory scholarship (perhaps Georges Bataille might say alternating), puts productive tensions together and tries to listen to them simultaneously. But it seems to me that *all* of this is deeply familiar to dance, even if still (and tiringly) unsettling to written scholarship that requires us to parse the right from the wrong, the error from the ideal, the legitimate from the illegitimate, live from dead, etc. Words like vibration are bodily words. Lively words. A lot of work today is looking for bodily sensation to mark a new kind of work. And I think that Dance Studies can help us with that. In some ways I think we're seeking an access to partiality. We're seeking an access to partial connection. You know, post-modernity: we may be well out from under the drive for mastery. But do we know how to value partiality?

Whether we look to the partial through Judith Butler's notion, for instance, of vulnerability or injurability, or look through Foucault for care, or whether we celebrate the current emphasis on relationality, or affect studies, as a way to explore the both/and, there remains a great deal of work to do. The question becomes one of unsettling the body off of the site of positive embodiment, into all the partial spaces it may or may not touch. The body both in positive and negative space. The body being always already in a space between. Not only here, now, contingently, but in the affective spaces that any body creates in relation to other objects, other bodies, other things—in and *across* space and in and *across* time.

I think a lot of really interesting work these days is not about loss, not about forgetting the body formerly known as human, but about moving us into a space between, an animistic if not animated space, where humanism can be "not only human." Both/and. There's a great deal to think about. Recent "new materialism" is important for dance (or better, dance is important for the new materialism). The both/and is used in much new materialist work to extend the human beyond a myopia of subjectivity and into what André was accessing as thing theory. I was really interested also in the invitation in André's work to think against utility, or, has he says, "evacuate" utility. That's really difficult when we're wanting to think both/and, right? We're wanting to *both* utilize dance scholarship to expand dance studies in the academy, *and* we're wanting to critique utility—perhaps, evacuate the utility of disciplinary and medial boundaries when those boundaries are used primarily as limits to thought. André used the word "initiate" as a possible way out of the stultifying aspects of the paradox. Sounding like Gertrude Stein (who sounded like Henri Bergson), he invites us to constantly initiate, again and again and again. And there's still a both/and problem with that, right? Because we want to set something up that will have a baton—an object sometimes defined as "dance" that we can pass on in a kind of relay race of transmission, but at the same time, we seek an institution that undoes itself into initiation. So perhaps the emphasis or focus has to be off of the baton—the thing or idea or template or tradition or limit passed on—and onto the human action of passing—the reaching, the running, the reaching again, *the letting go*.

I don't think that with the both/and (both useful and against utility), we ever get something that we can call pure. So I want to make a plea for always thinking with the impure. Here I think that "error" is a useful category, and of course it is key in thinking about so-called "live" performance, the signature of which is that "something can go wrong." We should emphasize that "something wrong" more carefully. So I want to argue for the fecundity of error. How is error a particular provenance of the body? Can dance give us not only a better field for thinking about the simultaneity of traditionally mutually exclusive opposites (like up/down), but also help us theorize the something that can go wrong that we value so highly in live performance? Perhaps we can get Mellon funding for error studies? Good luck with that.

Despite what I just said about error, I want to caution us against an over-privileging of the live and liveness. The category is famously under-theorized and can easily foreclose a more productive both/and analysis. Why do we insist that things that take place live in time are living? Or that the living are only live in time? Or that the dead do not appear on stage? Or that recorded things are not live? What is dead dance, for instance, and does it occur live? I mean, theater has been dead for a long time. And because of that, it's one of the reasons that you just can't kill it. I mean that as a compliment. And you know, all these other media—apparently film's dead now—and no, you can't kill a zombie form. As I argue in *Performing Remains* (Schneider 2011), I want us to think about inter-inanimacies. Those are my comments.

Mark Franko: Thank you. Thank you for inviting me to this seminar. I just want to start off by responding a bit to some of Susan's thoughts and then backtrack to where I thought I would begin before. Because I think it's so fascinating, Susan, your description of this choreography theory mode of research, versus the assimilationist mode, and I think there's another option out there, which is the interdisciplinary mode. And I've worked with that myself over the years, some of you may know, at Santa Cruz with this Center of Visual and Performance Studies [VPS], which was a very kind of grassroots attempt there to move dance studies forward in that context where we had a lot of disciplines, but they weren't represented by many people. It's one of these small universities where it's almost as if one person represents each discipline. So there's this potential for a certain collegiality, and certainly one of the things that attracted me there in the first place was, you know, that I could engage with Teresa de Lauretis, with Hayden White, with Jim Clifford on a very kind of even terrain there. And that was a great audience for everyone. But this idea that we could do dance studies within an interdisciplinary framework which has methodological connotations, but also institutional connotations, is, I think, a third model, but maybe the most difficult institutionally to realize because it's very hard to institutionalize interdisciplinarity. Catherine Soussloff and I wrote an article on that experience for *Social Text*: "A New History of Interdisciplinarity" (Soussloff and Franko 2002).

I don't think Louis Menand's discussion of interdisciplinarity as anxiety has much purchase on dance studies. For one thing, dance studies is, I believe, something relatively new. I do think it constitutes an epistemological break of the 1980s. Menand writes: "[T]he elites have had the resources to innovate and the visibility to set standards for the system as a whole" (2010, 18). The Ivy League did not discover dance studies, and it is still having difficulty recognizing it. Of course, nowhere in Menand's book is dance so much as mentioned. The point is that in terms of dance, interdisciplinarity is not a way out of the discipline: it is a way to describe the complexity of the discipline or "object" of study. I think those of us originally trained in the humanities—I think of Michelle Clayton who is here with us today—find dance *within* their own discipline even as they find dance studies *beside* or without.

Michelle Clayton: Thanks very much. Maybe to pick up on something that Rebecca was talking about a moment ago: the idea of partiality, which we might connect back to the idea of interdisciplinarity. And looking at the question of—not so much institutions, which are obviously very important for thinking about this—but pedagogy itself. The space of the classroom: I find that's one of the places, or one of the routes through which I found my way back to dance from

being a practitioner and then having the two forcibly separated—going to graduate school for literary studies and literally not being able to line up time-wise classes that would coincide with that. So the space of the classroom itself as a way of thinking about partial connections. And maybe a call for less nervousness on our own parts about not having a full immersion in a subject before you begin to deal with it. Part of my work has involved the notion of fleeting encounters: encounters that are based in half-knowledges, and sometimes in errors and in misunderstanding, even generative misunderstandings.

I found my own way really to thinking about dance through a course that I started to teach about ten years ago on the international avant-gardes. I started thinking about the bodies that were transmitting different forms of experiment across different spaces: a question that was somehow invisible to me, until students began to talk about it from their own positions, was the role that was being played by dancers in the avant-gardes. And this is still something that is not sufficiently recognized, whether in terms of dancers moving between different spaces, or just the activity of dancers themselves within a space such as the Cabaret Voltaire. For instance, with dancers such as Sophie Taeuber, the experience of performing night after night after night an entirely new show. The exhausting nature of that repetition, and how little attention has been given to the role played by dance within that particular configuration. I find that every time I teach a version of this course, every time I start working with graduate students who have an increasing interest in dance, they are bringing texts to me that I wasn't aware of before, or they're making me see texts in a very different way than I'd seen before.

Once you open up the lens of dance studies onto another field, a whole range of different apertures opens up. You start to see multiple languages in conversation with one another, multiple art forms, actively engaging with and generating new ideas through the period of the avant-gardes. One of the ideas this generates, that is very theoretically important for us now, is the notion of the temporality of an action. We find a number of writers and theorists in the early twentieth century demanding precise attention to a moment, and to the small moments within a moment itself, but also holding open a space of time as a time for experiment—insisting on the importance of not specifying the end product. And this allows a certain series of movements to unfold, which involve conversations within or between different spheres.

It may be helpful to point out that all of the movement I'm tracing in my own work in the modernist period—movements of dancers, artists, writers across the Americas—is partly a consequence of war, and partly a critical response to war in Europe. Dada, the Cabaret Voltaire, had used bodily agitation to signal the breakdown of communicative possibilities, and possibly also the regeneration of those possibilities in the process. But we also need to consider the issue of so many performers being literally displaced from Europe; as theater houses were closed down, dancers were forced to travel further afield, to North and South America. Of course one of the dangers of the approach that I'm trying to undertake here, which involves tracing these movements, is that it tends to suggest a diffusionist model for culture. The idea that cultural modernity radiates outward from Europe, and is picked up and transformed in different spaces. I think that one of the ways that we can turn this around is to pay careful attention to the knowingness of the gaze that's being turned on these circulating icons. In other words, in different parts of the South American continent, local audiences receive these performances of modernity critically, and use them to stage their own disagreement, a different temporality in the reception of these figures.

The basic idea behind this involves shifting the accent from cultural production to cultural consumption. Placing the accent not on the tours themselves—of Isadora Duncan, or of Anna Pavlova, or of Tórtola Valencia, or of any of these figures—but on the way that local audiences are staging their own versions of modernity in their reactions to those icons. This also helps us to perceive quite clearly, I think, looking back, the idea of dance as offering an alternative history of modernity. This is something that Mark points to in his introduction to the most recent issue of

Dance Research Journal (Franko 2013), that if we actually look at dance, we can see different kinds of cultural flashpoints emerging, focused around the momentary appearance in these different spaces of performing bodies. And sometimes, as I'm trying to show in my own work, performances or ideas or projects or imaginations that come to nothing, that burn out in the process of being imagined. Take Nijinsky for instance: he was in Argentina for two very brief moments in 1913 and 1917, but those very brief moments were sufficient to suggest that there was something in the style of dance that he was offering which lent itself to local re-appropriation and reworking. Nijinsky in this instance stood not for the most up-to-date modernity, not for a universal modernity that was trying to colonize the globe, but instead for a certain local engagement with Russian folklore. And that in itself, that kind of particularism, became paradoxically enticing as a model for Argentinian audiences.

Mark Franko: I would like to come back to the whole conversation about what dance studies is as a disciplinary formation. What are its needs institutionally? That is, very pragmatically speaking, where do we need best to position ourselves in order to move the field forward? In this context I want to propose the potential interest of the no longer new term: interdisciplinarity. Of course, it always works in a very concrete way in terms of who the interlocutors are. Interdisciplinarity implies the interdisciplinary team, a point that Jean-François Lyotard made in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979). What is the dynamic that enables it to occur? The assimilationist model Susan mentioned, which seems to me mostly a model that connects dance to literature and theater studies, or maybe dance to the humanities—Susan you mentioned social sciences, but it feels like mostly dance in relation to the humanities—does not quite cover it. Because VPS was an attempt to move into the social sciences as well. Really, from my point of view, interdisciplinarity is an attempt to speak to each other. For example, I did a graduate course at Santa Cruz with three other colleagues: one in visual culture, one in music, one in literature—specifically in classics—and myself. The four of us (Catherine Soussloff, Karen Bassi, Nina Treadwell, and myself) had worked together for fifteen years already. So that interdisciplinarity only has meaning in terms of a lived history of dialogue. You know, I think otherwise it does not. So it has both this artificial potential that is really very clunky, and it also has this lived potential that actually could materialize.

How does it materialize? This is the point I wanted to get to, just to elaborate a bit more: interdisciplinarity in common can actually alter the way people work individually. In other words, they speak to each other from certain disciplinary formations, but they speak about an object that they share. And therefore, there is a kind of expansion of methodological purpose and theoretical outlook that I found there—which was the most positive thing—that can be really extraordinary. Because it's sort of similar to what's happening here. This kind of exchange between us has immense potential for all of our thinking, individually and as a group. It's a difficult model, but it's possible.

On the history/ethnography divide I know Susan you've worked on, I'm beginning to wonder now—and this will lead into a few other comments about where the field is going, or where it might go, from the so-called inside—I wonder if there's really anymore any strong distinction between the archive and embodied memory? I don't think so. And I think that it is kind of dismantling this history/ethnography divide that you mentioned. I think of André's paper on the body as archive in *DRJ* (Lepecki 2010); I think of the phenomenon of reenactment that we had workshops on in Santa Cruz recently. You know, a lot of us are working on reenactment. That term doesn't have a lot of meaning in itself. There could be many, many terms around that, but I mean that phenomenon, which could be related to the affective turn as well. I think this is an interesting moment in dance studies right now: the possibility of the artists themselves becoming the historian, and the historian becoming an artist. In other words, this personal relationship to history, this corporeal relationship to history, and therefore this blurring of the distinction between embodied memory and archival documentation is, I think, one of the challenges and one of the moments

of dance studies now that we need to seize, and obviously, develop. It may be another way of considering choreography as theorization.

And in connection to that—and I think this points back to what you said, Susan, about Riverside and that kind of blending of the MFA and the PhD—it seems to me that that too is being pursued at a slightly different register now in Europe with what they call PAR—Performance as Research—and what that is at the PhD level. And I don't think that we really know what that is yet. I'm also affiliated with Middlesex University in London, and they are really moving ahead with the performance as research model at the PhD level in a very interdisciplinary setting, where you have students working on all kind of different things in the same department. I don't think we really understand yet what that will mean. In other words, what does it mean to do a PhD dissertation that is practice? And what, also, even at the MFA level—and I'm seeing this already at Temple—what does it mean to have MFA students produce written theoretical work on their practice? I mean, it's fine to say that's what you should do, but you have to train people to do it. How do you do that? I don't think that's happened yet. So I think that's another kind of offshoot of what we're talking about in a very pragmatic institutional sense that's taking place right now. And it bears attention I think. I'm not sure what I feel about it exactly.

So those are a certain number of relationships that I think can be located within dance studies or dance studies/performance studies. I mean those are things that we can attend to. And finally, just to sort of answer the charge of the panel, I do think we need more graduate programs in dance studies that represent different positions. And I certainly have worked on that over the years, and found it is easier to join a program that exists than to actually create one from the ground up. But, in the process of doing that, I would just add that when I went to Bard College a few years ago, ostensibly with the mission of creating a graduate program in dance studies, but which never—you know again, they didn't seem to realize that that's why they brought me in. They forgot about that as soon as I arrived. I wound up teaching undergraduates and realized in that process that no one seems to be talking about an undergraduate major in dance studies, but we need that. That in fact would be the smartest thing to do. Because then you create this infrastructure that's sort of inevitable for the creation of further PhD programs. And I think it's strange, I mean, even though many of us are located in humanities departments and we do this kind of teaching, that there is very little undergraduate presence—maybe none. Where are there dance studies undergraduate majors? Show me! I'd like to know where they are. I don't think there are any. Or am I wrong? Some undergraduate dance programs might offer a “studies track,” but does that give you a major in dance studies? Because that's important. It's very important to give dignity to the student for their interests. They need a degree in dance studies. Which is not dance. I mean, it is and is not dance. In other words, it's different. There again is that funny slant thing. And I think that—because it does involve practice to some degree—there are many, many students out there who want to do this and are extremely well prepared to do it. Who have danced, who know a lot about dance, who are not going to be dancers, but who can contribute. I don't want to go on and on about it, but do I think it's an unrecognized potential direction that the field should take itself in. And I really think it's important that there be—actually be—a major, not just a track within a field. I guess that's essentially what I wanted to say.

Janice Ross: I'm going to take a different approach. It's very rich to hear everyone. As Susan remarked, I think each of us speaks, either consciously or unconsciously, from the relevance of our own institutional position, and I think that will come through. So, I was reflecting last night that we've really spent the last 48 hours immersed in what for me is an unprecedentedly rich sampling of the next wave of dance studies scholarship, as I think back on everything that I've heard over the last two days. My sense is that it's really a remarkably fresh perspective on varieties of knowledge—the kinds of information linkages that dance practices hold about the relations between art, politics, life—and, within that, the potential of human bodies to acquire significance. I think that's really what's at the root of a lot of the research. I heard in the small sessions that I was

in yesterday and the big ones on Monday a number of ways about how these meanings have been traced across transnational crossings, hybrid citizenship, spiritual journeys, diasporic tourism, issues of flexibility, labor, virtuosity, ambulatory aesthetics, to give only a small taste of some of the larger frames of people's research. And I think the point is inescapable that really the aperture that dance studies has opened on a global world at this point is wider than any time in the history of the field. I would argue that it is certainly true of its predecessor in some regards, which I see as dance history. Dance Studies is still a very young field, so that you guys have bitten off large chunks of research areas where you're the first people to venture in. And that's a very special position to hold in a field. And I think you're fueled by this momentum of permission to go ahead with these methodological, theoretical models, a lot of them borrowed from performance studies.

So I think it's really a very promising moment, but now I want to make a slight turn. I think it's a deeply precarious and risky moment for dance studies in the academy. I think these two moments of possibility and risk are really nested closely together. When I think back as Susan did about last year's Mellon Seminar, I think back to when we had a panel, a state of the field panel, and in that moment I remember addressing the crisis in the humanities as a central concern for all humanities departments and programs. And I place art and dance within the humanities. I find it very interesting that exactly one year later as I sit here, there are massive shifts in the field as universities are moving very quickly to implement sweeping changes to address that crisis.

Let me rehearse some of the points of the crisis: humanities programs in universities continue to report precipitously declining numbers of majors. The most recent figures show drops in the number of BAs in the humanities from fourteen percent of undergrads graduating in 1966 having BAs in the humanities to 2010 when it was halved to seven percent. On June 6th, last week, Harvard released a report that had been two years in the making called *Mapping the Future*, which was a real statement on the future of the humanities in the academy. This is not trivial to dance studies at all. And that report—I'm sure a number of you have maybe heard of it, glanced at it, read it—used as a case study students who entered Harvard intending to major in the humanities and revealed how they migrate to other fields, especially the social sciences and hard sciences, much more frequently than humanities majors make that reverse migration. This is happening acutely in my university where something like 80 percent of entering undergrads are computer science, or engineering, or pre-med. They are not in the humanities or the arts.

Harvard reported that 81 percent of students who come to study the social sciences stay with that decision. Forty-three percent who come to study the humanities stick with that choice by the time they're done. The number of Liberal Arts Colleges has declined from 212 in 1990 to only 130 today. These are places where dance studies could find academic lines and positions. Georgetown has released recently its own study about what happens in the search for recent college graduates looking to get a job—the workforce for humanities students. They reported that college grads in the 22–26 year age range with humanities and liberal arts degrees had an unemployment rate of about ten percent. If you were in health, education, other majors, you had less than two percent unemployment. I could cite a lot more data supporting this same point.

This morning, another set of recommendations came in about saving the humanities and sciences. It's called *The Heart of the Matter*. It was produced by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, which had convened a commission. They're looking at the same crisis: how to save the humanities? How to save this home site for what our whole lives are about in the academy in many respects? One of the things that they suggested that might be considered is—and I love the title, but I have no idea what it is content-wise—a recommendation to pass a National Competitiveness Act to support international affairs and transnational studies.

So I think for many of us the metaphor that comes to mind is that you're being born in the midst of a war. Being born as scholars into academies that are really under fire. I think Dance Studies should

be the weapon to respond to that. What does it mean for dance studies to be accelerating as a discipline, taking off, with all of this great hope and promise, at a moment when higher education institutions are questioning what's pushing students away from the humanities and arts as majors—while also strategizing really desperately how to save it. The Harvard report has a set of explanations—a lot of it is familiar, but it's chilling to hear these stated as the contributing causes. The report argues that the humanities have little to contribute in an age of economic global competition. The humanities fail to provide preparation for careers. The “bookish” humanities have been rendered obsolete by technological change. The humanists—and now there's a whole set of complaints that really say we're the cause of our own crisis—the humanists are guilty of a research culture of excessive specialization that deters the formation of truly educated citizens. These are things that we should check off and say no to, and why.

I was at a session a couple weeks ago at my campus where a leading administrator in the Humanities and Arts chastised a room full of faculty for teaching what she called “boutique” classes. Boutique seminars: super specialized, your own area of research, you know, precious and really not of much use or interest. That was her language. And I think it's probably playing out in other arenas, certainly beyond Harvard, beyond Stanford. I think these conversations are unfolding in a lot of places. So there's this criticism that the language of specialized humanities research has become largely impenetrable to a wider public. These are the kind of causes being given as contributing factors.

So what are the next steps? I think we need to be really wary of what Rebecca yesterday noted as multinational capitalism behind these national calls and institutional calls informing educational decisions. It's very dangerous. But I think that the forces there are getting bigger, not smaller. I also think within these that there are a lot of opportunities for dance studies: that there is now a push to transform the mechanism by which undergraduates achieve educational breadth. This supports Mark's comments about a push toward interdisciplinarity. I see the old structures that are breaking up even at the most foundational undergraduate level in my institution, where there's a new rethinking of “capacities of learning,” rather than departmental and disciplinary boundaries. This new focus on “how can we reconceptualize what we teach?” is about giving students a capacity to assemble knowledge on their own; to become their own educators in effect, so that they actively create their own education rather than passively accept it.

Stanford, as of this fall, will have eliminated the whole former Introduction to the Humanities freshman undergraduate core as a requirement, in favor of a set of eight *dispositifs*, or knowledge clusters, that the University is calling “Ways”—ways of knowing and doing. It's a pretty radical change. The hope is to pull all of those science people at least back through the arts and humanities at the beginning of their academic career. And it's challenging the faculty heavily to really rethink what they're teaching. Not just what department you're lodged in, but what really is the capacity that your practice has to offer? So I really see this happening outside of my particular place, where there is this shift in undergraduate education away from research driven departments as well.

There's also a critique about too much research and a call for a return to teaching. That's not new, but I think we need to figure out how to have that discussion, and to be really articulate in forwarding that battle. The rhetoric comes up again and again about excessive specialization, theoretical jargon. In some respects, the Harvard report does suggest a possible return to the canon. A rethought canon, but canon is implicit in what they're suggesting. So we need to be vocal about what needs to be inserted into the new canon.

Anyway, there's a lot I could go on about here. One article recommended a radical strategy for saving the humanities. The title was “Blow Them Up, and Start Again.” And so, mapping the future I think really includes these imperatives that arise from decades of data. It is not just an off-the-cuff response. These conversations about crises really outline a complex action plan that looks ahead for

the next ten years, and it acknowledges seriously the challenges the humanities face. And there are a lot of hostile arguments in the corridors of political power about the humanities now—in the minds of skeptical parents, also in the minds of college graduates, and in the minds of just entering college undergrads who are weighting massive debt and career practicalities.

So, I think this is a set of issues I would like to have hovering around our conversation here. And I'd like to end with a few statements. I entered the room when we started on Monday, thinking, in many ways, because we're a mix of individuals at different stages of our lives in Dance Studies—some people finishing PhD programs, some on the job market. It sometimes seems that the task of the PhD really, of getting your PhD and then getting a job, it might reduce to these two imperatives: how to get out of the classroom, and then how to get right back into the classroom, right? The push. And I think I want to add a third consideration there, which is really to make sure that the classroom is going to be there for dance studies.

I think that the classroom will migrate. I think it's going to be in the larger university and college curricula, not predictably in performance studies, or some of the more traditional places. And I don't know that the future for dance studies as a discrete department is the best target and goal, or even possible goal. But I'd say whatever we do in terms of charting this rocky terrain I've mapped out, we have to pick up our language, as I started with in the beginning. I think we really need to do it with this hyper flexibility, with virtuosity, with resilience, with all the attributes that we're pulling out of dance as a practice. We will need all of these skills to really implement it in the academy. So, those are my thoughts.

André Lepecki: The conversation that just preceded made me change a little bit what I wanted to say, because when Janice describes the war against the humanities, this issue makes me realize that one way of describing your generation is of one that's coming into professionalization after a decade of a permanent state of war in the U.S., right? Thus, I feel that the "war against the humanities" is just a reflex of this generalized war coming into the job market. To work in the arts and in the humanities, in a country that has been in a permanent state of war for many years—either in cold or "hot" versions of warfare—and in the past decade, even more so and more brutally and horrendously (torture, rendition, assassinations by presidential fiat, concentration camps)—this has its consequences. It seems to me that this attack against the humanities and the arts has a strong relationship to this kind of state of war in which thought, critical thinking, and art—which all involve a different way of thinking about creativity, which is a creativity that is not mobilized for capital, not mobilized for more creative ways of destroying—actually need to be attacked by Power. I remember still fascist Portugal: how I had to behave as a kid in fourth grade within this kind of violent national formation, with the wars in the Portuguese colonies at the time, censorship, etc. I get affectively very stirred when I start thinking about the broader semantic field that this war against the humanities also implies and signifies—a country at war, a country in permanent war, must eventually be at war with the humanities and a certain way of thinking and making art.

And having said that, the question of "beside" actually is a very important one, I feel. Because within the kind of ruination that this war machine has constructed—which is simultaneously a capital machine and a neoliberal machine—within the ruins, there is always dance happening. This is where political movement actually emerges. This is where thought actually takes place, which is always in the space of crisis. And I'm thinking here of the work of Randy Martin most recently, thinking precisely about all sorts of board cultures and surfing in LA after the financial meltdown of the 1980s, and dancing in Detroit in the ruins of a whole industry (Martin 2013). How is it that the ruins of capital actually condition, or allow for the possibility of something else, a movement much more powerful than capital itself, to emerge, and indeed, dance?

So I'm thinking that the "beside" is actually a place for us to really think, perhaps, interdisciplinarily, but perhaps also to start thinking strategically and tactically. How is it that, within our scholarship and

artistic practices, we can actually produce something for the humanities that is not under house arrest, and perhaps actually embrace the notion of crisis, as opposed to want or desire not to be in crisis?

So, having said that, I was thinking two things. On our first day, Susan and Rebecca proposed this great exercise to all of us: what Dance Studies is, what it does, and what it needs. And I said kind of jokingly that, for me, it is what it does. And I kind of believe in that, in a way, in a kind of non-ontological or anti-ontological position. It's never what it is; it's always what it does. But, I realize, it's also what's done to it. Somebody's always doing something to Dance Studies. For instance, defunding it, or denying it recognition as an important field of critical research and inquiry in the academy. And how do we then create strategies of resistance? With this in mind there are a few issues that I find important for the field—if it is a field. New challenges and issues are emerging.

One of them is to think about, how is it that dance studies can actually contribute to political theory? And this is a project that everyone at this table has been involved in. But it seems to me that at this particular moment in which we are right now choreography is a very important term for us to consider. How is it that within societies of control and societies of discipline, we can actually imagine agency? And for me, that's the question of the dancer. That's the task of the dancer. William Forsythe talks about choreography as a system of control or discipline (Franko 2010, 16). It's kind of a horrendous way of thinking about choreography, and yet quite lucid and quite accurate at many levels. And, if this is the case, the question for the dancer becomes: why am I willing to serve control as a dancer? Why do I want to participate in this task? And the question of the choreographer becomes also one of imagining a kind of leading without commanding. A different imagination of what a leader might be, and what is the social contract involved in creating choreographic work. And it seems to me that a possible answer is this: I want to participate in this task (as a dancer, as a choreographer) because I know that, within control, I can always mobilize agency.

So for this kind of moment in which globally we see more and more implementation of control through neo-liberal opportunism—even yesterday in Brazil all of a sudden we have 200,000 people protesting in the streets of Sao Paulo, in this massive mobilization against increasing precarization, even in a country that is run by a left wing party. So there's a massive discontent of the multitude across the planet, and it seems to me that this corresponds precisely with the emergence of a subject that knows that he or she can move otherwise. Yesterday we saw several presentations that dealt with this question of agency within larger “choreopolitical” formations, normative or disciplinary formations. This kind of alternative choreopolitical imagination, that knows it is always possible to reinvent what movement is and how we want to activate it (even if the necessary movement is to be still), is something that I find very important for Dance Studies to develop at this point.

So it seems that how dance studies can contribute to an ongoing conversation about politics (via for instance the tension “choreography/agency”) is something pressing in the field right now that could lead to historical, but also contemporary research—to work with what is happening right now. For instance, how, with Jacques Rancière, we can think about circulation and policing. This research could perhaps depart from, but also it could even reshape, for instance, how Hannah Arendt thinks about the dancer as the exemplary political subject, because he or she has the courage to take initiative, to initiate (1958, 207).⁴ But let me also complicate that immediately by saying that the political subject is not only the one who acts, but also the one who speaks. So, how is it that dance discourses and texts can actually be included within the task of the dancer in a similar operation to that performed by *Tanztheater*—to remain within dance, but to accept language and voice as part of the dancer's actions and of choreography's tools.

There is another “beside” aspect I was thinking of: I mentioned half-jokingly that dance studies is an American thing. Of course, it's not. But for non-Americans of my generation, the coming into awareness that there was a discursive, theoretical support for our practice in Europe at the time came through the work of American scholars like Susan Foster, Susan Manning, Mark Franko,

Sally Banes. The books that were being published in the early 1990s were extremely important. And that inflected also how we can conceive the field. But it seems to me that at this point, in 2013, dance studies is emerging everywhere. Like your book, Susan, on *New German Dance Studies*, which is of course an excellent example, but also in France, Spain, Sweden. And in Brazil—I will just talk about Brazil because now I'm a little more familiar with the scholarship being produced there—it's really extraordinary. There are universities with strong dance programs popping up everywhere, programs with really incredible positions. Recently there was a tenure track position for Critical Choreography and Dramaturgy. So, someone's going to be hired for that job in Fortaleza, which is this relatively small town in the Northeast of Brazil, which is incredible. It's a department with young professors with degrees in philosophy and dance, performance studies and dance, film and dance. And there are a lot of publications coming up, books and academic journals in dance, which actually not only engage the works of some of you at this table, but propose a different way of thinking about dance. So I feel that today, the question of translation is essential for dance studies. And not only interdisciplinary translations, but international formulations for dance studies so that the U.S. Dance Studies can also be messed up, energize, and moved by these interventions that are coming from other places.

The other “beside” that I find to be very important for dance studies right now—and it has to do a little bit with the crisis in the humanities that Janice was talking about—is the relationship between dance and the visual arts. Not only to think about visual artists who are interested in working with dance as a medium and vice versa, like choreographers doing visual art work and things like that, but also because it seems to me that the museum is an institution that right now is emerging as a site in which the humanities and the arts actually could merge, enter into a vivid dialogue in ways that perhaps universities are no longer, let's say, too enthusiastic to consider. So museums are developing research seminars. They are promoting encounters between artists and scholars in all sorts of fields that I find are really, really interesting. And particularly, museums are very interested in dance at this point. I don't know why it's happening—I have a few theories, some of them have to do with affective labor, but that's something else. But there is the possibility of thinking of this interaction, and perhaps as dance scholars we could take the first step and really shape the direction of the conversation so that visual arts do not colonize, as they tend to do. So, it seems that this will be another important area for the field at this point.

Finally, another “beside” is dramaturgy. I think that dance dramaturgy has resurgences here and there, and what I find important about dramaturgy and dance, or dance dramaturgy, is for instance when Pina Bausch opens up the authorial function in her practice and distributes the author function among the dancers. And everyone starts to create this kind of strange, ongoing mode of producing choreography, of producing artwork. And in that process this other figure of the dramaturge just came in, sitting literally beside the choreographer to co-create. But this breaking down of the author function in choreography through the figure of the dramaturge allows for the possibility of thinking about not only artistic processes, but how these processes may impact or inform epistemological and methodological questions for dance studies, such as, what is the critical proximity or critical distance in regards to its object of analysis that dance studies could actually create through a practice that emerges from choreography itself? Do you see what I'm saying? Its immanence to a certain understanding of making choreography to create this figure, called the dramaturge, who is in a privileged position of extreme proximity to the object of analysis, that then allows him or her to create a different kind of discourse on the dance being created—and which is not a “distant-eye” kind of discourse. It's not about distance as objectivity, but proximity as another mode of objectivity—of objectively looking at the choreographic material by being beside it. It seems to me that dramaturgy proposes a different kind of epistemology, which is an epistemology of besideness, or “along-sidedness,” that could be interesting for other articulations with theater studies, with performance studies, and disciplines like that. How is it that dance could also inform this practice? So for me politics, choreography, the visual arts, and dramaturgy are issues that I find pressing

and interesting to think about for dance studies—all of these are doing things to dance practices that need to be acknowledged by our discourses and research.

And then, just to add one last thought. So we discussed what Dance Studies is, what Dance Studies does, what Dance Studies needs, but then I was thinking, what does it want? Which is an important question: what is it that Dance Studies wants? From what I saw in the last two days—and I have to say, that I was moved; I was really happy and thrilled by the scholarship—it seems that your work is telling us that dance studies wants first to make a strong intervention in political and social discourse. It seems that it is through this kind of very close understanding of mobilization, agency that dance studies may address questions such as: how is it that groups get together and reshape through their mobilization social or urban spaces? How do social movements reshape the very imagination of what ethnicity, inclusion, exclusion might be in the U.S. and abroad? Dance studies, as it was presented here by your works, wants really to make an intervention in reimagining what political discourse and political practice could be. The other thing that dance studies wants: to articulate a lively exchange with current artistic and choreographic practices. So it's no longer dance studies on one side, and then you have the dancer and choreographer over there or the dance over there as a kind of object, right? But dance studies today sees that the exchange and the proximity (again, being beside, being alongside) is very, very important. And the question becomes how to create immanent concepts—concepts that emerge from artistic and choreographic practice. Deleuze has this beautiful moment in the opening of *Difference and Repetition* (1968) where he talks about how a concept should always be the expression of an encounter. So it seems to me that yesterday there were a lot of concepts being generated by you. Words that we are not familiar with. And for me they express precisely these many encounters between dance studies and dance practices, not just a scholarly impulse to create a new word—you know, like this horrible thing: “What I call so and so . . .”

Then I was thinking dance studies wants another thing, which is to trouble—and Mark's work does that a lot—it wants to restart—to use Georges Didi-Huberman's expression—to restart art history. So, every artwork restarts history once again. Every time that you do Dance Studies, you restart the discipline once again. And that's really beautiful to think about. And I think that dance studies wants that. I don't want to fetishize dance studies, but I think that's what the dancer does as well, right? Like, every time you do the same piece again, you restart it once again, and it's something completely new, right? So it seems to me that it's immanent to the practice of dancing to do that. To restart—so the importance of the discussion around reenactment.

And finally—and I really want to say that—dance studies wants theory. And this desiring is very, very important. At NYU, performance studies is based in the School of the Arts, and one of the wars that takes place within the arts is that, all of a sudden, arts are okay, and actually there's money for the arts as long as you're working for TV, cinema, whatever. Interactive telecommunications, gaming development: that's good to have artists to do that. But there's a different kind of art, which has always been with us, that develops theory, that desires theory, that theorizes itself, and actually demands disciplines that theorize alongside it. And so, to justify constantly performance studies and dance studies not only for the deans who are dealing with the humanities at large, or social sciences, but even within the arts is hard, you know? And one of the things that is often said is that theory is too ethereal, it's useless, it has no utility, so on and so forth. So it actually makes me think of the political urgency of theory. It's Homi Bhabha's (1994) call 20 years ago—*the commitment to theory* as essential to subaltern voices and to artistic practices. So I want to say that dance studies wants theory.

Anusha Kedhar: I want to pick up on things that Janice—and everybody at the table—was talking about: this idea that in the 1970s was this turn toward post-modernism and post-structuralism and its impact on dance studies. I was wondering if we're now at a new critical juncture in dance studies,

and what that is. And it's always easier in hindsight, in retrospect, to talk about what that is, but I wonder if we could start to think about what this new moment is.

And I think it's come out in the various talks—in Janice's talk about this crisis in the humanities, about saving the humanities, about the kind of corporatization of the university and these business models, and how dance studies fits into that, and going back to conversations with Rebecca about dance studies possibly being complicit, possibly being a weapon. Where does it fit into this new neoliberal moment, late late capital, whatever you want to call it? If we could sort of start to discuss and refine what we think this new moment in dance studies is, because I think post-structuralism and post-modernism were a huge impact on dance studies in the 1970s and post. But possibly we're looking at a different moment? Or maybe not? I'm not sure, but I think that it might be.

Mark Franko: It strikes me that part of this crisis, and what Janice and others mentioned, is the rejection of post-structuralism, too. And this is coming from a social sciences position. So, I feel, again, that we need to reenact post-structuralism. I think that's largely what André is talking about. And I feel very in line with what he said. I had notes about the necessity to push much more ahead into the political aesthetic realm, which has been developed, but there's still so much more to do there. I think that maybe nothing ever comes around again the same way. I think that post-structuralism has in Europe been rejected. No one wants to talk about Derrida anymore, no one wants to talk about Lyotard, no one wants to talk about anyone. Of course, there are certain figures that continue to circulate, like Deleuze more than others. I think that's an interesting thing. So I just wanted to throw that out there.

Janice Ross: I'll make just one comment, Anusha. And I appreciate very much the way you distilled a lot into the question. I'm struck by the sort of 40-year interval moment. If I go back to the 1930s—1926 is when University of Wisconsin Madison starts the first dance major. You're talking 40 years after, the 1970s, and we're now another 40 years later. And I think at each juncture certainly, I mean, starting back in the late 1920s, 1930s, it was definitely the possibility for dance in entering the academy at all. It was a highly political move cloaked as something quite different. But it was deeply radical at its core. It was saturated with a feminist agenda into the university, a remaking of those bodies, and the possibility for women's bodies and agency and all of that. So, I do think that there are affordances within what looks like a really rigid academic institutional structure, as André is suggesting. But I'm just struck by that sort of moment.

André Lepecki: I agree with Mark and Janice. I think it's quite interesting when Derrida dies and *The New York Times* has this obituary, and it's almost celebratory: finally, he's dead. And there's something also like the disappearance or the disavowal of postcolonial theory that is aligned to this construction in post-structuralism. It's quite interesting. So I feel like perhaps the new moment will be a kind of rescuing again of the postcolonial—through this theoretical impulse.

But just to be a little more descriptive: for example in Canada, there are Erin Manning and Brian Massumi and people around the Sense Lab developing a different kind of approach, and an extremely important one, between dance studies, dance practices, and philosophy, through their readings of Deleuze. My only critique is that it seems to me that the Deleuze they use is a too happy Deleuze. Deleuze is of course a vitalist, but also the one who proposes the notion of microfascism as that which characterizes the interrelationships and intersubjective relationships. So, just to say that choreographic practices have aligned themselves with philosophy, and I'm just wondering what that could be, and what kind of philosophy is being privileged. Just to talk about this new moment, and how to put pressure on it more.

Susan Manning: I think in a way we are in this moment of consolidation, maybe, of the earlier, of the new changes from the 1970s. And what I eliminated from my script is the other important thing at that 2008 conference: I did my "looking back," and then there was a panel that was selected by

Danielle Goldman and Barbara Browning, who headed that conference, of six young scholars who were “moving forward.” And one could feel the excitement and the energy of this new wave through that juxtaposition of me looking back and then this new panel. And again, going back to the keynote, I do think maybe I’m less invested in a reinvention of post-structuralism than my colleagues, but also that that was what I talked about in that lecture. A move toward the public humanities, toward the global humanities, and toward the digital humanities, which were ideas floating around the American Council of Learned Societies. I think dance studies is in a terrific position to take up all of those because in a way we have been doing the public humanities in many ways. And this move toward the global is just incredibly powerful at the moment. Again, that was part of the original model. We wanted to use the Mellon imprimatur to invite people from anthropology, musicology, history, so that dance becomes a recognized subfield the way music studies and film studies have. There are people all over the academy working on music and film. Why can’t dance also be that?

José Reynoso: I want to ask about something related to what André said. In his essay around dance studies in the international academy, Jens Giersdorf (2009) acknowledges to be reflecting on his own experience as a practitioner, as a student, and then as a scholar and professor. He talks about Germany, Britain, and the U.S., and notes the diversity of scholars he encountered at UC Riverside. Personally, I really appreciate those inclusionary efforts. It’s something that I’m happy for; I am a willing participant and a beneficiary of this inclusion of different voices and discourses. On the other hand, I can also see these efforts as a potential reification of some kind of uncritical multiculturalism. I’m interested in thinking about ways of decentering the whiteness of dance studies and thus learning more about the interaction of different paradigms in addition to the multiplicity of diverse bodies. Like in my case: I’m a Mexican immigrant, but I’ve been disciplined in the U.S. academy. So I’m really, really looking forward to seeing more discussion, more inclusiveness of different paradigms from places such as Latin America. For example, I went to Toronto to a conference in 2010, and the keynote speaker was from Germany. I went to UCLA a couple of months ago for a conference and the keynote speaker was from Germany. So I’m sure that something really interesting is going on in Germany. But maybe we need to talk more about what kind of interdisciplinarity and inter-paradigms conversation we are having and want to be having, and what are the factors at stake—such as funding, linguistic barriers, colonialist implications. I was just wondering if you have anything to say about that, maybe as to why, or maybe as to some possibilities?

Susan Manning: Yes. This question of, how do we decenter the whiteness of dance studies transnationally? I take that as a really important task. My view is that maybe we are consolidating the importance of post-structuralism to the field, while we’re launching some new initiatives. One way I want to contribute to this: I think there’s a whole new way we have to write the history of ballet, and it’s the global history. Of course, ballet was moving between cultures—not just in the twentieth century, but in all those movements, between France and Germany and Italy and England—and so ballet has always been a transnational form, from its inception. And so I think we have to rewrite the whole history of ballet so that we follow all of that migration of the form. Not to mention to Russia and back out. And also wanting to rewrite the whole history of modern dance in terms of transnational circulation, because it’s the same thing: modern dance is not just this American and German and Central European tradition. When we go back and start to look at the importance of Sada Yacco, at the 1900 Universal Exposition of Paris, and the ways that Isadora Duncan and Lois Fuller and Ruth St. Denis took from her. I mean, there’s a whole way I see that we can begin to rewrite these histories. And José your research is utterly vital in that—as is the research of many other folks here. I guess one way that I would like to contribute to that decentering of whiteness in dance studies in the next 40 years—OK, I’m not going to be around—is to rewrite the history of these forms that have seemed to be about the West but that are transnational forms from their very inception. So let’s uncover that history. Let’s script that history.

Rebecca Schneider: Yes. I think there’s also a really important link that we have to remember if we’re going to rescue—which is not a word that I like; be, enact, or whatever we’re going to do

with post-structuralism; rethink post-structuralism—is to remember post-structuralism’s fundamental link historically to questions about the Global South, actually. And really bring up the volume on Global South issues/questions/scholars. Susan, you were talking about outreach, and certainly for formations like this Mellon—ongoing, hopefully, Mellon initiatives—having Global South presence. Part of the issue of all of this has been to see dance studies in the American academy, as we’ve been talking about. But obviously building/initiating within the *North* American academy is only one wing. We need the Global South in the room(s).

Janice Ross: And just one quick thing I wanted to say in response to José’s question, which I think is a really important one. As you asked it, I was reflecting on the more recent transnational dance studies research, which has broken up this sort of monolithic conception of ballet. And the way in which research subjects flow is not a trivial issue. I think it’s made possible the going back and looking. I mean, you’re doing research on ballet, just finished a book on ballet in the totalitarian state. That research for me is only possible because of the other research that’s happened about transnational dance—not about ballet—which is always parked over there as uninteresting and just this big lump. So I think this is very important: the flow of what opens up in the wake of a surge of dance research in a certain area. It could be way over here, but it’s completely connected.

Naomi Bragin: So of course we’re all dancers, we’re performers, we’re interested in dance studies and performance studies, and I know that you were all talking about ways to move within structures and systems. But I’m really interested in not forgetting what it means not to move. And just being aware of this belief that fluidity always means freedom; that fluidity also can be a privilege many times. For example, Harvey Young (2010) talks about stillness and what stays the same. And I’m just thinking about whether post-structuralism is something that we want to reenact? I just want to remind us all that post-structuralism has moved to trouble essential identity—and scholars made a note of that—in this exact moment when identity became an important strategy for taking power, and to keep that in mind. Although I think that the work of visibilization and of recognizing a kind of inter-culturalism of our practices is very important, and groundbreaking in different moments, I also want to question, is it enough in this moment to just think about physicalizing as a strategy? What are the unmoving structural relations of power that lie beneath, that we leave unarticulated?

I think that we forget that the black/white binary very much structures our society and that we should be alive to its operation in the present moment. And that’s not to disavow intercultural forms, but to think about whiteness not just as something that moves across bodies, or something that exists in bodies, but as also a feeling that is submerged and can be more pervasive and insidious because it’s submerged. And I’m not going to be prescriptive, but at the same time as thinking about decentering whiteness, I would also just like to pose the question, what would it mean to live in a world without whiteness? What would it mean to even think outside of whiteness?

André Lepecki: Just a quick response. Because I’m not a dancer. And maybe because of that, stillness is very important for my work. I’ve written a lot about it. But I think it’s an important point also in terms of defining a discipline, right? So, do we have to define dance studies as the study of movement? Or is it something else? Or the discipline that studies what dancers do? What is it that actually forms dance, so that we can study it in a more complex and open way? So I just wanted to add that. Because I think it’s an important point that you’re making.

Nadine George-Graves: *[Nadine began her comments by asking the audience to close their eyes. When they opened them she was in the space between the audience and the speakers and performed an embodied response to the prompt of speaking from “beside” dance studies. In this performance, she stood on one foot while recalling some of the earlier conversations about finding an intellectual home as artist/scholars. She evoked the interdisciplinary dashes in African-American, Dance-Theater, Theory-Practice, and her last name George-Graves as places to find balance and become centered. And challenged the audience to develop strategies to maintain balance if the dash becomes a slash.]*

Earlier this week, Jasmine Johnson and Anusha Kedhar asked us to think about passports—how do people without passports travel? How do brown and black people with passports travel? I remember traveling to France for a joint dance conference going through customs. Throngs of people walking through. But I am stopped. I'm asked to show my passport. I get it partially out of my very fashionable/professional travel bag. The agent just sees the blue (read American not African) and I'm allowed to pass—well, I'm allowed to get into France. Under my breath (but a little too loudly) I say, "Don't worry, I'm not staying." I bring this up to complicate our conversation about travel between intellectual spaces besides dance. I bring this up to complicate our notions of access and privilege in terms of race, class, and gender.

So I'm standing here beside dance. We're thinking about what there is beside dance, in a convivial, generous way, and I'm being asked to think about our intellectual passports—traveling between disciplines and ways of navigating scholarship and career paths without getting stopped by customs, by customs and trends, and fashions, and discourse, and language.

Gillian Lipton said in her presentation on Monday, "Grace brings reason to a standstill." Perhaps it can also be said that reason brings grace to a standstill. So, I'd like us to think about how we get moving again. How do we practically and ideologically move between, inside, outside, and beside(s)?

Let's start by thinking about ideologies. If you had a chance to read the intro to the *Oxford Handbook of Dance and Theater* (forthcoming), you'll see my interest in embodiment and theatricality. (I'm a little theatrical, if you haven't noticed.) As ideological lynchpins specifically, I think it becomes clear that new insight is gained into theories of embodiment and theatricality by attending to performances on and off stage—professional, personal, social, or cultural—that are at the nexus of dance and theater. Theater and dance serve, I think, as correctives to the Cartesian emphasis on cogito experience, advancing embodied knowledge that is not too easily explained in old paradigms of disembodied reason. And moments when these two ways of knowing are closely aligned call on us to pay even more attention. Theater and dance remind us that the human body is not just another physical object, but the mechanism by which the world is made manifest and indeed existent. If the distinction between perception and movement is an artificial divide of what is always united in lived experience, then dance and theater offer us perhaps a more direct access to knowledge than is usually recognized.

So that's thinking about ideologies. And thinking about practicalities, there are many departments of theater and dance out there. Most are not happy marriages in many respects. We must recognize and maintain rigorous distinctions and distinct modes of inquiry at the same time we interrogate the space between and resist those feelings of being threatened, which I think is an important challenge.

The subtitle for my introduction to the Oxford text is: "Too Dance for Theater, Too Theater for Dance," and this comes from something that I've often been told I am. I've said this before, that I'm too dance for theater, too theater for dance. And it's been difficult to succeed in the academy navigating the many models that have been articulated. I think it's getting easier for the next generation of scholars. And I have lots of flexibility, both metaphorically and non-metaphorically, trying to be an interdisciplinary artist/scholar.

I'm still trying to practice what I preach. I'm still trying to stand my ground in stillness. I am trying to move my ground, usually on one foot. I'm still trying to perform expertise, perform authority, I am unperforming expertise, and I'm unperforming authority, and professing performance, and performing professing. Unlike Susan, I am a perpetual pessimist. Playwright Suzan-Lori Parks says history is "once upon a time you weren't here, you weren't here and you didn't do shit" (Drukman 1995, 67). She also says, in *The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire*

World, a play where in the face of social death and the perpetual repeated death of blackness, especially black maleness, battle is done through history writing. The characters say, “You should write that down. You should write that down and you should hide it under a rock. You should write that down, because if you don’t write it down, they will come along and tell the future that we did not exist” (Parks 1995, 130–1). Of course we have to make sure that they don’t tell the future that the rock did not exist. What you write “will be of us but you will mention them from time to time so that in the future . . . they’ll know how they exist . . . so that in the future . . . they’ll know why they exist. You will carve it all out of a rock so that in the future when we come along we will know that the rock does yes exist” (Ibid).

And to pick up on Naomi’s point about what gets written out of history theory when they say you weren’t here and you didn’t do shit, as we undo whiteness where everyone says yes. Let’s do that. So I’m a perpetual pessimist. But I am not an Afro-pessimist—yet. At least I’m trying not to be an Afro-pessimist. Even though I am dead in many ways—including as a theater person apparently—but I’m a fighter. I’m a tired fighter. But I’m confident that humanists can rescue the humanities. We can do it. And civilization by the way, when the economic crisis is over—not to mean that there’s no work to be done. We’ll do the work. But it’ll get done. We have a lot of work to do, in the machine, and in the house.

I think dance studies needs to be in upper administration, not just asking administration for things. This is a call to myself to reinvigorate my own administrative impulses, even though I have hit the glass ceiling and the brick wall repeatedly, and hard. Janice discussed the practical challenges. We are at war against the humanities. I echo André’s call to embrace the conflict. Again, I am a fighter, and I’m calling on you to put on your Wonder Woman deflector bracelets. And I’ve never been convinced fully that the master’s tools cannot take down, dismantle the master’s house. We don’t have to sell our souls to the devil, but there are some nice houses out there. And many of us built them to begin with, anyway. Even if we used the master’s tools, we did the labor. And like in *The Piano Lesson*, the ghosts sanction us to steal the piano back and play it. As Audre Lorde tells us, “because the machine will try to grind you into dust anyway, whether or not we speak” (1984, 44).

And I’ll say we must do the work that makes sense for us to do, whatever that is for you. So you may as well speak and do your work—strategically, yes, get a job—but do your work. So don’t be afraid to do illegitimate, impure, interdisciplinary research. You may be too _____ for _____, but you will all land with grace that moves reason—and institutions, and bodies and, . . .

Rebecca Schneider: I have a follow up question. Susan, you asked at the end of one of your essays: “whether the discipline of dance studies presents methodological challenges distinctly different from issues faced by musicologists, ethnomusicologists, anthropologists, theater and”—my note reads dharma scholars, but it must mean drama scholars (Manning 2008). Even as we talk about interdisciplinarity, can we also talk about methodology: is there a distinct methodological approach; what is the methodology that dance studies—if there is one—would bring to an interdisciplinary table? Can we articulate that? Or is there not (only) one, and do we not want (only) one? Which is another question.

Mark Franko: Well, just one beginning of an answer is something that Susan already brought up, which is that strategy we had back in the 1980s, which was to infiltrate the other disciplines. In a sense, we were consciously working on that—and Susan you spoke about this explicitly at the time, infiltration was I think the word that you used. And that has remained in my mind an important thing. I mean, beside the fact that I got my PhD in a French department, so I was actually trained in another discipline, but then also disciplining my mentors to work on dance at the same time. My point is just to say that part of the methodological take away that dance studies has to offer other disciplines is to let them know that they have always already been doing dance studies. That may be

a facile answer, but that's something I think we were aware of back then. We were trying to make that point.

André Lepecki: One of the questions made me think of my own coming into dance studies. I came to performance studies from Portugal to do an anthropological project. And I wanted to work with Michael Taussig, who left the day I arrived in performance studies in 1993—he left for Columbia University. Even though it was a dance-related project, all of a sudden I was in a department that had Marcia Siegel, Mark Franko who was there for a year, and Peggy Phelan, just publishing *Unmarked*. And that for me framed my understanding of what would be the methodologies for dance studies. Because on one hand, taking classes simultaneously with Marcia Siegel and Mark Franko made me realize two things. One, that there's something about this kind of close attention—as a methodology, this close attention to the event, which is Marcia's amazing strength. How is it that you can extract from a movement the precise word that will describe what that is? So her methodology is a very fine way of thinking about that. But at the same time, with Mark, I learned about all the invisible forces that every dance work is already producing and that also condition the production of dance (ideology, politics, rhetoric, economy, etc.). Dance's visibility is already there as an ideological formation. And in that sense, to give an account, a description of invisible forces is also a kind of close scrutiny. It's not a fantastical formation, but actually something that comes out of dance. So how is it that you can offer this methodology and turn dance studies into critical dance studies? This is what I felt Mark added to the field with his books of the late 1980s early 1990s. And then with Peggy, of course, this notion of what will be the political ontology of these formations? These for me are methodologies that come from dance practices and could be a way for us to continue this work, in a kind of impurity and errancy in regards to what would be considered "proper" visibility, "proper" modes of description, "proper" methodologies predicated on "objective distance," and of "proper" elements for dance analysis. In sum, how to account for that which is present on the motions (or stillnesses) of dance, but does not give itself as identical to what one may think dance is?

Susan Manning: I do feel that the sort of plurality of methods is really, really important for the field at this moment. But, certainly, dance studies can bring an awareness of embodied knowledge, and how to translate that into words, through movement analysis, choreographic analysis, and what I even call frame analysis, which comes from my interest in spectatorship, and how so many different people can look at the same live event and make different meanings. And that's a way of following these different frames.

Mark Franko: Coming back to this methodological conversation, it's also the appropriation of methodologies from other disciplines, which was essential to this moment of infiltration. And it's also what André was referring to. In other words, the question of invisibility—in some ways, the sense was that you could not approach dance directly. That it's by not talking about it that you talk about it. And that was the thing about post-structuralist theory I think that was so attractive. That it was always in search of some body. I mean, despite all its shortcomings. And despite the fact that these people had very little knowledge of performance, and were kind of groping around in the dark. That there was this attempt to find some corporeality, even in its anti-phenomenological impulse. I just want to point out that that was also a claim that was made against dance studies in the beginning—that it was importing methodologies from other fields, that it had no indigenous, immanent methodology. But I think that's precisely, in a way, its strength—that it is phantasmatic, that it doesn't exist in one place—like bodies themselves.

Notes

1. Dance Studies in/and the Humanities is a manifold research project initiated by Susan Manning, Rebecca Schneider, and Janice Ross across Northwestern University, Brown University,

and Stanford University and funded by the Andrew W. Mellon foundation from 2012 to 2015. For more information about its aims and the series of events it proposes, see <http://www.mellondances-tudies.org>.

2. In addition to Michelle Clayton, Mark Franko, Nadine George-Graves, André Lepecki, Susan Manning, Janice Ross, and Rebecca Schneider, Julie Adams Strandberg and Kiri Miller, both teaching at Brown University in dance and music, respectively, took part to the roundtables. José Reynoso, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Dance Studies at Northwestern, and Naomi Bragin, Theater, Dance and Performance Studies PhD Candidate at University of California Berkeley, were designated respondents and pose questions to the roundtable participants. The current edited version incorporates the two distinct panels in one single conversation.

3. Italics appear in the original text.

4. In chapter 3 of *The Human Condition*, “Action,” Hannah Arendt remarks how in Greek political philosophy “politics is a *techné*, belongs among the arts, and can be likened to such activities as healing or navigation, where, as in the performance of the dancer or play-actor, the ‘product’ is identical with the perform-ing act itself.” Arendt sees a “degradation” in modernity of this “prephilosophical Greek experience” of politics, for instance in Adam Smith (Smith cited in Arendt, 207) when he classifies “all occupations which rest essentially with performance” as “the lowest and most unproductive labor.”

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