

22.6 Paper Presentation III – Process Abstract

Empowering Young Contemporary Dance Artists of Tomorrow: Leveraging the Findings from a Practice-led Research on Presence and the Possibilities of Dancer Experience

By Dr. Peter Gn

As dance evolves in the 21st century, dancers, whether students or professionals, need to be even more thoughtful, confident and versatile. Yet dance teaching in Singapore schools has traditionally tended towards a hierarchical approach within an 'authoritarian' or instructor-centred environment, with emphasis on the accomplishment of correct skill execution (Daniels, 2009). In this model, the constant focus on a 'wrong' and 'right' way of executing skills potentially creates in student dancers an aversion to failure. This presentation advocates the view that it is timely for a reimagining or shifting of Singapore's contemporary dance parameters towards one that does not allow dance to be solely defined by technique mastery and spectacle. Beginning with the schools, elements related to immersive dancing and technique mastery can and should be taught in tandem and integrated in the student dancer's process as a means of empowering them, and achieving effective, impactful performance (Daniels, 2009, Geber & Wilson 2010).

As a significant area of inquiry within dance and performance studies since the 1950s, theories on presence have variously suggested that it is an ineffable, mysterious and captivating quality escaping words; an intangible or mystical quality possessed by the performer; and "the most significant interaction in theatre" (Trenos, 2014, pp.64 – 65). My research that informs this presentation was sited in Singapore's contemporary dance pedagogy and practice. It adopted a phenomenological stance and investigated the presence phenomenon through delving into the complexities of contemporary dance performance and factors fostering the dancer's deep engagement when training and performing. Aspects of my research process were informed by heuristic methods (Moustakas, 2001). The tension – between a type of presence grounded in the felt sensations of the body and that displayed by agile bodies performing high-octane choreographies – underpinned this research. Besides outlining my research findings, I also highlight their educational implications, stating how they can i. yield meaningful insights into contemporary dance performance as an artful, embodied practice; and ii. strategically inform pedagogical approaches that empower dancers in schools and dance companies. (i) and (ii) imply broad mindset shifts that are especially significant

as they impact not only students' learning in, of and through dance, but also the future of Singapore's dance practice and pedagogies.

From Guru-shishya-parampara to liberating-nothingness-in-self—towards a new dancing of India

By JiaYuan Tian

At the beginning of 2020, the covid-19 lockdown started with the mandatory restrictions of wearing masks in public. It seems that the *Kali yug*, the fourth and worst of the four world cycles in Hindu myth, had descended. Both a *guru* and his/her *shishya* (student) were left alone in a space where social interaction with each other was replaced by video lessons. A *shishya*, however, could be more vulnerable to the uncertainty caused by the pandemic, and to power relation inherited from the structure of the training-learning.

In the realm of classical Indian dance, a *guru* is a god-man whose authority is acted as the source of knowledge, guidance, and access to opportunities to students. The legacy of *guru-shishya-parampara* (master-pupil convention) has been the pedagogic structure of classical Indian dance tradition. Parallel to that, the activity of debating philosophy of Tibetan Buddhism with accompanying physical gestures of clapping of hands while jumping epitomizes a different yet structured pedagogy highlighting the rational and intellectual elements of it. By juxtaposing this two different training as performance, this paper attempts to sort out: 1st) the distinction between the *parampara* in Brahmanism and the pedagogy of debate in Tibetan Buddhism; 2nd) how these two India-originated pedagogies convert trainees in a way that leads to different paths: the former assumes the superiority of the metaphysical and spiritual dimension rather than the physical/somatic dimension, while the latter recognizes the equal centrality of mind and body; 3rd) the possibility of new Indian dance which is based not on unquestioning obedience to gurus but on the dialogue emanated from the debate-as-performance of Buddhism.

Gazing Death: Landscapes of A Body in a Cemetery

By Yi-Fang Cheng

Cultural geography believe that the environment is the product of the human mind, the cultural landscape produced by the joint operation of society and nature, and reflects the life context of human cultural habits and customs. Through the theoretical perspective of "landscape" in human geography, this article explores the

integration of environmental past history and contemporary society in A Body in a Cemetery, as well as the spatial heterogeneity of Eiko Otake's body placement. A Body in Places is a large-scale solo project launched by Eiko Otake in 2014. It aims to place the body in different contexts and urban landscapes, and Eiko uses his body to respond to the unique texture of the different spaces. A Body in a Cemetery is one of these art project.

**When Perceptual Production Meets Rational Laban Movement Analysis – Taking”
漫漫 [man] ”as an example.**

By Chieh Hsi Chiang

The discourse analysis of this paper is my production “漫漫[man-man]” performed in 2019. It refers to fragments of memory in minds, in the new-normal life, what is the thing that is closest to and most hope to achieve with your current self?

The first part introduces the motivation of choreography, and briefly discusses the theoretical concept of BESS (Body, Effort, Shape, Space) in Laban Movement Analysis, as well as the author's thinking about "Relationship Connectivity". Then discusses the use of BESS and Relationship Connectivity in one piece of the production as an example and extends to the aesthetic conception in the linkage of space, and the relationship between technical.

Creation and movement analysis are both emotional expressions and rational induction. The road ahead is still long and full of unknowns and challenges. Although I have no idea which is the best way to lead the arts through the pandemic, I do rely on LMA during this time to get to know both myself and my choreography better.