THE DANCE OF APOLLO AND DIONYSUS: THE INTERPLAY OF FORCES BRIDGING
THE WHITE VIEWER AND THE BLACK DANCE

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ABSTRACT

It is the goal of this paper to deconstruct the white fascination with black cultural dance, specifically looking at hip-hop, in order to utilize these findings as an impetus for discussion on the prevalence of white cultural absorption and modification of the exotic ‘Other.’ Such analysis will extend beyond the interplay of black and white culture by speaking to the deeply pervasive Apollonian and Dionysian impulses that underpin the heart of this philosophical investigation. Particular emphasis will be placed on locating the lures that motivate white individuals to both observe and participate in cross-cultural practices. Finally, I will discuss how hip-hop, and by extension, the power of the moving body finds a place in the discourse of arts education by suggesting ways in which movement-based activities can contribute to an understanding of the conscious body as a rich pedagogical site and source of embodied knowledge.
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Chapter 1:

Introduction

I am white. My hometown is white. My grade school and high school were white. My family is white. My dance team was white. White was the one “color” I was most familiar with, and yet, the one color I was most often told I was not. It was while dancing that this labeling of white versus non-white became most apparent to me, and where an understanding of racial classification and identification appeared not so black and white. What did appear to be “black” was my dancing—or at least that is what I was told. I was continually asked by my dance teachers and peers, “Where did you learn to dance like that? You dance like a black girl.”

Perhaps I acquired some moves and a little bit of rhythm by mimicking the dancers I saw on the television. Almost every morning before high school, I watched hip-hop dancers “break it down”\(^1\) on MTV and VH1’s early hour stream of music videos; I admired the breakdancing techniques captured in cinematic productions; and I listened to the hip-hop songs of the time and watched the accompanying music videos tell me and show me how to “slide to the right, slide to left,” how to “get low,” and how to “shake my tail feather.”\(^2\) Significantly, my contact with these expressions of hip-hop—expressions that tend to be associated with members of the black\(^3\) community—were not only limited but also mediated by the mass media (Rose, 2008). Yet, even with my little understanding of the cultural significance of hip-hop styles and movements,

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1. A colloquial term used when individuals on a dance floor want to showcase their moves in an impromptu dance-off or competition.
2. Those sections of text captured in quotes indicate references to the following songs, respectively: the “Cha Cha Slide” by DJ Casper released in 2000; “Get Low” by Lil Jon and the Eastside Boyz released in 2003; and “Shake Ya Tail feather” by Nelly featuring P. Diddy and Murphy Lee released in 2003.
3. The term black will be used as an all-inclusive term signifying individuals who associate with this particular racial classification. It is important to note that not everyone who identifies as black assumes African ancestry.
and in spite of my clear upbringing within a white community, I was somehow still “moving like a black girl” on the dance floor.

But what does “you dance like a black girl” really mean? How does one’s corporeal form dictate race? What does it mean to be a white participant (or viewer) in a historically and culturally black mode of expression, be it a particular genre of dance or other artistic forms? Questions like these crystalize the fact that seemingly simple comments such as “you dance like a black girl” hold much more weight than one might intend, and they are comments that beg to be unpacked in terms of their use of language and cultural significance.

In this case, such a question extends beyond a discussion of dance and the power of the moving body to one that raises critical issues of race, cultural capital, and cultural appropriation. Paying particular attention to the issue of appropriation of black modes of expression by dominant, white culture, the primary question to be addressed for this thesis is as follows: How can the white fascination with black dance be used as an impetus for discussion about the prevalence of white cultural absorption and modification of the exotic ‘Other’? While the bulk of the analysis will be centered on black cultural dance, specifically hip-hop, dance will merely serve as the backdrop or the vehicle to the larger conceptual piece—that being the examination of the continual trend or evolution of cultural appreciation towards cultural appropriation by dominant culture.

Noting that cultural appropriation is not a new phenomenon and is indeed one that has been extensively researched, I am interested in contributing to the discussion of appropriation and its intersection with art education by more closely observing how individuals construct their cultural identities through dance, and why white audiences are continually drawn to black cultural expressions as it relates to particular dance styles. More specifically, I am interested in
expounding upon the particular pleasures and desires that are cultivated through traditional black
dance as well as locating the lures that motivate dominant culture to not only appropriate, but
capitalize on such cultural expressions.

In order to explore this phenomenon, I will provide a descriptive and historical analysis
of the African influences that pervaded early forms of American dance and those which
continue to in the current hip-hop style. I will also discuss the theoretical framework that
contextualizes this fascination by considering the works of Plato, Immanuel Kant, Friedrich
Nietzsche, Mikhail Bakhtin, as well as the work of contemporary scholars, such as Richard
Shusterman, Deidre Sklar, Liora Bresler, and Tricia Rose. I will then expound upon their
theories of the body, the exotic, the erotic, the carnivalesque, affect, voyeuristic power, and white
hegemony as they relate to dance and the overarching concept of cultural appropriation. It is also
important to note that much of the scholarship on hip-hop tends to pay little attention to a
discussion of its dance culture; and if there is discussion on the dance scene, most emphasis is
placed on the perspective of the dancer (Wisner, 2007). Accordingly, it is the goal of this paper
to focus attention on the white spectator and the sets of relationships that are formed between the
dance, the performer, and the viewer.

Furthermore, this work will explore the transformation of black cultural dance, and the
pervasive tendency for reactions as varied as curiosity to fear to be experienced by white viewers
at first exposure. It is noteworthy that over time black cultural dance may begin to be perceived
by some as a forum that allows for a space for expressive freedom and indulgence, while for
others, it is viewed as a transgressive space that should be resisted and restricted. Such analysis

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4 I will be using the term *African* to refer to those individuals who were taken from Africa and transported to the
Americas during the slave trade of the 16-19th centuries. In reference to the discussion of dance, *African* will be
used to signify the particular movement vocabulary associated with various ethnic groups of Africa—movement
vocabulary that will be discussed in Chapter 2.
will also go beyond the interplay of black and white culture by speaking to the deeply pervasive Apollonian and Dionysian impulses that underpin the heart of this analysis. In order to discuss the popular pleasures, or lures, that impact the viewing experience of the white spectator, I will provide an examination of how this fascination is played out in various 21st century popular cultural sites—television ads, movies, television shows, and music videos—and how these sites are marketing elements of hip-hop with an increased awareness of the conscious body (Turner, 1996).

Finally, I will provide a discussion of the implications that hip-hop discourse has not just on dance education, but arts education as a whole, and suggest ways in which movement-based activities can contribute to an understanding of the body as a base of cultural knowledge and as a pedagogical site. This part of the discussion will also be supplemented with a video of various dance clips spliced together in order to portray the evolution of black cultural dance and the key concepts of this analysis through the art making process of “digital storytelling” (Dreon, Kerper, & Landis, 2011, p. 4).

I must also make mention here of any possible limitations that may be present in this endeavor. Given that I am a white female from upper-middle class suburbia, my socio-economic background will invariably affect the ways in which I approach, engage with, and examine hip-hop dance. By also acknowledging that I am an active participant within hip-hop, and have been for nearly ten years, it is my goal to make both myself and the reader consciously aware of how my own biases may implicitly affect how I reflect on this genre of dance and its place in visual culture. That is, while I will be considering the research of various authors, I will also employ a

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5 A complete list of the clips utilized in this montage is provided under “Video References” at the end of this paper starting on p. 83. I will, however, make note throughout the paper of the specific times that such clips align with the text and concepts discussed in each chapter.
reflexive analysis whereby I intend to demonstrate where I am coming from within this culture, and how my ideological position informs my interpretations of this popular visual site.
Chapter 2:

Historical Description

To understand the current state of contemporary dance, it is essential to examine the progression of black cultural dances throughout American history. Hip-hop, arguably the strongest current dance trend in America and abroad, is heavily grounded in African culture (Giordano, 2007; Huntington, 2011; Kassing, 2007). Though hip-hop dancing is often attributed to the stylistic movements of the 1970s (Glass, 2007; Hazzard-Gordon, 1983; Rose, 1994), in truth, its roots are centuries deep. In fact, analysis of the corporeal forms and level of posturing that the moving body of hip-hop dancing takes on connects this artistic expression to the aesthetic forms characteristic of African ethnic dances (DeFrantz, 2004; Glass, 2007).

The “Twist”

As observed by Noyes (2006), “Communities do not create their culture sui generis from their unique soil: they select and combine forms in general circulation according to their possibilities and with a competitive eye on the creations of their neighbors” (p. 37). In the dawn of the 1960s, white America’s neighbors were on the cutting edge of both the music industry and the dance scene. They were infiltrating mainstream popular American culture. And they were African American.6

In 1960, one of the largest dance fads raged across America: the “Twist”.7 Although, the “Twist’s” origins lie in the vocal recordings of Hank Ballard, the sounds and the moves of the “Twist” were made famous by the African American performer, Ernest Evans, more commonly known as “Chubby Checker” (Giordano, 2007). It was a dance that involved planting the balls

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6 I will be using African American to refer to a segment of the population whose heritage lies in African and North American origins. Also, in the context of dance, African American will be used to signify a dance style that is infused with both African and European-American movement characteristics.

7 Refer to 03:10-03:27 in the video supplement
of one’s feet on the ground while shifting one’s weight from side-to-side. Dancers were also to shimmy their upper torsos while simultaneously swiveling their hips.

Although the “Twist” became widely accepted, its emphasis on performers’ pelvic gyrations quickly inspired controversy. Moreover, the execution of the dance did not require a partner; thus, the “Twist” lent itself to the mixing of genders, social classes, and races on the dance floor\(^8\) (Giordano, 2007; Kassing, 2007). It was this mixing of racial lines primarily between blacks and whites that firmly established the “Twist” as not only a popular dance, but a powerful cultural form. As asserted by political activist, Eldridge Cleaver, “The [T]wist was a guided missile launched from the ghetto into the very heart of suburbia” (cited in Kassing, 2007, p. 231). It was a missile, whether desired or not, that quickly confronted white America and brought with it social expressions and movements that typified black culture of the time.

While this clash of cultures characterized life of the 1960s, such cultural convergence through dance did not originate or stop with the “Twist”. In fact, the evolution of black ethnic dance fusing with the dominant culture of America, as suggested above, can be traced back to the slave trade in the beginning of the 16\(^{th}\) century (Kassing, 2007; Rose, 1994). The 16\(^{th}\) century was, in a way, a moment of impact—the moment African-infused dance steps directly jolted white Americans and forever changed the cultural milieu and the face, or should I say the body, of dance. In fact, without this moment, socially and culturally relevant dance crazes like the “Twist” that challenge race relations and celebrate the body as an avenue for expression would not exist.

**Origins in Slavery**

It is no coincidence that much of today’s popular dance is African-inspired, for American life, and by extension, dance itself, was altered in the 1500s with the introduction of slavery.

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\(^8\) Refer to 03:28-03:42 in the video supplement
The slave trade removed individuals from their homes and forced them to endure the harsh conditions of the *Middle Passage*, the Western term used to signify the journey across the Atlantic that brought thousands of Africans from their homeland to the Americas. In order to increase the likelihood of survival during this treacherous voyage, as well as to ensure a high auctioning price, slaves were required to regularly dance on the decks of the ships to increase their physical strength and endurance (Allen, 2001). Ironically, although the goal of this practice was distasteful, dancing aboard the ships served as a way to unite the various African tribal groups represented. Ultimately, dance had the “power to bind slaves together as a community, to give them spiritual sustenance, to link them to a cherished African past, and to serve as a release and escape from oppression” (Glass, 2007, p. 6).

As the number of enslaved Africans increased throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, so did the strength of their culture. Though they brought no material possessions, each cohort brought a plethora of cultural traditions, including dance, which reinforced a collective African culture (Allen, 2001). However, in the South, dancing was heavily moderated and drumming was outright banned for, as white plantation owners soon discovered, the drum⁹ was more than a mere percussive instrument to their African slaves (Kassing, 2007). It was a symbolic product of their culture and a semblance of hope—hope for freedom, hope for a restored identity, and hope for a return to a life of spiritual bliss and fulfillment (Sullivan, 2001). While not every African came from similar ethnic communities, the drum and its relation to dance, language, and the forces of the Earth served as a connective, unifying thread.

Noting the drum’s power to unite the masses, it is for this reason that many white authority figures during the time of slavery quickly became wary of the political function of the instrument and thus began restricting its usage (Sullivan, 2001). Their suspicions of the drum

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⁹ Refer to 00:27-00:41 of the video supplement
were, to some extent, warranted for African slaves were indeed using the polyrhythmic beats as a form of communication, as melodic messages intended to coordinate uprisings and incite efforts of resistance both on the lands they worked and on the ships that transported them (Sullivan, 2001). Upon identifying this, the use of the drum was not only prohibited, but the mere possession of the drum was as well. For Africans, whose rhythms and sounds relied heavily on the beat of the drum, this demanded a re-invention. Consequently, the “Ring Shout”\textsuperscript{10} was born—alternate names being the “Patting Juba” and the “Slapping Juba” (Sullivan, 2001, p. 22).

The “Ring Shout” was a dance that mimicked the sounds of the drums through slapping of the body with one’s hands and the stomping of feet against the ground. Powerful bodily movements replaced the rhythm of the drums, sounds of the body against the earth supplemented for the vibrations of the instrument, poetic chants took the place of the song; and in the end, a distinctly African American form of expression was born (Kassing, 2007). It was a form of dance that would serve as the precursor to various current forms of dances, such as stepping, krumping, and breakdancing\textsuperscript{11}, all particular elements that fall under the umbrella of hip-hop (Giordano, 2007).

**European Style Confronts the African ‘Other’**

African dance in the early period of American slavery was instantly met with resistance and fear. Not only were the dances executed by individuals who were already regarded as foreign and barbaric, but the stylistic movements themselves were unfamiliar (Wagner, 1997). White Americans were witnessing a style unlike anything they had seen. They were unsure how to interpret it, and, as Buchowski (2006) points out, when such ambiguity arises, fear and discomfort soon follow. This style was clearly an unknown form; it was a dance of the ‘Other.’

\textsuperscript{10} Refer to 00:42-00:58 of the video supplement

\textsuperscript{11} Stepping, krumping, and breakdancing, while mentioned here, will be more fully explained in Chapter 5 on the discussion of the various elements and movements of hip-hop dance.
As articulated by Papadopoulos (2002), the ‘Other’ is not a mutually exclusive term. It is a term that relies on the understanding of ‘what is.’ By defining all that ‘is,’ it becomes easier to label anything that ‘is not’—and anything that ‘is not’ becomes the ‘Other.’ In this case, courtly dance predicated on European posturing stood for everything known, and everything else was representative of the mysterious ‘Other.’

**Western Movement Vocabulary**

Early European-American colonists held a notion of dance based on vastly different principles than those which characterized African dance. As expounded upon by Glass (2007), European-American dance was used to display one’s privileged position in society. Knowing the fashions and arrangements of courtly dances indicated a level of culture and nobility. To know how to dance was to be well-educated—a concept aligned with Plato’s conception of dance in ancient Greece (Kassing, 2007; Lawler, 1967). Plato classified bodily movement into two categories: noble and ignoble. *Noble* signified “movement of beautiful bodies,” whereas *ignoble* stood for “distorted movement” (Kassing, 2007, p. 53). For Plato, beautiful movement indicated a body that exhibited precision and grace, and one that had regard for formality. It was a type of corporeal activity that was to be studied and appreciated, unlike that of the frenzied movement of the ignoble body that was deemed inappropriate and vacuous (Kassing, 2007; Lawler, 1967).

This notion of precision and grace is further conveyed in courtly dance’s demand for “verticality and heavenward orientation” (Glass, 2007, p. 24). Performers danced on their toes with straight alignment in their backs, and chins elevated upwards.\(^ {12} \) Emphasis was never to be placed on the lower stratum of the body. Hips were to be locked, and one’s entire torso was to move in unison with the rest of one’s frame. Arm movements were highly-structured and rigid,

\(^ {12} \) Refer to 00:59-01:13 in the video supplement
and dancers “gave preference to light movement, as if denying the corporeality of their own being” (p. 24).

**African Movement Vocabulary**

By contrast, African dance\(^{13}\) embraced the natural, boundless energy of the human spirit that could only be released through the unrestrained power of the dancing body (DeFrantz, 2004). African dances, unlike that of European-American styles, have a movement vocabulary that extends beyond the torso and beyond a structured patterning of physical gestures. Their vocabulary includes the following: community practice, head-to-toe dancing, orientation to the earth, improvisation, competition, and polyrhythmic and percussive elements\(^{14}\) (Glass, 2007).

For Africans, dance was a tradition of community engagement; it was through participation in the dance that the bonds of the group were strengthened. Their dances were designed not as a way to elevate one’s status, but as a way to re-establish spiritual connections with the sacred beings and elements of the earth. While European-inspired dances also facilitated social bonding, the distinction here is that African-infused steps not only brought together individuals within a community, but they were also thought to bring together human and nature. In order to achieve this sense of spiritual unity, dancers tended to lean forward, or to bend their backs in a way that positioned their bodies more closely to the ground (Glass, 2007); it was a form of posturing inherent to their culture, but one that would later be deemed erotic by white onlookers.

African style also employed head-to-toe dancing. Everything from the head, to eyes, fingers, hips, bottoms, and feet were utilized. No part of the body remained dormant. This mode of expression was further emphasized by the sounds of the drums (Glass, 2007).

\(^{13}\) Primarily looking at the dance movement vocabulary of West Africa, but noting that this too is a generalization and therefore has its limitations

\(^{14}\) Refer to 01:14-01:39 in the video supplement
emulated the rhythm and power of the drums, and to do so required an all-encompassing corporeal movement. Multiple beats were enacted by the body simultaneously, for restricting the body to subtle, isolated movements—as done in the European style—was seen as unfaithful to the true nature and quality of the drum. It is through activated rather than fragmented movement that dancers create a sort of visual “dialogue by making the beat visible [by] shaping [the drum’s] accents into coherent phraseology” (DeFrantz, 2004, p. 73). It is thus through an interaction between the body’s movements and the sounds of the drums that a visual language is formed, a language that aims to translate the intangible energy of the beat into something palpable and fluid.

African dance also featured improvisational and competitive elements. When dancing in a circle or line, individual dancers would break free from the formation and creatively interpret the rhythmic sounds through a combination of individual physical gestures. Multiple performers would take their turn in the inner circle hoping their innovative expressions would garner individual praise, and more importantly, communal pride. It was an act that served as a precursor to the competitions among slaves on plantations and to the traditional “break” used in breakdancing of the 1980s (Giordano, 2007; Glass, 2007).

Overall, it is through comprehension of the marked contrast between Western and African movement vocabularies\(^{15}\) that one can begin to grasp the magnitude of the impact felt by white settlers at the sight of such frenzied, seemingly non-formulaic dancing. And furthermore, it is through such comparisons that an understanding of the white fascination with the dance of the ‘Other’ begins to emerge.

\(^{15}\) Refer to 00:59-02:13 in the video supplement
Chapter 3:

Theoretical Frameworks

Apollo v. Dionysus

African-infused steps, while they did adhere to some degree of form and pattern, allowed for more expressive freedom within this mode of dance. It was a sense of freedom not inherent to the European style. It was a style simply denied to early colonists, possibly not unknown, just repressed and allowed to surface only during rare times of uninhibited festivities (Lachmann, Eshelman, & Davis, 1988; Santino, 2011).

This tension between two opposing forces—structure and order versus freedom and chaos—has been a common theme explored for centuries. I am referring to the notion of the interplay of Apollonian and Dionysian impulses—a concept grounded in ancient Greek mythology, but popularized by the work of the 19th century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche in his treatise, The Birth of Tragedy (Kreis, 2004; Nietzsche, 1968; Thro, 1996). Here, Apollonian and Dionysian refer to the Greek mythological figures, Apollo and Dionysus, respectively—Apollo being the god of the sun, rationality, sobriety, and restraint, and Dionysus being the god of wine, theatre, and revelry (Lawler, 1967). Apollonian aspects of life signify all things that are backed by rationality, logic, order, control, modesty, and reservation, while the Dionysian dimension of life stands for all things that are chaotic, excessive, unrestrained, emotional, impulsive, and disordered (Thro, 1996).

Rather than viewing Apollonian and Dionysian concepts in opposition to one another, ancient Greek philosophers studied the interaction between the two forces and placed emphasis on their complementary and cooperative nature (Lawler, 1967). That is, they saw the necessity of obtaining a balance of Apollonian and Dionysian impulses. As discussed by Thro (1996), a
proper balance between the two establishes stability and structure within community life as well as regulates individual behavior. If an individual engages with one force more frequently than the other, he or she may feel some degree of deprivation and thus be compelled to break from his or her normal mode and succumb to that impulse which was previously neglected. This compulsion is further heightened if an individual’s participation with one force is not only prohibited, but also given no other alternative for appropriate means of indulgence (Nietzsche, 1968; Thro, 1996). Consequently, if an individual continually operates in accordance with the modes of Apollonian restriction, one may seek out uninhibited Dionysian pleasures; and conversely, if one overly indulges in Dionysian revelry, he or she may yearn for a sense of balance realized in the Apollonian dimension.

Extending the Apollonian-Dionysian concept to the current discourse on dance, it seems plausible that the reactions to African modes of dance from early European-American settlers were a result of this interaction between these two forces (Waxman, 1996). European courtly style demonstrates a clear association with the Apollonian dimension with its regular patterning and highly-structured choreographed compositions, while the less rigid, free-flowing forms taken on by African style possess more of a Dionysian dimension.16

This notion of Apollonian and Dionysian style directly parallels Plato’s views on noble and ignoble dance as discussed previously. Regardless of which set of terms are used to classify movement, noble-ignoble or Apollonian-Dionysian, these concepts are omnipresent. And in the early period of American slavery, these dichotomous forms directly confronted one another. At the moment of contact—the moment white, European courtly dance met African-infused steps—the dance as white individuals previously knew it was forever altered. A new dance was soon to form: the dance of Apollo and Dionysus.

16 Refer to 09:45-11:21 in the video supplement
Carnivalesque Eroticism

The notion of carnivalesque eroticism is central in understanding the lure of the Dionysian dimension, and by extension, the white spectator’s interest in Dionysian style dances like early African-infused steps as well as hip-hop. While typically the carnivalesque is not followed specifically by the word eroticism, I am using this particular language to draw attention to the fact that, for the purpose of this review, I am concerned primarily with the sexual or erotic nature of the carnivalesque and its celebration of carnal pleasure, not its violence or denigration (Bakhtin, 1994; Duncum, 2009).

The carnivalesque is a concept presented in Mikhail Bakhtin’s *Rabelais and His World* (Bakhtin, 1994). In his work, Bakhtin distinguishes between two bodily forms which he refers to as the closed, “classical” body and the open, extreme, “grotesque” body (Bakhtin, 1994, pp. 20-21). For Bakhtin, the classical body is associated with the upper-stratum of the body, which is “predominantly secure and intellectual and maintains it integrity,” and stands for the “impenetrable, the ideal and the spiritual” (Keft-Kennedy, 2005, p. 283). In contrast, the grotesque body focuses on the lower stratum; and thus, emphasizes the orifices, and those areas of the body that are protuberant, open, excessive, and tinged with sexual implications (Bakhtin, 1994; Duncum, 2005; Keft-Kennedy, 2005).

Carnivalesque eroticism is thus that which describes an unrestrained, transgressive body— the body that is explicitly exposed and sexualized in a society where overt sexuality is repressed (Keft-Kennedy, 2005; Mullis, 2006). It describes the temporary moments when culture and life are metaphorically turned upside down, and rather than celebrating restraint and modesty, carnivalesque eroticism delights in the body, in “hedonistic irrationality,” and in an assumed sense of “purposelessness” (cited in Duncum, 2009, p. 234).
In American society, a society founded on Puritan values, the display of such inverted, open, and transgressive bodies has been discouraged, and at times, even condemned (Giordano, 2008). Puritans believed that discipline of the mind and body was essential for a spiritually and morally sound existence (Duncum, 2005). Any action that exhibited a lack of self-control or displayed an attachment to material life was considered corrupt and potentially harmful to one’s progress on the path to eternity (American Antiquarian Society, 2007; Sturm, 1998). For many, dancing was considered to be purely carnal and earthly, and one that threatened the moral fiber of life (Strum, 1998).

This view of dancing as a corruptive force is magnified when the dance is performed by racial ‘Others’ (Giordano, 2007; Giordano, 2008). Black cultural dances of the past and today, with their emphasis on gyrations of the lower stratum and a heavy focus on those objects of the self that are generally confined and unexposed, is the embodiment of carnivalesque eroticism. And, according to the 19th century diplomat Edwin de Leon, when such racially ‘Other’ moving bodies join together in Dionysian dance forms, the collective dance becomes a “spectacle of uncontrolled (and uncontrollable) grotesque contortions” (cited in Keft-Kennedy, 2005, p. 284).

**The Racially Moving, Exotic Body**

Although many white, Apollonian-driven individuals perceived the dances of the ‘Other’ as grotesque contortions, grotesque or not, they were dynamic contortions that commanded attention. They were contortions that challenged the conservative values surrounding the body, and contortions that forced whites spectators to begin to look at the black body as a site not of carnal disgust, but as a site of power (Campbell, 2004; Wagner, 1997).

By re-examining the significance and power of the moving body, one can also begin to view the dance as a function of embodied knowledge. For white Americans who had never seen
the stylings of African traditional dance, they knew neither how to interpret these movements nor how to make sense of their accompanying fears and anxieties (Bresler, 2004b; Shilling, 2012). It is for this reason that African dances and, by extension, hip-hop, continue to be viewed and regarded as hyper-sexualized forms of expressions by those who “fail to recognize [these art forms’] multilayered and nuanced meanings” (Shusterman, 2000, p. 49).

For European-Americans, such failure to comprehend this new visual language of African dance produced immediate confusion and repudiation. The dance of the ‘Other’ with its presumed heightened carnival emphasis and profane pleasures incited large-scale resistance to public dancing. In fact, according to Lihs (2009), between the latter half of the 17th century to the middle of the 20th century, approximately 157 anti-dance books were published in the United States by prominent Christian leaders. Figures 1 and 2 provide vivid depictions of just how strongly dance was associated with society’s fear of moral decay and corruption.

**Figure 1** Image of the “Dance of Death” (Satan in the dance hall)
*Source:* Giordano, 2008

**Figure 2** Image of dancers falling out of dance halls and into the depths of hell, disease, and prostitution
*Source:* Glass, 2007
Along with the written word, other sentiments forwarded the notion that the “negr[...[ immoral and not fit for good society” (cited in Glass, 2007, p. 192). In the mid-1800s, a then well-known advocate of white supremacy, Bishop Moses Henkle, claimed that the “‘unintellectual’ character of dancing made it peculiarly disposed to the taste and morality of barbarous people” (cited in Wagner, 1997, p. 366). He also posited that this form of dancing was directly associated with black culture and should therefore be regarded as an “animal affair” (cited in Wagner, 1997, p. 366).

Significantly, even in spite of this initial disdain held by many, black cultural dance was, and continues to be, an art that white audiences seek pleasure in. The core of this white fascination lies in the allure of a particular aesthetic, the allure of the exotic. As noted previously, the exotic refers to the notion of the ‘Other.’ The ‘Other’ is representative of anything that is not already known, dominant, or previously identified. It is a social invention that serves as a way of separating the world into a state of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ (Buchowski, 2006; Mazrui, 2005). For early white Americans who represented all that was ‘us,’ African slaves with their unique style of dancing immediately became ‘them.’ Through the lens of the dominant culture of the time, Africans were considered to be primitive people whose seemingly formless and aggressive dance style countered both the modes of dancing known to the colonialists, and one that threatened the very essence of civilized white culture (Giordano, 2008; Sturm, 1998).

For some white audiences, though, this new exotic, African expressionistic style sparked a reaction of curiosity and a keen desire to further study their movement vocabulary (Glass, 2007)—a reaction that strongly aligns with the competing interactions of Apollonian and Dionysian desires that operate within the individual and society. For early Americans who were
well-versed in the Apollonian styles of courtly dance, an exploration into the Dionysian dimensions of African expression, appeared quite compelling.

In order to derive pleasure in the unknown, however, a degree of separation or unfamiliarity with the exotic ‘Other’ was required by dominant culture (Bock & Borland, 2011; Papadopoulos, 2002). White Americans had to negotiate ways to appreciate these exotic forms without condoning the equality of the participants. Maintaining distance was thus essential to extracting pleasure from the performances of the ‘Other’ (Glass, 2007). However, as Stinson (2004) states, to truly make sense of the power of the moving body, to heighten one’s sensitivity and openness to new aesthetics, and to increase one’s kinesthetic pleasure, white individuals need position themselves more actively within the dance. That is, they must engage in “deeply embodied participatory involvement” (Shusterman, 2000, p 75) for, as Stinson (2004) claims, to only observe and not participate is to “miss half of the [performance]” and to never truly experience the dance (p. 154).

Affect

This belief in an intense engagement with dance, as posited by Stinson above, speaks to an aesthetic of embodiment—an aesthetic that is inherently infused within the steps of the exotic ‘Other’. Within black cultural dance, it is urged that one experience and appreciate this art form “primarily through energetic and impassioned dance, not through immobile contemplation and dispassionate study” (Shusterman, 2000, p. 75). Black cultural dances, especially hip-hop, with their seemingly seductive rhythms and movements possess a sort of raw energy, an in-your-face type of movement that demands individuals to look in on the performance and become almost “possessed by the beat” (Shusterman, 2000, p. 75). This overwhelming feeling provoked by the
intensity, dynamism, and rhythmic ecstasy of the dance presents the spectator with an immediate sensuous experience, a visceral reaction, or what is called affect.

According to Springgay (2011b), affect refers to those “forces and [unqualified] intensities” that have the power to motivate us to act (p. 67). They are intensities that “arise from a break in the continuity of experience; [they are] a shock . . . [They] have the critical ability to disrupt the clichéd narrative of daily life” (Marks, 2008, p. 134). It is through this understanding of affect that one can conceptualize an affective experience and an aesthetic response as one in the same, for both ignite an immediate bodily reaction to a sensational event. Affect characterizes, without explicitly labeling, what the body is experiencing in the moment of interaction between the physicality of a material (the dancing body) and the subjectivity of viewing (the gaze).

This notion of sensuous immediacy or affect further underscores the appeal of both observing and participating in various styles of black cultural dance, including but not limited to hip-hop. Concurrently, it is a concept that also serves as the argument against these cultural forms or, what some would call, a mere popular pleasure. For Kant, anything that directly targets the senses, arousing pleasurable sensations solely within the body is known as agreeable art, popular art, or simply entertainment (Kant, 1952). Conversely, that which inspires reflection and a level of intellectual contemplation is regarded as fine art or art proper—an art form that is “inherently” superior to that of popular art (Stecker, 1996). It is through such Kantian logic that African-infused dances with their emphases on the body have therefore been “[r]epeatedly vilified as mindless, tasteless trash, devoid of any worthwhile form or content” (Shusterman, 2000, p. 35).

This sentiment concerns not just dance, though. In fact, as Shusterman asserts,
[Popular art in general] is still more viciously denounced as an addictive and stupefying narcotic of escape which manipulates its audience for purely mercenary motives and undermines critical and creative thought by affirming its own standardized illusions and false satisfactions. (p. 35)

While some perceive the “addictive” qualities of popular entertainment as threatening sources of pleasure and as sites that should be approached with the utmost caution, it is this addiction that forms part of the basis of the allure of popular art forms like hip-hop. Dancing is often perceived as this “narcotic of escape,” but in contrast to how it is presented above, it is an escape that has a positive connotation (Reasons & Reynolds, 2010). Dancing is a domain not just of carnal pleasure, but one of reflection. It is an aspect of dance that is often overlooked for anything that produces sensuous immediacy is often “misconstrued as entailing effortless nullity” (Shusterman, 2000, p. 45). Furthermore, due to the fact that responses to dance performances are often felt without first employing “intellectual interpretation”, those forms of dance which particularly target the senses are often considered to be “not sufficiently ‘cerebral’ to be aesthetically legitimate” (Shusterman, 2000, p. 45).

To feel and then process kinesthetic pleasure does not mean, however, that dancing is void of a reflective component. Even though both the performer and the spectator are to metaphorically let go of all distractions of mind and lose themselves to the sounds of the music and moves of the dance, the act of dancing and the memory of the moment still occupy aspects of ourselves that deal both with emotions and cognition (Wisner, 2007). Hip-hop choreographer Shane Sparks says,

A chest pump comes from the heart. When I’m doing the wave, I’m picturing slithering through a tunnel. If I stomp the ground, it’s not just a move. I’m stomping like I’m
shaking the earth. It’s not just how I move my body, it’s what I’m thinking. (cited in Wisner, 2007, p. 85)

But does this contemplation extend beyond the moves of the dance at that precise moment in time that they are first enacted? It is here that I would posit that black cultural dance of the past and hip-hop of today provide expressive spaces where participants and audiences can reflect upon the “body as site of power, but also struggle” (Csordas, 1994, p. 3). It is this belief that leads to the discussion of the body as a medium for cultural knowledge and identity construction.

The Body

It is through the body that we experience sensations, and as both Springgay (2011b) and Nietzsche (1968) point out, the body by way of the senses plays a pivotal role in knowledge production and formation (cited in Lee & Duncum, 2011, p. 239). Nietzsche, for example, describes how “knowledge based on bodily experiences with the world is ‘lived out’ rather than merely ‘thought-out’ (p. 239). It is in the “lived out” realm where affect resides, and it is only when affect is “thought-out,” or when the visceral reaction moves into language that the body’s integral role in organizing one’s lived experiences is revealed (Shusterman, 2003). In similar words, Nietzsche states, “. . . [A]though you may not believe in it—[it] is your body and its great intelligence, which does not say ‘I’ but performs ‘I’” (Nietzsche, 1960, pp. 61-62). His use of the word “performs” is significant, for he is alluding to the fact that what we do with our bodies, from our gesticulations to our posturing to the ways in which we establish relationships and positions with others through the presence of our bodies, attests to the fact that our corporeal forms are more than physical entities, more than objects. It is a view that treats the body more as
a subject, a subject that creates meaning through movement and one that embodies societal, cultural, and religious values (Mans, 2004; Peters, 2004).

This philosophical turn in the discourse stands in marked contrast to the treatment of the body in the past, for the body is now given agency. The body shifts from an enfleshed object to a mindful body—a body or subject that is “defined through its possession of consciousness, intentions and language” (Shilling, 2012, p. 79). It is a shift that represents a movement toward an understanding of the conscious body, and one that ultimately challenges the notion of the mind-body separation by embracing a non-dualistic approach to embodied learning and living (Boyd, 2004; Brown, 2003; Shusterman, 2000; Turner, 1996).

To understand this shift, one must go back to the writings of Plato. Plato assumes a theory of a dualistic world, a world of Ideal Forms versus a world of mere appearances. He suggests that a conception of a divine, utopian reality exists somewhere in an ethereal realm that lies beyond our world of sense perceptions, while a more inferior, illusionistic version of this reality lies in the inadequately representative objects that characterize our perceptual world (Dickie, 1971; Peters, 2004). And it is through this philosophical construction that the mind-body dualism emerges.

Plato saw the soul as a distinct entity, one that was separate from the body. The body was perceived to be a threat to the sanctity of one’s soul, due to its closer attachment with the senses. The senses were thought to be metaphorical attacks on the body, manipulative forces that served as unreliable sources for accessing truth and knowledge. The soul was therefore aligned with the world of the Ideal Forms, and the only way to return to this reality was through preservation of the mind, intellect, and rationality and through concomitant condemnation of the body (Peters, 2004). Significantly, it this dualistic logic that has historically and repeatedly been used as an
“instrument of ‘[O]thering’” (Peters, 2004, p. 14)—a system of ‘Othering’ which is clearly present in the Apollonian and Dionysian struggles of the cross-cultural dance.

By contrast, rather than privileging the mind, Nietzsche spoke of the power of the mind and body in tandem while placing particular emphasis on the body as a way to reassume its role in navigating the perceptually rich domains of life (Shusterman, 2000). He regarded the body as the “‘starting point’ [which] provides not only one’s basic, spatiotemporal perspective toward the world but also one’s basic drives toward pleasure, power, and life enhancement, which underlie our derivative desire for knowledge” (cited in Shusterman, 2000, p. 147). That is, he saw the body as a “constructive force,” a powerful force contributing to the fashioning of identities, the processing of symbolic structures of society, the forming of bonds between members of a group, and the production of collective and individual knowledge (Shusterman, 2000, p. 148).

Applying these suppositions to the larger framework that has guided this discussion, Plato clearly assumes an Apollonian metaphor of verticality with his emphasis on the mind as the route to achievement and mastery, while Nietzsche maintains his ties with the Dionysian metaphor of horizontality that acknowledges those drives towards community and shared experiences (Stinson, 2003).

Returning briefly to a discussion of the Western and African dance styles, these vertical-horizontal metaphors are evidently grounded within their movement vocabularies. The Western, European style with its upright posturing and the African style with its low center of gravity and forward-leaning, orientation to earth thus offer a clear visual representation of this ongoing mind/body distinction. It should be noted, though, that while African-based dances do favor overt expression of the body to some extent, this dualistic interaction between the mind and body is a mode of thought not found within African tradition (Mans, 2003). Rather, African cultural
practices are predicated upon the notion of the inseparability of life’s binary opposites; specifically, one’s earthly existence which is associated with the body, and one’s spiritual life which is associated with the mind and a divine essence (Glass, 2007). Traces of Platonic and Nietzschean logic are notably present, but the key difference remains that for Africans, neither dimension is privileged over the other.

Many Africans view the body as a vehicle to the spiritual realm, and likewise perceive spiritual aspects to already be embedded in all forms. It is thus through the movement of the body that the individual and communal spirit is awakened and enriched, and it is through the practice of the dance that the traditions and beliefs of their culture are preserved. And by extension, it is through this understanding that one can begin to truly see, not just African-based dances, but all movement-based activities as “construction[s] of culture in motion” (cited in Langman, 2003).
Chapter 4:

The Pleasures, the Lures, and the Desire to Appropriate

Working in accordance with the overarching concept of this push and pull between Apollonian and Dionysian desires within the individual and society as a whole, this chapter seeks to analyze the motivations behind white spectators’ attendance at African-infused dance performances in order to explore not only why white viewers continually attend such sites, but more importantly, what it is that they enjoy in the observation of black cultural dance. By exploring the lures and fascination with such forms, this chapter will also discuss how an art form goes from something that is appreciated to something that is absorbed, or as Eric Lott calls this process, “love and theft” (cited in Glass, 2007, p. 100).

Carnivalesque Eroticism and the Exotic

First, two popular pleasures or lures that may account for this attraction are those of the “carnivalesque eroticism” and the “exotic.” While these two notions have been discussed in the previous chapter as concepts that contribute to the theoretical underpinnings of this discourse, they also are useful to this analysis. Given that both have already been presented in some detail, I will only make brief mention of them here.

The carnivalesque eroticism relates to the white viewers’ captivation with the frenzied nature and liberating aspects of a body that is metaphorically turned inside out and upside down through all-encompassing movement (Bakhtin, 1994). By observing the dance of the exotic ‘Other’—a dance that is typically deemed erotic and carnal—white viewers are offered a mediated space whereby they too can participate in the transgressive spectacle. They are presented with a space in which they can become lost in the moment of the carnival and
subversive spirit and excite in the mystery of the exotic (Bakhtin, 1994). It is this aspect of pleasure that creates a bridge to the consideration of escapist motivations.

**Escapist Motivations**

For white individuals with little knowledge of the exotic ‘Other,’ witnessing black dance is to witness a presumably authentic\(^{17}\) exotic display; it is a “journey into the ‘other’” (Ghandnoosh, 2010, p. 1587). But what precise pleasure is derived from this journey? Perhaps, it serves as an escape from the strictures of everyday life (Reason & Reynolds, 2010). More precisely, it is an escapist journey from the Apollonian restrictions imposed in white dance forms to the Dionysian freedoms permitted in modes of black dance.

The underlying attraction is, however, not isolated just to the dance; the dance is simply a metaphor for the larger issue at hand, that being the deprivation or suppression of the self that is modified and moderated by societal and cultural values imposed upon the body. Through observation of the dance of the ‘Other,’ white spectators locate a space where the body is granted freedom from such expectations and structures. It is through this space that they are given allowance to simply “let go”, “lose themselves”, and succumb to the sensuous immediacies of the music, the movement, and the moment and derive pleasure in the ethereal beauty of performance pieces (Shusterman, 2000). In this moment of being metaphorically lost in the dance, white spectators discover an artistic arena fueled by the exploration of the self; in particular, an exploration of “the dimensions of the self that remain dormant, unrecognized, or delegitimized [sic] by dominant identity categories ascribed to them within their own cultures” (Bock & Borland, 2011, p. 5).

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\(^{17}\) This notion of authenticity will be examined and problematized in detail in Chapter 6.
Exploration of the Self through Vicarious Identification and Sexual Liberation

This escape into the unrestrained, carnival dance style of the African ‘Other’ offers a site of sexual exploration for some white observers and uneasiness for others. As suggested by Keft-Kennedy (2005), when witnessing erotic, or seemingly erotic, forms of dance, “the spectator constantly vacillates between responses of repulsion and desire” (p. 285). Arguably, this tension may be related to the individual’s desire for sexual liberation—liberation that is denied when Puritan and Apollonian values reign. For white viewers of the past and present, the observation of the carnival-erotic body undulating through space provides them with a new sense of power and delight in seeing “what the body is and what the body can do” (Bock & Borland, 2011, p. 17). Campbell (2004) argues that such dance forms visually speak to the physical desires that white viewers tend to repress, but long to enact. It is through the act of viewing these dances that the white spectator ultimately locates pleasure and power in knowing that his or her body is potentially capable of moving with intense expressive freedom, and by extension, is capable of obtaining sexual liberation (Fitts, 2008; Ralph, 2009; Reason & Reynolds, 2010).

By establishing a connection with the performer and the movements themselves, the spectator is experiencing what Deidre Sklar classifies as “kinesthetic empathy” (cited in Bock & Borland, 2011, p. 21). It is through this vicarious process that the spectator visualizes him or herself actively participating in the dance. Here, observers sense that they are experiencing the physical action of the movements themselves and their “associated emotions” (Reason & Reynolds, 2010, p. 54). In a way, the spectator is “feeling with” the dancers and discovering that through physical manipulation of the body, dance can “make visible one’s alignment or lack of alignment with the invisible values of a culture as a whole . . .” (Bock & Borland, 2011, p. 22).
Accordingly, for the white viewer, the spectacle of black cultural dance not only embodies the Dionysian dance of sexual freedom, but it also becomes a stage where white viewers understand, consciously or unconsciously, that they too can experience the same degree of power, liberation, and weightlessness that comes with immersing oneself in what might ordinarily be deemed a guilty, carnal pleasure.

**Voyeuristic Pleasure and Power**

A sense of power can also be derived when looking in and critiquing a form considered foreign to oneself. As anthropologist Michael Taussig explains, “The wonder of mimesis lies in the copy drawing on the character of and power of the original, to the point whereby the representation may even assume that character and power” (cited in Bock & Borland, 2011, p. 5). Applying this notion, one could argue that white individuals interpret black performers as possessing a degree of power and freedom of control over their own bodies—an expressive freedom often unexplored by white observers (DeFrantz, 2004; Bock & Borland, 2011).

Therefore, by copying and engaging with these forms, white audiences acquire this level of power, vicariously. Furthermore, as anthropologist Paul Stoller describes, “One sometimes copies otherness to make partial sense of it, to master it” (cited in Bock & Borland, 2011, p. 5). In this case, power lies in the understanding of these exotic forms, and such knowledge can only be obtained through a combination of observation and imitation.

** Appropriation Phases**

This understanding of power not only helps to explain the lure of black dance to dominant culture, but also offers insight into the motivations behind cultural appropriation. As mentioned previously, cultural appropriation, or “love and theft” is certainly not a new
phenomenon. This practice of “love and theft”, in regards to the absorption of African-dance steps, first occurred on the plantations when slaves were required to dance for their masters and their families as a form of evening entertainment. We know that white onlookers partook in the viewing pleasure of African-style dancing not only because of evidence provided in collections of drawings and writings from various signs and newspapers of the early periods of American life (refer to Figures 3 and 4), but also because of the development of blackface minstrelsy.

![Figure 3](image1.png)  
**Figure 3** Drawing showing white plantation owners sitting in on the dance of their slaves  
*Source: Glass, 2007*  

![Figure 4](image2.png)  
**Figure 4** Sheet music depicting African dance steps for white audiences in the North  
*Source: Glass, 2007*

Blackface minstrel shows were a popular form of entertainment that characterized theatrical life from the 1840s to the early 1900s. In this arena, white performers, with their faces painted black, imitated what they believed were “authentic” black mannerisms, songs, and dances (Glass, 2007, p. 124). Blackface minstrelsy was a way for white spectators to satisfy their tastes for the exotic in a “non-threatening” environment (p. 125).

While blackface minstrelsy is a clear example of white individuals loving, taking, and reshaping a form not inherent to their culture, it is certainly not the last. In the early 1900s,

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18 Refer to 03:10-04:17 in the video supplement
as can be seen in Figure 5, the “Black Bottom,”\textsuperscript{19} the “Charleston,”\textsuperscript{20} the “Shimmy,” and the “Lindy Hop”\textsuperscript{21} were also exploited and even commercialized (Rose, 1994). The popularity of black dances have also been used to sell anything from candy in the early 1900s, specialty brand peanuts in the 1920s, cigarettes in the 1940s (see Figure 6), to even bowties in the 1960s as a marketing strategy to appeal to white audiences’ desires for “exotic” commodities (Glass, 2007; Rose, 1994).

For the sake of brevity, fast forward to the 1950s and another phase of this evolution of appropriation can be seen in Rock ‘n’ Roll. Again, the rhythms, sounds, and movements that characterized black cultural life were re-worked and introduced into mainstream America. One of Rock ‘n’ Roll’s leading figures, Elvis Presley, known for his characteristic hip movements, was also guilty of “love and theft.” His iconic moves were, in fact, taken from his neighbors in

\textsuperscript{19} Refer to 02:17-02:23 in the video supplement
\textsuperscript{20} Refer to 03:00-03:09 in the video supplement
\textsuperscript{21} Refer to 02:39-02:59 in the video supplement
Mississippi, whom he observed dancing regularly (Giordano, 2007). Even in spite of Elvis being a white male performer, “his” moves were still considered to be overly vulgar. He was, therefore, initially presented on television from the waist up (Giordano, 2007). Significantly, once this resistance was surmounted, Elvis’s seemingly unique gyrations became a national craze and a hit with dominant, white society (Giordano, 2007).

In the 1960s, the commodification and modification of the black dance continued with the “Twist”, as captured in Figures 7 and 8, and later with the “Disco” fad of the 1970s.

In the 1980s, a new acrobatic and highly African-based form of dance known as breakdancing emerged. Breakdancing then became part of a new mode of expression that combined various styles of black cultural dance; this became known as hip-hop dancing, a style that has dominated the American dance scene since the 1990s, and one that has garnered mass appeal across racial, cultural, and generational lines (Giordano, 2007; Glass, 2007). Hip-hop is
now the most current example of significant white participation in a predominantly black mode of expression and the most current site being appreciated, appropriated, and arguably exploited by dominant culture (Ghandnoosh, 2010; Rose, 1994; Woldu, 2010).

**Dominant and Emergent Culture**

To understand the process by which an artifact or expression of a particular culture is appropriated, one must look to the relationship between what Williams (1977) refers to as dominant and emergent culture. Dominant culture today is commonly known as mass or popular culture, and refers to the expansive array of artifacts and images that reinforce and reproduce mainstream values, beliefs, traditions, and attitudes (Duncum, 2012b). It is a culture actively governed by the capitalist economy; it is a culture of consumption. Emergent culture, on the other hand, represents a domain that seeks not to reproduce, but to produce “new meanings and values, new practices, [and] new relationships . . . those which are substantially alternative or oppositional to [the dominant culture]” (Williams, 1977, p. 123). Emergent culture seeks to critique society, resist dominant social structures, and contest the values held by the masses. It is a model of culture that typically appears threatening at first and then is later perceived as desirable. For this reason, emergent culture is often situated in a precarious position whereby once accepted, it is subsequently easily absorbed by dominant culture (Duncum, 1987; Duncum, 2012b).

This incorporation of emergent forms by mass culture is precisely what has and continues to occur with black cultural dances. Looking back to the discussion on the significant phases in the evolution of the African dance in America, one can see clear evidence of this process. It is a process that has modified the dance of the exotic ‘Other’ and led to misinterpretations of the

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Refer to 04:15-05:48 in the video supplement
nuances embedded in various movement vocabularies, but it is also a process that has given birth to the current state of hip-hop as an infectious cross-cultural and global participatory art form.
Chapter 5:

Hip-Hop and Its Place in Contemporary Popular Culture

Through the dynamic interaction between the viewing of the spectator and the performance of the dance, dance as a powerful cultural site becomes a bridge linking the past to the present as dances are performed, observed, taught, and then performed again. With each new performance, various styles may be re-worked, an issue that raises the notion of authenticity, which will again be discussed in the following chapter, but re-worked or not, the dance demonstrates how an artistic practice can transcend time and cultures. Specifically, this can be seen in the fact that hip-hop, with its roots in African tradition, is now the contemporary focus of dance on a global scale.

Hip-Hop as an Art Form

Before detailing what hip-hop dancing “looks like”, I will first dissect what the term hip-hop entails. As highlighted by Ghandnoosh (2010), hip-hop as an art form “traditionally includes four creative elements: ‘deejaying’ (sampling and scratching records); ‘emceeing’ (rapping); ‘breaking’ (breakdancing); and ‘bombing’ (graffiti art)” (p. 1582). While the element that most concerns the discussion of this paper is evidently that of “breaking,” it is pertinent to note that these four practices together exemplify the quintessential goals of hip-hop not just as an art but as a culture: to preserve the pride of a historically-oppressed community, to raise awareness of the struggles of ethnic minorities in poverty, to display mental and emotional strength in spite of discrimination and adversity, and to demonstrate a level of collective resilience (Rose, 2008).

While the core elements of hip-hop are generally agreed upon, arriving at a codified and accurate timeline of the history of hip-hop is not as easily established (Wisner, 2007). In relation
to other genres, such as ballet, ballroom, and jazz, hip-hop lags far behind in scholarly attention. This continues to be the case, for not only is the style constantly in flux, as I will demonstrate later, but agreement on hip-hop’s origins is also a matter of debate (Rose, 1994; Rose, 2008). Furthermore, while some regard hip-hop as a purely Western creation that has now become a global expression or even arguably a global phenomenon, upon examining the specific elements that govern the steps of African dance, it is evident that traces of the African movement vocabulary discussed previously are heavily embedded within the current hip-hop style. Therefore, it might be more accurate to refer to hip-hop as a fusion of both Western and African traditions (Giordano, 2007; Glass, 2007).

What is most commonly agreed upon, however, is that hip-hop dance, while previously associated primarily with the breakdancing of the 1980s, has now expanded to include a range of new dance styles and techniques, namely, popping, locking, krumping, and breaking (Wisner, 2007; Zar, 2011). While each of these styles separately does not define hip-hop dance in its entirety, they do characterize specific movements that typify this inclusive art form. By illuminating the main emphases of these styles, it is therefore the goal of the following section to draw parallels between African dance of the past and hip-hop of today.

**Hip-Hop Elements and Movement Vocabulary**

Popping refers to a technique that employs a quick jerking motion of specific body parts placing particular emphasis on the chest, shoulders, and legs (Zar, 2011). This sharp and dynamic motion highlights the beat in regards to both its rhythmic pace and, more significantly, in regards to its level of intensity and dynamism. It is a movement that captures a sudden surge of energy—energy that extends from within the body and the beat simultaneously.

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23 Refer to 05:51-06:05 in the video supplement
Closely aligned with popping is krumping, which is a more explosive style, and one that is less localized to particular areas of the body (Wisner, 2007). Through powerful pulsating movements and a level of aggression that is translated through unrestrained gyrations, one’s body appears to almost extend beyond itself. It is a dance that allows one to truly “let loose.” As former judge of the television show *America’s Best Dance Crew (ABDC)*, Shane Sparks, says, “The beautiful thing about krumping is that you can never do it wrong if you express yourself honestly. It’s taking pain and anger and releasing it in a crowd” (cited in Wisner, 2007, p. 84).

This release or outpouring of emotion through full-body movement is depicted in Figure 9. Given that Figure 9 is actually a video still of a hip-hop routine performed by the group Quest Crew on *ABDC*, the image is a little difficult to discern. While images of this particular section of the routine capturing the dancers’ movements frozen in time were accessible on a simple Google image search, I felt that the stillness of those images failed to capture the essence and vitality that is inherent in krumping.24

![Figure 9 Video still of krumping from the show ABDC](source: YouTube)

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24 For a clear presentation of krumping, refer to 05:49-06:16 in the video supplement
As is the case with African-infused steps, krumping clearly embodies the practice of head-to-toe dancing. Referring to Figures 10, 11, and 12, one can see how every extremity is engaged. Knees are bent, torsos are twisted, heads are tilted, and overall, these figures assume an “aggressively layered, dynamic array of shapes” (DeFrantz, 2004, p. 71). Even fingers become “tiny dancers” in themselves as illustrated in Figure 12. It is the expressive freedom of corporeal movement given within this genre that fosters such complex forms and patterns.

Figure 10 Video still from the show ABDC highlighting how dancers of this style leave no aspects of their body unattended to. Also, this image showcases the use of facial expressions within this form. Source: YouTube

Figure 11 Video still from the show ABDC further demonstrating the range of forms the body can take on. Source: YouTube
Notice too that a critical component of hip-hop is not just the movements alone, but also the attitudes taken on by the forms. Such attitudes or forces can be seen not just within the aggressive nature or physicality of one’s posture, but in one’s facial expressions as well (Hip-Hop Dance Guide Los Angeles, 2011). Similar to an exclamatory statement, the movements are like the words of a sentence, while the face provides the exclamation point. It completes the dance. It gives the dance a spark, a life.

Hip-hop also finds vitality in the “flares”\(^{25}\) of breakdancing. Breakdancing most often involves a combination of highly acrobatic tricks, glides, head spins, intricate twirls, high-paced floor work, and heavy footwork (Wisner, 2007). It is through breakdancing that the ties to African tradition are again made visible. Breakdancing typically involves the common breakdance circle—an opening on the dance floor that provides a space for individual dancers to display their artistic prowess and enhance his or her freestyling skills, or what choreographer Kennis Marquis calls “a dancer’s resume” (cited in Wisner, 2007, p. 85); (See Figure 13 below). It is a practice clearly reminiscent of the improvisational and competitive aspects found within African styles.

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\(^{25}\) A play-on-words making use of a dance element in breakdancing known as a “flare”.
Furthermore, breakdancing aligns with the idea of community practice, for those who breakdance often identify as a part of some larger group or crew, other names for these groups being *b-boys, b-girls, or breakers* (Zar, 2011). When these crews come together, they participate in what are known as dance battles—battles that give dancers a platform to speak through performance pieces rather than through actual violence (Giordano, 2007; Glass, 2007). It is through such battles that breakers garner respect for their craft and, more importantly, for the community from which they stem. As Engel (2001) explains, “Everyone [involved in the break] gets into a kind of collective rapture because of the uniqueness of the moment and the intensity of being in the magic circle of exchange—[an exchange] of energy and technical skill and fantasy” (p. 369).

It is this sense of “magic” and marvel at such awe-inspiring gyrations and acrobatic feats that has lured in individuals cross-culturally, and it is this “magic” that has facilitated in the
growing popularity of hip-hop as it is celebrated not just in the sphere of dance, but in other facets of contemporary culture, as well.

**Popular Culture Sites**

Hip-hop in its early development in the 1970s, with its aggressive stylings and emphasis on the body as a powerful “site where social hegemonies [can be] constructed, evaded, or resisted”, was initially a strong example of emergent culture (Mans, 2004). But now, through an examination of current popular visual culture sites, one can identify the mass appeal of this now firmly integrated dominant form and begin to note the overwhelming impact hip-hop dance has had on the American and global dance scene as a whole (Brunson, 2011; Rose, 1994). Furthermore, through the inclusion of various examples of the commodification of black culture by dominant culture, the effectiveness of the previously discussed pleasures in attracting the attention of white audiences to black cultural expressions is made more explicit. It is thus through an elucidation of these visual sites that it becomes clear that this phenomenon of “love [of the emergent] and theft [by the dominant]” shows no signs of slowing down.

Considering television alone, a variety of shows exhibiting black dance styles have gained notable air time and recognition, including but not limited to *Soul Train* (1971-2006)\(^{26}\), *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* (1990-1996), *So You Think You Can Dance* (2005-present), *Born to Dance* (2011), *The X Factor* (2004-present), and *America’s Got Talent* (2006-present). Furthermore, *America’s Best Dance Crew*, which became an instant hit in its opening season in 2008, has played a significant role in providing a platform for breakdancing crews and other hip-hop artists alike (Lihs, 2009). Hip-hop has become such an integral part of the American dance scene that even shows predominantly focused on traditional Western modes of dancing, shows like *Dancing With the Stars* (2012) and *Abby’s Ultimate Dance Competition* (2012), have

\(^{26}\) Refer to 03:58-04:02 in the video supplement
incorporated aspects of black cultural dance into their programs in order to stay on the cutting edge and continue to captivate audiences, particularly teenagers and young adults (Wisner, 2006).

Similar findings exist within cinema. The 1980s and 1990s marked a major turn in the development of dance in America, for it was through movies that the general public was introduced to breakdancing and hip-hop culture. Movies like *Flashdance* (1983), *Wild Style* (1983), *Beat Street* (1984), and *Breakin’* (1984) positioned breakdancing in a way that was noticed by viewers regardless of race (Lihs, 2009). Soon to follow were other films like *You Got Served* (2004), *Stomp the Yard* (2007), *Save the Last Dance* (2001), *Honey* (2003), and *Step Up* (2006).

Significant to the discussion of the interplay between white viewers and black dance, the latter three films highlight interest in this dynamic. They all involve a white or light-skinned, typically upper-middle class, female character becoming fascinated with dance styles of black culture. In each case, the female dancer finds a way to overcome racial issues, cultural expectations, and restrictions within her own artistic style to arrive at an expressive form that derives passion and pleasure from hip-hop culture (Cort & Adler, 2001; Hayward, Garrett, & Starke, 2006; Higgins, 2004).

Hip-hop has also found its place in the commercial industry. With the development of the Internet, specifically YouTube, dance studios and choreographers can post videos online as a way to promote their individual work and as a way to promote their companies. YouTube has become a de facto public stage for various dancers and crews to gain visibility and recognition (Burgess & Green, 2009). With this platform, the popularization and access to music videos, especially hip-hop videos, has significantly grown (Turner, 2010).

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27 Refer to 07:41-08:27 in the video supplement
Hip-hop has also made its impact in the world of advertising. Just as black cultural
dances like the “Cakewalk,” the “Charleston,” and the “Twist” were commodified, hip-hop has
undergone the same treatment (Glass, 2007; Huntington, 2011). Commercials on both television
and Internet sites, particularly YouTube, are flooded with images of hip-hop dancers moving in
ways to inspire wonder and to lure the viewer into buying various products like video games for
Wii and Xbox consoles, such as Just Dance and Dance Central\(^{28}\); clothes from major department
stores like JCPenney; Adidas shoes; Evian water\(^{29}\); robot vacuums\(^{30}\); soda pop brands like the
citrus-flavored, Sun Drop\(^{31}\); MasterCard credit cards; Cheerios\(^{32}\); and even faucets (Huntington,
2011).

\(^{28}\) Refer to 08:29-09:04 in the video supplement
\(^{29}\) Refer to 09:05-09:14 in the video supplement
\(^{30}\) Refer to 09:15-09:22 in the video supplement
\(^{31}\) Refer to 09:23-09:35 in the video supplement
\(^{32}\) Refer to 09:36-09:44 in the video supplement
Chapter 6:  
Implications for Art(s) Education

I now return to the question of “How can the white fascination with black dance be used as an impetus for discussion about the prevalence of white cultural absorption and modification of the exotic ‘Other’?” It is a question that immediately finds its place within the discourse of Critical Race Theory and in dance education, but where are the implications for art education? I will begin by suggesting three general ways in which the topics covered in this thesis are relevant to art education. Following this section, I will then offer four specific examples of how educators can begin to critically engage students in the discussion of popular art forms like hip-hop and its relation to the cultural significance and power of the moving body.

First, with a postmodern approach to art theory and practice, the discourse of art education has widened to include more than just the images of the fine art world. It has broaden and shifted towards an emphasis on visual culture studies, or the study of visual culture art education (VCAE) (Duncum, 2003; Duncum, 2012b). Visual culture includes a breadth of material for analysis. Everything has the potential to be an artifact of study for VCAE so long as it is viewed in terms of its sign-value, “point[ing] beyond [itself] to something else—to ideas, values, or beliefs” (Duncum, 2012b, p. 114). The implication here is that anything from the paintings of the past and present to the drawings from the times of slavery, to commercial products like the “Twist” tie to advertisements, YouTube videos and music videos on MTV, to social dances themselves may be relevant to a postmodern discussion of VCAE (Duncum, 2003; Duncum, 2007; Duncum, 2012b).

Second, not only has art education shifted in a new direction of inquiry, but an understanding of the word “art” in itself has also evolved in the contemporary art world, both at the institutional level and in the art classroom. That is, we are now working from a frame of
art(s) plural rather than art singular. Consequently, domains of study such as music, drama, and, significantly, dance are now assumed as a part of the research that informs arts education (Appel, 2006).

Third, as Bresler (2004b) points out,

The arts, unlike the traditional academic areas, are an arena in which the body is central to the process of inquiry and constitutes a mode of knowing. This makes dance, drama, music, and the visual arts education a particularly rich place to explore what embodiment means for educational researchers and practitioners. (p. 9)

I would argue that art provides the structures for embodied knowledge not just for educational researchers and practitioners, but more importantly, for all individuals who inevitably navigate their daily lives through their bodies and its accompanying senses—an experience of embodiment that is unique to the individual. By understanding the interactions and relationships between our bodies and their visceral responses to sensational events, these “affective configurations of experience” (Springgay, 2011a, p. 640) create an integrated, holistic learning space for the re-examining and updating of visual culture art education (Bresler, 1995; Springgay, 2011a). And dance is just one space where these affective experiences that contribute to knowledge production come alive.

**Dissecting the “Twerk”**

Duncum (2009) argues that “while art teachers now critique popular visual culture for its often-dubious ideologies, they are yet to come to terms with its transgressive pleasures”; he suggests that “[t]eachers fail to engage with its carnivalesque, subversive qualities because they conflict with the rationality upon which schools are founded” (p. 232). But to ignore the pleasures that particular visual sites offer students is to implicitly discredit their perceptual and affective experiences within art making and meaning. Moreover, what happens if, and when,
students bring presumed transgressive material and discussion into the classroom walls? How, if at all, should such material be addressed? Art educator Terry Barrett asserts that if students bring particular issues to the school setting, no matter what the issue is, then it is deserving of critical attention (personal communication, November 12, 2013).

Dance is just one such pleasure that is often excluded from the pedagogical realm. Paradoxically, dance is a form that many students not only actively engage in, but one that is repeatedly viewed through the increased proliferation of imagery by way of television and the Internet (Duncum, 2012b). Arguably one of the most strikingly transgressive moments found within the current intersection of popular culture and dance is that of Miley Cyrus’s 2013 Video Music Awards (VMA) performance (see Figure 14).

Figure 14 Image of Miley Cyrus “twerking” on R&B singer Robin Thicke during her 2013 VMA performance
Source: General Google search for “Miley VMA”

33 Refer to 07:10-07:24 in the video supplement
In Figure 14, Miley Cyrus can be seen gyrating, or what is now globally known as “twerking,” on R&B singer Robin Thicke during her 2013 VMA performance to Thicke’s hit single, “Blurred Lines” (Ignjatovic, 2013). According to Oxford Dictionaries Online, “to twerk is to dance to popular music in a sexually provocative manner involving thrusting hip movements and a low, squatting stance” (“Twerk”, 2013a). Urban Dictionary defines twerk as “the rhythmic gyrating of the lower fleshy extremities in a lascivious manner with the intent to elicit sexual arousal or laughter in ones intended audience” (“Twerk”, 2013b). In some respects, these definitions resemble the African and hip-hop based movement vocabularies in their references to an emphasis on the lower stratum of the body and on a low-slung center of gravity. However, these definitions allude to the hyper-sexualized nature of this dance style—an aspect of the dance that is not inherently found with African-based styles but one that is often attached to the dance by white onlookers.

Given that twerking has now become synonymous both with Cyrus and with hip-hop as a whole, the issue of authenticity arises and is problematized. Many scholars and hip-hop artists continue to assert that hip-hop is “dead” (Dimitriadis, 2001, xii) or that its dance steps are continually being “watered down” (Wisner, 2007, p. 84), “whitewashed” (Gabriel, 1998, p. 4), or simply misconstrued. For those assuming this position, cases such as Cyrus are being used as evidence of such a metaphorical death. Others contest this notion of an “authentic” hip-hop, suggesting that this belief is only an elusive, romanticized ideal of the past (Boyd, 2004; Lang, 2013; Rose; 1994, Rose; 2008; Thompson, 2009; Wisner, 2007). In fact, as Storey (2003) indicates, every culture tends to speak of a romanticized past, of a time when everything was as it should be, even in spite of the fact that during the contemporary moment of that time, such sentiments were not expressed.

34 Refer to 06:32-06:55 and 07:06-07:09 in the video supplement
As was discussed previously, when hip-hop dance first arrived to the American dance scene, it too was viewed as a threatening force. Now, however, hip-hop styles of the 1980s and 1990s are located in the idyllic past, while the new styles of Cyrus and the twerk are considered by some to be inauthentic displays that delegitimize true hip-hop (Lang, 2013). But are these styles really that “new” or so radical that they appear delinked from what constitutes hip-hop? I would argue that Cyrus is taking a dance move that has been previously done, providing an alternative form of its execution, and placing the twerk in new contexts—contexts that position the twerk in the public sphere rather than the private sphere of entertainment. From this perspective, her performance should then be read as a dance that highlights how current artistic styles are constantly shifting, being reworked, and re-contextualized; and perhaps, it is this shifting and melding of styles and forms that represents the “true” and “authentic” nature of not just hip-hop, but popular culture in general.

Educators can use such an example of Cyrus’s performance as a way to not only deal with the debate over authenticity, but also as a way to discuss the social phenomenon of cultural appropriation. Moreover, Cyrus’s dance moves raise critical issues of the politics of the body; in particular, how dance moves that are separated from their distinct histories become sites of colorblindness (Rodriquez, 2006; Rose, 2008). Simply performing the movements or steps of a particular style without giving any nod to the culture from which it stems or performing the steps without the knowledge of its historical, racial, and cultural significance is to undermine the symbolic and racially-coded meanings of the dance by “delinking [it] from its ethnic marker” (Bock & Borland, 2011, p. 5). In short, 
*doing* the steps of a dance is not the same as 
*experiencing* or 
*feeling* the steps—and it is only through the latter that the body as a corporeal construction of culture and self is given agency (Langman, 2003a; Sklar, 2001).
Through such an understanding, Cyrus’s performance can again be used on the discussion of how we locate power in ourselves, and how the body can serve as both a constructive and destructive force. This power relation is critical to the analysis of the conscious body discussed in Chapter 3, for Cyrus is in a way an embodiment of appropriation by the dominant culture, and since children and adults are talking about and watching her twerk, it is vital that we begin to construct pedagogies that address the repositioning of the body in popular culture.

**Deconstructing Cinematography by Way of Various Principles for VCAE**

The Apollonian and Dionysian dimensions of dance are clearly captured in the 2001 feature film, *Save the Last Dance* (Cort & Adler, 2001). While numerous dance films could have been used to exemplify these concepts, I chose this one for its readily apparent connection to these long-standing impulses.

Sara Johnson, a white ballerina, played by Julia Stiles, is forced to move in with her father who lives in Chicago’s inner city after the tragic death of her mother. She instantly finds herself in a predominantly black community and black high school and in a feeling of dislocation in an ethnic community unfamiliar to her. Being one of the few white individuals within the school, Sara quickly realizes that to navigate through the school and her daily life in a more “blended fashion”, she must “learn to be ‘black’ in order to fit in” (Boyd, 2004, p. 75). She soon meets Derek Reynolds, played by Sean Patrick Thomas, a black male who encourages her to continue her pursuit for a spot in Julliard’s School of Ballet. However, it is not through ballet, but through hip-hop that the movie focuses upon, and it is through hip-hop that Sara reconstructs her identity and forms relationships with her peers and soon-to-be love interest, Derek.35

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35 Refer to 07:25-07:32 in the video supplement
Significantly, as Boyd (2004) points out, “[T]he film presents a black dance form primarily danced by a Caucasian performer and celebrated only in its appropriated forms” (p. 75). It is this observation that leads to the discussion of the importance of deconstructing popular forms of entertainment through a more critical lens while still actively acknowledging the pleasure such sites afford (Duncum, 2009; Duncum, 2010).

Using screen shots from the film as a way to discuss the relationship of power and the gaze—two of the seven principles suggested by Duncum (2010) that aid in the examination of visual culture imagery—it is the goal of this section to critically analyze the visual information that the viewer receives through the lens of the camera. *Save the Last Dance* will thus serve as a mere backdrop to the larger discussion of these principles as they relate to the erotic and exotic ‘Other.’

Just as there are formal elements and principles of design that contribute to aesthetic constructions and interpretations of mostly two-dimensional imagery, there too are elements for analyzing the ways in which photographic images are arranged and captured. Seeing as how most children engage with photographic and cinematic realms of popular entertainment regularly, it is imperative that students “understand that images construct a version of reality rather than naively assuming that the meanings of realistic images are self-evident” (Duncum, 2012c, p. 46). That is, students need to see themselves as spectators who are always in dynamic relationships with visual texts (Duncum, 2003). By assuming this active role, students can then become critically-minded consumers of visual culture capable of acknowledging that power not only lies in the hands of those that construct imagery, but also in the mind of the viewer (Duncum, 2010). As posited by Barker,
Being an audience for anything is never a simple or singular process. It is a process that begins in advance of the actual encounter, as people gather knowledge and build expectations . . . In other words, audiences bring their social and personal histories with them. (cited in Reason & Reynolds, 2010, p. 50)

This is related to what is more commonly known as the spectator’s gaze. The spectator’s gaze concerns how we look at images, specifically referring to “what people view, the circumstances under which they view, and, crucially, what people bring to images. Our gaze tells us about ourselves, especially what we desire” (Duncum, 2012a, p. 24).

While the spectator’s gaze does contribute to the ways in which we interact with images, the ways in which photos are taken, or the angles of view or framing of pictures, influences our gaze, as well. For instance, Figures 15 and 16 below, display a neutral view whereby the viewer is placed at eye level, not with Sara and Derek’s faces, but with their hips. By zooming in on the pelvic region of the dance, the picture instantly becomes more erotic than if shot from a distance. Interestingly, this zoomed-in, neutral angle is almost solely utilized during the hip-hop portions of the film, whereas when Sara is doing ballet, her entire body is usually in frame with no singular aspect of her body receiving emphasis.

![Figure 15](image.png) Video still of Sara and Derek dancing; emphasis on the pelvic and posterior regions
*Source: Cort & Adler, 2001*
By intentionally leaving the dancers’ faces out of the shot (see Figure 17), the participants or subjects’ gazes are made obsolete and the body in the frame becomes just that: a fleshy body, an object, one that is stripped of its power. It becomes a body subjugated by the viewer’s desires for carnal consumption and pleasure. Here, Sara’s body is observed in the same

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Refer to 07:33-07:40 in the video supplement
way the black body has been traditionally viewed, and together, their dancing bodies, by way of
the camera shot, become an amalgamation of the overly exoticized and eroticized hip-hop body.
The viewer is privileged and the subjects are exploited, and the dance of the ‘Other’ retains its
position of inferiority by the white gaze.

**Re-establishing the Body’s Place in the Curriculum**

As articulated by Sklar (2001), “Movement is an essential aspect of culture that has been
undervalued and underexamined, even trivialized.” This can be seen when observing the current
condition of the curriculum and the environment of the classroom. Students are told to sit
upright at their desks, raise their hands and wait to be called upon, stay in their seats and restrain
from excessive and disruptive movement, walk in straight lines, and remain quiet (Bresler,
2004a). These forms of posture and behavior that “curtail the body by disciplining the mind”
characterize the ideology of the Apollonian paradigm (Duncum, 2009, p. 235). The school,
metaphorically speaking, is the school of Apollo.

While this privileging of the mind through disciplining of the body may seem ideal for an
institution driven by the desire to acquire and produce new knowledge, it is a practice that
ignores the value of embodied knowledge. It is a practice that reinforces the mind-body
separation and creates a gap between the Apollonian (inquiry by mind) and Dionysian (inquiry
by body) forms of learning.

The question then becomes: How do we re-position the body as a pedagogical tool that
actively participates in the learning process? I would argue that the answer lies in the permission
to use one’s body in settings where such use is normally prohibited. That is, how do we relay the
value of the body in order to create a Dionysian playground within the curriculum? It is here that
I would suggest that educators look to the dance, specifically to hip-hop, for its virtues of bodily
agency.
Hip-hop, with its outwardly aggressive movements and dynamic layering of forms, displays corporeal power that cannot be denied. It offers a space for individuals to metaphorically move out and live out emotions through intense, uncontained, “honest movement” (Wisner, 2007, p. 85). It presents a way to tap into the power of the moving, conscious body and “experience and enjoy the body’s involuntary movements [as] an expression of its life, of its vibrant force” (cited in Shusterman, 2000, p. 177). This force is that which allows us to move, to engage with our surroundings, and to process our lived experiences.

Through comprehension of the power of our bodies in such processes, it seems that educators ought to allow students to explore this force and its abilities to facilitate in physical learning. That is not to say that hip-hop is the only means of doing so, but it does present itself as an alternative tool for self-expression and self-fashioning. Hip-hop, as inspiration for movement-based activities in the classroom, awakens the current “static” curriculum by closing the gap and reconnecting the body and the mind, and ultimately, establishing, in this sense, a holistic approach to learning (Bresler, 1995, p. 31).

**YouTube and Digital Storytelling**

Creating such a contemporary spark in the curriculum through pedagogical practices of embodied knowledge requires educators to move beyond the mere discussion of the benefits of movement-based activities and actually implement a practice whereby students are doing just that—moving. As Skoning (2010) would suggest, it is vital that educators across disciplines, create lessons whereby students may in fact “dance the curriculum” (p. 170). Sklar (1991) posits a similar position for as she points out,

Although one must resort to words to understand the symbolic meaning of movement, talking [alone] cannot reveal what is known through the media of movement. The
cultural knowledge that is embodied in movement is an emotional experience that depends upon cultural learning. Since we all inevitably embody our own very particular cultural perspectives, we must do more than look at movement when we write about dance. (para. 7)

Bridging language with movement therefore seems not only appropriate but feasible especially as alternative methods for learning are being incorporated into 21st century American school systems as a way to meet the demands of a population comprised of diverse students ranging from auditory to visual to haptic to kinesthetic learners (Bresler, 1995; President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities, 2011; Skoning, 2010). Again, given the expanding realm of material that may be included in the discourse of art education, dance, along with other traditional modes of visual art, may provide just that bridge.

What does this bridge look like, however? In sticking with the current discussion of hip-hop and its accompanying styles, I would argue that even in spite of the broadened scope of educational material in our schools, a push for the inclusion of hip-hop dance into the curriculum would not only be a challenging endeavor, but one that would most likely be met with resistance. And while rap, an element of hip-hop, has already begun to make its way into academic institutions due to its emphasis on linguistic and expressive capabilities, dance has not experienced the same success be it in scholarship or in its actual implementation within the school walls (Dimitriadis, 2001). The seemingly transgressive nature of hip hop with its emphasis on the lower stratum of the body and aggressive gyrations—an aspect that lies at the core of both its appeal and repulsion—marks it as an art form that, by its very nature, subverts the pursuit of rationality reified in schools and codified in the education of students (Duncum,
Therefore, having students “pop, lock, and drop it”\textsuperscript{37} or krump, breakdance, and even twerk as a way to understand the cultural, historical, and symbolic signification of the dance still seems like a remote possibility.

However, I would ask: Why should such forms of dance be excluded when other styles such as ballet and jazz are more readily included, especially given that hip-hop is the latest trend within the current youth dance scene? It is a question that I do not yet have an answer to, and it is one that I will not seek to adequately answer in this analysis. Yet, I raise it here for if our educational system is still not ready for such a shift, how then should educators deal with the influence and interest of popular cultural forms such as hip hop that characterize the everyday lives of students both directly and indirectly? I use \textit{directly} to refer to those students who may be active participants within this dance form, while I use \textit{indirectly} to allude to the fact that whether or not students may be consciously involved in the hip-hop scene, they most likely have been exposed to some degree of hip-hop culture—be it through the radio, magazines, the internet, television, movies, clubs, or music videos and clips on YouTube.

YouTube, a site that has received mass appeal since its launch in 2007, offers a space for popular pleasure that cannot be ignored (YouTube Statistics, 2014). Students, as well as adults, are not only actively perusing through millions of videos made accessible on the site and spending hours on a daily basis viewing them, but many are also partaking in the informal production of homemade videos and uploading them on their own initiative. That is, they are participating in the construction and dissemination of vernacular or folk art, a classification of work which speaks to the “work of amateurs, formally untrained people who make pictures because they enjoy doing so” (Duncum, 2012b, p. 114). It is relevant to draw attention to the inclusion of the word \textit{enjoy} in said definition, for YouTube provides a space for pleasure and

\textsuperscript{37} Reference to the song, “Pop, Lock, & Drop It” by Huey released in 2007
engagement both from the perspective of the conscious viewer and the informal producer (Duncum, 2012b).

This implied level of enjoyment is made evident when examining a few key statistics on audience interaction with YouTube. Specifically, at this time, it is estimated that per month, more than 1 billion unique users visit the site, and within that one month span, over 6 billion hours of video are watched. Furthermore, it is currently approximated that, globally, 100 hours of video are uploaded every minute (YouTube Statistics, 2014). With such staggering numbers, both educators and the layman alike must pay attention to the interactive appeal of YouTube as a virtual community of creative producers and consumers.

It is here where YouTube’s role in the overall discussion of the white fascination with black dance and the prevalence of white cultural absorption and modification of the exotic ‘Other’ arises. If having students perform various hip-hop dance elements is regarded as a possibly unacceptable in-school activity, and if writing and reading about the distinct movement vocabularies of various cultures is inadequate in the understanding of the full scope of the dance, YouTube might serve as an alternate solution. YouTube provides a mediated space whereby students may still be immersed in the visual aspects of hip-hop dance, as well as in the dialogue that is sparked by the viewing of such videos.

Returning back to the metaphor of the bridge, YouTube thus becomes that link between the movement/visual components needed to affectively experience the dance and the language component needed to articulate one’s response to the dance as both an art form of individual expression and one of cultural significance. Simply put, YouTube offers a space for art making and meaning—a notion that lies at the core of a comprehensive art education curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1986; Parsons, 1987). By utilizing YouTube as a contemporary platform
for art making, students can learn how to use the various technological components needed in the production of videos, learn how to properly compose video shots, consider ways to compile and arrange imagery, as well as discover options for uploading videos to various interfaces. From the stance of making meaning through the process of art making, YouTube also serves as a site for students to critically deconstruct individual images/videos, analyze the intentional composition of the site’s interface as a whole, and allow them to more closely examine the potentially positive and negative consequences of the creative freedom and space afforded by YouTube (Naim, 2006).

While this notion of critically dissecting those images with which individuals interact in their everyday lived experiences is a vital aspect of the learning process being discussed, as alluded to earlier, learning must also be supported by a sense of engagement and relevance (Roodt, 2013). As Duncum (2009) asserts, “[W]hile art teachers now are attempting to deal with popular culture by subjecting it to a critical lens . . . to fully address popular culture in the classroom, [educators] need to develop pedagogy that acknowledges fun and pleasure” (p. 234). Given that YouTube actively engages millions daily, YouTube can thus be viewed as a pedagogically-rich site that demonstrates learning and fun do not have to be mutually exclusive; rather, the two should be seen as synergistic forces.

This idea of fun can also be derived from what Dreon et al. (2011) refer to as “digital storytelling” (p. 4). In the case of dance, when actual live performances are inaccessible, capturing such routines on film allows viewers to abstract the power of the dance while also providing viewers with time and space to make sense of the dance in terms of its symbolic, cultural, and historical significance, as well as evaluate it in terms of emotionality, musicality,
artistry, and aesthetics. In fact, as noted by Martin (2004), “stories can be told about dances just as much as dances can tell stories” (p. 48).

Prior to the age of film and technological advances, I would argue that a sort of three-point model of the dancing story could be read or interpreted:

1. A narrative metaphorically spoken by the dance itself—a dialogue formed by the sounds of the instruments accompanied by the movements of the body
2. Those unique experiences felt throughout the movement by the performers themselves as their bodies undulate through space and interact with the forms of other dancers
3. Those visceral reactions, emotional experiences, and cultural perspectives which contribute to each individual’s unique viewer relationship formed with the dance (DeFrantz, 2004, p. 63-66)

And now, in the age of the technological spectacle, I would add a fourth and fifth story:

4. The artistic perspective of the choreographer whose vision is sought to vicariously play out on stage
5. That of the film producer, formally or informally, who shares his or her experiences on camera through carefully chosen and intentionally composed shots which compliment his or her own aesthetic sensibilities and aid in the expression of his or her response to the dance

I prefer to refer to this suggested model as points rather than as a tiered model, for no story is prioritized or given more value; they are points which are in constant interaction. These experiences or metanarratives of a singular dance performance may differ, however. Yet, cumulatively, these unique experiences are what contribute to the power and captivation of the
moving body. They are stories of visual experiences that highlight that space which lies between movement and language—a “space of transgressive delight” (Mackendrick, 2004, p. 142). Dance can convey those messages which escape words. In a single moment in time, one pirouette in a ballet ensemble or a flare in a breakdancing section can tell a hundred stories all at once. And now, individuals can create what I would call a “digital dance”. They can create visual, virtual texts by making and uploading their own videos of themselves or others dancing, or take clips of various dances and compile and splice them in ways which essentially recreate and rework previous dances. In short, individuals can now continually construct and reconstruct their relationships with dance forms such as hip-hop and share their artistic stories by virtue of YouTube and its open arena for digital storytelling.

The Digital Dance

It is for all of the aforementioned benefits and possibilities of YouTube and digital storytelling that, rather than dancing the curriculum, I created a “digitally dancing thesis.”38 That is, along with an actual written thesis, I decided to compile clips that visually told my thesis by highlighting the key dance movements and styles that are covered in this discussion as well as visually depicting the theories presented. This video supplement is not only meant to “dance out” my thesis, but also meant to demonstrate how learning is enhanced when the visual and the verbal aspects of learning operate in tandem.

When trying to describe particular movement vocabularies, I found it quite challenging to elucidate the adequate word choices and proper descriptors that captured the essence of dance, for speaking of an art form that deliberately avoids words can be challenging and problematic. I found myself thinking, “It would be easier if I could just demonstrate or show what I am trying

38 Compilation of my video supplement was due in large part to the assistance of my colleague, John Cornelius Clifford IV.
to say.” But just doing the movement, as Sklar (2001) asserted, is not enough; it is vital that one make meaning of the movement through contemplation and articulation. Therefore, by including the visual representation of my thesis, it is my intention to further illuminate the evolution of hip-hop dance and the white fascination with this form through the act of viewing, selecting, and constructing videos and images that physically dictate the ideas I have been exploring. It is a way to bring the aspects of art making and art meaning into my work in order to further demonstrate the reciprocal relationship between the two processes as well as support further understanding of the key concepts for both myself and the reader.

At this point, I would suggest that the reader view the video, which can be accessed privately on YouTube through the following link: http://youtu.be/3IQMeOGSaYk

Significantly, through the process of composing this video, I discovered new meanings and encountered further questions as it pertains to my work on white interaction with black cultural dance. For the sake of brevity, however, rather than examining each clip individually, I will discuss the major themes that emerged through this process and discuss their relevance in both facilitating art making through digital manipulation and in prompting discussion on white appropriation in the context of hip-hop dance, critical race issues, and the consequences of digital storytelling. Furthermore, I will be including a discussion of how these themes relate to the various theories discussed in Chapter 3, and how this discussion can be utilized in an interactive art making and meaning lesson for students, particularly those in secondary or higher education. In order to more clearly demonstrate the teachable moments of a “digitally dancing thesis,” as well for any video making activity in general, I will provide possible questions that may be used to facilitate thoughtful conversation and support engagement.

39 Again, a complete list of every clip, including titles and duration, can be found under “Video References” starting on p. 83
First, when trying to select the videos that I wanted to incorporate into my piece, I immediately discovered that such decisions were made difficult by the vast amount of imagery made available, and paradoxically, by the scarcity of others. For instance, when choosing which music videos to include of Miley Cyrus’s song “We Can’t Stop” and DJ Casper’s “Cha Cha Slide,” upon an initial search, not only did the official music videos for both artists immediately pull up, but so did various other renditions as well as edited versions of the originals. Choosing which to feature, in this case, did not seem as overwhelming, for displaying the official video released by VEVO seemed to be the appropriate choice and one which would uphold the integrity of the artist’s vision and my own.

However, when searching for an example of the “Patting Juba” or “Slapping Juba,” my options were quite limited. It took nearly 45 minutes to navigate the site through a finicky process of entering specific keywords into the search box and then viewing the options of suggested videos. Of those which I found, one seemed overly theatrical to the point that I felt uncertain about its usage, while another was presented by a government website. With the latter, I was uneasy in presenting a dance with a political slant, so I chose instead to reference the home video of a man and his three boys doing what is alternatively referred to as the “hambone.” Given the audience response as depicted in the commentary, I felt that of the videos I considered, this one displayed threads of past African tradition as well as contemporary appeal.

It is from these experiences that I found the following questions most relevant for students first exploring the idea of digital storytelling:

- Where does one begin in planning a digital story?
- How do sites, such as YouTube, both “enable and constrain” individuals as they navigate and utilize the interface? (Dimitriadis, 2001, p. 9)
• When presented with a myriad of images/videos, what criteria might be used to effectively choose a video that both communicates messages clearly and aligns with the overall intention of the video?

• If opting to produce new imagery rather than splicing pre-existing imagery in new arrangements, are the selection criteria the same or different from the aforementioned question?

• Are there hidden biases present in the keyword searches used to locate particular videos, and if so, how does this affect one’s process of navigation?

• To what extent does feedback provided by interface users affect one’s browsing habits on YouTube?

A second theme that emerged was the idea of essential narratives (Duncum, 2013, p. 123). That is, I had to decide which particular scenes most clearly and concisely portrayed the aspects of the dance germane to my discussion. Seeing as I had constraints on the length of my video, the arduous task was not only finding the videos but also locating particular moments within each clip to showcase. Referring to Miley Cyrus again, it seemed an obvious choice to start her music video with the alphabet soup spelling out “twerk” given that this term was introduced extensively within this discussion. However, when choosing which examples of West African drumming and ritual dancing to present from a documentary spanning nearly an hour, the choice became less clear. I wanted to focus on the tone and rhythm of the drum and then showcase the sense of community and spirituality created by the beat of the drum and passion of the dance in order to set the foundation for the contrast between African movement and Western European-derived movement.

Noting the difficulty of this task, I would present a similar challenge to students:
• What constitutes as an essential narrative? What key features mark particular moments or scenes as more significant to the overall plot line or intent than others?
• When working with various time constraints, what are some strategies to more efficiently sort through images for inclusion in the final cut?

This segues into the ubiquitous theme of authenticity. I found this issue most present when searching for examples of traditional African dance and drumming mentioned above, as well as European-inspired courtly dance, “Patting Juba”, and examples of the “Black Bottom.” I wanted to ensure that I was presenting an accurate portrayal of these various dance styles and not incorporating imagery that had been reworked in movies or other forms of popular entertainment. But as suggested earlier, this ideal of an authentic display is problematic, and one that may not yield any conclusive results.

Given the inherent difficulties in ascertaining authentic displays of art forms such as dance, I chose to consult with individuals whom, due to their direct experiences with these art practices, I felt had more credibility on the topics at hand. I discussed the “Black Bottom” with my grandmother who grew up in the era of this dance, and I showed footage to a friend who came from West Africa when making a decision about the drumming sections. As for the Romantic Period drama dance scenes, ascertaining accuracy was problematic, but when re-examining the movement vocabulary of Western courtly dance, I found such characteristics most evident in the clips I presented.

It is from this analysis that I would therefore pose these questions:
• Even if this notion of authenticity is problematic, how might one go about constructing imagery and performances that maintain a level of integrity given that authenticity is in fact a concern for one’s video?

• Given that anyone with means to a technological device with Internet access can upload videos to YouTube or like sites, it is likely that videos already posted online have been manipulated or spliced in a way that significantly alters the meaning of an original artist’s work (Naim, 2006). What are the consequences of this possibility, and how do they affect one’s relationships with these visual texts?

Next, the notion of the gaze discussed in Chapter 3 also became apparent to me during this process. To reiterate, the gaze “concerns how we look at images and the circumstances under which we look. It refers to our predisposition to see things in certain ways. . .” (Duncum, 2010, p. 161). I realized that my preference for performances appearing on shows like America’s Best Dance Crew and So You Think You Can Dance greatly impacted my selection process when choosing dance routines which reflected the elements of the hip-hop genre. Not only did I see this in the fact that I selected multiple clips from said sources, but I also allotted more run-time for these clips as compared to other examples. Upon realizing this and going back through the video montage, I also noticed that when screening clips side-by-side, I was not consistent in giving equal viewing time to the various styles; and thus, had to make adjustments so as to avoid any inherent biases.

Noting the power of the gaze even on an almost unconscious level, I would ask:

• Why is it important to understand where one is coming from within a particular culture and from a particular point of view when constructing visual artwork and when assessing such work?
• How does one’s gaze restrict and open possibilities in the process of art making and meaning?

• When constructing videos and uploading them to public sites such as YouTube, where and how might one’s biases permeate one’s work?

When displaying dances side-by-side in a split screen, as was done with examples of black and white communal dances shown at 01:42 and with examples of the “Charleston” being performed by both white and black performers at 03:03, it was my intention to not only make the distinctions between the two forms more visible, but also to force viewers to note any possible similarities or examples of appropriation and alterations of these dance forms.

Here, I would ask:

• How does the juxtaposition of two seemingly disparate clips affect one’s response to the imagery?

• When images are viewed simultaneously and displayed in a way that forces viewers to draw comparisons, how does such a presentation alter the relationships formed and the interaction between the producer, the consumer, and the work itself?

Along with these themes, I also incorporated video clips that highlighted the major theories explored in this work. While examples of the gaze and authenticity have already been provided, one can see the theories of Apollo and Dionysus, carnivalesque eroticism, the exotic ‘Other’, and issues of appropriation manifested in examples from both past and contemporary culture. The Apollonian and Dionysian dimensions, while intertwined throughout the entire video, are most apparent in the clips which place ballet against hip-hop. Such can be seen in the
Save the Last Dance and Step Up clips, in the Dance Central commercial where two soccer players battle for the field by way of their dance skills, and in the final performance where a classically-trained performer is urged to “get out of his mind” and celebrate the bodily and expressive liberation of hip-hop. In every example, the video depicts the metaphorical Dionysus ruling over Apollo, suggesting that the realm of irrationality, chaos, and freedom is both more alluring and fulfilling.

The notion of the carnivalesque with its “celebration of hedonistic irrationality” (Duncum, 2009, p. 234) is seen particularly in the aggressive gyrations of women’s derrières in the Twerk Team videos, in the Whooty White Girl with a Booty clip, and in the steps of Mega Jam dancers moving to the song “How Low Can You Go?” by Ludacris. Rather than restraining the body and suppressing a desire for sexual exploration in favor of the mind which seeks to repress such urges, these dancers seem to move in ways that defy the limitations of the body and force the viewer to both watch and derive pleasure in the body’s capabilities to maneuver through space and incite arousal.

One might also suggest that the lure of the exotic is played out in these clips as well, for even in spite of the fact that both the Whooty White Girl and the Twerk Team performers, who represent the racially moving ‘Other’, are doing very similar acts with their bodies, the Twerk Team has received considerably more views and recognition on YouTube’s interface. Now while this may be due to a number of factors, it does bring attention to the potential power and appeal of the exotic.

Finally, evidence of “love and theft” can be seen in the clip showing Chubby Checker performing the “Twist” as the camera pans across the all-white audience and then fast forwards

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40 A play-on-words that makes reference to the name of the song to which Alex Wong and Stephen “Twitch” Boss perform
to a clip of solely white participants partaking in the fun of this social dance trend. Also, I have included a brief video of a white couple in the park coming across what resembles a precursor to the Soul Train Line and showing interest in these dance steps that are all together new to them. From there, a video of American Bandstand captures the melding of different races on the dance floor.

For the contemporary examples of hip-hop being used and modified in advertisements, one can see how hip-hop is being portrayed as a dance that crosses cultures and generations. Babies are breakdancing for water, and the Cheerios honey bee is shimmying to attain the status of cool. The everyday consumer is also doing the “robot” to mimic the sleek capabilities of a vacuum that one must purchase to be hip, while the Sun Drop white girl, who now feels “fresh” after sipping this brand of beverage, inspires both a sense of enjoyment and confusion from her attempts to “drop it like it’s hot” like the black female dancers of the music video.

Relating specifically to the themes and issues central to the discussion of white interaction with black cultural forms, I would ask students to consider the following:

- How can one see these theories and concepts in other aspects of one’s daily life?
- What makes these ads and commercials so effective?
- Why are some clips considered offensive to some and not to others, and what particular conditions lend some clips to more readily be seen as transgressive?

(Duncum, 2013)

- What sort of pleasure is derived from watching these clips?

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41 This is a type of jerking dance move that is said to look like a robot moving; hence, its name.
42 A play-on-words combining the idea of being refreshed or rehydrated and being fresh as in being hip and with the times.
43 Reference to the song and video titled “Drop It Like It’s Hot” by Snoop Dogg featuring Pharrell Williams released in 2004
As an educator, I would then see how students’ answers align with the particular theories that underpin the lures that govern white audience fascination with black dance and then more thoroughly discuss the implications of such findings with the class.

Finally, as discussed previously, critically dissecting every aspect of the art making process, in some respects, may undermine the inherent pleasure of the creative process (Duncum, 2013). So while it is imperative to extract meaning from any activity both within and outside the school walls, it is also important as educators to understand how video making, digital storytelling, and lessons which incorporate popular and contemporary sites such as YouTube may contribute to an overall sense of enjoyment for students. Using such feedback, educators may then begin to devise more meaningful and relevant activities that meet the demands of curriculum standards while concomitantly promoting student engagement.

Despite the fact that digitally dancing my thesis aided me in a more thorough understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of my work, such an activity may not be useful for every academic setting or for every individual learner. Yet, the essence of this project is what is most significant and applicable across all disciplines: finding ways to reconnect the mind and body, the visual and verbal, and the processes of art making and meaning as a vehicle to a more holistic approach to student learning and engagement (Bresler 1995; Bresler, 2004a; Bresler, 2004b).
Chapter 7:

Conclusion

Hip-hop, the latest phase in the evolution of black cultural dance in America, has clearly made a profound impact on visual culture (Osumare, 2001). Even more so, black cultural dance has established a niche in the history of American dance and in the engagement of white spectators on a global scale. It is a history rich in complex interactions between distinctly different cultures, and a history that has been cultivated in part by the unconscious desires and impulses that dictate human behavior. It is a history that speaks to forces beyond the dance and one that points to the dynamic interplay of Apollo and Dionysus—an interplay that, in part, underscores the continual white fascination with cultural expressions of the black community and the white desire to journey into the pleasures of the exotic ‘Other’.

In this paper, I briefly traced the history of African dance in the early periods of American history and discussed its transformations over time as a way to demonstrate how the contemporary focus of dance has arrived at hip-hop—a traditionally black mode of dance that now has garnered cross-cultural appeal. Yet, as I have discussed, while certain modes of expression may be quite popular in their current states, artistic forms, especially those stemming from African tradition, are not always readily accepted. For early European settlers who witnessed the unfamiliar modes of African expressions and the power of the unrestrained corporeal movement of black bodies, such an encounter initially incited reactions of fear and disgust. Nonetheless, these were reactions that were eventually overshadowed by responses of curiosity and desire—desire to understand the dance of the racially moving ‘Other’, and with this understanding, acquire cultural knowledge, a sense of power and liberation, and a sense of bodily agency.
This notion of activating the body’s agency and the body’s potential to undulate through space in ways that portray power and expressive freedom was discussed, as well. The celebration of the carnival-erotic body and its appeal to white observers restricted by Apollonian ideals was also highlighted. Moreover, attention was devoted to a discussion of the body’s role in identity and cultural construction and to the implications of an increased awareness of the conscious body as it relates to dance, popular culture, and by extension, arts education as a whole. It was argued that educators both within arts education as well as across disciplines should strive to infuse aspects of embodied learning into their pedagogical practices so as to draw attention to the synergistic spark that can be ignited when the mind and body, the visual and verbal, and the Apollonian and Dionysian modes of learning are intertwined.

Noting the body’s powerful role in inculcating desires, values, and beliefs, it becomes clearer as to how and why white audiences have continually been drawn to black styles of dance and why the trend of “love and theft” or cultural appropriation has been omnipresent. And while the act of appropriating particular forms of expression may be regarded as distasteful, especially if little credit is given to the culture from which a particular form stems, appropriation appears to be an almost inevitable process. Paradoxically, without the “love and theft” of black cultural dance, hip-hop might not exist today.

Seeing as hip-hop is now a dominant form of dance, it is always under threat of being forever disconnected from its history and seen only as a popular pleasure. Rose (1994) speaks of this concern when she says,

[O]nce a black cultural practice takes a prominent place inside the commodity system, it is no longer considered a black practice—it is instead a ‘popular’ practice whose black
cultural priorities and distinctively black approaches are either taken for granted as a
‘point of origin,’ an isolated ‘technique,’ or rendered invisible. (p. 83)

However, it was the goal of this paper to remind dominant culture of the indelible effect
African-inspired dance has had on American society. It is a reminder that the African-American
dance is “more than personal entertainment . . . The dance is imbued with individual, socio-
psychological, cultural, and political meaning” (Hazzard-Gordon, 1983, p. 24). It is a dance that
intrigues the Apollonian-oriented individual, and one that provides sustenance for an individual’s
desire for Dionysian indulgence and carnal pleasure. It is a cultural site of exoticism and
eroticism for the white viewer, and a place of freedom and tradition for black dancers. It is a
cultural expression that was initially grounded in African history and one that was changed by
the influence and act of white appropriation of the exotic ‘Other’. But it was through this
process of modification that hip-hop has become the global participatory art form that it is today.
And today, Africanist dance is the dance of America and the world (Glass, 2007, p. 29); and in
this world, “white” Apollo and “black” Dionysus are dancing partners.
References


Accessed 20 February 2014.

Video References

1. Lil Jon and the East Side Boyz—*Get Low*[^44]  
   00:03-00:07

2. Nelly ft. P. Diddy and Murphy Lee—*Shake Ya Tail feather*  
   00:08-00:17

3. DJ Casper—*Cha Cha Slide*  
   00:18-00:26

4. *The Sounds of Africa Documentary*  
   00:27-00:41

5. *R. L. Burnside’s Sons Hambone (1978)*  
   00:42-00:58

6. *The Laendler—Romantic Period Drama Movie Dancing Montage*  
   00:59-01:13

7. *The Sounds of Africa Documentary*  
   01:14-01:39

8. *The Laendler—Romantic Period Drama Movie Dancing Montage*  
   01:40-02:16, at 01:42 it goes to a split screen
   
   A 1914 film showing black people dancing in a dance hall. Great dance moves. Getting jiggy with it!  
   01:42-02:13

9. *Black Bottom 1926, and The Black Bottom Dance*  
   02:17-02:23

10. *Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire “Waltz in Swing Time” from Swing Time (1936)*  
    02:24-02:38

11. *Whiteys Lindy Hoppers from the film Hellzapoppin*  
    02:39-02:59

[^44]: All italicized text is to indicate the title of the YouTube video as it appears on the site itself. Also, capitalization and punctuation marks within the italicized text is in place to uphold the integrity of the titles, as well. Finally, the numbering is used to indicate the order in which these clips appear in the video montage.
12. *The Roaring Twenties—Dance Craze*
03:00-03:09, at 03:03 it goes to a split screen

*1920s Charleston*
03:03-03:09

13. *Chubby Checker—The Twist*
03:10-03:27

14. *The Twist—Chubby Checker*
03:28-03:42

15. *The Stroll dance origin—film + Patsy by the Diamonds*
03:43-03:57

16. *My favorite Soul Train Line Dance featuring Ballero by War*
03:58-04:02

17. *American Bandstand Dancers Boogie Fever Sylvers*
04:03-04:17

18. *ABDC—Jabbawockeez, Season 1 Week 7 (Evolution of Hip-Hop, Funkytown)*
04:18-05:48

19. *ABDC—Season 3—Quest Crew Decathlon Challenge*
05:49-06:16

20. *Trey Songz—2 Reasons, Choreography by Dejan Tubic and Quon*
06:17-06:24

21. *Mega Jam ‘how low can you go’ Ludacris (Jasmine Meakin)*
06:25-06:31

22. *Twerk Team—#ThrowBackEdition*
06:32-06:41

23. *Whooty.. White Girl with a Booty*
06:42-06:55
24. *This is hip hop (Dena Rizzo)*
   06:56-06:57

25. *Miley Cyrus Twerk*
   06:57-07:05

26. *Miley Cyrus—We Can’t Stop (VEVO)*
   07:06-07:09

27. *Miley Cyrus Twerk VMA 2013 Full Performance (LIVE)*
   07:10-07:24

   07:25-07:32

29. *Save the Last Dance (9/9) Movie CLIP-The Big Audition (2001)*
   07:33-07:40

30. *Step Up-Parking Lot Dance*
    07:41-07:55

31. *Step Up Final Dance Scene*
    07:56-08:27

32. *Dance Central 3 TV Commercial featuring Usher (2012)*
    08:29-09:04

33. *Evian Roller Babies international version (2009)*
    09:05-09:14

34. *iRobot Roomba Vacuum: iRobot. Do you?*
    09:15-09:22

35. *Sun Drop Dancing commercial*
    09:23-09:35

36. *Cheerios commercial Drop That Honey Beat*
    09:36-09:44
    (clips from this commercial also appear in the first 3 seconds and in the final 2 seconds of this “dancing thesis” compilation video)
37. Alex Wong and Stephen “Twitch” Boss “Outta Your Mind”  
(Season 7, Week 3, June 30, 2010 SYTYCD)  
09:45-11:21