South African Dance: In the Shadow of Some Tourists' (Mis)Perceptions

Maxwell Xolani Rani
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4939-3688
University of Cape Town, South Africa
maxwell.rani@uct.ac.za

Abstract

This article will explore the (mis)understanding of African dance by some tourists. Visitors to South Africa often look for "traditional African dancing," and discredit the African contemporary dance forms. To understand this misperception, the author will draw from different social theories including those proposed by authors such as Hegel and Maine. Rooted in Maine's theory, the article will explain how the Western world still perceives Africa as a traditional society whose traditions are static, unchanging, and in need of protection from Western influence. In line with what Hegel said, the generalisation of the continent of Africa as the "Dark Continent" that does not produce knowledge or has no history still influences today's perception of culture in its countries. This article states that there is a great need for education and a shift in people's mentality regarding how Africa and Africans are viewed and thus how its cultural components such as dance are perceived.

Keywords: indigenous; urbanisation; modernisation; adaptable tradition; African contemporary dance; tourism

UNISA university of south africa PRESS

Southern African Journal for Folklore Studies
https://upjournals.co.za/index.php/SAJFS
Volume 30 | Number 1 | 2020 | #7686 | 16 pages

https://doi.org/10.25159/2663-6697/7686
ISSN 2663-6697 (Online) | ISSN 1016-8427 (Print)

Background

I lecture at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. I specialise in African dance theatre studies and I have been in the practical academic field for 18 years. One of the amazing and vibrant courses I teach is African Dance (TDP1800F/S), which is an international students' course with 98% American students. This research article is inspired by the debates and unpacking of a few research papers from these lectures. The course provides an overview of the past, present and future of African dance both within the continent and across the Atlantic and explores the history of the diasporic global community. The course is designed to offer the basic theoretical components that are attached to African dance history, for example, defining and interrogating the transition and continuity of African dance in 21st century spaces, and the appropriation and appreciation of African indigenous dances. The course offers an understanding of African contemporary dance in South Africa and the socio-political factors that are attached to it. It emphasises local and global influences of modernity and urbanism on traditional and neo-traditional dances and contemporary South African choreographic works. There are excursions to performance spaces such as theatres, tourist performance sites such as the Victoria & Alfred (V&A) Waterfront, social visits to townships such as Langa, Khayelitsha and Nyanga and exposure to traditional dance performances.

One topic that provided a stimulus for this research article is when we debated the decolonisation of African dance and the role of tourism in South African performance spaces. The readings covered included the likes of Judith Hanna, Tracy Snipe, Maxwell Xolani Rani, Kristina Johnstone, Sylvia Glasser, Sharon Friedman, Lliane Loots and Clare Craighead, to name a few. The debates inspired me to embark on this profound research article and to use the comments and discussions provided on- and offline as a springboard for thoughts and interrogating my opinionated, personal philosophical mindset, because of my own academic inquisitiveness.

Introduction

In South African culture, dance is mostly not a recreational activity. "To dance is to live" (Snipe 1996, 63). Dance is closely intertwined with life so that it becomes a medium of expression—the language—of feelings (Snipe 1996, 66). Dances often are a reflection of the community, as the movements are expressions of life experiences (Snipe 1996, 64). In this way, dance becomes political. Not only is it a reflection of the political situation of the people as they relate to the public affairs of the country, but dance also becomes a medium to express one's political opinion (Rani 2018, 315). The

vast diversity in meaning but also in the expression of African dance is often underestimated due to the simple category of "African Dance."

From scholars such as Hanna (1973), Welsh-Asante (1996), Snipe (1996) and Mabingo (2018), the following can be noted: Africa has about 1000 different languages and many dance patterns. There are 55 countries that make up the continent. African dance is about human behaviour and it means different things to different African ethnicities but is inclusive. However, there is a broad commonality that binds these ethnicities together when dancing generically (Welsh-Asante 1996). African dance is a distinctive brand that is used to define dances that exist on the continent and in the diaspora. African dance is composed of purposefully, intentionally, rhythmically, and culturally patterned sequences of non-verbal body movements and gestures, which are not ordinary motor activities, the motions having inherent value. The fact cannot be dismissed that African countries have evolved and transformed in the 21st century and so have its forms of dance (Welsh-Asante 1996).

Not only is dance in Africa used in different ways, but the dances and their values also differ from culture to culture (Snipe 1996, 64). Using the term "African" or "Black Dance" oversimplifies the complexity and diversity of dance on the African continent and is thus problematic (Craighead 2006, 20). To view Black Dance simply as the "indigenous African dances" does not do justice to the various interpretations of South Africa and its dancers. Nonetheless, this kind of dance is what tourists are looking for, remaining ignorant of the newer articulations or African dance called African contemporary. I will argue that social theories that were put in place to justify colonialism are still present in most people's minds in the West[1] and this greatly influences their view of Africa and thus also African dance. The tourists' preference comes from ignorance and a lack of education. Thus, I will not only reflect on the theories' influence on today's perception of Africa but also question the role of African dance and its performers in changing it.

To assist in bringing to light the complexity of categories of African dance and to prevent oversimplification, I will first describe traditional African dance and how it changed through modernisation. This will lead to an explanation of African contemporary dance. After exploring how culture and tradition change and evolve, I will go on to describe Western perceptions of Africa. Lastly, I will attempt to suggest how to address this issue.

[1] The terms the West and Western are used to describe an international political region, and in some cases the terms are associated with geographical references to Europe and North America and social specifications such Western power, Western style, and capitalism, to name a few (Williams 1985).

African Indigenous Dance

In the traditional African setting, indigenous dance is an integral part of life; it is linked with the worldview of the society in which it is produced. In its real sense, indigenous dance as an art form transforms images, ideas, thoughts and feelings into movement sequences that are personally and socially significant (Akas 2013, 18). In traditional African dances, everyone is involved; the audience is part of the performance in clapping and chanting along with the dancers (Rani 2018, 319). Not only does it include all the people present from the community, but African indigenous dance is also thought to connect the living to the dead and the unborn (Snipe 1996, 53). As a means of communication, dance is seen to preserve history and cultural traditions and has the power to pass them on to the next generation (Rani 2018, 320). The dances serve specific functions in the culture. "There is no art for art's sake" (Nicholls 1996, 43). The meaning of the dance is understood in the community and particular context (Snipe 1996, 71–72). The dances can serve the community in different ways: by integrating the society, attaining societal goals, providing the society with supernatural services, adapting to the environment and promoting unity (Hanna 1973, 169–70). For example, many dances are danced in situations that transform one's life, such as birth, puberty, marriage and death (Nicholls 1996, 45). Dancing through these transitions does not only create a communal event, where others come and offer support, but also helps the dancers to experience the threatening situation ahead of time and to prepare them for the transition (Hanna 1973, 168). Thus, African indigenous dance is more than a recreational activity—it is a means of communication and service to the community.

The examples of indigenous dances in South Africa that are popular from rural to urban settlements are Ingoma (Isizingili and Isishameni dances). The Ingoma are one of the "purest" remnants of Zulu tradition. Boys and girls perform the dances for transition ceremonies such as coming of age and weddings. In the past they were performed before a hunt as well as before battle. For the youth it instils the tradition of sharing experiences and building solidarity through communal dance.

Ingoma (Isizingili)

This is a dance performed by boys and it is not popular amongst girls. It is performed with huge round drums covered by a cow skin. There are two to six drums and they are placed behind the dancers. At times there are melodic chants before or in-between the dance. The chant is well-structured with sections of musical arrangement where whistles are blown musically. They are domesticated as musical accompaniment. The girls wear woollen skirts and are usually bare-chested, which is mostly due to their age group and sexuality. They also wear rattles made of seedpods around their ankles to accentuate the high stamping. The boys wear *Amabheshu* (cow hide), *Amanqashela* (ankle Angora goat

skins), are bare-chested and their movements are very vibrant. The movements vary from one place to the other or from one province to another. The styles too vary due to stylisation and some are inclined to the new modern township styles as an additional aesthetic to be relevant with regard to fashion and "state of the cool" as a state of being. However, due to industrialisation and urbanisation such costumes are rare to find. In most cases dancers use a pair of trousers (depending on their choice) and a leopard-print vest (or plain white) and *Dabula Iinzwane* sandals instead of bare feet (home-made sandals made from a car tire; the name translates to "tearing apart of toes," i.e., the big toe is divided from other toes but with a huge divider, hence splitting the toes widely). If one is not aware of the style, one might associate the hip movements with sensuality. There are side angulations and arm movements that work in synergy with the body while the legs are in bow-legged stunts in a dance preparing leg position. Most of the time the dancers are on the balls of their feet, which mimic digging movement with a mellow and sometimes sharp stamping. Most of the time, the rhythm and movements are in synergy in a uniform structure and well-choreographed. There are amazing dramatic movements and dynamics from one person to the next. There is a space for individual expression with improvisation for aesthetic purposes.

Ingoma (IsiShameni)

IsiShameni is practised in places such as Mahlabathini, Ulundi and urban spaces like the residential hostels of the townships in Durban in KwaZulu-Natal and in some of Cape Town's entertainment spaces. It is a harmonising performance with boys and girls together but dancing separately. IsiShameni, by contrast to IsiZingili, favours vertical movements. It is a typical product of people who are neither traditionalists nor Christians. IsiShameni dancers consider themselves as soldiers (*Amasoja*) and a great deal of the ethos of the performance is couched in military terms. It is a dance form that has acrobatic movements, high energy and robust stampings and tumbling (Clegg 1982, 7; Erlmann 1991, 10). Within the hostels, one finds IsiShameni accompanied by props such as staves (*Intonga*) and Zulu traditional attire. In the urban areas, one finds a pair of trousers called *Umbleselo* and leopard-printed vests with tommy *tekkies* (sneakers) or training shoes.

Indigenous dance is normally mentioned together with traditional dance. Traditional dance and indigenous dance are defined from the interpreter's point of view. The central issue is what needs to be protected and how it is to be protected. The meaning of the indigenous dance and traditional dance is inextricably linked, but there are some points of distinction. For example, not all traditional dance is part of indigenous dance, but all indigenous dance is a subset within traditional dance. This is because traditional dance may have been created by any individual or group, whether indigenous peoples or not. Similarly, indigenous dance is therefore part of the traditional dance category. That is

to say, indigenous dance is a traditional dance, but not all traditional dance is indigenous knowledge. Although traditional dance and indigenous dance are not synonymous, they share many attributes, such as being unwritten, customary, pragmatic, experiential, and holistic. This explains why traditional dance and indigenous dance are regularly used in the same context. The distinction between traditional dance and indigenous dance relates to the beholders, that is, the observers rather than the knowledge per se.

Not only has traditional dancing been used to serve the community, but it has become a way of empowering the artists on a political level (Rani 2018, 322). In the struggle against colonialism and apartheid, dance was used to unite people of different tribes and races to move to the same rhythm of the dream of equality and freedom (Rani 2018, 323). The unity that came from the dances was necessary to stand up against the oppression caused by the minority of the country. Social traditional dance implies a consistency that has its own boundaries and parameters. Implied in the definition of social tradition are the requisite confines of the rules and norms of the society in which the artforms manifest (Welsh-Asante 1996, 78). Using dance to give a voice to people who otherwise were never listened to is closely connected with the participatory character of traditional African dance, where the focus is on the community and the inclusion of each member of the community, especially in the urban spaces.

Urbanisation

Dance in South Africa has undergone many changes since the time of the First World War and has not been left untouched by the influences of colonisation and urbanisation. The influences of Western education, mass media, Christianity and urbanisation have eroded indigenous culture, and it is not practised widely anymore (Bhola 2000, 47). Urbanisation in the South African context is seen as the movement of people from rural to so-called “developed” communities (Wisner 1995, 269). There was a rapid expansion in the 19th century due to the development of the mining industry, railway building and economic growth. Until 1870, South Africa was primarily an agricultural country. “The discovery of gold in the Witwatersrand and diamonds in Kimberly, however, caused a massive migration of people to the cities as they came looking for work in the mines” (Louw 2004, 107). Diamonds, railroads, and mining were the three major industries influencing the development of urbanisation within South Africa.

During colonialism and apartheid, people of different tribes and races were forced to work in the city and thus move away from the community they were part of (Rani 2015, 73). Thus not only the daily life of the people changed, but also their dances and traditions kept changing. Sacred dances, for example, were moved to official holidays, when the people came back to the village from work (Hanna 1973, 170). However, not only the dates changed, but also the meaning, the context and the function of social

traditional African dances were impacted (Rani 2015, 73). As a result of the great diversity of tribes and thus dances, the dances started to change and evolve (Rani 2015, 75). Ceremonies, instead of being performed when the time was there, became restricted by the availability of transport, vacation and time constraints. The areas where the dances were performed changed from lawn or sand in the open spaces to wooden and cement floors in township halls (Rani 2015, 76). According to Mahajan, townships in South Africa are characterised by issues such as joblessness, uneven access to basic public services, and overwhelming levels of crime and violence (Mahajan 2014, 3).

Since the latter part of the 20th century, Black South Africans have been drawn to urban areas, more commonly referred to as townships, in the hopes of a higher general standard of education, better housing, employment opportunities, the possibility of piped water, decent sanitation services and food subsidies (Louw 2004, 110; Rakodi 1997; Van Vuuren et al. 1983). However, the allure of an expected improved lifestyle was often overly romanticised, as the living conditions in these townships are very poor (Bradshaw 1987). “The so-called ‘housing’ frequently consists of old pieces of iron, sacking, wood poles, mud, and anything else at hand. Sanitary provisions are often absent, water and lighting not laid on” (Stent 1948, 182). Many townships still do not have good housing, educational facilities and clinics (Aboutorabi 2000).

As far as music’s concerned, it has become Westernised; the traditional role models were replaced by American celebrities; traditions were taught and learned at schools instead of homes, and the traditional dances lost their spiritual meaning through Christianisation (Rani 2015, 79–81). Thus, urbanisation had a significant impact on how indigenous African dances were practised.

One township dweller described the effects of urbanisation and modernity to Kevin Cox and Andrew Mair as follows:

> People who have culture, to me, are those [who] strive to keep their traditions alive, even if they have an appreciation for the cultures of others. Most people in the city disregard the culture of the African people. Even those who claim to practice it mostly talk about their own modified cultures. Many no longer practice the fundamental rituals of African culture. I mean they no longer consult with their ancestors as they used to. And as soon you have forsaken your ancestors, you have lost your culture. (Cox and Mair 1988, 317)

Nicholls, among others, has argued that modernity is harming traditional dance in Africa (1996, 15).

Modernisation

Modernisation refers to a "post-transitional period marked by the rise of industrialising, capitalism, and secularization" (Barker 2005, 444). Expanding on the complexities of modernisation, Lee states that modernism refers "to a certain period of western cultural, artistic and sociological history. This period covers the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, modernism is a vague and general term that refers to a period of great change in the western world" (2006, 356). This change refers mainly to an alteration in thinking and the development of a different view of reality. Several historical factors are important in understanding modernism, modernity and modernisation. The modernity that is relevant to the content and context of this article within the South African dance climate falls between reflexive and liquid types of modernity. Reflexive modernity is embedded within an action-oriented approach to social change that sharpens the awareness of social responsibility and culpability (Lee 2006, 255–56). Liquid modernity is critically concerned with the ephemeral condition of contemporary society. It is a theory of social change that attempts to uncover the consequences of advanced social differentiation and alienation. In terms of liquid modernity, Bauman (2000, 14) views the world as inexorably transient, producing a sense of impermanence that he describes as "new lightness and fluidity of the increasingly mobile, slippery, shifty, evasive and fugitive power."

As different African cultures were and are still mixing and becoming diluted in the townships of South Africa and adapting to new physical and socio-cultural spaces, they are also confronting new ideological spaces and the influences of modernity's Western norms and values. In other words, cultures are created and established according to the present urban forms, culture and identity. In the past, cultural norms and values were handed down from one generation to the next in many ways, not least of which was through dance. However, when traditional cultures encountered modernity, schools began to take on the responsibility of teaching norms and values to the younger generation (Mpho and Molapisi 2006, 65–66). For example, according to Mpho and Molapisi, the concept of patriarchy, a cornerstone of most African traditional cultures, has been strongly challenged by Western education. The prevalence of foreign pop culture has also pushed African tradition to the wayside and created not only a generational gap but a cultural identity gap.

Traditional African dance was greatly influenced by modernisation. Through Western influences, the dances were torn from crucial aspects of the lives of individuals and collectives (Hanna 1973, 172). There are various influences that "endanger" the "original" form of indigenous or traditional African dances. There is a fusion of Western and African dances such as African ballroom dancing, where African movements are used but Western music is played (Nicholls 1996, 51). As in the West, African dance

also tends to become purely recreational now (Nicholls 1996, 53). Nicholls (1996, 56) asserts that "modernisation deconstructs societies, cultures and artefacts and emphasized the need to concentrate anthropological resources on their preservation." To preserve the tradition and dances, there are organised dance festivals and competitions. However, seeing a dance becomes a privilege, which goes against the traditional idea of inclusivity (Nicholls 1996, 51).

Problematic Preservation of Tradition

In the 21st century it is imperative to question who wants to preserve the traditions and who decides which traditions are preserved and which ones are not. Henry Sumner Maine was a social scientist in the 19th century writing in favour of colonialist practices. In his writings, he describes how different modern (Western) societies are from traditional (non-Western) societies (Mantena 2010, 67). Non-Western societies were seen as weaker and thus endangered by modern influences (Mantena 2010, 69). Therefore, the traditional societies needed to be protected and their customs preserved. The problem is not the idea of preservation, but that the customs and traditions were described by scientific-explorers, administrators, missionaries and merchants, and not by the people themselves (Mantena 2010, 57). The intention behind recording customs in Maine's time was to suppress and domesticate the people under their Western "civilised" traditions, not to empower them to live out their traditions. Therefore, it is critical to reflect on who wants to preserve traditions and dances and for what purposes. Is it about suppressing people by forcing them to follow their unchanging traditions or is it about keeping the tradition, the stories, the heritage alive, and letting these adapt to the present? Thus, the idea of preserving the indigenous African dance needs to be led by the people themselves and not by foreigners.

Not only African dance scholars are interested in the traditions of their culture, but also tourists travelling to South Africa. They want to fully experience the country with its customs and culture. Authenticity is what they look for (Dennett and Song 2016). But what is authenticity? "Anything that is not devised and structured to make a profit. Anything that exists for its own sake, […] that assumes its shape" (Robert Doniger from Michaels Crichton's *Timeline* cited in Gilmore and Pine II 2007, xiiii). Therefore, as soon as something exists for economic reasons, it has lost its authenticity. Experts talk about "Disneyfication," "SunCityfication," "Lion King[action] and African Footprint" when something exists solely for the consumer to buy it. Therefore, it loses its originality, its feeling of being real, true, maybe even difficult, rural and exotic (Dennett and Song 2016). Authenticity is also linked to what tourists already know about the culture and thus expect to see and experience (Ingram 2005, 21). Tourists might have heard about or seen African traditional dances and then expect to see something similar. Anything outside what they perceive as authentic cannot be a reflection of true South

African dancing. Tourists are looking for the "pure" African experience of tradition and culture, which sets different expectations. If they are not met, tourists are disappointed. But what are these expectations based on?

Adaptable Tradition

It is widely thought that tradition is static and unchanging. This, however, is a myth based on the colonial perception of Europe regarding Africa. What Europe wanted to show was that Africa was Europe before it became civilised, incapable of change (Hansen 1980, 245). However, traditions in Africa, like everywhere else, are not a given dimension that is unchanging, but should rather be seen as a record of how people react to challenges of their time. This may or may not include looking back in history and choosing to do what the ancestors chose to do. Traditions and customs evolve and adapt to changes in the society, lifestyles, and climate. Therefore, with tradition, dances are passed on from generation to generation (Snipe 1996, 68), evolve and change; new ones are created, while others stop being practised (Nicholls 1996, 41). Many of the "uniquely African" dances have evolved because of Western influences (Rani 2015, 80), but does that make them any less African? One "cannot simply keep presenting 'old' traditions if there is a 'new reality', or they will simply perpetuate these western stereotypes" (Rani 2015, 84). There is a need to move beyond what has been done, because life has changed for the people. Therefore, dances will have to evolve with them. Especially the "born frees" have a hard time identifying themselves with the indigenous dances. Born frees refer to a post-apartheid, young generation that is seen to be less committed to democracy than their parents or grandparents (Mattes 2012, 133). They hunger for wider artistic movements and exploring new mediums of expression (Rani 2018, 324). This new form of art or movement can be analysed in many ways. However, the synergy within the artistic paradigms, creative expressions, and nuances in arts can be associated with what is called African contemporary dance.

African Contemporary Dance

As the contexts of traditional dances, the rural communities, become less important for youth in the cities, African traditional dances give way to new forms of making sense of the life they are living (Rani 2015, 83). It is communication (Nicholls 1996, 47), a way of letting the youth tell their own stories (Rani 2018, 323). Dance becomes a medium of "self-expression, a vessel to send a message, a way of retelling and reliving history, a ritual of worship, a form of celebration and anything else that it wants to be or be interpreted" (Rani 2018, 322). African contemporary dance, as opposed to indigenous African dance, is not limited to movements or music but draws on whatever will suit the storyline of the dance. There is much more freedom in how and when it is performed because it is contemporary. In a way, the dance could also be called "born

free." Intending to evoke self-reflection and enhance understanding (Rani 2018, 320) of the cultural heritage, without fully understanding it, African contemporary dance allows people to watch and internalise this new form of art (Rani 2018, 322). Through the performance, a reality is created where social and emotional conflicts can be brought into the open. Experiencing such a performance may touch the audience as it is a way to bring issues that people keep quiet about into the open to be publicly discussed (Rani 2018, 323). In this way, African contemporary is very political, as it is performed in a political system and addresses political issues (Rani 2018, 323). African contemporary is used to make social statements or comments about current issues, which makes it much more relatable, especially for the younger generation (Rani 2015, 84).

Africa in the West

Even though there are social and artistic developments happening in South Africa, the world still has a backwards view of Africa as stagnant, poverty-stricken, ravaged by the AIDS pandemic and requiring help (Maqoma 2001, 37). Africa is often seen as one nation, not giving justice to the diversity of the continent. But it is not only the African continent that is underestimated—the cultural, artistic and rhythmic diversity and complexity of African dance are not acknowledged enough (Rani 2018, 323). I believe this Eurocentric view of Africa is rooted in the works of social theorists such as Hegel.

Hegel (1988) wrote about the civilising mission that colonialism officially had (Mantena 2010, 62). He justified colonisation as a way of helping people in the whole of Africa (and other colonies) to develop. In his writings, he explained how history and the production of knowledge were born in the East and moved to the West, bypassing Africa (Hegel 1988, 92). Not being able to deny Egypt's contribution to today's understanding of the world, Hegel divided the African continent into two parts: North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. North Africa, he said, is much more like Europe and not Africa in that sense. To sub-Saharan Africa he also referred as the "Dark Continent." Not only were African countries seen as unable to produce knowledge, but they were also seen as inferior, which was apparent in their size (Hegel 1988, 85). Thus, it gave way for Europe to step in as a hero to help the underdeveloped areas south of the Sahara by colonising them and making them more confident and able to produce knowledge themselves (Hegel 1988, 89). Although the colonial rule is over and African countries have gained political independence, the ideas that made colonialism possible in the first place are still very present in people's minds.

Hegel's understanding of the world and the African continent interacts with what tourists expect when they come to see African dancing. They perceive South Africa as backwards and thus understand the indigenous African dance as an authentic national identity (Rani 2018, 316). However, what is the more authentic experience, history and

traditions or contemporary issues in a different art form? Seeing a dance performance in the West is often non-political. Thus, tourists fall into the trap of seeing African dance performances as non-political too, therefore missing their main point (Rani 2018, 316). Black dance is romanticised (Rani 2018, 320) and when tourists do not see what they expected to see, beautiful Black bodies dancing in unity with mother earth, they feel cheated of having a real South African experience (Rani 2018, 314). However, as Fanon said: "To write is to define and assume a culture" (1986, 17). Through their expectations and writings about African dance, tourists are suppressing a culture by assuming to understand it fully. However, indigenous African dances are not a holistic representation of the current culture of South Africa.

What Tourists Want

There is a need to address what the aim of tourism is. If one is trying to sell the country and its culture the best way possible, not making tourists uncomfortable by talking about current affairs, then it is done well. However, then one should not be surprised that some tourists are ignorant of the social and political challenges the country faces. Dances are performed out of context, making them profitable, but losing their inherent value (Snipe 1996, 72). Some dances are modified to suit the audience's taste to such an extent that the culture is exploited, authenticity is lost, and the performers lose their dignity (Nicholls 1996, 52). The original purpose of the dances is lost and the performance becomes nothing but a spectacle (Rani 2015, 82). I would like to suggest that the aim of tourism should be understanding, and not profit. Through understanding, the stereotype of Africa as a "Dark Continent can be broken. There is power in heritage and in the universality of dance to break boundaries and build bridges (Snipe 1996, 73).

New Century, New Voices

In the 21st century, South African contemporary dance is used to "often provide a voice for those who are denied verbal or literary expression of opposition and resistance" (Rani 2018, 316). It is a form of non-violent protesting against a violent system, with the aim to break boundaries. There is a new wave of African contemporary dances developing that connect socio-political components with dance (Rani 2018, 318). These new voices offer new ways of addressing current issues such as identity, gender, racial streamlining, cultural ownership, tradition and the general struggle as humans (Craighead 2006, 23; Rani 2018, 320). The passion in the dances for political issues are giving way to "a new meeting place where new and radical happenings can occur" (hooks 1990, 31). There is a critical exchange happening between people who are taking ownership of the situation and practically attempting to be the change they want to see. "It might be less profitable, but works need to be created that are accepted and understood" (Rani 2018, 318). In South Africa, most dances are political in two ways.

First, every dance is performed in a political system and is influenced by the current political situation. It displays what is happening. And second, it is a way of voicing one's opinion about a situation and possible solutions (Glasser 1991, 113). South African contemporary dance in such a way is empowering the people of the 21st century to stand up against injustice and become part of the solution.

Conclusion

It has been shown that social theories that were put forth to justify colonialism are still present in some people's minds in the West and greatly influence their view of South Africa and thus also African dance. A lack of education and knowledge is to blame for most tourists' preference for traditional dance over contemporary art forms. Since African dance is always political, a lack of knowledge can leave some audiences without understanding or appreciation of the performance. However, many South African dancers are aiming to remember elements of rural traditional dance and keep traditions alive while simultaneously adapting to change. This offers the potential for great creativity. A combined approach that seeks to educate the world, preserve and keep traditions alive is feasible. Thus, African dance can be used to mould society, not only here in South Africa, but through tourism all over the world by challenging cultural norms.

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