

## In the Space of Interdisciplinary Dialogue: Generating Ethnographic Research on Dance/Movement in Canada

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I began to wonder about the relationship between dance<sup>1</sup> and anthropology in the Canadian academy in 2008 when I was discouraged from conducting dance research for my doctoral dissertation in sociocultural anthropology. My anthropology supervisor felt that pursuing dance-based research would diminish my options on the anthropology job market. Disappointed, I transferred to Dance Studies at York University under the stream of dance ethnography, where I completed my PhD. At the time, I was aware of a history of dance being marginal in cultural anthropology (Kaeppler 1978; Hanna 1979) and only recently gaining more traction (Grau 1993; Reed 1998; Henry et al. 2000), despite great anthropologists who have pursued dance research.<sup>2</sup> My experiences attending and presenting research at the Canadian Anthropological Society (CASCA) seemed to confirm that dance-based research is marginal there. I also met two other dance/performance studies scholars who were deterred from studying dance in anthropology contexts. While these compelling fragments suggest that studying dance is discouraged in Canadian anthropology circles, more broadly speaking, I had little sense of the status of dance in anthropology in Canada.

“Overspecialization” and “professionalization” in anthropology departments, which has led to discouraging graduate students from conducting research *outside* the scope of traditional anthropology (issues identified by Canadian anthropologists James Waldram and Pamela Downe [2006]) may be at the heart of why scholars are deterred from researching dance and bringing dance theories and methodologies *into* anthropology. My experiences are part of a larger “hierarchical construction of Canadian anthropology [that] begins with early education of students” (Waldram and Downe 2006, 194). I argue that such barriers to healthy interdisciplinary dialogue are problematic. Through an exploration of past and present connections and divisions between dance and sociocultural<sup>3</sup> anthropology in Canada, this article aims to generate greater interdisciplinary dialogue and synergies. In fact, as I explain later, I hope readers will augment and respond to this research in order to generate a deeper understanding of the synergies and to facilitate future research initiatives.

As a dance ethnographer participating in “The Other ‘D’” conversations about situating dance in drama, theatre, and performance studies,<sup>4</sup> I expanded our conversation on locating dance-friendly academic spaces in Canada by researching the relationship between dance and anthropology. This article builds on my roundtable contribution and draws from original qualitative and quantitative research conducted over the course of eight months. I initially located interviewees based on prior knowledge of their dance/movement and anthropology research. I located further interviewees using a snowball sampling method. I interviewed and corresponded with four scholars in anthropology whose research involves dance/movement through space-time,<sup>5</sup> seven in dance studies who draw from anthropological theory and methods,<sup>6</sup> two in folklore studies who also did degrees

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in dance,<sup>7</sup> and two in ethnomusicology who have done and/or supported extensive dance-based research.<sup>8</sup> I also did a quantitative search for the number of MA/PhD theses and dissertations produced in anthropology, dance, music, and folklore programs (among others) in Canada that combined dance and ethnography/anthropology. I asked: Do dance and anthropology connect in academia? If so, why and how? If not, why not? What are the theoretical and methodological influences of dance-friendly anthropology and anthropology-friendly dance research and teaching? How have dance and anthropology connected in Canada historically? And who are key individuals, what are their knowledge strengths, and what do they believe about how and why dance/movement-based ethnographic research has been produced in Canada?

The results of this research reveal how connections between dance and anthropology in Canada have been facilitated by a number of fields of study to produce dance/movement-based ethnographic research, hereafter referred to as dance ethno\* research. I use the term dance ethno\* when making broad reference to a theoretically informed method of researching dance/movement for cultural analysis. This is not to ignore the distinctive characteristics that have developed in different contexts. For example, depending on time and place, this research has been referred to as ethnochoreology (as practised primarily in Eastern Europe), dance ethnology, dance anthropology, ethnomusicology, and dance ethnography (as practised in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom), with each branch producing different types of knowledge. Based on extensive research of all these traditions, Gertrude Kurath (1960) found each approach to be researching characteristics of expressive movement for cultural analysis. Recognizing they are not interchangeable, I accept Kurath's finding of a common link and use the term dance ethno\* when referring to the multitude of dance/movement-based ethnographic research practices. The asterisk symbol is a placeholder for the variations of practice.

In order to demonstrate how multiple fields of study have produced dance ethno\*-friendly academic spaces, this article starts by looking at the current relationship between dance and anthropology, followed by the historical shifts and crosscurrents in dance ethno\* research. Next, a look at the dates and locations of such research in graduate-level theses and dissertation documented in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global and Library and Archives Canada reveals that the York University Dance Program has been a significant hub of dance ethno\* activity in Canada for roughly four decades. Using the history and development of Dance at York as a case study for creating the interdisciplinary synergies necessary for dance ethno\* to flourish, I explore the circumstances, theoretical and methodological orientations, curricula, departmental alliances, and individual scholars that made such research at York possible. Finally, I look at other hubs of dance ethno\* research in Canada that exist outside of dance and anthropology departments. This expanded view adds to knowledge about the intellectual threads, settings, and cultural processes that are shaping dance ethno\* in Canada. Ultimately, I found dance ethno\* in Canada to be interdisciplinary with a strong sociopolitical and kinesthetic tradition of pedagogical, curatorial, and methodological practice, grounded in understanding movement-based experiences.

### **The Current Relationship between Dance and Anthropology in Canada**

To begin exploring my questions about the relationship between dance and anthropology in Canada, I contacted four Canadian dance-friendly anthropologists whom I discovered after embarking on my PhD in dance studies. David Murray, whose previous work considered how identifying with nationalism is intricately connected to performing Maori *haka* (men's war dance) in New Zealand

(Murray 2000), suggests the lack of dance, theatre, and performance research in anthropology in Canada has to do with a benign neglect rather than active rejection. He writes, “there are sometimes anthropologists or researchers with anthropological training in dance and other performing arts departments, but I don’t see many anthropology departments advertising for positions that emphasize this area, unfortunately.”<sup>9</sup> Anthropologist Clara Sacchetti, who engages dance as an element in her studies of Italian-Canadianness and gender, writes:

Because there aren’t any dance scholars in Anthropology at the place where I studied, I have had to do a lot of work on my own to figure out the dance material in my research, attending conferences, talking to other dance scholars and the like. It was very intimidating for me to start writing/thinking about dance, as I am not a dancer. There’s the problem of the level of knowledge one has if one does not practice dance. Issues of embodiment abound here. Interdisciplinary study is great but it’s not easy; it takes time, it takes a willingness to make mistakes, and it needs a good support system of open-minded scholars. The latter becomes really interesting when departments continue to produce “disciplined” scholars.<sup>10</sup>

These responses indicate that while dance appears to be marginal in anthropology, Murray and Sacchetti express a desire for more contact with dance, or at least for anthropology becoming more dance-friendly. Murray and Sacchetti have worked hard to cultivate interdisciplinary dialogue between dance and anthropology. Their observations and experiences add credence to a noted pattern of “departmental hegemony over matters of training and professional anthropological practice” in Canada (Waldrum and Downe 2006, 183), and a potentially systematic barrier to dance-based research in anthropology due to the very methodologically and theoretically discipline-bound scholars that departments seem to want to produce.<sup>11</sup> This current hegemony is detrimental for the many trained anthropologists (and I would add dance ethno\* researchers) who are considered to be somehow less rigorous because they don’t work in anthropology departments (2006). This disciplinary trend also contradicts the early development of anthropology in Canada.

Preliminary research demonstrates that the history of this relationship between dance and anthropology has at times had a degree of interdisciplinarity, but it is more accurate to think of dance ethno\* research as having multiple points of contact between dance, anthropology, folklore studies, ethnomusicology, theatre and performance studies, life sciences, kinesiology, sociology, history, and health studies. While dance ethno\* research in the Canadian academy does not seem to have flourished in anthropology departments, it could be considered an interdiscipline with its own long tradition of developing theories and methods within/between larger fields of study.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, the kinesthetic and sociopolitical aspects of this research can be viewed as catalysts for generating greater interdisciplinary contact between multiple disciplinary fields, including anthropology. This point became more evident after my initial correspondences with dance-friendly anthropologists.

### **Anthropology as a Discrete Discipline is Contradictory**

The current trend to focus anthropology inward contradicts the early development of anthropology in Canada. Ethnographic research on dance/movement and performance has historically undergone many shifts in its deployment, but early examples reveal interdisciplinary, kinesthetic, and sociopolitical elements. In Canada, anthropology and dance ethno\* (along with ethnomusicology and folklore studies) share a common history in the early seventeenth-century descriptions of First

Nations practices made by European missionaries, settlers, and travellers (Hancock 2006; Robbins and Diamond 2010). They also share a common scholar-ancestor: Marius Barbeau (1883–1969). Barbeau trained in anthropology, archaeology, and ethnology at Oxford University (1907–10) and was directly influenced by anthropologists Marcel Mauss, Franz Boas, and Edward Sapir (Preston et al. 2008). Born in Quebec, he conducted research on the traditions of Huron, Tsimshian, and French Canadian peoples in the early twentieth century. Through his ethnological work of documenting, archiving, and publishing his research that crossed into the domains of dance, music, and performance, he is considered a founder of professional folklore studies in Canada (Preston et al. 2008). Barbeau’s field notes reveal detailed accounts of movement-based or kinesthetic knowledge embodied in dance-songs. These accounts include information about spatial orientation, movement speed, and qualities of movement and rhythm in connection with the social significance of the dance-songs in performance.<sup>13</sup>

Barbeau’s ethnological research on song and dance continues to resonate in Canada. While Barbeau’s research is of interest in Canada for its very detailed and descriptive ethnographic accounts, today the “salvage” approach of Barbeau can be viewed as problematic for positioning indigenous culture and traditions in the past (Nurse 2006), especially when his ethnological research dovetailed with the development of tourism (Jessup 2008). Knowingly or not, utilizing an interpretive scientific methodology that produced collections, classifications, and quantitative knowledge about human culture and behaviour largely for Western audiences positioned salvage ethnologists, like Barbeau, as arbiters of authenticity and authorities on the indigenous traditions they researched, thereby shifting cultural authority from indigenous communities to the research enclaves of the museum, the archives, and the academy (Nurse 2006, 63). Recognizing that they were products of their time, Canadian indigenous dance ethnographer and grassroots worker Nina De Shane-Gill<sup>14</sup> sees these salvage ethnographies as working at a politically subversive level to resist the obliteration of indigenous worldviews and the breakdown of all social networks that came with Canadian residential schools. According to De Shane-Gill, Barbeau’s work continues to have value in Canada for helping to keep some indigenous legends and myths alive (pers. comm. 2016). Barbeau’s anthropological approach in relation to folklore went on to influence Luc Lacourcière (Laval University) (Ménard 2007) who, in turn, inspired Canadian dance ethnographer Simonne Voyer to complete thirty years of extensive ethnographic and historical research on the traditional dances of French Canadians (LeBlanc 1994).

Today, the notion of anthropology as a discrete discipline is contradictory. While early twentieth-century Canadian anthropologists, such as Barbeau, have been characterized as anthropologists, despite their interdisciplinary cross-currents and the detailed ethnographic work they did, according to Waldram and Downe, today anthropologists are characterized by the anthropology department in which they study and work (2006). However, contrary to this view of anthropology in Canada as bound by department and discipline, interdisciplinary ethnographic experimentation with dance/movement and performance is also evident in Canadian anthropology departments. Such experimentation, including the blurring of boundaries between anthropology and performance studies sparked by the pioneering collaborative work of anthropologist Victor Turner and theatre and performance studies scholar Richard Schechner (Victor and Edith Turner 1982), enables an embodied and experiential understanding of culture. Performance ethnography—analyzing performance and expression as constitutive of the social, cultural, political, and aesthetic elements of lived experience—opens a space for researching dance/movement (Henry et al. 2000). Approaches to dance ethno\* that engage performance ethnography literature<sup>15</sup> can also be characterized as kinesthetic<sup>16</sup> (grounded in the body’s experience whereby movement is a way of knowing) and

sociopolitical (Sklar 1990), producing not the body as isolated entity but a multiplicity of bodies through movement (Reed 1998, 527). Based on my interviews with Canadian dance and anthropology scholars, these two trajectories are not distinct but, rather, inform each other, generating the potential for further interdisciplinary cross-contributions.

Such sociopolitical and kinesthetic ethnographic work is evident in the anthropology department at York University. Anthropologist Ken Little, who was a member of my dance studies dissertation committee, currently researches the expressive emergence of expat communities in Belize within a postcolonial and neoliberal historical frame. Little generates ethnographic work rich in its kinesthetic and affective writing, theory, and methodology (2012). In conversation with me in 2016, Little suggested ways in which research in dance/movement through space-time might happen within Canadian anthropology departments. For example, the anthropology of expressive culture leads into directions of movement through space-time. There is the anthropology of sensation and affect (such as Little's work [2012]), and the anthropology of the body, leading into embodiment, phenomenology (such as the work of Margaret Lock [1987]) and post-phenomenology (such as the work of Natasha Myers [2015]), whereby culture emerges from the body and its movements in relationship to other human and nonhuman bodies. I trace my own way into researching the movement-based experiences and expressions that emerge between bodies as political sites for social change (2014a, 2014b, 2015) through a combination of these trends in conjunction with my years of professional dance experience. York-based anthropologist Natasha Myers finds a unique academic trajectory from dance to science, to anthropology of science and technology, to anthropology of dancing scientists (Myers 2012, 2015), to anthropology of art/ecology.<sup>17</sup> Her recent book, *Rendering Life Molecular*, looks at the kinesthetics—"visceral sensibilities, movements, and muscular knowledge" and affects—indexing "the energetics, intensities, and emotions" of bodily experimentations in researching molecular life (Myers 2015, 1). Despite the very disciplined anthropology experienced by some, Little and Myers, who are active members of the Centre for Imaginative Ethnography—a research network that supports collective, trans-disciplinary processes, shares strong affinities with performance studies, and promotes creative and imaginative engagement with political realities—demonstrate strong interdisciplinary synergies and crosscurrents that open a space for dance/movement-friendly research.

### **Hubs of Dance Ethno\* Research at the Cross-Section of Multiple Fields of Study: Dance at York**

After discussing my questions with anthropologists, a quantitative search for dance/movement-based theses and dissertations produced at the graduate level revealed dance ethno\* research being generated at the cross-section of multiple fields of study. In anthropology departments, I found several emerging scholars with anthropology training who have focused on dance, particularly from York University, the University of Alberta, and the University of Toronto.<sup>18</sup> Widening my keyword search to "dance" and "culture" yielded more results<sup>19</sup> that were not necessarily based in anthropology departments. For example, I found dance ethno\* research emerging from folklore studies, music (ethnomusicology), ethnic studies, interdisciplinary studies, kinesiology, health studies, theatre and performance studies, and communication and art departments. Of significant note is that the Dance Department at York University produced a large portion of all graduate level theses<sup>20</sup> between 1975 and 2010 (Department of Dance "Dance Research at York") in Dance Anthropology, Ethnology and Cultural Studies (Department of Dance 2007).

The results of my quantitative search through graduate level theses and dissertations listed on ProQuest Dissertations and Library and Archives Canada indicate that York University's Dance Department has been a hub of graduate level dance ethno\* research for roughly four decades, suggesting a need to look more closely at its history. In 1976, the Dance Department at York established one of the world's first research-based dance graduate programs that supported ethnographic, cultural, and historical research on dance. Today the PhD program (established in 2008) is divided into two streams: Dance Ethnography and Cultural Research, and Dance History and Heritage Studies. It is currently the only place in Canada to do a PhD in Dance Studies under a dance ethnography stream. The PhD program description includes an emphasis on the sociopolitical, kinesthetic, and interdisciplinary dimensions of ethnographic research on dance, the body, and bodily experience (Department of Dance 2007).

Interdisciplinary, sociopolitical, and kinesthetic dance ethno\* research and teaching was present in the York Dance graduate program from the beginning. I did semi-structured interviews with some of the key individuals involved in the early development of dance ethno\* at York: Anna Blewchamp, Nina De Shane-Gill, Rosemary Jeanes Antze,<sup>21</sup> Selma Odom, and Mary Jane Warner.<sup>22</sup> These scholars drew heavily from foundational dance ethnology, ethnomusicology, anthropology, and performance studies scholars such as Gertrude Kurath, John Blacking, Anya P. Royce, Judith Lynne Hanna, Arjun Appadurai, Joann Keali'inohomoku, Victor Turner, and Richard Schechner to develop their dance courses at York. But, as scholars, Antze, Blewchamp, De Shane-Gill, and Odom also had unique relationships to anthropological theory and methods. In their own ways, each of these women fostered a hub of dance ethno\* activity motivated by sociopolitical, embodied experience. In this article, due to space limitations, I will demonstrate what I mean by using two women as examples: Nina De Shane-Gill and Selma Odom.

Nina De Shane-Gill was a key initiator of sociopolitical and kinesthetic dance ethnography at York at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Encouraged by Grant Strate (who founded York's Dance Department), she started teaching dance ethnography courses there in the mid-1980s. Her approach to teaching reveals her belief that arts are central to sociopolitical change. As a teenager on scholarship at Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, De Shane-Gill witnessed first-hand the inequities French Canadians were experiencing and the resulting francophone politics that were emerging in 1960s Quebec. She recalls, "It was a time when French Canadian singers would go to the Laurentian Mountains to sing their highly political popular songs in intimate spaces called the *boîtes à chansons*." From those experiences, she learned that the arts could be at the forefront of change. Her political beliefs about art expanded when she joined Les Feux Follets Dance Company<sup>23</sup> and danced alongside other politically active French Canadian and Aboriginal dancers. She brought her ideas about art and sociopolitical change with her, first to the dance anthropology classes at the University of Waterloo in Applied Health Sciences and then to York's Dance Department.

De Shane-Gill developed courses that allowed students (including in performance, music, and visual arts) to explore the sociopolitical and historical aspects of dance from a number of genres and places around the world. Rather than teach courses about dances of the world, she started her courses with theory (for example, work by Victor Turner and Richard Schechner) and then moved to dance ethnography methods, where she drew from field guides developed by ethnomusicologists and dance anthropologists (such as Anya P. Royce and Joann Keali'inohomoku), and then moved on to the themes that drew from her own expertise on African diaspora in the New World and Aboriginal cultures. For example, her course entitled "Performance and Consequence" examined Ghost Dances and the potlatch in the context of colonialism. She designed such courses to help her

students understand the sociopolitical underpinnings of dance and give them the tools they would need to conduct research of their own within an ethnographic theoretical and methodological framework.

De Shane-Gill paired this highly theoretical and methodological coursework with travel abroad. She recounted an important memory of bringing a group of students to Mexico to perform. In particular, she reconstructed a conversation she had with the two young women who were responsible for organizing an international dance festival in the Mexican state of Tlaxcala that was funded from the budget of the Ministry of Health, and that brought dance groups from around the world (including Korea, Italy, Cuba, and a Butoh group from Japan) to perform:

When I asked how they could afford to bring a group of international dancers like this as part of a budget from the Ministry of Health, they looked absolutely incredulous and said: “What kind of a ministry of health would we be if we did not provide beautiful images for people’s minds?” Now wouldn’t the world be better off if all the ministries of health thought the same way. I think that these events were free, no tickets, and the theatres were always full with a very wide range of people, racially, ethnically and socio-economically.<sup>24</sup>

De Shane-Gill believes a cross-cultural understanding of the arts could have a beneficial impact in Canada, especially with First Nations communities. “We need to understand what the Mexicans already understood—that beautiful imagery is beneficial to everyone’s health and wellbeing.”

While De Shane-Gill’s approach to dance ethno\* included bringing young scholars outside the academy to expand their experiences of dance to include equity issues, colonial and postcolonial issues, and Canadian indigenous dance traditions, Odom brought the world of dance home through student experiences. Odom,<sup>25</sup> who began teaching in Dance at York University in 1972 and retired in 2009, helps me to understand the many different disciplinary currents forming her research and supporting dance ethno\* at York. Odom is often associated with her extensive knowledge of historical research, yet her work also incorporates anthropological theories and ethnographic methods. Odom’s work with interviewing, oral history, and fieldwork began in the 1960s.<sup>26</sup> Later contact with anthropologist Margaret Critchlow in 1989 and 1990 was important in bringing Odom into contact with emergent anthropological theory, ethics, and reflexive writing. Odom used this knowledge to support her research and student learning. The dance faculty also supported ethnographic research on a wide range of topics by maintaining strong allies in other departments at York. The faculty regularly drew on the expertise of anthropologists (in particular Penny Van Esterik and Malcolm Blincoe) and ethnomusicologists (such as Jon Higgins and Beverley Diamond). In addition, there were many guests that came to the department in the ‘70s and ‘80s that crossed disciplinary lines between dance, ethnomusicology, ethnochoreology, and folklore studies: Colin Quigley, Joann Keali’i’nohomoku (who came three times), Judith Lynne Hannah, Marta Savigliano, and Judy Van Zile. These guest scholars had an important role in shaping the department, its pedagogical approach, and the educations of those who were studying the cultural, political, and kinesthetic dimensions of dance at York.

Odom credits the mid-twentieth-century dance ethnologist, Gertrude Kurath (1903–1992) with influencing her early career development (“Celebrating the Gertrude Prokosch Kurath Centennial” 2003) and an interdisciplinary, movement-based approach to dance ethno\* research in Canada (pers. comm. 2016). Gertrude Kurath, who wrote about Iroquois, Pueblo, and Six Nations songs and dances, among other topics, believed the study of dance for cultural analysis required the application

of multiple disciplines (and possibly multiple individuals who each bring specialized training), such as anthropology and ethnomusicology, together with a system of movement notation and someone who could actually do the dancing/movement one was studying (Kurath 1960). The sociopolitical aspects of Kurath's influence have also had important impacts in Canada. As Mohawk contemporary and traditional dancer/singer Santee Smith writes, Kurath's photographs and her detailed and respectful notations of dance, music, and culture continue to be accessed by Iroquoian community members, and "she herself has become a part of Iroquoian history" ("Celebrating the Gertrude Prokosch Kurath Centennial" 2003).

Odom incorporated her knowledge of ethnology and anthropology in her dance and cultural research courses, which were also invested in antiracist education. Odom writes about her strategies of drawing from student knowledge of the world—"or from those parts of the world that could be honestly addressed" (Veblen et al. 2005, 3) to instruct her dance ethno\* courses. Her approach to teaching balances learning, teaching, modelling, and questioning through a combination of course elements: participating in movement experiences together, critical examination of experiences through course readings, and participatory and ethnographic research. This approach to teaching builds on the notion that arts offer rich modes to understand varying ways of life, not in a surface way, but in ways that balance "learning to value with learning to question" (11). Odom's approach works to combat the tendency in Canada to dismiss dance as a surface representation of static culture or glib "folk-dance multiculturalism" (Donald Taylor quoted in Akkad 2005, A3).

While De Shane-Gill, Odom, Blewchamp, Jeanes Antze, and Warner were key to the development of dance ethno\* at York between the late 1970s and the early 2000s, since then, dance ethnography and cultural research in undergraduate and graduate studies, as well as in faculty research, continues to have a strong sociopolitical, kinesthetic, and interdisciplinary trajectory. This trajectory is exemplified by the research of more recently hired faculty members Danielle Robinson, Patrick Alcedo, and Bridget Cauthery.<sup>27</sup> Robinson (who helped to build the current PhD program) works collaboratively with ethnomusicologist Jeff Packman to examine dimensions of speech, sonic, and movement practices expressed in the Bahian samba de roda within a context of Brazil's legacy of colonialism and slavery (Robinson and Packman 2016). Alcedo works on the performance of gender in traditional dances and festivals from the Philippines (2007) and the Filipino diaspora. Cauthery's book project, *Choreographing the North* (forthcoming from McGill-Queens University Press), applies critical theory from cultural studies, feminist geography, wilderness studies, postcolonial theory, and current trends in ecology and environmental studies to "unravel both the allure and the distortion of the Far North as source and motif in contemporary dance-making."<sup>28</sup>

Although dance ethno\* in Canada emerges from a space of interdisciplinary dialogue, Cauthery, who has training in anthropology and dance studies, highlights complex disciplinary tensions. Cauthery has an anthropology background but like myself sought out dance studies when she was discouraged from researching dance through anthropology.<sup>29</sup> Throughout her career, Cauthery has grounded her dance studies research and teaching in her sociocultural anthropology background. At the same time, she is also aware of the tensions involving disciplinary boundaries between trained anthropologists who research dance and dance studies researchers who use ethnographic methods. According to Cauthery, this may be attributed to a concern within dance studies about how interdisciplinarity and the use of ethnographic methods have been perceived as a "watering down" of anthropological rigour (see Buckland (2006)). At the root of it is the concern that without the proper training, ethnography can, in the wrong hands, become a very surface or insubstantial methodology, lacking in integrity and scholarly strength. Cauthery believes that some scholars would rather keep

disciplines and methods distinct and that, for these trained anthropologists, dance studies does a disservice by performing hybrid scholarship without the proper training. However, as my examination indicates, interdisciplinary training is at the heart of dance ethno\* research and teaching in Canada.<sup>30</sup>

### **Hubs of Dance Ethno\* Research: Beyond Dance and Anthropology Departments**

While these issues and concerns about rigour are all valid, recently some have suggested that ethnography should take on a life of its own separate from anthropology because, as ethnomusicologist Anthony Seeger argues, it has great flexibility when it “is not defined by disciplinary lines or theoretical perspectives” (Fraleigh and Hanstein 1999, 258). It appears that this independence has already resulted in important ethnographic innovations inside and outside the academy. The curatorial and editorial work on artistic dance by Montreal-based dancer and dance anthropologist Dena Davida is an important contribution to this article because it can be viewed as an example of generating spaces for dance-friendly ethnographic research, precisely through such independent means.

Through publishing books like the anthology *Fields in Motion: Ethnography in the Worlds of Dance* (2012), Davida continues to fuel a vibrant field of dance ethno\* inquiry in the Canadian academic landscape. Her book continues a tradition of dance anthropology, inspired by Keali’i nohomoku, by focusing on artistic dance whereby dance and its aesthetics become emblematic for understanding cultural meaning. This dance anthropology book carves out its own unique angle as an anthology of art world dance ethnography. Eleven Canadian dance ethno\* scholars (including Davida) are featured in the book, along with many other ethno\* scholars from around the globe. Each scholar contributes dance-based theory derived from ethnographic research. They work as kinesthetically attuned participants in the dancing they are researching, as insiders to the dance companies and institutions they study, or as insiders to the wider communities in which they did fieldwork. Fieldwork participation, observation, and interview experiences are described as “collaborative inquiry,” the process of “coming together,” and “imaginative empathy” (Davida 2012, 5). The book has become an invaluable source for scholars researching dance ethno\* methodologies. The book opens the potential for new experiments in ethnography that start with the body and its movements as a site of knowledge.

While Davida has written and published extensively as a dance anthropology scholar, her work as the co-founder, director, and curator of Montreal’s *Tangente* dance performance organization also contributes to generating a space for dance ethno\* experimentation. According to Davida, she integrates her work as a dance anthropologist, with a view of the dance event as a social event, into her kinesthetic and sociopolitical curatorial work. For example, the day after our interview, Davida travelled to Lebanon to attend the Beirut International Platform of Dance (twenty-two choreographers and six presenters from Lebanon, Jordan, Tunisia, Palestine, Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Iraq) (Davida 2016) to learn more about the artistic dance happening there amid everyday dangers and pressures against public dancing, and to explore the possibility of presenting some of that work here in Canada in the future. Within a climate of increased migration from the Middle East, Davida’s curatorial work is timely and essential to the growth of antiracist community building in Canada. Davida’s curatorial work is an important and unique energizing point of contact between dance and anthropology. In her curatorial work, as in her scholarly publications, Davida activates a space of

ethnographic independence from anthropology while still maintaining anthropology and ethnography as sources of inspiration and guidance.

There are key dance-friendly academic spaces supported by Canadian ethno\* researchers who connect strongly with anthropological theory and methods but conduct their professional careers outside of anthropology departments: Magdalena Kazubowski-Houston (Theatre, York University), who is co-curator of the Centre for Imaginative Ethnography; Peter Dickinson (English and Contemporary Arts, Simon Fraser University), who is the director of SFU's Institute for Performance Studies and founding editor of *Performance Matters*; Beverley Diamond (Ethnomusicology, Memorial University, emerita), who has supported a whole generation of dance scholars, such as Sherry Johnson (Ethnomusicology, York University), Kristin Harris Walsh (Folklore and Ethnomusicology, Memorial University), and Heather Sparling (Folklore and Ethnomusicology, Cape Breton University); Marcia Ostashevski (Folklore and Ethnomusicology, Cape Breton University); Andriy Nahachewsky (University of Alberta's Kule Folklore Centre, Huculak Chair of Ukrainian Culture and Ethnography), who, as an activist, folklorist, and former professional dancer and choreographer, has published extensively on Ukrainian staged dance in Canada and abroad; Pierre Chartrand, who has done extensive work on "la gigue" and other French-Canadian dance forms; Meghan Forsyth (Ethnomusicology, Memorial University of Newfoundland), who recently mounted an exhibit at the Museum of Prince Edward Island on Acadian step dancing—the result of years of fieldwork within the Acadian community; Anne Flynn (Dance, University of Calgary), who is the current president of Congress on Research in Dance; and Lisa Doolittle (University of Lethbridge, Department of Theatre and Dramatic Arts). There may be others.

## Conclusion

While a tightly disciplined approach to anthropology in Canada may be central to why I was deterred from researching dance/movement through an anthropology department at the doctoral level, this research demonstrates the interdisciplinary potential between and beyond dance and anthropology. In a climate of interdisciplinary growth within the humanities and social sciences, and a growth in dance studies as a discipline, Canadian dance ethno\* research has the potential to energize what appears to have become, at times, a tightly bound and inward-looking anthropology. Canadian dance ethno\* research can offer an understanding of performative, political, and relational body movements as having meaning-carrying and meaning-making potential. Such dimensions of experience are relevant to scholars in a wide range of fields of inquiry.

Dance ethno\* in Canada needs to be reframed—not as an example of watered down anthropology, but as an established, rigorous sociopolitical and kinesthetic approach to ethnographic research with much to offer other disciplines. While dance, as a sub-discipline in anthropology, may have been a meeting ground for dance and anthropology in the US, dance ethno\* in Canada has emerged from multiple crosscurrents. Canadian dance ethno\* research has taken on independent lines of flight not hindered by discipline-bound anthropology departments—enabling the development of strong sociopolitical and kinesthetic pedagogical, curatorial, and methodological approaches and perspectives that are grounded in movement-based experiences and relations. These kinesthetic and sociopolitical aspects are catalysts for generating greater interdisciplinary contact between multiple disciplinary fields, including anthropology, pushing back against inwardly focused disciplinary specialization.

This article, which focuses largely on Dance at York, presents a spark for future research. There are many gaps to this research that need to be filled. To fill these gaps, and in the spirit of generating greater interdisciplinary dialogue and synergies, I invite responses that address ethnographic research on dance/movement in Canada generated in the space of interdisciplinary dialogue. Following the lead of Gertrude Kurath and Judith Lynne Hanna who, in their own articles, invited such dialogue about dance ethnology and dance anthropology respectively, my hope is to include responses in a follow-up article. Please send comments and replies to [dance.ethno.dialogue@gmail.com](mailto:dance.ethno.dialogue@gmail.com).

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## Notes

1. As many anthropological scholars of dance and human movement have commented, the naming of dance is problematic in that it can be culturally restrictive, static, and ambiguous as a category—foreclosing the kinds of projects one can take on and pushing one into a Eurocentric model of categorizing the arts (Kaeppler 1978; Grau 1993; Reed 1998; Henry et al. 2000). I use the term dance to refer to movement as it interweaves with sonic and performance experiences and expressions (both theatrical and non-theatrical), and as a topic and field of study with its own developed theories and methods.
2. Examples include Katherine Dunham (PhD, University of Chicago), Pearl Primus (PhD, New York University), Adrienne Kaeppler (PhD, University of Hawai'i), Drid Williams (PhD, Oxford University), Joann Keali'inohomoku (PhD, Indiana University), Jill D. Sweet (PhD, University of New Mexico), Anya Peterson Royce (PhD, University of California, Berkeley), Susan Reed (PhD, Brown University), Cynthia Jean Cohen Bull (PhD, Columbia University), Sally Ness (PhD, University of Washington), Brenda Farnell (PhD, University of Indiana), and Andrée Grau (PhD, Queen's University of Belfast), among others.
3. Anthropology in North America has four fields: linguistics, physical anthropology, social or cultural anthropology, and archeology. Canadian anthropology has been influenced by the traditions of British social anthropology, French sociologists (such as Émile Durkheim), sociologist and ethnologist Marcel Mauss, structuralist Claude Lévi-Strauss, and the US tradition of cultural anthropology. According to anthropologists Julia Harrison and Regna Darnell, Canadian anthropology is also founded by the Aboriginal collective presence (2006).
4. See the Forum's introductory editorial note that more fully explains "The Other 'D'" and roundtable.
5. Ken Little (PhD, University of Virginia), David Murray (PhD, University of Virginia), Clara Sacchetti (PhD, York University), and Natasha Myers (PhD, MIT).
6. Selma Odom (PhD, University of Surrey), Nina De Shane-Gill (doctoral training at Wesleyan University in Anthropology with David P. McAllester), Anna Blewchamp (MFA, York University), Rosemary Jeanes Antze (MFA, York University), Bridget Cauthery (PhD, University of Surrey), Danielle Robinson (PhD, University of California, Riverside), Dena Davida (PhD, Programme d'études et pratiques des arts, Université du Québec à Montréal).
7. Kristin Harris Walsh (PhD, Memorial University and MA, Dance at York University) and Andriy Nahachewsky (PhD, University of Alberta and BFA, Dance at York University).

8. Beverley Diamond (PhD, University of Toronto) and Sherry Johnson (PhD, York University).
9. David Murray, e-mail message to author, March 25, 2016.
10. Clara Sacchetti, e-mail message to author, March 24, 2016.
11. Nahachewsky, a folklorist who celebrates interdisciplinary dialogue, has also observed such disciplinary border maintenance between anthropology and folklore studies (personal communication, October 6, 2016).
12. I explore Canadian dance ethnography as a heuristic device to explore its distinctive development and opportunities (at the crossroads of several traditions) and future potentials.
13. For a full inventory of the Marius Barbeau Collection housed at the National Museum of History, see <http://www.historymuseum.ca/geos/marius-barbeau-fonds-huron-wyandot-inventory-e.pdf>, accessed August 31, 2016. To see his research collection, visit the Canadian Museum of History webpage “Marius Barbeau.” Accessed July 26, 2016. [http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmhc/exhibitions/tresors/barbeau/index\\_e.shtml](http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmhc/exhibitions/tresors/barbeau/index_e.shtml).
14. De Shane-Gill is of Haudenosaunee ancestry and an Elder in Residence at the Aboriginal Student Services Centre at the University of Waterloo. De Shane-Gill has an ongoing commitment to the Healing of the Seven Generations Centre in Kitchener. She co-founded Weejeendimin in Kitchener with Elaine Garner in 1985 (personal communication, April 13, 2016).
15. There are several dance ethnographers with training in and/or strong links to performance studies: Deidre Sklar (PhD in Performance Studies, NYU), Barbara Browning (Performance Studies at NYU), and Priya Srinivasan (PhD in Performance Studies, Northwestern University).
16. According to Deidre Sklar, the kinesthetic approach to dance ethnography grew out of dance methodologies such as Labanotation (2000). “Labananalysis opened the way for exploring the sociocultural significance of qualitative, felt bodily knowledge” (Sklar 2000, 70). Dance ethnographers who use this trajectory use sensory and kinesthetic experiences of movement to show how movement relates metaphorically and conceptually to larger patterns of social meaning (Sklar 2000).
17. Natasha Myers, email correspondence with author, March–September 2016.
18. ProQuest Dissertations search results for Dance in Anthropology (as the subject) revealed 94 MA/PhD theses/dissertations between 1979 and 2015. Because not all anthropology departments have their theses/dissertations on ProQuest (for example, McMaster University), the results of this search are very preliminary and need to be considered as food for thought and not conclusive data. In addition, this does not include those who did their training abroad. To quickly summarize the highlights, York’s anthropology department produced the most theses (24 from 1979 to present), followed by the University of Alberta (13 from 1989 to present), the University of Toronto (9 from 1982 to present), Carleton University (7 from 1995 to 2009), McGill University (6 from 1992 to present), and Concordia University (6 from 2002 to present). Simon Fraser University and University of Manitoba both produced 4 theses/dissertation between 1996 and 2013, the University of Calgary produced 3 from 2001 to 2013, and Memorial University of Newfoundland, the University of Victoria, Dalhousie University, Université de Montréal, and Queen’s University each produced 2 theses/dissertations between 1995 and 2012. Thesis/dissertation data tells me that there have been ebbs and flows in dance research since the late 1970s and early 1980s in anthropology departments, but there has been a significant increase in danced-focused research since the mid-1990s.
19. I found 143 theses/dissertations listed on the Library and Archives Canada database (from 1975 to present).
20. Forty-five MA/MFA theses in dance ethno\* from York.
21. Jeanes Antze taught dance anthropology in Dance at York for approximately twenty years (between 1981 and 2002). She also taught dance anthropology at University of Waterloo from 1982 to 1983 (personal communication, July 21, 2016).

22. Mary Jane Warner was also key to the success of the graduate program in Dance at York in terms of the number of ethno-related MAs she advised who made it through to completion (Selma Odom personal communication, August 2, 2016).
23. For more about Les Feux-Follets, see Bowring (2005), 16–19.
24. De Shane-Gill could not recall the Ministry's exact name and how the arts were justified within a health budget (personal communication, April 13, 2016).
25. For an interview with Odom (by Seika Boye) and tributes to Odom (by Amy Bowring and Grant Strate), see "Dance Historian of the Month, June 2009," in *Dance Collection Danse*. Accessed April 14, 2016. <http://www.dcd.ca/general/odomdhm.html>.
26. Selma Odom, e-mail message to author, August 2, 2016.
27. Robinson and Alcedo completed their doctoral work in Dance Studies at University of California, Riverside (advised by anthropologist and dance scholar Sally Ness). Other important contributors include Modesto Mawulolo Amegago (PhD, Education at Simon Fraser University), who focuses on African performing arts curriculum development and Mary Fogarty (PhD, Music at University of Edinburgh), who is a cultural sociologist with a focus on popular dance and music.
28. Bridget Cauthery, e-mail to author, September 14, 2016.
29. Cauthery minored in anthropology, completed an MA in Dance Ethnography at York and later completed a doctorate with Janet Lansdale at the University of Surrey (Cauthery, e-mail to author, September 14, 2016).
30. See work on dance ethnology in Canada by Ostashevsky et al. (2008).

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