

Dance and place: Body Weather, globalisation and Aotearoa

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Abstract

This article will explore the relationship between dance and place. Using the work of Body Weather (BW) practitioners such as Snow (2006), Grant & de Quincey (2006), and Taylor (2010), this article will explore their unique viewpoints and somatic approaches to engaging with place. Also the works of other scholars and movement practitioners will be used to investigate how place shapes dance practices (Alexeyeff, 2009; Brown, 1997; Gray, 2010; Mazer, 2007; Savigliano, 2009). BW threads within the Aotearoa/New Zealand contemporary dance scene will be traced, culminating in suggestions about the implications for practicing BW in an Aotearoa context. How understandings of movement can emerge from different environments is the focus of the research.

A dancer in essence is an anonymous lightning, a medium of the place. That is how I want to be ... an attempt to discover and initiate dance in all places. (Min Tanaka, founder of Body Weather as cited in Grant & de Quincey, 2006, p. 252)

Introduction: What is Body Weather?

Body Weather (BW) is a movement practice and philosophy that was developed by Japanese avant-garde dance-artist Min Tanaka in Tokyo in the late 1970's (Snow, 2002). The approach developed from *butoh*, a Japanese philosophy and performance practice generally accredited to Tatsumi Hijikata and Kazuo Ohno. BW grew out of Tanaka's 'laboratories'/workshops with groups of international dance and art practitioners, many of whom were part of Tanaka's performance company *Maijuku*. Tanaka and the company began working in the rural village of Hakushu, Yamanashi, two and a half hours northwest of Tokyo in the early 1980's; the laboratories' focus was to engage in intensive body-based investigation of the land (Venu, 2006). These investigations happened through long hours of manual work on the organic farm; intensive training through the movement system known as "M/B" or "M&B" (which stands for Mind/Body, Muscle/Bone or Music/Body, all

and any of which can be used); and “groundwork” which consisted of hands-on partner bodywork or “manipulations” and sensory/image-based investigations, often done outdoors.

Tanaka himself has been involved in many performances both in traditional theatre venues and in outdoor, site-specific environments both in Japan and internationally, and has collaborated on many occasions with artists from other disciplines (MoMA PS1, 2012; Venu, 2006). Since its beginnings, BW has been globalised in two ways. The first is that it has been transferred to other geographical locations to be investigated in different cultural contexts, and secondly what is actually practiced has changed. Dancers such as Stuart Lynch, Tess de Quincey, Frank Van de Ven and Oguri, some of whom worked with Tanaka in *Maijuku*, now practise and lead their own investigations in Australia, Europe and the US, often travelling internationally for performance or workshops (Body Weather, n.d). Other artists use BW as a springboard for creative work in different disciplines.

Due to this relocating of the Japanese-born dance practice, challenges in translation or re-contextualisation are evident. Thus, the practice of BW shifts uniquely depending on where it is practiced and with whom. In order to understand BW in relation to place, we must first contextualise it within the broader world of dance to see how globalisation affects other dance forms and communities. By looking at the meanings of ‘World Dance’, we may form a notion of how dance-meanings shift according to place and how dance shapes place.

Dancing globally and in local places

The relatively new term ‘World Dance’ is now being used in dance studies to encompass a variety of dance-forms and practices. Worldwide, dances happen in different yet specific places where dance is either still rooted to its cultural context, or has changed through innovation. ‘World Dance’ breaks down and re-frames what ‘dance’ is, opening up new territory and broadening the conceptual framework of how we see dance.

Savigliano (2009) argues for a re-thinking of the umbrella term ‘World Dance’ and asks how choreography (a Western notion) can be used as “a processor of differences” (Savigliano, 2009, p. 175). She suggests that different cultures of dance can come together to engage in dialogue. In the territory of globalisation, we must be open to multiplicity, processes of translation, and tailoring or

reframing of dance. She says dancers need to enter into intercultural dialogue with producers, scholars, critics, students, or with other dancers (Savigliano, 2009).

Foster (2009) denotes 'World Dance' as a term which "intimates a neutral comparative field wherein all dances are products of equally important, wonderfully diverse, equivalently powerful cultures" (Foster, p. 2). However, this is not true. We see this through Foster's tracings of the lineage of dance histories from a critical viewpoint. She states that there are politics of power implicated in researching dance that need to be acknowledged and questioned, both in past research and in present studies.

Together, Foster (2009) and Savigliano (2009) question how 'World Dance' might replace 'dance'. They seek to expand 'dance', and ask us to consider new and alternative definitions of choreography, technique, a dancer, and performance-presentation. They highlight the differences in power between dance that falls within the frame, and dance in "wild" places outside of it: "out there in the world" (Savigliano, p. 163). Both affirm "the need for new models of history writing that could provide alternative narrative structures" (Foster, p. 3). They suggest that communities that have not been written into history, such as indigenous people, need to be given voice.

For example, in the Cook Islands, globalisation of their dance "engage[s] local identities with global processes" (Alexeyeff, 2009, p. 1). Alexeyeff (2009) shows how Cook Islands dancers are affected by changes in tourism and commodification, by funding and other support (or lack of it), by European invasion, and the introduction of Christianity. These changes in politics can be seen through looking at Cook Islands expressive dance practice as well as individual, local and national identities.

'Worlding' dance sees dance not as separate from culture, 'cultureless', and not as a cultural 'mirror' or reflection of society, but as the actual production of culture. Dance can be seen as a way of crafting identity and as a generator of cultures within and outside of itself. Simultaneously, dance is affected by political, cultural, social and economic constraints. Constraints of political, cultural, social and the economic are illustrated in Alexeyeff's study on Cook Islands dance (2009). She illustrates how one community is in fact a microcosm of globalisation. Notions of belonging, identity and place are implicated in global changes, forming new concepts of belonging and 'place' within dance studies (Alexeyeff, 2009; Foster, 2009; Savigliano, 2009).

Being in Aotearoa/New Zealand

Take for instance Aotearoa/New Zealand which is called a bicultural context. Although we are in an era of ‘post-colonisation’, issues of colonisation still need to be addressed. Mazer (2007), discusses the Māori dance company Atamira¹ in their performance *Ngai Tahu* 32, choreographed by founding member Louise Potiki Bryant. Mazer describes the Māori dancers’ bodies as “implicitly come to reveal and embody the effects of colonisation: ritual dance suppressed by the aesthetic” (Mazer, 2007, p. 291). She implies that we can see the effects of colonisation on the dancers’ moving bodies. We are able to see the effects of colonisation embodied through the power-play between more traditional Māori practices and the Western aesthetic of contemporary dance. Mazer suggests that this kind of “working between cultural forms” (p. 291) is powerful in that it highlights problematic issues of biculturalism in our wider New Zealand society.

Jack Gray, (2010), another founding member of Atamira Dance Company, reflects on his experience at ‘Indigenous Dance Laboratory 2’ in Broome, Australia. As a Māori choreographer/dancer he describes the Australian environment as an integral and awe-inspiring part of his trip. “We were privileged to be in this unbelievable Dreamtime landscape of ochre red dust, rock, green Indian Ocean, the crispest blue skies, the abundance of life ... all had an incredible impact on me” (p. 3). Gray experienced the location through his body in everyday situations. He also experienced cultural identities embedded in the movement learnt from Indonesian choreographer Jecko Siompo and Congolese-born Andréya Ouamba (Gray, 2010).

How the body is situated and accommodates environment, local flora and fauna, is felt on a somatic level. Both Gray (2010), and Mazer (2007), highlight a Māori worldview wherein embodiment is integral to experiencing the world. Place is understood through the body. Mazer says, “From a Māori perspective, to locate one’s whakapapa [genealogy] in a *file* is not quite the same as recalling it from the *land itself*” (2007, p. 291, [emphasis added]). Thus both the land and the body hold pertinent cultural knowledge.

Brown (1997) reflects about *dis*-connection to land. As a Pākehā choreographer/dancer she discusses issues of cultural translation when working, dancing and transferring choreographic work between Britain and New Zealand. She is both an expatriate in England and a “visitor” in Aotearoa, thus dwelling in a place of “in-between-ness” (p. 140). Brown points out that unlike indigenous Māori, the *Pākehā* (New Zealand European) do not belong to the land. She says

“though the Māori are *tangata whenua* (of the land), the Pākehā as *Manuhiri* (visitor) is not” (p. 140). She links her cultural identity to the feeling of not connecting to *any* place, saying “the Pākehā belongs, in a foundational sense, neither here nor there” (p. 140).

As a Pākehā-born New Zealander, Brown’s reflections resonate with my own identity. I have one English-born parent and one Australian-born and grew up in a small community in Dunedin comprising predominantly of European New Zealanders. I too feel culturally nomadic or dislodged from belonging to any one place, yet Ōtepoti/Dunedin is also my home. I have an awareness of the problematic way the British have engaged historically with the New Zealand’s land and people, and too have an admiration for indigenous Māori values and their “determination” (Brown, 1997, p. 140). As a student researching dance in the world, I feel the need to engage my own identity respectfully with the environment and Body Weather is my starting point for this investigation.

‘Dancing a place’ with Body Weather

For Australian scholar and performer Peter Snow (2006), collaborations in BW began with Amsterdam-based dancer Frank Van de Ven. The two met at a BW laboratory with Tanaka, and their performance series *Thought/Action* is about improvising through thought, or speech, and through action or dance. Their work explores the interception of these two modes of improvisation, as well as how the identities of the two performers relate. Together they investigate “places as a mode of being in performance” (p. 228), rather than place being used as a frame, provocation, or performance itself. Snow discusses the embodiment of place through three elements of improvisation—“observation”, “reflexivity” and “becoming”—a triad of “interweaving processes” (p. 235). He says, “If beings are implaced, then they are always in some kind of site, always *in situ*, but *in situ* is a developing mode. In performance especially, bodies are remaking themselves, being made and remade, all the time” (p. 235). These artists focus on and utilise their constantly changing embodied experience for improvisation impetus, determining relationship to one another and the performance process.

Another Australian, site-based performer Gretel Taylor (2010), discusses the key concept of ‘emptiness’ in BW training. The process involves emptying the ‘self’ of habits and societal constructs so that a dancer may invite things from the ‘outside’ in. She suggests this enhances the dancer’s body and mind to be receptive to the environment around (Taylor, pp. 77-79). However, Taylor argues

that to ‘empty’ the body is both an impossible and inappropriate concept for her as a non-indigenous site-specific dancer in the post-colonial Australian context. She says “emptiness has been a false premise underscoring dispossession and genocide” (p. 85). She describes how British colonisers came to Australia and saw an ‘empty’, un-inhabited land. In reality, there were in fact indigenous Aboriginal people living there. Taylor suggests that these communities were not acknowledged because they did not fit into the British framework of what it means to dwell within a landscape. What followed was a denial of indigenous Aboriginal existence (Taylor, 2010).

Taylor also argues that while BW strives to deconstruct the body of its social inscriptions, it de-genders and de-culturalises the body. Taylor writes, “aspiring neutrality or emptiness”, are problematic in that skin colour and sex are undeniable inscriptions on the body (p. 80). Questioning these assumptions in BW, Taylor seeks to find an alternative vocabulary and practice in relation to dancing in the land she lives. Using feminist theory as a framework, she introduces the idea of bringing her “whole self/body to meet with the Australian site” (p. 86), neither land nor dancer being at the forefront of the dance, but both becoming fully present, engaging in an encounter that is relational—both bringing their histories and identities in full to the conversation—and not erasing or emptying any part of place or dancing self. Taylor uses what she calls “locating” (p. 73) to do this—a practice whereby she locates herself through listening to/noticing the nuances in the environment that she is in, and responds accordingly, dancing from a “permeable” (p. 85) body.

Similarly, Grant and de Quincy (2006) discuss BW in relationship to the Australian landscape and its indigenous peoples. The authors ruminate as non-indigenous artists working with the land, asking: “How do I stand in Australia?” (p. 248), and how to relate to the realities of biculturalism in this era of post-colonialism. Grant says “I am not entirely comfortable with the knowledge that the prosperity which I now enjoy is built on a foundation of theft and murder” (p. 266), and discusses the meaning of dwelling, stating that ethically it must be constantly revisited due to the ghosts of his past colonising ancestors.

As part of their investigation into these issues, Grant & de Quincey (2006) discuss their research which has taken place through BW practices. Their projects include *Triple Alice 1, 2 and 3* (1999-2001), described as laboratories in the Australian Central Desert. They engaged with the landscape by first researching its history and significance to local Aboriginal communities. Grant concludes

Aboriginal philosophy specific for this area “remained largely hidden and silent” (in Grant & de Quincey, 2006, p. 254). Perhaps he highlights a lack of understanding with the indigenous Australian population; or perhaps it was inappropriate for them to share this knowledge. Grant & de Quincey’s dance research in the desert involved what is called “omnicentral Imaging” in which dancers take on “images” from the surroundings (p. 250). They suggest that the body may transform through this practice, and become a site for performance (p. 250). De Quincey talks of places entering and inhabiting people and the relationships between dancer and site. Grant places their work apart from other site-based performance, stating that,

... in Body Weather place performs bodies as much as bodies are in place. And so the hidden workings of an ever present dimension of experience—the ways in which the places we inhabit makes us who we are—is revealed and laid open. (Grant & de Quincey, 2006, pp. 267-268)

Therefore BW practice for both Grant & de Quincy (2006) and Taylor (2010) can be seen as a method for understanding their own culturally situated identities. They weave values that support the Aboriginal community into their work, and try to understand the enormity of experiences held within the places they live and dance in. Grant & de Quincy discuss ‘imaging’ as part of their practice—a method for embodying simultaneous multiple sensibilities of the environment to generate movement. Like Taylor, they talk of the body as “becoming a vessel”, speak of “rhythms taken on from outside”, and having “cellular reactions” to the site they inhabit (p. 251). Describing the experience, Grant narrates the path of the BW dancer, who is:

All the time, mapping, measuring, naming, finding sense, analysing elements of the place ... with time, abiding in the dwelling with sustained attunement, she finds the place in her body, her body is in the place. The place leaves its footprints, its residues, in her flesh, vibrates her, making her something else. Someone she wasn’t. (Grant & de Quincy, 2006, p. 256)

Snow (2006), on the other hand discusses his relation to place as more transitory. He improvises in different places around the globe and does not appear to engage in post-colonial discourse. Like Taylor (2010), Grant & de Quincey (2006), he too is ‘mapping’ and ‘finding sense’, yet his sense of place is about

improvising identity. He discusses the paradox that places can be both fleeting and enduring. He suggests place can be held in the body momentarily, or be revisited through memories, time and time again (Snow, 2006, pp. 228, 246).

All three articles speak of somatic transformations in the body. They share a view that place affects identity in BW dance practice. Van de Ven and Snow (2006) seek to depart from their own inscribed identities in order to “displace” (p. 228) one another when performing. They seek to work from a “transparent” (Van de Ven & Snow, 2012) or ‘neutral’ body. This departure from the individual self is closer to Tanaka’s description at the beginning of this article of a dancer being “anonymous” and a “medium of the place” (Grant & de Quincey, 2006, p. 252). On the other hand Taylor and Grant & de Quincey seek to dance in a place without negating any part of the self. They acknowledge their inscribed cultural identity. As we saw above, Taylor has found new culturally appropriate structures through which to frame her dance practice.

Body Weather in Aotearoa/New Zealand, implications and conclusions

The above literature provides a picture of dance from BW practitioners wherein BW has its own parameters for conceptualising choreography and embodying place. It can be seen as a type of structured-improvisation where a relationship between place and the dancer’s body may be explored. Somatic experience is honed in on; the senses are used to investigate qualities and details of a specific environment. Memory, sensation, and image are used to explore situated identities and deepen connection with landscape and its significance. The sensation of an insect on the forehead on a hot day might be investigated for its potential to inform movement or state in the body; or the rhythm of the water felt while standing in a river might be remembered kinaesthetically and drawn on to later in the studio. Choreography might be a structuring of such “images”, enabling a dancer to move through different corporeal experiences, resulting in a kind of dance or performance. Here, movement is not fixed or ‘set’, but like other improvisational approaches the dancer must always be alert to moment-to-moment somatic changes and movement choices.

Additionally, practitioners drawing on BW are engaging in discourses of place and cultural identity, especially in Australian contexts where postcolonial conversations are currently pertinent. Such artists are looking at how local places and cultural identities intercept with BW in today’s global climate and BW

techniques and assumptions are being critiqued for relevancy. The literature signals how this Japanese-born dance is changing in new globalised contexts. As suggested above, landscape holds different meanings depending on worldview.

In Aotearoa/NZ there are a significant number of dance-artists influenced by BW or butoh, yet little is written about this history. A search for “butoh” on the Dance Aotearoa New Zealand (DANZ) website recently found fifteen mentions of the practice, yet I have only been able to find three scholarly documents about butoh alone in the Aotearoa/Pacific region. These are: Miki Seifert’s (2011) doctoral dissertation, William Franco’s (2008) master’s thesis, and Bert Van Dijk’s (2011) article. In terms of BW, Becca Wood’s (2010) master’s dissertation briefly cites Min Tanaka as an influence on her practice. In addition, renowned butoh scholar Sondra Fraleigh (2010) only notes two artists of the global butoh movement in Aotearoa/NZ: Lemi Ponifasio of MAU dance-theatre and Wilhemeena Monroe of SOUL Centre (p. 31), both are based in West Auckland. As the director and choreographer of MAU, Ponifasio accredits finding his own way in performanceⁱⁱ to Min Tanaka, after turning away from conventional contemporary dance techniques (Manson, 2000). However, the Samoan-born artist does not see himself as a butoh dancer (Jahn-Werner, 2008), and believes “butoh encompasses many, many different performers all with different styles, techniques and staging. It means different things to different people” (Meredith, n.d., para. 4). Monroe has worked with Ponifasio in the past and is also influenced by Tanaka, among other butoh notables (Fraleigh, 2010). She fuses butoh with somatic education and contemporary dance in her choreographic work and through her somatic research centre (Fraleigh, 2010).

However, in addition to those mentioned, there are a significant number of other contemporary dancers in Aotearoa/NZ influenced by BW or butoh in various ways. Charles Koroneho, Lynne Pringle, and Michael Parmenter are three such practitioners, each a notable artistic and educational presence in the Aotearoa Contemporary Dance scene. Koroneho “explore[s] cultural collaboration, intercultural performance and the intersection between choreography, performance art and theatre” (Koroneho, 2011, para. 2). His artistic research, under the conceptual platform Te Toki Haruru, investigates “the collision between maori [sic] cosmology, New Zealand society and global cultures” (Koroneho, 2011, para. 2). He “draw[s] from Dance, Body Weather and Performance Art” to explore an indigenous approach to choreography and performance (Smith, 2012).

Pringle is “deeply committed to the development of the performing arts in New Zealand” (Bipeds Productions, 2005, para. 1). Her BW knowledge was gained by working with Parmenter and through her study with Tanaka in New York (Bipeds Productions, 2005; personal communication, July 5, 2013). Parmenter is also influenced by Tanaka’s BW Laboratory, melding it with Hawkins Technique, and American “new dance” methods such as Klein and Alexander techniques, Contact Improvisation, and Ideokinesis (IndependANCE, 2011b). Alyx Duncan, Dave Hall, Joshua Rutter, Elle Louise August, Tru Paraha, and myself all trained with Min Tanaka in Japan, and have since worked in various performance trajectories. Others, such as Kristian Larsen have worked with Tanaka in Aotearoa when the artist presented work in Auckland and Wellington in 2000 (Chesterman, 2014; Larsen, n.d.).

MB has been a popular training approach for professional performers and body-based practitioners in Auckland where regular classes run through IndependANCE. Tutors such as Kerryn McMurdo, Becca Wood, Geoff Gilson, Charles Koroneho, Michael Parmenter, and Joshua Rutter lead these sessions (IndependANCE, 2011a). Christchurch’s recently established Re:Map classes developed by Erica Viedma, Julia Harvey and Paul Young also offer MB classes (South Island Dance Network, 2012), as does the new GASP! Dance Collective in Ōtepoti/Dunedin.

Although this is not an exhaustive list of BW threads in Aotearoa’s contemporary dance scene, it does signal part of the extent to which contemporary dancers, choreographers, and educators in this country might be indirectly or directly influenced by the Japanese-born practice and philosophy of BW and its parent butoh. The themes that arise through this brief survey of BW and butoh influences in Aotearoa are: the incorporation of indigenous approaches to the body and movement; the need for experimentation and the extension of contemporary dance boundaries; and discourses of environment, landscape, and belonging. However further research and articulation of BW and butoh threads in NZ dance-cultures, preferably by practitioners themselves, would shed light on the nuances and intentions of these practices. As Maufort (2007) importantly notes, the performing arts scene in this country is prolific yet under represented in scholarship. Documenting more of the cultural practices such as BW that influence our dance-making would engage Aotearoa/NZ more actively in global dance debates, and articulating cultural knowledge practiced acknowledges and pays respect to the lineage of teachers gone before us.

Towards embodying Ōtepoti

My own current practice in Ōtepoti/Dunedin draws from training with Min Tanaka in Japan; an undertaking inspired by Aotearoa contemporary dance teachers Charles Koroneho, Wilhemeena Monroe, and Michael Parmenter.ⁱⁱⁱ Travelling to Japan to live, work, and study BW and butoh forced me to face my cultural assumptions, particularly about the body, movement, and dance. Seven years later I question how elements of BW might relate to my cultural context and local landscape back in Aotearoa. As a Pākehā dancer-researcher I seek appropriate parameters for working in the bicultural Aotearoa/New Zealand environment. As the above literature signals, dance in Aotearoa responds to specific parameters wherein issues of belonging, identity, and landscape are pertinent and interwoven within the political, social, and cultural landscape. The somatic implications for dance in Aotearoa are about engaging with natural phenomena as a way of identifying with the landscape and understanding how we belong here as dancers and as human beings. Therefore dancing in Aotearoa engages me in a personal re-questioning of my assumptions about dance, my identity, and the landscape in which I live.

The following somatic portrait of dancing in Aramoana, a beach near my hometown of Ōtepoti/Dunedin in the South Island, provides an example of how my BW-inspired practice is a way of revealing connections and disconnections to self and homeland. My interest lies in how I might strengthen my relationship with the landscape by exploring and delighting in the Aramoana environment along the man-made mole. Through somatic movement investigation I pondered how my dance might transform as I engaged with plant, animal, land, sky, and water. My intention was to connect somatically, allowing movement responses to arise in relation to the elements along the length of the mole.

When I was standing in the water or crawling over the rocks, I felt like I was listening to a harsh landscape. Somehow, I was aware that this land was so familiar and comforting - I had grown up playing here and it felt ingrained in my body - yet paradoxically it also felt hard and unforgiving. Something was uncomfortable about being out there by the water early in the morning. My connection felt somewhat forced or tense. I wanted to let go of any judgments and hear the land speak for itself. I attempted to soften my body and listen to the rhythms of the place. I honed my senses on the presence around me. (Marler, 2014, p.13)

By consciously drawing on proprioceptive, tactile, aural, visual, and kinaesthetic information I was able to focus on the detailed rhythms, markers, patterns, and chatterings of the place (Marler, 2014). I chose the rocks, water, gulls, and the open space at the end of the mole to engage with for my exploration. I traced patterns of white dung on brown stone with all fours pressed to the sharp surfaces; I sensed the rhythm of waves seep into my pelvis and spine, a quiet yet powerful guiding force; the chaotic cries and the flurry of feathered gulls in flight shifted me to fling my arms up like the birds' wings while my feet stomped the clay as if in celebration or protest; and the expansive horizon where water and sky met calmed me to subtly lilt my torso, neck, and chest. After several hours of practice, my sense of self had shifted and expanded. I felt more at ease in my self and in the place, as if I had lessened a gap between myself and the landscape (Marler, 2014).

This brief somatic portrait has roots in Tanaka's BW work while simultaneously unearthing an uncertain relationship to the Aotearoa landscape. As Brown (1997) suggested earlier, being Pākehā can reveal tensions of belonging which are no doubt due to a history of colonisation. Herron Smith (2010) similarly notes that Pākehā identity engages “the pull between connections and displacement” (p. 68), a pertinent paradox given our current global and postcolonial climate. The author further elicits that in other Aotearoa performance contexts^{iv}, Pākehā identity is frequently expressed by employing elements of the landscape as sources of inspiration, by reflecting on ancestry from elsewhere, and by forming relationship with Māori (Herron Smith, 2010). Therefore, like Grant & de Quincey (2006), and Taylor (2010) earlier, my practice can be seen as a method for understanding my situated identity as Pākehā New Zealander and deepening sensitivity to the social, cultural, and geographical landscapes that I am part of.

What I have found is that this practice has given me a deeper sense of home in my body and in the landscape in which I was born. It has provided me insights into my own genealogy or *whakapapa* which is rooted elsewhere, yet the process has also inspired my attention to Māori perspectives of land, body, and identity. As Māori scholar Hinari Moko Mead (2003) states, land is not considered an asset belonging to people, but it is people that belong to the landscape. It is about “bonding to the land and having a place upon which one’s feet can be placed with confidence” (Mead, 2003, pp. 272-273). More dialogue with local *Ngai Tahu* (the local tribe) communities would be one way of deepening this research and my own understandings of the local landscape and its significance to Māori.

My own identity and dance genealogy illustrate the importance of global to local contexts and processes within and outside of dance. My practice, like the work of Taylor (2010), and Grant & de Quincey (2006), does bring implications of colonial power imbalances that need to be questioned thoughtfully. Dancing BW implicates me as a Pākehā dancer not only in the transplantation of practice here, but also in the reconfiguration of this knowledge in terms of our socio-cultural landscape. This means a process of making sense of BW within the situated implications, and a questioning of how BW might meet indigenous perspectives of landscape, dance, and body. Cruz Banks (2011) aptly points out that dance can be a powerful way of “strengthening [our] connection[s] to home, land and sea” (p. 82).

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ⁱ <http://www.atamiradance.co.nz/about/>

ⁱⁱ Editor's note, for discussion of Lemi Ponifasio's approach see:

Ponifasio, L. (2002). Creating cross-cultural dance in New Zealand. In Creative New Zealand (Ed.), *Moving to the future. Nga whakanekeneke atu ki te ao o apopo*, (pp.52-56). Wellington, NZ: Creative New Zealand.

ⁱⁱⁱ These teachers, along with witnessing the work of MAU dance theatre, awoke within me a thirst for a fresh approach to dance while training and working in the Contemporary Dance scene in Auckland, New Zealand from 2002-2006.

^{iv} Herron Smith (2010) discusses Lynne Pringle and Kilda Northcott's dance theatre work *Fishnet* (2005), Chris Blake and Stuart Hoar's opera *Bitter Calm* (1993), and Gary Henderson's play *Homeland* (2005), as studies for examining Pākehā identity on stage in Aotearoa.