

Reading Feminism, New Materialism and Post-colonial thought through *Costume in Performance: Materiality, Culture and the Body*.

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Abstract

This PhD by Publication enables the advancement of the research methodologies and theoretical positions that underpin the development of *Costume in Performance: Materiality, Culture and the Body*, a book that critically explores potentialities of agency through the ways in which costume, itself, performs. Drawn from selected and interconnected past and contemporary costume-led performances, this thesis addresses how these may account for the capacity to both empower and oppress, focusing on contexts of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Engaging in a wider and ongoing process of decolonising of the subject, it brings to bear key transdisciplinary theoretical advances that enable expanding beyond the ideas set out in the book to articulate intersecting ethical entanglements, while building on the implicit feminist, post-colonial position taken by it. In this process it considers costuming as a phenomenon that is critical, active, situated, material, temporal, spatial, in motion and embodied. Placing costume within post-humanist ontologies, I intend to make it an object of feminist, new materialist knowledge, that furthers thinking around performance as much as addresses social and environmental concerns, while offering a myriad of creative possibilities for future ethical interdisciplinary research, practice and pedagogy.

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Introduction:

Contexts and Ideas in Costume in Performance: Materiality, Culture and the Body

This PhD by Publication enables the advancement of the research methodologies and theoretical positions that underpin the development of *Costume in Performance: Materiality, Culture and the Body*, a book that critically explores potentialities of agency through the ways in which costume, itself, performs. Drawn from selected and interconnected past and contemporary costume-led performances, this thesis addresses how these may account for the capacity to both empower and oppress, focusing on contexts of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Engaging in a wider and ongoing process of decolonising of the subject, it brings to bear key transdisciplinary theoretical advances that enable expanding beyond the ideas set out in the book to articulate intersecting ethical entanglements, while building on the implicit feminist, post-colonial position taken by it. In this process it considers costuming as a phenomenon that is critical, active, situated, material, temporal, spatial, in motion and embodied. Placing costume within post-humanist ontologies, I intend to make it an object of feminist, new materialist knowledge, that furthers thinking around performance as much as addresses social and environmental concerns, while offering a myriad of creative possibilities for future ethical interdisciplinary research, practice and pedagogy.

Written between 2012 and 2015, *Costume in Performance: Materiality, Culture and the Body* (thereafter CiP) was first published in 2017 and reprinted by Bloomsbury Academic in 2019. It is currently being translated into Russian, was shortlisted for the Society of Theatre Research in 2018, received the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space

Publication Award in 2019¹, and has been reviewed positively in six research journals representing a range of adjacent fields of research.² This book, however, in order to voice a costume perspective that engages readers who are practitioners as much as scholars, whilst covering a broad range of examples of practice in thematic chapters, did not overtly address the theoretical positions, methodologies and values to which this thesis allows me to turn. Drawing on critical theorists including Karen Barad, Walter Benjamin, Aby Warburg, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Jasbin Puar, Anne Anlin Cheng, Donna Haraway, and Rosi Braidotti amongst others, this thesis recognises the feminist, anti-colonial and new materialist trajectories which may be further channelled into my future research, as well as that of others in the community of research to which I belong. The three frames of enquiry - feminism, post-colonialism and new materialism - enable the recognition of entanglements of ethics and agency in certain histories of oppression materialised through costume, as well as the role that costume can play in repairing, and in offering alternative embodiments, positions and approaches. So, to define costume through this thesis as a conduit for thinking in terms of global concerns, intends to engage while transcending its situatedness in performance making, albeit acknowledging my own situated knowledge as practitioner, researcher, and educator that both this thesis and CiP emerge from³.

The book's introduction sets out these expanded definitions of costume as 'an attempt to encompass the complexity' of the subject in a six-chapter structure 'broadly defined in opposites: the individual performer and the chorus in Chapters 1 and 2; the grotesque and

¹ Habitually awarded to theatre design and scenography publications.

² List of reviews, authors and publications in appendix 1 of this thesis.

³ See CV – appendix 2.

the sublime in Chapters 3 and 4; art and history in Chapters 5 and 6.’ (CiP, p. xxiii)⁴. It goes on to clarify that ‘the presentation of the body on stage requires an ethically instrumental position and within each chapter a specific reading is proposed: liminality and the societal in Chapters 1 and 2 respectively; transgression and emancipation in Chapters 3 and 4; empathy and authenticity in Chapters 5 and 6’ (CiP, p.xxiii). While chapter 5 is ‘by invitation’ and written by Melissa Trimingham, a notable expert of modernist Avant-garde performance⁵, its contents were agreed to fit into the structure of the book which included the potential of each chapter being read as stand-alone as well as part of an incremental expanding of knowledge⁶. This thesis’ approach enables a transversal intersecting between chapters so as to theorise costume further from ontological, relational, feminist and postcolonial positions, as gendered sociocultural embodiments that can be shaped through power relationships and material intra-actions. In this we find costume at various points able to either embolden or challenge the socio-political status quo.

The intention of writing CiP was to problematise the practice of costuming performance while advancing the visibility of the work of costume, neglected by scholarship (Monks 2010, Barbieri 2012), and highlighting its performative, cultural and societal agency. One of the

⁴ The year of all CiP citations is 2017

⁵ Amongst Trimingham’s most directly relevant research to her contribution to CiP is, *The Theatre of the Bauhaus: The Modern and Postmodern Stage of Oskar Schlemmer* (2011). She has also written on scenography, puppetry, costume and autism as well as on affect and practice as research.

⁶ In the Acknowledgements published in CiP, Trimingham’s contribution - including and beyond her chapter - is recognised in the following terms: ‘[Trimingham] has been involved in this project since 2012 and has been an unwavering source of enormous wisdom in our many conversations around costume. Her reading of the first drafts of individual chapters has provided intellectually rigorous questioning that has been invigorating as much as it has been challenging.’(CiP, xix)

threads I weave into the discussion in CiP and by extension this thesis, and that drives my research in costume, is the reclaiming of the subject through the expert and labour-intensive nature of the practice of costume, a predominantly female work force that remains too often invisible and undervalued (Kodicek, 2017⁷, Barbieri 2012 & 2020, Landis 2016). In a timespan that includes ancient Greek choruses, Renaissance opera choruses, 19th century *ballets blanc*, and contemporary dance, Chapter 2, 'Costuming of Choruses: Spectacle and the Social Landscape on Stage' (CiP, p. 29-58), evidences the quantity and quality of labour in costuming multitudes of performing bodies. As CiP makes evident, through its efficacy, costume work can be instrumental in promoting, via multiple human bodies on stage, hegemonic perspectives and exploitative representations to a co-present audience. Multitudes of bodies through costume can be rendered readable, engaging, spectacular, abject, and much else, and can hold real power through embodiments and representations of ways of being in the world. The reading across the chapters from post-colonial and new materialist feminist positions afforded by this thesis highlights oppression, resistance and liberation. As bell hooks wrote, 'feminism, as liberation struggle, must exist *apart from* and *as part of* the larger struggle to eradicate domination in all forms' (1989:22, my italics). The engagement of gendered discourse through costume goes beyond representation and embodiment, to involve sociocultural and political relationalities as 'gender ideology permeates deeply in every other ideological system' (20, 1996, Linda Martin Alcoff).

⁷ Since 2017, costume designer and supervisor Catherine Kodicek, writes regularly for The Stage advocating the rights of costume workers and other groups concerned whose reflections are from a 'backstage' position. Kodicek 2017 is the first of several and on-going articulations of working conditions that underscore the significance of a largely 'unseen', though critical workforce.

While Chapter 2 demonstrates the dramaturgical and societal costumed action of choruses, costume's instrumentality in wider concerns and contexts is evident throughout the chapters. In the first 'The First Costume: Ritual and Reinvention' (pp 1- 28), costume as liminal materiality exposes changing masculinities through hybridity in Europe, in embodiments of the satyr across time. Liminality created in relation to geo-cultural situated performance practices in post-coloniality between Asia and Europe, is also discussed in Chapter 1, and it will be furthered in this thesis via cultural appropriation, as costume is seen to become a means to re-colonise. Chapter 3, 'The Grotesque Costume: The Comical and Conflicted 'Other' Body' (pp. 59 – 93) defines a Bakhtinian carnivalesque costuming that is satirical and subversive, othering the wearer, and that can become a medium for resistance to autocratic structures, a relationship demonstrated by the absurd costume phalluses in Aristophanes' comedies that contribute a critique of the power of phallogentric Athenian society (CiP, p. 63-64). However, the transformative and immersive material agency articulated through the feminine sublime discussed in Chapter 4, 'The Flight off the Pedestal: A Sublime Second Skin' (CiP, pp. 95-136), is the initial impetus for a feminist reading of costume via CiP that will selectively engage with related performances in other chapters. Presenting the feminine sublime as the loss of the self into a material unlimited boundlessness, through a dispersal or surrender of the self into a site of self-empowerment (CiP, p. 96), this thesis will also further expand on how such Euro-American feminist emancipation was driven from within colonialist and racist, socio-political and cultural structures.

Empathy with matter through costume in Chapter 5, 'Agency and Empathy: Artists Touch the Body'(CiP, pp. 137-166) by Melissa Trimmingham, demonstrates the expressive agency of costume in revolutionary avant-garde performance. Focused on artists' costume work from

pre-annexation Austria and post-revolutionary Russia, it positions costume as radical performance in which performing bodies are absorbed into artworks. Chapter 6, 'A Different Performativity: Society, Culture and History on Stage', (CiP, pp. 167-211) questions notions of historical correctness and 'authentic' costumes utilised as instructive of certain versions of history, instrumental in entrenching nationalistic and patriarchal embodiments of privilege. Specifically looking at 19th century and early 20th century colonial Britain supports this thesis' intention to discuss costume in relation to histories of colonialism. Through contemporary designers' work, the chapter concludes the book, proposing a different type of authenticity, one that addresses the here and now of the performance and of the audience first and foremost in the embodiment of renewal and invention that costume can enable. In this thesis we shall see how this aligns with reading of histories and of historical images (and performances) from Baradian, Benjaminian and Warburgian perspectives.

CiP aimed to advance knowledge by articulating some of the complex agencies engendered through costume while redressing scholarship neglect, particularly in relation to political and ethical considerations. Through multiple constructs in CiP's chapters, costume emerges as agential matter⁸ in performance, an idea that was further theorised in the recent article 'The Scenographic, Costumed Chorus, Agency and the Performance of Matter: A New Materialist Approach to Costume' (Barbieri and Crawley, 2019), which was amongst the first framings of

⁸ I published initially about the concept of the agency of costume in Barbieri 2012, available on line and in relation to my research in the archive. In CiP this concept translates in 'co-authoring', costume co-authoring of the performance (2017: 22-23 and 2016: 206) drawing from my research presentation 2011 'Making Performance out of Costume - Costume as pre-existent to and prefiguring of performance' at the Authoring Theatre Conference at Central School of Speech and Drama (see CV, appendix 2).

costume through a new materialist theoretical lens. The concluding part of this thesis will enable further grounding in feminist new materialist thought in which notions of ethics and responsibility through matter entangle with ecological concerns.

Read together with the practice-centred chapter 'Body as the Matter of Costume: a Phenomenological Practice' (Barbieri 2020), that draws from CiP as well as from the relationship between Lecoq training, Butoh and phenomenology, the dependence of human agencies on material forces leads this thesis to enquire as to what extent costume may have always been more-than-human in its ability to channel embodiment processes through performing and worn materialities. Given costume's corporeal relational performativity, this thesis may provide useful grounds for an exploration of ideas around more-than-human feminist embodied thinking and practice.

As noted above, the monograph itself addresses a feminist, new materialist ontology in a mostly contingent and implicit manner. Articulating and expanding the relational ontologies that gave impetus to the development of this text intends to engender the transferability of the research and its future applications to adjacent and overlapping contexts and fields of research, particularly in relation to social and ecological justice through which performance, and thinking through performance, can intervene.

Critical to its development is the situated knowledge of its author, a seasoned performance design practitioner, academic and scholar. I have sought, via devising pedagogies and practice methodologies, as well as through research publishing, to evolve and elevate discourses around costume, substantially contributing to the transformation of its practices over a

period of twenty years, in particularly through the graduates of the courses I established⁹ as well as through research degree study.

The cross-disciplinary, relational nature of costuming as subject of research, that CiP has conveyed as both intersubjective processes and collaborative practices, reflects the energy of an emergent international community of researchers¹⁰ to whom *Studies in Costume and Performance*, the research journal I founded with Kate Dorney¹¹, Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) and Sofia Pantouvaki (Aalto University) in 2016, offers a space for publishing. Questions that are developed in this thesis have found initial articulation in the unpublished conversations that, since the book's publication in 2017, have followed my research presentations and which are held within this nascent community of research that gathers internationally¹². This thesis will draw attention to questions that, from these research encounters¹³, propel forward my theorising around costume in this thesis.

⁹ See relevant section in the appended CV, these includes courses validated in two institutions and at graduate and post-graduate level, as well as advancing research through research degree level study.

¹⁰ Fostered in research activities at Prague Quadrennials costume gatherings, Extreme Costume biannual conferences and exhibitions, World Stage Design exhibitions and OISTAT Costume Design working group activities.

¹¹ Now at Manchester University, Dorney was senior curator of performance, leaving her editorial in SCP position to edit *Studies in Theatre and Performance*. She was replaced by Susan Osmond (NIDA, Australia).

¹² The most significant research gathering of costume researchers is Critical Costume, founded by Rachel Hann and Sidsel Bech in 2013 at Hedge Hill University (Hann and Bech, 2014) and now run by Sofia Pantouvaki from Aalto University, which provides a dedicated biannual conference and exhibition event.

¹³ See significant presentation around CiP, in the CV in appendix 2 appended to this thesis, especially since its publication in 2017, most critically World Stage Design in 2017, in which intercultural theory was presented in relation to CiP and costume, and Critical Costume 2020, conference talk available online, on the entanglements of ethics and my experimental costume practice also included in the concomitant exhibition.

If the publishing and research dissemination projects discussed above emerged from the writing of CiP, the latter also benefited from previous research undertaken in the archive, in the rehearsal room and through pedagogic developments.

The substantial period of immersive archival research in the theatre and performance archive at the V&A was crucial to the writing of CiP as it contains extant costumes as performance remains. CiP was written as part of the V&A / LCF Joint Fellowship, awarded for the period between 2010-2014, permitting me access to an archive in which an estimated 20,000 costume elements are held. I applied methods developed through the direct encounters between researchers (mostly practice-based) and costumes documented in the *Encounters in the Archive* research project (Barbieri et al, 2011-3). These encounters were predicated on the interaction between archived costume and researcher, in ways that informed subsequent works¹⁴. The project methodology, directed towards seeking the performativity of costume in the archive, was discussed in the article 'Performativity and the Historical Body, detecting performance through the archived costume' (Barbieri, 2013). In the *Encounters in the Archive* research, body-less costumes as both fragments of past performances *and* instigator of new ones, engaged embodied and inventive responses to their material performance from the research participants¹⁵. An entanglement of Jules Prown's material culture analysis (Prown, 1980 and 1982) which in this article becomes conversant with perception and performative materiality, provided a grounding for claims around the performativity of costume matter that remain implicit in CiP, and that I shall extend via new materialism in Part 3 of this thesis.

¹⁴ Documented in *Re-encounters* (Barbieri 2012)

<https://ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk/id/eprint/10896/1/Re-Encounters.pdf>

¹⁵ See the *Encounters in the Archive* film <http://www.encountersinthearchive.com/film/>

Understandings of costume as material embodiment, gesture and movement were shaped in a practice of devising-through-costume workshop settings, in relation to Jacques Lecoq's Laboratoire d'Étude du Mouvement (Barbieri, 2006, 2007, 2012a, 2020). Such direct somatic engagement via intertwinings of perception and materiality drove the development of the MA Costume Design for Performance at London College of Fashion in 2006. The generative tension between phenomenology, meaning-making processes and new materialisms that informs my teaching – and that I believe is implicit to costume work - shaped the productive space that informed the writing of CiP as well as this thesis.

Structure of the thesis:

Having introduced CiP, its context and its intentions, this thesis divides into three parts; the first on methodologies, and the second on the feminism and post-colonial entanglements read through CiP, followed by a Part 3 on how standpoints explored in such analysis, support the development of a theorising of costume as neo-materialist. The exploration of methodologies that sustained CiP is discussed in Part 1, '*Costume in Performance* and meaning-making methodologies'. These enable, in Part 2, a feminism and post-colonial reading across the chapters, focusing initially on Chapter 4 of CiP. Similarly, CiP's structuring conception of time aligns with new materialist thinking of the final section, which is followed by the conclusion highlighting the potential application of this research.

The initial section of Part 1, '*Costume histories: monumentalising practices*', provides a critique of established approaches to history perceived through costume. This is followed by

‘Constellations of past and present costumes’ on time and the relationship between history and the here-and-now vis-à-vis extant archived costumes, as well as documentation of live performances, to expose theories that underpinned CiP in its exploration of costume. The final section of Part 1, ‘Decolonising costume through the archive’, is focused on the site of the research, the V&A theatre and performance archive, and in relation to the feminist, post-colonial frame of Part 2. This brings into focus the relevance of this research, as the archive exposes its imperialist legacies within a contemporary global context still marked by colonialism.

The first section of Part 2, ‘The feminine sublime costume and colonial entanglements’, articulating the sublime’s instrumentality in the colonial project, draws attention to how costume materialities direct audience’s sensorial perceiving through excess, creating atmospheres of triumphalism and domination. It is followed by ‘Legacies of staged harems: female bodies as power acquisition’ which demonstrates how bodily materialities established in the 19th century, via show girl costuming, interact with practices of objectification to reinforce hegemonic masculinities’ pursuit of supremacy in very real ways, impacting on the present. Returning to the late 19th, early 20th century, challenges by female dancers at a time of intensified struggle for women’s vote, are at the core of the section ‘Costumed appropriation as emancipation’. Such pursuit of freedoms is complicated by reading it through Spivak’s subaltern framing and cultural appropriation. The final section of Part 2, ‘Performances and costumes supporting rapture from oppression’ focuses specifically on two Black performers, identifying ways in which their costume, and in particular Josephine Baker’s, may lead us onto understanding costume materiality as performative and ethically entangled,

laying the ground for Part 3, 'New materialist costume: hybridity, material-discursive, material-semiotic ethical entanglements.'

Concluding this thesis is a feminist, post-humanist situating of costume in the nascent field of research that has recently embraced notions of costume agency¹⁶. The thesis intends to invite further conversations, practicing and theorising about where and how agency may arise in the blurring of boundaries between the human and the non-human that new materialisms entails, and what ethical implications are embedded in these materialisations.

Part 1 – *Costume in Performance* and meaning-making methodologies.

Costume histories: monumentalising practices.

Costume as material, made and worn to perform, is at the centre of CiP, engaging and connecting examples extracted from a wide range of sources and sites of research. Through repetitions and differences of forms, these residues of performances shape the six distinct definitions of costume that in the CiP chapters lay claim for sociocultural agency. As the

¹⁶ I have written on costume and agency since 2012 ('Encounters in the archive: Reflections on Costume' has a dedicated section to this idea), and presented research around this internationally since 2009, (Scenography Expanded Symposium, Theatre school Amsterdam, see appendix 2, CV) initially around work for my students and later through various research projects starting from *Encounters in the Archive*. This concept that enabled me to lay the ground for further engagements with the archive in an article 2013 and in CiP, as well as advance practice and pedagogy, including 2012a, 2016, and 2020. Wider adoption of the notion of costume agency by the research and practice community is at the core of the latest iteration of Critical Costume Conference, 2020 and concomitant Costume Agency exhibition with *Studies in Costume and Performance* dedicating a whole issue to this event, 6.2, December 2021.

Introduction makes clear (xxii - xxiii), these go beyond the costume-objects found in the V&A archive, to include performances analysed in scholarship and performers' biographies, those observed and responded to live, analysed in interviews with practitioners, described in critical reception, captured in production photographs, and represented in drawings, paintings, manuscripts, prints, artefacts and sculptures. Within each chapter, meaning emerges through the differences that could be detected *in between* similar types of costume shapes as temporal fragments of performances connecting across time, geographical locations and forms of performance.

A critical matter to costume is the concept of 'the past', of historical time, which is crucial both in terms of representation and of meaning-making in CiP. In this section I discuss the significance of time and the relationship between history and the here-and-now, vis-à-vis extant costumes from the archive to expose the methodology that underpinned CiP and which remained largely implicit in the book. While not discussed in the introduction, here it will support the intention of the tracing of feminist, post-colonial and new materialist positions through CiP.

The conception of historical time, much like the costume itself, may be understood as matter to be actively engaged with, in the present, rather than as a passive and fixed, marking out of its history. In CiP, the archive and the images that emerged from it, provided instead a space from where to reconfigure meaningful and active connections through time, shaping relationship between distinct historical moments.

Placing costume at the centre, while reading from the margins of various histories where this neglected subject finds itself¹⁷, an objective of CiP's structure was to propose an alternative approach to expected chronologies of drama, timelines normatively devised around texts and their authors, other influential figures or sites of production. Such probing in CiP therefore also challenges cultural and scholarly performance hierarches, as by travelling between wearing bodies¹⁸ it makes connections between dance, opera, dramatic theatre, vaudeville, pantomime, performance art, ritual performance, circus and street performance. As we shall see, such meaningful connections regardless of high or low culture was implicitly grounded in methodological dynamics of Warburg and Benjamin's writings.

In her summary of sources for research in costume in 'Writing about Costume' (2014 p 7- 18, in Maclaurin and Monks 2014) Maclaurin conflates costume with historical fashion by foregrounding fashion scholars' influential texts, reflecting normative expectations and canonical assumptions that have placed limits on the study of costume for performance over decades if not centuries¹⁹ as in this association, costume remains in the shadows. While this thesis finds connections with fashion studies through selected critical perspectives²⁰, I

¹⁷ As alluded to in CiP's introduction, this research in costume requires the exceeding of disciplinary boundaries defined in existing approaches, given the range of disciplines that can intersect through it, including performance studies, dress history, anthropology, social sciences, philosophy, art history, material culture, literary criticism, feminism and gender studies (CiP, p. xxii-xxv).

¹⁸ Rabelhofer (*Early Stuart Masque*, 2006) cited in chapter 1, for example, notes how court masque costumes worn in royals and courtiers' performance could be also used on the 'mercenary stage', to the horror of Queen Henrietta Maria (CiP, p. 8)

¹⁹ Barbieri and Pantouvaki, 2016, the launch editorial for *Studies in Costume and Performance*, points to several factors as a reason for this, not least amongst them is that the word costume itself is a term also used to define historical dress.

²⁰ In this section, through Caroline Evans's readings of Warburg and Benjamin, later via Jane Tynan's readings of Foucault. Several of the critical feminist and post-colonial thinkers

maintain in CiP's introduction that costume needs a much wider interdisciplinary engagement in the development of its own scholarship. Like CiP, this thesis thinks through the concepts evoked in critical alignments and material assemblages rather than through costume-as-timeline constructs.

The staple of the study of history of dress as timeline, that commonly orders sequencing of historical forms by sanitising them in unchallenging forms, remains a dominant force in teaching and publishing around practice. One such example is *Costume 1066 to Present* by costume designer John Peacock, reprinted multiple times since being first published in 1986. It presents fixed lines of diagrammatical, stylised, elegant depictions of historical dress on slim white bodies. Such approach to historical dress bolsters an aesthetics of nostalgia that ignores that costume can exist as part of registers of commodification and domination.

As demonstrated in CiP, it can be instrumental in the entrenchment of fictionalised histories aimed at building heroic ethnonational pasts to uphold specific political and cultural agendas. In Chapter 6, claims of accurate reproduction of hierarchies, mythologizing an English past through Shakespearean history plays' characters are argued to have been amongst the underpinnings of Victorian racial and cultural superiority at a time of maximum colonial expansion. CiP, citing theatre historians Alicia Finkel (1996), Stephen Orgel (2007) and Richard Schoch (1998), traces this approach to influential published designs by antiquarian Planché in the 1820s (CiP, pp. 177-9), replicated in many productions since. In Planché productions' programmes statues, effigies and monuments are cited as sources for his designs.

engaged in this thesis are significantly influential in advancements across several different fields, including fashion studies and performance studies.

Throughout and beyond the long 19th century, a ‘monumentalizing’ of Britain’s historical past into the creation myth of a superior people - for example via Shakespeare’s *King John* and the Magna Carta - reinforced narratives around a historical destiny to conquer the world. Disseminated in large scale spectacular theatrical productions, they instructed their audiences on exalted versions of history.

The legacy of a monument-based narration of history is pertinently felt in the present through the statues of figures identified as perpetrators of oppression, abduction, enslavement and trade of colonised people. In relation to the recent toppling of slave trader Edward Colston’s statue in Bristol,²¹ Black history scholar Gary Younge concludes that all monuments present an oversimplification of history fixed into permanence as ‘[t]his statue obsession mistakes adulation for history, history for heritage and heritage for memory. It attempts to detach the past from the present, the present from morality, and morality from responsibility’ (2021).

Performances of the history plays that followed Planché’s antiquarian approach across the decades embed and amplify a sanitised and instrumentalised understanding of history akin to that of statues on pedestals. Being fixed, in presumed historically authentic terms, can place Shakespearean characters, like statutes, ‘beyond interpretation, investigation and critique’ (Younge, 2021) as canons are upheld through recurring performance repetitions (Järvinen, 2020, also Silver and Terraciano, 2019). A change of costume or even a change of performer – as we shall see – can emboldened a change of culture through performance

²¹ The statue of Edward Colston (1636-1721) was erected in 1895, at the height of imperialistic expansion, part of cultural colonial triumphalism that is discussed in Chapter 4 and 6 of CiP.

which remains urgent as ‘racial inequality, white supremacy, imperialism, colonialism and slavery’, Younge writes, ‘are still very much with us’ (2021).

The fixing of Shakespeare’s characters through historically ‘authentic’ costume as ‘permanent statement of fact’ is ongoing. Most recently *Shakespearean Wig Styling, a practical guide to wig making for 1500 and 1600s* (Leedham & Leedham, 2021) promises ‘detailed historical guidance [...] on a range of Shakespearean archetypal characters.’ Such misplaced notion of ‘archetypal characters’²² could not account for Anne Boleyn played by Black British actress Jodie Turner-Smith in 2020 on the eponymous ITV series. Her bold historic-contemporary costuming and hair challenged preconceptions of history that envisage an entirely white Britain prior to the Windrush (Olusoga, 2016, and Otele 2020). Black history scholar Olivette Otele, author of *Black Europeans* (2020) in her review of the Anne Boleyn ITV series writes that Turner-Smith’s costumes and the production itself engage the imagination beyond habitual glossing over of enslavement and its consequences, while Boleyn image proposes alternative representations of black women. Otele reminds us that it was Elizabeth I that started the slave trade in Britain. Her mother Anne Boleyn, being black makes it possible to speculate on the possibilities of different histories (Otele, 2021)²³. If costume - alongside with casting - can create monument-like embodiments that forego a sense of responsibility to the present as well as to the past, it can also do the opposite: it can disrupt expectations, and embody new ones, through its relationship with performers’ own bodies and the here and

²² Fixing archetypes as historical period markers denies timelessness to the notion of archetype, whether in the terms defined by Jung (1969) or as canonical masked characters from performance traditions from across the world that also transcend specific historical periods or authors (see *commendia* in CiP’s Chapter 3, and the second half of Chapter 1, including *Les Atrides*)

²³ In the same article, Otele notes that such meaningful casting and design choices have already taken place in theatre, the series made them available to a wider audience.

now of the performance. In this case, in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd and other Black victims of police violence that gave rise to the BLM movement, different readings of histories are devised through costume and performance that address the geopolitical and sociocultural present through the concept of 'spacetimemattering' that we will discuss next.

Constellations of past and present costumes

From a feminist new materialist perspective, philosopher of physics Karen Barad has argued for a concept of time informed by quantum physics, 'spacetimemattering', as fixed spatial and temporal 'boundaries don't hold; times, places, beings bleed through one another' (2014, p. 179). The performance of matter itself challenges linear understandings of time. In this context 'there is no moving beyond, no leaving the 'old' behind' (2014, p.168). Engaging with historical material is not a case of revisiting a fixed historical epoch, performance or figure, as 'the past was never simply there to begin with, and the future is not simply what will unfold, rather the "past" and the "future" are reworked and enfolded through the iterative practices of spacetimemattering' (2010, p. 260), as Barad proposes. Applying quantum physics to understanding time, their furthering of physicist Niels Bohr's empirical experiments concludes that the atom's 'identity, its ontology, is never fixed, but is always open to future and past reworkings' (2011, 142). Barad reads these scientific findings through Derrida's deconstructionist *Margins of Philosophy* (1982) and the notion that the 'past has never been present'²⁴. Derrida elaborates that the concern 'is not with horizons of modified – past or future – presents, but with a "past" that has never been present, and which never will be, whose future to come will never be a production or a reproduction in the form of presence'

²⁴ Derrida credits Emmanuel Levinas with the 'formula' that 'the past has never been present' (p.21, 1982).

(1982, p. 21). Resisting the authoritative presence of an established past while simultaneously enmeshed in the archive, the performance of costume matter in CiP is predicated on past *as* present. Derrida, in *Archive Fever* (1998), explains that in this a responsibility for the future is also implicated as ‘the question of the archive is not, we repeat, a question of the past. [...]. It is a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow’ (1998, p. 36). The accounting of costume, whether from historical productions through the archive or in live performance in its possibilities of becomings, is entangled with ethical concerns precisely because of a responsibility for present, past and future.

While emerging from quantum physics, Barad’s ongoing development of concepts of time engages with the deconstructed temporalities defined by Derrida but also with the inseparability of time and a drive for justice they read in Benjamin (Barad, 2017: 21). The relationships between past, present, and future in Benjamin’s notion of *Tigersprung* (tiger’s leap) are articulated in *Arcades Project* (Benjamin, 1999), which describe leaps across moments in time, to reflect indeterminate and ever-changing presents. In shaping understandings in such momentary manner, ‘every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably’ (Benjamin, 1969, p. 255). Such concern with images and the now can also be applied to performance and costume²⁵.

²⁵ Performance scholar Mischa Twitchin writing on *The Theatre of Death*, brings attention to Benjamin in relation to theatre, specifically Benjamin’s call for a ‘fresh approach to the grand old opportunity of theatre – namely, to the focus on the people who are present’ (Benjamin, 2005, cited in Twitchin, 2013: 56, see also Twitchin, 2016)

Intending to create critical constellations of past and present, in a connecting across through costume, supported the way meanings was formed in the CiP chapters. Rather than a passive understanding of 'empty' history, Benjamin 'blasts open the continuum of history' that may offer 'a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past' (1969, p. 263), in a discontinuity enabled by the engagement with 'the thick-now of this moment' (Barad, 2017 p. 22). In the context of forming critical meaning through multiple images in what Benjamin calls 'constellations' in the present, 'image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation.' (Benjamin,1999, p. 462). Constellations of moments in costume shaped the six chapters of CiP, together with images that flashed 'with the now' at the time of writing CiP continue to do so in this second reading. Possibly with more urgency however, while writing this thesis, images and performances create new constellations around feminist, post-colonial and new materialism thought.

Whilst no other book on costume for performance written in English has dealt with the potentialities of a concept of time that 'blasts open the continuum of history', constructing new stories and meanings from constellations of past images that make sense in the present, fashion scholarship has recognised the creative and theoretical potential of Benjamin's ideas. His death in 1940 while escaping Nazi persecution meant that the unfinished *Arcades Project* appeared in a complete English translation only in 1999. Drawing from it, fashion scholar Ulrich Lehmann interprets Benjamin's concept of time as 'fragmented periods that may relate independently to each other' (2000, xxi), while Caroline Evans, in *Time in Fashion* (2020)

has recently revisited²⁶ Benjamin's concept of time, which she first engaged with in *Fashion at the Edge* (2003), a book that greatly influenced the discontinuity of time in the experimental fashion exhibitions of Judith Clark (Crawley & Barbieri, 2013 and Pantouvaki and Barbieri, 2014) that in turn impacted on CiP's methods. More on this later. A significant example of temporal discontinuity on stage through costume cited in CiP is the only surviving image believed to be from a production by Shakespeare, Henry Peacham's 1614 drawing considered to be of a scene from *Titus Andronicus* (CiP, 178). It depicts characters in costumes in a mix of ancient Roman garb with contemporaneous early 17th century Britain. One of the seven character depicted appears to be a black performer, recalling the studies, mentioned above, by Olusoga (2016) and Otele (2020), on the established presence of black people in Britain and Europe that challenge the whiteness of European studies of histories. A mixing of race and historical period, such as noted above in the casting of Anne Boleyn, is not what Planché and his contemporary successors would consider Shakespearean. However, Peacham's 1614 drawing as the only potential extant visual record of a Shakespearean production, demonstrates a costuming that in CiP is aligned with the authenticity of the here-and-now impact of the carnivalesque rather than with displaced notion of historical accuracy (CiP p. 178).

In their reading of Benjamin, Barad draws both on queer theorist Judith Butler and physics, applying a 'diffractive' methodology through which they read insights and approaches – here from philosophy, gender studies and quantum physics - through one another rather than against each other, to make evident the 'always already entanglements of specific ideas in

²⁶ With Alessandra Vaccari, Evans and Vaccari, eds., 2020. *Time in Fashion: Industrial, Antilinear and Uchronic Temporalities*. Bloomsbury.

their materiality' (Barad, 2017b p.64). In the reconfiguring of costumes through an indeterminate perception of past and present, ideas that are specific to their materiality come to the fore, in an open-ended process that enables the tracing of entanglement of meanings and ideas.

In order for costume stories to 'matter', in Haraway's terms²⁷, to tell stories that matter while focusing on its material performative coming into being (2016), tangible costumes exceed semiotic and representational roles (Barthes, 1955), or their activities as extensions of the actor's performance (Monks, 2010). CiP considers costume as matter first that may account for its enacting through a collapsing of temporal and geographical distances. This is particularly evident in the way images - one-hundred and seventy-eight of them²⁸ - together with descriptive analyses, are critical to CiP's theorising of costume, in a tracing of 'mattering' – as its material coming into being - into 'constellations'. These images 'flash up' in relation to one another, enabling the channelling of the meanings they revealed. In composing ideas for chapters, while excluding several other images, the questions I asked as a design and performance practitioner, were around the performative materiality of costume objects and of the performance they instigated. Discussing Benjamin's use of objects in his writing, Barad notes that 'objects are not mere metaphors for Benjamin. They are instances of sensuous materiality' (Barad, 2017, p.30). The sensuous and affecting costume objects in CiP demanded care and detailed observation as much as their performances with bodies and spaces. Such care precedes and exceeds the performance in a new materialist reading of

²⁷ Haraway uses stories and figures to engage with and value matter and consider it through processes of becoming, as 'mattering'. More on this in Part 3.

²⁸ V&A images account for more than half of the images in the book.

costume, rendering it accountable in playing its part beyond the moment of its enacting with the performer, as we shall see in Part 3 of this thesis.

One way in which costume may float away from the performance and impact beyond it, is as recorded and transmitted action, a process that renders it a means through which the pathos of gesture can be conveyed. Performance scholar Kathleen Gough explains the relationship between performing bodies and material records of performance documented through images in relation to Richard Schechner's reliance on strips of film to animate 'restorative behaviour' as repeated and rehearsed action (Gough, 2012). The distinction between restored behaviour as 'strips of film' and sociologist Irvin Goffman's 'strips of action' (1974) as interpersonal and unique everyday moments, is critical to performance studies. In Schechner's words, such performed actions as 'strips of film' acquire 'a life of their own' (Schechner, 1985, p.35) through repetition in different contexts²⁹ as such 'strips', or records of costume and performance, may find connections with others independently from their original context to shape new meanings. Gough surmises that for art historian Aby Warburg (1866-1929)³⁰, anticipating Schechner's performance studies methods through his study of gesture and movement in artistic representation, 'embodied knowledge passes through

²⁹ The potential for cultural appropriation of Schechner's is identified by dance scholar Olivia Whitmer (2004) in 'Dancing the past into the Present: Ruth St Denis and Bharatanatyam' as 'restored behaviour' enacts St Denis' imitation of nautch dances.

³⁰ Warburg could be further connected to embodiment research methods around costume given the grounding his methods offer. As Katritzky writes, neither 'Warburg's contribution to laying the foundations of theatre iconography as a systematic research procedure, based on art historical techniques, nor the innovative comparative theatre iconographical methodologies he pioneered, have received serious critical attention outside the field of Renaissance festival studies.' (Katritzky, 2009, p.160) particularly in relation to his writing on the costumes of the Florentine Intermedi (Warburg, 1895). However, this thesis is not focused on iconography and this section draws attention to methods underpinning CiP.

objects, and then back to bodies, and then back to objects, and so on' (Gough 2012, p. 116) making connections between objects and bodies across time. In Warburg's unfinished *Mnemosyne Atlas*, embodied memory works across arrangements of visual fragments, 'gestural correspondences between historical and contemporary images' (Gough, 2012: 115) animate each other³¹. These assemblages of objects, seemingly unconnected, immobile and silent in isolation, acquire voice and movement in relation to one another. In a similar manner, objects and images, via bodies, become agentially interconnected in meaning making processes that shaped the chapters of CiP.

Alongside Benjamin's constellations, the methodology of *Mnemosyne Atlas*, has provided grounding for Judith Clark's experimental exhibition making, amongst the first to present historical dress as performative in relationships to space and viewers. A previous holder of the joint V&A / LCF fellowship, Clarke produces non-linear, spatial and curatorial associations in her engagement with historical fashion in exhibitions such as *Spectres: When Fashion Looks back* (V&A, 2005) and *Concise Dictionary of Dress* (V&A, Clark and Phillips, 2010). As part of the methodological preparation for researching CiP, her transformative approach to the display of historical dress was analysed in two co-authored texts 'Making things present: Exhibition-maker Judith Clark and the layered meanings of historical dress in the here and now' (Pantouvaki and Barbieri, 2014), and 'Dress, time, and space: Expanding the field through exhibition making' (Crawley and Barbieri, 2013). These emerged from a series of

³¹ For performance scholar Mischa Twitchin it is emotion 'which informs the very concept of theatre' (2013:43), the Warburgian concept of 'pathos formulae', through gesture, is at the core of the cultural memory that connects images through time (Twitchin, 2013, 2016). Via Warburg (1866-1929), the relationships created across images and objects - suggests dance scholar Rachel Fensham whose research has focused on the archive of dance - provides 'a historical precedent for the 'image in motion' within an archive of diverse objects' (2013:150) that transverse a number of previously unrelated scholarly disciplines.

interviews held with Clark in 2011. Clark's bold Benjaminian and Warburgian methodology³² and the critical and active relationality between images, objects, bodies, histories and the present, further solidified the method of structuring CiP's chapters as Benjaminian constellations around costume.

Parallels can therefore be drawn here between practices. Not unlike the curatorial impetus, an instinctive understanding of images and matter as active, relational and embodied is implicit to my practice as scenographer and costume designer. Often preceding drawing processes, carefully and iteratively curated constellations of images can become the centre around which performance ideas emerge, shared with collaborators in creative interactions. Such perceiving through images, materials and objects engages the sentient, present body, of the costume designer (Barbieri, 2020) who is, in CiP's concluding section, focused on the work of five ground-breaking designers, very much 'our contemporaries' as Jan Kott would have it³³ engaging in historical works. The intentions to subvert historical timelines to challenge limited understandings of costume for performance found similarities with the methodology of exhibition making by Clark. Equally, considering time from the perspective of quantum physics alongside costumes on rails, as *tigersprung* between moments that permit connections between bodies across time, may, as in *Mnemosyne Atlas* and constellations, align with costume design predicated on authentic, felt and meaningful responses in the here and now.

³² This approach was criticised by established dress historians such as Lou Taylor when first deployed, in 2005 - see Pantouvaki and Barbieri 2014 - but has since been applied more widely through Clark's own practice and that of her students as she co-founded, with Amy de la Haye, the MA in Fashion Curation at London College of Fashion, as well as the Centre for Fashion Curation soon after her first ground-breaking exhibition.

³³ Shakespeare Our Contemporary (1964) which forms the basis for

Decolonising costume through the archive

The deconstructing of passive historical timelines in favour of an approach that identifies invisible connections is required in the critical engagement with the main site of my research, particularly via an anti-colonial, feminist perspective that I found was inescapable when engaging with Eurocentric historical archives³⁴. Most of my time researching and writing CiP was spent in the Research Department of the V&A, and more than half of examples of costumes in CiP are drawn from its vast Theatre and Performance archives and collection.

While the immersion in this phenomenal space of research provided extraordinary resources without which CiP would not have materialised, its enormous archive can also be a demonstration of imperial cultural privilege. Particularly from the perspective of colonised and displaced people. As Ariella Aisha Azoulay writes, museum and archives are institutions predicated on the destruction of existing worlds, 'which could not have been pursued if the separation between people and their objects, and between people and their world, had not already been institutionalised' (Azoulay, 2019: 128)³⁵.

³⁴ Decolonised perspectives on costume that have emerged recently include Carringer (2018), Osmond (2020), Järvinen (2020, 2020a and 2021), Chatterjee (2020), and Collett (2022).

³⁵ See also Homi Bhabha's seminal essay 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse' (1994) on the engagement of the colonised with the colonizers' institutions and the ambivalence and double standard this reveals, which undermines colonialism.

A national institution, the V&A was established at the height of the British Empire in 1852, with the aim to ‘to educate designers, manufacturers and the public in art and design’³⁶, following Britain’s 1851 Great Exhibition in Crystal Palace, London. As Carol Ann Dixon writes in her PhD thesis *The ‘othering’ of Africa and its Diaspora in Museum Practices*, the Great Exhibition was the first large-scale international event staged by a European colonial power to celebrate imperialist expansionism, articulating and legitimising the othering of colonised people (Dixon, 2016:19). The height of colonial expansion was also when the monumentalising of costume through Planché’s antiquarian design was instructing British audiences on a mythologised past through Shakespeare’s history plays’ that implicitly legitimised British exceptionalism. Both the latter and the Great Exhibition contributed to engraining a racial superiority that still upholds the obfuscation of the brutality of colonialism, finally beginning to be eroded by sustained scholarly and non-scholarly publishing by anti-colonial scholars – W. E. B. De Bois, Eric Williams, Paul Gilroy, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, David Olusoga, Olivette Otele, Gary Younge, and several others – with greater urgency since the killing of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement.

In museums this transformation is long overdue, as racist and colonial legacies are present not only in collecting strategies, but also in the universalising and canonising of African Art that Euro-American art institutions impose on contemporary conceptual African artists (Twitchin, 2018). Like certain other institutions in Britain and Europe, the V&A is beginning to engage with processes of decolonisation, for example certain collected objects, the provenance of which may be marked by colonial looting, are set for restitution (Hunt 2019,

³⁶ <https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/building-the-museum#slideshow=31131014&slide=0>

Quinn 2021), whilst a curator post is being created specifically to address Africa and Diaspora in relation to performance³⁷, and the exhibition *Africa Fashion* is due to open at the V&A in June 2022.

Representations of female bodies played their part in the colonial project, not least the marble, engraved and printed Britannias, imperial embodiments of the goddess Athena as both a weaponised *and* civilizing presence from the pantheon of ancient Greek culture, underscoring an assumed superiority to colonised cultures by the adoption of classical iconography that obfuscated the brutality of colonial rule (CiP, p. 96, citing Wilson, 2003). As Marina Warner writes in *Monuments and Maidens*, Britannia presented male agency, later to be transferred to prime minister Margaret Thatcher, that had been channelled in the Thomson and Arne's *Rule Britannia*³⁸, and transcended through her god-likeness the prescribed female containment of Victorian society (1985, p. 124-126). More critically, she was antithetical to the representation of colonised female characters through costume and performance in various 19th century and early 20th century Orientalist productions that will be discussed in Part 2. Donald Preziosi, in *Brain of the Earth Body: Art, Museum and the Phantasm of Modernity* (2003), writes of the hierarchies of aesthetics that enabled colonial Europe through artistic representation and collecting strategies to present itself as the brain of the earth's body. In CiP, particularly in Chapter 4, the body presented in such hierarchies is

³⁷ See appendix 3 for the text of the post advert. This appointment followed the widely reported compulsory redundancies announced in 2021 through which several specialist archivists with extensive knowledge of this vast archive lost their jobs in a restructuring that was opposed by national and international organisations and stakeholders as the loss of expertise is detrimental to research and practice, arguably also damaging processes of decolonisation of the archive the knowledges no longer available to its study.

³⁸ *Rule Britannia*, poem by James Thomson and music by Thomas Arne, first performed in 1740, Warner, 1985, pp46-47.

female, costumed, draped with veils and dancing, often performing a slave or subservient character, in orientalist constructs, which in Part 2 are discussed in relation to the male gaze.

Structural masculinism was engrained in European culture and society well before colonial expansion, impacting on a range of marginalised groups from its very foundations in classical antiquity. In ancient Greek theatre, for example, much like in most public life, women, slaves and foreigners were excluded from the audience (CiP, p.30). Through costume, such masculinist dominance is evident in the fetishizing of the phallus via the satyr in Chapter 1 (CiP, p. 6) while mocking a cartoonish, out-of-control phallus in the Aristophanic comedies as embodiment of the excessive power granted to male citizens of ancient Athens in Chapter 3 (CiP, p. 63). In the layering of critical priorities that underpin but remain mostly underexposed in CiP and come to the fore in this thesis, an inescapable feminist position formed an initial impetus in writing about costume, intersecting with other critical discourses, particularly anti-colonialism. My own feminist sensitivity, emerging from lived experience and situatedness, intersects with anti-racism through the study of costume and performance as we shall see in Part 2, given that costume can be complicit in oppression as much as it can be the means for liberation. The scale and endurance of heteropatriarchal structures makes it clear that feminism and anti-colonialism are on-going projects. A perpetuating of phallogocentrism (Irigaray, 1985, Derrida, 1981), that established the human as male in social relationships, continues to be reflected in global inequalities. In her recent book, Anne Karpf demonstrates how women from the Global South, who have done least to cause climate change, are most affected by it. This is particularly the case in parts of the world where the effects of colonisation persist, channelled through globalisation (Karpf, 2021). Added to which, evidence is emerging of the gendered impact of the current pandemic across the world (Al-

Ali, 2020), whilst the UN has established the disproportionate consequences of armed conflict on women during and after wars (UN Security Council, 2003)³⁹. On a global level, environmental crisis, armed conflict and the effects of the pandemic are causing greater damage to black and brown women in the Global South, in former colonies and developing countries impacted by economic imbalances caused by centuries of exploitation. This aligns colonialism, imperialism and globalisation with racism and the oppression of women in structures of social, cultural and economic disadvantage. Feminism and anti-colonialism are the forces at work in aspects of CiP that I will focus, initially considering performances from the end of the 19th century, at a time when the struggle for women's emancipation was intensifying while European colonial expansion had reached its apex. In Part 2 I will discuss how such emancipation, through costume, became possible specifically because of the costume-based performance practices which European and North American white female performers could culturally appropriate in order to perform transformed (and racialised) femininities. Centred around Chapter 4 of CiP, whilst taking on board selected aspects from other chapters, I will conclude this section by focusing on two Black performers in whose success and emancipation costume played a significant role.

³⁹ 'Women suffer disproportionately during and after war, security council told.' United Nation press release, 29 October 2003 <https://www.un.org/press/en/2003/sc7908.doc.htm>

Part 2 Post-colonial feminism and *Costume in Performance*

The feminine sublime costume and colonial entanglements

Chapter 4 of CiP considers costume from a feminist perspective, addressing performances from the middle of the 19th century to the near-contemporary. In a critical interrogation of the historical entanglement of Western misogyny and colonialism inscribed in culture through costume and performance, the philosophy of the sublime as a specific system of ideas, enables the articulation of performative materiality of costume, and its tactical potential for both subjugation and subversion through plural (mostly in terms of subjugation) and singular (as subversion) female bodies⁴⁰. Titled 'The Flight off the Pedestal: A Sublime Second Skin', it theorises costumed bodies, applying the 'feminine sublime' feminist theory (Freeman, 1995, Battersby, 2007, Wawrzinek, 2008, Yaeger, 1989, Ziarek, 2013) which is further advanced in

⁴⁰ I apply her theories specifically to female performers and the use of their costumes; more broadly Freeman qualification of 'the term "feminine" as that which contests binaries, including a rigid notion of sexual difference that would insist upon separate male and female selves. The appeal of as "feminine sublime" is not to a specifically feminine subjectivity or mode of expression, but rather to that which calls such categories into question.' (p. 9) and '[w]hat is specifically feminine about the feminine sublime is not an assertion of innate sexual difference, but a radical re articulation of the role gender plays in producing the history of discourse on the sublime and the formulation of an alternative position with respect to excess and the possibilities of its figuration' (p. 10)

this thesis addressing Freeman's seminal text⁴¹ in more detail as well as new material (Zylinska, 2001)⁴² and find intersecting points with CiP and post-colonial positions.

Via a re-reading of the poem by Sappho of Lesbos (610-570 BC), drawn from the initial defining of the sublime in classical antiquity in a document presumed to be by Dionysius Longinus (first century AD), the feminine sublime re-defines the sublime away from its distancing transcendence that ultimately legitimised domination, confrontation and ravishment (Freeman, 1995, Battersby, 2007). It also displaces binaries and hierarchies through its challenge to both Longinus' reading of Sappho's poem (Freeman 1995) and to the Kantian and Burkean eighteenth century revival of the sublime that further entrenched gender, class and race exclusivity, particularly for our investigation, through categorising subject (sublime male) and object (idealised female). Usefully for the historical practices' analysis undertaken in this chapter, the feminine sublime, as defined by Freeman, engages materiality, which I translate into an immersion in the materiality of costume, the means for female performers as 'subjects who exert will, even at the cost of self-destruction and thus not merely as victims who are acted upon' (1995, p. 6)⁴³ as opposite to the distancing of the transcendental gaze afforded by the masculinist sublime of the 18th century. Such materiality permits ambiguities to be engaged through conjoining of separate entities (such as costume,

⁴¹ The aim of *The Feminine Sublime* was 'to demonstrate the dominant ideology of misogyny that haunts canonical theories of the sublime and to suggest another mode of envisioning it.' (Freeman, 1995, p. 7)

⁴² Zylinska does not feature in CiP but, alongside other scholars (on the sublime for example these include Labbe, Wittenberg, Baugh, amongst others) she is part of the expanding of theory that this thesis permits.

⁴³ Freeman here writes more widely of literary figures as she draws from 20th century women's fiction to address the danger of the exertion of agency by women, including black women through Toni Morrison *Beloved* around which the concluding chapter is centred.

body and space) addressing 'tension between and the ability to contain extreme opposites, such as terror and pleasure, life and death, infinity and finality' (CiP, p. 96). Its destabilizing of Kant's (1724-1804) and Burke's (1729-1797) complicating of Longinus'⁴⁴ first literary articulation of the sublime, posits a challenge to a philosophical grounding of gender discrimination that underpins Western power asymmetries codified in the ancient classical sublime canon. The feminine sublime in Chapter 4 exposes embedded fault lines and contradictions via costume and performance to expose the readings of female costumed performances that are possible through feminist scholars' advances in the sublime in recent decades.

Rather than the 'ideology of the eminence' expounded by the masculine sublime (Labbe 1998: xxi), as the preserve of the white educated male, European classes, the feminine sublime is 'a reconciling of opposites in which a dispersal of the ego into selflessness [...] acquires an ethical position' (CiP, p. 96). Instead of the masculine proprietary relationship to the landscape (Labbe 1998, p. 37) crucial to colonial dominance (Said, 1978; Wittenberg, 2004)⁴⁵, the feminine sublime, applied to performance, explains female performers used of costume – adapting practices from colonised cultures - as 'spatial, dynamic and material articulation of new femininities' that have contributed to their eventual emancipation (CiP, p. 97). In contrast to Kant's 'free' individual (male, European and educated) with his overseeing, totalising eye, sublimity from the feminine perspective explored in this chapter identifies a

⁴⁴ First translated by Boileau in 1674. Freeman considers other perspectives on the Sublime; for Wordsworth 'the subject who subsumes all experience into an infinitely expanding "I" while Keats and Coleridge's 'individual consciousness is subsumed by the eternal'. Irigaray 'envisions a sublime in which she neither possesses nor merges with the other but attests to a relation with it (p.9).

⁴⁵ Hernmann Wittenberg PhD thesis, *The Sublime, Imperialism and the African Landscape*.

dissolving of bodily experience into materiality that engages alternative modes of being in the world. In opposition to the immobilising pedestal on which objectified female body was placed as 'object of rapture' (Freeman, 1995, p. 3) for the consumption of the male gaze, the feminine sublime, applied to costumed performances, demonstrates how these impacted wider cultural transformations, emboldening modernist perspectives transcending artistic boundaries⁴⁶. In the analysis that follows the platforming of objectified bodies 'packaged' through costume in ravishing spectacles read in the key to the sublime, was part of practices that have upheld and underpinned colonial, supremacist and racist agendas which built on culturally generated gender inequalities.

I will return to the role of costume in reclaiming the stage by women performers. Initially I expand on examples that, at the beginning of Chapter 4, set the scene at the turn of the 20th century, attesting to the instrumentality of multitudes of costumed bodies, ubiquitous in large scale productions as transcendental 'object of rapture' and conduits in entrenching colonial, as well as patriarchal, supremacy. I review three images (4.1, 4.8 and 4.9), visual documents of performance from in the V&A archive, dating between late 19th and early 20th century, to go beyond the analysis offered in CiP by tracing ongoing fault lines in gender politics. Interwoven with examples offered in Chapter 2 'Costuming choruses: spectacle and the social landscape on stage', costume can be found to be on one hand an agent of social transformation and on the other the means through which *en masse* objectification of female bodies is materialised to uphold hegemonic sociocultural structures. As we shall see, these images from the archive, in Benjaminian terms, 'flash up' in ways that can further expose assumptions about women's bodies enduring in contemporary culture.

⁴⁶ Loïe Fuller is strongly identified with Art Nouveaux, and Josephine Baker with Art Deco.

Ravishing spectacles of overabundance that may be considered sublime are illustrated from the audience perspective in prints of performance at the end of the 19th century. Figures 4.3 and 4.5 show legions of female dancers creating spectacular, totalising stage images, filling a snowy mountain landscape (4.3) or a whole stage overflowing with a *corp de ballet* as gigantic dancing orchids, while orchid aerialists crowd the space above them (4.5). The first illustration of the chapter (4.1), however, foregrounds the backstage technology and crews that supported aerialist performers' stage flight. The three opera singers performing the Rhinemaidens of Wagner's *Das Rheingold* in Covent Garden (1907), harnessed to rigging systems while wearing part-women part-fish costumes, are 'swimming' in mid-air as if in the Rhine while being puppeteered by male stage crew (Figure 4.1, CiP p. 98). Wagner's idea of *gesamtkunstwerk*, total artwork in which scenic elements including costumed bodies are combined as greater than the sums of their parts (Baugh, 2017, p. 365), engendered experiences that have been 'linked recurrently with transcendent sublimity' (Hibberd and Staynton: 2020, p. 13). The Rhinemaidens illustration demonstrates the extent to which this early 20th century version of transcendental sublimity relied scenographically on female bodies controlled by stage technology rendered compliant through costume. Holding their legs tightly together while hanging in mid-air was paramount as doing otherwise would dispel scenic illusion, exposing their fishtail costumes as bifurcated (CiP, p. 98). Stagings intent on ravishment such as this, considered through the transcendental sublime, underscore notions

of female bodies expected to be beautiful, never sublime⁴⁷, ciphers in the totality of the stage picture thus contrived by the normatively male 'genius' artist⁴⁸.

More directly implicated in the relationships between overpowering aesthetics and imperialist agendas are the multitudes of costumed dancers who, *en masse*, embodied conquest in orientalist scenic environments. In a popular and spectacular dance adaptation of *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* (1894) at the Alhambra⁴⁹, the finale of which is one of the earliest examples of on-stage photography held by the V&A archives (figure 4.8), flying dancers hold up a drape as a victorious insignia over the plethora of kneeling female bodies in a gesture that is grandly heroic. Orientalised vaguely through plumed headdresses and flowing pre-Raphaelite hair, while wearing a concoction of medieval armour and classical, draped costumes from antiquity, the mass of white female dancers fills the floor of a sumptuously painted representation of an oriental palace, appearing as a European conquering army gathered from the Roman Empire and the crusades. If, in Benjaminian terms, 'the threat' that 'hangs over' is 'that of becoming a tool of the ruling classes' (Benjamin, 1969, p.255), in this case, whether intended or not, the effect that costumes and painted backdrop create is of a mythologised conquest of the Orient, a glorious destiny justifying colonialism.

⁴⁷ See Bainbridge on a broader reading of women's representation through a sublime that, simultaneously, excluded them, 2008:149-150

⁴⁸ See Labbe (1998) for a longer discussion on masculine aesthetics and the exclusion of the female from its own representation, justified through the sublime.

⁴⁹ Alhambra Palace of Variety, Leicester Square London. For more on its archive see Jane Pritchard's 'Archives of Dance: The Alhambra Moul Collection at the Victorian and Albert Museum' (2014).

This was while purportedly presenting an ancient tale from the Arab narrative tradition that had existed for centuries in oral form prior to being transcribed for the first time in 1704⁵⁰.

Two decades later the musical *Chu Chin Cho* (1916-1921) added *chinoiserie* to its Orientalist version of the Arabic-Islamic Ali Baba story, and its West End run lasted longer than any previous musical. Alongside the Orientalist female embodiments found in the gendered spaces of the harems and in the slave market scenes of other Ali Baba stage adaptations, the Houris, (figure 4.9, CiP) were flamboyantly costumed female extras with no spoken parts. Their insertion in this performance was so successful that they were photographed by *Vogue* in 1917 in their orientalist spectacular pastiche costumes. As exposing as they were immobilising, these costumes turned their wearers into ornaments (CiP, p. 107-8).

Drawn from Islamic culture as rewards for male faithfuls reaching of paradise⁵¹, the Houris, even more than the underdressed slave characters resonated with World War One soldiers in the audience on leave from the front, representing rewards in heaven for their perilous existence in the trenches (Everett, 2007, cited in CiP, p. 104). If the thinly veiled and bejewelled slaves' costumes may have loosely referred to performance practices from colonized cultures⁵² such as belly dancing, equally the Houris were objectification of female white bodies in an Orientalist costume concoction. In Said's terms, such imperial perspectives

⁵⁰ *Arabian Nights Tales*, gathered across the Islamic world in its Golden Age (8th to 14th c), see Aboubakr Chraïbi, Galland's "Ali Baba" and other Arabic Versions, pp.159-169, for contemporary impact see: al-Musawi, 2021. *The Arabian Nights in Contemporary World Cultures: Global Commodification, Translation, and the Culture Industry*.

⁵¹ For a reading of the Houris beyond sexual exploitative tropes of colonial performance, see Nerina Rustomji's *The Beauty of the Houri: Heavenly Virgins, Feminine Ideals*. 2021.

⁵² See Brian Singleton's *Oscar Asche, Orientalism, and British Musical Comedy* (2004)

of an imagined Orient were entirely about the colonisers and their own justification of colonialism and war, that exploited colonised cultures while othering them (Said, 1978). Simultaneously, male Oriental characters nurtured their audience's sense of moral and racial superiority through their iniquity, brutality and greed, thus legitimising notions of imperial domination as civilising force.⁵³ As well as immobilised in picturesque visions, or deployed *en masse* in triumphant, orientalist pastiche tableaux, female bodies are found to be materially constructed into exotic alterities, objectified to articulate a white, imperial supremacy that justified war and domination, while the male viewer retained the external, distanced gaze of the transcendental sublime.

In 1902, the influential New York theatre critic⁵⁴ Kobbe, ignoring the obvious expertise of female stage flight dance specialists after attending their rehearsals of *Mr Bluebeard* on tour from London, exalts instead the 'military discipline' of male stage crews, their 'skilful manipulation' and 'geometrical perfection' of what he considered passive and willing female bodies, compliantly child-like, or equated to birds, on whom a corset of wood and iron had been fastened (Kobbe, cited in CiP, 100, see also Chapter 4 note 2, p. 215-6). He praises the dancers' compliance to objectification via the materiality of their harnesses and stage technology. The *New York Times* reviewing the same production from the audience perspective, focuses particular on the spectacle of the multiple displayed female bodies in 'twinkling fleshings' simulating nudity, and, as in *Chu Chin Chow*, in exoticized orientalist costume versions of othered cultures, as 'entrancing, bewildering, blinding, annihilating in its

⁵³ As well as Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (1978). See also Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation* (1996).

⁵⁴ Kobbe's writing, in particular Kobbe's Complete Opera Book has been fundamental to understandings of opera internationally since its writing in 1919.

bursts of splendor' (cited in CiP, p. 101). Via excessive, luxurious, spectacular costume materiality as spoils of colonial conquest worn by orientalised white female bodies over exposing fleshings, a sublime, objectifying experience is manufactured.

One of this thesis' objectives in its analysis of CiP is to expose more-than-human ethical entanglements in performance making through costume via a decentring of the human 'subject' from a post-humanist perspective in a rereading of CiP, to which the final chapter of this thesis is dedicated. The material, affective agency of costume from this perspective entails ethical responsibilities in the production of atmosphere and meaning as well as gender and race on stage, given the potential for it to be deployed instrumentally to determine, uphold and further ideologies of exploitation and subjugation of the (female) other.

Legacies of staged harems: female bodies as power acquisition.

Costume as agent of feminist change is evident in the conclusion of Chapter 2 of CiP, 'Costuming choruses: spectacle and the social landscape on stage', a chapter centred on the sociocultural impact of multiple staged bodies in shaping the communities from within which their performances emerge (CiP pp 29-58). Building on a study by Irish dance scholar Aoife McGrath (2011), I claim that feminist and queer Fabulous Beast dance company's *The Rite of Spring* (2009, CiP images 2.23a, 2.23b and 2.24) contributed to a growing change of consciousness that led to the repeal of the law against abortion in Ireland via the 2018 referendum. At the core of Roerich and Stravinsky's scenario for *The Rite of Spring* (1913) is the inevitable female sacrifice, ubiquitous in other ballets as well as operas of European repertoires. Its ending is subverted in the Fabulous Beast production through a costume-led

performance by the on-stage constructed community that leaves the female 'Chosen One' standing. This finale evolved from a dissolving of animal/human, female/male binaries via costume that dislodged institutional power hierarchies based precisely on policing of such binaries (see pp 56-58, CiP). Recurring female sacrifices in the canon of opera and ballet can be classed as what feminist art historian Griselda Pollock calls the 'powerful, cultural *idée fixe* of the phallogentric imaginary'⁵⁵ that needs to be disrupted in order to generate possibilities of how things could be (Pollock, 2009: 100). By showing how differently stories could be told, this *Rite*, which concluded, in CiP, a discussion on the how power operates through costumed bodies on stage, may have contributed to the challenge to the institutionalised oppression of women in Ireland by church and state that negated them control over their own bodies and lives by denying them the choice of abortion.⁵⁶

In the introduction to Chapter 2, the ordering of the on-stage community through costume (CiP p.29) brings to bear fashion theorist Jane Tynan's reading of military uniforms via Foucault (Tynan, 2013). While Foucault has been criticised for his de-gendered bodies (Entwhistle, 2015, and Tynan 2016) Tynan has since extended her Foucaultian analysis to how power operates through fashion and dress, perceiving clothed bodies as materialisation of power relationships (Tynan, 2016). Disciplined and objectified through their costumes, the Houris as much as the inhabitants of staged orientalist harems and slave markets find common grounds with the lines of 19th century can-can dancers and rows of identical

⁵⁵ Pollock deploys this in the context of film and femme fatales.

⁵⁶ The construct of the 'fallen' female outcast in Daly's analysis (1995) of the carceral and forced labour of nuns-run, state-sponsored Magdalene Laundries (1922-37), renders evident the cultural, legal and political systems in place to support an economic agenda of the state, in coalition with the catholic church, to get men back to work in a very weak economy. Jarrett finds connection to the present through domestic digital female labour (2019).

showgirls featured in chapter 2 (CiP, figures 2.16, 2.17, and 2.18, with accompanying text p.49-51) that produced bodies as 'disposable through multiplication' (CiP, 49). Throughout the book attention is paid to the materiality that is at work, the knowledges and processes of costume techniques that are engaged, including, here, to construct *en masse* versions of femininity. Feminist and queer theorist Teresa de Laurentis goes beyond a critique of Foucault's a-gendering of bodies as 'the construction of gender is both the product and the process of its representation' (de Laurentis, 1987:5)⁵⁷. As such not only final costumes and their representations, but also contexts, processes, materialities, and labours of costuming and costume creation are fundamental. CiP demonstrates how, by its nature, costume questions essentialist determining of binaries through processes of gendering, and, for our discussion here, specifically through constructing certain versions of objectified femininities.

Expendable and objectified versions of constructed femininities implicate processes as much as products through representations that are powerfully effective in controlling and reinforcing power relationship and hierarchies. In Chapter 2, showgirls' shimmering bodily extensions of diamante, feathers and frilled materials that framed glittering flesh, as sex appeal are 'produced serially, mechanised and even militarised' (CiP, 50). Choreographed with military precision by John Tiller (1854-1925) and famously admired by Goebbels, the Tiller Girls (figure 2.18) are discussed by Kracauer in *The Mass Ornament*, ([1927] CiP, p. 50-51). On-stage reflection of a culture of universalising capitalist mass consumption that, exploiting production line workers, reproduces its own power structures through cultural

⁵⁷ Judith Butler focus is on performativity in her advancements on process and product of gender studies (1988) whereas de Laurentis addresses representation in her theorising.

representation via rows of identical legs moving in unison as if machine operated in Taylorist optimised processes⁵⁸.

Exploitative objectification that became the target of anti-pornography feminism later in 20th century finds precedents in these mechanised choreographies, in rendering women ‘less than human’, via dehumanising processes, that construct bodies primarily as objects (Dworkin 2000, 30)⁵⁹. Kracauer’s reading presumes the external gaze that the proscenium provides its seated viewers, a space where Kantian distanced transcendence is privileged, in which a remote dreamlike stage picture, ‘a mysterious chasm’, as Wagner describes it, is ‘designed for nothing else but seeing’ (cited in Beacham, 2014: 10). Such chasms to be gazed at holds power over audiences if, as postcolonial scholar Anne Anlin Cheng argues, ‘[w]e do not master by seeing; we are ourselves transformed when we look’ (2010:21). A saturation of embodiments of objectified bodies normalises them in culture and society, transforming both through the act of looking. Irigaray notes the perception of the ‘omnipotence of gazing’, where all the potency is displaced onto ‘the phallic gaze’ that grants mastery to bearers of such gaze, as she challenges Freud’s controversial castration complex with its focus on penis

⁵⁸ While Kira Reilly, cited in CiP, writes that the Tiller girls as wage earners were ‘both mass ornament *and* key players in the emerging image of the liberated ‘modern girl’’(CiP, p 51), my focus in this thesis is on representation of gendered bodies and their instrumentality.

⁵⁹ On objectification and feminism see also Linda LeMoncheck, *Dehumanizing Women: Treating Persons as Sex Objects*, 1985. Also, Cathering MacKinnon, 1987, *Feminism Unmodified*, Harvard University Press. On objectification through assumed and presumed objectivity, see Sally Haslanger’s chapter ‘On Being Objective and Being Objectified’ (1993). On instrumentalised objectification, which considers not all objectification as negative, see Martha Nussbaum’s article titled ‘Objectification’ (1995).

envy (Irigaray, 1985, 47). Less-than-human objectified representations are also constructed as less-than-male, through Irigaray's reading of the 'phallic gaze'.

The persistence of the masculine gaze in relation to the mass appeal of multiplicities of ornamental (objectified) bodies identified by Kracauer, for which spectaculars such as *Ali Baba*, *Chu Chin Cow* and *Mr Bluebeard* have provided precedents, is noted in Laura Mulvey's 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (1975). The spectacles of Ziegfeld Follies and Busby Berkeley, cited by this influential provocation, bridge between stage and film through the presentation of female flesh via the gaze:

The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness. Woman displayed as sexual object is the leitmotif of erotic spectacle: from pin-ups to strip-tease, from Ziegfeld to Busby (1975, p. 11)

Mulvey's essay on voyeurism, fetishization, scopophilia, film, and constructed feminine bodies versus active male spectatorship, has recently been re-evaluated in *Revisiting the Gaze: The Fashioned Body and the Politics of Looking*, (Laing and Willson, 2020). As well as reviewing it in relation to new media and social media, they extend Mulvey's critique of phallogocentricity through intersectionality, beyond 'its privileging of gender over other axes of identity, which are also imbricated in spectatorship, such as same sex desire and the politics of race' (Laing and Willson, 2020: 1). For the purpose of this thesis, race in particular, via histories of

imperialism and orientalism, is intertwined with exploitative display on film as ‘an oriental setting [...] provided Hollywood filmmakers with license to expose flesh without risking censorship’ (Shohat & Stam, 1994, p. 158). Shoham and Stam in *Unthinking Eurocentrism* draw attention to the pervasive orientalist construct of harems in film that appear to have inherited performances such as the ones of Ali Baba and orientalist Bluebeard adaptations:

Strong continuities link Hollywood’s ethnography with Hollywood’s pornography, which often latently inscribes harems and despots even in texts not set in the orient. What might be called “harem structures” in fact permeated Western mass-mediated culture. Busby Berkeley’s production numbers, for example, project a harem-like structure reminiscent of Hollywood’s mythical orient; like the oriental harem, they house a multitude of women serving [...] as signifiers of male power over infinitely substitutable females (Shohat and Stam ,1994, p. 164).

The sexualised colonising phantasy of the Orient⁶⁰ transferred the dynamics of the harem to other contexts. In her analysis of Busby Berkeley’s *Dames* (1936), Fischer defines the chorus lines’ dance numbers as performed by the ‘Berkeley harem’ citing Berkeley’s reference to matching female bodies ‘just like pearls’ (1981, p. 74). In the overabundance and excess of shimmering aesthetics, bodies of dancers are both objectified and rendered disposable through repetition applying strategies established on the stage (see CiP for vaudeville

⁶⁰ exploitative narrations of the harem have been pervasive in western culture since the end of the 18th century (Mabilat, cited in CiP). These were developed by male colonial travel writers who had no access to such segregated spaces. As Reina Lewis (1994, 2005) and Sarah Graham Brown (2003) write, notwithstanding their lesser influence in popular culture, female travel writers and artists who visited harems from the late 19th century were able to provide more reliable documentation as they were granted access.

associations p. 49-50, and dance ones p. 100-103). Furthermore, the association of jewels, veils, treasure troves with female flesh as signifier of masculine power and conquest is found in orientalist representations of odalisques, Salomés, and oriental dancers loosely drawn from the Middle East and India throughout the 19th century. They are described by Alison Smith in *The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, Morality and Art* as 'available and willing passive victims of Asiatic power and lust' (Smith, cited in CiP, p 108)⁶¹. These fantasies, the empire's imaginings in Said's terms, enabled not only immoral desire to be projected on othered, colonised people constructed as inferior, but acted as a recurring reminder of the material spoils of conquest, the opulence and riches inherent to the overpowering and vanquishing of a feminised colonial East.

Race and gender constituted and reinforced each other in European touring performances at the apex of colonial power, emboldened by the construct of female bodies as colonial treasure trove in overwhelming 'sublime' performance. In cinematic productions such as Busby Berkley's, multiplicities of objectified bodies impacted on wider culture globally in scenarios that could underscore the normalisation of gendered power imbalances critical to the success of certain self-serving politicians. In 2010, harem narratives played a significant role in Silvio Berlusconi's exploitation of Italian colonial legacies through his *Bunga Bunga parties*, in which he was presented by some of the media as 'sultan' (Gribaldo, 2018: 152). A phallogocentric performance of Berlusconi's power dominated public debate, deflecting the criminal charges of sex with underage women hanging over him.

⁶¹ For wider references on odalisques and exotic women see Piya Pal-Lapinski who builds on Smith's and other studies of colonialism and female representation in art and literature, in *The Exotic Woman in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction and Culture: A Reconsideration* (2005).

Berlusconi's perceived control over 'harems' of women, some of whom were racially profiled in the press in the entanglement of misogyny, racism and homophobia that Gribaldo detects in 'Veline, ordinary women and male savages: Disentangling racism and heteronormativity in contemporary narratives on sexual freedom'⁶², was presented as sign of virility in a populist stance that kept his party in power, notwithstanding numerous scandals and financial malpractice (Gribaldo, 2018). Analysing Berlusconi's rise to power, Paul Ginsborg identifies his TV empire established in the 1980s as crucial to political success, noting that Mulvey's objectifying male gaze had never 'been so crudely constructed' as in Berlusconi's TV channels' where scantily dressed showgirls surrounded 'every middle-aged compere' (Ginsborg, 43:2004). During visits to Italy in the 1990s I witnessed such daily televised female objectification normalising on lunchtime TV as one of Berlusconi's TV channels' screen was filled with paillette, feathers, and the glittering young flesh of females surrounding male middle-aged males, who, holding the microphones, were visibly empowered. These soubrettes could have absconded from revue floor shows such as *The Talk of the Town*, pictured in figure 2.17, CiP, and found themselves on a daytime TV show in which populist politics was publicised⁶³. In this they share with the staged 'Houris' of *Chu Chin Chow*, (1917), a muted, fleshy and compliant costumed presence that upheld a culturally, socially and politically questionable hegemonic masculinity by a dominant group set to materially benefit from such display of subjugation (Cornell and Messerschmidt, 2005). The longevity of harems initially invented through costumed bodies on the stages of the long 19th century, provides a

⁶² 'Veline' refers to the scantily dressed decorative young women of daytime TV, (Aldo Grasso, 2013) 'velo' meaning 'veil' in Italian.

⁶³ Prior to becoming a property magnate and a broadcast media proprietor, Berlusconi was a compare for cruise ship entertainment (Ginsborg, 2004).

‘powerful, cultural *idée fixe* of the phallogentric imaginary’, to borrow Pollock’s words again, that, reproduced in popular media, contributes to shoring up heteropatriarchal wealth and power in processes of disempowerment of feminised others. Implicit to the latter are not only women, but also the exclusion of any alternative masculinities and marginalised and othered (thus feminised) groups.

In this section I have revisited parts of Chapters 4, and of 2, to extend feminist and anti-colonial positions inscribed in CiP, in relation to objectification, power and domination of women, colonised people and other marginalised groups. Having advanced the misogynist and white supremacist qualities of the transcendental sublime, a force behind the ravishing materiality of the multitudes of bodies packaged in totalising visions, I connected them to representations of society on stage in Chapter 2. Implicating the construction of gender through costume in cementing cultures of oppression entangled in colonial histories, the ongoing impact on the contemporary is evident in very real ways. While the subversive materiality of costume in the *Rite of Spring* upends entrenched gender discrimination through alternatives in queer and multispecies propositions, costumes have also have been found to reinforce hegemonic power through the performance of objectification repeated across groups of multiple anonymised and near-automated female bodies, in different historical times and geopolitical contexts, where they are reiterated through various popular media, gaining power through repeated viewing. If materially excessive spectacle can be aligned to the workings of the transcendental sublime, the feminine sublime discussed in the next section enables a reading of performances that disrupts such status quo, particularly through female performances from the late 19th early 20th century. They provide the starting point for further ethical considerations around costume and the female body placing cultural

appropriation, alterity and subalternity at its core in a furthering of feminist arguments that emerge from Chapter 4 while implicating performances discussed Chapters 1, 3 and 6.

Costumed appropriation as emancipation.

In her recent article 'On Decolonisation and the University' (2021), Priyamvada Gopal notes how current transformative influences, 'not for the first time', run from the global South northwards (Gopal, 2021, 4). The study of performance and artistic practices offers ample proof of the transformative impact on European and North American performance of encounters with non-western forms in the 19th and 20th century, which are mentioned in Chapter 1 in discussing cultural renewal in the West (p. 15-28). As Said writes in a relationship between the East and West, the former is not the 'interlocutor, but its silent Other' as the transformed practitioner 'makes the Orient speak, describes the Orient, renders its mysteries plain for and to the West' (Said, 1979, p. 44). Critical analysis in relation to cultural exchange versus cultural appropriation (CiP, p. 23) is an area of questioning that has become more intense in the few years since writing CiP and will be discussed later in relation to feminist and postcolonial philosopher Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in particular. As posited in the previous section in a turn towards a fantastical East, Orientalism entrenched the status quo of imperialism through costume and performance.

Building further on the notion of the feminine sublime, I will consider the impact of the global South northwards, reappraising from this perspective the dancers discussed in Chapter 4 who, mostly coming from North America, laid the founding blocks for modern dance using costumes at the turn of the 20th century, as their performances paralleled the intensifying of

first wave feminist struggle towards the vote for women in multiple countries. At the same time, as demonstrated in Chapter 6, European stars of the theatre stage such as Sarah Bernhardt, Eleonora Duse, Lillie Langtry and Ellen Terry utilised costumes as powerful performing partners in their influential transnational circuits of performance. Whether by engaging the foremost fashion couturier, such as Sarah Bernhardt did with Charles Worth (CiP, p. 169), or as in the case of Ellen Terry, by making her own costume as a fifteen-year-old performer, later closely collaborating with designers and makers while publicly campaigning for dress reform (CiP, p. 192), and in both, their on-stage female-to-male transvestism (CiP, p. 186), costume could be the means through which to transgress limits placed on women, to render them more-than-female, even more than human (CiP, p. 182-193). While these divas did challenge gendered ideologies that saturated culture and society in the late 19th century, their performances through costume were not directly consistently drawn from the Global South⁶⁴. My intention here is to identify racial power in feminist cultures through costume and performance via which gender - female in particular - is performed in dramatically new ways which can be transformative beyond the performance.

Aspiration to define dance as high art drove Isadora Duncan's reinvention of classical embodiments of dance (CiP figures 4.21 and 4.22) via draped chitons and tunics adopted from Greek imagery and Botticelli paintings. Such identification, however, implicated an explicit racist attitude which she committed to text (Duncan, [1927] 1983). Although her movement, that was barefooted, barelegged, barearmed and with free-flowing hair, freeing bodily expression (Daly, 2002, cited in CiP, 123-4), she separated herself from her peers who were

⁶⁴ Japonisme was evident in Terry's use of the Kimono's un-corseted form in everyday life as part of her dress reform campaign (CiP, figure 6.17)

influenced by pervasive Orientalism, notwithstanding the heightened interest in the 1890s around imported Oriental dances that eventually gave impetus to Salomania in her native US before she left for Europe in 1898 (Maira, 2008, 322). While she reconciled classical thought with socialism, her 'new woman' status was inconsistent with her published racist views. Her 'I see America Dancing', a nationalist essay remonstrating against Jazz, African rhythms, 'ape-like convulsions of the Charleston' and the 'sensual convulsion of the South African negro' (Duncan 1927[1983] p. 263, in Copeland and Cohen), is a demonstration of the cultural elitism of modernist positions that gave expression to ideologies of white supremacy, while building on classical philosophy and culture (Burt, 1998). A product of socio-political systemic racism, growing up in a North American culture 'saturated in race and gendered ideologies produced out of histories of violence and social injustice' (Scheper, 2016: 4), she nonetheless, twenty-five years earlier, while propelling herself into international circuits, presented a less nationalistic perspective in her vision of feminist dance.

The dancer of the future will be one whose body and soul have grown so harmoniously together that the natural language of the soul will have become the movement of the body. The dancer will not belong to a nation but to all humanity. [...] From all parts of her body shall shine radiant intelligence, bringing to the world the message of the thoughts and aspirations of thousands of women. She shall dance the freedom of women. (Duncan [1903] 2013, p 168, in Brayshaw and Witts)

While it mentioned Duncan's racism, CiP skirted around these deep contradictions, engaging instead with the use of costume by ground-breaking black female performers, specifically Josephine Baker (p.123-124) and Olga Brown, aka Miss La La (p. 113-115). Disjunctions made

evident through Duncan's writing remain relevant in the context of renewed tensions around black and white feminist positions as the ongoing aftermath of imperialism, enslavement and colonialism, which are arguably only beginning to be fully understood in public discourse.

Disrupting European what restrictive modes of performance such as ballet (that Duncan was rejecting through her dance) were in fact those colonised subjects from the Middle East and Asia, whose dances, experienced in real life through their tours of North America and Europe, had a profound impact of white female performers. Whilst New York ballet audiences in 1880 could not equate Indian Nautch dancers with expectation of Indian dance formed by 19th century orientalist fantasy ballet *La Bayadere*⁶⁵, resulting in Nautch dance not being seen again on a main stage, they continued dancing in popular spaces such as Circuses, street performances, World Fairs and Coney Island until 1907, when immigration laws were changed due to growing anti-Asian sentiment. Their dance impacted on St Denis in particular, enabling her to establish herself as a producing dancer, having been influenced by Indian female dancers now excluded (Srinivasan,2009). Due to the anti-Asian laws enacted in 1907, St Denis could absorb culture and costume unopposed, marketing an assured 'authenticity' that could not be challenged (Srinivasan, 2011:190). In her seminal *Gendering Orientalism* (1996) Lewis reappraises Said's foundational *Orientalism* (1978) arguing that it pays too little attention to women in the analysis of colonialism, for whom she writes 'imperialism played a role in the very construction of professional creative opportunities' (1996, p.3) as she analyses the way

⁶⁵ *La Bayadere* (translated 'Temple Dancer') was choreographed by Marius Pepita in 1877, the first visit of temple dancers in Europe was in 1838, see Meduri, 2018 'Interweaving dance archives: Devadasis, Bayadères, and Nautch girls of 1838', and Chakravorty, 2000. *From interculturalism to historicism: Reflections on classical Indian dance.*

British female artists and writers benefited. To this group we can add orientalist North American dancers such as St Denis and Maud Allen.

They produced veiled, jewelled, circular skirt-based performances that drew from colonised cultures, 'oriental dancers' from Egypt and India. Contrary to the glittering bodies of the 1896 *Ali Baba* finale in which orientalist costume appeared, mixed with classical and medieval references as immobilising veneer on white bodies, these performers embraced the ambiguity of costumes appropriated from practices from othered cultures, by devising Orientalist characters and becoming synonymous with them. While the resulting expressiveness launched and sustained their careers it problematises understandings of the intersection of race, women, costume and dance. CiP builds on the ethical position 'a reconciling of opposites' (CiP: 96) offered by Freeman's feminine sublime, through a full immersion in the materiality of performance that can contain expression of opposites, in a totality that permits 'spatial, dynamic and material articulation of new femininities' (CiP: 97). This dissolving of bodily presence into costume materiality in movement exposes alternative ways of being as well as performing. That these are appropriated ones however should command great attention as this thesis permits, as ambiguities are placed in relief by looking beyond the efficacious performativity of such costumes. For example, Loie Fuller's expansive creations of fabric, light and projections provide a significant demonstration of the feminine sublime in Chapter 4 (CiP, p 126-128). They also exemplify the pervasive nature of the orientalist binary. While Fuller admitted that her creation was indebted to Indian Nautch skirt dancing foundational to her practice (Kraut, 2015), her notoriously unsuccessful pursuit of

copyright rights⁶⁶ against less established fellow female dancer imitators ‘must be seen at one and the same time as an act of gendered resistance against a patriarchal system and an assertion of racial privilege within a system of white dominance’ (Kraut, 2016, p. 90). Heteropatriarchal domination and racial privilege are interdependent. In fact, the former may set the preconditions for the latter as concluded in his study of colonialism by Indian political theorist Ashis Nandy as it ‘produced a cultural consensus in which political and socio-economic dominance symbolized the dominance of men and masculinity over women and femininity’ (1983, 4). In such pervasive patriarchal consensus, the white dominance accorded to Loie Fuller therefore masculinized her, particularly if, as bell hooks reminds us ‘patriarchy has no gender’ (hooks, 2009, p 170).

Such ambiguities can be found in critical readings of *Vision of Salome*, (CiP, 116-7) Maude Allen’s performance that contributed to setting off the Salomania craze⁶⁷. Her nearly naked body - bar strings of pearls and veils reminiscent of the orientalist odalisque paintings⁶⁸ - that may have informed Oscar Wilde’s writing of the dance of the seven veils in his banned play *Salome* (1895) - enabled a reclaiming to self-display as she danced longingly and with murderous lust, holding and kissing a realistic severed head of John the Baptist - a bewildering gesture, an unspeakable⁶⁹ act that challenged gender norms (CiP 117- 118) through excess in

⁶⁶ Chorus girl Mimmie Bemis was sued by Fuller for breach of copyright, a case famously dismissed by the judge for the lack of narrativity in Fuller’s dance. (Garelick 2007, p. 30.)

⁶⁷ The craze that came to be described in derogatory terms by Percival Pollard of *New York Times* as Salomania (Percival Pollard, 1908, cited in Meenasarani Linde Murugan, 2018).

⁶⁸ On the connection between jewellery, sexuality and orientalism see Pal-Lapinski (2005)

⁶⁹ Freeman, discussing the notion of unrepresentable experience that is key to the sublime, write that ‘[i]n the formulation of Jean François Lyotard, for example, the sublime is not the presentation of the unrepresentable but the presentation of the fact that the unrepresentable exists.’ (1995 p.11).

ways that channel the power of the sublime. Her subsuming into appropriated costume however continues to pose questions on its fragility in relation to cultural representation. Writing about Allan's and other versions of Salome's costuming by white performers, black cultures scholar Jayna Brown notes that while 'such created racial mimicry [...] dramatized the colonial subject' these dancers remained 'the colonizing women of empire.' (Brown 2008, p. 176). Allen's performance played into this ambiguity an assertive, murderous female sexuality, displaced onto the colonised Other, while also remaining white and middle-class. Koritz concludes that '[b]y simultaneously embodying and denying female sexuality, Allen was also simultaneously denying and embodying the threat of the racial Other' (Koritz 1994, p. 76). The reconciling of opposites permitted by an understanding of costume informed by the feminine sublime can be problematic if the ethical framework that Freeman embodies particularly in her final chapter in relation to Toni Morrison's *Beloved* is not entangled into the performance from its very conception.

In 1906, Ruth St Denis danced *Radha* staining her skin brown and wearing what appeared as a pared down and more revealing versions of a Nautch full-skirted dance costume, baring her mid-rift with ankle bangles that drew attention to her bare feet (CiP, p.118). While, unlike Allen, the colour of her skin is what must be disguised by the costume and make up⁷⁰, St Denis' full immersion in her Hindu character was accompanied by the study of Hinduism and Indian dance history, as well as direct work with Indian male dancers and musicians who formed an on-stage presence in her act.⁷¹ Such strategic and appropriating immersion into Indian

⁷⁰ Jane Desmond writes that the body make-up was later replaced by a body suit (1991)

⁷¹ St Denis was transformed by her encounter with Nautch dancers in Coney Island in 1904, a few years before those dancers would no longer be permitted entry into the US due to

costume and movement however transformed dance in the US and beyond. Like Allen, as a middle-class white woman she had access to both high culture performance spaces and the vaudeville theatre, which mitigated and balanced risks in her performance (Desmond, 1991).

The appropriation of colonised dancers' cultural practices through costume in these orientalist performances is evident as the means through which bodily self-assertion is enacted, in a way that ultimately, as Lewis writes, advances their professional standing (1994). Like Duncan and Fuller, St Denis and Allen were their own choreographers, authors of their dance against the grain of the time, in positions habitually held by men. St Denis' immersion into Hindu culture fed into the development of contemporary dance through her decades teaching (CiP, p. 118), eventually contributing to the generation of a more inclusive future modern dance than the one envisioned by Duncan in her final years. Appropriation and adaptation of colonised culture in the development of empowered femininities by providing a challenge to established Western dance forms, may have eventually contributed to enabling free and legitimate access and exchange to practitioners from different cultural backgrounds and racial heritages. However, these can be tenuous changes, easily reversible. The recent closing of national borders in the US discussed later in this section via Deepsikha Chatterjee's article is a reminder of how precarious such international access remains given power imbalances inherited from centuries of colonialism, how easily access can be denied in the same way as it was to in 1907 to Nautch dancers.

changes in immigration laws. This enabled her to embody 'oriental dance' as Indian dancers stopped touring to the US (Srinivasan, 2007, 2009 and 2011).

Notwithstanding her empowered femininity, for Desmond St Denis' *Radha* was working within patriarchal notions of race, gender and orientalism in the 'construction of difference necessary to the maintenance of the hegemony [...] in its presentation of the woman's body as sexualised' (1991, p. 48). As Indian dance scholar Priya Srinivasan writes, St Denis' brown-facing is an imperialistic, Orientalist practice particularly given the lack of access of Nautch dancers to US audience. Desmond sees the darkening of her skin – or later wearing dark 'fleshings' – as part of her performance in 1906, as rendering her daring, given the illegality of race mixing in many parts of the United States⁷² from where she was also excluded from performing in collaboration with Indian dancers. While she acknowledges ambiguities of opposites that this dance embodied, these draw attention to a fault-line in the feminine sublime as applied to costume. Material immersion into the costume enabled corporeal empowered femininities to inhabit misogynist and colonialist structures in ways that may also contributed to their transformation. However, such transformation is an ongoing project. As Desmond concludes 'the element of mastery, implied by the right to represent the "other" remains' (1991, p. 47).

In Chapter 1 of CiP such representations of the Other are also the sticking point in a lengthy examination of Ariane Mnouchkine's Theatre du Soleil *Les Atrides* (1990), in which costumes from various Indian dances were clearly efficacious through their borrowed performative sensory materiality and aesthetic forms that defined character and world through spectacular, elaborate and narrative materialisations (CiP, pp. 18-23). As noted via Cixous, who is credited

⁷² See Hodes, 1999. *Sex, love, race: Crossing boundaries in North American history*.

for the dramaturgy of the performance, pleasure plays a significant role in such borrowing as “[t]heatre only exists because it procures for us a bonus of pleasure” while “ ‘spectacle’ does not destroy profound emotions [. . .] pleasure permit[s] us to tolerate the intolerable” (cited in CiP, p. 20, quoting Franke and Chazal). Costume sensory pleasure is certainly at work in the tragedies of *Les Atrides* in appropriated costumes. Productions such as *Les Atrides* are not perceived in the context of cultural exchange for Indian performance scholar Rustom Bharucha as ‘[c]olonialism, one might say, does not operate through principles of ‘exchange.’ Rather, it appropriates, decontextualizes, and represents the ‘other’ culture, often with the complicity of its colonized subjects. It legitimates its authority only by asserting its cultural superiority’ (1993, p. 1–2, cited in CiP, p. 23). Costume scholar Chatterjee concurs, given her experience of curating Indian dance ‘Erasing Borders’ festival in New York. Dancers from India she programs may be automatically excluded from entry into the US⁷³, while paradoxically their costumes may move freely across national boundaries as, she notes, in the case of the spectacular South Indian Terukkuttu dance costume that appear in Mnouchkine’s production of *A Room in India* staged in New York in 2017 (Chatterjee, 2020). She finds cultural stereotyping at work in the latter, particular its presentation of terrorists, noting that ‘the Other is lesser than the white saviour’ (2020, p. 54)⁷⁴, rendering Bharucha’s charge to intercultural theatre as re-colonizing an ongoing challenge. Miller and Watson identify ‘Benjaminian constellations’ in the composition of Mnouchkine’s *A Room in India*, with its multi-layered assemblages of performance styles that include Terukkuttu (Miller and Watson 2017, p. 140) in ways that do not consider whether these processes of assembling

⁷³ For a historical perspective on dance labour, precarity and US immigration exclusions see *Sweating Saris*, Priya Srinivasan, 2011.

⁷⁴ Spivak’s 1988 “Can the subaltern speak?” eloquently explains the notion of ‘white saviour’.

constellation may in fact be problematic, as discussed in this thesis (p.23). In their review of the performance, the latter appears represented through costume and dance, and simultaneously non-present, the performance lacking “literacy’ into a justification for a project of exchange’ (Al-Kassim 2002, p. 174). As in Schechner’s ‘strips of film’ of performance, moments of dance and costume elements have floated away from their contexts to address the themes and narrative of the play in ways that do not account for the cultural specificity and situatedness of the bodies producing such culture via costume.

In ways that may also apply to *A Room in India*, Bharucha, writing in 2001, analyzes Ong Keng Sen’s *Lear* that uses post-modern montage technique to assemble cultural performances from across Asia. Bharucha, critiqued it as ‘creating performance assemblages that are aligned to global market economy’ (CiP, 28). Ong’s later work however presents significant engagement with voiceless subalternity. In Chapter 1 his is one of two interpretations of *Hamlet* adapted through Asian performance practices, Yukio Ninagawa’s *Hamlet* (2009) and Ong Keng Sen Search: *Hamlet* (2007). In different ways both mix a range of performance and aesthetic traditions to develop efficacious productions. A dissonance between post-structuralist understandings of performance, such as Schechner, with its Benjaminian and Walburgian echoes, and those practitioners and scholars who guard cultural traditions from which performances as ‘strips of films’ emerge, delineates the complexities of cultural exchanges, borrowings and appropriations.

On one hand, though her call for post-national approaches, *Shakespeare and East Asia* author Alexa Joubin’s concern is the possibility of jingoism that can emerge if cultural borders are tightly policed (2017, p. 431). Her answer is by way of Deleuze and Guattari’s use of ‘rhizome’,

in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) which opens multiplicities of possibilities, having broken off from the master tree, the opposite to the prescribed 'arborescent' hierarchic models of knowledge. As such this enables a reterritorializing of Shakespearean production from East Asian perspectives (Joubin 2021, p. 12). However, such post-structural fluidity may not always account for the imbalances of power that exist between cultures, races, genders that can emerge through intercultural practicing and thinking. Spivak warns against the danger of speaking for others that may be implicit in such universalising. She identifies that the entanglement of colonialism and patriarchy are not addressed by a post-structuralist de-centring of the subject by Foucault and Deleuze. Her seminal essay 'Can the subaltern speak?' (Spivak, 1994) surmised a universalising of Foucault and Deleuze western privileged position, as well as a pointing to the incapacity to recognise the 'constitutive place of gender in the formation of the subject' (Morris 2010, p. 4). Her point of departure is a published conversation between Foucault and Deleuze (1977) in which she detected a disavowal of responsibility for the Other in their theorising of power, with Deleuze stating that theory 'has nothing to do with the signifier' (1977, cited in Spivak, 1994). Such denying of accountability for, and commitment to, the Other that renders theory 'a box of tools', leads her to conclude that the de-centred male and colonizing subject was being restored to the centre. Underneath post-structuralism's aim of liberation from the grand narratives of history and the sovereign subject of classical humanism - a significant aim indeed - she perceived a masculine imperialism that could still be at work. She goes on to analyse two historical female suicides from colonial India, demonstrating how colonised women had been 'spoken for', while men projected a sense of 'saving brown women from brown men' in imperialist rescue missions that primarily benefited the colonisers. Contemporary feminism itself is not immune from 'speaking for others'. Morris, in her introduction of the edited collection *Can the Subaltern*

Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea, notes how Spivak's position remains relevant where the emancipation of women is presented as 'potent ideological weapon', for example in the legitimisation of the US war on terror in neoliberal feminist arguments (Morris: 7, 2010). In Spivak's feminism, colonised and female subalterns emerged from the 'social groups on the margins of history', the subalterns of Gramsci's *Prison Diaries*, (Spivak, 2021, preface xii) about whom Gramsci, who also spoke about the emancipation of women, wrote while incarcerated by the Italian fascist state as leader of the anti-fascist movement, identifying with marginalised others with no access to power and constrained by hegemonic rule.

Such identification with others, and the desire of speaking with and about them rather than for them, shaped Singaporean Ong Keng Sen's *Search: Hamlet*, 2002, in ritual exchanges through costume (CiP, p.27, Chapter 1). Ong's previous project restoring traditional Cambodian dance that was nearly extinguished by targeted killings of female dancers during the Cambodian genocide by the Khmer Rouge, informed the non-existent Hamlet (represented by light) of *Search: Hamlet* staged in Kronborg Castle in Denmark, Shakespeare's Elsinore (CiP, p.27-8). The sense of loss also permeated the production's rehearsals in which trial paper costumes were torn as part of movement and meaning generation; 'we brought these rags into the finery of the ballroom [...] we realised the frailty of human nature and our attempts at concealing these vulnerabilities in the public self' (Ong, 2002, cited in CiP, p. 27).

Addressing structurally the disadvantage of women, Ninagawa's *Hamlet* (CiP, pp. 24-6) in 1995, questioned patriarchal societal hierarchies through the use of Japanese girls' Hina dolls yearly ritual, to 'unravelling the meaning of Ophelia's madness not as purely contingent to her situation but as symptomatic of the unsustainable role apportioned to women, within the

family and in society.’ (CiP, p.26). The identification of Ophelia with ritually discarded dolls in rivers as part of the Hinamtsuri female purification festival within a strictly hierarchical tiered altar space of the Hinadan (fig 26, CiP), lends performed embodiment of the social construct of gender and social difference, explaining Ophelia’s death as sacrifice to the altar of patriarchy. If the feminine sublime is not purely an aesthetic moment of spectacle and pleasure, but ‘an encounter with the other’ through which the self ‘simultaneously disabled and empowered, testifies to what exceeds it’ (Freeman, p.16), moments of loss in performance demonstrated its workings. Freeman writes that in the feminine sublime, ‘ethics, politics, and aesthetics are inseparable and that human excellence resides in the capacity to engage the incalculable’ (Freeman, 1995, p. 41).

Given that costumes can be worn across different bodies and travel transnationally with an ease not granted to humans, the discussion around a feminine sublime costume as active and agential has led to cultural appropriation and oppression. These bring to bear the responsibility for the Other that Spivak and Gramsci’s subalternity in contexts of colonialist legacies, marginalisation, and social and cultural oppression that aligns performance costume to fundamental ethics of respect for the Other. As Freeman writes, in the generative reconciling of opposites of the feminine sublime, a dispersal of the ego into selflessness empowerment aims to acquire an ethical position of ‘respect in response to incalculable otherness’ (Freeman, 1995: 11 cited in CiP).

To invoke the non-demonstratable - not as a familiar feature of aesthetics but rather in the context of the incommensurable - is to situate the sublime as a site of resistance

to aestheticism and also to underscore its political and ethical dimensions. In this sense, the notion of alterity eludes, sexuality, class, race, or geopolitical positioning but implies both a general concept of the unrepresentable as that which exceeds the symbolic order of language and culture, and the particular otherness of actual others, who remain nameless insofar as they are outside its borders. Unlike the masculinist sublime that seeks to master, appropriate, or colonise the other, I propose that the politics of the feminine sublime involves taking up a position of respect in response to an incalculable otherness. (1995, p.11)

Subaltern speech, unrepresentable through the horrors of extermination, was made materially eloquent in costume centred workshops for *Search: Hamlet* (Ong) while the costuming of *Hamlet* (Ninagawa) through the use of costume and scenographic materialities such as the Hina dolls⁷⁵ produced, at least for this viewer, an experience in excess of the language and culture of both Shakespeare and its Japanese cultural markers to address Ophelia's character in a way that fully engaged her female otherness.

Costume may, however as we have seen in St. Denis *Radha*, appear as muting of subaltern speech if reduced to material from a source culture in appropriating works. Nonetheless as Cheng writes in relation to Picasso's eventual acknowledgement of the impact of African art on his work, it is possible for 'acts of appropriation [to] open up sites of contamination that point to other kinds of relationality, ones that may not always be easily categorized'. (Cheng, 2010, p. 19). A veteran feminist and activist theatre artist, Mnouchkine's work is profoundly

⁷⁵ These include the scenic arrangements and pre-set, see pp.24-6, CiP.

critical of political hegemonic structures, in France and elsewhere, which include colonial ones and their legacies⁷⁶. Her perspective may equate universalizing with international artist solidarity based on human rights (CiP, p. 23, Dickson, 2012), perceived as opposite to the capitalist universalizing of colonialism and globalization (Spivak, 2004). In the parallel provided around Picasso's and African art, Cheng notes that '[a]longside taking in the objects, Picasso was also taken by the objects'(2010, p.19). It is possible to consider that Mnouchkine was also taken by the Terukkuttu costumed performances she included in *A Room in India* or the Khatakali ones for *Les Atrides*. It maybe that, given Mnouchkine's direct engagement with subaltern voices in *Le Dernier Caravanserail* (2003) and her previous record of active solidarity, transnationally, she was appropriated by the costumes as much as she appropriated them. Through such identification she may have imagined, however naively, that weaving Indian dances into her performances may also benefit Indian dancers and cultures. We have seen that these remain acts of colonialism given the imbalance of power and lack of access that is in fact a growing issue with intractable borders limiting the movement of those artists perceived as subalterns (while freely circulating their cultural artifacts). The complexities, ambiguities and polarities through spatial and dynamic costumes in the immersion into materiality that the feminine sublime construct implies, that can perform itself and its opposite within the same moment of performance. Such attesting to its potential to recolonize, bringing into the equation the traumatic institution of colonialism. The sublime in performance demands active ethics and care for the Other to be addressed from the start as the incalculable loss negates the real source of its power.

⁷⁶ Amongst her work in solidarity with artists trans-nationally Mnouchkine co-created *Le Dernier Caravanserail* with refugees from the Sengratte refugee camp in 2003 (Dickson, 2012) while also offering them shelter (CiP, p. 23).

The final two examples from Chapter 4 align the costuming by two black performers with the potential of subaltern speech embodied through the ethics and aesthetics of performance, while also being claimed through the feminine sublime applied to costume in CiP. Josephine Baker, born in Louisiana, the first state to implement Jim Crow's laws in 1892 legally segregating Blacks and Whites, will enable to engage the historical relationship between feminism and white supremacy that concludes this section. First, Miss La La, also known as Olga Brown, a black performer born in Germany, (CiP pp. 110-116), permits the consideration of how opposites of racialized, engrained subalternity and professional success might be recognized through her circus performance in 19th Century Europe with the aid of costume. An analysis of costume here 'opens the language to the necessary task of giving voices to those who have been silenced' (Freeman, p. 12) as the costume enables the expression through a bodily shared materiality.

Performance and costume supporting rapture from oppression.

It is vital to remember that Black people, largely from Africa, existed as equals in Europe since the Roman Empire prior to socio-political degradation entailed by colonial expansion from the 16th Century (Otele, 2020; Olusoga, 2016). The enslavement of several millions of Africans in the Atlantic Slave Trade⁷⁷, and the death of many in captivity, were critical to the

⁷⁷ Toni Morrison cited in Freeman: 'Some historians told me 200 million died. The smallest number I got from anybody was 60 million. There were travel accounts of people who were in the Congo—that's a wide river—saying "we could not get the boat through the river, it was choked with bodies." That's like a logjam. A lot of people died. Half of them died in those ships. . . . I thought [*BeLoved*] has got to be the least read of all the books I'd written

phenomenal enrichment of European and North American economies over four hundred years, and in particular to the industrial revolution (Williams, 1944). As we have seen, by the 19th century, colonialism and enslavement were ubiquitous in culture, embodied as slave characters in orientalist staged contexts as phantasies of harems, narratives of brown women saved from brown men while associations of exotic treasure-troves with black female bodies abounded. Olga Brown was born in Germany from a black father and white mother. As Miss La La, an iron jaw circus artist, she capitalized on exoticism by using African Princess as one of her stage names. In her substantial article, art historian Marilyn R. Brown, whilst acknowledging that Miss La La's subaltern voice is fragmentary, exposes the extent to which she was able to transcend the limitation placed on her black body to go on to acquire transnational success, earning more than male counterparts, and becoming the subject of Edgar Degas' painting, 1879, *Miss La La at the Cirque Fernando* (figure 4.14, CiP). She presented an ambiguous gender identity, embodied through unmatched physical strength, and bi-racial heritage, thus challenging both the fears of 'miscegenation', the collapse of the 'distinction between Other and Same', and polygenism, the 'scientific' racism intent on proving black and whites as belonging to different species (Brown 2007, p.750-3). Whilst belonging to the circus, which could normalize while commodifying alterity, Miss La La's normatively Victorian, decorated, aerialist costume reminiscent of bourgeois summer wear⁷⁸,

because it is about something that the characters don't want to remember, I don't want to remember, black people don't want to remember, white people don't want to remember. I mean it's national amnesia' (cited in Freeman, p. 123)

⁷⁸ Citing Brown, CiP analysis finds evidence in posters and photographs, normatively corseted even if including a leotard, as her potentially transgressive skin colour is countered by 'ruffles and polka-dots [...] with tassels, fichus, and floral appliqué edging the costumes that highlighted movement. These costumes countered with decorous femininity the potential projection of a sexually available and "threateningly lascivious black woman"' (Brown, 2007:749)'(p.133)

spoke eloquently of her belonging as equal to the worlds of both the circus and the white European circus audience (CiP 113-4). Her success as a Black woman and performer was antithetical to the objectification, exploitation and spectacularization (Cheng 2010, p.37) of African women displayed as 'scientific' specimen, as in the case of the 'Hottentot Venus', Sarah Baartman, (1789-1815) –and later imitations - presented as a naked attraction around Britain and Paris. Baartman's body casts and body parts were displayed well into the 20th century before finally being buried in her native South Africa on Nelson Mandela's demand for the restitution of her remains from France in 2002 (Gilman, 1985, Cheng, 2010, Holmes, 2020).

Not only did Olga Brown's image counter such a dehumanizing stance, it also potentially advanced the cause of other subaltern classes through an alliance that can exist between oppressed groups, as Brown writes referring to Degas' other painting subjects:

'The nineteenth century could view the working classes (and this could include ballet rats, as the young dancers were called, as well as laundresses and prostitutes) in racialist terms; dispossessed populations were surveyed, regulated, and represented in comparable ways' (Brown 2007, p. 752).⁷⁹

Unassailable talent as a circus artist permitted Olga Brown to transcend gender, class, racial and national distinction, in implicit alliances across subaltern populations with which her costuming facilitated identification. Such alliances are not to be taken for granted. Brown's analysis of the composition of Miss La La's body in Degas' painting and preparatory sketches

⁷⁹ I read this as Olga Brown belonging (and being claimed by through audience reception) to intersecting subaltern positions in the facing of oppression within imperialist capitalism.

points to similarities with images of the lynchings of black people that may have impacted on Degas as he had spent months painting in New Orleans in 1872 (Brown, 2007). Placing into sharp relief the opposites of the mortal danger of her racialised body and her more-than-male, more-than-human performance, Degas' painting layers the horrors of death by lynching over the danger of performing her iron jaw act. In ways that echo the traditional sublime, Zylinska underscores the potential for disaster and death in the immersive, unknown and open-ended feminine sublime (Zylinska 2001, p. 138). Through the identification with marginalised others, the ethics of incalculable otherness that calls hierarchies into question (Freeman 1995, p. 9), as well as speaking through Olga Brown's corporeality and costuming, address the mortal danger of a performance that bound her to them.

Experiencing of 'infinite *jouissance*, a feeling that results in the direct contact with otherness' that is implicit in the open-endedness of the feminine sublime (Zylinska 2001, p 40), may also be at work in *La Danse des Bananas*, Josephine Baker's performance of otherness in 1920s Paris (CiP, 124). From a critical race theory and art history perspective, citing Frantz Fanon's concept of the 'epidemiological inferiority' (cited in Cheng 2010, p. 12) Cheng construes Baker's 'fabricated nakedness' (p. 35) as a socially and culturally constructed lack of humanity, a product of 1920s European whiteness as its racial Other⁸⁰. Encapsulating 'a complex network of mediated desires and cross-narratives', Baker's body was sexualized and racialized within imperial phallocentric conceits of primitivism (Cheng 2010:47). Notwithstanding, as I

⁸⁰ In more generic terms, Monks (2010, p. 100) also writes of nakedness as a costume the performer 'puts on' and 'takes off' the moment the performance is over. Critical here is the racialised female black skin as external construct, efficaciously co-directed by the performer herself.

write in CiP, building on Borshuk (2001), 'to parody the savage perceived to be projected by her skin color, was the means through which she transcended the limitations placed upon her', (cited in CiP, p. 124). Phallic bananas later became studded with diamonds, thus layering luxuriant Orientalist codes of undress on the movement rhythm of the bananas (CiP p. 124). Alongside strings of pearls and jewelry worn over her breasts, they amplified her bodily movement that was marked by 'dynamic spontaneity and wild abandon' (Burt 1998, p. 77). Dance scholar Joanna Dee Das argues that as an avant-garde experimental creator of dance, '[t]hrough embodiment, [Baker] theorized the body as a producer of kinesthetic energy and emphasized movement invention' (2020, p. 2). To this day, her banana dance costume retains its efficacious performativity as, in Willson's words, 'Baker's provocative gestures', performed in contemporary cabaret in the subcultural spaces of the neo-burlesque, continues to 'unsettle gendered assumptions and propriety' (2020, p. 184).

Global pop culture phenomenon Beyoncé Knowles-Carter adopted Baker's banana girdle in 2006 for the video of her song *Déjà vu*⁸¹, a tribute 'orchestrated to signal Beyoncé seriousness as a solo performer' while also reinforcing 'Baker's iconicity not only as a marker of success but also as a sign of artistic authorship and innovation'⁸² (Scheper 2007, p. 96). In Sweeney-Risko's analysis of both Knowles' and Baker's performances, the banana girdle performs assertive black feminism in rejecting 'respectability that still keeps black women in submissive

⁸¹ From the album *B'Day* (2006), Josephine Baker was born in 1906.

⁸² Jeanne Scheper also draws attention to Patricia Hill Collins who sees 'Baker as part of a genealogy of "distinctive sexualized spectacles performed by Baartmann, Baker, Destiny's Child, and [Jennifer] Lopez [that] invoke sexual meanings that give shape to racism, sexism, class exploitation, and heterosexism. Each spectacle marks the contradictions of Western perceptions of African bodies and of black women's agency concerning the use of their bodies. Together they frame an invented discourse of Black sexuality'" (cited in Scheper, 2007, p. 96).

subject positions' (Sweeney-Risko, 2018 p 511). *La Danse des Bananas* costume provoke oppositional responses; bell hooks, for whom Beyoncé's *Lemonade* video (2016) is neoliberal and lacking intersectionality in its feminist message (hooks, 2016), compared Baker's performance in *La Danse des Bananas* to the display of the Hottentot Venus, reading it through the focus on her 'butt'⁸³ (hooks, 2015, 63).

Into such a space of opposing feminist perspectives, this performance of *jouissance* and otherness reveals a becoming typical of feminine sublimity, an ongoing unfolding of extremes of anxiety and fascination. As images from Baker's past performance 'flash' in the present of contemporary performance, fear and delight around this racialized and self-objectified performance through multiple bananas and jewelry, expand discourses on dance and feminism. In Cheng's conceptualization of Baker's fabricated, sartorial and theatricalized nakedness, her blackness in relation to the costume elements acts as a second skin, a sheath (Cheng, 2010, p. 20), or 'a splendid second skin'(p. 174). She is immersed in the performance of the latter, through which a bodily saturation of experience is communicated to her audience through movement. Inserting herself in multivalent layers of primitivism, feminism, animalism, and homoeroticism (Cheng 2010, p.47), such moments of performance, engaging wonder, offer a paradigm for the ethics of the sublime for it is the '*possibility* of an encounter with the alterity of the other, which for a moment suspends Burke's fear of nothingness and death, that gives the feminine sublime an ethical character' (Zylinska, 2001, p. 5, original

⁸³ Twerking movement, Willson (2020,184) is evident in the YouTube-disseminated recording of *La Danse Des Bananas* at the Follie Bergere (1926). It creates movement feedback between body and the bananas of her costume, captured in words and illustrations since its first performance in 1925, in a performance that propelled Baker into international stardom.

emphasis). Having escaped, through dance, the nothingness and death that segregation could have apportioned her because of the colour of her skin, Baker's performance asks us to consider the specific intertwining of feminism and race, given the concerns that critical race theorists including Patricia Hill Collins, Jayna Browne, bell hooks and Anna Anlin Cheng have expressed in relation to Baker's self-objectification.

The existential struggle by women of colour in the US has been understood as having driven feminism forward. Black feminism historian Ula Taylor (1998) has written about tensions that go back to black women slavery abolitionism from the middle of the 19th century, noting how white feminist organisations, through decades, excluded black women from the fight for emancipation and for the vote. Historian Aileen Kraditor supports this noting that the suffrage movement of white women fought in isolation from racial issues (1968). Notwithstanding 'African American women have aggressively shaped feminist theory and praxis to include issues unique to them'(Taylor 1998, p251). The radicality of US feminism may owe much to the triple struggle of black women, on gender, race and class, and the resilience instilled by such resistance on multiple forms. The groundswell of modernist female performers, including Maud Allen, Loie Fuller, Isadora Duncan and Ruth St Denis, and later followed by Josephine Baker and Martha Graham, as the fight for women's suffrage intensified in the US by the turn of the century, may have also benefited from such triple struggles. Racism remains as an insidious presence however, as legacies of centuries of slavery did not end with segregation or suffrage. Black women continue to deal with intersecting gender, race and class inequalities. These are eloquently articulated in prolific scholarship since the 1970s, including by bell hooks in *Ain't I a woman, Black women and Feminism* (1981), Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved* on slavery, Kimberle Crenshaw's *Demarginalizing the intersection of race and*

sex (1989) on intersectionality, and Hill Collins (1990) through 'standpoint feminism'⁸⁴, amongst others. White feminists such as Elizabeth Spelman (1988) have also questioned, drawing on bell hooks and others, the universal, undifferentiated female experience in Simone De Beauvoir foundational text *The Second Sex* ([1949] 1953). Such questioning is at the core of Sabine Broek's recent theorising in *Gender and the Abjection of Blackness* (2018). Contemporary feminist movements are not immune from the erasure of black voices. Recent statistical analysis of tweets from the Hashtag MeToo campaign found that white twitter use overshadowed the reporting of violence by women of colour who had started that very movement (Mueller et al., 2021:22). Such questioning is also reaching wider audiences particularly following George Floyd's killing; Robin di Angelo's *White Fragility* (2018) for example made the New York Times bestsellers list, drawing attention to white supremacy and privilege in liberal contexts that are normatively pro-women.⁸⁵

Such entrenched systemic misogynist racism has colonial roots. Recently Linda Martin Alcoff in 'Decolonising Feminist Theory, Latina contributions to the debate' (2020) has called for geopolitical, material and local engagements that go beyond the presumption that fixed gender binaries pre-existed European settlements. Offering evidence of the contrary, she concludes that gender roles were in fact imported colonial tropes. Alcoff decries a trend of 'feminist imperialism' which aligns with neo-liberal, neo-colonial and racist objectives. Highlighting the connections between imperialism, white supremacy, capitalism and

⁸⁴ Standpoint feminism informs and is similar to situated knowledges discussed in the next section of this thesis via Haraway.

⁸⁵ This book however was criticised by John McWorther who perceives it as intended to make white readers feel better about themselves in a way that does not address the black experience, in his review titled 'The Dehumanizing Condescension of *White Fragility*' (2021)

patriarchy bell hooks concluded that 'feminism, as liberation struggle, must exist apart from and as part of the larger struggle to eradicate domination in all forms' (hooks 1989, p. 22). The interdependence of the dismantling of the patriarchy as social, post-colonial, racial, and gender justice, renders necessary an expanded, feminist approach to the study of histories, cultures, performances and costumes, as 'gender ideology permeates deeply in every other ideological system' (Alcoff 1996, p.20).

Concluding a feminist, post-colonial exposition that exceeds the ideas that underpin CiP, certain points come to the fore. Firstly, the instrumentality of objectified female display through costume has been, and continues to be, critical in the entrenching of hegemonic masculine political power and wealth positions, as in the various versions of staged and televised 'harems' as much as in the canonisation of slave characters in 19th century stages. Secondly that costumed performances and the immersion in performance practices and costumes appropriated from colonised cultures greatly enhanced the potential of white female Western performers to succeed in forging new femininities in ways that have enabled the transforming of dance practices in Europe and North America. Lastly, read through material and performative entanglements via ethics and aesthetics of the feminine sublime, black performers Olga Brown and Josephine Baker provided subaltern challenges to systemic oppression and erasure. The feminine sublime has provided a porous framework that, in bearing witness to the horror of oppression can also engage its opposite through costume and performance, proposing radical alternatives. These enable extremes of abjection and identification to coexist in performances by female dancers who may have escaped, like Baker did, Taylorist chorus line machine. Immersed into active and interactive costumes, albeit ones that could include in different ways their own epidermis, Baker, Brown, St Denis, Allen, Fuller,

Duncan, and also Martha Graham whom we shall discuss later, through dynamic and plastic costumed performances, with shedding normative costuming while baring skin, eschewed aspects of their own subjectivities in order to engage their and/or the audience's other. These artists could become not only harbingers of new femininities, but also of cultural transformations as Baker is associated with Art Deco, St Denis with modern dance, Allen with Salomania, Fuller with Art Nouveau, Duncan with natural dance, and Graham with contemporary dance. Knowingly or unknowingly, such transformative dancing related to appropriations, exchanges, identifications or even abjections and objectifications through the influences of performances and costumes from the Global South, especially India and the Middle East, as well as coming into existence in the context of struggle for human rights by Black feminists that followed enslavement and Civil War in the US, and that, on certain fronts, are ongoing.

In the relinquishing of selfhood in favour of expressive and subsuming materialities, a displacement of subjectivity onto the costume-as-object is enacted, in which the dispersal of the self as 'site of self-empowerment' (Freeman, 1995, p. 19) through costume and its materiality engages the world of the audience and beyond (CiP, Chapter 2, see also Barbieri and Crawley, 2019). Pursuing ethical entanglements in material performances may remind us that 'our cherished subjectivity is borrowed magic, that our subjecthood bears unbearable proximity to objecthood' (Cheng, 2010, p. 20) especially if perceived through the idea of 'human bodies made inhuman' (Cheng, 2010, p. 12) that costumes can enable through their workings. As I shall mention in the next section on new materialism, through the care of its materiality, costume implicates the voice of the subaltern.

In the exposition of the workings and agencies of costume provided by CiP, its re-reading in the next and final section of this thesis moves onto new materialism, connecting the situated position of practice within broader philosophical thinking to further entangle ethical orientations⁸⁶ and consider future avenues of this research. Through the latter we may note how costume inhumanity may attend to the human in ways that benefit both, or, as with the feminine sublime, human and non-human assimilate one another to face up to oppressive domination through costume.

Part 3: New materialist costume

Hybridity, material-discursive, material-semiotic and ethical entanglements

In engaging with new materialism my intention is to entangle in discourses around costume notions of subalternity given that women, people of colour, LGBTQ+ and groups constituted as 'other' by the hetero patriarchy have been excluded from the uplands of humanist thought. They have not always specifically perceived themselves as autonomous singularities as proposed by the sublime, pointing towards not only a different concept of the human reflecting on differing ways of researching (Braidotti, 2013). Rather, heterogenous 'subaltern' groups are relational and dependant on material entanglements of human and non-human agencies (Jarrett, 2019)⁸⁷. The performances I have returned to through an expanded reading of the feminine sublime have demonstrated the capacity to materialise counter-hegemonic embodiments able to transform certain performers' identities as well as their performance in

⁸⁶ I refer here to Sara Ahmed sense of 'orientation', as in this thesis I have sought to focus on 'a world that is not oriented around whiteness' (2006) that aligns with what Ahmed considers queering of phenomenology.

⁸⁷ Jarrett discussed this in relation to digital labour.

communion with the material costume with which they interact and even merged. Such transformative action is implicit in the workings of costume which can co-perform a range of outcomes depending on their instrumentalizations and contexts. These can, as found in CiP, further oppressive and self-serving systems as well oppose them.

Beyond a critique of self-possession and oppressive instrumentality⁸⁸, the focus on material performativity in CiP and in this thesis (as the mechanism through which costume becomes agentive) is motivated by the knowledge that, at the very least from an urgent ecological perspective, we are all made vulnerable by a neglect of the matter that shapes performance practices as much as our communal existence on the planet. The latter is rendered increasingly more fragile for ‘subaltern’ groups from the Global South – and particularly women – that are most vulnerable as discussed in Part 2. We have seen colonised India generated costume-led performance such as those of the Nautch female dancers, who, having largely unimpeded access to the US between 1880 and 1907, impacted on the materiality and movement of emancipatory dances by Duncan, Allen, Fuller and St Denis advancing both their careers and the development of modern dance. St Denis in particular, in her debut in the ‘oriental’ dance *Radha* (1906, figure 4.18), absorbed ‘skin colour’, cultural costume, and movement, reshaping a transformed identity through a performance of likeness to Nautch dances as Srinivasan writes in *Sweating Saris* (2011). If Nautch dancers were considered unworthy, and, alongside many other marginalised racialised groups, barred from entering the US by anti-Asian immigration laws in 1907 (Srinivasan, 2009), their appropriated costume-centric materiality

⁸⁸ The *ballet de cour* costumes, Louis XIV’s Roi de Soleil dance of absolutist rule over his people, (pp. 41-2) as well as to the Tiller Girls and subsequent chorus line dance companies are amongst examples offered by CiP.

performing dance left indelible marks, through which hybrid forms emerged, laying the foundations for contemporary dance. Martha Graham who trained with St Denis, exposed the significance of an active materiality of costume, in the symbiosis with the body in movement that St Denis had absorbed from the Nautch dancers. Subsuming her dancer body inside the abstracting, minimalist costume, Graham devised her seminal *Lamentations* (1930), movement in relation to the elastic performativity of the stretchable tube of fabric that pushes back against her (CiP, p. 128, figure 4.26). Looking together at photographic documentation of both performances – *Radha* and *Lamentation* - as Warburg taught us, it is possible to perceive correspondences, notwithstanding their opposing dynamics. It appears as if the centrifugal force of the full Nautch swirling dance skirt adapted by St Denis (figure 4.18) has turned inward, absorbed into the hollowness of Graham’s twisting and stretched tubular form, with different, but equally heightened, affective intensity. Both dancers are in relation to the materiality giving form to the performances that ‘follow the forces and flows of the material’ (Ingold, 2010 p. 10)⁸⁹. In *Lamentation*, moments of trapped grief and haunting loss coalesced via costume and body movement, rather than the entrancing liveliness and expansion of the Nautch dance swirling skirt worn by St Denis. *Lamentation* may mark the moment when Graham disavowed her orientalist past in the St Denis school and dance company (Srinivasan, 2011 p. 104) in favour of a contemporary dance future, whilst continuing to draw from its costume centrality. One may also speculate that *Lamentation* could perform absence of the incalculable otherness of those unnamed Nautch dancers who, in 1904 in Coney Island, affected St Denis, resulting in Radha’s and her ‘oriental’ stage persona.

⁸⁹ Ingold engages Deleuze and Guattari’s (2004) reading of Klee’s diaries and his differentiation between ‘form’ and ‘giving form’. “Form is the end, death’, he wrote. ‘Form-giving is movement, action. Form-giving is life” (Klee, cited in Ingold, 2010:10).

Absent, due to the enforcement of discrimination against migrants enshrined in law in 1907,⁹⁰ Nautch dancers remain virtually affectively present in performances of *Radha*, notwithstanding as Jayda Brown writes, St Denis remaining one of ‘the colonizing women of empire.’ (Brown, 2008 p. 176) underneath her costume, make up and immersion in Hindu culture.

Rendered virtual through exclusion and emulation, these affective performances of relational material performativity exceed – and preceded – the performance, bringing to bear wider concerns such as the predicament of migrant exclusions. Massumi suggests that ‘[a]ffect is autonomous to the degree to which it escapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality, or potential for interaction, it is’ (1996 p. 228). As such, the affective material performances of Nautch dancers’ skirts, as much as Graham’s *Lamentation*’s costume and choreography, function intracorporeally and across time. Costumes here can be akin to the ‘enabling constraints’, the ‘relation’ that ‘gives movement its force’ (Manning, 2009 p. 230) as affective force around which Manning improvises dance.

To emphasise both its relationality and its immanence, Massumi theorises the concept of affect away from emotions that are determined within individual subjects. Barad removes individual entities entirely in the ‘world’s becoming’, explaining the performativity of matter from a post-humanist, quantum-physics informed perspective (2003, 2007). Human and non-human matter creates meaning through becomings, rather than shaped by words, as

⁹⁰ Srinivasan writes about their presence before 1907 and disappearance from the record after, St Denis met other members of the company when she toured India, decades later, but not the dancers that had inspired her.

'[m]atter is not figured as a mere effect or product of discursive practices, but rather as an agentive factor in its iterative materialization' (Barad, 2012 p. 32). The performativity of costume in the study of historical performance as demonstrated by CiP can be researched in movement between iterative performances and contexts, as well as deeply situated in specific moments in time⁹¹. It may be partly accessible through words but as CiP and this thesis have made clear, other visual, material performance records examined in the here-and-now are both object and performance becomings, agentive factors in iterative meaning making in performance and analysis⁹². New materialist approaches are about the present, while accessing historical moments, oriented to bypass temptations of nostalgia, building on the ethics of engagement discussed through the feminine sublime. This enables understanding, repairing, exploring alternatives as, following Derrida, the past is read and understood anew in each present. A Benjaminian 'leaping' through records of costume performances to create constellations that flash in the present, alongside the relationality of Warburg's gestures detected across artworks, align with a Baradian, new materialist 'thick-now'. This engages on-going wider conversations that demand attention to the

⁹¹ In this feminist understandings of costume, intersectional / standpoint feminisms and feminist new materialist ontologies that at first may seem in contradiction (given that the intersection of identities tends to fix the subject in a specific standpoint, while new materialism perceives the subject as in formation, becoming) can co-exist. Costume as conceived in action and performing, lives both in the fixed moment, as made object within a sociocultural network, and in performative relationalities that exceed that moment. Puar, 2012, referring to Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* (1985), makes a similar point in more widely applicable terms in 'I Would Rather be a Cyborg Than a Goddess: Intersectionality, Assemblage and Affective Politics'.

⁹² An application of this approach was explored in 'Performativity and this Historical Body' (Barbieri, 2013) which enabled implicitly diffractive methodologies around the performance and history of a single clown jacket from the 1870s. This article provided the blueprint for the approach taken by CiP.

entanglements of race and gender through costume as much as concerns for the future of the planet.

As such, matter's becomings are processes of 'mattering', simultaneously valuing costume 'matter', placing it at the core of performance practice and discourse.⁹³ 'Mattering' as coming into being is an action, a 'doing', that emphasizes the process-based nature of new materialism. Such active valuing of costume matter, as this thesis finds in CiP and extends, demands that agency – and its new materialist double, ethics – be considered more closely.

In Barad's quantum physics' informed agential realism, agency is not simply something someone or something has, it emerges through intra-action, their neo-logism that replaces interaction which 'assumes that there are separate individual agencies that precede their interaction' (2007 p. 33). In considering *Lamentation* and the Nautch dance inflected *Radha*, it is clear that affect and agency are generated through the intra-action between body and performer. When considering costume agency, the body of a performer is implied, but so is other non-human and human matter, within agential apparatuses that can form around ethical considerations, entangled via intra-actions. A costume-led performance is one such apparatus, in a meaningful intra-acting through various human and non-human matterings, implicating wider concerns and ethical dimensions. A Baradian accounting for 'marks on bodies' is also 'an accounting of the apparatuses that enact determinate causal structures, boundaries, properties, and meanings' (2007 p. 340) implicated in the coming into the world

⁹³ Matter is also etymologically generative as the root also of 'mother', Moravansky's *Metamorphism: Material Changes in Architecture* (2017) reminds us, referring to Freud's tenth lecture 'Symbolism in the dream' in 'A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis' (1920)

of a performance. The performers' whose work is discussed in Part 2 were nexuses in material-discursive apparatuses that depended on Nautch dances, exposing new boundaries for female performers through hybrids forms emergent from such appropriating, that were unlike the apparatus of mass-produced, militarized chorus lines.

Barad's immanent ethicality 'allows matter its due as an active participant in the world's becoming, in its ongoing intra-activity' (Barad, 2007 p.136). Material-discursive and performative intra-actions enable us to consider a 'doing' of costume in which 'all bodies, not merely human bodies, come to matter through the world's performativity' (Barad, 2012 p. 32). Ethics and values are intrinsic to the nature of knowing and being; they are about 'accounting for our part of the entangled webs we weave' (2007 p. 384) given that we are never separated from them. 'There is no getting away from ethics', as 'a delicate tissue of ethicality runs through the marrow of being' (Barad, 2007 p. 396). The racist publishing by Duncan in 1927 tears holes in the delicate tissue of the ethicality of her dance. While it may not remove the generative marks on the bodies released from ballet pointe shoes and boned bodices into draped chiton-like costumes, her disavowal of the influences of her contemporaries, whom she othered and racialized, relegates her dance to being an appropriation of classical materiality in materializations of cultural and racial supremacism.

Through the application of diffractive methodology that does not fix *a priori* subject and object and enables the reading of insights from relevant frames of reference through one another (rather than against one another), Barad's approach (2007 p. 30) provides the means

through which costume's agency can be critically analyzed and understood to be practiced.⁹⁴ In an ethico-onto-epistemological agential realism - as Barad inseparably connects these normally distinct frames – the intra-active, agential 'doing' of costume invited by this thesis (and by extension, implicitly, in CiP) supports an engagement with feminist, post-colonial epistemologies, that at the same time decenters, through a focus on the performance costume, the normally prioritized human on-stage performance. To approach race and costume diffractively is to understand the apparatus that created on-stage blackness, construing 'scientifically' miscegenation through polygenism, that placed Sara Baartman as specimen on stage and with whom Josephine Baker's own self-display and parody of stereotype through the banana skirt has been compared. It also implicates the performance of diamante studs on her costume surface, feedback through the costume weight and movement, the position and the proportions of its elements in relation to her body, as well as the implication of its objecthood in intra-acting of her black skin and the audience's experience. Baker's performance has been much imitated, including in the present, through its daring and subversive bodily materiality that challenges propriety as well as objectification and bestiality apportioned to black female bodies. A new materialist perspective has enabled diffracting standpoints and intersectional feminist approaches (for example hooks and Hill Collins) in readings through race studies that engage with the performance of matter, identification and becomings (for example, Cheng). While these present diverging conclusions, costume such as this, with its affective material performances, can embrace complexity by rendering it evident in its multiple embodiments across time.

⁹⁴ For an application of Baradian agential realism to the detailed analysis of costume in a single opera performance, see Barbieri and Crawley 2019.

Addressing costume through new materialism aligns to similarly inflected scholarship in scenography. The latter has engaged, while transforming it, the understanding of practice and its relationship to audiences (McKinney, 2015, 2015b and 2019), while expanding the field beyond performance practice (McKinney and Palmer, 2017; Hann, 2018), addressing areas such as therapeutic approaches to autism (Trimingham, 2017), human environment relationship (Donald, 2016), cultural situatedness (Collins and Brooks, 2017), queering practice (Hann, 2021) and, sustainability (Beer, 2016, 2018, and 2021), calling for change in performance making in response to social and environmental crisis. Underpinned by new materialism, costume scholarship has also found new horizons in addressing ethical concerns through engagements with history and the archive (Schweitzer, 2014; Schweitzer and Zerdy, 2014; Trimingham, 2017; Barbieri, 2013), choral performances and the labour of costume (Barbieri and Crawley, 2019), monstrous bodies (Grew, 2019), spatial and bodily dimensions of realisation processes (Taylor, 2021), intercultural costume-centric rehearsal processes (Laupin, 2019) and ecological approaches (Pantouvaki, Fossheim and Suurla, 2021). A feminist, postcolonial, historical, and new materialist perspective in this thesis in relation to CiP contributes grounds for future research in socially engaged thinking and practicing through costume. A challenge of Eurocentric, long-established binaries and hierarchies is also overdue, given that 'contemporary European subjects of knowledge must meet the ethical obligations to be accountable for their past history and the long shadow it casts on their present-day politics' (Braidotti, 2011 p. 218). As such, CiP perceived through this thesis has enabled me to examine my own position of privilege as British-based European researcher, as much as the position of sites of research I have had access to, to recognize the complexities of inherited histories of performance cultures and oppression, identifiable via the material performances of costume.

As such, costume perceived through matter's relational, intra-active and affective capacities (Barad 2003: 822) does not disregard the human. Rather, the notion of distributed agency brings to the fore 'knowledge as relating [...] matters in the mattering of the world' as Maria Puig de la Bellacasa writes in *Matters of Care* (2017, p. 28), placing care and concern beyond the purely human in meaning making.

Interests and other affectively animated forces— such as concern and care— are decentered and distributed in fields of meaning-making materialities: from being in the intentionality of human subjectivity, they become understood as intimately entangled in the ongoing material remaking of the world.
(Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017 p. 31)

As human and non-human matter are found to be mutually informing and symbiotically agential this implicates the work of several other costume specialists, who are by norm invisible, intent on supporting the performance of the performer. Acknowledging costume's relational, affective and intra-active position draws attention to situated knowledges, advancing the status of those material experts, a largely female, transnational community of practice that has been historically undervalued. Materialist feminist Angela Mc Robbie has identified how blindsiding the agency of dress has contributed to the invisibility of its labour, translating into historically poor working conditions for its workers, noting that feminism needs to address the material conditions of production as well as the representation of women in *Bridging the Gap, Feminism, Fashion and Consumption*, (1997) as exploitative conditions of female labour can be equated with objectification of female bodies.

Feminism underpins the work of post-humanist and new materialist philosophers such as Barad, Braidotti and Haraway whose ideas grew within and alongside science and technologies studies as 'feminist work has marked this endeavour with a commitment to alternative politics of knowledge' (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p.29). Through these two interconnected frames, the relational workings of costume apparatuses - and the meanings and performances these generate - can be articulated as material-discursive intra-acting practices through bodies, images, technology, materials, rails, cutting tables, fitting rooms, in rehearsal, workshops and performance spaces, bringing to bear wider conversations about representation, differing bodies, histories, subaltern speech, ecologies, sustainability, agential materiality, technologies, together with performance situatedness that connect to before and beyond the moment of enactment. As such my practitioner and teaching identities have been extended in the process of writing this thesis, as it has offered the opportunity to consider the position of costume artists, not only in terms of their stake in agential materiality, performative co-creation and sociocultural entanglements, but also in terms of the apparatuses they may create and the ethics these may entangle.

My own gendered situatedness is also enmeshed and furthered in this thesis. I have sharpened my awareness of the notion that Rosi Braidotti, in 'Posthuman Feminist Theory' (2016) surmises from Sandra Harding's standpoint feminism (1986) and Haraway's situated knowledges (1988), that 'being-women-in-the-world is the starting point for all critical reflection on the status of humanity and a jointly articulated political praxis' (2016 p. 675). This was particularly evident in relation to the instrumental serial objectifications discussed in both Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 of CiP, insights advanced here in relation to the phallic gaze,

power, domination and control that remain relevant in the age of the internet and social media in relation to bodily spectacle. The 19th century on-stage dissemination of performed harems and their legacies as bodies, that *en masse* produce and uphold 'certain ordains of things' (Tynan, 2013, cited in CiP p. 29) has led to such serial and affective objectification in Berlusconi's Italy 2009-10 to demonstrate the real power of carnal, costumed materiality.

While a relatively recent turn in performance, costume and scenography, the new materialist, post-humanist scholarly community within the humanities, philosophy and sociology has been posing questions for three decades about the taken-for-granted privileging of human agency in discourses and practices sedimented over millennia of Western historical thought.⁹⁵ The notion of 'man'⁹⁶, as being above a nature that is at 'his' service, emboldens other fixed hierarchical binaries, animal/human, culture/nature, mind/body, subject/object, black/white, and local/global (Braidotti, 2011 p. 218), inexhaustibly establishing interior hierarchies and exclusion zones that produce misogyny, racism, and varieties of discrimination. In terms of defining a history of costume, what Haraway defines as 'the god trick', providing a presumed 'objectivity' (1988 p. 581), brings to mind the lined-up vignettes neatly capturing historical

⁹⁵ While Barad's agential realism and theorising by other new materialists and post-humanists have had a sizable transversal impact on discourses across traditionally bounded disciplines, human-centric subjects such as performance and fashion studies have been slower in engaging with it (Barbieri and Crawley, 2019).

⁹⁶ bell hooks wrote that 'the patriarchy has no gender' (2009) as the male/female binary functions as an axis of oppression entrenched to maintain certain dominant masculinist hegemonies. A male/female balance is reflected in CiP in a director/designer binary, with the contemporary examples directed mostly by men (Ong Ken Seng, Yukio Ninagawa, Michael Keegan Dolan, Richard Jones, Thomas de Mallet Burgess, Robert Wilson, Peter Brook, Matthew Francis, David Pountney and Charlie Edwards, with Pina Bausch, whose work is on the cover, and co-director/designer Ene-Lis Semper as notable exceptions) whereas most designers included are women. New models, including some devised by graduates of the MA Costume at LCF-UAL (eg Daphne Karstens and Kate Lane) promote a co-creative practicing that defies such binaries.

moments of costume, such as Peacock's, discussed earlier in this thesis. Her 'God trick' attests to a history from above that entrenches hierarchies and dominant orders. In 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective' she concludes that 'the only position from which objectivity could not possibly be practiced and honoured is the standpoint of the master [...] whose Eye produces, appropriates and orders all difference.' (1988 p. 587). From her feminist scholarly and activist standpoint, Haraway proposes a partial perspective, one that gives voice to 'the subjugated', which enables the condition from which to 'make rational claims' (p. 589). My hope is that CiP may have made a rational claim that escapes former reductive categorisations of the subject. As this thesis has demonstrated, such rational claims can be furthered to align more sharply with core values that motivated its writing from the very start and are even more relevant now.

To continue in this journey therefore is critical, as Haraway's call for an 'embodied, therefore accountable' and partial, situated perspective, that 'promises something quite extraordinary, that is, knowledge potent for constructing worlds less organised by axes of domination' (1988 p. 585) towards which the human and non-human can work together. As Haraway's object of knowledge, costume can be agential in feminist challenges to power imbalances, as '[s]ituated knowledges require that the object of knowledge be pictured as an actor and agent, not a screen or a ground or a resource, never finally as slave to the master that closes off the dialectic in his unique agency and authorship of "objective" knowledge' (Haraway 1991, p. 198). A situated knowledge approach, presenting costume as actor or agent, is in line with the way CiP claims costume co-authors the performance (CiP, 2017 p. 22-23, see also Barbieri, 2016: 206). Such co-authoring and co-performing can be elaborated through Haraway's notion of vital 'response-ability' (2008). To be response-able is to actively 'become with' the

other, so as to address ethical ways of co-creating, of 'becoming worldly', aware of one's own entanglement with multiple others, human and non-human, rather than being subsumed into oppression and subaltern subjugation.

Attending the advancing of climate change, such response-ability has become more critical, given that privileging human subjects entails taking for granted the world's resources to the detriment of the planet. Entrenched in Western philosophies is the perception that natural resources are, Haraway writes, 'only the raw material of culture' (1988 p. 592). In the context of knowledge creation, objecthood 'guarantees and refreshes the power of the knower, but any status as *agent* in the production of knowledge must be denied to the object' (1988, p. 592). As a biologist and feminist technoscientist, Haraway's initial focus on objects extends into environment and reproductive justice as well as to activist multispecism (2008 and 2018). The status granted to humans is afforded to the environment and non-human matter, such as objects and animals, as together they are framed within the same threat of extinction, generated by systematic destructions of humans, non-humans and the environment that was set in motion with the slave trade and establishing of plantations of colonial rule.⁹⁷

From this perspective, the identification with objects discussed earlier through Cheng's reading of Baker's performance via Picasso's encounter with African art may need to be taken

⁹⁷ Haraway writes that '[s]cholars have long understood that the slave plantation system was the model and motor for the carbon-greedy machine-based factory system that is often cited as an inflection point for the Anthropocene.' (2016, p.206) She draws from the Ethnos symposia held at the University of Aarhus in October 2014, in which participants generated the name Plantationocene for the 'devastating transformation of diverse kinds of human-tended farms, pastures, and forests into extractive and enclosed plantations, relying on slave labor and other forms of exploited, alienated, and usually spatially transported labor. See Tsing et al., "Anthropologists Are Talking about the Anthropocene.'" (2016, p.206)

further. Sara Baartman's display, Nautch dancers' exclusions, the pearls-on-a-string chorus line dancers, and the invisible costume labourers are amongst the many humans that are exploited, regulated, adjected and negated. If humans are routinely exploited, and even cut down⁹⁸ *en masse* by other humans in similar ways to natural resources and non-humans, an entire rethinking of what it is to be human, that engages Barad's entanglements in the fragile tissue of ethicality in agential realism together with Haraway's response-able becoming-with, may begin to consider ways of being in the world in which all matter, human and non-human, may survive.

Specifically here, through the care of both costumes and bodies, via the focus on matter's ability to perform new worldings response-ably, the very conception of performance that acknowledges costume's constitution and interdependence with multiple beings, materials and forces, in which costume is a nexus, proposes a radical departure from established understandings of the subject. Costume-based thinking about performance offer a multiplicity of possibilities in an ongoing 'becoming with' that is the necessary shift as part of the future flourishing of us and the planet.

Breaking down the boundaries between nature and culture that new materialism advocates leads towards hybrid forms via the situated knowledge position of costume, a shift in being-in-the-world in symbiosis of the organic and of technology. Haraway's reclaiming of agency for objects within situated knowledges, concludes by enmeshing, through the notion of 'the

⁹⁸ I write this on 27 January, on Holocaust Memorial Day that commemorates the largest recorded genocide in history. Genocides, however, have continued and continue in various parts of the world.

apparatus of bodily production', 'the organic' and 'facticity' in entities called 'material-semiotic actors' that create meaning and knowledge. She uses the character of Frankenstein to make her point, through whom art and organism, nature and culture, are no longer divided, proposing that bodies, constructed through interaction (which Barad will later turn into intra-action, eschewing individual entities entirely), are also objects of knowledge in ways that are pertinent to how costume may be considered:

[...] bodies as objects of knowledge are material-semiotic generative nodes. Their boundaries materialize in social interaction. Boundaries are drawn by mapping practices; 'objects' do not pre-exist as such. Objects are boundary projects. But boundaries shift from within; boundaries are very tricky. What boundaries provisionally contain remains generative, productive of meanings and bodies. Siting (sighting) boundaries is a risky practice. (1988 p. 595)

As hybrids, costumed bodies, material-semiotic objects of knowledge can also be boundary objects, emerging as nature-culture art-organism generative of potentialities with intrinsic agency. The risky practice of which Haraway writes implies the possibilities of channelling the potency of bodily production in a manner that is devoid of ethics. The use of Frankenstein here may be pertinent in exposing such ambiguity. She had written previously about the lack of innocence in her other metaphorical figure, the cyborg (1985).

The hybridity of the cyborg, part human and part technology, offers partial belongings, constructs that enable the inhabiting of multiple paradigms, eschewing the patriarchy in a post-gender world that involves 'people who have been oppressed in colonial and racial ways'

and is 'understood as a kind of intensified critical understanding of these many threads of production of inequality' (Haraway, 2004 p. 329). Serving to keep women from the stage (also excluded from the audience and public life) the comedic de-gendering and re-gendering through costume in Aristophanes plays in ancient Athens (CiP, 63, figures 3.3a and 3.3b), committed gender ambiguity to play texts, as well as to recorded scenes on painted vases, in a blurring of sexual identities through costume that implicitly questioned the monolithic phallogocentricity at the core of Hellenic sociopolitical and cultural life, much like the comedic exaggerated phallus operating as demonstration of an out of control masculinity. Similar challenges to gender boundaries are found throughout historical times and geocultural sites of performance as cross dressing resolves the historically widespread exclusion of women from performance and public spaces. Hybrids created by cross-dressing women to men on late Victorian stages, instead, present a challenge to social limitation placed on female bodies. Ellen Terry's cross-dressing as Balthazar in multiple revivals of *Merchant of Venice* may have emboldened her dress reform campaign (CiP, pp. 186-193, figure 6.16b), whereas for Sarah Bernhardt successive trouser roles are connected in CiP with her success as sculptor (CiP, 168, figure 6.12a), a transgressing into a traditional male role in which she created dangerous hybrid forms, part-animal part human, such as her *Self-Portrait as Chimera* often referred to as Sphinx (Emerson, 2022). New forms of costume are seen to coalesce as hybridized objects in the Avant-Garde artist-led performances analysed in Melissa Trimingham's Chapter 5, and in the modernist costume inventions by Loïe Fuller and Martha Graham discussed in Chapter 4. The liminality of Chapter 1, in re-thinking costume as boundary object, affords inter-cultural performances such as *Search Hamlet* with its Butoh ghost to be considered as a hybrid between life and death. Then there are the human animal hybrids that trouble boundaries through time, geographies, cultural practices of performance, through the

shaman/satyr/fawn/swan transformation that runs through Chapter 1, and that sets off the investigation in CiP of performing bodies that, through costume, emerge as more than human hybrids.

Hybridity through costume is often the means to anthropomorphise stories as noted in new materialist framings of contemporary opera costume (Barbieri and Crawley, 2019 p. 154) that, citing Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter* (2010) via Erin Manning's *Always More than One* (2013) is efficacious because it 'works against anthropocentrism: a chord is struck between person and thing, and I am no longer above or outside a nonhuman 'environment''. (Bennett, 2010, 120). Hence hybridity and anthropomorphising embody meaningful ways in which costume matters as the starting point. As Haraway reminds us in material-semiotic meaning making terms, 'it matters what matters we use to think other matters with' (2016 p.12).

As well as through hybridity shaping stories through human and non-human matter, performance and meaning, costume can also shape forms of performance across time. From the partial perspective of costume at work in this thesis as hybrids, and material-semiotics agents, costume temporarily marks bodies in ways that, through repetition, may be rendered permanent, such as 'authentic' Shakespearean costume that became normative through imitations of Planché's antiquarianism in the 19th century in Britain. More efficacious in giving form to practices are the canonical costumes that shaped over time *commedia dell'arte*, and the pointe shoes and tutus in 1830s Paris that become fixed into forms that retain material affectivity and movement.

Hence the significance of the canonical Nautch costumes and dances that would have taken centuries and myriads of intra-actions to materialise and were so swiftly channelled into St Denis' *Radha*. From the partial perspective of costume, the knowledges of dance and culture becomes evident through an accountability for the marks on bodies that the cyborg hybridity of costume reveals.

A Cyborg Manifesto (1985) in proposing an ontological position does not escape charges of universalizing in its utopian proposal of an entirely new way of considering human and non-humans as cyborg assemblages (Puar, 2012). Malini Johar Schueller proposes that the situated and locatable knowledges on which Haraway expands later in her body of work (1988), pose a direct challenge to the cyborg analogy in relationship to women of colour - that Haraway purposefully implicates – considering them homogenising and imperial (Schueller, 2005, p. 79). Spivak's warning against the risk of speaking for others and the demand that the subaltern to be allowed to speak align with the criticism raised here. New materialism, that partly emerged from Haraway's cyborg / natureculture feminism has been under attack, in performance studies, for the neglect of the human for example from Andrew Sofer (2016) and Rebecca Schneider (2015).⁹⁹

However, in the context of this thesis, CiP, my practice and teaching, the ontological shift embodied by the cyborg, as 'a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction' (Haraway 1991 p. 149) that complexities in the nascent study of costume can find expression. In the 'doings' and 'makings' of costume, in apparatuses created

⁹⁹ See more on this in Barbieri and Crawley (2019)

through situated practice knowledges, paying attention to material performativity and intra-actions over time and space. The articulation of the case against appropriation, for example, benefits from valuing relational, situated, material-discursive entanglement of bodies and matter, as the ill-conceived 'borrowings' of culturally specific costume may tear holes in the delicate tissue of ethicality that, in Baradian terms, runs through every agential intra-action and binds us all to the world's becomings (2007). Such distributed agency (Bennett, 2010) prioritizes interdependences in coming into being of matter and meaning in the granularity of the material discursivity of practices. The promise of something quite extraordinary in relation to situated knowledges and material embodied practices such as costume, is via 'mattering', in the connecting to the planet, universe and other beings, and can be generative of potentialities in re-ordering our being in the world away from axes of domination.

Practice-centred costume research has fully embraced new materialism in the recently published 6.2 edition of *Studies in Costume and Performance* on Critical Costume: Costume Agency¹⁰⁰, edited by Sofia Pantouvaki and Barbora Příhodová. In this special issue that emerged from the 2020 Critical Costume conference and concurrent Costume Agency online exhibition, the contributions approach the notion of costume agency through an explicit new materialism perspective. These includes addressing culturally and situated knowledges (Chatterjee, 2021), practice transformations (Christina Lindgren, 2021), political agency (Vieira dos Santos (2021), thing theory (Gurnos-Davies (2021), creative methods (Marshall,

¹⁰⁰ While I have written on 'the agency of costume' (2012) from the context of the archive, Schneider recognises the agency of 'props, sets, lights, sound, makeup, and all the backstage machinery' (2015: 14) in performance. This special issue was dedicated to the Critical Costume 2020, titled Costume Agency, on-line conference and concomitant on-line exhibition, organized by Christina Lingdren and Sodja Lotker, with curation by Yuka Oyama.

2021), ecological practice (Man, 2021), technology (Hrga and Frumen, 2021), and site (Ceschi and Lane, 2021). While this demonstrates the breadth of application of costume thinking through a new materialist lens to a range of contexts, it is significant that '[m]ost (if not all) of the contributors to this issue are active artists, costume designers, scenographers (and a choreographer)' (Pantouvaki and Príhodová, 2021 p.148) confirming the significance of new materialisms to creative practice.

Clothes have always been implicitly agential, as Virginia Woolf writes in *Orland* '[v]ain trifles as they seem, clothes have, they say, more important offices than to merely keep us warm. They change our view of the world and the world's view of us [...]. There is much to support the view that *it is clothes that wear us and not we them*; we may make them take the mould of arm or breast, but they mould our hearts, our brains, our tongues to their liking.' (1960 [1928], p. 170-1, my italics). They may change our view of the world, but can also be an extension of the soul as Quentin Bell writes in *Human Finery* 'our clothes are too much a part of us for most of us to be entirely indifferent to their condition: it is as though the fabric were indeed a natural extension of the body, or even of the soul' (1976 [1947] p. 19). Bell may have been influenced by Erasmus who in *On Good Manners* (1530) argued that 'clothing is in a way *the body's body*, and from this too one may infer the state of a man's character" (Erasmus, cited in CiP p. 178). In other words, non-human clothes, or costumes, may have always stood in for what is perceived as human, including gender, soul, and character. Practitioners across the world know this, and understand the significant responsibility placed on their work. Care and concern is for an expertise largely dependent on materials, technologies and a community of practice to function agentially to transcends purely individualist, human-centric notions of being in the worlds. In a very real manner costumed bodies may have always been

more than human in way that allow agency that emerges from its dispersal into wider concerns.

New materialism deepens and complicates this awareness even when looking at historical material, offering a theoretical expression, a grammar, processes, analogies, entangled ethicality and the intellectual tools to analyse our practice from a more empowered position as this thesis and by extension CiP has permitted me to do.

Conclusion:

Productively complicating costume further

Costume as a practice has been characterised by precarity and operational invisibility¹⁰¹ that has only begun to be addressed through research over the last ten years¹⁰². In writing CiP my intention was to render costume's rich complexity and participation in the world becoming visible through multiple 'constellations' defined by the material performances and embodiments of costume.

Part 2 of this thesis, has enabled me to expand the intersecting of feminism and anti-colonialism focusing on specific performances analysed in CiP, initially in Chapter 4 and

¹⁰¹ Barthes has written that costume 'must pass unnoticed' and that 'we must see and not notice it' so as not to distract from its role of supporting the play ([1955] 2010 p. 209) in his essay titled 'The Diseases of Costume' he pathologizes costume as a potential parasitic sign. Evidence confirms that a moralising attitude towards costume is not uncommon in present practice and reception, its blind-siding by reviewers has been discussed in Barbieri 202.

¹⁰² In the anglosphere, Monks, 2010, marks the beginning of sustained research in the subject that includes Schweitzer 2011, Barbieri 2012, Hann & Beck 2014, Hannah 2014, Pantouvaki 2014, and Bugg 2014.

gradually expanding in relevant sections across other chapters, and to advance these in ways that have also challenged certain aspects of the book, making a case for a second edition that includes a fuller engagement with, for example, Isadora Duncan's racism. Equally aspects such as appropriation and subaltern speech that were only briefly made explicit in CiP could come to the fore in a revised version of the book, including the discussion on the present and absent Nautch costume in early modernist and feminist dance. In broadening a feminist standpoint through this thesis, my intention has been to go beyond the feminine sublime to address objectification and post-colonial intersection which would also find space in an expanded edition, particularly in relation to the slave trade and colonialism.

A second project that may emerge from Part 2 should respond to the need for engaging voices other than Eurocentric, white ones, not only to 'grow' costume scholarship but also to give value to practices, cultures and communities whose work does not find a space in the archive or even the main stage, and to begin to rebalance discourse away from the established canon, with the intention of creating new canons. A future publication should be an international collaboration with scholars and practitioners from the Global South, the Global majority. Rather than expanding across time, such a collaboration may focus on specific geographies of performance around costume and in the here and now, emboldening partial perspectives and situated knowledges, foregrounding natureculture and the interdependence of human and non-humans matter, practices, communities and the environment.

In the unfolding of the methodologies of CiP in Part 1 of this thesis, I have made explicit and expanded on the theories and methods shaping CiP's chapters, and the relationship between images that map meaningful constellations. Claiming the uniqueness of this approach as one

of the contributions to knowledge that CiP and the analysis in this thesis permit. Understanding of time articulated through Benjaminian and Derridean theories as well Warburgian approaches enabled a questioning of accepted notions of historical authenticity – characteristic of the expectations placed upon costume - easily instrumentalized in the entrenching of privilege via the manipulation of historical pasts. Thus, this thesis strengthens the ethical, affective and methodological framing that precedes and exceeds costumes and performance, delimited in the contemporary examples that conclude Chapter 6 and CiP (p.193-211) and each of the preceding chapters. Through feminist and anti-colonial framing, CiP is placed here in relation to the current race relation crises and the Me Too campaign in ways that also implicate centuries of European colonial expansion and Euro-American slavery.

Part 3 has addressed the materiality of costume and bodies, that render it conversant with wider concerns, through the ontological shift that new materialism permits by dissolving binaries such as subject/object and nature/culture. Such deepening of theory may germinate the seeds of eco-activism and social justice in me as practitioner and teacher, given the vitality of matter in the aliveness of Barad and Haraway's theories, in which agential intra-actions as part of discursive practices that produce costume hybridity, are a call to action and accountability for the part I play in the world becomings. Part 3 emboldens a practicing and a thinking dependant on re-considered costume apparatuses, accepting the partial perspective that situated knowledges entails. The promise of a more-than-human understanding of costume led performance is not the same as other-than-human. The human remains implicated in bodily production through the medium of costume, which can be accountable for what Barad calls 'marks on bodies'. Costume as material-semiotic is also processes centred on material discursiveness, involving experts whose agency derives from the

relationship to matter and its performativity. The focus on resistance and persistence through materiality that CiP seeks out from the stories costumes tell, points me back to practice-centred and performance centred research.

In conclusion, writing this thesis has taken me beyond the initial aim of demonstrating the contribution to knowledge that CiP makes and has pointed towards areas of research that need attending through both practice and reflection. Exposing its methodology in Part 1, which presents sustained departure in research and analysis from existing costume scholarship, specifically perceiving the past as present from a partial - situated knowledges - perspective, has led to re-considering, and expanding upon, viewpoints that underpin CiP and that remain critical in the present, such as feminism and anti-colonialism. Finally, transcending both the monograph and limits set by the field through new materialism, makes it possible to perceive future articulations of both practice and theorising intent on provoking change from an expanded costume perspective.

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Appendix 1

1. Fashion Theory, by J. Gall

Gall, J., 2019. *Costume in Performance: Materiality, Culture, and the Body: Donatella Barbieri, with a contribution by Melissa Trimmingham* (Bloomsbury Academic, London and New York, 2017).

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2. Theatre Topics, by S Strauss

Strauss, S., 2017. *Costume in Performance: Materiality, Culture, and the Body* by Donatella Barbieri. *Theatre Topics*, 27(3), pp.241-242.

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3. Visual Anthropology Review, by J Valk

Valk, J., 2019. *Costume in Performance: Materiality, Culture, and the Body* By Donatella Barbieri (with a contribution from Melissa Trimmingham). London: Bloomsbury, 2017.

<https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/var.12181>

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4. Fashion Style and Popular Culture, by DW Arrington

Arrington, D.W., 2019. *Costume in Performance: Materiality, Culture, and the Body. Fashion, Style, & Popular Culture*, 6(1), pp.123-126.

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5. Studies in Costume and Performance, by Peta Tait.

Tait, P., 2018. *COSTUME IN PERFORMANCE: MATERIALITY, CULTURE, AND THE BODY. Studies in Costume & Performance*, 3(2), pp.211-214.

<https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA564607584&sid=googleScholar&v=2.1&>

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6. Theatre and Performance Design by Amy Holt,

Holt, A., 2020. *Costume in performance: materiality, culture, and the body: by Donatella Barbieri, with a contribution by Melissa Trimmingham*, Bloomsbury, 2017

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Appendix 2

Curriculum

Donatella Barbieri

Senior Research Fellow and Principal Lecturer in Design for Performance
London College of Fashion: University of the Arts London
20 John Princes Street, London, W1G 0BJ
email: d.barbieri@fashion.arts.ac.uk

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

London College of Fashion: University of the Arts London

2014 - current, Senior Research Fellow and Principal Lecturer in Design for Performance.
PhD Director of Studies, and Leader, MA Costume Design for Performance.

2010 - 2014, Joint V&A/LCF Research Fellow, based in the V&A Research Department. Also,
Unit Leader, MA Costume and PhD supervisor at LCF.

2008 – 2010, Director of Programmes, Graduate School, Design Cluster, which included: MA
Costume Design for Performance, MA Fashion Design and Technology, MA Fashion Artefact,
MA Fashion Footwear, Graduate Diploma in Pattern Cutting and Garment Technology, and
Graduate Diploma in Fashion Design Technology.

2006 – 2010, Founding Course Director, MA Costume Design for Performance.

2002 – 2006, Director of Programmes, Performance, establishing the BA (Hons) Costume, BA
(Hons) Make-up and BA (Hons) Technical Effects.

2000 – 2002, Course Director BA (Hons) Costume, Technical Effects and Make-up for the
Performing Arts.

Rose Bruford College

1993-2000, Founding Course Director, BA (Hons) Theatre Design, the first undergraduate
course on the subject offered within a drama college in the UK. Student successes included
two Linbury Prize winners, an Arts Council bursary winner and participation in the PQ 1999.

Associate Lecturer / Visiting Practitioner

1998. Central Saint Martins, BA Performance Design and Practice.

1994. Central School of Speech and Drama, BA Theatre Practice.

1991-1992 Mountview Drama College, BA Stage Management.

1990-1991 Northbook College, HND Theatre Design and Technical Crafts.

Visiting Appointment

2010-2014 Joint V&A/LCF Research Fellow, based in the V&A Research Department and at Blythe House, V&A Theatre and Performance Archive.

Educational Qualifications

2020-22 PhD by Publication Goldsmith University_DoS Professor Anna Furse

2013 SEDA / CLTAD at UAL PhD Supervision Portfolio

1986 BA (Hons) Theatre Design, Central School of Art and Design (now CSM), course directed by now UAL Emerita Professor Pamela Howard.

1982 Art and Design Foundation Diploma, Central School of Art and Design, course directed by now UAL Emerita Professor Margaret Buck.

Selected Faculty Service

2020 – current. UAL TECHNE doctoral award reviewer, for performance subjects.

2010 – current. LCF Design for Performance Research Hub Leader and founder.

2016 – current. Performing Dress Lab, contributor to its development and events.

2008 – 2010. ‘Thinking through Performance’ research group, with Professor Helen Thomas.

2007 – 2009. UAL special committee for the potential merger of London Studio Centre dance school and CSM, representing LCF Performance.

2008 – 2010. Chair of MA Costume Course Committee as Director of Programmes for the Design Cluster, Graduate School.

2008 – 2010. School of Design, Senior Staff Team – as Director of Programmes for the Design Cluster.

2002. Organiser of the validation committee for performance, with invited industry advisors from 3 distinct areas of theatre and television industry.

2000 – 2020. Member of various panels for academic appointments related to LCF performance and media subject areas, mostly for Lecturer, Senior and Principal Lecturer posts, also for Research Fellow: Design for Performance in 2009.

Selected HE External examinations, appointments and validations

2014 – 2018. Queen Margaret University – External Examiner, BA (Hons) Costume Design and Construction.

2011 – 2015. External Examiner, BA (Hons) Costume, Rose Bruford College.

2010. External Member for academic appointment of the newly validated BA Course Director, IADT Dún Laoghaire, Ireland

2006 – 2009. External Examiner, BA (Hons) Theatre Design – Croydon College of Art and Design

2004. Advisor for the revalidation of the BA (Hons) Costume for Stage and Screen, IAB

2001 – 2004 External Examiner for BA (Hons) Theatre Design, Wimbledon School of Art.

2000. Academic Review and Validations Panels: Wimbledon School of Art (prior to joining UAL)

Selected External Appointments and Memberships

2021 – current Co-convener Scenography Working Group for IFTR.

2019 – current Member of International Federation of Theatre Research (IFTR)

- 2015 – current Steering board member, Critical Costume International Group.
- 2014 – current Board Member, Society of British Theatre Designers.
- 2019 – 2020 UK representative, Costume Agency research project.
- 2013 Initiator and co-curator, Costume in Action, World Stage Design, Cardiff.
- 2012 PSi Performance Studies International member.
- 2008 – 2011 Theatre and Performance Research Association. Co-convenor Scenography WG
- 2007 Curator for Scenofest Costume, PQ 2007
- 2006 – 2007 International Advisor for Prague Quadrennial 2007, Czech Theatre Institute.
- 2003 – current Member of Oistat (International Organisation of Scenographers and Theatre Architects)
- 2003 – current Member of Oistat Costume Designers working group.
- 2003 – 2010 Member of Oistat Education Committee
- 1999 – 2010 Founding Member of ACTD Association of Courses in Theatre Design (now PDEC)

Fellowships and Awards

Awarded the **2019 Prague Quadrennial Best Scenography and Performance Design Publication Award** for *Costume in Performance, Materiality, Culture and the Body* (2017), also shortlisted for the **Society of British Theatre Research 2018** book award. In both cases, this was the first book on costume to reach this level of recognition, its translation in Russian in 2022.

Awarded the **Joint Research Fellowship, V&A/LCF, 2010-14** to advance research in costume through the archive and the museum, via research publishing, the founding a specialist journal, as well as producing collaborative film-based research in the archive and bring costume-based performance to the museum.

Awarded the **2004 [Teaching and Professional Practice Fellowship by UAL](#)** to develop the international foundations for a methodological shift that, extended to pedagogy, underpinned to validation of the experimental MA Costume Design for Performance, 2006, and subsequent development of the study of costume at PhD level.

RESEARCH PUBLISHING

Selected Publications

Barbieri, D., 2020, [The body as matter of costume: a phenomenological practice](#), in S. Pantouvaki & P. McNeil (eds) *Performance Costume: New Perspectives*, Bloomsbury Academic, London and New York. pp 197-212

Barbieri, D. and Pantouvaki, S., 2020. Costume and ethics: Reflections on past, present and future entanglements. *Studies in Costume & Performance*, 5(1), pp.3-11.

Pantouvaki, S., Barbieri, D. and Isaac, V., 2020. Costume as an agent for ethical praxis. *Studies in Costume & Performance*, 5(2), pp.145-152.

Barbieri, D. & Crawley, G., 2019, [The scenographic, costumed chorus, agency and the performance of matter: A new materialist approach to costume](#). *International Journal of Fashion Studies*, 6 (2).

Barbieri, D. and Osmond, S., 2019. At the still point. *Studies in Costume & Performance*, 4(1), pp.3-9.

Barbieri, D., 2018, *Shakespeare and Costume* by Patricia Lennox and Bella Mirabella. *Costume: Journal of the Costume Society of Great Britain*. 50(1), 2018.

Barbieri, D. & Pantouvaki, S., 2018, Cross-pollination and Shifting Research and Practice Trajectories; Expanding the Field in Costume Research. *Studies in Costume and Performance* 3 (1) pp 3-10.

Barbieri, D. (2017) [Costume in performance, materiality, culture and the body](#). Bloomsbury Academic: London and New York, 238 pp, with invited chapter contribution by Melissa Trimmingham.

Barbieri, D., 2017. A fertile ground for ideas and reflections. *Studies in Costume & Performance*, 2(1), pp.3-9.

Barbieri, D., 2016, Costume before and beyond the production: Spacelab costume at Prague Quadrennial 2015. *Studies in Costume & Performance*, 1(2), pp. 199-207.

Barbieri, D., and Pantouvaki, S., 2016, [Towards a philosophy of costume](#). *Studies in costume & performance* 1.1: 3-7.

Trimingham, M. & Barbieri, D., 2016, War, revolution and design: exploring pedagogy, practice-based research and costume for performance through the Russian avant-garde theatre. *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, 36(3), pp. 269-280.

Pantouvaki S. & Barbieri D., 2014, Making Things Present, on exhibition-making and Judith Clark. *Catwalk: The Journal of Beauty, Fashion, and Style*. Vol. 3, pp 77-100.

Barbieri, D., 2013. [Performativity and the historical body: Detecting performance through the archived costume](#). *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, 33(3), pp.281-301.

Crawley, G. & Barbieri D., 2013, Dress, Time and Space: Expanding the Field Through Exhibition Making. In: Black, S. et al. (eds.). *The Berg Handbook of Fashion Studies*. London: Bloomsbury Academic pp. 44-60.

Barbieri, D., 2012, [Costume re-considered, from scenographic box to scenographic body, a practice-based methodology to re-focus performance onto costume](#). *Endyesthai (to dress): Historical, Sociological, and Methodological Approaches*.

Barbieri, D., 2012, [Encounters in the archive: reflections on costume](#). *V&A Online Research Journal*, Summer (4).

Barbieri, D., 2012, 'Re-encounters' accompanying the exhibition *Encounters in the Archive*, held at the V&A. Book produced by Book Works, London, 2012.

Barbieri, D., 2012, Jaqueta de Charlie Keith no Arquivo de Teatro e Performance da Blythe House. *Traje de Cena* (trans. F. Riello) based on keynote delivered at the first ever conference on costume held in Brazil.

Barbieri, D., 2012, *Czech Theatre Costume* by Vera Ptackova, Barbora Prihodova and Simona Rybakova. *Blue Pages, journal of the Society of British Theatre Designers*, December.

Barbieri, D., 2011, Costume expanded at Prague Quadrennial 2011. *Blue Pages, journal of the Society of British Theatre Designers*.

Barbieri, D, 2010, Costume as body, on methods for the re-imagining performance. *Blue Pages, journal of the Society of British Theatre Designers* May.

Barbieri, D., 2007, [Proposing an interdisciplinary, movement-based approach to teaching and learning as applied to design for performance related areas](#). Working paper published in conjunction with Prague Quadrennial 2007.

Barbieri, D., 2006, [An exploration of the application of the Laboratoire d'Étude du Mouvement \(L.E.M.\) pedagogy to the teaching and practice of costume design for performance](#). *Bournemouth Costume Symposium 2006*. Arts University Bournemouth, pp 104-119.

Editorships and peer-reviewing

Founding and principal editor of [Studies in Costume and Performance](#), now in its sixth volume, with co-editors Sofia Pantouvaki and Suzanne Osmond, the first peer reviewed research journal to focus on costume for performance, intended to be a transformative force in discourse and practice, positioning costume as fundamentally interdisciplinary.

Editorial Board member, *Costume*, the Journal of the Costume Society, 2010 – 2015.

Peer reviewer for research journals including *Scene*, *Fashion Theory* and *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, as well as for several chapters, book proposals and full book reviews from Intellect, Routledge and Bloomsbury Academic.

Editor of UK contributions in the global publishing collaboration, *World Scenography 1975-1990*, edited with Kate Dorney, for Organisation Internationale des Scénographes Techniciens et Architectes de Théâtre, 2011.

Recent and selected keynotes and panel presentations

- 2021 [‘The performativity of matter: through time, space, and gesture’](#), keynote for Make 21 Object/Performance CIT, Cork, Ireland.
- 2021 ‘Performing self-empowerment through costume, a feminist practice’. Performance Artistic Research Laboratory (PeARL) HSE University of Art and Design, Moscow (online)
- 2020 ‘Participatory drawings: experienced marks in performance’ panel contribution to the online Drawing and Performance Conference.
- 2020 [‘Costume as Archive of gesture and meaning: its methods and ethics’](#) Critical Costume 2020 Conference pre-recorded research presentation around ‘Precede / inform / (per) form’ artworks exhibited in the Costume Agency exhibition, followed by in-conversation on ethicality and agency with Joslin Mc Kinney.
- 2020 ‘Costume, a Journey in six chapters’ Blue Raincoat Theatre Academy and Yeats Academy of Art and Architecture, Sligo, Ireland.
- 2019 Publication Award Keynote, *Materiality, Culture and the Body*. Prague Quadrennial 2019.
- 2019 ‘Re-imagining Costume: Between the Archive, the Studio and the Rehearsal Room’ Research Seminar 2019, Leeds University. <https://ahc.leeds.ac.uk/performance/events/event/1606/re-imagining-costume-between-the-archive-the-studio-and-the-rehearsal-room>
- 2018 ‘Ethics of embodiment and the dispersal of agency’ Critical Costume Conference 2018, University of Surrey.
- 2018 ‘OISTAT@50, Advancing teaching and research in design’, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.
- 2017 [‘New Intercultural’](#) on cultural appropriation, Taipei National University of the Arts, part of World Stage Design 2017.
- 2017 Keynote, ‘Archives and Meaning Making through Display and Interaction’, at Politics of Fashion in the Museum symposium, Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal.
- 2016 Keynote ‘Writing costume’ Huddersfield University, Costume and Fashion in Context and Practice symposium.

- 2015 ‘In Performance’ or ‘for Performance’ problematizing costume’ at the Critical Costume conference, Aalto University, Helsinki.
- 2013 Oxford Mansfield College ‘The unexplored agency of costume in performance: contexts and propositions’. Interdisciplinary conference on performance.
- 2013 ‘Moving/Drawing/Masking.’ Performed presentation delivered at Layering Reality: Right to Mask symposium, Prague, 2013.
- 2013 Performativity and absence, a view on costume from the archive. Critical Costume, Hedge Hill University.
- 2012 The Labour of costume. Performance Studies International, Leeds University.
- 2012 Ambiguities and absences: creating discourse around costume. OISTAT History and Theory Commission conference, held at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.
- 2012 The performativity of costume through archived objects at the Traje De Cena Conference, Rio De Janeiro, Brazil.
- 2012 The Embodied Researcher: effecting change through the body, creative processes, materials and interaction. Barbican’s Bauhaus Conference, with Melissa Trimmingham.
- 2011 ‘Making Performance out of Costume - Costume as pre-existent to and prefiguring of performance’ For the Authoring Theatre Conference at Central School of Speech and Drama.
- 2010 *Costume (Re)considered* paper delivered at the Endesthai – To Dress: Historical, sociological and methodological approaches. Hellenic Costume Society Conference held at the Benaki Museum of Greek Culture, Athens.
- 2009 [Curating costume back to the centre of performance](#). Scenography Expanded Symposium , Theaterschool Amsterdam.

RESEARCH COMMUNITY BUILDING & SUPERVISION

Research events convening within UAL and externally

IFTR – Co-convenor with Dr Xristina Penna (Derby University) Shifting Centres (in the middle of nowhere) Scenography Working Group, IFTR 2022, Reykjavík, Iceland 20th – 24th June 2022

UAL co-coordinator of For Scenographics TECHNE conflux with Rachel Hann and Ele Slade (Surrey), and Alice Helps (Roehampton). On-going, as suspended in 2020, forthcoming symposium is due to take place in July 2021. The series of events has so far included the following speakers: Felicity Colman, Annamari Almila, Florence Peake, (4th July 2019, at LCF, chaired by Barbieri), Derek Mc Cormak, Chloe Lamford, Tom Scutt, Joslin McKinney, Tanja Beer, Nick J Fox (May 2019) Rachel Hann, Ele Slade, Alice Helps, Donatella Barbieri (April 2019).

Founder and coordinator of LCF Design for Performance Research Hub, its last event, as part of the **UAL Research Season 2021**, ‘Thinking Through Resilience in Performance and Design’ with eight colleagues from CSM, CCW and LCF. Since 2010 this hub has engaged colleagues from across the Univeristy. In 2012, held at LCF, the Barbican Centre and the V&A, the ‘paradigm shift’ series of masterclasses, included Deborah Landis on curation; Melissa Trimmingham on empathy and materiality; and Nicky Gillibrand on creative journeys. In June 2019 ‘Making Performance out of Costume’ convened a panel of emerging UAL-related performance makers, Kate Lane, Sandra Jiminez and Carolina Reikhoff, at Prague Quadrennial 2019, part of the Society of British Theatre Designers events in one of its off-site research hub.

Conceived, and co-curated with Sofia Pantouvaki, **Costume in Action**, an international gathering of costume experts, with 30 events, including masterclasses, talks, workshops, performances and exhibitions at World Stage Design 2013. Presentations from speakers from across the globe included significant practitioners such as Sammy Sheldon Differ, Yves Barre, John Bright, Sabine Snijders, Vin Burham, Robert Allsop, Roma Patel, Chrisi Karvonides, Ramons Ivars and Fausto Viana. <http://www.wsd2013.com/scenofest/costume-in-action/>

Co-convener with Nick Moran (CSSD)- Scenography Working Group: Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA) organizing interim and main yearly conference events, 2008 – 2011.

Chair and co-convener, with Simona Rybakova, of [Extreme Costume Talks](#), run concurrently with the eponymous exhibition, with 12 international speakers, Prague Quadrennial 2011.

In 2010 - 2011, organized with Professor Helen Thomas, two **Thinking through Performance Costume** research symposia in the Hochhouser Auditorium, V&A, a collaboration between Queen Mary University, Central School of Speech and Drama and LCF:UAL.

Peer reviewer for research submissions to conferences and research events for TAPRA, IFTR and Critical Costume since 2009.

External Research grant reviews

2017 The Norwegian Artistic Research Programme, grant for *Costume Agency* led by Oslo Academy of the arts for over £ 600.000

2019 The Wolfson Foundation, new buildings grant for the Royal Shakespeare Company's costume department, £ 50,000.

2019 Galway 2020 European capital of culture, 'Hope it Rains' and 'Waterproof me' funding design competition member of the jury panel.

Research degree-facing training events

2019- current – **TECHNE Conflux For Scenographics**, with Rachel Hann, Ele Slate (Surrey University) and Alice Helps (Roehampton University).

2017 **Research and the Historical Archive of Dress**, initiated and led the application for this TECHNE 'training and development days' event, engaging the Centre for Fashion Curation (CfC), V&A colleagues, and TECHNE research students, now being advanced further by the CfC.

2017 Organised the first two-day **Ethnography workshop** led by Annamari Almila.

2016 and on-going contributions, **Performing Dress Hub**, (UAL, RMIT and Aalto).

2016 Aalto University – Respondent for '**Costume and Research in Finland**' National-level research seminar on costume and related fields.

Research students and viva examinations

PhD completions: Dr Johan Sjernholm, Dr Michele Danjoux and Dr Matteo Augello.

Currently director of studies for: Berthe Foltin (LDOC), Lisa Colpaert and Ilaria Martello (both TECHNE with V&A as external partner), Kami Anderson (Sadler's Wells scholarship), Cassandra Schreiber (awarded funding from Swedish research body) and Jenny Hayton.

UAL Viva internal examiner: Dr Birgitta Hosea (CSM), Dr Sophie Jump (WSA), Dr Katie Barford (WSA) and Dr Ben Askew (CSM).

External Examiner for Queensland University of Technology: Dr Erin Roche

Viva Examiner 2021: National College of Art and Design, Dublin, Dr O'Brien, and Roehampton University, Dr Alice Helps. 2022: Brighton University, Caroline Hamilton

Internal University of the Arts London confirmation examiner for Katie Rees (LCF), Louise Chapman (experimental immersive all-day confirmation process), and Lydia Kaye (CSM).

External practice review pre-examiner doctoral candidate Heini Kiamiri, Aalto University (2021)

PRACTICE AS RESEARCH

Selected participatory somatic methodological laboratories

Material Interactions participatory practice held at LCF and Laban, in London, and DAMU, Academy of Performing Arts, Prague, seeking a radically equal relationship between bodies and matter through movements. Collaborators: Giulia Pecorari (then LCF, now CCW), Pinar Gercek (Mimar Sinan University, Istanbul) and Mary Kate Connolly (Roehampton University). Participants: self-selecting emerging theatre directors and choreographers, architects, designers, puppeteers and acrobats. From its documentation see the collection of images [Precede/Inform/\(Per\)form](#) curated in the Costume Agency online exhibition.

Wearing Space. Space Lab, DAMU, Prague Quadrennial 2015. Methods of material embodiment in costume-led performance. Also at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, London, 2015, Oslo Academy of the Arts, 2016, and Estonia Academy of Arts, 2017. Collaborators: Mary Kate Connolly (Laban) Giulia Pecorari (CSSD). Participants: design academics, designers and performers. Included in *Precede/Inform/(Per)form* and discussed in Barbieri, 2020.

Drawing and Movement into Design Butoh embodiment applied through material fragility, via expendable paper extensions, created over several weeks and destroyed over the course of the laboratory. With Marie Gabrielle Rotie (movement) and Nick Parkin (music composition), held in 2008, theorized in Barbieri, 2020.

Moving/Drawing CLIP/CETL funded investigation into drawing and movement, with performer and movement director Lilo Bower and fine artist Charlotte Hodes, the subject of a methodological working paper (Barbieri, 2007) and chapter (Barbieri, 2020).

Selected costume-led performances

Participatory performance at the Industrial Palace during the Prague Quadrennial 2019, a result of the Material Interactions laboratory.

Producer of **Revolutions in Costume** part of Shakespeare festival at the V&A 2012, held in the Rafael Cartoons Room, lighting Joshua Pharo, music Nick Parkin, with Nadia Malik, works by Panos Labrianidis, Clio Alphas, Vana Giannoula, Giulia Pecorari and Nadia Malik.

Old into New at Extreme Costume: Prague Quadrennial 2011, collaboration with dancer Mary-Kate Connolly from Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, supported by the V&A and the Veletrzní Palace, National Gallery Auditorium, Prague.

Les/Forest at the Disk Theatre, Prague, 2005 then at Prague Quadrennial 2007. Collaboration with Jana Zbořilova from the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (DAMU), devising approaches for the development of performance through costume, methods also embedded in the experimental MA Costume Design at LCF.

Exhibition making

Encounters in the Archive developed in collaboration with the V&A as part of the Transformations and Revelations exhibition, 2012. Interdisciplinary research documenting and analysing, through film, website and published research texts, the close-up interaction around rarely accessed archived costumes with research participants Amy de la Haye, Charlotte Hodes, Nicky Gillibrand, Darren Cabon, Paul Bevan and Claire Christie. The impact of the research is demonstrated in the catalogue *Re-Encounters*, findings evaluated in 'Reflections on Costume' (Barbieri, 2012), its methodology in 'Performativity' (Barbieri, 2013), and it underpins my monograph, Barbieri 2017. The final film, made and edited with film-maker Netia Jones, and links to articles are available online at: www.encountersinthearchive.com.

AHRB funded **Designs for the Performer**, (2002-2005) Fashion Space LCF, 2D>3D Theatre Design Exhibition Millennium Gallery, Sheffield, Theatre Museum, London, parts of which were selected for Prague Quadrennial 2003. Ten performances presented through costumes and quotes from each designer exposed the complex agency of costume. It resulted in designer Nicky Gillibrand receiving the Gold Medal for Costume Design at PQ03, contributing to the UK gaining the Golden Triga. Other designers included: Marie Jeanne Lecca, Emma Ryott, Brigitte Reiffenstuel, Lez Brotherston, Sandy Powell, John Bright, Lucy Orta, Elizabeth Jenyons, and Pamela Howard. Part of this research is included in Barbieri, 2017.

L.E.M. Exhibition. Exhibition of work from *Laboratoire d'Etude du Mouvement* by Pascale Lecoq and Krikor Belekien from the Ecole Jacques Lecoq, created for the OISTAT education symposium held at LCF, 2005, exemplifying innovative methodologies in design for performance advanced through the work. I have written on the L.E.M. extensively and shared the results at international conferences, see proceedings 2006, 2007, 2012 and peer-reviewed chapter 2020.

Selected installations examining embodiments of femininity through costume

The Dance of the Seven Veils in *Opera: Power, Passion and Politics* at the V&A, 2017. R. Strauss Salome's unravelling costume interpreted through the feminine sublime as defined in chapter 4 of my monograph (Barbieri, 2017).

Ariel as Harpy in *Shakespeare in Ten Acts* at the British Library, 2016. Ariel's apparition in *The Tempest* through the aesthetics of the medieval, as defined in chapter 3 of my monograph

(Barbieri, 2017), and mythical female anger. Selected for exhibition for World Stage Design 2017, Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts, TNUA, Taipei, Taiwan.

Gilda, secret 'trophy' daughter. Collaborators: UK Theatre Design 2002-2006 Society of British Theatre Designer national exhibition, 2007. Life-sized 'rag-doll' Gilda, made of costume elements initially created for G. Verdi's [Rigoletto](#), Opera Holland Park.

Selected Group Exhibitions

Blythe House Storyboards, 2011, series of drawing included in *Drawing and the Body* exhibition curated by Charlotte Hodes at the KG52 Gallery in Stockholm.

Moments in Performance, 2008, in *When Photography and Drawing Meet Fashion* curated by Charlotte Hodes, at the Fashion and Textile Resource Centre, Hong Kong.

Designs for Rigoletto, 2007. National Theatre Design Exhibition. Curated and organized by the Society of British Theatre Designers. Waverly gallery, Nottingham Trent University

TEACHING

Pedagogical Advancements and selected students' successes in Design for Performance

2020 July to September, [Special PQ Studio Project](#). Instigator and weekly supervisor for a group of self-selecting and self-driven MA students submitting to this one-off international Design for Performance competition. Their project was one of the few selected for on-line display.

2010 to date, unit leader for 40 Credit Narrative costume for performance, MA Costume Design, which introduces a heterogeneous group of students to practices, ethics and potentialities of costume-led performance. In 2019, three of the students' projects were selected for exhibition at PQ 19, enabling their networking with international designers.

2006-2010 MA Costume validation and leadership. MA Costume established itself as ground-breaking, with its first three cohorts showing at the Royal Academy of Art, Lillian Baylis Studio Sadler's Wells, and in the V&A's Raphael Cartoons Room. Some graduates have gone on to leadership in academia as well as devising new ways to practice. Through research established a pedagogy that, while evolving, continues under course leader Agnes Treplin.

2000-2006 Course Director / Director of Programmes Performance BA Programmes, London College of Fashion. Initially the CD of a single course, I revalidated it into three distinct though symbiotic courses, doubling intake and increasing student satisfaction through international collaborations, professional practice relationships, and students' awards (e.g. BBC Vision).

External & Internal Grant Awards

2019	Material Interactions , - from Prague Quadrennial, £2500, LCF research project funding £ 2500, EU funding via associate Pinar Gercek £ 2500.
2017 V&A	<u>Dance of the Seven Veils</u> costume installation £ 2000
2017 TATT	Taiwan Association of Theatre Technology <u>Ariel as Harpy</u> exhibit in

	Taipei £ 1000 accommodation grant. LCF £ 3000.
2016	British Library – <u>Ariel as Harpy</u> - £ 1000
2015 PQ15	<u>Wearing Space</u> £ 2000 + £ 2000 LCF Research Project fund
2013 OISTAT	<u>Costume in Action</u> for World Stage Design £ 10,000 for the curation of costume events, plus £ 5000 V&A in kind support (flight sponsorship).
2012 STR	Society of Theatre Research, Image copyright £660
2011 PQ11	<u>Old into New</u> , performance research. £ 2000.
2010 V&A	<u>Encounters in the Archive</u> (V&A £ 5000 plus £ 5,000 UAL)
2007 CLIP/CETL	<u>Moving/Drawing</u> , research into movement and for drawing £3,000
2005 Complicite	<u>Laboratoire D’Etude Du Mouvement</u> - Edited and exhibited film £ 1000
2005 Erasmus/DAMU	<u>LES/Forest</u> –practice based performance research £ 3000.
2002 AHRB	<u>Designs for the Performer</u> , £ 5000 plus match funding, LCF, Society of British Theatre Designers and V&A exhibition funding and tour.

Theatre Design Practice. 1986 – 2006. As theatre designer, I have collaborated in wide variety of projects in the UK and in Europe, from fringe to opera establishments and national theatres, including site-specific, large-scale performances in public spaces. Since 2006, I have focused entirely on re-imagining, and radically transforming, established modes of production, which are predicated on fixed hierarchies. Through practice-theory entanglements, I instigated and led participatory and collaborative projects in a range of different contexts, intent on advancing knowledges in design and performance, creating frames through which new types of practices (and practitioners) could emerge.

Appendix 3 – Advert for new post at the V&A.

We are seeking a candidate who is passionate about African and African diaspora music and music cultures, as well as other forms of performance.

This is one of 12 Curator posts that sit in the Performance, Furniture, Textiles and Fashion Department. The post holder will take responsibility for the development, care of, documentation, research, presentation, and interpretation of part of the V&A's Collection, in this case, Africa and Diaspora Performance. The V&A acknowledges that this area of its collections, particularly modern and contemporary music and music cultures, needs to be expanded. This post provides an exciting opportunity to play an active role in curating and developing these collections and contributing to new collection development strategies, as well as displays, exhibitions and public engagement projects.

The post holder will be expected to represent the Museum at the highest level and play an active role in the field of Africa and Diaspora Performance, nationally and internationally. As a member of the FTF/T&P Department, the post holder will also play a role in the wider work of the V&A, contributing to policy, supporting fundraising /income generation, and assisting senior colleagues in the running of the Department, including creating a positive environment, encouraging collaboration across the museum, contributing to change, leading and mentoring Assistant Curators and sharing knowledge, expertise and best practice to help them develop and perform.

The post holder will also play a role in the community of Africa and Diaspora Curators that span the V&A's four curatorial teams, as well as the volunteer African Heritage Tour Guides, liaising with the Programme Manager of African Heritage & Culture at V&A.

Closing date for receipt of applications is 25 July 2021 at 23.59

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