

UCLA

UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Dancing at the Crossroads with Raiz di Polon: Contemporary Dance, Seas of Sodadi and Corporeal Creolization

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/73p11321>

Author

Stranovsky, Sara

Publication Date

2013

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Dancing at the Crossroads with Raiz di Polon:
Contemporary Dance, Seas of Sodadi and Corporeal Creolization.

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Culture & Performance

by

Šara Stranovsky

2013

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Dancing at the Crossroads with Raiz di Polon:
Contemporary Dance, Seas of Sodadi and Corporeal Creolization.

by

Šara Stranovsky

Doctor of Philosophy in Culture and Performance

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor, Allen F. Roberts, Chair

Cape Verde is located at the geographical and cultural crossroads between West Africa, Europe, and the Americas. The archipelago's location physically isolates the islands, while a lack of financial opportunities encourages Cape Verdeans to emigrate to study or work. Cape Verde is a point of union for many nations around the world and many Cape Verdeans identify with being both European and African. The islands are divided culturally and linguistically while united as part of the Cape Verdean *Kriolu* mosaic. Opposition between isolation and union has developed divisions regarding which languages and traditions will be privileged as markers of national identity. These tensions create the context for the archipelago's first contemporary dance company, Raiz di Polon. I show how director Mano Preto has innovated a style that blurs boundaries using techniques rooted in the archipelago's folk practices and informed by intercultural collaboration. Through conducting participatory ethnographic research, accessing archives, collaborating on performances and documenting the company's work, I clarify both the strengths and the constraints of migratory flows, globalization, and the financial need for a

global audience. Four strategies are employed to analyze Raiz di Polon: a grounding of key historical events that built a culture of adaptation and resistance; a discussion of *Kriolu* as a mode of ontological expression to which to compare movement; a dissection of the performance “Cidade Velha” that reimagines the nation through narratives and the development of a “kriolized” movement lexicon; and an examination of RDP as a local, regional, and global dance training center. Five case studies highlight how Raiz di Polon’s impact can be evaluated through festival and musical concert contexts. This project makes the case that RDP succeeds in reclaiming muted postcolonial histories, uniting internal archipelagic divides, and promoting sustainability through the creation of a *corporeal Kriolu* lexicon. I show that RDP is emblematic to Cape Verdeans who seek to officialize Kriolu against contestations regarding the archipelago’s identity as an African Nation. This dissertation shows the impact of dance, art, creolity and globalization on the autonomy of small nations and highlights dance as an important subject of diaspora and globalization studies.

The dissertation of Sara Stranovsky is approved.

Janet O'Shea

Anthony Seeger

David Shorter

Allen Roberts, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2013

DEDICATION

For

My late mother, Sandy Stranovsky, whose tireless dedication to teaching me music, dance, and art has forever propelled my thirst for learning, and whose dream was to see me complete this work.

For

My father and brother, whose support was fundamental to the completion of this work.

For

Cape Verdean performers, artists, and friends whose stories inform this work

For

My mentors from childhood through graduate school who set examples of passionate work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	viii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	x
LIST OF CHARACTERS	xi
GLOSSARY OF KEY WORDS	xiv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	xvii
VITA	xxi
INTRODUCTION	
Morabeza Welcome: Setting the Stage	1
Chapter descriptions	10
Šara/Xara/Sarah in Cape Verde	13
Methods	16
Literature Review	25
CHAPTER ONE: CIRCULATING HISTORIES	
Contrasting Winds: Land to Sea to Stage	45
The Births of Cape Verdean identities	51
Contrasting Regional Identities	60
Language: unofficial vs. official culture	67
Migrations and Nodes of Networks	71
Audience of Strangers?	76
Seas of Sodadi	88
CHAPTER TWO: RAIZ DI POLON IN CAPE VERDE	
Introduction	95
Roots of RDP Syle	98
Mimicry or Invention	106
Contemporary Dance: Liberation from the Style Norm.....	118
CHAPTER THREE: RAIZ DI POLON ON STAGE IN CIDADE VELHA	
Introduction	134
Cidade Velha close analysis	142
The Need for History	145
Narrative Framework Reclaims History	149
In-Transit Architecture as emblems of autonomy	162
Medley and Suite: Uniting Archipelagic Creolity	172
Adaptations and Emotional Infusion	182

Hybrid Visual Objects	185
Free-Form Resemblance	194
Amplified Pathways	198
Chapter Conclusion	202
CHAPTER FOUR: RAIZ DI POLON AS COMMUNITY	
Introduction: Putting words and bodies together.	206
Praia: Cosmopolitan Spaces and Contending winds	212
Place and Space: Community Institution	220
Deepening the Crossroads: Exchanging and Sponging	231
Building a Lexicon: Corporeal Kriolu	249
Borrowing for Missing Words	258
Borrowing for Prestige	260
Borrowing for Fuller expressive Vocabularies	265
Borrowing Accents and Phonetics	268
Borrowing for Comic Effect	275
Chapter Conclusions	279
CHAPTER FIVE: RDP ON CROSSING STAGES	
Introduction	283
Matrix of Identity/Matrix of Othering	284
Festival Mindelact: RDP as African Theater	293
Talentu Strella: RDP as superstar musical accompaniment	305
Café Palkus: RDP as intellectual elite	307
Kommuni: RDP as intercultural experiment	316
Chapter Conclusions	323
CONCLUSIONS: RDP AS THE NATIONAL BALLET OF CAPE VERDE	
Findings and Implications	327
Writing as Place-Making	329
Broader Implications	330
Predictions	336
The Polon by the Sea is the Flower	338
WORKS CITED/BIBLIOGRAPHY	338

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Street Raízes.	xii
Figure 2. Simentera.	3
Figure 3. Grasp the Nation.	44
Figure 4. Water dance.	45
Figure 5. Map of Cape Verde Archipelago.	46
Figure 6. Banana Ride.	56
Figure 7. Crioula.	58
Figure 8. Contrasts.	60
Figure 9. Batuko and Pano di Terra	62
Figure 10. Tabanka procession.	64
Figure 11. Amilcar Cabral images.	66
Figure 12. Diaspora Map	75
Figure 13. Raiz di Polon for China.	86
Figure 14. Sodadi.	88
Figure 15. Montage of Maramar performance.	91
Figure 16: Longing Distance.	94
Figure 17. Dancing in Cape Verde.	95
Figure 18. Arms that Sway.	98
Figure 19. Afrika Rainbow	100
Figure 20. Polon Tree and Roots.	101
Figure 21. A Little of Everything	109
Figure 22. Sambista.	112
Figure 23. Carnival Street.	115
Figure 24. Head Thrash.	119
Figure 25. Chart of Musical and Dance Expressions.	122
Figure 26. Disbanded groups based upon hearsay.	125
Figure 27. Principle Dance Groups in Santiago, 2008-2013	128
Figure 28. Photo Montage of Santiago Dance groups.	130
Figure 29. Making of Cidade Velha.	134
Figure 30. First Five Minutes.	137
Figure 31. Cidade Velha Visual Summary.	140
Figure 32. Pillar Dance.	143
Figure 33: Monastery Forum.	147
Figure 34. Rosy Timas Immersed.	153
Figure 35. Closing.	155
Figure 36. In transit Architectures within Cidade Velha.	166
Figure 37. Medley of Dances.	177
Figure 38. Coladeira.	186
Figure 39. Morna in “Cidade Velha.”	190
Figure 40. Batuko dances.	191

Figure 41. Batuko Scene in “CidadeVelha.”	194
Figure 42. Free Form Resemblance.	196
Figure 43. Colá Dance.	199
Figure 44. Island Hopping.	206
Figure 45. Katchupa Rica.	208
Figure 46. Embodied Katchupa.	210
Figure 47. Waiting.	214
Figure 48. Winds.	215
Figure 49. Plateau from Below.	222
Figure 50. Plateau to Below.	222
Figure 51. School Montage.	225
Figure 52. Ballerinas.	227
Figure 53. Nucleus.	228
Figure 54. Get to Know You.	233
Figure 55. Bety Fernandes.	236
Figure 56. Solo by Maman Sani.	240
Figure 57. Contemporary dance for me is...	241
Figure 58. Trying on Ballet.	246
Figure 59. Making of.	249
Figure 60. Past Present Future.	258
Figure 61. Traditional Funana.	267
Figure 62. Contemporary Funana.	268
Figure 63. Video stills from Project Espera,	273
Figure 64. More video stills from Project Espera,	274
Figure 65. Forti!	277
Figure 66. Tabanka.	278
Figure 67. Connected.	280
Figure 68. Map of Performances according to Richard Schechner.	282
Figure 69. Tangled. “Kommuni.”	283
Figure 70. Inauguration of Mindelact.	295
Figure 71. Mindelact RDP.	304
Figure 72. Talentu Strella Stadium.	305
Figure 73. 2012 Talentu Strella Finals with Raiz di Polon.	312
Figure 74. Café Palkus Audience.	314
Figure 75. Kommuni.	322
Figure 76. Traditional Modern International Regional Local	326
Figure 77. National Steps.	327
Figure 78. New Beginnings.	336
Figure 79. Smiling Flowers.	340

ABBREVIATIONS:

ALUPEC	Alfabeto Unificado para a Escrita do Caboverdiano (Unified Alphabet for Cape Verdean Writing)
CCB	Brazilian Cultural Center
CPLP	Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries)
CCP	Centro Cultural Portugues (Portuguese Cultural Center)
CCF	Centro Cultural Français (French Cultural Center)
IC	Instituto das Comunidades (Institute of the Communities [Cape Verde])
ICIEG	Instituto Caboverdiano para a Igualdade e Equidade de Género (Cape Verdean Institute for Gender Equality and Equity)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
GDP	Gross National Product
GOIPM	Gabinete de Orientação e Inserção Profissional Mulher (Guidance Office and Insertion of the Professional Woman)
MpD	Movimento para Democracia (Movement for Democracy)
OMCV	Organização das Mulheres do Cabo Verde (Organization of Women of Cape Verde)
PAICV	Partido Africano da Independência de Cabo Verde (African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde)
PAIGC	Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde)
RDP	Raiz di Polon (Roots of the Polon Tree)
FBC	Fidjus di Bibinha Cabral (Sons of Bibinha Cabral)
KDM	Kriol Dance Movement (Urban dance company)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

LIST OF REOCCURING CHARACTERS



Figure 1. *Street Raizes. (Street roots.)* Company members of Raiz di Polon, junior company members, and some neighbors gathering for a photograph after filming a dance on a rainy street as part of a dance-video project. (Photo from film-footage in Figure 17) Mano Preto is center, in the white shirt.

ALL IMAGES ARE BY THE AUTHOR UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

Commentaries within the dissertation were derived from multiple ongoing conversations. The following people are portrayed as lead characters and central voices in the collaborative ethnographic story.

Amilcar Monteiro:

Director of Sustainable Tourism in Cape Verde and freelance photographer. Monteiro is from Praia, Santiago and went to college in the United States. He returned to his hometown to help try and spread local tourism for Cape Verdeans who know little about their own backyards.

Bety Fernandes:

Founding member of Raiz di Polon and principle dancer. With her musician husband Ndu Carlos, Fernandes recently opened her own children's performance school in Praia called *Gota Arte* which includes creative dance for children. She has also taught the children's classes in Raiz di Polon's school for over ten years and has been fundamental to expanding and establishing dance expression in the archipelago. She works for a youth organization for income.

Jeff Hessney:

Producer, business manager, musician, and intermittent musical director for Raiz di Polon. Hessney is an American with a BA in anthropology who has lived in Praia for over 15 years who also works as a translator of numerous languages. He is an unofficial cultural consultant and

many people in Cape Verde call him the “walking encyclopedia” for Cape Verdean history and culture.

Kaká Oliveira.

Principle dancer in Raiz di Polon. Oliveira typically teaches the evening adult contemporary dance class. He and I performed a duet during the summer of 2013 for the television show “Talentu Strella” and nonprofit fundraisers. Oliveira also works as a teacher in elementary and middle schools, and implements history classes regarding Cape Verdean music and basic cultural history.

Mano Preto:

Pioneer choreographer and dancer who is the director of all dance activities with Cape Verde’s Ministry of Culture. He is the founder/artistic director of Associação Cultural Raiz di Polon, which includes Raiz di Polon’s company and school. When he and some other friends started Raiz di Polon in 1998, some of the dancers from the original group dissipated while Preto stayed to develop contemporary dance within the islands.

Mario Lucio de Sousa:

Musician and composer who is especially famous for his leadership role in the musical group, Simentera, and who is currently the official composer for Raiz di Polon. Since 2011 Sousa has served as Cape Verde’s Minister of Culture and is currently in 2013. I refer to him as “Mario Lucio,” his artist name, regarding his collaborations with Raiz di Polon, and “Minister de Sousa” when referring to his government role.

Nuno Barreto:

Raiz di Polon company member who is the first Raiz di Polon dancer to launch work in Cape Verde as an independent choreographer. Barreto and I created a performance together called “Kommuni” about intercultural miscommunication based upon our own intercultural exchanges dancing together in the studio. Barreto’s uncommon identification with vegetarianism, Rastafarian religious practices, and radical ideas about what contemporary dance should be, provide tensions within the greater dance community.

Rosy Timas: Principle dancer of Raiz di Polon for over ten years known for her ability to portray quirky and strong characters in dance-theater performances. Timas explains her role as a dancer in an unusual way. “I don’t really think of myself as a dancer or actor. When I’m on stage, I draw from my experiences. I don’t use them to give a character real life. I’m just there. Just me, on stage.”

Suanna Tavares:

Dancer in Raiz di Polon dance company who sees performing and teaching as an honorary cultural ambassadorship. She has lived in Praia her whole life, and works as a merchant in the produce industry when she is not dancing and teaching dance to children. She is the youngest member of Raiz di Polon and moved up from the junior company into the main company in 2008. She is married to Zecca.

Antonio Tavares:

One of the founding members of the first Raiz di Polon and friend of Mano Preto. He moved to Lisbon where he became an accomplished dancer, musician, and choreographer for the Lisbon Opera. He returns yearly to Cape Verde to work with Raiz di Polon during brief visits. He serves as an important voice for speaking on behalf of artists who felt forced to live abroad and who established a career overseas.

Zecca Cardoso:

New member of the Raiz di Polon company since 2008, who trained in the school before entering the main company. He is married to Suzanna and works as a metal smith and carpenter when he is not dancing. He sometimes teaches dance in his community of Kokeru, a small zone within Praia.

Zé Monteiro, also known as “Movimentu Shokanti” (Shocking Movement).

Zé (José) is a young producer living in Brockton, MA, who was one of the directors who organized a youth Exchange program called KulturArte where I first met Raiz di Polon and Mano Preto. Monteiro has worked as a theater teacher in Cape Verde and as a hip-hop artist under the name Movimentu Shokanti. He currently intertwines his artistic identities as the director of arts programming for Cape Verdean Diaspora in Brockton, MA. Monteiro’s commentaries represent one of many important voices from the Cape Verdean diaspora community in the USA.

GLOSSARY OF KEY WORDS¹

Upper and lower case words distinguish proper nouns.

batuko: “Beating.” A drum and dance style using polyrhythm on Santiago Island; it is usually performed by a group of women.

badiu: People from Santiago are called *badiu*, while people from other islands are called *sampadjudu*. The terms come from the slavery period: descendants of the enslaved were considered to be uneducated and vagabonds, or “vadio” in Portuguese, whereas *sambajudu* people—from the Portuguese *só para ajudar*—were there “just to help.” Today, the term *badiu* is spoken with pride and signifies “roots culture,” “roots people,” and “more African” as it refers to people from Santiago. The term also refers to the Santiago dialect of Kriolu.

barlavento: “Windward.” These are the islands in the northern part of the Cape Verdean archipelago.

bruma seca: “Dry mist.” This phrase refers to the booming gusts of powerful winds that characterize the cooling winter-to-spring season. Flights are usually cancelled if *bruma seca* is too frequent.

cabralista: Someone who chooses to identify only with national hero Amílcar Cabral, who stood for the working class and for the distribution of political and economic power. To identify as a *cabralista* is also sometimes superficially utilized as a label of “cool” in the same way that a person may call him or herself “Rastafarian” without necessarily being a practitioner of Rastafarian religious and political beliefs.

cavaquinho: A small 4-stringed instrument used in Lusophone music. The instrument looks like the Hawaiian ukulele except that it has a wider neck and more typically has steel strings.

coladeira: Music and dance idiom endemic to the northern islands, typically performed with *cavaquinhos* and other string instruments and accompanied by a light-footed bouncy couples’ dance.

despedida: “Farewell.” According to translator-linguist Jeff Hessney, a *despedida* refers specifically to the moment when one person departs and others bid farewell. The word comes from the verb, “despedir-se” which means to send away (). Despedida has come to casually mean a farewell party, shortened from the complete phrase, “festa de despedida.” A farewell party is traditionally termed “Ora di Bai,” which corresponds to the Brazilian term, “Bota fora.” I refer to a despedida as both the party and the “moment” in this manuscript, reflecting how the word was used in my personal experience.

¹ Note: Because no Kriolu dictionary exists and because Kriolu is derived from Portugal-based Portuguese, many words can be translated from Portugal-based Portuguese. Sometimes Brazilian meanings apply in Cape Verde, although Portuguese from Portugal is more common. Not all Kriolu meanings can be translated perfectly into Portuguese or English. My explanations are based upon conversations with Cape Verdean linguists and translators simultaneously with consulting the *Routledge Portuguese Bilingual Dictionary* (Allen 2011).

faxi faxi: “Fast fast.” *Faxi faxi* is used in reference to people returning, as in “Please come back *faxi faxi*.”

ferro: “Iron.” A musical instrument consisting of a piece of iron metal scraped with another piece of iron.

funana: A musical and dance tradition originating on Santiago Island that involves a fast-paced rhythm and includes the instruments of accordion, drums (now electronic drum loop), *ferro*, and singing.

katchupa: A traditional stew made from corn, beans, and various meats. A party where the stew is served is called a *katchupada*.

kommuni: A word invented by Nuno and author to signify *comunidade*/community or *comunicação*/communication. The word is “interrupted” as if words like “communi—cation” or “communi—ty” were interrupted. The “k” alludes to creolized Cape Verdean spelling.

Kriola: Also spelled *Krioula* and *Criola*, this is the female term for a Cape Verdean creole person but the word is used colloquially to mean “good-looking young girl.” The word *Kriolo* refers to a male Cape Verdean creole person; however, it does not have the same sexual slang connotation.

Kriolu: *Badiu* spelling of the language Creole. Also spelled *Crioulo* and *Krioulo* in the ALUPEC system (*Alfabeto Unificado para a Escrita do Caboverdiano*/Unified Alphabet for Cape Verdean Writing).

Kriolu fundo: *Fundo* means “deep.” *Kriolu fundo* or *deep Kriolu* is what people call the language used in Santiago rural areas, which is considered to be more closely related to African language dialects.

Kriol: Also spelled Creole, *Krioule*, and *Crioul*, *Kriol* refers to a creole person.

loja Chinesa: Translated to mean “Store Chinese,” this is the common word for general store in Cape Verde; almost all of the general stores, which provide everything from cheap clothing to household items, are owned by Chinese immigrants.

Maramar: A word invented by author and friends for the title of a performance. *Mar* means “ocean” in Portuguese, and *amar* means “to love.” The *Maramar* performance was about Cape Verdean love of the ocean.

morna: A sad, slow, song and dance style. Morna songs often include topics of love, suffering, and *sodadi*. Word etymology for morna has been debated. According to music specialist Lucia Cardoso and translator Jeff Hessney, some people think that the word could have been derived from the Portuguese word, “morno” which means “tepid” in temperature, but tell me that this understanding is speculative. Regarding the form’s history, Cardoso

and Hessney explain that morna has been erroneously linked to the slow and mournful music of Portuguese Fado. However, as musician Vasco Martins has discussed (1988), Portuguese fado developed far after Cape Verdean morna and Brazilian Forro musical forms, but all of them were born in the “Lusophone transatlantic matrix” (Arenas 2011, 65). Both the word etymology and musical origins of the form are still debated, and morna can only be defined by its musical rhythm and form.

mel: Sugar cane nectar or Cape Verdean “honey.”

Merkano(s): “American(s).” This term refers to Cape Verdean-Americans, from the point of view of Cape Verdeans residing in the islands.

nôs ku nôs: “Us with Us.” A Cape Verdean mantra that implies unity and helping one another.

polon: A large tree with intricate roots that is commonly mistaken for a baobab tree, but is a kind of cotton-silk tree in the same family as the baobab.

Plateau: The zone of the capital city of Praia hosting the majority of governmental offices.

Rebelados: “Rebels.” A religious community formed in the 1940s and found primarily in the interior of Santiago Island, *Rebelados* revolted against reforms in the liturgy of the Catholic Church. They became isolated from the rest of society and still live today in a kind of technology and money-free commune near Porto Madeira.

sampadjudu. “Only to help.” Island people are called *sampadjudu*, with the exception being the people from Santiago who are called *badiu*. The terms come from the slavery period: descendants of the enslaved were labeled as “empty” or uneducated, whereas *sambajudu* people—from the Portuguese “só para ajudar”—were there “only to help.”

sodadi: The nostalgia and emotion associated with missing someone; the term is also spelled interchangeably in Cape Verde as *sodad*. It comes from the Portuguese word *saudade* and has no perfect translation in English.

sotavento: The leeward islands in the southern part of the Cape Verdean archipelago.

spera: “Wait.” From the Portuguese “*esperar*” which means to wait.

terra terra: “Earth earth.” The term denotes a sense of roots culture or “back to the roots,” and is a descriptive term for genres of music or dance, but also a general feeling.

tchabeta: Slapping pouches used as percussive drums in *batuko* traditions. The pouches were initially made out of fabric but have been replaced by plastic sand-filled pouches.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I offer special thanks to the mentors, colleagues, family and friends who supported me during the duration of this degree. First and foremost, I am indebted my mentor, Allen Roberts, who has helped profoundly with my writing and supported my intertwined interests regarding scholarship, art-making, and teaching for over six years. More importantly, I am forever grateful for his support related to matters of the heart and life tragedy, inspiring me to recover academically, emotionally, and artistically in ways that cannot be expressed in written form during a time that moving forward seemed impossible. I am also most grateful to David Shorter, whose steadfast support and detailed constructive criticism has helped me to improve my writing and more generally locate my confidence as a scholar and teacher. David Shorter has reshaped the World Arts and Cultures/Dance department, and I have felt this positive change dramatically at the individual level in many ways. I am also most appreciative of Janet O’Shea, for supporting my interests in dance studies and for always helping me understand the difference between “summary” and “argument.” Her particular teaching style and lectures have inspired me to strive for eloquence and detail in my future presentations. I am also grateful to Anthony Seeger, whose advice regarding music and more general positive attitude regarding the fascination and thrills of research have reminded me of why I pursued higher education in cultural studies. Mike Owen Jones, also known as “Mojo,” has provided incredible inspirational support with proposals, grant-writing, off-the-books mentoring, and reminding me of the humanity within academia. I would also like to thank other scholars of Cape Verdean performance, especially Cristina McMahon, Eunice Ferreira, Akintola Hubbard, Pedro Ferreira Marcelino and Richard Lobban, who have personally shared their experiences with me and served as unofficial mentors for Cape Verde-specific topics, welcoming me to join them in this specific area of research.

I am indebted to the many artists and friends in Cape Verde, whose ideas and commentaries have served as the connecting threads to all of the ideas throughout this dissertation. Thank you to Mano Preto, who welcomed me to the Raiz di Polon community and shared his beautiful work behind the scenes and on the stage. Thank you Jeff Hessney, for our infinite conversations regarding everything from cultural facts to corrections regarding my language skills, to Raiz di Polon experiences, and for always making sure that I was safe in Praia. Without Jeff, this manuscript simply could not exist. For the musical jams and conversations about music and performance with Miroca Paris, Ndu Carlos, Binga de Castro, Lucia Cardoso, Carlos Ferro, and others, have all reminded me over and over about why art can change lives. Thank you to the Cape Verdean Ministry of Culture who has been supportive by connecting me to many producers of cultural events, and for providing me with an opportunity to use the archives, libraries, and performance spaces. Thank you to Cesar Schofield, João Paulo Brito, João Branco, Movimentu Shokanti (Ze Monteiro) and others for sharing your thoughts and ideas about film, theater, cinema, and performance politics. To friends and colleagues including Deni Mendes, Ivan Santos, Amilcar Monteiro, Maky Silva, Vanessa Barbosa, Redy Wilson, Isa Elias, Monica Andrade and others, whose spirited debates helped me gain insight about Cape Verdean politics, language, policy and education.

Dancers of Raiz di Polon including Djamilia Reis, Kaka Oliveira, Susanna Tavares, Zecca Cardoso, Luis Darosa, Bety Fernandes, and Rosy Timas, have all become a second family to me by not only supplying me with such a valuable subject for my dissertation, but by exemplifying the meaning of community off stage. To Bruno Amarante for his powerful opinions and stories about dancing hiphop and Rita Nobre Luz and Cindy Baptista for our “artist commune” in Cape Verde. Americo Silva and Jorge Melicio provided valuable connections, translation help,

housing and friendship. I also must recognize many other performance groups in the community, including Mon a Roda, Marina Voz, Fidjus di Bibinha Cabral, Batukadeiras di Delta Cultura, and others who were integral to my understandings of performance. My only regret is that time and space did not permit me to include all of their powerful stories.

Thank you to the funders of this dissertation: The Graduate Division of UCLA, for awarding me a Graduate Research Mentorship Fellowship, the West African Research Association for networking support and the Predoctoral Fellowship, the World Arts and Cultures/Dance department for stipends and teaching opportunities. Thank you to the Fowler Museum for incredible producing opportunities with my employment as the Fowler Out Loud producer, and for the Ralph C. Altman stipend award. Thank you to the Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance community: colleagues and professors have been a force unparalleled to any work/education environment in which I have ever participated.

Thank you to American Peace corps volunteers, diplomats, and other American expatriots living in Cape Verde who have generously shared their homes, travel advice, and cultural experiences with me to ensure that my stays and travels were smooth. In 2008, Peacecorps volunteers, Sarah Mendelson, Rhett Scarborough, Anthony Barnum, Laurie Hart, were the first people that I met in Cape Verde, and without their support I would likely never have returned with enthusiasm in 2010 and 2012. Jacob Cullen, Robert Sarwark and Faron Peckham who are Americans working in the areas of business and development in Praia, always ensured that I had a roof over my head as they connected me to several members of the community. Yang Madsen generously shared her home and contacts with me during my stay in 2012, which was absolutely integral to the most important phases of research.

Lastly, I am most grateful for friends all over the world, whose conversations about topics unrelated to the dissertation resulted in more meaning than words can say. Djamila Raiz, Monica Andrade, Tanya Oliveira, Cindy Baptista, and Rita Nobre Luz in Cape Verde. American friends Sara Park, Lindsey Jurca, Reuben Reynoso, Adam Kulakow, Ari Joseph, and Alex Castillo-Kesper, have kept me centered and reminded me of who I am. I am also indebted to colleagues in the WAC department, who have taught me that the lines between artist and scholar are as blurry and nonexistent as we want to make them. Thank you to my father, brother and mother, for being the fire and fuel of my journey.

VITA

Education:

- 2009 MA, Culture and Performance Studies, Dept. of World Arts and Cultures, UCLA
2007 ACABEU Language Institute, Salvador Bahia. Portuguese Study Abroad Program, UCLA
2005 BA, English Literature and Dance, Middlebury College.
Departmental honors. Minor in French.
2003 Sarah Lawrence College in Paris, Study Abroad Program.

Awards

- 2012 West African Research Association, Predoctoral Fellow
2011 Ralph C. Altman Fowler Museum Award
2011 UCLA Center for the Study of Women Travel Grant
2009 Department of Arts and Architecture Fellowship
2008 Summer Graduate Research Mentorship Fellowship
2008 UCLA Graduate division stipend
2007 Latin American Institute Summer Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (FLAS) for Intensive Portuguese study
2007 UCLA Graduate division stipend
2004 Ron Brown Fellowship Award for volunteer work in Senegal Arts
2003 Felton Family Fund Fellowship for writing internship in Arts Education.
2001-2004 Dean's List Middlebury College
2004 Dance Department award, Middlebury College
2000 Distinguished Women In Business Scholarship, Summit NJ.
2000 National Merit Scholar, Summit NJ.

Memberships:

- Deans Council member, School of Arts and Architecture 2009-2010
Society for Ethnomusicology, UCLA
Intercultural Programming Committee, Office of Residential Life, UCLA 2008-2010
Le Centre Cultural Colin Powell, United States representative
Observatoire des Metiers et Des Arts Senegal, United States Representative

Teaching Experience

- 2012 "Cape Verdean Dance." Public Lecture, November 19, Middlebury College, VT
2012 Associação Cultural Raiz di Polon, Praia Cape Verde.
Teaching dance to professionals and students.
2012 Projeto Simenti: Achada Grande, Praia Cape Verde. Volunteered as a mentor to young girls for this social outreach organization.
2011 The Fowler Museum
Kids Muse Summer Jazz Camp, Coordinator.
2010 (winter) Teaching assistant for Professor Patrick Polk, WAC 22, "Introduction to Folklore Studies." UCLA.
2009 (fall) Guest Lecturer for Fieldwork Methods and writing class. Otis College.

- 2009 (fall) Teaching assistant for Professor Donald Cosentino, WAC 22, "Introduction to Folklore Studies." UCLA.
- 2009 (spring) Teaching assistant to Professor David Shorter, WAC 21, "Fieldwork Methods." UCLA.
- 2009 (winter) Teaching assistant for Donald Cosentino, WAC 20 "Introduction to Cultural Studies." UCLA.
- 2008 (fall) Teaching assistant for Professor Robert Sember, WAC 101, "Theories of Performance." UCLA.
- 2008 *CulturArte International Summer Arts Residency*, Praia, Cape Verde Center for Creative Youth at Cape Verde. English and dance teacher.
- 2007 (fall) Teaching Assistant for Professor Peter Sellars, WAC 1, "Introduction to World Arts and Cultures" UCLA.

Publications:

- 2013 "Dancing at the Crossroads: Update from the field." Published by West African Research Association newsletter. November 2013.
- 2011 "Dancing at the Crossroads." Published by the Center for the Study of Women newsletter, UCLA. May 2011
- 2003 "Lula Leaps from Lawyers to Land." Article published in Dance Teacher Magazine, September 2003.
- 2004 "Strings: A poetry collection regarding transnational heritage." Poems published in The Otter Creek Journal, September 2004, April 2004, October 2005, Middlebury VT.

Exhibitions:

- November 19, 2012
Photography and photo essay selectee for Conference on Global Migration. Joint Migration for Development Initiative. 2012 Global Forum on Migration and Development displayed in Mauritius.
- May 22, 2010
"Mirror Mirror." Poem. Sound Suit Stories exhibit, Fowler Museum.
- Winter 2007 Photojournalism writer/photo contributor. *HIV-Positive in Los Angeles* with photographer Gideon Mendel, UCLA Make Art Stop AIDS program.

Community Collaborations and Performances

- 2010 Nick Cave, "Sound Suit Stories" Creative Writing/Fowler Museum collaboration. Producer/writer/organizer.
- 2009 Watts House project volunteer, Watts towers in Los Angeles.
- 2006-10 Core drummer of BatUCLAda, Afro-Brazilian drum ensemble at UCLA, performances with Remo drum company, and other local Afro-Brazilian communities.
- Winter 2008 Production assistant: *Emerging Voices*, Center for Intercultural Performance at UCLA.
- 2004 Bat Sen Fune—collaborated as a vocalist with this hip-hop group, organized performances, including AIDS awareness events.

Dança Ma Mi Criola

Dança ma mi criola

Dance with me, my little creole

Sabura é la na nos terra cabo verde
La no ta sinti na mei d'nos tradição

Pleasure is in our home of Cape Verde
There we feel in the middle of our traditions

Ké pam sinti calor di bô murininha
O cabo verde

Feel the heat of you, little mestiza
Oh, Cape Verde.

by Toy Vieira (made famous by performer Tito Paris)

ON: MORABEZA² WELCOME

On a typical day, the ground outside of the capital city's National Auditorium is nothing but a parking lot for the select few who own cars. The lot is not quite sand, not quite dirt, and separates the national library and auditorium from an untamed tall-grass field that hosts a few hidden impromptu shacks and rusted car parts. Tonight, this in-between space in front of the national auditorium is transformed into a magical, multilayered reunion, where people of all backgrounds, ages, with varied musical interests are crowded together for one event. Tonight is a reunion, not only of the Cape Verdean band, Simentera, who last played together in 2002, but a reunion across several forms of artistic national expression; dance and music at the heart and heat of it all. Minister of Culture Mario Lucio de Sousa smiles from atop this outdoor stage—a smile that seems to ricochet from his bright teeth to the projected screen, straight back to the lights that buzz from the back beer-drinking area of the concert-transformed lot. Mario Lucio is dressed in his trademark all-white clothes that sway with him as he plays coladeira music on the guitar. While all eyes are glued to him as he sings the lead vocals, the stage is filled with more than thirty people.

Off to the side of the men instrumentalists stands a chorus of eight women vocalists that echo Mario Lucio's words on stage right. Upstage, an all-female traditional batuko group drums their plastic pouches called *tchabetas*, and off to a stage extension on stage left, a traditional³

² *Morabeza* is a Kriolu word that is difficult to translate into English directly. The word loosely translates to “welcoming” or “feeling at home,” and comes from the words, “morar” and “amar,” to live and love, in Portuguese. *Morabeza* has a similar meaning to the word “*teranga*,” in Wolof, the lingua franca of Senegal. When one “feels the *Morabeza*” one “feels the welcoming vibrations” from Cabo Verde.

³ I use the word “traditional” in this prospectus and in my dissertation because artists in Cape Verde use it to distinguish between popular social forms and performance idioms aligned with Cape Verdean folklore or folk performance. In this, I am informed by the work of Welsh Asante who theorizes about the word “traditional” in the context of African dance (Welsh Asante 1996), and the work of Terence Ranger, who explores the “invention of tradition” in colonial Africa as linked to “overlapping multiple identities” and the adaptive dynamism of culture (Ranger 1983, 248).

dance group dances, swishing their black and white plaid pleated skirts in choreographed unison. One of Simentera's band members passed away several years ago, and, like many Cape Verdeans, the group was said to have disbanded afterwards due to members traveling and moving abroad. No one thought that their reunion concert ten years later could meet the standards of past performances. Despite concerns about the quality of the group's reunion concert, according to the majority of tonight's audience of people of all ages, class groups, and from all corners of the extended capital city, this is an "epic" event regardless of whether or not musical standards were met. Children dance from atop of their parents' shoulders. Young teenagers group together in the back area, snapping photographs with the "3G i-phones" that just recently arrived to the islands in the last few years, and Cape Verdeans visiting from abroad are reunited with their families. Everyone is crowded together at this joyously free concert. But there is still one more puzzle piece left to complete this national image of Kriolu cohesion: contemporary dance.

Bety Fernandes, a dancer and founding member in the contemporary dance company Raiz di Polon, enters the jam-packed stage and weaves through the members of Simentera. She dances, ducking underneath the bowing movements from the violin player and quite remarkably seems to find ease through the filled stage, advancing through the musicians' spaces with low-flying leaps and fluid spine undulations. Her expression is curious, smiling and finding her movements as if she is in her own world. Fernandes seems to stand out from the rest of the performers with her improvised explorations, while at the same time she is seamlessly incorporated into the mix of happenings on stage. She is the contemporary avant-guard body balancing with the batuko dancers. As she uses improvisation, she has no directional boundaries in contrast to the traditional dance groups that only incorporate forward-facing unison movements

and staged variations of social dances. [See Figure 2.]

With Fernandes improvising across the stage, the national presentation of Simentera's reunion is now complete. The famous musician minister of culture, traditional dance and music, and contemporary dance collectively create an ideal balance to promote this dramatic national representation of Cape Verdean Kriolu Culture. The lines separating contemporary and traditional, past and future, elite and poor, local and global, are blurred. Performers and audience are dancing and singing at the crossroads. Although perhaps a smaller lightstream within the greater spotlight of Cape Verdean music, contemporary dance is an important part of the Kriol⁴ puzzle and an important element of Cape Verde's young history. This dissertation demonstrates how and why this puzzle-piece of performance fits into concepts of Cape Verdean identity.



Figure 2. *Simentera*. Simentera performing on the stage in front of the National Auditorium. Bety Fernandes is the dancer whose hands are up in the air, dressed in black. Mario Lucio is dressed in white, and batuko dancers are behind him.

⁴ Kriol or “creole” is a word that is used to express the people of Cape Verde, as in, “creole people” and as a word that was later used to also mean the language, Kriolu. A “kriolo” (masculine) or “kriola” (feminine) person is a “mixed heritage Cape Verdean person,” who speaks Kriolu. Chapter Two and Four discuss how a “kriola” (n.) experiences significant gender bias. The word also means “young good looking mestizo girl” and is charged with sexuality, whereas “kriolo” (masculine) is understood as a male Cape Verdean without sexual references. Kriolidade, spelled Krioulidade or Criolidad, means Cape Verdeanness or creole-ness.

Cape Verde is often recognized for the nostalgic music of acclaimed *latediva* Cesária Évora, whose international spotlight helped name her home island of São Vicente the “cultural capital” of the archipelago. Évora’s heart-wrenching *morna* songs of *sodad*⁵ depicting the longing for family and loved ones far away have been heard around the world, and her stardom has helped to buttress the careers of many Cape Verdean musicians. Meanwhile, Santiago Island, labeled as the “most African” island of Cape Verde, is rapidly rising as another important cultural hub, and choreographers based in the urban capital such as Mano Preto and Bety Fernandes are leaping forward to share Évora’s role as cultural ambassadors. Contemporary dance theater in Cape Verde has been slowly taking form over the last fifteen years through the creative explorations of a performance group called Raiz di Polon, and through the complicated development of dance theater as a professional field.

Cape Verde is “not quite” African, not quite European, and not quite Caribbean or Latin American, although it shares many cultural traits with these regions. Cape Verde differs from many other creole nations such as Brazil, the Philippines, or those of the Caribbean, because it did not have an indigenous population prior to Portuguese colonization. The archipelago’s location 250 miles west of Senegal at the geographic and cultural crossroads among West Africa, Europe, and the Americas isolates the islands from these regions physically, while encouraging a constant and eclectic network of cultural exchanges. Furthermore, Cape Verde’s lack of financial autonomy makes it difficult for Cape Verdeans to live in the islands for their whole lives, and many of them emigrate to study or work—a mobile lifestyle occurring throughout the Republic of Cape Verde’s brief history. Precise numbers have been impossible to track over the last

⁵ “Sodad”, also spelled “sodadi,” has no English equivalent, but is typically translated as “nostalgia” or “longing.” It comes from the Portuguese word, “saudade.” This word will be discussed even more in Chapter One.

decade because differentiating those who are “away” from those who are “home” is often impossible. However, Cape Verdeans and investigators who have tried to estimate numbers have generally accepted that Cape Verdeans living abroad outnumber those residing in the archipelago, adding to the nation’s crossroads identity through constant flows of cultural exchange as people remain in touch and return home.⁶ From influenced performance styles to incorporated languages to foreign products, cultural fragments from all over the world saturate life and exemplify the crossroads culture that is readily identified with Cape Verde.

Exchanges are a dynamic aspect of Cape Verdean culture, connecting people to worldwide events while honoring and constantly reshaping their local identities. When I first began my research in Cabo Verde in 2008, I thought that tensions between local and global influences provided an identity crisis. Do people identify with the cosmopolitan countries of Europe and the Americas where they resided for most their lives, or with being “Kriolu,” or with their African “roots”? The answer is “all of the above.” As I lived in Praia for seven months and performed in several events that ranged from commercial television to national celebrations to global exchanges, I realized that through promoting emblems of a unified National whole through performance, Cape Verdeans embrace and value these tensions both consciously and unconsciously. Cape Verdeans continually debate and detangle these ideas and their possibilities. As the political activist Redy Lima holds, “We are all obsessed with our own problematic identity!” (pers. comm. Aug. 4, 2012). Contemporary dance on Santiago Island allows us to examine local-to-global-to-local cultural processes and reveals some of the tensions negotiated through creole culture in Cape Verde in ways that differ from other small island nations and

⁶ This “flow” is not only cultural but economic, for according to Mai Palmberg, remittances from the Cape Verdean diaspora amount to about 50 percent of the GDP, with Cape Verdean communities in the United States leading the league (2002, 130).

West African countries.

Cape Verdeans rank music and dance highest in a hierarchy of cultural preferences (Hurley-Glowa 1997), but because musical recordings are more easily diffused through diasporic communities, Cape Verde is far better known for its music than its dance (Arenas 2011). This dissertation is the first written work to focus upon the dance community as keynote within the greater performance community and not merely a decorative detail of musical performances. Official dance groups exist in Cape Verde and only one small and limited dance school, traditional dances originating from social gatherings resurface on the stages of musical performances as an important part of Cape Verdean social fabric.⁷ According to Raiz di Polon director Mano Preto, traditional dances of Cape Verde “can unite people of varied socio-economic backgrounds.” (Mano Preto, pers. comm, August 10, 2010). During earlier fieldwork, I observed that dance groups were increasingly forming over the last eight years, giving local communities on Santiago island opportunities to participate in a spectrum of traditional performance styles.⁸ When I returned in 2012, I found that some of these groups were no longer active. Many had disbanded, leaving Raiz di Polon as the nation’s only professional company working within traditional and contemporary dance. Still, many new groups have suddenly formed.

Raiz di Polon’s now twenty-year endurance as the unofficial “national dance company of Cape Verde” demonstrates remarkable resistance to nation-wide struggles with autonomy and sustainability when so many performance groups, businesses, and organized activities fail due to

⁷ I use the word “official” to refer to dance groups that are “formal” in the sense that they have weekly rehearsals, perform for an audience, and are supported financially through their work. The only known contemporary dance company in Cape Verde supported by the Portuguese and Cape Verdean governments is the Raiz di Polon. Even this most famous troupe has only a small space for its community classes and company rehearsals.

⁸ This estimate stems from my fieldwork taking place in 2008 and 2010, during which I talked to over 10 dance groups about their history.

lack of funding, commitment, and the “in transit” fluctuations of the population. At the same time, like every performance group, the company has had its logistical struggles. In this, Raiz di Polon epitomizes Cape Verde’s national issues. There are no art schools or art-education centers to provide the foundation for dance technique and explorations of choreography, and so this company has had to create its own training methods as it has proceeded. For the government to support Raiz di Polon as opposed to, say, a “fully folkloric performance troupe,” suggests that contemporary dance promotes an image that the Nation endorses—so much so that the company will become the nucleus of the Ballet Nacional de Cabo Verde in November of 2013. As of this writing, younger generations are starting to follow in the footsteps of Raiz di Polon and their ideas of contemporary dance are expanding. This dissertation analyzes the movement vocabulary and performance style of Raiz di Polon whose lexicon is unlike any other performance medium in Cape Verde—so much so that various global stages have titled director Mano Preto as a “pioneer” of dance. Furthermore, I argue that part of the artistic agency of dance and dance-theater is that these artforms can embrace a number of different philosophies and histories in ways that can change how social systems operate.

My interviews with Cape Verdeans in the capital as well as in rural villages on Santiago Island and neighboring islands show that the company’s national and international fame among people of all social classes was noteworthy. Some may not know the name of their municipal leader or own a television to watch the news. Others may become aware of trends in popular culture via their smartphones. Almost everyone, regardless of social status, knows that “contemporary dance” exists in Cape Verde.

Do I know RDP?” a homeless person said defensively when I asked him if he knew about them. “Of course I do. They do that crazy dance. They are rock stars!” he exclaimed, throwing his arms up in the air with theatrical silence, imitating RDP’s trademark frenetic arm movements and strong facial expressions

(Fieldnotes May 3, 2012).

People of various class categories recognize Raiz di Polon as an important representation of Cape Verdean national culture, and several organizations invite the company to participate in many government sanctioned and other events, from political rallies to international music festivals within the islands. However, while various island residents know Raiz di Polon as the “professional contemporary dancers,” local dance practitioners sometimes argue that contemporary dance does not even “exist” in Cabo Verde. That is, while contemporary dance is promoted locally and internationally as “essential Cape Verdean culture,” some hold that any so-called “dance revolution” is a complete façade. As I surveyed dance practitioners, artists, and other people across Santiago Island as well as on other islands, I encountered many contentions about Raiz di Polon’s artistic voice, professional status, and the definitions of contemporary dance. Could heated arguments be a sign of the growth of a dance community? And why would Cape Verdeans so eagerly promote this “new” and “different” dance, if at times, the form seems to exist merely in the sparkle of circulating elite catch-phrases without actually existing?

After living, performing and teaching with the company while getting to know the greater Praia community over the course of five years, I believe that Raiz di Polon represents a new cosmopolitan intellectual movement. Cape Verdean identity is idealized, global networking valued, and tensions between tradition and modern, African and European, and creolization and globalization are brought to the fore in contemporary dance. As As Minister of Culture Mario Lucio says, “To be a Creole nation is not to just speak a creole language. It is about a mentality—a mentality of acceptance, and inclusion, and anyone can be Kriolo.” (Mario Lucio

de Sousa, speech, April 8 2013).⁹

Raiz di Polon performs the “Kriolidade” or “creoleness” of which Mario Lucio speaks, and “Kriolidade” is cultivated through their artistic style. My hypothesis is that many Cape Verdeans value Raiz di Polon because the company has become famous and has survived a record-breaking twenty years. Many connect with the feelings and themes that they experience in Raiz di Polon's performances. Cape Verdeans world-wide can see themselves in the work of Raiz di Polon because the group has innovated a performance style that blurs boundaries of tradition, language, and history using techniques noticeably rooted in the archipelago's folk practices and informed by intercultural collaboration. As members of Raiz di Polon train, teach one another, and perform both locally and internationally, they metaphorically and literally cross national borders and rewrite their own national histories—a process of constant border crossing that every Cape Verdean understands at a personal level.

As a nation based upon the suffering of forced migration and foreign economic dependence, border-crossing through contemporary dance realigns Cape Verdeans with a sense of opportunity, autonomy, and innovation. They are constantly restaging their own identities because they recognize that they will always be divided by their cities, islands, expatriate nations, and oceans, and the “Cape Verdeanness” seen in RDP's work encompasses many of such divides and bridges. The fractured nation becomes celebrated, not merely by uniting its pieces, but by celebrating the pieces individually through Raiz di Polon “style.” By discussing RDP’s expression of Kriolidade through a specific performance, through their school community, and through their versatile place among changing stages, I will show how Raiz di

⁹ From the first annual Atlantic Music Expo speech, April 8, 2013. I watched the live video feed of the speech and events and took notes. Translated by author. The Atlantic Music Expo was advertised as a cross cultural transatlantic meeting of musical minds and instruments.

Polon's movement style helps the Cape Verdean person anywhere in the world to feel "at home" despite the borders that they have been crossing. *Sodadi* is not easily translated into English. As a noun, the word means deep longing and nostalgia. As a verb, used in phrases such as "sodadi bo" or "sodadi you," the phrase means, "I miss you" in relationships of friendship, romance, or family. As a sub-plot of Kriolidad, *sodadi* plays a key emotional role in the art that Raiz di Polon expresses, and serves as a spiritualism that blends through all of the themes of Cape Verdean performance.

CHAPTER PREVIEW

The chapters that follow will address the impact and agency of Raiz di Polon's work by entering the intricate matrix of Cape Verdean identity and *sodadi* through key performance frames. I will begin by discussing Cape Verdean history, calling special attention to historical events that paved the road for important performance themes. First, Santiago Island is introduced in the context of the "birth of the Cape Verdean person," as key historical events such as the transatlantic slave trade and deadly climate changes established Cape Verde's formative years, building skills of adaptation and resistance. Included in this contextual chapter is a discussion of Kriolo and why it is an important mode of ontological expression to which to compare movement. I will also examine how the term "sodadi" has evolved as an important artistic theme because of Cape Verde's history of constant migration.

Chapters Two, Three, and Four cover how Kriolidade is revealed and contested through creation of a contemporary dance style that embodies values held high in Cape Verdean cosmopolitan society. Chapter Two details some of the critical topics surrounding dance in Cape Verde, including what I call "flash factors" and the trends upon which Raiz di Polon builds and changes. Chapter three opens the discussion of RDP with an indepth analysis of a recent

performance called “Cidade Velha,” that depicts the first generation of Cape Verdeans in the oldest slave port on Santiago Island. Thinking of dance as “language,” following Susan Foster’s ideas of syntax and reading (1986, 1-20), I analyze how the performance of “Cidade Velha” reimagines the nation through narratives and a creolized movement lexicon. Chapter Four considers RDP as a community and training grounds, and how international exchange with people like myself is intrinsic to the creation of its cosmopolitan performance genre. Chapter Five considers the effects of the previous chapters by detailing how Raiz di Polon uses its techniques and vocabularies to represent the nation in festival and musical concert contexts. RDP’s embodied Kriolu is so versatile that audiences can read it in multiple, often contending ways. The performance of “Cidade Velha” will serve as an example throughout my dissertation, and I interweave the subtopics of migration, sodadi, and processes of authentication in discussions of the creation of a creolized performance genre.

The general art community in Cape Verde in 2013 is expanding, changing, and experiencing contestations, including the rapid establishment of a dance community. Even as I have written this dissertation with fervor and excitement, as if my pages were rotating on some kind surreal wheel, I have the sense that the contents might expire and feel out of date within days. Predictions that I made in 2008 about how I might recognize the “bloom” of a dance community had been realized in 2013 when I returned. In 2013, a first Atlantic Music Festival has taken place in CV, and one can watch the performances through the digital revolution’s close proximity. Three choreographers have debuted their work in early 2013. While Praia is the capital of Cape Verde-- a title that implies “big city” atmosphere, the place is actually very small, and one person’s efforts can affect an entire artistic community. When an event intrigues a community, the news can spread quickly, and even amidst a culture whose proud rhythm of life

is deemed “peaceful,” “laid back,” and “slow” as promoted through an imaginary “tranquil island paradise” helpful in promoting tourism, keeping up with rapid changes is difficult. A Study of Cape Verde’s contemporary dance scenes provides insights into the country’s rapidly changing history.

Ethnographic data gathered from several research trips within a five year period will be utilized to present actors within artistic communities of Santiago Island. In the first phase of my fieldwork in 2008, I focused upon getting to know all of the performance groups on the island of Santiago, and I attended festivals in Mindelo and Praia, the two cities that often trade the title of the nation’s “Cultural Capital.” During this initial phase I paid careful attention to what people considered to be the “traditional” *batuko* performance groups of Santiago Island, to gain a solid understanding of what the word “traditional” means in this cosmopolitan performance world. In 2010, I gave more focus to Raiz di Polon and shifted from looking at “traditional” folkloric performances to concentrating upon “contemporary” dance. During this four-month phase, I focused upon getting to know RDP company members and the school and mottos of this contemporary dance circle. In the third and largest phase of my dissertation research during which I spent seven months in Praia, I worked exclusively with Raiz di Polon as an educator, collaborator, student, and observer during both the animated summer months and the “off season” fall, winter, and spring months. During this most crucial phase, from which I draw the majority of my claims and quotations, I addressed the following questions: How does contemporary dance reveal accommodate tensions between local and global stages? In what ways are international exchanges through migration and other means intrinsic to the formation of local communities? How do RDP performances embody local and global Cape Verdean identities, and how is their work affecting the public? In final fieldwork in February 2012,

attention was focused upon migration and all it entails and implies. Artists and friends were asked about “sodadi” to better understand emotional themes constantly appearing in RDP performances.

“Xara” “Sarah” “Sarita” and “Sha-Ruh” In Cape Verde

I landed on Santiago Island like a single dandelion seed separating from its puff, popping off the academic stem of the Pacific coast but twirling softly to the ground at the mercy of surrounding winds. The factors leading up to my journey were layered, and looking back I am grateful that I could let go and trust that the journey would take its own course. The graduate student in me was eager to build upon my previous undergraduate and Masters projects about Senegalese dances and Afro-Brazilian performance idioms. I was curious to know how a small island nation in the Atlantic supplied, maintained, and circulated similarities among performance idioms I had come to know and practice. My MA thesis concerned community building through “culture swapping,” and I wanted to explore such notions regarding creolization within the trans-Atlantic world. Still, while the scholar in me arrived in Cape Verde during my two initial visits, eager to meet anyone who could help me explore Kriolu cultural identities through performances and conversations, the artist in me was still caught up in perpetual self-discovery. After stepping back from academia for over a year as I cared for my terminally ill mother and experienced her life-changing loss, my “real” work began when I returned to Cape Verde not as a graduate student, but as a sensitive human in need of healing, community, friendship, and a sense of moving forward. I was again a soft, path-changing, self-conscious dandelion seed, searching to analyze a story with color and personal meaning.

As I interviewed friends about what being Cape Verdean means to them, three topics became more and more prominent: *Sodadi*, Celebrations, and Migration. By returning to Cape

Verde for healing and not merely as a site for research, I was able to discover that I had so much more in common with my collaborators than I could have realized, utilizing what Michael Jackson terms “shared lived experiences” (1989, 30; 2005, xxvii). When dancers missed rehearsals due to a death in the family, our common experiences brought us closer. As I listened to stories about migration and about living in a family in which difficulties exist in understanding other family members who have grown up abroad with different languages, I thought about my own upbringing and the translation difficulties I have had with my Slovak father and battles with distance that we have since faced keeping in touch with loved ones abroad. As my informants talked to me about how contemporary dance was an exciting and ruleless way to bring together people from other cultures, I remembered how contemporary dance has enabled me to “speak” with people on stages in Cuba, Senegal, France, Brazil and around the world. When I learned about the theme of *sodadi* and nostalgia in song lyrics and conversations about missing friends, after five years of leaving and returning to this crossroads community I was finally able to fully understand what *sodadi* means in Cape Verde. Through discovering these deeply personal commonalities I have been able to write about a topic of which I am a part: dancing at the cultural crossroads through contemporary idioms.

At the start of every conversation, my name caused confusion because of its Slovak-American pronunciation, “Sha-ruh.” I would be initiating a discussion of mixed pronunciations, hybrid languages, and get-to-know-you conversations related to border crossings, accents, and identity-related titles. Switching from “Shara” to “Sarah” to spelling my name with an X for the correct local pronunciation, I was constantly changing my own presentation of identity at this crossroads for people to understand. This constant process of restaging, re-explaining, and readapting, gave me insight into quotidian Cape Verdean culture.

While I hope that my emotional sensitivity as a friend to this community and my own sodadi for Cape Verde is demonstrated by accurately portraying the voices and thoughts of my informants throughout my dissertation, I am nonetheless aware of the ethical issues at play as a privileged expatriate writing about Cape Verdean expressions of identity. While I would like to justify my deep connection for the islands with Mario Lucio's words, "to be Kriolu is not about being from a creole nation or speaking a creole language; it is about inclusion and deep connection to many cultures," (Mario Lucio de Sousa, Speech, April 8, 2013),¹⁰ I am not Cape Verdean nor will I will ever be from Cape Verde. I was a white woman spending her own money, barely supported by student grants, to conduct participatory research in a predominantly black, post-colonial African nation. Unlike many Cape Verdeans who want to leave the islands to pursue a more lucrative lifestyle but cannot, I had the financial ability to return to the United States. Transitional flows of people leaving and returning to the islands may make the circulation of Cape Verdean identity unusual, but whether or not a person is financially able to be mobile by choice, force, or ambition, differentiates people by social class. My ability to converse and attain interviews with both elite government officials and poorer fringe members of the community was sometimes related to my foreign status. The Cape Verdean community welcomes foreigners because many Cape Verdeans are dependent upon foreign volunteers and benefactors for healthcare or education. While I like to believe that my social skills and personality facilitated the my acceptance, I know that my status as a foreigner sometimes authenticated my initial conversations, and perhaps even influenced the responses of interviewees who were aware of my "special guest" status.

Furthermore, as will be discussed in Chapter Three, foreigners are assumed to have

¹⁰ Atlantic Music Expo, 2013.

achieved higher education, and therefore anyone presenting herself or himself as an artist, dancer, researcher, or writer (all among my descriptors in the field), is often tagged with a higher status which can prove to be both useful and difficult. These unsolicited markers required me to be overly self-aware of my own impact and appearance—especially after being robbed at gunpoint two times—but I always presented myself as a friend, student, and colleague. Taking photographs and teaching about my camera and my dance training often mitigated these differences so that warm collaboration and sharing resulted. When I write about Cape Verdean identity as performed through dance, then, I am trying to share the perspectives that my friends have expressed to me, and also how I have come to live a version of Cape Verdean identity as a welcomed foreigner. Not only have I observed how kriol identity was promoted, articulated and discussed by the Raiz di Polon company, but I have tried to feel, move, think, and question as I too was a part of many performances which explored these themes. My presence performing on stage, representing a “global citizen” among Cape Verdean cosmopolitan society, was also part of the performance of Kriolidade, and although I cannot speak as a Cape Verdean, I can speak honestly as someone who played a role in generating Kriolidade.

METHODS

Project Rationale

Initially, I started my dissertation research with a focus upon the Cape Verdean drumming and solo dance form called batuko. Batuko performances interested me because they present movement similarities with Brazilian *samba* and Senegalese *sabar*. In my pilot studies, I attended several performances hoping that I could prepare for a dissertation related to “traditional batuko” as the “missing link” between these practices on either side of the Atlantic.

Scholars such as Varela (2000) and Hurley-Glowa (2009) have recently written about the musical connections between Brazil and Cape Verde, and such studies have influenced my ability to recognize movement similarities. This narrow objective restricted me to *only* seeing batuko's *past*—which I now know is one of *many* aspects of Cape Verde's crossroads identity.¹¹ When choreographer Mano Preto asked me to teach my own voice/movement class for his contemporary dance company Raiz di Polon, I agreed so as to make friends “outside” of my research topic. I was biased by my Eurocentric dance background in that I was still convinced that contemporary dance was different and *separate* from traditional dance. However, teaching and sharing seemed most integral to contemporary Cape Verdean culture, important beyond my own degree completion, and methodologically most accessible to me as a non-Cape Verdean. Working with friends at RDP as a dancer and teacher provided me with opportunities to utilize what I call “embodied ethnographic participation.” My foreignness was welcomed by the artistic Cape Verdean community (and at times questionably welcomed by others), and I became increasingly aware of the power plays, integration issues, and ideals of “exchange” at the heart of Cape Verdean artistic and quotidian life. As I got to know the dance communities of Santiago Island by joining the general dance performance network, traditional and contemporary genres were linked by a framework of community outreach and international exchange. Contemporary dance was not merely a Euro-American form transplanted to Cape Verde, but a vehicle for tradition to be explored, honored, and to serve as a founding base for new ideas. At the heart of all Cape Verdean artistic communities, with batuko or contemporary dance as no exceptions, is community, honoring historical pasts, and international exchange. While I shifted my focus from

¹¹ In my training in Brazilian *samba de roda* and Senegalese *sabar*, I became accustomed to a structural setup that included a circular audience formation as well as physical coordination that required tripled weight shifts to 6/8 metered polyrhythms. This training enabled me to learn batuko quickly and I noticed how these attributes were also within the batuko performance.

batuko to contemporary dance, my initial observations about meanings of tradition through batuko enabled me to recognize and understand many of the rhythms, movements, references, and symbols within Raiz di Polon's work.

My central thesis shifted from batuko to contemporary dance in Cape Verde as a way to build upon local community while simultaneously connecting with global audiences; and "contemporary dance" as defined by Raiz di Polon serves as one of many important creole idioms. Seeking a central focus as well as a comparative multi-sited approach (Marcus 1998, 96-97), I used qualitative methods such as participant-observation, unstructured interviews, informal surveys, and photo/video documentary to establish the ethnographic core of my dissertation. I had originally anticipated a four-part case study to accumulate multiple viewpoints (Clifford 2003, 2013; Jackson 1989, 30, 184) about dance on Santiago Island and the needs that performances serve. Each of the four groups that I had originally selected varied in location (urban capital, remote rural village, coastal town, and suburb outside of the capital) to account for performance among different economic and social backgrounds. The differences in these groups accounted for a range of international exchanges which enabled me to theorize how Cape Verde is connected to the world and in what ways Santiago Island itself could be argued to be something of a global stage despite its remote location. These methods describe my preliminary fieldwork phases taking place in 2008 and 2010. However, as I was living in Praia, my involvement with Raiz di Polon deepened and I realized that their work and community was central to my main inquiry. I decided that I had ample information from earlier research to focus upon Raiz di Polon while incorporating comparative examples of the other dance groups throughout my dissertation.

Interviews and Performances¹²

In order to learn more about the personal motivations, beliefs, and values that individuals have about contemporary dance and Cape Verdean identity, I conducted over fifty one-on-one interviews with dance students, community participants, community directors, and other people. Using a question guide [see appendix], I asked focused questions about meanings of contemporary dance, traditional dance, and the role of art in Cape Verdean society, and more general questions that would allow people to elaborate on Cape Verdean identities. I held a discussion group with friends of different professional identities (linguistics, politics, education, art) once a week at my home during the third phase of my fieldwork, and we discussed identity, language, and Cape Verdean culture. Towards the end of my research, and during a return “gap-closing” phase, I asked more specific questions related to migration and memory (which will be a part of a documentary that I am making about “returning home”) as these topics became more evident as central to Cape Verdean identity. As a post-dissertation project, I am producing a documentary video about “returning home” based upon these interactions.

To transcribe these conversations for future reference, I audio and video-recorded interviews. I then employed narrative analysis as described by Redfern-Vance in *Doing Cultural Anthropology* (2007), so as to translate colloquial phrases, hesitant answers, opinionated responses, or emotional metaphors into a collected understanding of how individuals perceive 1) their participation in their communities, 2) what they learn or perceive from exchanges with visitors like me, and 3) if they could elaborate on aspects of Kriol identity that are important to them. I have then drawn conclusions about how contemporary dance is affecting Cape Verdean communities at an individual level. In order to learn more about RDP’s motivations and artistic

¹² All interviews cited within the dissertation have been translated by the author, unless otherwise noted.

approaches, I also conducted group interviews and casual conversations with community members. We discussed how members perceive their relationship to performing and their opinions of dance, music, and the arts in Cape Verde. This group-discussion approach supplemented individual interviews by allowing for more open-ended dialogues between participants. Such conversations revealed inter-community dynamics between those speaking as well as issues that I may not have perceived otherwise. I used feedback from individual and group interviews to determine the scope of the terms “contemporary art” and “contemporary dance.” Through these discussions I learned that professionalization, class mobility, and foreign involvement are mechanisms for social legitimization.

Embodied Participant Observation

Participant observation permitted me to learn more about the ways that Raiz di Polon works together, rehearses, and performs, and I am grateful for how I was received as a guest company member through training, teaching, performing, and offering my opinions during rehearsals. I use the word “embodied” to emphasize the body’s importance in observing and participating in dance. Not only were dancing and teaching dance ways of physically placing myself among the subjects of my research even as I observed them, but my own body became a mechanism for understanding movement vocabulary and for communicating physically with dancers. I alternated between observing rehearsals and dancing in them, depending on the director’s permission or the particular repertoire. I employed movement analysis (Novack 1998) by identifying and analyzing the efforts, pathways, tactics, and strategies with which dancers

produce and transmit knowledge. Susan Foster argues that the body can reveal its own lexicon of meaning (Foster 1995, 15-20). During my research, I saw my challenge as recognizing and locating such a lexicon within RDP practice based upon what I have learned in performance studies. Moving through the company's vocabularies and by working with dancers in new movement experienced together, we articulated how the body reveals social, economic, and political issues through such vocabularies.

In order to describe and draw conclusions about local and global stages, I collected information about who attends performances and how RDP was perceived by different constituencies. I spoke with audience members, venue producers, and other programmers to find out who they are and what they thought about Raiz di Polon's style and performance events. These techniques, along with collecting performance flyers, newspaper articles and other records (which were often extremely limited), have contributed to my understanding of Raiz di Polon's work, background to their work, contemporary dance within Cape Verde, and about dance as a practice and profession more generally. Furthermore, combining my growing knowledge of how audiences perceived these performances with how the artists perceive their work, I found that Cape Verdeans are not only "restoring a sense of place" through their involvement with Raiz di Polon, as Christina McMahon argues in her "new Diasporic dimensions" of transculturation theory (McMahon 2009, 30), but they are declaring to the world that Cape Verde has always been and will always be "their place." Contemporary dance professes a sense of Cape Verdean autonomy while simultaneously honoring the Cape Verdean as a cosmopolitan "global citizen." This active approach of creating one's own sense of place (and places) through performance has been key to this dissertation project.

Evoking again what ethnographic methods scholar Michael Jackson called "shared lived

experience” (1989 30; 2005, xxvii), I worked with RDP and other groups as a dancer, musician, and teacher. My performance background as a professional dancer, solo and ensemble singer, songwriter, and producer of a performance series are just some of the experiences that guided me as a participant-observer and collaborator in Cape Verde. Portraying all of my identities helped me, as James Clifford expresses it, to experience the “vicissitudes of translation” at the “bodily as well as an intellectual level” (1988, 24). As I taught and learned from these communities and created performances with artists in the community, I strove to understand the ways in which community members respond to intercultural exchange. Sharing provided me with first-hand knowledge of how tensions within the community are instigated and mitigated through ideals of “unity in diversity.” Michael Jackson argues that such collective experiences create dialogical knowledge and humanize ethnographic research (1989, 2-10). However, as Christopher Kelty has warned in *Fieldwork is Not What it Used to Be*, the word “collaboration” can become an empty catchphrase if work merely shows some sense of interaction (Kelty in Faubion 2010, 195-197). By asking performers about their opinions of our exchanges and by creating a dialogue with dancers when I learned *and* taught, I strove to shift my “interactive” project to “collaborative” by actively *producing* an experience together. A goal of my dissertation is to explore and explain the social processes so implied.

Photography as Two Dimensional Performance and Community Voice

To engage with various communities and sustain myself in the field when my limited funding ran out, I participated in a number of paid and unpaid activities: teaching dance, gathering film footage for potential documentaries and dance-for-camera films, trading translating for interviews, performing as a musician, and creating a dance piece for a duet

performance. Not all of these activities were directly involved with Raiz di Polon and their corporeal creolization processes that are in focus in this dissertation. However, all involved artistic exchanges, permitting me to engage subtle performances of identity taking place every day in the community, and all served as crucial connecting fibers to my investigation of RDP.

My peripheral participatory activities often concerned physical movement and artistic interactions that cannot be accurately represented through text. Similarly, the meanings behind the dances in focus extend far beyond the performances themselves and require more than words to convey them adequately to my readers. Because of earlier interest in the medium, I decided to utilize photography as a collaborative art form in Cape Verde that will further enliven my pages and interweave crucial anecdotal information related to movement practices in my participatory collection processes. The present dissertation is a hybrid, then, of written and visual results.

My perspectives about the use of photography in this dissertation reflect the concepts brought forth by performance studies professor Philip Auslander and his essay, “The Performativity of Performance Documentation” (2006, 9). As he explains,

Our sense of the presence, power and authenticity of these [photos] derives not from treating the document as an indexical access point to a past event but from perceiving the document itself as a performance that directly reflects an artist’s aesthetic project or sensibility for which we are the present audience.

As Auslander says, my photography is itself a performance, and through it, I have sought to make art that complements my embodied practice. Each photograph selected has its own story and expressive purposes, and was not merely selected as part of a documentation process. I am also influenced by my experience as a student of photographer and arts activist Gideon Mendel, who taught what he called “photojournalism collaboration” with David Gere through the Arts

and Global Health collaboration within the Department World Arts and Cultures/Dance.¹³

Mendel taught me to emphasize collaboration while taking a photograph as well as during the selection of photographs from a given project, so that the entire process is part of the narrated story and not merely a passive illustration of the photographer's activities or viewpoint. As I utilized embodied participant observation to conduct my dance research, my photography has served as a performative art form living within the two dimensional performance of my pages. Friends and collaborators in these photographs have helped me to select the images, and the subjects of my photographs often participated in the act of taking the photographs. Even the pictures in which I am dancing represent intercultural exchange, because a student, friend, or collaborator learned how to use my camera in order to participate in the process of telling this greater story.

Many of the photographs used in this dissertation were taken while interacting with the artistic community for related side-projects that I initiated not knowing whether or not the images would intertwine with this written document. Some still images were created from my efforts to create two films (still in process). I often snapped photographs while shooting film footage, or used still images from the actual film as photographs in this dissertation. One film/performance project is called "Maramar" and has to do with the water, emigration, and the coming-and-going nature of living linked to Cape Verde. The other in-progress film is "Espera" and concerns RDP students when I introduced them to dancing for the camera. I built many close relationships through learning about the art of film and photography with dancers and students, rendering the resulting images part of the many performances speaking from these pages. I purposefully include photographs taken from other photographers and from Raiz di

¹³ Make Art Stop AIDS course and Special Projects course, taken Winter/Spring 2007 with Gideon Mendel and David Gere in the WAC/D Art & Activism Series at UCLA.

Polon members themselves so as to add additional collective voice to the images and ideas presented. Lastly, as visual ethnographer John Collier wrote long ago, from an artistic and technical standpoint, “the camera eye [can] see what the human eye cannot” (1986, 7). While Collier was speaking with reference to logistical advantages of noticing what escapes the gaze, the same concept applies to atmospheric and emotional circumstances in which the contrast, lighting, and controlled detail of an image can help to highlight and emphasize emotional circumstances that might not be obvious otherwise. The photographs I have selected therefore represent collaborative works of art that live in a symbiotic relationship to the theorizations, stories, interviews, dances, and silences unfolding within the entire dissertation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to address how contemporary dance both reveals and resolves tensions within the national portrayal of kriolo identity, it is instructive to consider the bodies of literature related to Cape Verdean performance, general Cape Verdean history, and global connections to Cape Verde, as well as more general works on diasporic and contemporary dance and performance analysis. I will describe what has been argued or articulated in these works and how my project will contribute to their conversations.

Santiago Traditional Performance

To date there exist no written works about staged dances and dance groups in Cape Verde. The first project to shed light on Santiago Island musical culture was Gei Zantzinger’s film, *Songs of the Badius*, produced in 1986. It remains the only documentary film about batuko performers and composers. The film is useful because it highlights one of the earliest genres of

Cape Verdean music and it places an emphasis on batuko innovation in the 1980s, foreshadowing the importance of variation in generating creole culture. For example, Zanzinger includes an artist profile of a male batuko director and singer, which was not common at the time. However, the film exemplifies a quintessential problem echoed throughout literature of the period that labels—and in a way dismisses--batuko as an African tradition without further explanation. Cristina McMahon critiques Zanzinger's film, holding that it erases the diversity intrinsic to Cape Verdean culture and denies Cape Verde the process of creolization that is still at work in the islands today (McMahon 2004, 5-6). My dissertation updates understanding of Cape Verdean traditional dances like batuko by placing them within the context of their diverse surroundings, including contemporary culture.

Cape Verdean music began to appear in African Studies journals and Latin American music conferences in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Merriam 1982; Nketia 1974). While these works recognized the local-global paradox and the importance of music in Cape Verdean society, their language placed Cape Verdeans in a provincial/modern binary that limits their perspectives to Eurocentric viewpoints, as if it is a surprise for Cape Verde to be such an internationally-aware society. Susan Hurley-Glowa's pivotal work, *Batuko and Funana: Musical Traditions of Santiago* (1997), was the first written study of Santiago Island's music culture.¹⁴ Hers is still the only dissertation-length studies to focus entirely upon Santiago's performance traditions. However, Hurley-Glowa's work is primarily focused on the relationships among rhythm, instrumentation, lyrics, and social structures with little attention to movement. My focus on dance trends and community performance groups fifteen years later will supplement Hurley-

¹⁴ To read earlier general accounts of Cape Verdean music, see Alfama, 1910. Hurley-Glowa is currently turning her dissertation into a book, and is also working on a documentary film on the musical genre funana, which is a sister genre to batuko.

Glowa's ethnographic study of batuko music. Cape Verdean academics have generally been preoccupied with studies of social issues (Fernandez 1989; Brito-Semedo 2006) and linguistics (Almada, D. 1989; Almada 2001), and I have yet to discover a locally produced treatment of traditional performance. An exception is *Kap Verd Band* (Gonçalves 2006), an encyclopedia of musical instruments used in all types of musical and dance traditions in Cape Verde that includes a brief section on batuko, funana, and mazurka instrumentation.

In the years since Hurley-Glowa's study, scholars of Cape Verde have emerged in a variety of academic fields, and some have included dance briefly within their larger projects. Christina McMahon (2004, 2005, 2007) has written about theater groups performing in São Vicente Island's acclaimed Mindalect theater festival, for instance. McMahon argues for a new diasporic model of transnationalism to account for the community of Cape Verdeans around the world. She has also written about Santiago idioms such as tabanka (2004), a marching musical performance (often included in Raiz di Polon's repertoire, although McMahon makes no note of it) that mocks Portuguese colonial officials. She argues that tabanka performers are contesting Cape Verde's colonial history with each festival, and just as mimicry plays an essential theatrical role in tabanka, I believe that it functions in a non-contesting manner through contemporary dance (2004). Akintola Hubbard has recently published his dissertation about iconography and contemporary music Cape Verde, which I find to be the most parallel to my focus on contemporary dance. My work echoes many of his claims about rising elite classes and the role of new well-educated, well-traveled generations in the rapid development of new performance genres (2012).

In *Managing African Portugal* (2009), anthropologist Keysha Feikes recounts how Cape Verdean dance has lingered in the memory of Cape Verdean fisherwomen living in Portugal. In

her chapter on women and migration, Feikes explores the migrant-citizen binary inscribed in the lives of Cape Verdean fisherwomen and how women believe that “real” Santiaganeuse women should still remember how to “do the hip stuff” (a reference to the batuko *torno* movement) regardless of their status as “assimilated Portuguese” (Feikes 2009, 72). Feikes’ work supplements previous writings by providing a sense of how batuko remains important off the islands and among diaspora communities today. Sociologists Catherine Carter and Judy Aulette, through their co-authored work *Cape Verdean Women and Globalization* (2009), are the first writers to give more attention to batuko in their chapter, “Batuku: Dance as Resistance.” They argue that like the dances of batuque in Brazil and Angola and circle dances performed in Senegal, Cape Verdean batuko was primarily performed as a way of resisting the disapproving opinions of men who did not want them to dance (Carter & Aulette 2009, 41). Locating knowledge on batuko within these works has enabled me to recognize batuko when observing performances, understand batuko’s history of gender politics, and gain a sense of how batuko’s meanings and purposes have changed over time. My work will add to these conversations by including contemporary dances utilizing elements of batuko so that dance is at the forefront of historical and cultural research, rather than on the sidelines. In so doing, we may recall and strive to heed Edward Evans Evans-Pritchard’s claim made so long ago, that “in ethnological accounts the dance is usually given a place quite unworthy of its social importance” (1928, 446, as discussed in Roberts 2013, 79 and passim).

General History

My central argument is that contemporary dance as founded in Cape Verde by Mano Preto’s company Raiz di Polon embodies and performs Cape Verdean identity in ways that speak

to diverse local and global audiences. By creating a new vocabulary, establishing a practice that incorporates foreign teachers, and adapting their work for various stages, RDP practitioners are able to converse with cosmopolitan audiences. To better understand and recognize some of the national issues intrinsic to themes explored in Raiz di Polon's work, I have acquired relevant knowledge of the social, gender, and political struggles throughout Cape Verdean history. The following texts offer a general understanding of how traditional dances are situated historically, socially, and politically in Cape Verdean life.

George Brooks (2010), Antonio Carreira (1982), Gabriel Meintel (1984), Colm Foy (1988), and Richard Lobban (1995) are most thorough with regards to understanding the development of creole identity and Cape Verde's path towards independence in 1975. These authors all historicize how Cape Verde became a stop-off point in Portugal's slave trade after Portuguese navigators discovered Santiago Island in 1460, while each author offers a particular, complementary focus. Africanist historian George Brooks' recent study traces the relationship between West Africa and Cape Verde from the 1790s to the 1830s, and argues that these interactions are at the heart of Cape Verdean African identity. Antonio Carreira argues how differences among the islands' varying fertile soil and forced labor solidified a socio-racial economy among the islands focused upon mestizo communities of people trading with European boats (1982, 27). Meintel tracks these racial continuums as Santiago shifted from slave society to colonial province, noting carefully the particular use of the word "indegens" as an ironic term that was both a derogatory term used by the Portuguese to imply a lack of "civilization" as well as a source of respect that would later inspire "kriolo pride" (1984, 128).¹⁵ The works in this paragraph are fundamental for Cape Verde scholars because the nation is often promoted by

¹⁵ I use the word "ironic" because there is no indigenous population of Cape Verde.

locals as being free of racial divides. As Pedro Marcelino has underscored in the main thesis of his book, *The New Migration Paradigm of Transitional African Spaces* (2011), Cape Verde's history with racism can be traced to many of the topics covered by the aforementioned authors. My work further illustrates how some of the effects of these tensions manifest in performance.

Continuing with other scholars of Cape Verde history, Colm Foy has taken great care in documenting the events after Cape Verde achieved independence from Portugal in 1975 and outlines how political integration, effective management, and external trade agreements have enabled Cape Verde to “come back to life” economically and socially since the devastating droughts of the early 17th and 18th centuries—a common topic of batuko songs (Foy 1988, 12). Foy's summaries of political parties are especially useful, including his breakdown of the PAICV¹⁶—the radical African political party which helped Cape Verde become independent—as well as the Organization of Women in Cape Verde (OMCV) which significantly increased awareness for women's rights in the 1980s. These political organizations have greatly supported and influenced the dance and music trends that have reinvigorated Cape Verdean pride, including the creation of all-women performance groups. American scholar Richard Lobban, author of *Cape Verde: Crioulu Colony to Independent Nation* (1995), has provided the first English language overview of cultural trends and politics on each of the islands developing after Independence, situating Santiago within the greater array. His attention to racism and tension between the northern and southern islands is especially relevant today, yet is often overlooked, as the nation is often promoted as a place that has miraculously avoided racism. While these works provide a foundational understanding of Cape Verdean history, they generally exclude performance from their political histories, and my work will add to their conversations.

¹⁶ Partido Africano de Independência de Cabo Verde. African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde.

Global Cape Verde History

In order to argue that Cape Verdean contemporary dance is simultaneously connected to its elusive roots, its local present, its global diaspora, and its non-Cape Verdean international audiences, I have acquainted myself with many of Cape Verde's past and present global connections. The nations in the "transatlantic matrix," as Arenas coins it, have been connected for nearly six centuries and Cape Verde has been in the center of this matrix. To begin, Hurley-Glowa traces what she describes as batuko's "elusive" and "untenable" (Hurley-Glowa 1997) roots. To understand batuko's relationship to its many pasts, research into the etymology of the words *batuko*, *batuque*, and *batucar*, reveals that this "local" Cape Verdean performance is traceable to multidirectional exchanges between Angola, Brazil, Portugal, and even the indigenous community in Brazil's northeastern Amazon).¹⁷ There is linguistic and anthropological evidence of Fula, Mandinka, Wolof, and Bambara influences from Western and Central Africa in Cape Verde (Meintel 1984, 44; Hannerz 1996, 67-68), but descriptions are brief.

Recent scholars like Fernando Arenas (2011) argue that Brazil offered an unusual "buttress" to the transatlantic bridge so that Cape Verde was not locked into a Euro-African binary. Cape Verde often receives the nickname, "Little Brazil" as a consequence.¹⁸ Arenas is the first to document connections between Brazil and Cape Verde, and argues that the African

¹⁷ Oyeade 2007, 146; Fryer 2000, 119-133; Hurley-Glowa 1997, Vassberg 1976; Glazier 2001, 43. Glazier's argument is unsupported by evidence and he merely mentions the possibility of Amazonian influence in the Brazil-to-Africa crossing, but his hypothesis must be considered possible. Although it exceeds the purview of my research, Brazilian studies concerning the indigenous influence of Afro-Brazilian culture are useful comparisons for better understanding Cape Verde's lack of indigenous identity.

¹⁸ August 23rd 2010 *Nação*, the weekly Cape Verdean newspaper, included an article called "Little Brazil" about Mindelo during the Baía das Gatas music festival. I also interviewed the mayor of São Vicente in 2010 who said that in the nationally celebrated Baía das Gatas festival, the planning committee requires one Brazilian performance group in their lineup of Cape Verdean artists.

roots of Brazil (along with Fryer 2000; Béhague 1994; Vassburg 1976), the influence of Brazilian popular culture in Africa (Perrone & Dunn 2001), the spreading of Portuguese and Brazilian media throughout Lusophone Africa, and evolving Political and economic relations between Brazil and Africa (see also Carreira 1972, 77-80) have all played a role in Cape Verde's accumulated relationships Brazil (Arenas 2011, 11-7). Echoing Benedict Anderson's notion of imagined community (1991), these connections have contributed to the "imagined" close connection that many Cape Verdeans find with Brazil and have contributed towards Mindelo's nicknames "little Brazil" and "culture capital." Similarly, in brief conference presentations Varela (2000) and Hurley-Glowa (2009) have documented some of the specific musical and performance similarities between Brazil and Cape Verde that include rhythmic and choreographic parallels between popular samba and *coladeira* and with historical ties to the Angolan *lundu*.¹⁹

Brazilian and Cape Verdean music have gained global popularity since the 1960s (Martin 2011, Arenas 2011), beginning with the bossa nova and samba booms in the US and Paris (Henry 2008, 94-97), and then echoed by the globalization of Cesária Évora's *coladeira* music in the 1970s and 1980s. (Arenas 2011, 45-103) While my research on dance communities is *not* focused on the music industry, my fieldwork shows that staged dances have been structured with regard to the music industry. I argue that global recognition of Cape Verdean music has set the stage for dance communities to grow because of its reliance on Cape Verdean diaspora communities who flock to Cape Verdean distributors to listen to the sounds of their homelands (Arenas 2011, 52-55). To date, no research has made this connection between dance communities and the music industry, partly because many dance groups are only just forming.

¹⁹ My fieldwork observations confirm Arenas' assertions regarding the similarities between Brazilian samba and Cape Verdean *batuko*

With the aforementioned discourses and information on the globalization of Brazilian and Cape Verdean music in mind, I believe that world-wide distribution of Cape Verdean music is logistically and ideologically linked to local community outreach and dance performance, which have only *recently* started to separate themselves from the music community.²⁰

Cape Verde's network of Cape Verdeans off the islands has received recent attention for its flow between emigrants and the islands. Diaspora transitions were the topic of a cover-story in *The New York Times* entitled "In a World on the Move" (DeParle 2007), and they were a feature of the Smithsonian Institution's 29th Annual Folklife Festival in the summer of 1995. The documentary film *Some Kind of Funny Porto Rican: A Cape Verdean American Story* (2006) by Claire Andrade-Watkins gives a rich anecdotal spectrum of the misconceptions and identity negotiations experienced by the largest and second-oldest Cape Verdean communities in Boston and Providence, respectively. More generally, Andrade-Watkins' film highlights the fear of Cape Verdeans that the population of Cape Verdeans in the United States is decreasing and could result in financial instability and a loss of cultural production on the islands. The documentary also echoes what Meintel (2002, 35) describes as "myths of identity" or what Benedict Anderson (1991) describes as "imagined communities" by addressing how Cape Verdeans strive to maintain aspects of Cape Verdean culture and regenerate such ideologies through visits home.

In *The New Migration Paradigm of Transitional African Spaces* (2011), Pedro Marcelino argues that a new perspective must be delineated to understand some of these contradictory identity myths for the sake of the nation's future development. Discussing his book with me, Marcelino tells me, "one of the elements that is problematic about Cape Verde is a vision of its

²⁰ I use the word separate here NOT to imply that music is itself separate from movement, but to mean that dancers are not merely accompanying visual entertainment within a musical concert. They are adding dance groups to the professional circle of artistic organizations, rather than as simply part of live musical performances.

own identity as unique, which ends up being exclusionary,” and contradictory to its cosmopolitan characteristics (Pedro Marcelino, pers. comm. March 15 2013). In *Transnational Archipelago* (2008), Batalha and Carling conceptualize and compare the racial struggles in many different Cape Verdean networks across the globe and provide the first comprehensive mapping of the largest Cape Verdean diasporic communities which include Cape Verdean communities in Sweden, the northeastern US, the Netherlands, and Portugal, as well as smaller communities in Brazil, Cuba, Senegal, and France. Batalha’s work offers insight into island-specific transnational connections and concludes that Santiago, still the poorest island of the archipelago and stereotyped as the “most African” island, draws Cape Verdeans from all over the islands to work in the capital of Praia (2008, 13-33). Batalha’s argument is fundamental to my investigation of international exchange among Santiago island performance groups based in this multicultural capital. All of these authors offer specific evidence to show how Cape Verde continues to increase its global ties around the world. However, most of this research has been unidirectional from Cape Verde outward to the World, and little research has been done on Cape Verdeans returning to the islands. My attention to international exchange within Santiago Island includes diasporic individuals returning to visit.

Culture Crossings and Theories

I have used the term “crossroads” to account for Cape Verde as a site of exchange in multiple frames—from multiple historical roots, inter-island exchanges, geographical displacements, and the blending of disciplinary boundaries. Scholars of Latin American Studies, Caribbean Studies, African American Studies, and African Studies have all emphasized umbrella terms to account for the process of creating new cultures through hybridity, syncretism,

transculturation, creolization, and transnationalism. Each of these terms will find a place in my dissertation, but I will focus on Cape Verdean Kriolo identity, as well as terms like “transculturation” to highlight innovative cultural productions. I will study how pre-independent Cape Verde plays a role in present-day politics and promoting national images. Still, understanding how leading literature has historicized Cape Verde within the Black Atlantic is necessary. Models of cultural exchange across the Atlantic have been diverse, from Rehm’s one-way “flow” (1975), to the “transatlantic triangle” (Meintel 1978), Paul Gilroy’s “web” (1993), Frye’s “matrix” (2000), and McMahon (2008) and Taylor’s (1991) “circle” that elides particular origin. James Clifford (1997, 245) has vented his frustrations about the overabundance of theoretical terminologies when he wrote that “an unruly crowd of descriptive/interpretive terms now jostle and converse in an effort to characterize the contact zones of nations, culture, and regions” (245). He further implies that authors often propose their own competing terms rather than elucidating specific processes that are occurring. I agree with Clifford’s point and I believe that Deidre Meintel and Cristina McMahon are among the scholars who have most successfully “jostled,” and “conversed” to articulate how especially difficult it is to characterize the processes taking place in Cape Verde. My work builds upon their thinking by considering how dance embodies such complex transatlantic circles.

Hannerz (1996) has paved the road for discussions related to transculturation and creolization. To engage in how his theories apply to cultural exchanges taking place in Cape Verde, McMahon argues that theories of transculturation use language that locks culture into a binary between two origins—foreign/indigenous, dominator/dominated, center/periphery—and so contradicts the multiplicity of influences that these theories seek to characterize. I read Hannerz and other theorists of transculturation theory through McMahon because she accounts

for how the underlying principle of transculturation is inapplicable to Cape Verde where a lack of indigenous community makes it difficult to pinpoint a sense of cultural origins. Sidney Mintz argues that creolization theory has been especially relevant to Caribbean Studies and that scholars are using creolization as a crutch to account for “new sorts” of cultures born out of migrant communities so as to create a new culture “out of a fragmented past” (Mintz 1996, 302). In these terms, from “fragmented” to “new,” creolization theory in the Caribbean context may apply to Cape Verde’s linguistic history of creole language, but the diverse array of island-specific cultures in Cape Verde characterizes the place as far more “fragmented” than cohesively new. Mintz and Price (1992) have dismissed creole cultures’ connections to roots, which is also out of place in Cape Verde. These theories need readjusting for the Cape Verde context.

Deirdre Meintel (2002) accounts for the diasporic dimension of cultural transmission that McMahon suggests is needed to alter transculturation theory. She also distinguishes how today’s Cape Verdean transnationalism differs from that of the past. Supported by both qualitative and quantitative comparative evidence, she proves that Cape Verdean transnationalism is unprecedented in that it includes 1) migrations from diverse genders, classes, and localities of migrant origins; 2) intense contact across localities and 3) migrants who maintain political roles in the Cape Verde state and diaspora communities. Meintel refers to other types of transnationalism, such as Chinese and Italian-Canadian, to suggest that Cape Verdean studies should move past the common focus between migrant and home. She is the first to argue for a specific Cape Verdean transnational model, and my project will further develop this argument.

Arjun Appaduri (1996) has also made signal contributions to the discourse of transnationalism and globalization. His *Modernity at Large* has influenced how others perceive the existence of a local-global paradox. In particular, his term “ethnoscapes,” which

characterizes multiple groups of people characterized by flow and unbounded by one territorial location, applies strongly to the Cape Verdean crossroads because it allows for the inclusion of Cape Verdeans dispersed abroad. Visualizing the Cape Verdean crossroads as an ethnoscape philosophically removes disjunction within the islands and among networks abroad, and constructs Cape Verdean identity as a shifting ideological landscape rather than limited to space and location. Allen Roberts (2000) clarifies the ambiguity implicit in an ethnoscape's "shifts" by using the term "process geographies," showing that multidirectional flows include purpose, intention, and transaction. In my research of contemporary dance and traditional dance performances I will work with the ideas of Appaduri and Roberts by showing how multiple shifting ideological fragments inform one another like a purposeful, transactional, cohesive, and unstable ethnoscape.

Performing the Nation

In order to consider batuko as one of many national Cape Verdean dances, I work with issues brought forth in studies of performance and nationalism. Performance is both a lens and a site for generating ideas about individual communities and the greater nation. This perspective stems from dance theorist Susan Foster (1995, 15) who draws an analogy between choreography and writing and encourages scholars to consider how movement generates corporeal meaning and knowledge production. Janet O'Shea (2007) also highlights choreography as an opportunity for and a reflection of agency. Following O'Shea and Foster, I understand the term choreography to imply explicit decision-making, while accepting O'Shea's point that usage of the word is contested among dance scholars in specific national contexts (2007, 10-12).

Dance can also serve as a negotiator between community and the individual, and reveal tensions between larger social and political rules. Scholars whose research concerns how the nation is “performed” focus on such tensions. Benedict Anderson explains that “nation” is commonly understood to be a unified and “deep horizontal comradeship,” but further argues that a nation is an imagined political construct perceived to be both limited and sovereign (1991, 6-7). Members who do not live face-to-face with one another redefine and reevaluate political, cultural, racial, or social borders that distinguish the community. Commonalities and strains between imaginations can be located in performance, serving as a way to reveal how “nation” is perceived as well as a site of imagination where performers play an active role in constructing how it will be represented. Practices like batuko and contemporary Cape Verdean dance are elucidated by demonstrating some of the changes, processes, and consequences that can occur within performance as it is shaped by local and international audiences.

Not all dances, musical genres, or performances are created with nationalistic intentions, quite obviously; but as Anthony Seeger writes, “eventually music [like performance] can be used as a way to indicate who you are within a community and to interpret who others are” (1998, 3). One of the ways scholars have written about performing national identity is by thinking about performance as a way of reconstructing an idealized originary practice that will yield to a larger understanding of heritage. Gender, class, race, and ethnicity are some of the interconnected systems by which reconstructions can take place. In *Cape Verdean Women and Globalization* (2009), for example, Katherine Carter and Judy Aulette highlight a frame of gender to show how performance can serve to reconstruct unbalanced roles and reify the nation through references to strong maternal women. In the case of Cape Verde, dancing and singing with sexually demonstrative hip circles enables batuko dancers to “talk back” to those who would control

them, purging themselves from a victimized past and reclaiming their identity as strong independent Cape Verdean women (Carter & Aulette 2009, 131). By reconstructing a historical period prior to when emigration exacerbated detrimental gender imbalances, “revival” festivals in the 1970s were used as a national coping mechanism (ibid. 131-133). Jane Desmond’s work on hula dance also addresses the nationalization of performance through a process of gender and race. She argues that hula developed as a symbolic representation of a reconstructed “pristine” past, when a gracefully moving, feminine hula girl portrayed Hawaii as “untainted” by European contact. This constructed nostalgic image, although grounded in indigenous performance evoked through an aesthetics of indigeneity, helped to legitimize hula as Hawaii’s national dance for outside audiences (Desmond 1999, 275). Using such works as a guide, looking to the performance of nostalgia and migration through contemporary dance is another way to reconstruct originary forms. However, Raiz di Polon’s relationship to nostalgia and “outside audiences,” functions in a much different way than the case of Carter & Aulette and Desmond.

After a performance at the Portuguese embassy in 2010, Mano Preto of Raiz di Polon told me that he was frustrated because only upper-class members of society came to see his work that night. Contemporary dance is often shaped by issues of class. Savigliano (1995), Carter and Aulette (2009), Daniel (1995), O’Shea (2007), Ness (1997) and others have noted the ways that class is contested through choreography and negotiated between local and global communities. These authors’ particular examples of dance began as subaltern forms. By appropriating and extracting elements of movement, rhythm, and “feeling” from the subaltern, elites could “increase” their detachment from colonial others by using the forms to re-establish a foundational cultural identity. However, these idioms could only increase in popularity or be “approved” by upper class audiences through a process of legitimization, which often meant

“purifying” the performances by “cleaning” their lyrics (Carter and Aulette), desexualizing their movements (Savigliano 1995, Daniel 1995), professionalizing their social roles (Daniel 1995, 2011, Graff 1997) or establishing a more Western pedagogy (Ness 1997, O’Shea 2007). Only through such strategies could a dance be understood as a “national form.” In the Raiz di Polon case, legitimization becomes an issue of searching out and maintaining a presence of a “terra terra” feeling, or a feeling of traditional Cape Verde. These ideas will especially be important in Chapters 3 and 4.

Scholars have also argued that some performers reclaim a past through a presence or absence of a colonial gaze, which one can relate to Cape Verde’s history of colonial resistance as a theme present in traditional narratives such as batuko songs and dance, and in narrative contemporary pieces. For example, in their works about Senegalese, Tanzanian, Indian, and American performance idioms, Castaldi (2005), Edmonson (2005), O’Shea (2007) and Graff (1997) respectively articulate how some performers evoke a hereditary origin by “cleansing” a colonial past from their present. The National Ballet of Senegal, for example, uses narratives, colorful costumes, reenacted social situations, and rhythms to evoke events that take place off the stage in romanticized rural settings (Castaldi 2006, 9).²¹ Choreographic “cleansing” realigned a Senegalese “present” with its imagined past. Graff notes a similar strategy through her example of American choreographer Martha Graham who used community dances and Americana to create utopian visions of a frontier community without race issues (Graff 1997, 21). “Cleansing” America of its post-war depression connected subgroups back to the nation—however utopian. Issues of class and cleansing will be especially relevant with regard to my case study of

²¹ Such assertions refer most directly to the cultural politics of President Leopold Sédar Senghor. The “French” aspects of Senegalese culture remained in the organizational and logistical aspects of the performance such as the title, the performance spaces, and the patrons, while the “Senegalese” aspects of the performance remained inside the performance.

contemporary dance company Raiz di Polon that performs batuko movements with theatrical elements such as props and abstract costumes to reinterpret the past for international audiences. I will look to Graff, Castaldi, and others to demonstrate that batuko in this “theatrical” context legitimizes the form for elite audiences.

In *Samba: Resistance in Motion* (1995), Barbara Browning shows that narrating reconstructed history to reunite a nation can be compressed in a single repeated musical and movement phrase. By performing a metaphor of colonial resistance and strength as inscribed within the basic samba step, dancers realign their past with their present on their own terms (Browning 1995, 15). Janet O’Shea’s chapter “Nation and Region” is especially useful in its discussion of history, legitimization, and “cleansing,” as she traces contrasting understandings of Indian patriotism expressed within *Bharata Natyam* performance. O’Shea suggests how Bharata Natyam represents a form of “cleansed” post-colonial national identity which unifies several regions, as well as providing a means for Indians to identify with specific regional practices, each of which has varying connections to the form (O’Shea 2007, 70-81). There is unity in having diverse ties to Bharata Natyam, which enables the form to speak to both local and global audiences. Like samba, batuko can also be interpreted as a repeated metaphor for a reconstructed history, and like Bharata Natyam, batuko unites diverse communities through its metaphor of colonial resistance. But when batuko takes on the form of a subnarrative within a contemporary dance-theater piece, it speaks to both local and global audiences.

Performers also construct a sense of nation as a history through which multiple legacies converge. For example, Sally Ness (1997) notes the choreographic junction of European ballet and an aesthetic of Philippino “tribal idioms,” revealing tensions between converging legacies while the work is promoted as both “transcultural” and “Philippino.” Appropriation of

international idioms on both local and international levels creates a “mestizo” national identity—one that can speak to an international audience while maintaining an aesthetic of a “lost,” “tribal,” local past (ibid, 3). Peter Manuel, however, also shows us that constructing a mestizo image can be interpreted as severing a creole community from its many legacies. He argues that performing the nation can be a form of “deculturation” as a process through which one or more of the communities in question loses touch with its traditional culture (Manuel 2009, 35). Manuel recalls a Trinidadian musician who said, “We’re glad the British banned our drumming, because it inspired us to invent the steel drum” (ibid. 37). The innovation of steel drums promoted a new ideal creole form in the interest of an emerging sense of nationhood. Manuel’s quotation is parallel to a common Cape Verdean phrase, “I am not African or Portuguese, I am Crioulo,” which recognizes multiple legacies and implies a sense of separation from any in particular. Working from Manuel and Ness I will demonstrate how Crioulo mestizo identity, as performed through contemporary dance, encompasses both a “severing from” and “recognition of” multiple converging legacies.

Whether choreography or musical compositions are viewed as attempted reconstructions of an idealized past, representations of multiple lineages, or efforts to articulate new languages, the negotiations so implied produce many social and artistic consequences. Processes of professionalization and institutionalization are linked to these consequences. Daniels, O’Shea, Ness, Foulkes, and Graff show how the gradual institutionalization of dance forms serves to legitimize them as an art form by increasing their status through standards of technical rigor, training pedagogy, and respect in the work force. For example, Janet O’Shea demonstrates that the incorporation of “cross-national pedagogical relationships” and professional academies helped to bring Bharata Natyam to the attention of Western concert dance circles while

increasing the dedication of local audiences (O'Shea, 141). However, unlike dances that are, as Novack says, a "way of life," professionalizing dance can often stratify performance, tag it as "high art," and separate it from its "people" (Novack 1990, 16). This stratification process both is and is not occurring in Praia: Raiz di Polon has established the first dance academy which to some extent institutionalizesg the company's dance techniques and helps the entire art community to start thinking that expression can be professionalized in Cape Verde. And in some ways RDP does represent a rising "high art" for, as discussed in Chapter Three, people of all social classes are invited and encouraged to participate in its productions through free classes.²²

Works that link performance studies with nationalism enable an understanding of choreographic strategies that might be at play within the creation of folk-dance-based contemporary dance, locate consequences that arise out of these changes, and determine how Cape Verde's place at the crossroads enables some of its artists to escape or negotiate all such consequences. Because Cape Verdean dance communities are just beginning to form, I will use these works to make predictions about Cape Verdean dance. I am also interested in finding out how Cape Verde's global and local stages change or amplify the techniques and tensions that these authors have revealed. I decipher how these tensions are rerouted or anchored by Cape Verde's lack of indigeneity and play roles at a cultural and geographic crossroads. I do not intend to define Cape Verdean identity or prove how complicated creole identity can be; the answers to such questions are impossible to define because they are constantly changing. I show how Raiz di Polon members mingle with and grasp the many signifiers that exist in conflicting dyads, and so propel conversations surrounding Cape Verdean identity.

²² Plans for the school can be seen in this video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgDQU5Ts13o>



Figure 3. *Grasp the Nation*. Raiz di Polon community class. July 2012.

CHAPTER ONE: CIRCULATING HISTORIES

“The ocean is our life, and also our death” –Fisherman.



Figure 4. *Water dance*. Raiz di Polon student dancing on rock. Creative exploration for video-dance film project Maramar.

Contrasting Winds: Land to Sea to Stage

The ten volcanic islands that emerge from the Atlantic Ocean 250 miles off of the coast of Senegal are beset with physical contradictions and provide countless natural metaphors for the islands' cultural contrasts. Drought and harsh winds oppose unpredictable flooding and humid stillness. Towering rock formations and moon-looking rubble protrude skyward next to lush, fertile, rolling valleys and hills. Cities serve as international hubs while island interiors less than minutes away reveal tangled tropical forest isolating farmers from nearby city life. While some islands are united by a short peaceful boat ride, the ocean also serves as an impenetrable barrier

to others farther away. A lack of sufficient potable water opposes the abundance of seawater surrounding the islands. While Cape Verdean *ethnoscapes* (Appaduri 1996, 48) occupy territory worldwide, making it difficult to demarcate physical boundaries of Cape Verdean inhabitants, the actual collected size of the Cape Verdean archipelago is said to total the equivalent size of the state of Rhode Island—so small that the islands were often left off of early World Maps (Hurley-Glowa 1997, 10). As Madeira Santos writes, the “climate has defined the physical and human characteristics of the islands” and these contrasts contribute to the perpetual negotiations thematically and theatrically restaged in Cape Verdean performance (Madeira Santos 2007, 6).

Geological forces impact the ways in which people have built an adaptive relationship to their surroundings. Responding to the violent extremes brought about by wind and water, northern islands are named after the leeward coastal winds and called the “Sotavento” islands, while the Southern windward archipelago that includes Santiago is called the “Barlavento” islands. [See Figure 5.]



Figure 5. “Map of Cape Verde Archipelago.” Left: Archipelago map. Right: Archipelago highlighted next to the African continent. Source: wiki site www.18dao.net, public domain.]

Names that connect language and vocabulary with intangible, natural elements, serve as poetic reminders of the importance that nature plays in the archipelago. From water imagery to references to land and fertility, all of these topographical and spatial contrasts play an especially emblematic part in the portrayal of national themes in performance, and contribute to a spiritual allegiance to the ocean something like what surfer community researcher Bron Taylor calls a “new aquatic nature religion” (2007, 923). Even before we consider the key historical events that have led to the “imagined communities” (Anderson 1983) of Cape Verde, we can already see how marked contrasts have always been filtering through the soil and water of Cape Verde prior to the formation of Kriol identity. A fisherman once said “The ocean is our life, and also our death.”²³ His words are simple and reflect how water imagery and natural elements play symbolic roles in national performance. As he highlighted the ocean’s menacing and life-giving qualities, the fisherman’s words evoke the extremes of achievement (“life”) and suffering (“death”) that characterize the islands as well as how the struggles involved in developing the nation are also among the aspects of Cape Verdean life that are valued most.

Shifting from natural objects and space to man-made objects, stark contrasts also apply to visible symbols in quotidian life. From sounds to clothing to imported goods, representations from all over the world saturate the nine islands, exemplifying the national contradictions that readily identify *Kriolo* island culture. For example, on Santiago Island, one might see that at a nearby general store called a “Chinese Loja,” a man is wearing a green-and-yellow “Brazil” t-shirt and purchasing Portuguese “Superboc” beer. His wife, dressed in the bright patterns of a Senegalese dress, waits for him outside as she sips French coffee from her Boston College mug and sways to American hip-hop music playing from the store. Such visual and sensory examples

²³ Fisherman’s saying, as quoted in an interview with Déni Mendes, Migration Studies student who comes from a family of fishermen. April 30, 2012.

are infinite and color the islands with both subtle and determined global markers. Due to the country's struggle with infertile land and lack of potential for self-sustaining agriculture, the archipelago imports over 80% of its food and goods to the islands, primarily from Brazil, the US, Portugal, and China; and six percent of these imported goods are for petroleum products (Baker 2006, 306). Other images and symbols are more intangible, such as the use of English and Brazilian slang within Kriolo vocabularies, or even more extensive in scope such as the tradition of Carnival imported to the islands from Brazil.²⁴ When Cape Verdeans profess in many ways and through various forms of expression, "I am not African, I am not European, I am Cape Verdean"—a phrase that has been spoken for centuries up through present-day debates (many of which are flooding social media in traceable ways today)—what does this mean? What does it mean to Cape Verdean to be Kriolu, and does one need to be born in the islands or living in the islands to have this identity?

During a cross-cultural festival called the Atlantic Music Expo, musician and Minister of Culture Mario Lucio de Sousa was provided with an opportunity to discuss identity questions among people of other crossroads communities. During a speech, he declared that:

After these musical exchanges today, I have learned that to be a creole nation and to be a Cape Verdean, Kriolu is not necessarily to be born in a country that speaks a creole language. Creole today is a mindset and a relationship; we are a culture of inclusion and respect, where everyone can be Creole and it is no longer necessary to claim the territory as space for identity and begin to situate identity as mental space and relationship with the other.²⁵

Minister de Sousa describes the utopian community in which Cape Verdeans believe that they are living. How did Cape Verde historically develop this "mental space and relationship with the

²⁴ I make a very general statement here saying that Carnival was imported from Brazil. This statement is debatable and goes beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, Carnival, and the plural forms of Cape Verdean Carnival will be discussed with a little more detail in Chapter Four.

²⁵ Mario Lucio. Speech. Atlantic Music Expo, April 8, 2013. Author's translation.

other”? In this chapter, the Minister’s “Kriolu-as-mentality” philosophy will be seen to be widely respected by a majority of influential elite Cape Verdeans including dance company director, Mano Preto of Raiz di Polon, and assertions such as that are not merely the result of recent forces of globalization. As dance theorist Sherry Shapiro has suggested in a different context, globalization is the result of “human migration across borders, the shrinking of distance and time through technology, and the growing connection between diverse communities [that are] creating a world that is transforming our sensibilities and the understanding of others” (2008, vii). Clearly, Cape Verde’s shifting borders, increased connections between Diaspora communities, and promotion of such an “open mentality” (Mario Lucio de Sousa) exemplify Shapiro’s definition. However, many scholars over the last several decades have used the term “globalization” as an easy justification for the presence of an international network with anxieties that the world will become homogenized—as though “globalization is an intractable fate of the world, an irreversible process” (Smith 1998, 1) and that rich cultural difference will disappear into a melting pot of the global “post-cultural” person. Recent publications about Cape Verde have noted how “globalization has shaped issues in Cape Verde” (Carter and Aulette 2010, 13), but as Minister de Sousa states and other sharp scholars have noted, “Globalization is not new! It has always been happening!”²⁶

Cape Verde’s unusual location as isolated and in the crossroads of many interconnected continents, making the archipelago an important site for understanding how interconnectedness and distant community ties affect nation-building. This dissertation is, in this way, *about* globalization. However, instead of proving the obvious statement that globalization is triggering changes in how the nation is expressed, attention will be drawn to the ways in which intercultural

²⁶ Minister of Culture Mario Lucio de Sousa. Speech. Atlantic Music Festival. March 15 2013.

openness as a “mental space” and living at the crossroads have been, from the very start, engrained in the Cape Verdean imaginary by way of adaptation to the climate, distances between and among islands and emigrant destinations, and complex emotional turbulence occasioned by mobility. Crafting a nation under these geographic circumstances and through difficult historical events requires creativity and innovation, rendering ideas of homogeneity irrelevant in conversations around globalization. What has arisen for Cape Verde is the urgent need to mark difference and craft Minister de Sousa’s “open mentality” simultaneously.

This chapter will highlight some of the important marking points in the Nation’s history, beginning with the transatlantic slave trade, a process that planted a number of seeds for complex processes and paradigms such as intricate systems of labor and sexuality, waves of migrations, and the development of regional identities. Such complex events and processes contributed to myths of nationhood and “in transit” social identities as the nation became an independent republic. Key post-independence socio-economic factors will also be considered, as they are related to tensions within migratory networks that have contributed to Cape Verdeans’ fierce anxiety about continued foreign control of politico-economic decisions. By explaining how historical events have crafted an imagined rootless national identity, in subsequent chapters performances with titles such as “Our Dance” “Us Here,” “Dancing What Is Ours,” “CV Matrix” and “Old City” will serve as examples of how these histories continue to be explored and rewritten today.

The Births of Cape Verdean identities: Slavery, Colonization, and Migrations

“Have no fear, Shhhara!” my friend Déni says to me, slurring with a beer in hand and responding to my nervous expression. He was a little too close to the edge of an ocean-facing cliff during one of many recent good-bye parties. “I am Kriol! We all come from fishermen and slaves! We have balance! We adapt. We never fall... emotionally or physically.” (Deni Mendes, pers. comm. April 30, 2012).

Despedidas or “festa de despedir” (“party of sending away”), are farewell celebrations that take place when a friend is leaving town for a long time. The word, “despedida” comes from the verb “despedir-se” in Portuguese, which means to send away. Due to the coming-and-going nature of the island, such parties are commonplace. Celebrating goodbyes while lightheartedly making reference to the slave trade? At times the islands can feel like a communal party in which people dance as a result of feeling like they are living on the edge. Like the physical and symbolic contrasts previously described, extremes in lifestyles are part of these contrasts. Déni may have been acting silly, but his uninhibited words reveal a national identification with physical and emotional strength that resonates with myths of the birth of the nation, and a carefreeness that would counteract the fears marking the nation’s formative years. In the forty years since independence, these references still play a strong part in every-day demonstrations of nation-building.

Historian Richard Lobban believes that the islands of Cape Verde were probably known by the Moors, Wolof, Serer, Lebou, and other fisherman or maritime travelers off the Guinea coast who would have likely known about them prior to European sailors (Lobban 1995, 2-5). However, Cape Verde was uninhabited until Portuguese explorers Antonio de Noli and Diogo Gomes navigating the west coast of Africa first visited in May of 1460. They named the first island that they encountered, São Tiago, after the Catholic patron Saint James known for his

strong military conquistas, whose feasts are celebrated in May in the Roman calendar.²⁷ Similarly, other islands were named for Catholic saints corresponding to the month that they were discovered, such as Saint Phillip (later called Fogo after the active “Fire” volcano), and Saint Vincent (São Vicente). Sao Tiago, which became “Santiago” was the largest of all the islands and the easiest to inhabit because it had more sources of fresh water. Because of its size and location, Santiago was also the ideal location to host a slave port and plantation. This initial entrepot was called “Ribeira Grande” and was later Cidade Velha or “Old Town,” and is considered to be the birthplace of the Cape Verdean person. UNESCO has recently added Cidade Velha to the list of World Heritage Sites for its role as an important port where enslaved people were traded or replaced on their ways to the New World. (See Chapter Three regarding a performance called “Cidade Velha.”) Portuguese colonizers brought Africans from the Guinea Coast to Sierra Leone, and from there to Ribeira Grande as a stopover “seasoning” point where groups would be mixed up, forced to become “strengthened” for labor sales, and then either stay or be sold off to plantations across the Atlantic (Lobban 2007, Carreira 1972).

As a population began to form on Santiago Island, Cape Verde became known as a transit port for its supply of “skilled labor” purchased for the Americas. However, even though Cape Verde was an important location for the transatlantic slave trade, the presence of an enslaved population only existed during the early years of the islands’ history. According to Antonio Carreira and Richard Lobban, only a minority of the early population actually held enslaved persons. “The relative portion of slaves in society fell from the overwhelming majority to a rather stable 5-10% where it remained in the 18th and 19th centuries when slavery was curbed”

²⁷ Saint James, or São Tiago, plays a strong role in other nations established by European settlers, such as in Haiti, Colombia, Cuba, and Mexico. The Iberian Saint James was known for his colonial conquests. For example, Patrick Polk, in his book on Haitian flags, explains that the Portuguese arrived in the Kongo in 1491 and presented the king with a flag embroidered with the image of Saint James “on a horse charging fearlessly.” See Polk 1997.

(Lobban 2007, 215). Plantations on Santiago and Fogo outnumbered those on other islands where conditions were less viable, and in general, southern islands were populated with more people of African descent than the northern islands primarily inhabited by people of European descent. A hundred years after the discovery of Santiago, Mindelo in the northern islands became established as another port that was strategically even closer to Portugal. It would later become a key competitor as the other “cultural capital”—one that would be associated with people of a higher social class within Portuguese colonial contexts. Race and class divisions that would complicate Kriolu identity were beginning to take form.

The islands were environmentally unstable, and famine struck the plantations between 1578 and 1585, when the first of a series of droughts increased the population’s need to adapt to severe change (see Carreira 1982 and Pires 2010). A second drought and famine in the mid-1700s took the lives of several thousand inhabitants, nearly wiping out the island’s population (Lobban 2007, Madeira Santos 2007). The slave-based economy was growing so rapidly that plantation owners rarely sought to create sustainable industries within the islands, although wheat and cocoa were small sources of agricultural revenue. Colonial masters and Portuguese people governing the islands from Portugal neglected the populations they so brutally oversaw during these times of suffering because they were more concerned with slave sales than with sustainability of the growing population. “Slaves would escape and form their own families deep in the rural parts of the island, and they would merely be replaced by the incoming new slaves coming from the port. A non-slave population grew out of this quick replacement process,” Richard Lobban explained (pers. comm. July 26, 2013). Escaped slaves and first- and second-generation Cape Verdeans fled these brutal circumstances to migrate in many directions to find more livable conditions.

Contract labor, which itself was essentially a form of legalized slavery, enabled colonial officials to send workers (typically men) to other regions such as coastal Senegal and Guinea (now Guinea Bissau) where there were the beginnings of a coffee industry. Many fled to the Americas by way of whaling ships. Migration specialists like Marcelino, Carriera, and Lobban claim that the whaling industry boom in New England in the 1840s started the first of what would later become one of the largest Cape Verdean communities in Boston, when Cape Verdeans were recruited to work as sailors. Famine and harsh labor conditions contributed to what Góis describes as the first of three significant emigration waves from the islands (Gois 2005, Lobban 2007). In early and mid-1900s drought again killed thousands, causing yet another flight from the islands. After these larger waves, emigration continues to ripple in the 21st century. The last significant wave took place during the early 1990s, which was more related to economic recession than drought.

A complicated socio-racial economy based upon skills, physical labor, and sexuality formed on Santiago Island during the early centuries of slavery, setting a path for the development of an ideology that would erase racial fragmentation and build towards Cape Verde's imagined "raceless" nation. As more Europeans began to arrive at the Northern port of Mindelo and the slave trade continued to be associated with the port of Cidade Velha, a mestizo population resulted from Portuguese men having sexual relations with enslaved African women. Race and class became two complex systems, resulting in a process of upward and downward mobility that Richard Lobban says differs significantly from other nations, including the United States. "In Cape Verde, class, which was often *defined* by whiteness, weighed heavier than race. The ubiquitous phrase, "I am not African, I am Cape Verdean" stems from the understanding that Africanness was perceived as the lowest of all class hierarchies, not necessarily blackness.

This is why in Cape Verdeans that live in the USA sometimes have a problem understanding racism, because to them, no matter what their skin color is, they don't consider themselves African, even if they are darker than a Senegalese immigrant." (Richard Lobban, pers. comm. July 26, 2013).²⁸

Settlers living near Santiago had more contact with enslaved mestizo people, while those living on northern islands were in more ready contact with European ships calling at Mindelo port, a situation that Carreira explains was also related to varying degrees of land fertility, resulting in a compounded socio-racial economy. Explaining how the archipelago's first generations began, Richard Lobban notes that "although few in number, virtually all slave masters and landlords took their sexual pleasures with their slaves... a value system of male supremacy was added to this practice and sometimes resulted in dominant persona having a dozen children or more" (2007, 215).²⁹ While it sounds problematic and saturated with racial stereotyping, the description that explains how race is understood in the archipelago is still used today as explained through an anecdote.

When catching a ride on a banana truck to visit a Peace Corps friend of a friend on Santo Antão Island in the north, the driver thought I might not know anything about Cape Verde history and insisted on telling me what I needed to know. "You know here in Sananton [Santo Antão] we are lighter here. It goes in order from the time of slavery. People in Santiago and Maio in the south, you know they are really really dark because they mated with the Africans, and then as you go north, we get lighter and lighter in skin color and have greener eyes. It's like a spectrum. Shades. Each one a different degree of darkness. A rainbow. South to North we get lighter. We like rainbows here, especially in Sananton because we need the rain *and* the sun!" (Driver, pers. comm. August 21, 2008).

²⁸ Phone conversation with Richard Lobban. He is the first US-based scholar to write about Cape Verde and part of his research for the book, *The Historical Dictionary of Cape Verde*, entailed extensive ethnographic work with Cape Verdeans in the US and in Cape Verde regarding racism.

²⁹ As Paul Gilroy has noted, this fact was true in most of the Black Atlantic (1993, x, 214).



Figure 6. *Banana Ride*. Conversations with a banana farmer on Santo Antão Island. 2008.

The man spoke as if he were merely describing the color of fabric, unaware that saying the word “shades” might be a derogatory term. From his standpoint, shades did not signify hierarchical discrimination. Yet the man’s visual understanding of a racial continuum was accompanied by stigma of social class and economic wealth.

In the colonial era, differentiations developed among black enslaved people, freed slaves and mulattos, and Portuguese people (and some of their mulatto offspring). Portuguese men took on African concubines, which was a process that Cape Verdean anthropologist Mesquitela Lima calls the “historical process of cultural physical miscegenation” through which Cape Verde’s

creole identity developed (1984). As Isabel Rodrigues has noted in her essay “Islands of Sexuality,” women’s roles as concubines, prostitutes, and mothers would provide the basis for what she and other scholars have termed a “hyper-sexualized labor society” that she believes continues to exist in the archipelago today (Rodrigues 2003, 83-100).³⁰ Rodrigues explains that the population of the archipelago grew as a result of sexual relationships between landlords and enslaved women or between landlords with freed blacks, for sexuality was often a form of currency and a way for women to escape domination or secure an opportunity to move to another location.

Between 2008 and 2013, I observed gender biases in the islands. For example, the word “kriola” is constantly used to imply a young, curvy, trim, *mestizo* girl.³¹ “Kriolo,” the male form of the word referring to a creole person, does not have similar sexual connotations. When a male or female friend would say in a social gathering or party, “Sara! Look at you! You are finally kriola!” this was not meant to serve as proof that I was integrating well linguistically and was therefore “a Cape Verdean person.” Instead, it was a euphemism for “hey you are sexy!” and was used to comment upon having a tanned skin tone or the appearance of choosing clothing that could emphasize the body’s curves. The notion of the female creole person as eternally youthful and attractive is commonly used as a marketing strategy for every-day social blogs, such as the one in Figure 7 which means, “Kriola, let’s relax.”

³⁰ Issues of sexuality, concubines, and gender roles during colonial eras have been widely discussed. Anne McClintock’s work, *Imperial Leather: Race Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (1995) gives an in-depth analysis of the limits of power and the ambiguity of black women’s roles during the colonial era. Ann Laura Stoler’s gives attention to colonial categories and the boundaries of race in *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (2010). Antoinette Burton’s anthology, *Gender, Sexuality and Colonial Modernities* (1999) includes essays regarding the “unfinished business” of global gender bias from colonial subjugation.

³¹ A strong parallel exists between the kriola mestizo girl and Jane Desmond’s discussions of the “hapa hole” hula girl (Desmond 1998, 109, 134).



Figure 7. *Crioula*. Blog logo for current events and social life, depicting the curvy mestizo image as the emblem for popular social life.

Evelynn Hammonds (1994) argues that the world's fixation on African American women's sexuality began when Europeans claimed that they scientifically concluded that the black female body is marked by uncontrolled sexuality when they made initial contact with Africans. Scholars of gender and African American Studies have attributed the foundation of this stereotype to countless examples of "primitivized" and exoticized African cultures (Apter 2007, 20; Butler 1993, 175; Defranz 2006, 20, 45; Hammonds 1994, 48) These ideas have undoubtedly mixed into the ways in which the history of Cape Verdean sexuality has developed, as it has with many other post-colonial African Diasporic nations. However, while Eurocentric views have for centuries stereotyped Africans as "hyper-sexualized" through colonizers' often-deliberate misunderstandings of social dynamics and religious practices (again, see McClintock 1995 42; Stoler 2010, 58), the development of supposed "hypersexuality" in Cape Verde relates to histories of gender politics as well as to Western misunderstandings. More specifically, sexuality is directly linked to the nation's very specific history of migration. During migration waves that have continued throughout the nation's history, men have left the islands in search of work. Because most women remained in the islands, gender imbalance formed in favor of men who did not emigrate or who returned to Cape Verde, forcing women to compete for men's attention. Competition created a circular system by which imbalances set a norm for marriage infidelity, as men would start multiple families and women were constantly fighting for power (Rodrigues

2003; Carter and Aulette 2009; Vanilde Fertado, interview. August 12, 2012).

Today, Cape Verdean governmental policies and NGOs have sought to create more gender equality. According to the (Organization for Women in Cape Verde (OMCV), “Women used to compete with one another, to get a sense of power. They would compete for unfaithful husbands and the circle would keep going. Times are changing, and we have women in government leadership positions and the balances are more even. But we are still recovering from that and we are trying to empower women to take on strong leadership roles and to demand respect.”³² In Chapter Three Raiz di Polon’s desexualized movement style will be presented as a restaging of Cape Verdean identity to “correct” gender balance that is constantly at play in the islands, aligning the country with gender equality.

Slavery in Cape Verde ended in 1836 as it did in Brazil, where many of the enslaved were taken from their stopping points in Cape Verde. This end date occurred years after Great Britain and France pushed Portugal to ban slavery (Lobban 2007, 205). However, as it did in other nations, slavery continued to exist clandestinely through various sailors and fishermen who claimed to be engaged in legitimate business. Although historical data is scarce to confirm this, Antonio Carreira and others have claimed that independent slave ships would disguise their sails with American flags, appearing to be whaling ships, while obscuring the true identity of the boat as slave ships (Carreira 1972, Lobban 2007, Madera Santos 2007).³³

³² Interview. Vanilde Fertado. Assistant director of GOIPM and OMCV. April 12, 2012. For more information regarding womens’ rights see Carter and Aulette *Cape Verdean Women and Globalization* 2009.

³³ For more information see “Slavery” in *The Historical Dictionary of Cape Verde*. Lobban, (2007).

Contrasting Regional Identities: Badiu and Sambadjudu

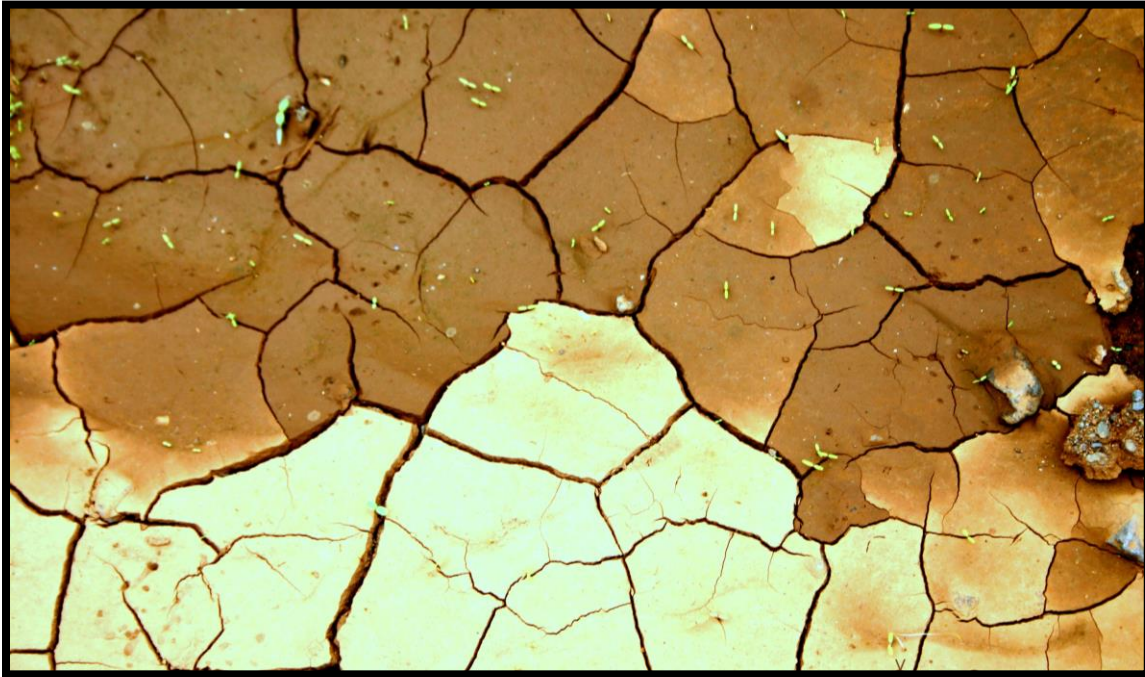


Figure 8. *Contrasts*. Taken from a post-rain hike near Ribeira Grande, Cidade Velha, Santiago.

Distinct identities began to develop during the first two centuries of the archipelago's inhabitation, and Santiago Island specifically became increasingly known as the "African" island. Differences were the direct result of colonial labeling based upon how inhabitants were "assimilated" into the colony, reflecting what Trinidadian scholar Lloyd Braithwaite calls the presence of an "ascriptive base" (1975, 46-49). As he suggests, phenotypically and culturally dissimilar groups remain together not only due to regulations but within a closed system of "ascribed values." A spectrum exists between two nodes: Blackness and Whiteness, and in the Cape Verdean's case, Portuguese or African. "Non-assimilated" Cape Verdeans that are often found in the rural areas (with less interactions with Portuguese people) in the center of Santiago island were deemed unable to adapt to Portuguese language and were called "Vadiu" meaning "vagabond," or "wanderer." This term later became known as "Badiu" and became a symbol of Africanness and Cape Verdean colonial rebellion.

In contrast, people who were “helpful” to slave owners and Portuguese colonists were called “Sambadjudu,” from the phrase, “Só para adjudar” or “just in order to help.” Santiago people became known as “Badiu” and all other Cape Verdeans on other islands became known as Sambadjudu—a distinction differentiating Santiago residents from other island residents that is still used today. Keisha Feikes, in her research that details histories of Santiaguense women, reminds us that badiu and sampadjudu identities are often represented as tension-free and stable in popular discourses, but because the terms are grounded in colonial labor policies, they are redolent of suppression and rebellion (Feikes 2006, 72-26). As Akintola Hubbard argues in his dissertation about Cape Verdean music, the “two, broad, opposing cultural categories of badiu and sampadjudu structure the Cape Verdean Kriolu imaginary and a host of racial and gender ascriptions, assumptions and stereotypes are signified by these terms and frame this opposition” (2011, 8). If forming cultural identity over several centuries of colonial domination was not already complex, the archipelagic geographic and post-colonial separations that dispersed people according to the African-European spectrum further complicated how cultural identity would split the nation.

Badiu culture today is most notably displayed and represented by the performance idioms *batuko* and *tabanka*. *Batuko* is a dance and drumming idiom that includes women drummers with female solo improvised dances. Women use *batuko* to create what, in other contexts, Victor Turner (1967) described as “*communitas*”—a deep solidarity formed in the face of oppression through singing about sexually abusive slave owners and other quotidian hardships. In *batuko*, women dance with a “*pano di terra*” (“cloth of the earth”) wrapped around their hips in reference to hand-woven belts once used as currency but now signifying sexual autonomy, power, and rebellion.



Figure 9. *Batuko and Pano di Terra*. Batuko drumming and dancing occurring for the President's day festivities on the pedestrian street outside of the market in Plateau, Praia Santiago. July 2012.

Another Santiago-based tradition, *tabanka*, can refer to a tabanka association, a ten-day annual festival, or the parade that concludes tabanka festivals. During the festival, which takes place around the saints' days of May and June, "players,"³⁴ reenact the "stealing of a saint" or relic from the chapel as happened in Medieval Europe (see Geary 1991, 5, 132). The events include prayers reenacting the "selling" of the relic, bargaining between courts, and eventually the relic as returned to the chapel after a celebratory parade. Tabanka is known for its clamoring final

³⁴ People who assume roles as these players inherit their roles. This "born into tabanka" mentality parallels other generational traditions such as the role of the "griot," performer in Senegal.

parade march when participants dress up in military and formal attire imitating colonial elite as they drum military-style cadences and blow trumpets made from conch shells. Similar to the syncretic religions of Cuban Santería, Haitian Vodou, and Brazilian Candomblé which combine Yoruba and other African practices with Catholic symbols to continue prohibited rituals in colonial societies (see Cosentino 1995), tabanka, is a syncretic ritual practice as the events mimic colonial practices and Catholic rituals. However, the African aspect of tabanka is highly debated and deemed undetermined. Cape Verde individual ethnic identities were gradually lost early on as the islands were populated, and tabanka does not embrace any particular African origin. As Cristina McMahon writes, “the tabanka rite is inherently polysemous. As such, it resists classificatory systems devised by anthropologists and performance theorists alike to make meaning out of processions and public events” (2004, 7). McMahon critiques how scholars who have written about tabanka with an objective to locate roots, have done so by comparing the form to Brazilian syncretism, which is similar but very different. For example, Semedo and Turano privilege the Catholic and Portuguese aspects of tabanka because, compared to Yoruba-based rites in Brazil, the form appeared to them to be more Portuguese. McMahon asserts that most such studies) are biased in that they have been written from Eurocentric perspectives for a Portuguese publishing patrons, and were written without adequate access to African archives or narratives (ibid).

T]he authors’ lack of access to ethnological texts on Wolof, Mandinga, and Fulani allowed them to essentially shift the origins of tabanka at will by allowing Turano’s narrative about the influences of Portuguese pilgrimages to predominate in their book. In effect, Turano attributes origins where she might have simply observed similarities. (2004, 18).

Such scholars were “searching for roots but missing the flower,” as Mai Palmberg has written (2002, 121). Recently José Monteiro has suggested that “Tabanka has everything. It has so much

competition and mysticism. Everything is done for the love of Saint John the Baptist. It reminds us that the king's court is the highest authority. It reminds us of African royal societies and European societies together" (2012, 1).



Figure 10. *Tabanka procession*. Praia, Santiago. 2008.

Because badiu idioms encompass the oldest songs and dances within the islands, badiu culture is often promoted as the “heart” of Cape Verdean culture, and is even labeled the “indigenous” performance of the islands (Hurley Glowa 1997). However, the apparent privileging of batuko as the “soul” of Cape Verde depends upon whether or not a person is speaking from badiu or sambajudu island communities. Batuko and other earlier forms of performance, like many other Afro-Atlantic performance idioms arising in European colonies—Brazilian capoeira and marakatu, for example—originated as physical, communal, and expressive ways for slaves to rebel against their colonial oppressors. Rhythms are loud in volume because they are based upon communal polyrhythmic drumming patterns. Political lyrics are related to farm life, sexuality, and African ancestry, and are deemed provocative, especially from

the perspectives of Sampadjudu residents. In the case of batuko, these “forbidden dances” were prohibited under the Portuguese empire. By contrast, more European-inspired performance idioms of *morna*, *coladeira*, and *mazurka* were crafted in the northern islands, which were superficially more apolitical in that they stress natural landscapes, love, and nostalgia for distant family instead of sexuality, corruption, and infidelity. Gabriel Fernandes has studied Cape Verdean politics and accredits these tendencies to Sampadjudu politics (2006). To this day, Sampadjudu songs are the most celebrated among the nation’s musical genres, made famous by the morna songs of sodadi with the late “barefoot diva” Cesária Évora (Arenas 2011, 57; Kavoori 2009, 109).

Between 1963 and 1974, responding to the intellectual exploration of Negritude movements in Francophone Africa and Luso-African discourses on the mainland, Cape Verdeans began to express their severed identity from Portugal. Revolutionary leader Amílcar Cabral led this liberation struggle, and although he was mobilizing the Cape Verdean people, his policies simultaneously contributed to regional divisions between badiu and sampadjudu identities which were blooming on separate islands. Cabral was the son of a Cape Verdean father and mother from Guinea-Bissau, and after studying in Lisbon where he participated in Pan-Africanist discourses among Luso-African intellectuals, he returned to Cape Verde with political ideas of re-Africanization. Cabral’s agenda made him an emblem for rebellion and leadership worldwide, not only as a pan-Africanist but because he believed that the only way to free a nation from colonial oppression and cultural alienation was to diminish the barriers between the bourgeoisie and poorer classes. He visualized reconnecting the elite with older cultural traditions like tabanka and batuko as part of this cultural union. In 1956, Cabral formed the PAICV party, (African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde) and led his followers to combat

Portuguese soldiers to victory that led to independence for Guinea Bissau in 1963 and eventually, to Cape Verde's independence in 1976. While the PAIGV later severed relations with Guinea Bissau, it continued its re-Africanization and emphasized the Africa pole of the “I am neither African nor European” debate. When Cabral was assassinated in 1973, his image became a Cape Verdean trope for liberty, rebellion, and a united front with poorer communities worldwide. [See Figure 11.]



Figure 11. *Amílcar Cabral images*. Amílcar Cabral's image on book covers, posters, and public graffiti art. Montage by author. Book images in public domain.

In post-independence Cape Verde, badiu culture became romanticized to counteract its suppression during the colonial era.³⁵ As a result, tabanka processions and batuko circles have

³⁵ To this day PAICV is still vaguely associated with re-Africanization when compared to the second party that emerged called the MPD, Movement for Democracy. Cape Verde has had four presidents since Independence, two of whom have been PAICV and two MPD, including the President Fonseca who was elected in 2011. According to Baker, Cape Verde “is one of the few countries in Africa to have a homogenous society, free of ethnic competition

been promoted through politically sponsored events and festivals, and batuko has shifted from backyards and social gatherings to political stages. Badiu people who were once seen as “lowly,” “ignorant,” “backwards,” “slow,” and “uncivilized” have become more readily associated with the nation’s “heart” and “soul,” and have served as symbols of Cape Verde’s “indigenous” roots. Echoing what Marta Savigliano (1998, 14) theorizes about tango’s history in Argentina, badiu performance forms in post-independent Cape Verde have been undergoing a degree of “autoexoticism” as more and more people in elite roles have come to support “low” forms of expression. Savigliano’s notion of autoexoticism may be extended to how many Cape Verdean returnees maintain notions of how Cape Verde “used to be” as part of their imaginary, and in this sense, autoexoticize their romantic notions of an unchanging island utopia. However, the Cape Verdean context differs from that of Argentina as described by Savigliano, because unlike tango, which was validated overseas by the “colonizer” and then gained popularity back in Argentina, the fragmented regional identities of the archipelago have kept badiu performance forms like batuko in constant debate. For example, in carefully chosen, politically correct words, the official in charge of the island’s largest music festival explained that “here in São Vicente, we just don’t..... *appreciate* batuko like the badiu do” (Humberto Lelis, interview, August 17, 2010).³⁶ As will be discussed in later chapters, such tensions between regional identities are both honored and dissolved in the work of Raiz di Polon when the company sews together ALL of these forms—batuko, morna, funana, tabanka, and others—using Mano Preto’s new lexicon as the thread.

and the burdens of tradition... who focused upon policy and practice rather than fighting over the relative representation of different groups” (2006, 504). According to my own observations, the country does have a successful sense of democracy, but rivalry, competition, and “burdens of tradition” DO exist.

³⁶ Mr. Lelis was then Councilman of Culture, Education and Sports, and producer of the Baia das Gatas Music festival.

Unofficial Language, Official Culture

Returning to pre-independent Cape Verde, we must consider another path by which the poetics of politics have revealed contending regional identities in the archipelago. While *badiu* performance idioms were suppressed and then later encouraged through the nation's emerging re-Africanization policies, people of the *sampadjudu* islands like São Vicente were expressing their own transitions away from the slavery era through the performance idioms of morna, mazurka, cola, and coladeira, most of which are more closely connected to the archipelago's European influences.³⁷ Intellectuals were also searching for ways to express their growing questions about cultural identity and founded the first Cape Verdean literary magazine *Claridade* ("Clarity/Enlightenment") in 1936, to address definitions of blackness, artistic aesthetics, and language.

The Claridade movement marked the first time that Kriolu was ever used in written form, and articles were written in both Kriolu (written as "Crioulo" in *Claridade*) and Portuguese. To date, the Claridade movement is still considered the "historical moment" when controversial thoughts about identity and contemporary art were explored, and Mindelo was understood as the cultural capital of Cape Verde as tourist guides still dub it. When I held discussion groups among students and art-educators, conversations almost always steered towards the Claridade movement. "Well the privileging of morna came out of Claridade!" Migration Studies student Déni Mendes exclaimed. For another project, a musician's 85-year old mother was shy and nervous and refused to be filmed, but suddenly remembered that her late husband was a writer in

³⁷ More information about specific traditional dances of the islands will be unraveled as I discuss contemporary dance in relation to tradition in chapters 2-4.

the Claridade movement and beamed with pride when she rushed to show me his picture. Self-conscious that her own life was not extraordinary (so her son told me later), she had been searching for an extraordinary event to tell about her own life, and Claridade for her was “the peak of history.”³⁸ Dení Mendes later stated, “We may not have anything. We may not have our own food, or our own ‘officialized language,’ but we have our own thoughts. We have autonomy of thought. Claridade started that” (pers. comm. September 12, 2012).

Conversations about art and identity spark debates about language, uniting Sambadjudu and Badiu identities while still revealing marked divisions. Claridade writer Baltasar Lopes was famous for his texts that emphasized Portuguese and Latin influences in Kriolu language, whereas writers politically linked with the PAICV agendas were encouraged to emphasize “Kriolu fundo” “deep Creole” that was more based in Africa language. Because so many variants of Kriolu are spoken in the islands, an agreement has yet to be realized about which variant to make official, and so Portuguese remains the official lingua franca. In the 1990s, a group of intellectuals established the “ALUPEC” orthography as an attempt to codify and write creole. Within this system, the use of “k” was used as, for example, in “Krioulo” rather than “Crioulo,” giving preference to presumed k-based African spellings.³⁹ This system was highly debated because it privileged Santiago lexicons using the “k” and was seen as an opponent to lexicons with European roots, even though the “ou” vowel was more Portuguese than the “o” Santiago spelling. Ultimately, the ALUPEC system was not successful because there have been too many

³⁸ Fieldnotes. February 2013.

³⁹ Allen F. Roberts explains that k-based spellings may be more complicated than these understandings, since orthographic conventions have often been established through international bodies. African languages may appear “k-based,” then, but those who made such decisions may well have been European linguists (Allen F. Roberts, pers. comm. 2013).

debates over the years as to how to make it official.⁴⁰

When I asked Vanuza Barbosa, a professional linguist and professor at the University of Praia, what she thought about a recent article through which Mario Lucio de Sousa (noted PAICV supporter) pushed for the officialization of Kriolu (see de Sousa 2013), she responded, “Well, I do think that we will eventually officialize Kriolo. But it is going to take a very long time. There are still too many debates about how to go about it, so many variants to choose from, but the fact that the conversation was re-started is progress” (Vanuza Barbosa, group discussion, June 19, 2013).

Because dance performance (and more specifically, dance-theater) includes a combination of verbal text and movement lexicon, the contemporary dance work of Raiz di Polon is a venue for exploring how contentions of language and identity play out upon the national stage. Raiz di Polon’s new lexicon serves as a type of Kriolo in a place where the officialization of Kriolo is desired by the entire archipelago, but almost impossible to piece together perfectly. Furthermore, Raiz di Polon is soon going to transition from being the “unofficial national dance company” to the become the “Ballet Nacional de Cabo Verde.”⁴¹ If the national company forms as expected, Raiz di Polon will have successfully officialized its “embodied kriolo,” bringing to fruition the standardization of kriolo in symbolic terms. Using texts in Portuguese, Mindelese-inflected Kriolo, Santiago-inflected Kriolo, and hybrid corporeal languages that fluctuate among the various traditional idioms of all the different islands in a way that is still readable as “contemporary dance” to a global audience, Mano Preto has, in effect, solved the Kriolo debate. Chapter Three will look more closely at his lexicon vis-à-vis basic

⁴⁰ I have been using the spelling, “Kriolu” and not the more “neutral” Crioulo or Kriol spelling to reflect the ways in which my friends and informants spelled the word, as an attempt to encourage their voices to speak through my writing and so as not to align myself with either ALUPEC or Portuguese.

⁴¹ This is an ongoing process in which I have been invited to participate.

ideas of linguistics, and Chapter Four will consider kriolu language formation through the creation of a dance community and school.

Migrations and Nodes of Networks

While the slave trade and colonial period uprooted, displaced, and forced people to replant their senses of identity, centuries of migration have prevented Cape Verdeans' new roots from remaining fixed. Social identities have become more like lily pads, hovering above water with myriads of linking tendrils. Migration specialist Pedro Góis (2005) describes the tugs and tensions between these floating markers within the Cape Verdean ethnoscape. Three main migratory cycles have occurred in the history of Cape Verdean migration, each cycle with multiple city-specific destination nodes and often split between northward (United States and Portugal) and southward (Brazil, Angola) flows depending on the cycle (ibid, 1-6). Reasons varied from forced agricultural emigration (discussed earlier with regards to famine and forced labor) to employment-specific opportunities, increasing family connections, and most recently, to government-sponsored higher-educational opportunities. These changing and diverging reasons have contributed to the formation of a matrix of social classes foreshadowing the vicissitudes of power dynamics between the Cape Verdean Diaspora and residents of the archipelago. Over time, these power dynamics have come into play because the archipelago is increasingly dependent upon remittances from Diaspora communities that account for at least twenty per cent of Cape Verde's gross domestic product of US \$620 million (IRIN Africa: 2010). As a result, Cape Verdeans living abroad have significant political impact on the government decisions. Bruce Baker questions this and holds that Cape Verde takes pride in its "exemplary diasporic electoral model," shown through the fact that any Cape Verdean with a

grandparent living in the archipelago may participate in national elections (2006, 473).

Furthermore, the shifts in migrations were very specific to Cape Verde's geographic structure as an archipelago, which has played a key role in how Cape Verdean *ethnoscapes* remain connected. For example, São Vicente Island has become especially connected to the Rotterdam expatriate Cape Verdean community, Santiago is more connected to Lisbon, and Fogo is known for its connections to Boston/Rhode Island.

These alliances between archipelagic “nation” and “world city” are seen today. For example, Praia serves as a microcosm of the entire archipelago where people from various islands live in one city. During the Portuguese soccer championship of May 2013, Praia residents rooted for opposing teams between northern and southern Portugal, revealing some of the differences between “node-alliances” in their own archipelagic nation. “We always have a local team, and a Portuguese team that we root for. You know, intensely” a friend tells me. These contending allegiances were recently the subject of national news, as violence emerged at soccer-viewing parties in Praia when the northern Portuguese city of Porto was in competition with Lisbon—two cities known for their Cape Verdean communities.⁴² Violence broke out between Cape Verdean supporters of these two teams, which spurred countless debates in social media.

The famous contemporary visual artist from Mindelo, Tchalé Figuera, critiqued the nation's growing patriotism for Portugal and apparent lack of caring for local football (soccer) matches. He used Facebook as a medium to spark a serious debate among Portuguese and Cape Verdean people living in Praia and Mindelo:

The Mindese people were beaten by Praia in a local soccer game and no one cared. But Porto beats Benfica and people take their passion and ruckus to the streets?... When a Brazilian poet said to our beloved Baltazar Lopes that the

⁴² See the newspaper, *A Semana*, which reads, “Young Person loses teeth after someone throws a rock during the games.” <http://www.asemana.publ.cv/spip.php?article87943&ak=1> accessed May 12, 2013.

Brazilians were the most ungrateful of this world, he responded, ‘you don’t know the Cape Verdean people!’”⁴³

Figueira’s posting sparked a long, unmonitored debate about continued colonialism in Cape Verde. The public exclaimed “Cultural imperialism!” and “but our league still has work to do!” and the debate ultimately ended with someone concluding

I’m not saying that cultural imperialism is the reason for our weakness or that cheering for Benfica and Porto is wrong. But there is no doubt that Cape Verde is still permeated by cultural colonialism that induces Cape Verdeans to conceive their culture as ‘less.’⁴³

Similarly, Redy Wilson publically commented about the game-related violence on his blog and social media outlets: “Colonial remnants... there is our morabeza!”⁴⁴ These debates circulating around sports and postcolonial identity show that allegiances between international affiliations like Portuguese soccer teams and Cape Verdean development, are debated on a daily basis as Cape Verdeans must constantly work hard to find balance between their local and international affiliations. Raiz di Polon will be another example of such balancing acts.

Forty years after Cape Verdean Independence, Cape Verdeans continue to discuss the boundaries and limits of where and how colonialism still holds power. Reminiscent of Benedict Anderson’s arguments about print-communication and the formation of an imagined community (Anderson 1991), social media in Cape Verde, especially Facebook, enables people from all over the islands (and world) to engage in such debates. In the aftermath of Cape Verde’s success in the African Cup of Nations, physical strength, patriotism, team playing, and physical performance have been topics of intense virtual debate. On one hand, Cape Verdeans were elated about their national squad’s successes making them excited about soccer all over the world. Yet when their team was eliminated and fervor shifted to Portuguese contests, many Cape Verdeans

⁴³ Tchâle Figueira. Posting of facebook status update May 12 in response to the violence. Accessed March 14.

⁴⁴ Redy Wilson. Posting of facebook status update. May 12 in response to the violence article. Accessed March 12.

wanted to keep their sense of excitement in “check” and reserve their patriotism for their own country. The Portuguese affiliation scenario is just one recent example of how constant flows of information and intercultural “ties” are constantly igniting questions of allegiance and identity, and how laborious performance through sports or movement expression are strong symbols of national identity in Cape Verde.

Soccer anecdotes suggest a slippery slope to the “Kriole-as-openness” philosophy that Minister of Culture de Sousa promotes. Local and global boundaries are both very visible and very invisible, depending on the event and circumstance. For the most part, however, global networks are so extensive, especially in capital where island-specific identity is mixed, that frictions among world-alliances are more typically inspire togetherness than violence.⁴⁵ For example, Cape Verdeans on the islands are in constant contact with friends and family abroad. When I came over to Praia from Boston, I helped to bring some items for a friend of a friend of a friend—because participating in barter systems and transporter favors are considered to be a part of Cape Verdean communal responsibility. Friends and family host strangers when they need a place to stay. *Morabeza*, the Kriolo word that means welcoming, is a word that applies all over the world of Cape Verdean diaspora and not merely within the islands. The word implies “welcome to our network,” rather than, “welcome to our islands.” Plurality in the Cape Verdean context therefore not only applies to centuries of mixing between Africans and Europeans and the various consequences of colonialism, but also to the emergence of contrasting global identities. Statistics of how many Cape Verdeans live abroad are impossible to determine. However, generally speaking, scholars and Cape Verdean people generally accept that of the nation’s 515,000 people, at least an equal if not double number of first-, second-, and third-

⁴⁵ See Rodrigues’ dissertation on “Crafting the Cape Verdean Nation” for more information about the creation of inter-island formations and connections (2002).

generation Cape Verdeans live abroad (Carling 2004, 114; See Figure 12). Realities call into question who is included in national membership, and within the context of national spectacle, performance intentions, audience expectations, and artistic content must include flexible emotional clues that keeps membership intact.

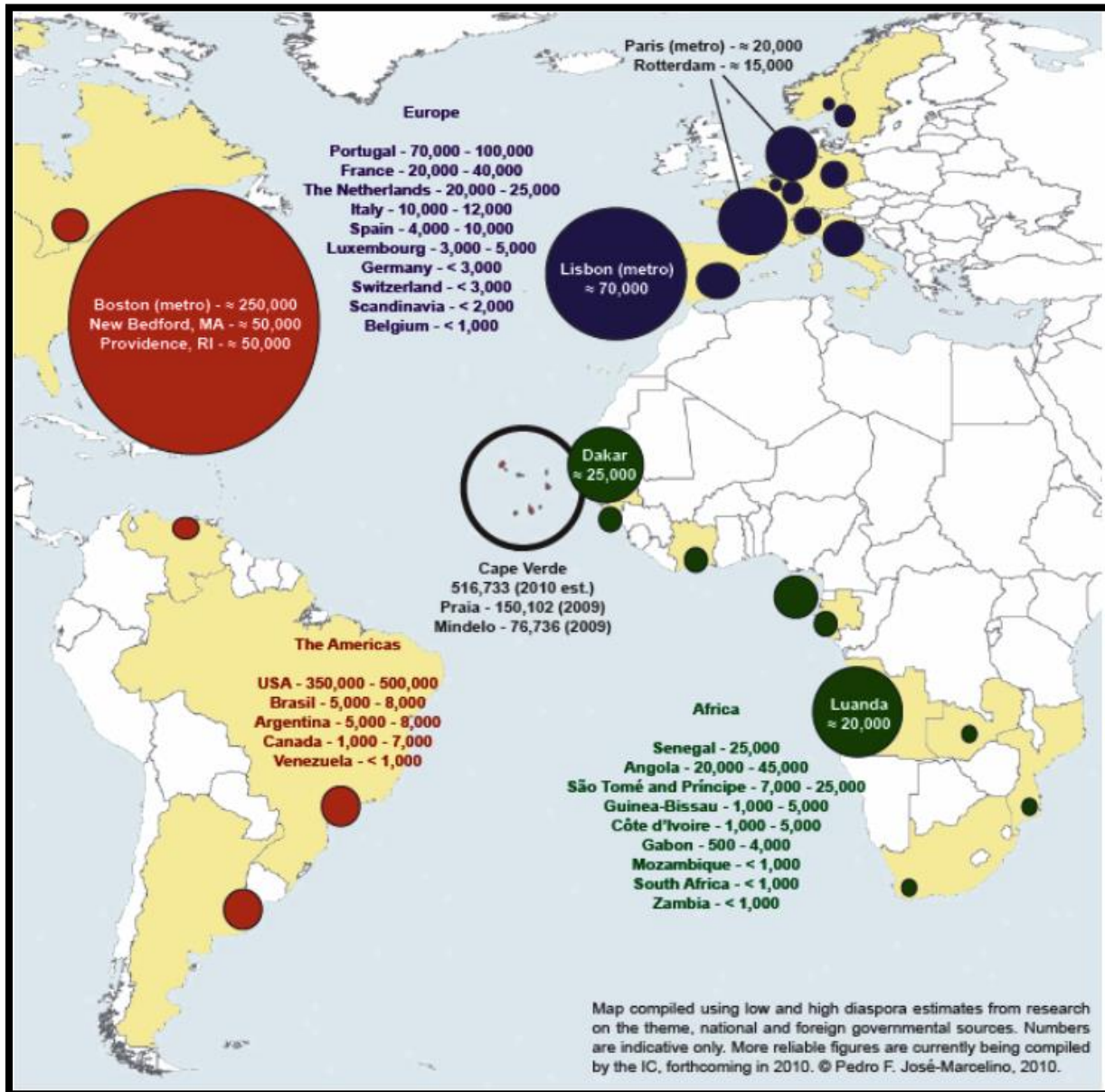


Figure 12. *Diaspora Map*. Courtesy of Pedro F. Marcelino, (2013, 31). As seen in these various nodes, the Cape Verdean ethnoscape is expansive.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ According to Pedro Marcelino the map was compiled in 2009-2010, and was not updated since. Marcelino explained, “The IC was supposed to collect new data in 2010-2011 but failed because it was too difficult.” (Pedro

Audience of Strangers or Audience of Locals? Sodadi, Paradise, and Strangers

Island-paradise life, here we come! Sodadi tcheu! [so much nostalgia!]" A passenger aboard TACV's redeye flight from Boston to Praia boomed, laughing and shouting to anyone else that would listen. A domino effect of applause rippled across the seats of the small airplane. I wondered if I had entered the right plane, because no one seemed to be annoyed or even surprised that the plane was leaving three hours late. In fact, waiting seemed to be the nutrients that helped celebrations bloom aboard the plane. Some people in the back of the plane started drinking alcohol that they had purchased in the duty free shop as soon as they found their seats. That is, if they weren't too busy standing in their seats and catching up with their nearby passengers that they clearly knew but had not seen in a while. "Mano what is UP man? I haven't seen you since that party in little Brazil! Yeah I'm staying in Brazil!" I was slightly worried, wondering if I had boarded the right plane.⁴⁷ As a first-timer on the Boston-Praia flight, I felt as if I were suddenly welcomed into a secret club—apparently one that involved celebrating "island-paradise" according to one singing Cape Verdean. As some people on the plane started swaying and singing to the song, "Sodade" made famous by the late Cesaria Evora, I couldn't quite tell if we were celebrating to leave, or celebrating to arrive, if everyone was going to sleep or if everyone would stay awake, if the plane was going to take a trip to Brazil or go straight to CV. The loudspeaker on the plane was streaming with announcements in Portuguese, English, and even French, and most people were speaking Kriolo. Since this was my second time going to CV, I found myself using every language I could speak—Portuguese, Kriolo, and even French and Spanglish as I interacted with circulating neighbors on the plane. One woman speaking Kriolo told me she was going to CV for the first time, and she asked me for advice on where to stay since I had lived there previously. Suddenly I was the "guide" to the Cape Verdean tourist. Just minutes into entering the airspace above the Atlantic Ocean, I was already experiencing the borderlessness trademark to Cape Verde: Lines between foreigner, local, returnee, visitor, tourist, relative were all blurred and we were all a part of the in-transit familial'festa. We WERE participating in our own multi-cultural performance en route to the performance. When we landed, blaring from within the applause and roller coaster arms, the announcer speaker sounded, "And we have arrived! Welcome home to your islands." (Fieldnotes, August 1, 2010).

Marcelino, pers. comm, 2013.) To my knowledge it is still is the only map that reflects estimates of high and low populations, because calculating the number of Cape Verdeans overseas is so difficult. Data was collected from a number of research teams from embassies, civil society organizations, United Nations, International Organization for Migration, as well as media estimates. Marcelino chose to portray highest and lowest estimates across many surveys to reflect the variation in numbers.

⁴⁷ At the time, I had not realized that Brazil was the unofficial nickname for an area in Praia, formerly known for crime and violence. Through conversations with residents in the area I learned that Brazil's favelas and ghetto communities were considered rebellious and "cool," and Cape Verdeans in the area called their area Brazil to align themselves with rebels of Brazil.

Over the course of five years, I have taken three different routes to arrive in Cabo Verde. While these trajectories and “in transit” moments represent a small percentage of time within the greater span of my dissertation fieldwork, each trip has presented microcosms through which to think about the flows of cultures and people passing through Cape Verde—that is, the “audience” who comprise the viewers of national performances, and the people that continually return to be a part of the in situ Cape Verdean network. People travel to Cape Verde for various reasons. For example, from Dakar, I had the pleasure of talking to merchants from Senegal and Nigeria who were arriving in the islands to take part in the textile and African goods sector of the bustling street markets of Praia.⁴⁸ Migrants from Senegal and Guinea Bissau make up the majority of recent African immigrants to the Cape Verdean islands (Marcelino 2011, 45). From Portugal, my neighboring flyer was a husband who was returning to Praia to visit his wife and children whom he had not seen during the eight years he had been working overseas. The introduction to this chapter section describes my experience on the Boston-to-CV route when I met Boston-based Cape Verdeans going to visit mothers and friends for the first time or for their “routine” seasonal visits. Many passengers enjoyed the “non stop partying.” This particular flight was most memorable because it took place right before the Baia das Gatas music festival when many returnees plan their visits. (Raiz di Polon would perform in the festival as part of a musical act.) People in Cape Verde both complain about and celebrate this festive season as Praia and other populated cities become packed with people.

These flights became yet another microcosm with which to view the tensions and supports forming the fabric of Cape Verdean society. Not only did the flight introduce me to the

⁴⁸ Pedro Marcelino has conducted extensive research about West African migrants coming to the archipelago, which has fueled racism in ways the islands had not previously experienced (2011).

very physically exhausting⁴⁹ aspects of having multiple homes—physical communal experiences that play a part in what it feels to participate in Cape Verdean culture—but dialogs and lyrics presented me with key topic words such as “paradise,” “sodadi” and “adapt” that represent larger threads in the fabric of Cape Verdean identity. Furthermore, the emotions filled within these trajectories, especially including the moments of departing the gate and moments of arriving to greet people, are filled with emotional extremes, and “Sodad,” the song made famous by Cesaria Evora, has become a type of pop culture national anthem for the islands. Perhaps witnessing emotional reunions are common at any airport, but in a small country, small airport, and small plane filled with people saying hello or goodbye to an extensive network where everyone seems to know one another, emotions are visible and audible through singing, laughing, crying, and complete saturation in “it’s so good to see you” conversations. Sodadi is the glue that holds everyone together when they are forever in motion.

What also became apparent through these in-flight conversations were the ways in which definitions of “foreign” became important at times and impossible to define at other moments. I was acting as the tour guide to the Cape Verdean woman who was visiting for the first time. I was speaking three languages like other passengers. I sang along to “sodadi” as I, too, was nostalgic for my adopted friends and family from previous fieldtrips. Were all these people “Cape Verdean” even if they were living away from the archipelago on what was called the “Eleventh Island” of southeastern New England? Is Kriolidade simply another way of referring

⁴⁹ I use the word “exhausting” not only to describe the process of flying on a plane. The Cape Verdean airlines, TACV, are known for their tardiness and unpredictable changes as well as inconsistencies with regards to baggage policies. Furthermore, because goods are imported and expensive, many Cape Verdeans request that friends carry some of their items back to the islands for them. Oftentimes at the airport, when someone cannot fit all of their goods on the plane, they will ask other people and strangers in line to help carry extra baggage by hand or as their allotted checkable items. During my last trip, I carried a fifty pound metal car jack in my arms, which was just one of many typical examples of why travel processes are fatiguing as they often involve helping others as part of the actual travel process.

to the “cosmopolitan global citizen” as Clifford says in *Routes* (1997, 36)? Or could some of these people and even yours truly be “peripheral citizens,” to borrow Fandon’s (2008, 252) phrase? (How does foreignness function in Cape Verde, if the lines between inhabitants and others are often so blurry? What matters is not so much “who is foreign” or “who is Cape Verdean,” but rather “in what moments are people ‘most’ Cape Verdean.”

In *Staging Tourism*, Jane Desmond argues that in Hawaii, performances have become a way of “authenticating the destination image” and an integral part of creating the “natural,” vacation setting that tourists desire when seeking “exotic” refuge from their hectic lives (12). That is, the tourists’ “nostalgia” to connect to moments in imagined pre-imperialist history contributed to the construction of Hawaii’s “destination image” as a utopian paradise. Foreign imaginations altered the cultural economy and Hawaiian performances shifted to accommodate commodified imagery. In some ways, notions of Cape Verdean identity function in a similar way to the Hawaiian paradise case. Like the latter, Cape Verde operates under the control of “outsider” economics and because more than half the population live off the islands and long to return with a romantic notion of their homeland. Paradise envisioned in Cape Verdean diaspora is not constructed in relation to modernity as in the Hawaiian case, but is instead imagined to appease of nostalgia or “sodadi.” Long-awaited reunions with family and friends, are tinged with the sadness of living so far away. Festivals, goodbye parties, and welcome-home celebrations characterize these euphoric and ephemeral states of paradise, and are always followed by more separation, more *inclusion* of new local *and* foreign friends, more sadness when they too leave, and so the cycle continues. As the airport sign says, “If you don’t leave, you cannot return.” Still a “reality” must exist with which to compare any such “paradise,” and non- Cape-Verdean foreigners also participate in a collective Kriolo identity in numerous ways. As a result, notions

of foreignness are always changing, which affects the perception of Cape Verde as an “island paradise” and also affects the ways in which national symbols are adapted to accommodate Cape Verdean membership. Furthermore, because of the transitional lifestyle of the islands, almost everyone experiences feelings of being foreign in their own home archipelago.

The ways in which tensions and support develop from people coming to the islands directly impacts how performance operates in Cape Verde. The forces that propel Cape Verdeans to define their own style vis-à-vis Europe and the African continent are often the same forces that provide economic or creative support. For example, Bety Fernandes, a dancer with Raiz di Polon, expressed that company members often feel that Europeans expect the company to demonstrate its “Africanity,” while at the same time, they feel pressured to master “techniques” like many European companies do via ballet derivatives in their physical training. Likewise, when the company performs in Africa, some dancers are surprised to see that Raiz di Polon work is so “European.” Raiz di Polon’s creative work is often propelled by such performance opportunities, and even if Mano Preto does not create work to please these expectations, the tensions and entanglements are there. On one hand, foreignness becomes hampers the creative process, while on the other, it becomes a supportive financial and creative tool.

One is reminded of what Hubbard calls the “dark space” tensions that are often ignored in discussions of Cape Verdean imaginaries. Hubbard warns that many postmodern approaches to creolity and creolization refer to heterogeneity, flux, and multi-ethnic democracy to free a nation of its tensions of race or class, as if we should acknowledge how societies have realized their utopias. Hubbard argues that writers considering “criolité” often “neglect altogether the ‘dark spaces’--the moments of self-loathing, implosion and self-destruction,” and Hubbard’s warnings must be taken seriously. These dark spaces are fundamental to Cape Verdean culture, as

performed and set to stage. I situate Raiz di Polon's nation-building processes as an embodied middle ground for these critiques. That is, RDP productions both erase AND highlight dark spaces and self-destruction through their themes, while promoting a unified imaginary.

Pedro Marcelino is the first scholar to offer detailed analysis of the flows of people to the archipelago and details some of the policies and resulting socio-economic contentions at play that make Cape Verde's relationship to foreignness such a shape-shifting act. Following Marcelino's lead, categorical distinctions can be proposed as clues to how local vs. foreign can be perceived. In the *fora* ("far away") of rural Santiago Island, many people are farmers who travel to Praia to sell their produce in the market. Many work with poorer members of the urban community to sell their goods, and because their incomes are significantly less than non-farmer Cape Verdeans, many have never had the opportunity to travel in between islands or to send a family member abroad. Mainland Africans who have migrated to Santiago as merchants of cloth and food items often live in the poorer areas of Praia. According to Marcelino (2010), Nigerians are stereotyped as thieves, lending their "blackness" negative connotations.

Feelings of the sort are evident in everyday circumstances. When I asked Mano Preto if there was a particular city in West Africa where he enjoys performing most, implying that he may have experienced cultural parallels to Cape Verde as many have told me about their experiences in Dakar, his response was quite unexpected. "I don't like performing and traveling to Africa," he said bluntly. "There is always so much confusion in those airports. I prefer the modern cities of Europe." At the time, Preto's response was a defensive response to my question, and he reacted as if I had implied that he was African rather than someone interested in reflecting upon how international audiences have reacted to his company. His reaction suggested that for him, implying that his work is African, or implying that he is African, is almost insulting. This was

not my intention, but the anxieties and antipathies reflected in Preto's misunderstanding of my question revealed far more than if he had answered my question. Under the umbrella of "open mentality" that Mano Preto and Minister de Sousa claim to believe, a sensitivity to any labeling also exists.

While many people in rural areas of the archipelago have never left their home islands, governmental agreements in the education sector over the last two decades have provided younger generations with opportunities to go to college in Portugal and Brazil. Most of these fortunate individuals return to Cape Verde after they have finished their studies, and so many between the ages of 23 and 26 have had recent experience abroad (Mendes 2010). These politically inspired young people provide an important support for contemporary art in Cape Verde. Akintola Hubbard (2011) argues that the arrival of a new elite of well-educated, well-traveled people has provoked new musical genres, rendering badiu culture "chic" because those so identified can recognize Black Atlantic rhythms like jazz as influential signifiers of their own contemporary batuku music. These returnee students have a higher chance of starting their own jobs or in finding work within the islands through the validity of their education, but sometimes their return leads to political problems. As Suely Neves, who recently moved back to Santiago from Boston, explained:

My sodadi for CV was just too strong. I wanted to come back. I always wanted to come back. And when I did, I came back with force. But sometimes when I'm at a meeting or giving a presentation, people say, "Oh you think that just because you lived abroad that your ideas are better than ours. Are you American or Cape Verdean?" And it was hard, because I felt like I wasn't allowed to express my ideas, and they were my ideas not American or Cape Verdean.

Similarly, A first-generation dancer and instructor in Raiz di Polon named Kaka expressed his frustrations about students who return after living in Brazil and Portugal. His attention to language in dance foreshadows the importance of RDP's eclectic movement lexicon.

Many students return and they don't even know some of their own language. They don't remember how to dance funana or a mazurka, and they think that just because they are "home" that they haven't lost anything. We come back with new knowledge but have to still remember our old knowledge.

As one last example, Luci Fonseca, who like many Cape Verdeans, is fluent in seven languages, talked about her feelings of displacement when returning after studying at Yale, and describes the feelings of shock when she realized that the idealized open mentality promoted so much in CV was not the reality she had assumed:

Yesterday, a friend walked up to me to say hi and confidently declared, "So, we've been discussing and we realized that you are actually not Cape Verdean. You have spent too much time in the US and China to be Cape Verdean. I realized when you did not know what it means to 'pega-vela.'" You'd think that in a country like Cape Verde where we run the absolute gamut in terms of color, race, nationality and where we have been defined by encounters with difference since the first steps were taken on these shores, that we might have developed just the slightest capacity for nuance that we might acknowledge and accept complexity, that we might think that there are more interesting things to discuss about a person's identity than what neat little box you can pack them in or kick them out of.⁵⁰

Unbalanced levels of education and opportunity stamp foreignness and foreign education with problematic feelings of inferiority for those who have not been able to leave the islands -. These questions and tensions will become especially relevant in the discussion of professionalization of contemporary dance in Chapter Three.

Cape Verde's ongoing relationship to Europe is especially important to the development of the Cape Verdean nation, and will serve as one of the most problematic global stages for Cape Verdean performance. The construction of Cape Verde is reliant upon its diverse multilateral partnerships which include implementation of educational programs, health services, tourism organizations, and private businesses, all of which contribute to the country's development and economy, with the controversial exception of for-profit tourism organizations on Sal and Boa

⁵⁰ Luci Fonseca. Public Facebook Status update. May 20 2013. Accessed May 20 2013.

Vista Islands. For example, non-Cape Verdean friends that I made in Praia were working for European-based nonprofit organizations that operate through grants from donors in Belgium, Portugal, or Denmark. Examples include the Center for Domestic Violence, the children's outreach group Projeto Simenti, and the Organization for Cape Verdean Women (OMCV). Many American friends continued civic engagement projects begun through the Peace Corps. Because the Peace Corps recently ended their programs in Cape Verde as a positive response to developmental success, over half the volunteers of 2012 found NGO work..

Interviews with over thirty Americans and Europeans working in Cape Verde, foreigners who come to Cape Verde for civic engagement are well received even though, as Pedro Marcelino has stated, "Europeans often carry with them the emotional baggage of being a colonizer" (2010, 120). Many younger Europeans are also involved in volunteer work and internships, creating power dynamics between privileged foreigners and the local population. As an example, when I investigated a financial opportunity that might enable me to help me stay longer in the field, I was frustrated to discover that the woman who wanted me to teach ballet classes in her studio assumed that because I was foreign and therefore wealthy by comparison to locals, I did not require payment as a "rich volunteer" like many of the young interns in the area.⁵¹ Power dynamics and assumptions about differences of wealth mingle with the positive relationships with foreigners engaged in community outreach.

Another critical area of foreign tensions stems from the relationship between the People's Republic of China and Cape Verde. Haugen and Carling explain how government trade

⁵¹ This anecdote touches upon a critical issue to be discussed in Chapter Four regarding the formation of a dance community. Cape Verdeans are only recently beginning to develop the understanding that art has economic value, and that teachers of dance must also demand payment in order to develop the professional field. Notions of "tradition" and "contemporariness" come into conflict: traditionally dance has appeared to most Cape Verdeans as a social form in which "anyone can dance," contributing to the lack of paying teachers. However, as RDP has grown, so too has the development of professionalism and economic value for artistic endeavors.

agreements with China have resulted in “Loja Chinasas” or general stores dominating the markets of Praia and Mindelo, to the point that in 2005 almost every other store was Chinese. Chinese goods are felt to be of poor quality, yet they provide poor Cape Verdeans with affordable toys, clothing, and furniture. Chinese and Cape Verdeans alike assert that the standard of living has improved, and Haugen and Carling (2005, 650) assert that “‘before the Chinese came, very few people wore shoes. At least now they have shoes.’ Locals confirm this, saying that the arrival of the Chinese has meant that children in Cape Verde no longer need to go barefoot to school.”

While much good has resulted from Chinese-Cape Verdean trade, the friction is obvious. Unlike many other Europeans, North and South Americans, and Africans who have integrated into Cape Verdean society, Chinese immigrants who may speak perfect Kriolu, almost always remain segregated in their own large family units noticeably separated from Cape Verdean social life. Similar controversy is to be found in most African nations. In Senegal, for example, hand-made religious art once commonly found in the market has been replaced by photoshopped copies of religious images and sold cheaper, and Chinese merchants have “hijacked” the market that was once dominated by Senegalese art sellers, in the words of a Senegalese critic (Roberts 2010). Similarly, in Cape Verde, while Chinese shops have provided Cape Verdeans with employment due to local labor laws, the decreased number of Cape Verdean shop owners and distrust among competing stores fuels strained relationships between Cape Verdeans and Chinese residents.⁵² Furthermore, price-wars and competition among Chinese immigrants have caused social tensions even within the Chinese community. However, as of 2012 the dance

⁵² As Janet O’Shea has explained, Chinese immigrants worldwide, much like European Jews and Tamil Sri Lankans, tend to be scapegoated for economic inequities and stereotyped as money-driven ‘outsiders.’ Much of the racial discrimination against Chinese residents in Southeast Asia, for example, deploys these stereotypes (Janet O’Shea, pers. comm. November 4, 2013).

community has provided significant opportunities for soothing, maintaining, and strengthening China-Cape Verdean socio-economic relationships through, Chinese cultural week performances and the celebratory announcement that China will be the financial backers to the new *Ballet Nacional de Cabo Verde* and *Orchestra Nacional*.



Figure 13. *Raiz di Polon for China*. Raiz di Polon junior company and company collaborate to perform Chinese dances for the first annual “Semana Chinesa Cultural” (“Chinese Culture Week”.) February 2013.

Performances in Praia present an important snapshot of the complexities involved in producing a cultural product that appeals “to the people,” when the Cape Verdean archipelago

encompasses so many alliances and ties. Mano Preto and Raiz di Polon do not create work solely with the intention of pleasing an audience. However, appealing to an audience *is* a factor, especially when funding for the Ministry of Culture is provided by China and Europe. When does pressure to please an audience transform the artistic integrity of art? In most cultural capitals of the world, little time is required to distinguish between the types of performances that may be considered to be geared towards foreign tourists, and those that may appeal more strongly to local communities. Typically, the performance venues listed in tourist guides are located in safe neighborhoods, with relatively high ticket prices or meal prices out of reach to locals. However, differences between venue clienteles are far more complex in Cape Verde, because foreigners are more integrated into the community and most importantly, cities are small with fewer venue choices. The uncertainty about who to include in the current nation building process, and the urgency of strengthening “Cape Verdeanness” in the face of globalization have Cape Verdeans worried, especially in the islands most affected by mass tourism (Sal, Boavista), and in the cities most affected by African migration (Mindelo, Praia) that are hotspots inducing rapid social change (Marcelino 2013, 100). Marcelino appropriately writes that, “as always, Cape Verde survives in a limbo of multiple, competing spheres of influence, and its balancing act is as intrinsic to the understanding of the new migratory phenomenon as are migrants themselves” (2011, 7).

Dance embodies this “balancing act” of shifting social identities, and Mano Preto has engaged just such a creative limbo as he navigates among the tensions among “spheres of influence” to produce a movement lexicon that is “new,” “traditional,” and valuable for all of Cape Verde’s various audience members. Indeed, his balancing act is as intrinsic to the understanding of Cape Verdean dance as the dancers themselves.

Seas of Sodadi



Figure 14. *Sodadi*. Man on boat. Tarrafal Santiago. June 2012.

Dixa-m ben kantu-bu un stória
K-um sértu melankolia
Pa-N flau kuze k é sodadi
Di nha kabu k é ka verdi.

Let me sing you a story
With a certain melancholy
To make you feel what is longing/nostalgia
For my Cape which is not green.

“Stória Stória” (Story Story) song by Mayra Andrade, 2010

Sodad and *sodadi* are Kriolo words for the Portuguese word, *saudade*, which generally translates to “nostalgia” and “emotional longing” in English. Although these terms have already proven important to arguments presented above, in concluding this chapter one may emphasize the many historical details that have led to how *sodadi* has gained meaning over time through migration and exchanges within the archipelago. In the Cape Verdean context, *sodadi* means more than its English translations, and according to some Cape Verdeans, *sodad* also means more than its Brazilian and Portuguese equivalents. In February 2013, twenty Cape

Verdean friends were asked to define sodadi. Each person would smile with a pregnant pause and nod after the question, knowing that the term was more complex than they could easily describe. Responses can be categorized in four ways: 1), people and places for whom they had “felt sodadi” were described, associating the word with memories of those left behind; 2) the etymology of the word would be considered, and how it refers to the suffering that people faced when families were dispersed during famine years—using physically descriptive words like, “agony” and “pain” to describe such trials; 3) metaphors of sodadi would be offered, with very particular attention to the ambiguities of the ocean as reflected in the proverb “the ocean is our death and our life”; and 4) some would exclaim that “there is no definition, in Kriolu or any other language. The word is its own language.”

Almost all interviewees describing what they missed when living abroad would mention the ocean. Vocabulary, language, and phrasing about sodadi led to discussions of the ocean, and the terms were almost interchangeable:

For me, the ocean is both a separator and a barrier, while at the same time it is this mysterious beautiful thing that you have to be away from to appreciate and miss.⁵³

Sodadi is an obstacle, a separator of loved ones and family... but you have to have it in order to have a sweet reunion.⁵⁴

Embedded in these understandings of respecting the ocean and enduring sodadi, a student in the Raiz di Polon school held that

Sodadi is this incredible feeling of immensity like the ocean, and if you can put it into words, then you really can't understand it. To understand it is to really know what it means to be Kriolo and to be Cape Verdean. Like it is to really understand the ocean.”⁵⁵

⁵³ Francisco Carvalho. Interview. Director of the Ministry of Communities, which is in charge of migration and integration programs within Cape Verde. February 17 2013.

⁵⁴ Flavio Silva. Interview. Part-time musician and banker, Resident of Rotterdam Holland who returned to Praia to visit family. February 2013.

⁵⁵ Monica Andrade. Interview. February 16, 2013. Interview for Maramar ocean documentary.

These interviews became so charged with emotion and poetry that two musician friends and I decided to create a performance that would ignite even more dialog about sodadi and the ocean, using the films of the interviews as projections for part of the show. Singer Lucia Cardoso, the only vocal teacher in Praia Santiago, expressed interest in this collaboration because she felt that updating understandings of sodadi was important for the nation.

Sodadi used to be this theme of agony, pain, suffering. Associated with migrations out of the colonial hand. And sodadi for things, cultures, and disappeared pasts. But today, sodadi is a positive thing. We miss our friends because they have gone off to pursue beautiful opportunities and expand their minds. I want to reflect this new, modern definition of Sodadi.

Lucia Cardoso and I wrote songs together about our own experiences of sodadi, and this all became part of our performance called, “Maramar” referring to “mar” (the ocean) and “amar” (to love). [See figure 15.]



Figure 15. *Montage of Maramar performance.* TOP left: Performance flyer. Still images from interviews and projected film, including some dances created with the Raiz di Polon school (BOTTOM left). Photo of live performance with projected interviews (bottom right.) February 15, 2013. Please see film attachment, “Maramar.”

Through the creation of a performance and participatory storytelling, I began to understand the meanings of sodadi. The ocean and sodadi form a double helix in the Cape Verdean imaginary, as recognized by many scholars. As Fernando Arenas explains, “the sea constitutes a primary spatial and temporal referent in Cape Verdean oral and written literature as well as song. It is by far one of the most common motifs in morna” (2011, 68). Cristina McMahon traces the quintessential “sodadi dilemma” in various theatrical performances in Mindelo, as it has been emblemized by the words, “I have to leave but I want to stay” (McMahon 2008, 249).

Contemporary dance performance also enable sodadi to be explored and retold in ways that update McMahon's "sodadi dilemma" byrestaging the sadness and longing that characterize the nation's past to honor its new nationalist symbolism, and stylistically updating sodadi to account for the exciting opportunities and perspectives that modern cosmopolitan contemporary society provides.

Non-Cape Verdean artists, too, have recognized the Portuguese word *saudade* for its symbolic profundity, both as a complex emotional entity and as related to distance and loss, especially with regards to the world's history of slavery. UCLA professor and choreographer David Rousseve, for example, created a performance entitled "Saudade" in 2009 using dance, spoken word, and Fado music (the mother of morna music in Cape Verde). The work is an interdisciplinary form of storytelling to express feelings described as "bittersweet—that single moment when the greatest joy and agony are experienced together."⁵⁶ While Rousseve explains that his aims were to "bring our separate histories to the dance. We do not come as representatives of a culture, but as individuals and we are finding common ground," Cape Verdean usage of sodadi is more specific. For artists like Mano Preto, sodadi is expressed specifically as an emotion that all humans have in common, but that resonates very specifically for Cape Verdeans and their relationships with the rest of the world. "The performance is about sodadi because we are not just losing something or someone. We often have to actively leave to be successful and then return. This is a difference," he explains. (pers. comm. January 12, 2013).

Christina McMahon argues that creole subjects who have lost elements of their cultural memory mourn that loss and try to retain what remains, even as they exercise a certain freedom in reimagining the "symbolic frontiers" of their various heritages (2008, 34). Processes of

⁵⁶ From David Rousseve's website for Saudade. www.davidrousseve.com, accessed June 1, 2013.

forming a colony and country were based upon the chaos and suffering of displaced roots. McMahon's ideas about "symbolic frontiers" which imply retaining partial representations of those heritages apply to the choreographic strategies discussed in next chapters. However, today, nostalgia for "lost" heritages applies more to *Cape Verdean* traditions than to loss of pre-colonial roots. In other words, sodadi focuses on island-developed traditions and the first set of branches visible "above ground." It includes a longing for traditions that arose out of Cape Verdean soil and a longing to connect with people world-wide who remember them. In conclusion, then, sodadi is not only a word used in song lyrics and national themes, it represents a complex historical and contemporary paradox: a longing for traditions that can never remain static, a longing for friends and distant family compounded over centuries of migration, and a positive symbol for opportunity. Closing this chapter with the words of singing teacher Lucia Cardoso written for project Maramar, we can fully understand the sodadi spectrum of emotion. [Translation by Lúcia Cardoso].

Tempus k ta ben la

Sodadi di tempu k nu era otu
Sodadi di roda nha saia bunitu la
Kontenta ku poku, pidi dimás
Sodadi di xinti, sem nem sabi dretu
Sodadi di tempu k tudo sabedoria era mamá

Sodadi di perdi, di sta confundido
Cada hoji e bunito
Di sta na sukuro, Di reza pa tempus k ta ben
la
Ku sábi, ku fanikitu
So pan da konta mó k n tchiga li
N ta odja pa trás; n ta odja pa trás
N ta reza pa tempus k ta bem la

(Translation by Lúcia Cardoso).

Times Yet to Come

Missing the times when we were others
Missing just twirling with my beautiful skirt
Being happy with little, asking for too much
Missing just feeling without knowing much
Missing the times when all wisdom was
Mommy
Missing being lost, being confused
Each “today” is beautiful
Being in the dark, praying for times yet to
come
with seizures of fun Only to realize how I
got here
Don’t look back, don’t look back
I look back Praying for times yet to come



Figure 16. *Longing Distance*. A woman walks slowly to a water hole. Western Santiago. August 2012.

CHAPTER TWO: RAIZ DI POLON IN CAPE VERDE.



Figure 17. *Dancing in Cape Verde*. Above: Raiz di Polon children school performs during the President's Day street festival. Below: Video dance project with author.

Have you ever seen Raiz di Polon and their arms that sway? Have you seen their style? They look just like the *polon* tree. [Bento moves his arms back and forth, overhead.] Beautiful. Majestic. As if talking to the wind. There is something unique about how these dancers and these trees move. They are frivolous and wild

and abrasive while they are graceful and grounded and connected to their roots with a whisper. They scare us with their beauty and strength but then they are a familiar tree we see all the time. No but really, Sara, have you ever gone to watch a polon tree? The dancers *look* like a polon tree! The similarities are uncanny! [smiles. Pauses. Gestures with his hands as he thinks visually.] The shapes that they make with their arms and rasta hair. They have a unique style, and to understand them, I think you need to know two things. The music of Pantera and the polon” (Bento Oliveira, pers comm. September 14, 2012).

In a city where soccer occupies the position as the prized form of entertainment related to physical performance, Raiz di Polon’s physical agility and strength are typically the first things that come to mind when asking the general public about the dance company’s characteristics. Abstract painter Bento Oliveira is a prominent member of the artistic community in Praia. As someone who studied visual art in Brazil and whose profession and passion entails interpreting symbols, he could describe Raiz di Polon without only including a commentary upon their athleticism. Bento immediately underscored the importance of the polon tree and other emblems in Raiz di Polon’s work.⁵⁷ He emphasized that meaning is not only revealed through performance but in the “stored symbols” that they present, reminiscent of Geertz’ understandings of expressive culture as cultivated and compiled in potent emblems (Geertz 1957, 422). This chapter contextualizes dance specifically on Santiago Island and explores how symbols of trees, sustainability and unique style have come to be associated with Raiz di Polon.

First, in the subsection, “Roots of RDP Style,” the symbolic origins of the company are explained through a narrative example of the company’s connection to land and travel; their style is rooted in rural traditions while dancers simultaneously incorporate a set of non-traditional

⁵⁷ The polon, or “poilão” in Portuguese, is associated with the family of kapok trees (Latin name: “*Ceiba pentandra*”) that grow in tropical West Africa, Mexico, the Maldives, and the Amazon of South America. Kapoc trees are tall growing trees that produce cotton fibers or “silk cotton” and according to *The Multilingual Dictionary of Agronomic plants*, the polon is a “silk cotton tree” in English.

contemporary dance techniques. Then, in subsection, “Mimicry or Invention: the importance of standing out,” Raiz di Polon’s work will be situated within the context of what I call the “flash factor” in Cape Verde by demonstrating how individual style in dance is especially crucial at cultural crossroads where mimicry becomes a problematic strategy for artistic sustainability. Raiz di Polon work has been inspired by these flash factors while resistant to them. Lastly, the chapter culminates with subsection, “Contemporary Dance: Liberation from the Style Norm,” and I illustrate how the majority of Cape Verdean dance groups have suffered a loss of emotional resonance or what informants call “feeling” as many of the dances have shifted from backyard to stage. Raiz di Polon’s choreographic intentions stand out from these groups.

These three subsections provide an overview of fundamental issues specific to Santiago Island that will later relate to why the company’s work has impacted the nation so greatly: The company is linked to rural landscape, as we will see through the polon tree metaphor; the company is lasting in opposition to circulating trends, which I explain through a discussion of “flash factors”; the company is developing a unique creole style, which is shown in the last section by a comparison of intentions among other growing dance groups. The issues put forth in this chapter will prepare for Chapter Three’s closer look at Raiz di Polon’s creolization processes.



Figure 18. *Arms that Sway*. Raiz di Polon rehearses in the National Auditorium. April 2012.

Roots of RDP Style

When asked about the name of his company, Mano Preto said he chose the name “Roots of the Polon” because of the “beautiful majestic curves and shapes that the trees make” (pers. comm. April 7, 2012). While his facial expressions implied that he had more to say about the subject, he quickly moved on to talk of the day’s plans. Speaking with other members of the artistic community like artist Bento Oliveira offered multiple perspectives regarding Raiz di Polon’s emblematic image. As a working artist from Mindelo, Oliveira has been a part of the greater contemporary art network forming in Cape Verde over the last fifteen years. He relocated to Praia in 2011 and now works with Mano Preto as a member of the Ministry of Culture. Oliveira sees Preto’s work as a metaphor for the roots of the polon tree. In the six months that I lived in Cape Verde, I followed Bento’s advice to observe a polon because I wanted to

understand more about the “uncanny” resemblance and inspiration that fueled Mano Preto’s ideology. To witness the choreography of the polon tree, I followed the musings of neighbors: “Oh, I think there is one over in Orgão”; or “I think there is one near the bend in the trail up near Joao’s house in the center of the valley.” I had assumed that many polon trees existed on Santiago Island, but as I began to seek them, the task became more difficult than I had expected. The trees are not easy to find without personal transportation into the interior and because few polon trees exist on Santiago Island.

As I encountered difficulties finding a polon tree, looking for one provided opportunities to talk with people during exhausting public van rides between Praia and the island interior. Being a passenger in a *hiase*⁵⁸ van is a communal effort as people pack themselves in tightly and help to position food products and even children on one another’s laps to create a full car and therefore earlier departure. During these excursions, people compared the dance company to polon trees by describing them as beautiful, strong, and symbolically important, yet they could not recall exactly where they had seen such a tree.⁵⁹ An Assomada person’s directions led to a mural of a polon on a convenience-store stand which superimposed the tree on the continent of Africa as a logo for the Cape Verdean reggae group “Africa Rainbow.” The words read, “Homi... si... stória,” meaning “Man...his.. story.”

⁵⁸ “Hiase” is the model name for the Toyota van that has been imported to the islands for public transportation. It has become a generic term like “Kleenex” for “tissue” in American culture.

⁵⁹ When speaking to environmentalists in Cape Verde, I noted how many people knew that the trees were “majestic” and symbolically important, but no one could give me details about its scientific traits. The most useful information came from an essay by Maria Odete da Costa Soares Semedo called, “The Mandjuandadi people-- songs and oral traditions of women in Guinea Bissau” which dedicates a section to the poilão trees (2010). For more information regarding myths of kapok trees in Western Africa, see Alma Gottlieb 1992 and Gerald E. Wickens, 1982. Vartika Jane’s work on kapok myths in India (2009) is also useful.



Figure 19. *Afrika Rainbow Mural*. Located in Assomada Santiago. Seen is Cindy Baptista, a graffitist but not the artist of this particular work.

Finally, during the last weeks of my fieldwork, I saw a solitary polon standing at the bottom of a hill. I had been helping a friend collect mangos to bring to his mother who was sick and unable to collect them herself. Using a long branch to bang the mangos from the tree branches, we noticed a large tree near the watering hole where children were drawing water. I asked some children playing nearby if the tree was a polon. They nodded, saying “ayan ayan,” the *Kriolu fundo* phrase for “yes yes.” The tree’s roots’ exaggerated knobby twists and turns seemed to meander illogically well above the ground before grasping the earth underneath. The trunk’s connection to the earth was complex, changing directions before plunging underneath, and my attention immediately went to the roots prior to the very full branches towering above. [See Figure 20.]



Figure 20. *Polon Tree and Roots*. I had no camera with me when I saw the polon, so Praia-based multimedia artist Pedro Migel Moita supplied me with one from his archive, which he took in 2011.

As I continued to gather mangos far from the bustle of Praia, I was reminded of the summer of 2004 that I spent on the outskirts of Dakar, Senegal, as a vocalist in a Senegalese hip-hop group. Band members insisted that in order to understand their urban hip-hop, we had to “experience nature” as “the blood at the heart of teranga” hospitality and grace. The genre might be “urban,” but spending time in pastoral spaces was an important ritual for the group. Innovation in Senegalese hip-hop at that time was not necessarily defined by contrasts with traditional rural life but rather to one’s ability to connect with the country’s history on the land. Similarly, Mano Preto’s contemporary dances are tied to rural landscapes, regardless of occurring within an urban environment. Through picking mangos in the “*fora*,”⁶⁰ lending a hand to strengthen my relationship to a neighbor, I was able to experience the polon as a visual object,

⁶⁰ “Fora” is slang for the “far away rural area” in Kriolo.

feel it as a physical support for resting, and look to it as a place of arrival, enabling me to understand the rural origins of contemporary Cape Verdean dance in ways over and above what occurred in rehearsals or performance spaces.

If curves were the shapes that would help to inspire Preto's "style," particular characteristics led them to inspire the important metaphor. "Curves," if considered in the context of physical body shapes, are often a metonym for "Kriola"—a Kriol woman. The term has become a sexually charged word for a young mestiza woman, yet the male equivalent, "Kriolo," does not hold the same meaning. In "Islands of Sexuality," Isabel Rodrigues reminds us that references to the curvy body can be traced to how sexuality became a foundational form of currency and power during the mixing processes that have taken place within the islands since the slave trade (2002, 84-86). Perhaps subconsciously, Mano Preto's inspiration of "beautiful curves" could be a connection to gender and the history of power and sexuality in the islands. However, his frequent use of strong male dancers contests any direct favoritism for the female form.

Back near the mango trees, I began to see what Mano Preto loved about curves when the sun started to set on the polon. The tree was backlit with a slight silhouette and the light emphasized detailed shadows simultaneously with one unifying image. Sinuosities in the tree trunk and roots seemed like initials left to commemorate people's memories. A wildflower curling around one side of the tree contrasted with dark shredded bark on the other side. These individual "curves" seemed to have their own histories separate from the entire tree, as each looked so different. The silhouetted image recalled the stout roots and robust strength of the baobab tree—a unifying symbol for Africanity.⁶¹ The Polon tree was a microcosm of the

⁶¹ The image of a baobab tree silhouette in front of a colorful sunset is one of the most common images used to express Africanity, and can be seen in logos and for groups promoting their African roots to paintings sold for

pluralistic, contradictory archipelago, linked to a unifying African image while individually marked. The Raiz di Polon dance company assumed a similar role for Cape Verde.

We can recall that when I first asked Preto about the polon trees, he was first elusive, and I had to rely on artist Bento Oliveira's descriptions to perceive that the tree's importance as a symbol was related to the curvy and strong trees and Preto's shape-oriented choreography. Preto's elusiveness forced me to undergo some of the feelings associated with the polon tree such as manual labor and the patience and exhaustion of inter-island travel. I experienced how the tree could appear simultaneously generic and unique depending on my vantage point. When Preto finally continued to elaborate regarding his symbolic connections to the polon tree, his commentary made more sense after experiencing the contexts surrounding the polon:

When we created the group in 1991, I wanted to give it some symbols that would hold weight and survive in a place where so many groups and projects die after a little while. And so this tree, with strong roots, and a symbol of OUR ground, seemed perfect (pers. comm. September 9, 2012).

“Our ground” could mean the stories and connections to all that has arisen from the archipelago itself—a declaration of Cape Verdeanness as separate from any other part of the world, yet “our ground *to* the world.”

Like Cape Verdeans worldwide, polon trees can be found on many continents, and because they can survive in a range of soil environments, they represent adaptability, survival, and versatility. When asked about why she and Rosy Timas often used branches as props in their theatrical performances, Bety Fernandes replied, “We use trees and branches often in our work. Trees represent versatile tools as living plants and as tools and fuel” (pers. comm. July 18, 2012).

tourists and nontourists. From my own fieldwork in Dakar Senegal, I have learned that baobab trees symbolize prosperity, longevity, fertility, and life for many cultures in the African continent, and are even given burial ceremonies in some cultures. For more information, about baobab legends and stories, see Bash 2002 and Peckham 2004.

Unlike many other plants that have difficulty surviving long-term, polon trees are known for their long-lasting endurance and ability to “withstand unpredictable droughts” and floods (Cain 2007). Polons are in the kapok tree family (*Ceiba pentandra*), and trees considered “majestic” and the source of myths in several West African countries because of their ability to host so many animals in their umbrella-looking canopy and in their expansive vertical hanging roots. The roots in the polon supersede its “flashy” leaves. Not only has Mano Preto been a pioneer in the field of dance, but his deep attention to strengthening his roots to Cape Verdean nationality have also been part of why he is considered to be a pioneer. “I want to create a feeling of roots, in a new way.” Therefore as a symbol of Cape Verde, Raiz di Polon conveys a sense of strength, rurality *and* urbanity, historical roots, and sustainability.

Introducing Raiz di Polon with reference to such a majestic tree is unintentionally political because by giving attention to the land of Santiago Island specifically, I am positioning myself as someone biased towards badiu culture as the “roots” of Cape Verdean culture. Typically in brief biographic descriptions for performance festivals and articles, Raiz di Polon is described as a group that from the very start was based upon an intercultural artistic exchange, with added emphasis upon the crossroads as the birthplace of contemporary dance in Cape Verde. These biographies emphasize dynamic exchange as the anchor of the dance form. One can question if the language used justifies the complexity of RDP’s creative work.

In “Dancers in the Margins Across the Ocean,” Angelica Feitosa writes that Raiz di Polon “started with traditional dances but soon after the ‘contamination’ of contemporary European dance, began to create their own contemporary work through workshops and classes” (2011, 90). Her jarring assertion of “contamination” refers to when Portuguese choreographer Clara Andermatt introduced dance-theater and contemporary dance to RDP in 1992 when she

came to Praia as a member of a nonprofit project called “Dancing What Is Ours.”

“Contamination,” suggests the swift attraction of the group to the ideas Andermatt presented, as if contemporary dance were a poisoning chemical reaction. As the Raiz di Polon website states, the dancers “were fascinated by what they saw” in Andermatt’s techniques and were inspired to create the form in Cape Verde. “Several of the company’s dancers continued to perform in Clara Andermatt’s pieces, and RDP began to organize workshops and dance classes in Cape Verde as part of the project.”⁶² As RDP founding member Dulce Almeida explained, RDP performers “danced morna, coladiera, funana, and kolasanjon when the group first formed, in order to get together and dance what was loved” among “traditional” practices. The group became “contemporary” when they began to experiment with the movements, methods, and choreographic creativity that Andermatt presented to them through the collaborative process of her styles of contemporary dance.

Presenting Raiz di Polon requires a negotiation and awareness of difficult-to-define origins in ways similar to how Cape Verde’s histories are told within the islands. Common questions regarding Cape Verdean identity are: At what point during the generations of mixing of Portuguese Europeans and African people did Cape Verdean identity “begin”? Was Cape Verdean identity concretized only after the Nation’s independence? Similarly, questions regarding Raiz di Polon’s identity are often debated: Did Cape Verdean contemporary dance begin when the Portuguese artist Clara Andermatt collaborated with Cape Verdean dancers through workshops in Cape Verde? Or should an emphasis be placed upon the feelings, textures, and “roots” that compelled the dancers to form a company in the first place when they considered themselves a “traditional group”? At issue is the degree to which Raiz di Polon has

⁶² Text from press kit text provided by Jeff Hessney, RDP producer.

emerged as an important emblem for nation-building in Cape Verde. For Mano Preto, “*terra terra*” or “back to the roots,” will always be a priority with foundational workshops and training, and the Cape Verdean Ministry of Culture supports this outlook.

Mimicry or Invention: The importance of standing out

In the previous subsection, we considered the roots of RDP as a metaphor and from where they draw their inspiration. Now we must consider why developing a sustainable artistic voice is so difficult in the Cape Verdean context. I use anecdotes related to every-day performances and trends to later relate to the performing arts specifically. This subsection will prepare the reader to understand why Raiz di Polon’s work is particularly revolutionary.

Sitting at a beachside eatery called Kebra Cabana on a sunny Friday afternoon, I could tell that the two male clients at the table next to me were “returnees” visiting from the United States.⁶³ They were wearing flashy Ray-Ban sunglasses—trendy styles that were popular with young American men at the time and were starting to show up in Praia. The men’s fluorescent yellow Nike graphic t-shirts were brand new, as was evident from the creases that folded at right angles on their torsos. Their Kriolu accents were from Fogo Island, with more frequent American words intermixed in the kriolo than one finds elsewhere in the archipelago. Because the majority of Cape Verdeans in the US have ties to Fogo, I assumed that they had just returned to the islands for vacation. In my peripheral vision, I began to take notice of what Donald Cosentino might call a “performance of cool.”⁶⁴ The slowness with which they were speaking and saying “heeeeeyyy” to old friends walking by promoted a sense of tranquility and carefreeness typical

⁶³ Kebra Cabana is located at Kebra Canela beach, which is the popular beach in the city of Praia.

⁶⁴ Donald Cosentino. Lecture including video documentary, “Merchants of Cool.” Introduction to Folklore, Department of World Arts and Cultures 2008. At issue was Cosentino’s interview with Robert Farris Thompson recently republished in Thompson’s *Aesthetic of the Cool: Afro-Atlantic Art and Music* (2011), 59-70.

of the restaurant, publicized as “Sempre Verao,” “Always Summer.” In a climate always tropical, “always summer” was a euphemism for “always on vacation.” Tranquility was promoted even further as Bob Marley’s lyrics “everything’s gonna be alright” from his well-known hit, “Redemption Song” boomed on nearby speakers (1980, EMI records). The men did care if people were watching. The more they tried not to care, the more obvious it was that they “cared.” By speaking in such high volume and glowing quite literally in fluorescent attire, their performance of cool drew attention. The men were putting their interpretations of material success on display. To them, fluorescent Nike t-shirts and Ray-Bans were globally “cool.” These items are not readily available in Cape Verde, and if they are, they are imported at very high prices. For the men to wear them so ostentatiously promoted their experience of living elsewhere or that they could pay a lot of money to appear as if they did. In either scenario, to be internationally “cool” automatically implied locally “cool.”

The Cape Verdean “returnee” vacationer with money to spend and new clothes to flaunt was not characteristic of the entire population. Likewise not all members of society frequented the eatery and social scene surrounding “Kebra Cabana.” Still, the young men illustrated the circulating “flash factor” in Cape Verde was basic to performances on stage and in daily life. Standing out is especially important in Cape Verde because global signifiers bombard the islands constantly, creating opportunity to follow a trend elsewhere in the world, ignore the idea, or build upon it. Images circulate in the archipelago at rapid-fire speed and can often be introduced by just a few people, leaving only a “flash” semblance of the original item or trend. “Flash” denotes speed of appearance and disappearance. Back in Kebra Cabana, I recognized the men’s shirts because similar ones sold in my mother’s sports store are specifically made for runners who need highly visible reflective materials for low light conditions. However, these men were

not running, and their new shirts with big fluorescent Nike “swooshes” were meant to be seen by the population and not by oncoming cars. Perhaps in the future the style will ignite a trend in the islands, just like fashions swiftly exploited by the Chinese merchants who import fake Ray-Bans. One can imagine that fluorescent “Nike” t-shirts will soon be available in Cape Verdean markets, signifying American power, wealth, and global cool.

The arrival of “flash factors” stems from the filtration occurring through media programs and the internet, and in the case of clothing, fashion, and even skill, Cape Verde’s struggle to produce its own goods is also at issue. The majority of available new clothing is imported from China and Europe. New and used clothing also arrives from large barrels called “*bidongs*” sent from individual exporters from Boston and sold in informal markets in Cape Verde.. With regards to circulating attitudes, international news, and modes of expression, many trends are derived from the internet (Melo 2009, 163). According to a website which prides itself on being a microcosm of the world called “De Tudo 1 Pouco” which means, “A little bit of everything,” Cape Verde is the fourth highest African Nation following Mozambique, Namibia and Rwanda in the 2013 internet speed ranking or “Net Index.” The report stemmed from a Portuguese statistics organization called Ecofin and the fact that this position was posted with great pride and produced many comment threads on social networking sites shows that Cape Verdeans aim to be connected to the world, up to speed with global news, and see themselves as living at a crossroads position.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Report published in <http://dtudo1pouco.com/cabo-verde-e-o-quarto-pais-africano-em-velocidade-da-internet/> accessed April 1 2013. Also reported as “Cabo Verde é o quarto país africano em velocidade de Internet,” A Semana online, June 24, 2013. <http://asemana.sapo.cv/spip.php?article89331&ak=1>. I was unable to confirm the data presented on this website from other government sponsored surveys and sources, but the importance here is that the website presents matters of interest and pride to Cape Verdeans world-wide.



Figure 21. *A Little of Everything.*

Leslie Rabine reminds us that Westerners should not be surprised by such fast-paced connections, whether they are virtual portals or occurring through individual physical exchanges.

In the interstices of these high-tech, big capitalist webs are other subordinate global networks that pass unnoticed to most of us in the dominant culture. Through such networks, peopled by suitcase vendors who transport their goods with them in suitcases and trunks, producers and consumers create transnational popular cultural forms (2002,2).

Exchanges of all level collectively influence popular culture. These various exchange portals affect waves of social behavior. For example, the popularity of Brazilian soap operas in Cape Verde has, according to Sonia Melo, greatly influenced gender roles by contributing to the modes of dress and hyper-sexualized ways in which women are portrayed in the islands (Melo 2009, 145).⁶⁶ While Melo's study was primarily focused upon the ways that the internet is used to keep diasporic Cape Verdeans connected to the islands, the ways that portals distribute other information can be easily observed. From dance students demonstrating the "gangsta" dance moves they have learned from viral videos or "filtered" news of violent American tragedies from American headlines, to attending parties to watch televised European soccer competitions, portals to global awareness open the road to "flash" influences. Bombardment by images happens everywhere in the world, but the urgency with which these images are adopted and

⁶⁶ For more information about the history of sexuality in Cape Verde, see Rodrigues 2003.

circulated is compounded in a nation so small as Cape Verde, where people are eager to overcome their isolation.

The speed with which the Cape Verdean media circulate information often comes with the price of self-inflicted drama. For example, on June 10, 2013, the newspaper *A Semana* announced prematurely that Nelson Mandela had died, when in fact, he had gone into the hospital for intensive care. The news spread across the world incorrectly,⁶⁷ followed by an apologetic retraction by the newspaper, all because the Cape Verdean media wanted to be “first” to report current events. Their eagerness to spread trans-Atlantic information, especially with regards to the African hero for whom their capital airport is named, revealed how cutting corners and obtaining superficial data is a quintessential problem in the islands. In the words of scholar Corsino Tolentino, “Cape Verde is still a baby. We are only forty years young as a nation, and we are still testing everything, and declaring—like a defiant eager teenager—that we are strong and can do things on our own! Raiz di Polon represents one of those mature voices, who voices their opinion after many years of knowing what that opinion is.”⁶⁸ (pers. comm. September 4, 2012). Tolentino’s comment regarding Cape Verde as a “baby” is significant because he calls attention to one of the reasons that sustainability has been a problem in the nation. Sustainability with development projects, jobs, and performance groups may not only be traced to a lack of resources, but also due to short-term “eager” planning like “defiant teenagers” with something to prove to those with more power. His attention to Raiz di Polon as a “mature voice,” shows how Preto’s ideas have not only impacted the world of dance, but also are marking a place as a symbol of long-term planning.

⁶⁷ For example, I observed many people sharing the article link on facebook and other social media websites.

⁶⁸ Cosentino Tolentino is a member of the Cape Verdean World Finance Center, is an education specialist, and is a member of the West African Research Association through which we were introduced.

Performance idioms can sometimes operate in ways similar to fluorescent t-shirts and Mandela news. Knowledge of dance terminology, “cool moves,” catch-phrases, and performance genres flood the islands, and many want to partake in the “flash factors” that they observe. Only with careful dedication and personal investigation do these forms take root and transform into something deeper than a “flash” or “trend.” Over time, differentiation between trend and art form becomes obvious, and as trends disappear, many groups appear to be doing the same choreography without variety.

The bombardment of global “flash factors” creates a community of people conscious of their own image production. Anthropologist Marshall Sahlins, who attended to the ways in which culture can motivate people to change, famously wrote, “the cultural self-consciousness developing among imperialism’s erstwhile victims is one of the more remarkable phenomena of world history in the late 20th century” (1994, 378). Sahlins sees people who are affected by imperialism as “victims” as they are forced to change their customs. While daily demonstrations of national pride disprove that Cape Verdeans see themselves as passive victims of imperialism and economic dependence, circulating images from Euro-American superpowers do perpetuate the sense of cultural self-consciousness that Sahlins noted. At times such an awareness creates a challenging atmosphere of superficiality, not only in myriad “performances of cool” (Thompson 2011, 1-15), but through adopting rituals from other parts of the world.

For example, just as Carnival developed in Brazil from Catholic European traditions, Cape Verdeans created Carnival in the northern islands of São Nicolão and São Vicente. A detailed account of samba in Cape Verde was not part of my study. However, I raise the topic here to set the stage for how the matrix of mimicry and innovation set the stage for Raiz di Polon as one of many markers of innovation. In São Vicente, Carnival includes performance of the

Mandjako, a controversial procession of men in blackface and grass skirts, supposedly to imitate Senegambian Mandinga people. In Praia, Carnival was started in the 1960s and includes a parade and competitions among floats of various school groups around the city. Yet writings about Carnival in Cape Verde do not honor Praia Carnival as they almost exclusively focused upon the celebrations in São Vicente and São Nicolão. Some hold that Praia Carnival is modeled after the extravagant floats, samba dancers, and competitions known in Rio and Salvador Brazil. Kaká Barboza, a composer and poet, holds that Praia Carnival was started by elite residents who relocated from Mindelo and wanted to continue their traditions among private schools and the bourgeoisie.



Figure 22. *Sambista*. Carnival in Praia, Cabo Verde. February 14, 2013.

On Lisbon City Avenue (Avenida Cidade Lisboa), where government buildings are located, samba performers gyrated and lowered themselves to the ground with movements that

resembled samba, and people shouted, “samba!” but their movement was not identical to the Brazilian idiom. For example, their steps did not emphasize side-to-side hip movements and individual foot steps were not synched with the the music. If a performer *was* dancing the triple-step hip-shifts of samba, it was “correct” but lacking in articulation and commitment underneath skin-revealing sequins and feathered costumes. The woman in Figure 22 was lovely, but the focus of her performance was the way in which she could coordinate a dance from standing to squatting, rather than about the steps of the dance itself. Perhaps samba ability was not the requirement for dancing atop of a float with blaring music which showed a different priority compared to some Brazil- based models. Preparation of floats and parades did not begin four to six months ahead of time as in Brazil, but rather one to two months prior to the celebrations, according to one school named Liceu Domingus who participated in the parade.

“Šara, Carnival came to Praia from Brazil, so it won’t be the same” a friend told me. “If you want to see ‘*real*’ carnival you have to go to Mindelo and Sao Nicolão where Carnival has been longer” (Monica Andrade. Pers. comm. February 16, 2013). I was not trying to compare this event to Brazil, or looking for “real” vs. “imitation.” My friend, who was constantly trying to share her Cape Verdean *morabeza*, assumed that I might not enjoy myself and that I might critique the event.⁶⁹ She was responding to her own cultural insecurities by assuming that I would label Praia Carnival as inauthentic. I wanted to experience what was happening in Praia and understand the innovations within the shadows and crevices of apparent superficiality, like the individual markings of the polon tree. As a foreign observer, I applauded the efforts of the city to come together to organize the event, but after Monica’s comment, I did wonder if I should question the event’s authenticity because Cape Verdeans seemed to question it. Having

⁶⁹ Morabeza means “welcoming” and “feeling at home.”

participated in samba parades in Los Angeles and Brazil, I had to make some comparisons because they facilitated my ability to spot innovation. For example, one drum group, Sambatucada, marched throughout the Carnival festivities. Some of the group's samba rhythms were "standards" from Brazil as I remembered playing them in BatUCLAda at UCLA—songs from famous drumming groups Olodum and IlyAyé who were known for their Panafrican musical palate in Salvador. The appearance of a Brazilian song reveals a bounce-back influence from African roots to Brazilian Carnival, and back to Cape Verde again.

Within Sambatucada song lists, some songs were uniquely Cape Verdean with faster tempos and slightly different timing. The director told me that they were "originals" (pers. comm. February 12, 2013). In this context, a Praia-based samba group called Prasamba is the first in the country to blend Cape Verdean instruments with Brazilian rhythms, creatively adding the Cape Verdean *cimboa*, to their work. In a project organized by the IIPC (Institute of Investigation for Cultural Patrimony,) called "Project Memory of the Cimboa," this monochordic instrument is "indigenous" because it dates back to rural Santiago during the colonial period and is the earliest known instrument of the islands.⁷⁰ Even if Carnival is has foreign origins, its usefulness and efficacy are specific to Praia, as exemplified by the incorporation of cimboa instrumentation. As another example, "Lisbon Street" normally serves as the high-traffic dividing line between upper and lower class areas of the city, yet through Carnival celebrations, the street became a liminal space where everyone celebrated how quickly schools could create costumes and events for a one-day event. [See Figure 23.] These unifying characteristics resemble the early forms of Brazilian Carnival that "is certainly spectacular, but is an earthy,

⁷⁰ The project, "Projeto Memoria da Cimboa" took place in 2011 and was organized to try and prevent the instrument's disappearance. The project enabled nearly 150 young people learn to create the instrument and captured the attention of national artists.

neighborhoodly affair. Prior to the surge of the blocos, the Bahian carnival was a ragtag mix of several forms... these styles clashed surprisingly happily for days” (Browning 1995, 131).

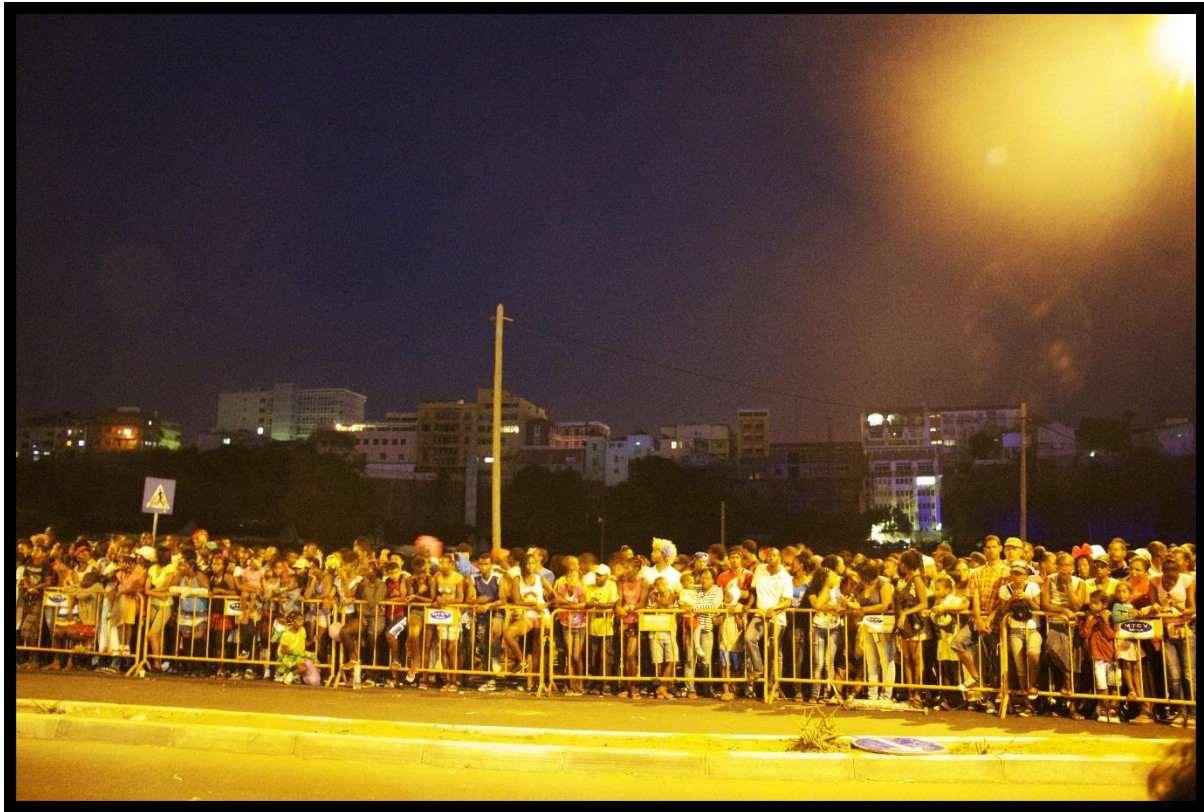


Figure 23. *Carnival Street*. Carnival February 14, 2013. Lisbon City Avenue, which separates the upper class Plateau (seen dark and above the crowd) from the lower class communities below.

Carnival in Praia is flashy and designed to emulate Brazilian manifestations. The celebration alludes to the fun that many Cape Verdeans experienced while living abroad, affirming the nation’s “we have a little bit of everything” philosophy. Praia Carnival is an “invented tradition,” adding Brazil to the mix of dances and celebrations that the country values in their cross-cultural celebrations. “Invented traditions are traditions which appear or claim to be old,” Hobsbawm asserts, yet they “are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented... establishing themselves with great rapidity and with repetition, which automatically implies a continuity with the past” (1983, 1). Through subtle innovations and inventions of the sort, one

can imagine that with more time, Carnival will become more and more distinctive to the city of Praia.

To note the many ways in which Cape Verdean events and dynamics produce feelings of superficiality for Cape Verdeans themselves is an observation made after visiting several islands, several cities on Santiago Island, and several areas of the capital city. This observation especially applies to Praia, where archipelagic creolization among distinct island and globally influenced identities occurs at a greater rate than in more isolated rural towns of the islands. “Superficiality” emphasizes ephemeral, perpetual newness, quickly-influenced ideas, and rapid change. Quickly changing tendencies can be related to something as basic as a color fad in fashion, as complex as a dance technique, or even something as emotional as a romantic relationship. Might Cape Verdean culture include a kind of “Las Vegas” simulacrum of the world in which flashy stereotypes and trends depend upon flows of information, media coverage, and portals of international exchange? Many of these cultural influences and “flash factors” may simply vanish as rapidly as they arrived, to be replaced by new ideas stemming from other unpredictable yet influential winds. Bands, dance groups, and organizations have begun in this very same manner, modeled upon an exciting idea or inspiration, but without the soil and nurturing processes to transform “flash” to polon-like rooted idea and practice.

Like the titles of archipelago groupings, every windward perspective is accompanied by a leeward perspective. Unlike many of these trends that will blow away like seeds from a paved path, some trends *will* take root and, with time, produce cultural innovation. Cape Verde sometimes appears more like a playground for global cultures to create new games, rather than a Las Vegas simulacrum. The poetic perspectives of Derek Walcott musing on mimicry are useful

in thinking about such contrasts, as this dissertation transitions back to the realm of dance and artistic responsibility. Walcott ascribes Saint Lucian creolité to creative “nothingness.”

Perhaps powerlessness leaves the Third World, the ex-colonial world, no alternative but to imitate those systems offered to or forced on it by the major powers, their political systems which must alter their common life, their art, their language, their philosophy. On the other hand, the bitterness of the colonial experience, its degradations of dependency... tempts the Third World with spiritual alternatives. ‘Nothing has ever been created?’ Precisely. Precisely. Nothing will always be created in the West Indies, for quite a long time, because what will come out of there is like nothing one has ever seen before. Mimicry is an act of imagination. . . . lizards, chameleons adapt.. it is design. We in the Caribbean know all about nothing... In the archipelago particularly, nature, the elements if you want, are so new, so overpowering in their presence that awe is deeper than articulation of awe. To name is to contradict. What is called mimicry is the painful, new, laborious uttering that comes out of belief, not doubt... in the shaping of tools, pen or spade, is the whole, profound sigh of human optimism, of what we in the archipelago still believe in: work and hope. It is out of this that the New World, or the Third World, should begin. Theoretical and idealistic though this sounds, it is our duty as poets to reiterate it. (Walcott 1975, 10-13).

Scholars of post-colonial studies have discussed the pressures of post-colonial society to maintain the systems imposed upon them during the colonial period (Taussig 1993, Bhabha 1994, Fabian 1998 among others). Walcott’s reference to “nothingness” is not meant to conjure existential nihilism (Sartre 1943); rather, creolized hybrid societies can be seen as sites for creative mimicry. There is hope, design, creative potential, and ownership even in this neutral starting point. Walcott also points out that mimicry presents a certain spirituality and love for nature specific to an archipelagic post-colonial nation. As we will see, Mano Preto and other artists benefit from the influence of foreign exchange and accumulate sustainable tools, perfecting their chameleon abilities while honoring the nature that surrounds them until what becomes most important is the chameleon itself; the chameleon must be recognized as an indigenous being rather than

merely as the colors and patterns through which the creature blends into backgrounds as its primary defense.

Contemporary Dance: Liberation from the Style Norm.

“Cidade Velha” begins. The dancers begin to whisper softly and in waves. “All death comes from within.” Seven dancers at different times. Then the spaces between the words narrow, overlapping until a booming cacophony peaks: TODA MORTE VEM DE DENTRO! ALL DEATH COMES FROM WITHIN! They cry out in desperation over and over, legs are braced strongly to the ground as their upper bodies are rigid with shoulders and arms held bound behind their backs. Heads are thrashing back and forth. The traditional music halts, dreadlocks of various lengths bounce in different directions hitting their faces as they speak at the same time. [See Figure 24]. Then, as if a rug were pulled out from beneath everyone, the dancers launch backwards onto the ground to the hands that were bound behind them, leaving one foot suspended in the air and their bodies forming a backwards tabletop, pelvises held upwards even with knees. They declare in unison, “E chegamos!” “And we have arrived!” I take a breath. The audience member next to me looks at me with a timid face and smiles. We both take another deep breath as we recognize together the intensity of the performance. I know the choreography order well because I have seen it rehearsed countless times. Even anticipating the sequences, their energy exhausts me. I can see that the other people around me in the audience are also on the edge of their seats as we watch the full 45 minute performance. We are currently at minute 5.



Figure 24. *Head Thrash*. Dancers Rosy Timas, Luis Da Rosa, Kaka Oliveira and Djamila Reis during a rehearsal during a sequence in which hands are bound and heads are shaken. The text spoken during this moment: “All death comes from within.” See also Figure 30 in Chapter Three for a photograph of the same moment.

If you are watching a dance company’s performance in Cape Verde and you find yourself taking a deep breath with your own muscles tensed, the probability is high that you are watching Raiz di Polon. The company is recognizable not only because the group is the only professional company performing long full-length dance concerts, but because the group’s “style” has become known throughout the archipelago. Within the sea of cultural mimicry and “borrowed” festivals like carnival discussed previously, solidifying a trademark style is particularly challenging. Feedback suggests that Raiz di Polon is succeeding in this challenge. Conversations with over one hundred Cape Verdean residents show that Raiz di Polon “style” involves emotional intensity, physical strength, and strategies that direct these emotions to the audience. One informant held that “sometimes their style reminds me of rape and murder and it makes me

so uncomfortable! They are brutal!” (Marlilene Perreira, pers. comm. August 7, 2012).⁷¹ “I don’t know anything about dance” a computer engineer admitted, “but I know that Raiz di Polon, you know, they are strong. Really physically strong.” So saying, he puffed up his chest like a weight-lifter, indicating how he perceived Raiz di Polon’s “style” (Marco Medina, pers. comm. February 6, 2013).

RDP’s athleticism and intensity offer an artistic vision that thematically and viscerally hammers the viewer with strong Cape Verdean symbols and exhausting, organized shapes through choreography developed by artistic director Mano Preto. As Susan Foster suggests, style in performance can reinforce choreography’s references to cultural identity. “Where representational mode of the dance alerts the viewer to a broad framework for signifying the world, style in dance clarifies this framework by adding references to cultural identity” (Foster 1987, 77). Foster deconstructs signifiers of style via quality of movement, characteristic use of parts of the body, and dancers’ orientation in the performance space. Karen Bond would add that style in dance serves as a “mediator of engagement” through conversational encounters, personal rhythms, and sensory preferences (Bond 1995, 17). Style as “conversation” suggests engagement with existing and changing ideas in contexts of intercultural exchange as a new dance community develops its performance identity.

Many Cape Verdean dancers understand style in the way that rising urban dancer Bruno “Djam” Amarante considers it: “A feeling you can’t describe that shows your history and how you manipulate yourself, and how your feelings are owned by the dancer’s body,” indicating that “having style” in dance is associated with personal sovereignty. (Bruno Amarante, pers. comm. September 12, 2012). Marcia Siegel’s understanding of style and lexicon complements

⁷¹ Author and director of the Brazilian Cultural Center in Praia.

Amarante's words, because she considers the personal movement history that Amarante discusses as a kind of "raw materials." In her essay "Bridging the Critical Distance," she asserts that "the lexicon is like the raw materials of the dance . . . and we start to track how it gets manipulated, interwoven and elaborated on during the dance" (2010, 192). The collection of these definitions suggests that lexicon—the raw materials—and style—how the materials get "manipulated"—differentiate one dance company from another. Locating a distinct lexicon and style can be difficult in a city distracted by so many "flash factors." For artists to filter out and filter in personal histories and flash factors requires dedication and to adhering to these selective styles. Trailblazing in Cape Verdean dance requires maintaining relative consistency among the flurry of constant change.

Mano Preto has been called a "pioneer of dance" with an "innovative style" in European, French, Brazilian, and Cape Verdean publications as he builds upon the status quo and distinguishes RDP from the many dance groups within the archipelago and the trans-Atlantic region. If Mano Preto is a "pioneer," the relevant question becomes, "From what established norms has he embarked and into what unknown territory has he ventured?" The archipelago's dance scene must be understood before considering the crossroads linking Cape Verde to the world. Raiz di Polon's lexicon is based upon what Cape Verdeans call the "traditional dances" of the islands which have shifted from social dances to unison performances for the stage. "Traditional" is the preferred term of Cape Verdeans to describe the forms that were once social dances. Island-specific dances stem from musical genres developed over time, with dances understood as the accompaniment to music rather than the central focus.

Figure 25. *Chart of Musical and Dance Expressions.*

ARCHIPELAGIC GROUP	ISLAND	GENRE OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC/DANCE
SOTAVENTO (South) Badiu	Brava	<i>Morna</i>
	Fogo	<i>talaia-baixu, morna</i>
	Santiago	<i>batuku, funaná, funaná-lentu, finason (vocal style)</i>
	Maio	<i>Morna</i>
	Boa Vista	<i>morna, koladera</i>
BARLAVENTO (North) Sampadjudu	Sal	<i>morna, koladera</i>
	São Nicolau	<i>morna, koladera, rabeka</i>
	São Vicente	<i>morna, koldera, kolasonjon</i>
	Santo Antão	<i>morna, koladera, kolasonjon, mazurka, polka, kontradansa</i>

Dances from the Sotavento islands like *batuko* and *funana* are most easily and commonly described within an “African-European” continuum (Lobban 1995; Hurley Glowa 1986).⁷²

While this model is used by Cape Verdean and Cape Verde scholars to draw conclusions and understand the forms, this common linear model ignores the complexities of Cape Verdean identity that include Brazilian, Caribbean, American, and Asian influences. Despite the limitations of this linear model, performance traditions like *batuko* and *funana* from *sotavento* leeward islands like Santiago sway towards the polyrhythmic call-and-response structures of African performance forms, in contrast to Portuguese couple-dances and waltzes like *mazurka*,

⁷² Brazilian, Caribbean, and Asian influences are obvious in Cape Verde. However these connections have been scarcely researched through comparative musical and choreographic study.

koladera, *morna* and *kolasanjon* in the more “European” *barlavento* windward islands (Hurley-Glowa 1997; Lobban 1995).

Robert Farris Thompson’s generalizations about African performance idioms can be questioned as well. “Even in tropical Africa,” he suggests, musical performances maintain a “percussive bias” which is true for some Cape Verdean traditions and irrelevant to others (2011, 1). Instead, Cape Verdean idioms make a compelling case for comparison to similar but diverging Haitian forms which Yvonne Daniels calls “second generation intra-Caribbean Creole,” as dances from similar sources but diverging into other forms (Daniels 2011, 93). The two differ in that Cape Verdean forms have remained somewhat isolated due to archipelagic separation, making the islands similar to the diversities of the entire Caribbean region rather than the specificities of any of its particular countries. Raiz di Polon is from Santiago Island, which is best known for the dances of *batuko* and *funana*, but Mano Preto makes a conscious effort to include many if not all other Cape Verdean idioms in his dance-theater performances.

Today, all of the dance forms throughout the islands have their individual localized places in social gatherings, festival contexts, and staged performances, and audience appreciation seems to vary widely for all of these genres and types of venues. *Batuko*, for example, experienced a wave of popularity on Santiago in early 1980s post-independent Cape Verde when festivals were produced to encourage political re-Africanization. These ignited creation of many new *batuko* performance troupes. Similarly, *coladeira* and *kolasanjon* accrued popularity in the northern islands as the Mindelesan diva Cesaria Evora became famous in the United States and throughout Europe (Arenas 2011, 57, Brandellero 2009).

Over time, all of these traditional dances have undergone a shift from street to stage, echoing what many have written about ritual dances in Brazil and Cuba (Browning 1995, John

2012). Social dances like Cuban rumba and Argentinean tango (Daniels 2011, Savigliano 1995) and Hawaiian hula (Desmond 1999), among others, have followed similar courses for intertwining issues of class, tourism, and politics. For example, only after the appropriation of rumba outside of Cuba on exoticised international stages was the form validated for elite Cuban audiences to view on stage (Daniels 1995). Staged renditions of traditional Cape Verdean dances around independence were not instigated by tourism, but to promote a new independent identity. From this political angle, the Cape Verdean case can be compared to Suki John's discussion of *Técnica Cubana* in Cuban dance schools, as the Cuban government sponsored a department of modern dance to define and strengthen the "New Cuba" (John 2012, 44-47). "Seeing how passionate Cuban people were about their traditions, the government recognized the value of connecting these traditions with the state" (ibid. 44). The emergence of Cape Verdean folkloric groups, especially on Santiago during the 1980s, echoes the Cuban example, but Cape Verde's financial crisis and added complications of heavy migration prevented emerging performance groups to be maintained.

Dance groups on Santiago Island have performed within the structure of the music industry's festivals, talent contests, and other staged events in which dances have been presented from a crowded stage, leaving little room for choreographic creativity. "We take pride in our dances because we have dance and music in the blood," says Suzanna Tavares from Raiz di Polon (pers. comm. October 8, 2012) However, to date, no dance festivals exist.⁷³ Dance has not been promoted as a main event in Cape Verdean productions and is usually included within a longer list of other musical, theatrical, and martial arts performers. "We love to dance, but dance

⁷³ I predict Cape Verde will host a dance festival in the next few years. For example, in September of 2012 I was offering my grant-writing services to try and apply for an "ACP (African Caribbean Pacific) Cultures" grant, proposing to organize a dance festival under Raiz di Polon's organizational name. The process enabled me to understand some of the complexities involved with fundraising and finding support.

is not yet respected as its own art” says a dancer in the Tarrafal-based group, Fidjus di Bibinha Cabral, two hours from Praia. (Súka, pers. comm. July 10, 2012).

In a 2012 discussion session held at my home in Praia, art educators debated why dance was not respected in the community, and voice teacher and dance-enthusiast Lucia Cardoso summarized: “Here everything is based upon music. And our community is so small and stubborn and even though we take pride in being ‘open’ to new expression and all forms of art because we are Kriolo, the public is still very stubborn and they stick to the set ways that have evolved in the hierarchy of art.” As a result, membership in dance companies has always been difficult to maintain. “People go away. We try to stay together so that our girls have something to come back to” added Marisa Correia, a leader of the Delta Cultural batuko group. “But here in Cape Verde, there is always someone coming and going, so we go with what works” (pers. comm. July 9, 2008). But not all dance groups have been able to stay together like Delta Cultura, perhaps because they are not supported by foreign aid like her German-sponsored nonprofit. Many dance groups have disbanded over the last ten years [see Figure 26].

Figure 26. *Disbanded groups based upon hearsay.*

Name	Years	Style	Reason for disbanding
Mindelstars	1984-1980 [Mindelo]	“spectacle focused” traditional dance	Financial problems, dispersed members
Geração Cretcheu	1992 [Mindelo]	Traditional	Members moved, Financial hardship
Grupo Renato Cardoso	1994-1998 [Praia]	Traditional	Unknown. Hearsay.
Dinana Monteiro Trio (name’less group)	Off and on, [Mindelo.] 2004-2006.	Traditional with “adaptations”	No space to rehearse.
Zazinha (nameless group)	2003-2008, [Assomada]	Batuko and Funana	Children moved away, dispersed members

Perhaps more relevant than this vague list was how readily interviewees accepted that “most groups fade out and fizzle fast” (pers. comm. Isabella Almeida, August 12, 2010). Pessimistic acceptance that sustainability is simply not always possible is the norm in the cultural capitals of Praia and Mindelo because no long-term models planted firmly on Cape Verdean soil exist within the archipelago. These anxieties about remaining together create a stigma about the kinds of styles that might more easily draw an audience. Because so many people understand that sustainability is dependent upon financial support, some dance groups make it their priority to perform in music videos, repeating spatial formations that cater to single-shot videos through which exposure to a greater number of audience members is guaranteed. Music videos also provide dancers with a chance to be a part of the musical network through products easily exported digital to the Diaspora network, (Monteiro 2011). Mia da Marina, the choreographer and director of the performance group Marina Voz, is also a funana singer, and he uses his dance group to perform in his music videos because “people want to participate in what we know. We see no reason to change what we love and know.” (Mia da Marina, pers. comm. July 20, 2010). Understandings of skill are therefore often based upon the completion of movements themselves, for situations like music video contexts that are perceived to automatically guarantee an audience, rather than skill based upon the ability to create a new audience for their particular work. Many groups are more focused upon attaining an immediate audience rather than building one over an extended amount of time, which is likely part of the reason groups disband.

Other dancers, too, critique the ever-present spectacle-oriented and emotionless aspects of the developing dance community, paving the way for why Raiz di Polon’s intentions fill a needed gap. For example, award-winning choreographer and performer Antonio Tavares, an original member of Raiz di Polon, remembers how dancers in the 1980s were breaking ground

because “it was almost sacrilege to dance in 1985.” He found most choreographic strategies too “spectacle oriented,” believing that even though groups honored Cape Verdean traditions, they portrayed them in imperialist ways. He calls these “American style,” revealing anxieties about stultifying American pop culture and superficial fame.

[Most groups] had a spectacle-oriented structure – that is, everything was done in the American style, so as to inflame the public’s feelings. And there were various different sensibilities in the pieces we created. There were shows that included fire, mazurka, John Travolta-style dancing, you know, a mix of various different tendencies. But my idea was for us to concentrate on just one of those tendencies in each show. But at the time I didn’t have enough background to defend my project and stand my ground.⁷⁴

Tavares explains how feelings of inferiority and a lack of education prevented him from standing his ground, which is why he later left those groups to pursue theater arts and choreography in Lisbon, Portugal, where he has subsequently acquired local and global fame. Only in Portugal, where a dance community was already solid, could he feel like he could “stand his ground,” regarding the importance of focused meaningful ideas. In 2012, Tavares told me that his published critique in 2004 still stands with the majority of current Cape Verdean dance companies who resort to spectacle-oriented choreographies to please global interests (pers. comm. January 29, 2013).

We can better understand some of these spectacle-focused trends in Figure 27, which includes a survey of the types of choreographic concerns for Santiago groups. The chart helps to illustrate how the majority of groups are focused upon execution of movements rather than conveying meaning about the dances. All of these groups have had similar situations with regards to financial backing: they may have received compensation for the occasional performance, but all groups have received assistance only in that they have been provided with

⁷⁴ Interview with Tony Tavares. Published in *A Semana*, 2004.

some kind of adaptive space to rehearse such as a large room in an auditorium, church, movie theater, or free space. Instructors teach for free and group membership is based upon willingness to commit.

Figure 27. *Principle Dance Groups in Santiago, 2008-2013*

Group name	Location	Dance Genre	Choreographic concerns
Raiz di Polon	Praia, 20 years	Traditional, contemporary, modern Concert dance	-“inside” feelings, Adaption to tradition -unique Shapes and group structures/interactions. -relationship to traditional music -representations of human emotions
Kriole Dance Movement KDM	Praia, 1 year	Urban, hip-hop, contemporary	Execution of recognizable moves, use of hip-hop music (American or Kriolo) Promoting a sense of “cool” and conversing “with” pop culture.
Enigma	Praia 4 years	Dance, acrobatics, jazz	-execution of difficult movements [high kicks, turns] -exploring choreography with stilts and brave team shapes
Bibinha Cabral	Praia 7 years	Traditional	-execution of group performances -maintaining traditional dances
Fidjus di Bibinha Cabral [FBC]	Tarrafal 8 years	Traditional “contemporary	Traditional unison dances for festivals, Free-moving dramatic dances.
Fidjus d’Africa	Praia 5 years [possibly disbanded]	Traditional	Execution of strong traditional repertoires, evoking “Africanness” through costume and muscular power
Marina Voz	Praia 7 years	Traditional “popular”	Popular music accompaniment. Group unison polished togetherness
Mona Roda	Praia 3 years	Wheelchair traditional and contemporary	Making disabled dancers look remarkable. Execution of routines.

This table is inspired by Susan Foster's analytical methods in *Reading Dancing*, in which she lists the primary choreographic concerns of Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, and others, based upon her observations and conversations about their work. In Foster's case, the categories helped to exemplify how each choreographer succeeded in creating a lexicon that addressed these very different choreographic concerns. In the Santiago Island dance context, I have chosen these particular categories to focus upon how Raiz di Polon stands alone regarding choreographic intentions and long-term sustainability. The chart information was based upon my observations of dance groups in Santiago between 2008 and 2013, interviews with group leaders, and through archives of dance prior to 2008. From these understandings of choreographic concerns, only Raiz di Polon has been focused upon embodying emotional connections and using dance as a vehicle for discovering and conveying meaning about the dances. Based upon sustainability and choreographic intentions, Raiz di Polon stands out from "flash factors" and from other performance groups.

Polon dancers have different intentions than the majority of Santiago dance groups and their choreography reflects these differences. Figure 27 (p. 133) serves as a visual complement to Figure 26 (p. 125). With the exception of Raiz di Polon, all of the dance groups shown in Figure 27 employ recordings of popular traditional music, exemplify unison choreography for groups of between six and fifteen people, and always orient their performances to face forward from the stage. These groups hope to display their dances with precision, unison, and exuberance. Performers are not exploring larger metaphors of what dances might mean to their audiences.



Figure 28. *Photo Montage of Santiago Dance groups*. 1. Bibinha Cabral. 2. Fidjus di Bibinha Cabral. 3. Marina Vaz. 4. Mona Roda. 5 Raiz di Polon. 6. Raiz di Polon. Photos 1, 2, 5 taken by Author. Photos 3 from public music video. Photos 4 and 6 courtesy of Tó Gomez.

The first four images of Figure 28 show groups on Santiago Island who use a front-facing format through which men and women maintain organized lines throughout their dances. Mano Preto's choreography for RDP always differs from such standard formations, typically including different directions and both close and scattered groupings. Founding members of Raiz di Polon, Mano Preto, Bety Fernandes, and Kaka Oliveira have critiqued regarding other groups' styles

and lexicons as being “void of emotion and void of innovation.” “But that’s okay,” Mano Preto adds. “That’s what they want to do. And they excel at what they do. We [Raiz di Polon] try to say something. Say something about life as we dance it. We just have different intentions” (pers. comm. July 30, 2010).

While Mano Preto is diplomatic about his support for other dance performance groups because he is responsible for managing funding with the Ministry of culture as the dance representative, Preto is trying to urge groups to challenge themselves and their choreographic intentions. With few resources, a hierarchy of talent and artistic sophistication is beginning to develop under the surface. How to differentiate which groups are worthy of attention or resources can sometimes be a matter of more deeply explored intention or “good taste,” as Barbara Kirshenblatt Gimblett calls is. “Good taste speaks in the moral language of honest lines, truth to material, form following function” (1998, 265). The “form” of the identical dances of many Cape Verdean troupes does not follow the “function” of dances based upon vibrant celebration and emotional reactions to migration. Like Antonio Tavares, Mano Preto and Bety Fernandes saw that the majority of dance groups only had audience satisfaction and spectacle in mind, without attention to the “feeling” of the dance or ways in which an audience member might perceive meaning. They lacked a certain “truth to material” (ibid). In contrast, when Tavares, Preto, and Fernandes began to experiment with alternate ways of moving—weight sharing, contact improvisation, and experimenting with directional orientation—Preto and Fernandes began thinking of movement as a way to express the intense feelings so important to Cape Verdean island identity.

After dancing with Raiz di Polon during the initial years, Antonio Tavares pursued his own choreographic education by studying theater arts in Portugal where he developed his career

as a choreographer and musician representing Cape Verdean dance. Mano Preto stayed in Praia to work on creating a new movement lexicon that would be different from that of other groups.

Tavares' artistic career off the islands represents the path that Preto could have taken, but instead, he took on the difficult role of creating a concert-dance community in the islands.

Tavares explains:

The habit of the show does not exist. The school is a space devoid of artistic expression, and when there is no expression there isn't the sensibility to like something or not to... I can't say that the Cape Verdean public knows how to appreciate or interpret dance. Everything is limited to music festivals, which has repercussions on television and on the radio, and in this case you can talk about taste, about liking something. But on the level of dance, as we haven't done anything yet, we don't have the capacity to appreciate it.⁷⁵

Raiz di Polon represents the "anything" that Tavares believed was lacking in Cape Verde. While most people still have a difficult time articulating what they like or dislike about Cape Verdean dance performances, Raiz di Polon has established a brand marked by physicality, emotional intensity, and, in Tavares' words, "unique expression" deviating from other groups "devoid of artistic expression" (pers. comm. via email, January 29, 2013).

Conclusions

Understanding the context for dance performance in Cape Verde and from where Raiz di Polon draws their inspiration is fundamental to perceiving how the company is creating a *corporeal Kriolu*. Preto and dancers are filling a need, building upon established trends, and creating a new style. As we first saw, the company is inspired by the natural landscape and rural traditions. Next, we saw how cultural mimicry as a result of this post-colonial crossroads is embedded in the creative processes of cultivating style. Lastly, we considered how the dance

⁷⁵ Tony Tavares. Interview. In "Interview with António Tavares." *A Semana* online. June 5, 2004. Accessed April 1, 2013. http://www.asemana.publ.cv/spip.php?article370&var_recherche=Search&ak=1

trends on Santiago Island call for a challenge to the status quo of choreographic potential. Raiz di Polon is situated at the matrix of all of these three contextual issues.

As we will see moving forward, Mano Preto is trying to shift how dance is perceived and lived in Cape Verde. A parallel example can be made with American contact improvisation. In *Sharing the Dance*, Cynthia Novak explains how contact improvisation emerged out of a need for democratizing dance. In the late 1970s contact improvisation differed from its contemporary form, disco, by introducing the idea of dance “as a way of life” that anyone could enjoy. She also demonstrates how the form turned spectacle-based dances inwards, offering an introspective and less uniform approach rather than the precise approaches of ballet (Novack 1990, 109). Contemporary dance in Cape Verde similarly challenges the status quo and emotionalizes physical mimetic dancing. Like contact improvisation with its new ways of moving for American dancers of the 1970s, Raiz di Polon’s company has broken down unison-based “traditional” dances to introduce a rule-less theatrical space, infusing traditional dances with extremes of emotional and physical power. Furthermore, unlike dance groups that perform neatly organized, contained, unison traditional dances, Raiz di Polon welcomes all people to challenge themselves and raise the bar of dance by creating something risky and new. “Some people say,” explained one student in my dance class, “that Raiz di Polon, oh you guys do that crazy dance. And well, we take that as a compliment. Because crazy is style. Crazy is different. Crazy is saying something. Crazy is powerful” (Amilton Monteiro. pers. comm. August 11, 2012). A look at one of these “crazy different” dances will now follow in Chapter Three, with a closer look at the performance of Raiz di Polon’s celebrated piece, “Cidade Velha.”

CHAPTER THREE: RAIZ DI POLON ON STAGE IN CIDADE VELHA



Figure 29. *Making of “Cidade Velha.”* Raiz di Polon making “Cidade Velha” in the town of Cidade Velha. Photo courtesy of Raiz di Polon.

Como vi dançar no Zimbabué
Quero também contigo gingar
Uma dança nova
Mistura de Semba com Samba
De Mambo com Rumba
Tua mão na minha E a minha na tua
Balancé ye
Balanca ya
Maria José
Swing no pé
Senão chega p'ra lá

As I saw people dancing in Zimbabwe,
I also want to sway with you.
A new dance
Mixed with semba and samba
From mambo and rumba
Your hand in mine and mine in yours.
Swing yeah
Balance yeah
Maria Jose
Swing your feet
In order to get there

-“Balancê”⁷⁶ by Sara Tavares

⁷⁶ This song was popular in 2006 when the song debuted. The verb “Balancê” means a combination of dance, balance, and sway, and to keep up with the rhythm of something. The song describes the mixing of multiple world rhythms and movemnets. Tavares was made famous by this song.

As we have seen so far, perceived traditional values such as working with land and remembering history are foundations upon which Raiz di Polon has built their lexicon. In this chapter a particular performance called “Cidade Velha” will be examined closely and in detail to demonstrate some of the choreographic strategies at play that contribute to Cape Verde’s nation-building process. Among the many versatile interpretations that the performance encourages for its diverse audience, Raiz di Polon’s choreography succeeds in reimagining lost histories, uniting archipelagic divides and instilling emotional strength through tradition. These achievements are made possible through creative processes that include narrative framing, architectural shapes, and medley organizational principles. To give my readers a sense of the power behind Raiz di Polon performances such as strong detail, rhythm, sensations, and multiple actions taking place within Raiz di Polon’s work, the chapter begins with a close thick description of the first five minutes of “Cidade Velha.” The chapter then shifts to a general description, to give readers a sense of the performance as a whole. Next, I use examples from the described performance to show how “Cidade Velha” encounters and resolves tensions regarding Cape Verdean creolity in six different ways at the choreographic level.

First, untold histories are told through narrative frameworks. Next I explore the concept of Cape Verdean autonomy and migration, as portrayed in what I call, “in-transit” architectures. Thirdly, divisions and utopic unions are accounted for in medley and suite strategies. Lastly, traditional movements are infused with emotion and renewed intentions through what I term, hybrid visual objects, free-form resemblances, and amplified pathways. This close look at a number of creative strategies provides evidence for my central thesis: that Raiz di Polon has created a new corporeal Kriolu lexicon to address the Nation’s identity crisis. Renowned songwriter and collaborator of Raiz di Polon, Sara Tavares, states in her number one hit song

from 2006: “A new dance, mixed with semba and samba, with rumba and mambo . . . swing with me in order to get there.” Through the journey portrayed by Raiz di Polon’s work, swinging back and forth between observed movements, adopted forms, and various meanings, an understanding will be gained of their excitingly innovative mixed dance.

Close Description of First 5 Minutes:



Figure 30. *First Five Minutes*. Left: “Cidade Velha” opening performance. Praia Sept. 2012. Right: Rosy Timas in rehearsal.

“Cidade Velha” begins with the heavy bone-shaking moan of the buzío—a conch shell typically used as a trumpeting call in *tabanka* marching during the first month of June on Santiago Island. In this opening moment, the trumpet blasts are long and sustained and function as soundscape, imitating the long-awaited arrival of boats pulling into port. The lights are dim and the sound creates a haunting atmosphere as vibrations occur through the amplification system and ripple through the small performance courtyard of the outdoor space. The lights brighten slightly to reveal five dancers upstage. Every other person is inverted in a handstand with legs apart, each suspended ankle held by dancers who stand upright. Facial expressions are serious, as the performers glare past the audience. Bodies that form a line of X’s are rigid and strong and we can see their flexed muscles pronounced through simple dark slacks and unadorned collared shirts—costumes that appear to give little representation of any specific time period. [Left photo, Figure 30.] While their shapes are almost frozen, the dancers’ strength

makes them appear as if they could remain upside-down for hours. They begin by speaking Portuguese text adapted from a book of the Santiaguense poet, Nuno Tavares.⁷⁷ Speaking in unison, the dancers say, “And it was by the sign of the cross that began the tortuous trip. [Pause]. And we arrived.” The conch shell continues as artist Mario Lucio’s recorded voice enters the soundscape in Kriolu, with a four-part a cappella harmony.⁷⁸ Minimalist set design is composed of scattered black rubber tire inner-tubes of various sizes placed around the walls of the performance stage. A lone dancer, Rosy Timas, then walks slowly and arduously across the front of the stage with her torso bent diagonally forward, her arms overhead supporting the largest of all tires on her back. As she bears the tire it towers over her slender figure, doubling her height as she walks slowly. Mano Preto has said that this is his favorite moment of the performance.

Although the voyage from stage left to stage right takes but three minutes, the trajectory feels much longer, and as she arrives, another boom of united voices sounds forth, “E chegamos!” (And we have arrived!) The chorus’ declaration is even louder a second time. One by one the dancers begin to spin their arms in a circular motion, bracing their legs with static lunges as Timas, still carrying the immense tire tube, begins to speak and walk through the other dancers, whose arms rotate like propellers and accelerate faster and faster. She speaks in Portuguese to the space around her about the “purr of fears in a restless and foreboding sea” and proclaims that she is “not in the book of lineages... but a daughter of the margins.” After separating from the tire tube, she joins in with the propeller arms, first slowly and hesitantly and then faster and faster as she synchronizes her movements with the group. All bodies on stage make circular arm swings and strong lunges. Mario Lucio’s a cappella echoes are still pulsing in

⁷⁷ Santiaguense means from Santiago Island.

⁷⁸ Reminder: “Mario Lucio” is Minister of Culture Mario Lucio de Sousa’s artist name.

the hesitations of the dancers' text. He sings, "Alguem cu fomi é ca sábi é ca sabi é ca sabi" (Someone with hunger is not okay is not okay is not okay), Transitioning quickly, as if their frenetic momentum has shifted from their arms to their heads, the dancers shake their heads to create a frenzy of dreadlocks as they repeat over and over, "All death comes from within! All death comes from within!" [Right Figure 30.]

General description of rest of performance:

[See individual numbers in Figure 31 to follow along.]

Details from the first few minutes of the performance give a sense of how the aural, visual, and rhythmic signals ignite layers of information even within the first five minutes. Now, the performance unfolds from a more distant perspective, to later understand some of the strategies at play.⁷⁹

Continuing from the previous description, the dancers proceed through various episodes, as if each scene was a puzzle within which the dancers must resolve their situations. Some dancers appear to be shape-shifting into recognizable structures as others maneuver through these configurations. Next, Luis Da Rosa is then lifted to offer a textual declaration, saying:

By the sign of the cross we begin our tormented voyage. Still not the clots of fear that prompt the heart, but the voice of dense forests, refractions of watery heaven retain the saturated atmosphere. All death comes from within. But I sleep in the vaults with dry rock voices in history and its harlot echoes stuck in my throat."
(#2)

The dancers shift their spatial arrangement. Audience attention is directed to Da Rosa as the rest of the group shuffles in small steps around the stage using tabanka rhythms to rotate as a tight-knit circle. The proximity of the dancers is so tight that Tavares is lifted upwards, sandwiched in

⁷⁹ I use the present tense to lend a sense of the performance as it is transpiring.

the middle. (#3,#4). Towering above the group, she speaks about family, famine, hearts, and oceans of pain. A sequence of floor crossings is accompanied by parallel waving arms overhead (reminiscent of the arm-waves that painter Bento Oliveira demonstrated as “treelike” at the beginning of Chapter Two), as a transition to a batuko section. Timas is almost whirled by the wind of the arm sequence and as she catches her balance, she gradually performs a batuko solo (#5), thrashing involuntarily and frantically as if touched by outside forces. This feels like a peak moment in the performance because it is the only solo.

The music slowly transitions from the intense slapping sounds of a *tchabeta* (batuko drum) to a more guitar-based batuko rhythm with major chords, and the other dancers filter onto the stage, bouncing like the flurry of vertical lines of an audio meter or cardiologist’s heart monitor, up and down from stage left and stage right, either in half-time or double with the music. Wind sounds in the soundtrack signal a shift to a *funana* rhythm in the music. Tavares is thrown about (#6), and seems to be pulled apart by the other dancers. Timas follows Tavares as Tavares is tossed around, holding on to Tavares when possible. Funana later transitions into a recognizable *coladeira* dance (#7) which is typically danced in pairs. Here the artists alternate between dancing with one another and performing by themselves, as if they still had partners with arms embracing the air. The *coladeira* becomes festive and the dancers begin to laugh. Audience members smile. Dancers descend into madness as they curl onto the floor laughing and rolling. As laughter begins to ebb, their limbs begin to calm physically and soon feet are seen twitching in the dark silence. Music shifts to a reverb-filled *morna* song recorded by Timas, and the dancers transition to a leg-lift sequence which suggests bound slaves by the ways that their arms are held and crossed underneath the legs of the others. (See #9). The bodies that appear to be enslaved and transported then begin motions like ocean waves as the dancers roll over onto

their hands like a set of cascading dominos. This repeating overlapping set of shapes is called a “canon” in musical and classical ballet terms (Blom and Chaplin 1982, 111). Each becomes linked head-to-toe to others in a line of fetal positions until they undulate in a round, lifting their hips upwards in a wave until they are all standing. A final morna sequence ends the performance. (#8.) To dance morna, one person in a couple is inverted, with her limp body dragged across the floor. The dimming spotlight is on Timas as she is placed back into the tire from which she came (#10). The performance is 45 minutes long.



Figure 31. “*Cidade Velha*” *Visual Summary*. Café Palkus, Praia Santiago and Midelact Festival, Mindelo São Vicente. Image 3 and 5 courtesy of Diogo Bento, and Image 6 courtesy of Tó Gomez.

The City Cidade Velha

Mano Preto’s choice to create an evening-length work about the early inhabitants of the country’s first city, Cidade Velha, is a political maneuver that screams, “This is a patriotic performance!” The title alone ties the performance to history and nation-building. Cidade Velha is considered the birthplace of Cape Verde, especially for those living in the *badiu* region where

allegiance to Santiago as the “roots” and “indigenous island” are strongest. Cidade Velha, which means “Old City,” has recently been named a UNESCO World Heritage Center due to its status as one of the most important slave ports in the trans-Atlantic trade. Today, sustainable tourism organizations and public-planning officials are making efforts to enliven the city by hosting events such as academic conferences, government forums, social-networking events, and musical performances, encouraging Cape Verdeans on all of the islands to visit and honor the historic site.

Cidade Velha is located about 20 minutes outside of the capital city by bus, and the town consists of one main cobblestone street leading to the village square’s emblematic monument: a pillar to which enslaved people were tied and sold located just steps from the small port.



Figure 32. *Pillar dance*. Screen photograph from video-dance project, “Waiting,” with RDP students.

Nearby, narrow trails wind upwards into tropical forest to reveal houses, an old church from the colonial era, and a monastery, which is now a beautiful open space used for events. Mano Preto describes the place as possessing “endless beauty, because you can always feel the history.” Over time, he has portrayed themes that depict some of the achievements and sufferings of the

Nation's young history. "Cidade Velha" can be added to this list, and as Preto and producer Jeff Hessney declared in a press conference at the Mindelact festival, "this is the first piece that we are doing that is more about the movement and bodies, more minimalist, focusing on the bodies of the performers and content of the work."⁸⁰

Mano Preto has always been inspired by Cidade Velha and considers this work an opportunity to collaborate with his friend and colleague José Luís Tavares, who wrote the book *City of the Oldest Name* (2009). Tavares uses poetry and prose to portray the isolation that he imagines people felt when the first generation of Cape Verdean were separated from the rest of the island, suffering from famine and experiencing a love-and-hate relationship with the ocean. Mano Preto took the company to Cidade Velha several times for site-specific research, to spend time in the landmark places of the city and to create movement based upon the isolation, solitude, and desperation that one can still experience there. In Figure 29, company members are seen exploring movements near the famous monastery, which is situated on a winding road surrounded by mango trees and a few houses. Much like my own methodology of embodied participant observation, through which I have sought to understand Raiz di Polon, members of Raiz di Polon used their experiences within present-day Cidade Velha to build a relationship at the movement level. A site-specific creative process parallels what dance ethnologist Deidre Skylar calls "experience-near perception" and "kinesthetic empathy," as the dancers began to understand the place through their own bodies (1994, 16). Skylar explains that bodylore collective experiences of the sort RDP members brought to "Cidade Velha," are fundamental to the collected work put on stage. (More about the creative process will be discussed in Chapter Four).

⁸⁰ Jeff Hessney and Mano Preto. Press Speech. Mindelact Festival September 9, 2012.

The Need for History

One of the first ways in which the “Cidade Velha” performance helps to construct a cohesive national imaginary is by rewriting history. Raiz di Polon’s performance is not the first to overtly address historical and political themes. As Cristina McMahon has written of Cape Verdean theater, “The past has urgent contemporary relevance, since representations of it become sites of political struggle wherein diverse communities cultivate collective identities and stake claims to socio-economic resources” (2008, 76). Raiz di Polon is just such a “key collective character,” and the rehearsal spaces and stages hosting its performances are “sites of political struggle.” The “urgent contemporary relevance” in this case is directly related to the post-colonial politics of written history itself. One might make the assumption that, within the forty years that Cape Verde has been independent, an historic town and landmark like Cidade Velha would be well known among people of the entire archipelago. Many Cape Verdeans do know where the village is located and that it is famous, “but Cape Verdeans hardly know *about* Cidade Velha and why it is so important!” Amilcar Monteiro asserted from his vantage point as leader of the Sustainable Tourism Group of Cape Verde. “In school, for example, children don’t even learn about their own Cape Verdean history. Still just the history of Portuguese discoveries. The residue from our colonial past is still a big problem” (pers. comm. February 4, 2013). He further explained that his goals for sustainable tourism projects are sometimes less focused upon foreign tourists, and instead seek to promote tourism among Cape Verdeans who may not know about their island’s own history.

In this regard, Minister Mario Lucio de Sousa spoke with young hip-hop artists and rappers at a special “Ministry of Youth” forum to provide at-risk youth with an opportunity to vent their frustrations or ask questions about their musical goals. He told participants that he was

there as an artist and not only as the Minister of Culture. The forum was held in the city of Cidade Velha, and participants packed into two government busses that shuttled them from the National Assembly to the old city. After walking up to the famous cobble stone monastery, participants waited for almost 45 minutes for Minister de Sousa to arrive. As they did, the mayor of Cidade Velha gave a presentation about the city. No one presented the speaker's name or title, and his speech seemed irrelevant to many, given how the event had been described to the participants. These aspiring artists had come to talk about rap and recording studio access; they wanted to discuss their opposition to elite misunderstandings of the “thug” phenomenon happening in Praia. The “thug situation” is what sociologist and activist Redy Lima calls the latest social movement since the *Claridade* movement. “Thugs” (pronounced “tugs”) is a word that comes from the United States to describe “gangsta” culture in Cape Verde. Self-described thugs identify with rap, hip hop, and urban culture, and controversy in Praia has developed because they are stereotyped as violent, much like the imported movies, videogames, and music videos that inspired the phenomenon to develop in Cape Verde. According to activist João José Tavares Monteiro from the outreach organization Projeto Simenti, artists identifying as thugs insist that toughness—but not violence—is at the heart of their lifestyle (pers. comm. August 14, 2013).

In the forum, participants were greeted with a 30-minute lecture about Cidade Velha's development statistics and public planning progress. In response, they stared blankly, looking around the space from their seats as if it were a tedious school lecture. This presentation may have been inserted at the late minute to fill the time as the Minister's arrival was delayed, in which case the Mayor should be applauded for his improvised speech. However, the audience was given no warning or transition that would hint as to why they might find the presentation

useful or applicable. When the Minister finally arrived, they became engaged.



Figure 33. *Monastery Forum*. Above: youth forum participants listening to a speech about Cidade Velha tourism activities. Bottom: Minister (right) joins the Mayor of Cidade Velha (left).

The youth forum serves as an example of the post-colonial residue that has affected Cape Verdean development. Amílcar Monteiro has often explained that these “overly done speeches that go on forever before the *real* speech starts are very Portuguese.” He believes that conservative Cape Verdeans always utilize dramatic speeches and “imitate how they think they

should be conducting formal events.”⁸¹ While the pedantic manner in which the speech was presented has been critiqued without accounting for better ways to reach this particular audience, the forum did illustrate the growing anxieties among Santiaguense people that new generations of Cape Verdeans are disconnected from the nation’s rich history. Organizers are in need of new approaches to disseminating information about Cape Verdean landmarks and history and have resorted to speeches about Cidade Velha whenever possible.

Other people have echoed similar frustrations regarding the colonial residue of public policies and formalities. When leaders of some NGOs were asked what they would change if they had the power, decolonizing education was an urgent priority. “We need more autonomy in our education system. I have an eight-year-old daughter and I can see her books,” said Ivan Santos, a pre-school education professional and director of the government’s youth organizations within the Center Municipal Office of Praia (CMP). He continued:

The history books are still, even today in contemporary times, they are still so Eurocentric. Kids learn in Portuguese about the history of Portugal, then they go outside and play and talk about their own neighborhoods in Kriolu. As a result, they are brought up with this inferiority complex. (pers. comm. March 12, 2012).

Mr. Santos’ commentaries about education were echoed by Amilcar Monteiro’s commentaries, who said:

Slavery is a taboo topic. We know about it. We know it happened. We know we are strong because of it. But that’s all. We don’t talk about it, or what happened to people within the islands as all of this was happening. We are patriotic on the surface, but hardly anyone goes beyond that with their cultural pride. We are not rootless because slavery took away our African roots. We are rootless because we are denying ourselves a chance to write our own history within the islands. And people who still praise the Portuguese propel this taboo by sticking to the set ways that they imposed upon us (pers. comm. February 10, 2013).

⁸¹ Casual conversation with Amilcar Monteiro. February 10, 2013. For more information about cultural mimicry, see Homi Bhaba’s chapter on “Of Mimicry and Man” in *The Location of Culture*, 1994.

In bureaucratic situations when rules are enforced without exception for a particular circumstance, a Cape Verdean would say, “That is so very Portuguese of them to do that,” alluding to an out-of-touch rigid structure and compulsively organized ritual that was imposed without accounting for Cape Verde’s differences. “We live in a tropical environment, so why do lawyers wear full suits and ties? Ridiculous!” Monteiro added Artists like Mano Preto therefore take on the role of remembering, feeling, and embodying history through various strategies during a crucial time when educational, linguistic, and systematic approaches from the colonial period remain problematic.

Narrative Framework Reclaims History

One of the first ways that the performance piece “Cidade Velha” re-writes Cape Verdean history is through a narrative framework that makes reference to historic events without completely performing them. No particular choreographic strategy is used more noticeably than others in such work. Instead, the performance is methodologically “creolized” with its fusion of various approaches. “Cidade Velha” has narrative moments and a vague narrative structure. However, unlike emblematic narrative dances like Alvin Ailey’s “Revelations” (DeFranz 2004) or the National Ballet of Senegal’s “Epic Tales” (Castaldi 2006), no particular story is told. Within the mix of strategies and vocabularies in “Cidade Velha,” a skeletal narrative framework serves to anchor the performance for the audience, enabling viewers to participate in moments of clarity as the rest of the performance encompasses a myriad of layered symbols.

In *Reading Dancing*, Susan Foster shows that every dance has some kind of structure that tells us how to “read” it, and among other literary-based choreographic strategies, she shows how narratives serve as frames to help an audience understand how to follow the performance (1986,

70). Narrative devices include indications that the essence of a story will be told wherein dancers represent people of a specific time and place, and a plot is developed to give meaning to the audience. Unlike traditional dancers performing unison movements and who accomplish their task by performing themselves (the dancers and their dance), narrative parameters signal to the audience that they can perceive performers not *only* as dancers on a stage, but as parts of the world that they create.⁸² Such a strategy echoes Francesca Castaldi's assertions about a Malian dance company that uses the historical "epic tale" about the discovery of the Americas to differentiate artistic work from folkloric dances sometimes performed for tourists to gain income (2006, 194). Castaldi reminds us that for centuries, *griot* bards in West Africa have conveyed tales about community traditions, myths, gossip, or other oral histories (Castaldi 2006, 194; Tang 2007, 13; Welsche Asante 1996, 131). Griot traditions are likely to have influenced the prevalent storytelling qualities of songs that developed in badiu culture, such as the poetic and often comical verbalizations found in *finaçon*—a type of spoken-word singing that sometimes accompanies *batuko* drumming.⁸³ One can infer that Mano Preto's tendency to include a storytelling quality in his performance stems from his respect for these oral history traditions.

From the program notes, we know that the story and setting of "Cidade Velha" will be about the town "as the choreographer imagines it."⁸⁴ The slowly revealing stage lights and sustained boat calls that open Rosy Timas' initial trajectory across the stage establish a setting that alludes to a specific place and time. That is, the dancer is perceived to be arriving

⁸² My understanding of "narrative" is informed by a book unrelated to performance, entitled *Memory, Identity, Community: The Idea of Narrative in the Human Sciences*, in which Hinchman discusses the post-modern "death" of personal narratives and narrative as a greater methodological rhetorical device. See Introduction on "Definitions of Narrative" (2001).

⁸³ To date, no scholarly works have discussed the connection between griots and *finaçon* singers in great depth, but Susan Hurley Glow's ethnographic research includes several opinions about the history of *finaçon* on Santiago Island. For more general information on griots across multiple African societies, see Hale, 1998.

⁸⁴ Program notes and publicity paragraph. 2012.

somewhere as the boat signal take place in real-time. This scene depicts what memory scholar Edward Casey describes as an “attuned space. . . with which one feels sympathetic at some very basic level” (1987, 192). Casey articulates how an attuned space makes it difficult *not* to feel at home, but I would state that in this case, we get a sense that definitions of “home” will be questioned throughout the performance. We know that we are entering a narrative world, as opposed to observing abstract movement shapes, even if we don’t know the details of that place. The spoken text, “And we have arrived,” reinforces this real-time setting and serves as the first of many of what literary scholar and sociologist Erving Goffman calls “frame spaces” that guide a reader to understanding what kind of world will unfold (1981, 215).

Imitation is a key strategy in the construction of historical narrative because recognizable actions can help an audience unaccustomed to attending contemporary dance to interpret with ease. Rosy Timas carries a large tire tube across the stage arduously, representing a journey from point A to point B. As this action takes place during the boat siren soundscape, her actions can be associated with boats. Boats may not be an obvious association at first, but as the performance continues and the dancers sit inside the large tire as if it were a floating device, the boat metaphor later solidifies. As she crosses the stage, Timas can be interpreted as *imitating* a person carrying a boat, moving slowly as a boat, or creating an image that parallels carrying a boat up from shore. Such laborious actions are what Susan Foster might also describe as *reflective representations* that “tangentially allude to other events in the world” in abstract form (1986, 70). The tire tubes scattered on the stage “tangentially” allude to travel, because 1) they, too, are used as locomotion and 2) the simple circle shape abstractly represents a boat. For Mano Preto, tire tubes symbolize childhood because many Cape Verdean children use discarded ones as toys on land and in the water (pers. comm. 2012). The tire tube itself is not heavy like it would be if it

included the full tire. But by displaying physical exhaustion and allowing the audience to sense the heaviness of the tube through her slow and sinking bent-over steps, the tube appears like an abstraction of something heavier. Rosy Timas “*replicates*” (ibid) associations with mariners, travelers, or subjugated people as she embarks on the “long and tortuous journey” she recounts in her narrative.

In her opening scene, Timas embodies a cohesive set of metaphoric tools that suggest that this performance is structured around a journey. Mano Preto’s interpretation of the tire tubes as children’s toys further emphasizes the idea of nostalgia, or looking back. During one rehearsal, Preto asked dancers to “spend some time playing in the tires” as they bounced and romped over and in the tubes, which further revealed his connection of tires to childhood curiosity. Timas’ separation from the rest of the dancers as her actions unfold establishes her as a kind of protagonist yet a purely narrative analysis is insufficient. At times the dancers shift from team-oriented shape formations, which create tableau-like pyramids and structures, to group moments comprised of individual differences where we catch glimpses of each dancer’s character. However, key symbolic moments and transitions utilizing imitation establish a vague story that consists of travel, togetherness, struggle, victory, and loss, all of which contribute to Raiz di Polon’s contribution to rewritten history—some of what Akintola Hubbard calls “dark spaces,” which he believes are neglected from Cape Verdean history (Hubbard 2011, 55).

For example, Rosy Timas’ journey changes after she loses control of the large tire tube. Suddenly, winds take over the stage, represented by wind-like sound clips and embodied as propellers, leading Timas to perform a batuko solo. This is the only “solo” within the performance where the rest of the cast disappears to the far sides of the stage, which makes her stand out in the narrative structure. Timas’ upper torso thrashes backwards in a frenzy as her hips

and feet dance traditional batuko steps. Timas is soon led to the tire that she once held above her and screams, arms outstretched as she is partially restrained and comforted by Suzanna Tavares. A visible return to the opening object serves as a symbol for the audience: what began as a strong journey has now shifted to despair and pain as the scene depicts Rosy Timas reaching up, surrounded by the rest of the dancers who witness her. Enclosing dancers bounce on the tire, towering over her and eventually consuming her. She has been engulfed by the boat and the rocking of waves (surrounding people), and her outstretched hands gesture for help as she begs. As Timas returns to the boat in which she began, the audience is given a clue that this was a significant moment along the journey.



Figure 34. *Rosy Timas Immersed*. “Cidade Velha.” Café Palkus. September 2012.

Two more key moments serve as marking points to help us follow Timas’ narrative within “Cidade Velha.” The next imitative moment mimics quotidian life and refers to the notion of aquatic spirituality (Taylor 2007) as if to say, “and here in the story, Timas is still suffering, but she has returned to her element.” Suddenly, the water that tormented her and bounced her

into a flurry of torment becomes the relief that soothes her body: the dancers are sitting on the floor bathing, drinking, and relaxing in water—literally, with water placed in large bowls as bathing props on stage, and imitatively, through gestures and lounging body positions that depict touching, drinking, and soaking in water. As they *reflect* the quality of water (Foster 1987), dancers move their bodies fluidly reacting to the water and gently tossing it, as if they were enjoying something they have not seen in a long time. Interpretations of this particular scene are numerous: they have been relieved from drought or have found mental relief in the torment of hunger and isolation. In either case, this bathing scene is emblematic of a community who honors water, especially when *colá* rhythms begin to form through the slapping of puddles. Music (both recorded and taking place through stomping on the real puddle), water, and dance are suddenly working together in the performance, signifying a moment of utopia. But the scene shifts quickly as the water is slapped in different rhythms, and the dancers participate in a call-and-response pattern, reflecting the calling and responding that workers might utilize in the fields. As they call out to one another and repeat onomatopoeic words, they begin to travel together, as if collectively working towards something or travelling towards some physical task.

This water scene is key in the narrative journey because suddenly a known situation—droughts and the coming of rain—stops being the focus of the story. As Amilcar Monteiro explained, “Many people know that there were droughts and that there is a history, but they don’t know how people worked to survive and made something of themselves” (pers. comm. 2013). This call-and-response team-playing game, working WITH the water that arrived, changes the woeful story of sadness and drought to one that depicts creativity and collaboration that was so under-acknowledged in Eurocentric accounts of Cape Verdean history. In other words, the gap in history, where little text has accounted for how people lived following slavery and drought, is

rewritten temporarily on the stage through this water scene.

As the story continues, the dancers proceed from partying and celebrating, made visible and audible through laughter and improvisational coladeira couple dancing, to solemn moments of despair. Morna, the emblematic songs of *sodadi*, ends the performance as Rosy Timas is carried overhead as a limp body, and she is placed back inside the large tire as the lights go dim. Timas and the rest of the dancers have proceeded through a series of struggles and celebrations, passing through variations of all of the island dances; they have symbolically interacted with water and drought. In this moment she returns, almost diving head-first back into the boat figure. We don't know if she died in this narrative. But she has returned physically to the place where she began. The text "All death comes from within," which was spoken in the beginning of the performance, suggests that Timas' character has drowned in the very water that brought her to Cidade Velha, reminiscent of the famous phrase, "The ocean is our life, but also our death."



Figure 35. *Closing*. Closing frame of "Cidade Velha." Rosy Timas is placed back into the tire.

Picking out this narrative skeleton as a journey through suffering, crossing points, and celebrations immediately connects to Cape Verde's history of migrations, drought, famine, and an arduous relationship to water. For most Cape Verdeans, the idea of migration and a journey is not a new story; migration is honored and re-told countless times in songs and oral histories, and all families have at least one relative who has studied, worked, or lived abroad. The fact that this is a known story echoes what Diana Taylor argues is the haunting force of national narratives, which create meaning by "resuscitating and reactivating" their importance. Taylor explains, "We've seen it all before. The framework allows for occlusions; by positioning our perspective, it promotes certain views while helping to disappear others" (Taylor 1991, 28). In other words, the structure tells the audience that they have seen this journey before and therefore know how it will end; what happens along the way becomes the focus, and the place and plot of the journey become irrelevant. Taylor calls this partial-blinding technique "percepticide," which also applies to other historical references within the performance. Timas is not a specific character or mythological heroine. Instead, she represents the batuko dancer, whose stories of hardship are applicable to all women. She can also be interpreted to represent all travelers male and female, who appear to be washed away by the waters that take loved ones away to other lands.

Timas' narrative does not represent a specific Cape Verdean myth, and yet her ability to invoke a character who seems to shape-shift, weave in and out of nature, and reveal a greater emotional turmoil has "mythical qualities" (Levi-Strauss 1978, 7). Myth and storytelling scholar Donald Cosentino explains that one effective way of storytelling is to include a theme that is relatively neutral, so as to create a set of images that are highly transposable to other mediums, such as song. Similarly, Timas' character and transposable journey remains versatile in its neutrality so that the "valueless image can become an intellectual tool" and promote some of the

individual symbols that unfold during the performance (Cosentino 1982, 45). In some ways, we could consider the “neutral story” to be an example of Susan Foster’s idea of *resemblance* (1986, 67). Foster explains that *resemblance*, as opposed to *imitation* of a clear set of actions or events, serves as a useful mode of representation because it gives focus to the emotions and impact of the event, rather than inviting an audience member to evaluate how well the performers render the event imitatively. As an example of a cross between imitative and resembled modes of representation, the vagueness of the story encourages the audience to pay attention to the history of emotional strength at the same time as they recognize the historic event.

Information about the meaning of a vague or nonlinear story can still be attained, even with discrepancies and differences in interpretation. Connecting how audiences interpret meanings of parts and phrases helps to illustrate crucial information behind the nonlinear story. For example, David Shorter, in his book *We Will Dance our Truth* (2009), uses several strategies to analyze discrepancies and story fragments in his interpretations of Yoeme myths in Mexico. In his analyses of variations of a particular tree myth, Shorter collects a number of different interpretations, each of which refutes some of the minor details of other versions of the story. As he noted their differences, he found importance in the shadows of these details. For example, the fact that the tree spoke as a character in all of the variations was most significant because it showed how nature was a powerful way for the Yoeme people to make sense of a source of emotional chaos, which for them was their relationships to ancestors (2009, 115). Using Shorter’s methods of interpretation as a model, I look past the blurry narrative plot and emphasize common reactions in audience interpretations. When audience members were asked about the meaning of the performance, different people explained that they perceived “a mother,” “a daughter,” or more simply, “a character,” and that this person was “always on a

journey and experiencing all shades of emotions,” as one audience member put it.⁸⁵ Whether or not she represents a mother, daughter, or—as Rosy herself interprets it—“a cloud passing through life,” audience members are consistent in understanding the performance as a journey, and they come to terms with in-transit identity as they connect with voyage. Therefore, even though audience members interpreted the plot and characters in different ways, their reactions help to portray how profound aspects of travel and transience are for Cape Verdean people.

Emphasizing a vague heroine serves as a kind of “refabulation”—a concept explored in Allen F. Roberts’ studies of graffiti art in Dakar. “Refabulation refers to the choosing of new myths and allusions to make a place more suited to the needs of those seeing to such transformation” (Roberts 2007, 66). In his examples of graffiti, Roberts illustrates how the layered image of religious icons to create one graffiti image produced a new image altogether and a new way of thinking about the religious icon. As this layered image appeared all over the city, the religious icon became refabulated. Similarly, instead of focusing upon one regional icon like Cesaria Evora, or one traditional costume or spectacle, Timas’ character instead *refabulates* Praia by emphasizing the common story among all the islands in the Cape Verdean archipelago. The Cape Verdean person’s story of sodadi is not new, but the ways in which it is told, like the layering methods Roberts described, are. Cape Verdean singer-songwriter Sara Tavares has become known for her ability to remake traditional rhythms in a jazz-influenced contemporary style. She commented, “Raiz di Polon has an uncanny ability to invoke characters and parables, in ways that make you dream backwards and forwards simultaneously. And that is unique. As a songwriter I am inspired” (Sara Tavares, pers. comm. June 19, 2013).

For children and other Cape Verdeans who might NOT know about the nation’s struggle

⁸⁵ Anonymous audience member. Post-performance feedback. September 15, 2013.

with migration, this journey-based narrative serves as a vague history lesson by revealing several moments of rising to power, celebrating victory, and valuing sacred water. If we think beyond the notion of the narrative as literal plot and instead think about the plot itself as a compounded metaphor, the journey narrative becomes more complicated. The program description gives no indication that the performance is about migration or traveling at all, even though performers confirmed these ideas through interviews. Jeff Hessney and Mano Preto explained that officially, the performance is about the isolation and suffering taking place in the minds of Cidade Velha residents. Because few records exist from this time period, Mano Preto worked with José Luís Tavares' poetic musings in his book *The City of the Oldest Name* to collectively imagine how people may have felt at the time. From this perspective one can imagine that the journeys evoked through imitation and narrative represent actions and physical encounters. However, one can also interpret them to symbolize a journey of the mind by seeing the plot as a dreamlike sequence taking place in the minds of Cidade Velha residents as they experience madness, *desires* to travel, and the accumulating need to escape the isolation they endure. From this interpretation, the narrative frame becomes a choreographic *representation* method. For audience members who may be more inclined to interpret art or see a deeper meaning in it, the vagueness with which the plot was created serves for more open-ended philosophical interpretations, like the journey through the mind.

Lastly, the way in which Timas begins and finishes near or with the tire tube provides a circular return. One wonders if she has died, or if a day has passed, or what this narrative structure signifies. The performance includes Portuguese, Kriolu from badiu culture, Kriolu from sampadjudu culture, dances from all of the islands, and no specific reference to any one island. Rosy Timas goes back into her tire from where she came. The lack of specific island references

and overstated inclusion of multiple island variants welcome all Cape Verdeans to connect to “Cidade Velha,” as if to say, “This is our history, not just Santiago’s history.” The openness of this narrative structure parallels the open-minded philosophy of Mario Lucio that I described in the introduction: “Kriolidade is about an open mental state.” If we were to only consider narrative as a choreographic strategy to stage nationalism, this approach echoes what Cape Verdean scholar Gabriel Fernandez critiques about Cape Verdean approaches to nation-building. In the book *In Search of the Nation*, Fernandez says that Cape Verdeans are politically weak in their stance, claiming to be “full-fledged Portuguese citizens” while simultaneously embracing the multi-ethnic creolity of the islands, a stance which he believes is too neutral to advance forward in their fight for true independence.⁸⁶ Similarly, the narrative structure is neutral and inclusive, and only present for those who may see it as narrative because of the specific interactions between Rosy Timas and the tire. One could therefore critique Mano Preto for unstructured choreographic choices.

However, Fernandez also calls for the “deconstruction of cultural symbols,” which includes the elimination of rigid Portuguese frameworks. His criticism parallels many interviewees’ frustrations about rigid Portuguese teaching curricula (like those mentioned by Ivan Santos at the beginning of this chapter) or political processes, which simply do not apply to Cape Verdean culture. In this sense, the meandering and semi-narrative backbone almost defies any obligatory overstated framework at all, embodying Gabriel Fernandez’ call to political action: Cape Verde must “overcome the framework of domination. By altering the balance of

⁸⁶ Fernandez is addressing tensions between those he describes as “Claridades,” or people aligned with ideals associated with the *Claridade* movement (who were also in favor of remaining attached to Portuguese citizenship during the pre-Independence period), and people he describes as “naturalists,” who are more in favor of creating a Cape Verdean-specific sense of identity.

forces within the nation we have to follow a strategy of integration and not confrontation ... a strategic resource to defeat colonialism” (Fernandez 2006, 248). Therefore, while Mano Preto’s choreographic openness could be critiqued for a lack of strategy, his decision to only partially include a narrative with a nonspecific character could be seen as a “strategic resource to defeat colonialism.” By refusing to adhere to a rigid framework, his choreography symbolizes rebellion against the “framework of domination.”

The use of national narratives resembles some of the ways in which Castaldi discusses the National Ballet of Senegal in *Choreographies of African Identities* (2006). She shows how the European term “ballet”—which implies a European choreographic structure and norm—was used as a label only in order to maintain its ties to a European audience, but that the choreography itself defied ballet structure and included only traditional dance movements, cleansing the company at least partially of its colonial ties (ibid. 2006, 9). Insight into this tension between narrative structure and Eurocentric reading structures stems from my observations of Portuguese audience members who did not enjoy the performance. Maria Ramos a Portuguese dancer said:

I didn’t enjoy the performance. I didn’t know how to watch. Was it a story? Was Rosy a character? They were frenetic and out of control, but were they supposed to be that way? I don’t know what was intended and what was not and if that was a story or if it was just dancing or if it was just about the chaos feeling. (Maria Ramos, pers. comm. 2012).⁸⁷

Ramos’ bias towards well-organized narrative-driven concerts left her critiquing “Cidade Velha” and uncertain how to interpret the work from her European-based perspective. Her reaction contrasted dramatically with audience members without concert-dance experience, who responded, “I loved it! I felt something. I connected with many parts of it and I don’t know why”

⁸⁷ Pseudonym.

(Anonymous audience member, pers. comm. 2012). Therefore, perhaps, Ramos' perspective represented the European norm in some ways, and this loose, circular narrative served to set a new Cape Verdean norm, one that can include all islands and all levels of dance-viewing experience by defying rigid structure.

A final example of narrative relates to what dance scholar Diana Taylor calls percepticide: stepping back to understand what happens in the performance, the dancer-characters experience sets of events together (Taylor 1991, 28). They struggle, celebrate, and witness, and as they shift to different scenarios, no clear distinguishing characters represent the colonizer vs. colonized. All of the dancers represent enslaved people during particular moments, such as when they scream, "All death comes from within," with their hands tied behind their backs. At times all of the dancers are clearly linked together like family, or water, or socializing couples, or boats. At times the presence of a colonizer is evoked, but as the character shape-shift and character shift, the colonizer does not seem to exist. Unless the colonizers are represented by invisible outside forces, as suggested by the thrashing and contortion of Timas' batuko solo, the colonial figure is conveniently washed away through this percepticide. When the dancers say, "All death comes from within," they are taking charge of their own destiny and rewriting history in Cape Verdean terms, without the colonizer, and on Cape Verdean soil. The journey is not about the discovery of Cidade Velha by the Portuguese, which Ivan Santos and Amilcar Monteiro lament is often the focus in Eurocentric representations of history, and is instead about the journey of Cape Verdeans' minds and bodies within the archipelago. Narrative—a term commonly used in language, linguistics, and storytelling—is one of many different effective components of the Raiz di Polon Kriolu lexicon.

In-Transit Architecture as Emblems of Autonomy

Narrative is one of many strategies involved in the construction of Raiz di Polon choreography. The emotions that dancers like Rosy Timas bring to the audience stem not only from the worlds they create through narrative, but also from the shapes and symbols that they emit through their bodies as dancers. As Susan Foster writes, dancers create “kinesthetic empathy,” a concept relating to how physiology is directly connected to perception. While she simultaneously argues that scientific evidence is historically constituted, she cites neurological data to show that movements can produce a physical resonance or internal sense of perception in the observer (Foster 1995, 2011). Similarly, dance scholar Jose Gil calls the body a “metaphenomenon” and paradoxical “*Möbius* body” because the body serves as a “transformer of space and time, both emitter of signs and trans-semiotic” (2006, 28). Allen F Roberts relates Gil’s ideas of the “*Möbius* body” to discuss how meanings of Tabwa dances are conveyed to participants and audiences because the body can “blur distinctions between person and place” (Roberts 2013, 84). These embodied symbolic processes are at play in Raiz di Polon’s work.

One choreographic strategy that has become part of Mano Preto’s trademark style and nation-building lexicon includes the construction of what I call “in-transit” symbols through weight sharing, team-oriented lifting, momentum, and locomotion. The way in which these shapes become active architectures differ from the stacking techniques used by other dance groups in Cape Verde and perhaps even from those used by post-modern performance artists in the United States. For example, Preto admires the American dance company Pilobolus, which is known for slow-moving shapes that imitate the structures of other objects (a lightbulb, for example). Local dance group Enigma, too, incorporates form-focused executions as members lift

and stack one another in order to convey recognizable shapes and difficult balances. While Preto appreciates and is aware of Enigma and Pilobolus' work, he sees his own work much differently. Preto envisions his work as more focused upon why dancers create shapes (pers. comm. 2012).

In-transit architectures intertwine narrative with embodied symbol, where bodies simultaneously serve as symbols on display and characters arriving to a particular situation. The shapes and architectures created in "Cidade Velha" come as an after-effect of momentum, and the dancers' arrival at those shapes becomes the site of meaning. Traveling *across* the stage is the impetus for the construction of meaningful architectural symbols, just as off stage, migration has produced cultural signifiers and emblems over centuries. Through spatial arrangements and lifting one another to pass *through* shapes, the dancers create emblematic towers, piled-up abstract figures, and crosses for audience members to notice consciously. As the dancers are focused on fluidity, the culmination of shape may go unnoticed as the audience fixates upon the physical feat of making the shapes themselves. Because spatial formation and team-oriented lifting are so prevalent in Preto's choreography, their repetition invites the audience to notice symbolic shapes, which, in this particular performance, reemphasize historical significance in the viewer's awareness.

The first of many "historic shapes" embodied through these in-transit architectures takes place during the beginning of the performance, after Rosy Timas' opening tire tube journey. Suzanna Tavares, who often comforts Timas and serves as a type of sister narrator to her, is one of three dancers who speaks while dancing. As Tavares and the other dancers walk in circles, lunging and grabbing on to each other's arms, the group shifts to a kind of chugging group formation. The music at this point is a contemporary tabanka rhythm, which is traditionally characterized by a fast-paced drum rhythm for marching parades. As the dancers shuffle in a

group, Tavares loudly vocalizes text to the back of the audience.

Tavares: These are not family references that are brought in the tiny bag of belongings, but a name, purified; a testimony of crossings. I will not hand over this pain of centuries, destiny woven in wound and blood. The ecstasy of soft metaphors.

Group: GOD!

Tavares: NO. It was not the voice of the gods that hear me in the dust of December, the voice that prompts me comes from the butchers, the carnivores and pulpits where the tall dignitaries of god grant an authorization to the captains of our heinous trades.

[See #3 and then #4 within Figure 31]

As the dancers chug, moving as a group across the stage, they simultaneously rotate. While their feet shuffle in time with a tabanka rhythm, their bodies are rigid and unmoving, and they stare ahead into the audience, as if their bodies were following orders and their feet were leading the pack. While Tavares says these words, declaring that they will “not hand over their destiny,” their arms lurch skyward in ninety degree angles, perfectly in time with the music’s melody. They switch sides, forming more right angles over and over, like an American might imagine a cheerleader spelling the words L and I with arm shapes. As the group works together to be in perfect unison, they get closer and closer to one another, so close that Tavares is slowly lifted upward off the ground, and she towers over everyone else, creating a T-like structure for a moment as the dancers continue to rotate. Only through group togetherness could they lift Tavares upwards, without using their hands. [See #3 Figure 31.]



Figure 36. *In-transit Architectures within “Cidade Velha.”* Photo 5, Courtesy of Tó Gomez.

These towering “in-transit” corporeal architectures, which require extreme group coordination, occur not only when a soloist is speaking and dancing (as in this example) but during many moments of the performance. The two most common structures in “Cidade Velha”

are a pyramid or tower (#2, #6)—where one person is lifted overhead—and a cross (#1, #4, #5), which may be a variation of the tower. These structures are intimidating because they are combined with very provocative text relating to God, and death, and life, and because the dancers form these structures out of significant momentum. Momentum functions almost counter-intuitively because force gives towering structures a kind of fragility: the more force, the greater the risk of collapse. Suzanna Tavares, for example, is at one point thrown into a tower position after her limbs are almost ripped apart (see # 5). Just as one shape is created, the dancers leave no time to indulge in the completion of the shape as they swiftly move on to another shape, another rhythm, or another weight-bearing set of vocabularies.

In rehearsals, Preto asked the dancers to repeat these lifts over and over. He was adamant that dancers retract from a lift immediately after achieving a peak moment, so as to ensure that the journey and not the static “pose” was in focus. The brevity with which these shapes are held in motion echoes some of the cultural characteristics that I described in Chapter One, such as the ephemeral quality of relationships, emotions, and events in Cape Verde. Just as power is gained metaphorically, which is represented by the peak moment where Tavares is highest off the floor, she is swiftly pulled downwards and begins a new set of momentous challenges. Unlike “flash factor” stacking trends in other groups, these in-transit movement structures focus upon the way in which one arrives over a prolonged period, just like the company’s motto of long-term sustainability; the Raiz di Polon school encourages long-term participation and community building as fundamental to technical skill, which parallels how the arrival process within these particular movements are emphasized more than the completion of the movement.

Thinking about these symbols as architecture is relevant, considering the long symbolic history of architecture within the islands. When I interviewed Amilcar Monteiro about his

thoughts about the ocean as part of my performance documentary project, *Maramar*, he revealed a little known fact that literally and metaphorically relates sodadi, the ocean, architecture, and new construction strategies:

A long time ago, when houses were built in Portuguese style, and when Cape Verdeans built homes with haphazard cement styles, both displayed a negative relationship to the ocean. They faced away from the ocean and towards Plateau [the area of the capital that sits high above other areas and hosts most of the government buildings, churches, and offices]. But in the last century, houses are starting to face the ocean, reflecting the positive relationship that we have to the ocean. (Amilcar Monteiro, pers. comm. February 10, 2013).

I am also reminded of an American Peace Corps colleague, whose three-year project was to teach Cape Verdeans about more sustainable environmentally friendly ways to construct houses, without using sand. These two stories show marked progress regarding Cape Verdean autonomy when it comes to architecture and constructing homes, because the styles are becoming less colonial, orientations are ocean-facing, and builders are using longer-term techniques. The saturation of Raiz di Polon's dances with well-constructed and shape-shifting architectural symbols could perhaps be representative of the history of Cape Verdean homes—it is both an in-transit, ever-changing metaphor that represents Cape Verdeans who live in multiple countries and an emblem of water-facing, higher-quality, *Cape Verdean-made* homes.

Many shapes appear in “Cidade Velha.” The cross motif reoccurs several times (See # 1, #4, #5, #6), which contributes to Cape Verdean history by embodying the physical crossroads as dynamic moments for innovation, power, and marking points of history. As José Luís Tavares’ poetry speaks through Suzanna Tavares’ declaration, we hear how material things brought forth mean nothing, but it is the “testimony of crossings” that gives them their strength. Every time the dancers come into contact with one another on stage, signifying a meeting of minds and a cultural encounter, they create a balanced shape or help someone rise to power. One person is

often lifted higher than the others, signifying that this person has power, but as soon as one person leaves the foundation, the structure disassembles, and the dancers shift to something else. These physical representations of power and change serve as emblems for Cape Verdean democracy, political change, and the swift creativity emblematic of Cape Verdean crossroads culture. Sometimes the very act of supporting one another can cause conflict, as represented by the tugging and pulling of Tavares' limbs (Figure 36, #5 page 169).

Recognizing the power of the lower classes is fundamental for supporters of hero Amilcar Cabral's politics, who call themselves "*cabralistas*." Cabralista ideology is represented in the many towering X shapes, where control is physically in the hands and bodies of the quiet supporting dancers. In these moments, the dance is about support systems and team togetherness. One interviewee, Maky Rodriguez, is a self-identified cabralista. He often spoke about his philosophy of wearing dreadlocks, which represent "the power of my African history," and he often spoke about his efforts to mobilize the masses against political tyranny. When the topic of Raiz di Polon came up, Rodriguez remembered the following:

When I saw Raiz di Polon perform that performance ["Cidade Velha"] in Brazil, you know, I kept thinking how strong they were. Constantly picking each other up. There were single dancers doing things alone but it was how they worked together. That's important to me and what I believe in and I really love their work." (Maky Rodriguez, pers. comm, February 20, 2013).

While Rodriguez did not explicitly articulate that he felt the performance portrayed cabralista ideas, his word choice "what I believe in" implies his political connection, which shows how Raiz di Polon's work addresses a versatile and sometimes liberal audience.

While my analysis of Raiz di Polon and "Cidade Velha" does not include an extensive focus upon religion—the subject rarely arose naturally in my discussions with dancers and audience members—an analysis of these towering shapes would not be complete without a

discussion of the work's Catholic undertones. In particular, Jose Tavares' spoken text is saturated with religious references. Phrases such as "Please to God" and "the goddesses did not hear me!" combined with motifs of crosses, could be interpreted as symbols of Christ. The moment that Suzanna Tavares is launched into the air as the other dancers hold her by her outstretched limbs occurs soon after the dancers have had their arms and legs bound behind their backs, and it evokes self-sacrifice and bondage to a point of overdetermination [#5 Figure 36]. The incorporation of cross symbols is an effective tool for two different reasons. First, 80 percent of the Cape Verdean population is Roman Catholic—a direct result of the Catholic Portuguese colonies that were established during its formative years (Lobban 2002, 98). Religious audience members, especially upper-class patrons who might contribute financially to benefit ticket costs, might appreciate the performance due to its many cross-like symbols. Indirectly referring to Catholicism could, on the one hand, stamp the performance with religious authenticity.

Second, many traditional Cape Verdean performance idioms—like Carnival and tabanka—critique religion while simultaneously including it, and the use of cross emblems could also be a critique of religion. The juxtaposition between religious symbols and references to known Cape Verdean signifiers like slavery, water, or particular folkdance steps emphasizes a historic tension that few people recognize about Cape Verdean history. Compared to other post-colonial Portuguese nations, Cape Verdeans are said to have had a better experience with regards to the impact of the slave trade, because the Cape Verdean colony was built physically around established churches rather than government headquarters (Hubbard 2011, 70; Lobban 1995, 200, 215). However, the Catholic Church banned performances such as batuko, funana, and others because they were considered lewd and too rebellious (Hurley-Glowa 1997, 158-162). While religion may have been considered to be the "saving grace" in Cape Verde's

comparatively better outcome regarding slavery, it did not play an unambiguously positive role, and this common misunderstanding is finally becoming exposed.

Zé Monteiro, organizer of Cape Verdean–American exchange programs and cultural organizer for the largest Cape Verdean community in the United States (Brockton), explained that his father was one of the key people who helped to reignite Santiago traditions:

Even today, people don't realize how so many of our prized performance traditions were illegal for centuries under the Portuguese colony. They don't realize how hard we have worked to keep them alive, and how they are BUILT upon resistance. We have to work hard to remind people. (Ze Monteiro, pers. comm, 2012).

Similarly lamenting lost histories and forgotten connections between religion, prohibition, and performance, Amilcar Monteiro explained, “People don't even know who the *Rebelados* are. And they are one of the most incredible forms of power and resistance in our history!” The *Rebelados*, who formed in the 1960s, were people who actively resisted the teachings of the Church and wanted to perform their own baptisms and wedding ceremonies. The *Rebelados* today have continued to reject the Church and have formed a kind of anti-establishment commune where they prefer not to deal with money and focus upon working the land.⁸⁸ While the *Rebelados* are not directly connected to the history of *Cidade Velha* during the early centuries of inhabitation (the time period implied in the program notes for “*Cidade Velha*”), the establishment of the Church continues to be one of the strongest markers of Portuguese influence today. By physically morphing in and out of shapes representing religion (crosses) and Cape Verdean symbols, the performance of “*Cidade Velha*” simultaneously honors and questions the historic role of the Church in relation to cultural creativity. The performance is not about

⁸⁸ For more information about the *Rebelados* see Jose Monteiro 1974 and Lobban, Richard. “*Rebelados*” in *The Historical Dictionary of Cape Verde* 2007.

religion or the church, per se, but actively incorporating religious symbols into an obviously nationalistic performance automatically includes the performance among other religiously connected idioms, on Santiago Island (tabanka) and other islands (carnival).

As religious motifs and architectural shapes emerge out of the momentum of other vocabularies, they represent the language-based communicative strategy that Susan Foster calls *reflection* and *resemblance*. Because Raiz di Polon is constructing a new language, thinking of strategies in language and literary terms is helpful. The cross shapes are “reflective” in that they represent a part of the relationship expressed (i.e. the relationship of people encountering one another) and they are “resemblances” in that they take on the form of some aspect of the relationship’s meaning, such as the interconnected stacking of people to represent the relationship of power (Foster 1986, 67). The possible readings of these crossroads symbols are endless, but their reappearance throughout the performance 1) creates a snapshot of Cape Verde as a nation that thrives off of its multiple icons; 2) stresses the early history of Cape Verde and Cidade Velha as stories not merely of victimization, but of negotiations of power and collected strength; and 3) emphasizes the birth of the Cape Verdean man as part of a crossroads community, rather than a displaced Africa or adapted Europe.

Medley and Suite: Uniting Archipelagic Creolity

Mano Preto’s choreographic strategies, such as narrative structures and iconographic group formations, reinstate forgotten histories and contribute to the nation’s utopian Kriolu image. All of these methods are simultaneously tied to their foundation in traditional movement practices. That is, the “almost-narrative” and the “in-transit architectures” function because of their place within the performance’s traditional dance references. Mano Preto and the founding

members of Raiz di Polon were introduced to post-modern and contemporary dance theater by a Portuguese choreographer, and, like Lisbon-based dancer Antonio Tavares, Preto attended dance workshops at the French, Brazilian, and Portuguese cultural centers. But the foundation of contemporary dance in Cape Verde is still Cape Verdean traditional dance. Contemporary dance is therefore a second-generation Kriolu, or a “creole of creole,” so-to-speak. Furthermore, even though the work is creolized, merging Cape Verdean traditions with stage-dance approaches, we can still recognize individual island idioms within an overall “creolized” performance. We have to view the complete work as a multilayered orchestration of adapted tradition idioms. Island divides are both celebrated by a medley approach AND merged together through a narrative framework. Combining multiple traditions within a given performance speaks to what Akintola Hubbard critiques about most forms of nation building in creole societies. He argues that “the great promise and miracle of creolization,” which he says should be met with suspicion, falsely “provides a means of obliterating internal social divisions and forging a platform for nationalism by corralling a heterogeneous population under one single cultural signifier” (2011, 48). While I agree that the staging of this “miracle” is somewhat misleading in constructing an impossible utopia, the medley approach enables distinct island identities to be both celebrated and sewn together, so that divides are not merely “obliterated,” as Hubbard says (*ibid*). This dedication to traditional foundations as well as crafting adaptations is perhaps the strongest reason why the government will build upon Raiz di Polon to become the National Ballet of Cape Verde.

To learn more about how government officials have responded to Raiz di Polon methods and mosaic-style works, I tried to schedule an interview or conversation with musician Mario Lucio, the current Minister of Culture in Cape Verde. Every time I would talk to him casually at an event, he would often end the conversation by telling me that we could continue with a

scheduled meeting if I wished. After finally getting through to the cultural ministry's secretary, I was scheduled for an interview. However, she failed to tell me that this "interview" was not a private conversation, but rather a brief moment to ask one or two questions in front of the entire Ministry of Culture. I was scheduled along with three other people who had problems that they felt required intervention, such as an inability to get a visa to the United States for a musical performance. I was led into a small room to await my turn in front of the ministry. The woman before me returned from her allotted one question sobbing, which indicated that he could not help her with her performance-related visa problems. Looking down at my list of twenty questions, ranging from general dance questions to governmental plans for dance in the future, I quickly crossed everything out and was forced to improvise. When it was my turn to enter the room, I asked Mario Lucio de Sousa directly what the creation of a National Ballet through Raiz di Polon would mean to him and to the nation.

Minister de Sousa responded, "I will respond as a politician, because that is who I am here today."⁸⁹ Contemporary dance in Cape Verde *is* Kriolu. It transforms [dance] just as jazz has done to music. And because our mission is to complete a set of plans to validate art and how art, including dance, can include so many cultures, this project is very important to us." Minister de Sousa's comparison of contemporary dance to jazz music reveals two important themes: first, his response shows how music serves as the nation's point of successful reference, and contemporary dance is very much a part of the musical performance sphere. Second, he emphasized the words "transforms," "includes," and "has done," which reflect his understanding

⁸⁹ Mario Lucio de Sousa implies with this statement that he might respond differently as a musician, because he has for years been a long-time musical collaborator and composer for Raiz di Polon. Unfortunately, his duties in the government have prevented him from performing live with the company, as was intended in the performance of "Cidade Velha." Instead, the company used several tracks from his latest musical recording, "Kriol," as part of their sound score.

of contemporary dance as inscribed with active inclusion and transformation, and not merely as a performance genre or technique. Contemporary dance is therefore *about* crossroads, for both Minister of Culture de Sousa and Mano Preto. The part of contemporary dance that is important to the Nation is its connecting abilities, like a string on a kite. The traditional dances of all of the islands serve as anchors to fly that kite in the winds of the world. This kite has a certain sense of freedom in the winds, much like the improvisational flows imagined in jazz music, but it will always be tied to traditional music and traditional dances.

If “Cidade Velha” choreography is creolized and individual traditions function together as a collective unit, how can we isolate individual dances to appreciate them without unraveling the work’s innovation? Anthony Shay’s research on government-sponsored dance productions provides some insight. In his book, *Choreographic Politics* (2002), Shay discusses the tendency for choreographers to essentialize, citing Benedict Anderson’s ideas of imagined communities. He says:

The performances of state-sponsored dance ensembles putatively represent ‘all of the people’ of the nation-state ...they have been designed to demonstrate the essential equality of its entire rainbow of citizens. . . . So powerful is the concept of the unity of the nation that it can sometimes be reduced and essentialized to a single individual as the embodiment and representation of the collective nation. Thus essentialism, epitomized by the presentations of these dance companies, becomes a strategy of representation of the State and the People (2002, 31).

Shay goes on to discuss some of the methods that national folk companies undertake across the globe to approach this “rainbow epitomization” and theorizes what he calls a “suite method,” in which a performance will depict one geographic location to include multiple traditions and regional identities. The second method he analyzes is the representation of a particular popular event such as a wedding or celebration to include the tendencies of multiple ethnic groups (ibid. 44). Even though Raiz di Polon does not quite fit the stereotype of “folkloric dance

companies”—Shay’s chosen examples of Russian, Mexican, and Turkish companies almost exclusively perform for tourists—Raiz di Polon, too, incorporates a “suite” method as part of the narrative journey within the performance. Eight distinct traditions emerge within a story that is titled after one particular place. Instead of portraying one popular event, such as a wedding, “Cidade Velha” is itself an event of history—or as performer Kaka Oliveira interprets it, “the event of the birth of the Cape Verdean person,” and traditions emerge from that one event (pers. comm. August 1, 2012).

The idea of a suite method parallels a concept that Janet O’Shea mentions in her chapter on “The Production of Locality,” which details the history of bharata natyam dance. O’Shea writes, “Choreographic devices and accompanying discursive descriptions align place, performance, and belonging . . . celebrations of specific cities and temples of particular areas, idioms that cultivated sentiments of belonging by associating the dance form with particular communities and environments” (2007, 141). The depiction of particular places within one given work could help to represent multiple places within a given work. However, rather than signifying particular characters or places in “Cidade Velha,” island-specific dance idioms become the signifiers that cultivate a sense of hybrid local belonging. Individual dances represent island-nations within the archipelago, rather than particular cities or landmarks.

Mano Preto does not like to think of Raiz di Polon as a folkloric dance company. But he does like to promote that their work is steeped and founded in traditional dances. “Cidade Velha” incorporates a “suite” of island-specific traditions, as Shay might call it, and the way that the dances are organized within the performance achieves some of the same inclusive techniques that “state folk dance companies” have utilized. Preto often includes set lists of the various dances within a given work, to organize its various traditional parts. (See Figure 37.)

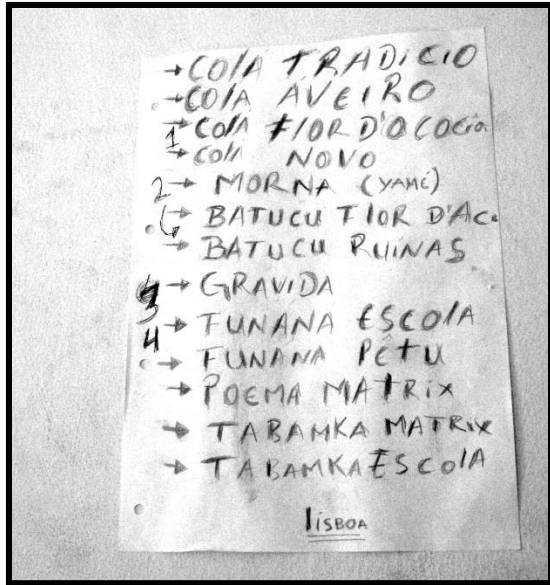


Figure 37. *Medley of Dances*. Rehearsal room guide taped to the wall. 2008.

Collecting individual dances together could also be called “sequencing” or “medley,” which are more commonly used in musical terms. Anthony Seeger has called ethnomusicologists’ attentions to sequence in musical compositions; he writes,

I stress the importance of sequencing in music today because I do not think enough attention has been given to it in the ethnomusicological literature. . . . It has not received nearly as much consideration as the analysis of individual ‘pieces’ in both theoretical discussions of musical traditions and in publications of musical transcriptions (2011, 3).

Seeger moves on to show how sequencing can greatly influence the individual impact of particular pieces within a series, as well as their collective impact. I echo this concern within studies of Cape Verdean performance. Most attention has been given to individual folkloric styles of dance or music as individual components in the Cape Verdean identity mosaic. The Raiz di Polon case provides a way of thinking about how these individual styles connect together artistically and thematically because the styles are so unusually included in one long performance. In the case of dance, folkloric dance historian Anthony Shay points out in his

examples that a survey method may be present, but does not elaborate upon how or why those particular idioms were chosen within the company (2002,31). While narrative in a dance performance may signify what happens to characters during the events, which is also a type of sequencing method, the ways in which tabanka, funana, batuko, coladiera, and morna are performed in a particular sequence are just as important. Both the inclusion of all of these traditions and the order of the traditions play a significant role in “Cidade Velha.”

The concept of including many styles or traditions in one performance seems like an obvious approach to representing the “identity rainbow,” as Shay terms it (2002, 31). For example, musical albums, performance set-lists, and the calendar of concerts for a performance series all take into account how the sequence of cultures, melodies, and performance styles speak as a unit. However, the concept becomes less simple when considering that organizing which songs and traditions are included can be a complicated political statement. Another example of Cape Verdean sequencing can be examined within the many music festivals, such as the Baia das Gatas music festival on São Vicente Island, which I attended in 2008 and 2010. The festival takes place yearly, scheduled around the lunar calendar when the moon’s light is brightest in late July, to honor festivities that took place when the city had no electricity. I asked Humberto Lelis, who was the City Councilman of Culture, Education and Sports in 2010 and produced the festival, how he selects artists. He replied as follows:

Traditional music makes up the core of our festivals. Within our groups, we try to have at least two groups from badiu culture, and some groups from here [São Vicente]. We have to have coladeira, morna, and at least a funana or batuko group. And we always always have a Brazilian group. And an American reggae group. And most often the visiting groups perform last. To summarize, we try to represent everyone! (Humberto Lelis, Pers. comm.)

Lelis’ response was swift, with little pause, and well-rehearsed. “So why wasn’t there a batuko group this year? Last year I saw a batuko group towards the beginning of the three-day festival,”

I asked him. Lelis paused, taken back by my question. “Well, this year we have a funana group,” he said defensively. “Funana is from Santiago like batuko.” He then leaned in, as if to say something he didn’t really want other people to hear. “Here in Soncente [São Vicente], we don’t [pauses] well, we don’t *appreciate* batuko as much as they do in Santiago.” Lelis’ selection process for the festival is applicable to the “Cidade Velha” analysis because it shows how Cape Verdeans know that they are supposed to try and represent all of the islands’ cultures. Even so, tensions are still present, and to point out these tensions directly is considered taboo and perhaps even rude. Mano Preto, as the dance representative on the Ministry of Culture, is unofficially obliged to represent all of the islands, and his deep awareness of including all of these traditions can be observed in their presence within “Cidade Velha.”

Speaking about his experiences with the performance group Mindelstars (active in 1998), Lisbon-based dancer Tony Tavares recalled how the incorporation of many styles within one performance felt too spectacle-based. He said:

And there were various different sensibilities in the pieces we created. There were shows that included fogo dances, mazurka, even American John Travolta–style dancing, you know, a mix of various different tendencies. But my idea was for us to concentrate on just one of those tendencies in each show... and concern ourselves more with researching and working on our culture.⁹⁰

Does the sequencing of “Cidade Velha” give us information about the meaning of the performance, or is the inclusion of multiple parts “spectacle,” as Tony Tavares critiqued ten years ago?

I assert that sequencing in “Cidade Velha” remedies the spectacle critique that Tavares gave years ago regarding other dance groups. Its sequence helps to emphasize the historical theme of resilience by accentuating the back and forth between intensity (physical or rhythmic)

⁹⁰ Interview. 2004. *A Semana* Online. Accessed online June 2013.

coupled with release (physical and rhythmic levity.) Looking at sing-along songs at music camps, Anthony Seeger points out that just the tone, lyrics, and “feel” of each song can affect the way an audience member actively interprets the performance, or in his case, the way audience members feel invited to participate and sing. Audiences need time to breathe, to laugh, and to have a break from laughing, or to feel encouraged to laugh after a sad song (2011, 5). Both rhythm—the pacing of the vocabulary—and the meaning of the vocabulary—how they move—play a role in the effect of sequencing in “Cidade Velha.” Working with the visual summary in Figure 31, the traditions appear in the following order: tabanka, batuko, colá, funana, coladeira, mazurka, and morna. If we consider their island origins as either badiu or sambpadjudu, the performance structure would read: B, B, S, B, S, S, S/B, which shows that the forms within the performance somewhat alternate. Like the ocean’s up and down waves, or the wind’s leeward and windward flows, energy levels and feeling negotiate between these regional rhythms. We are slammed with seriousness as the dancers experience the driving rhythmic pulses, chugs, and movements of tabanka and batuko which starts us at the “top” of an oscillation. Then as a relief from these badiu rhythms, the dancers find physical catharsis through the colá water sequence, using leaps and call-and-response to lengthen their limbs and release the tensions built up through the quick, condensed, short steps of tabanka and batuko (a lower intensity point).

Oscillating once again, the colá and funana segments are rather high in energy in the way that they incorporate use of the full body through lifting, stretching external limbs, and stomping feet into the ground (high point). Coladeira, which is light and bouncy with the center of gravity often upward, serves as another relief moment, especially when the dancers begin to mime laughter and celebration (low point). Finally, the performance ends with the trademark style that Cesaria Evora made famous for the archipelago: morna. “The ocean of intensity,” a phrase used

within the text of the performance, finally becomes the calm glassy mirror in which to reflect light. As the audience experiences these oscillations with the performance, they are not invited to dance or sing, as in Seeger's examples of sing-a-longs. But just like Seeger's example, where audience participation produces a diverse set of voices that reflect the meaning of the song, these audience members are invited to participate in the meaning-making of contemporary dance. That is, the fact that the performance is seamlessly orchestrated between these forms invites audience members to wonder which tradition will come next and find their own connections between forms. And in a community where contemporary dance is just beginning to form, encouraging the interpretation of choreography helps to propel the possibility of meaning-driven work that is far from its "flash factor" predecessors.

A second example regarding medley strategy is more abstract. These traditional parts are linked together within their compilation by the theme of sodadi. That is, contemporary theatrical adaptations that render these forms so physically sentimental help to dissolve the lines separating them as individual parts. What appears fragmentized becomes connected, ironically completing the metaphor of empty sodadi with fullness of form. The significance of this flow is revolutionary. This islands' dances are merely vocabularies that with equal emotional weight convey the same total history, just as the dances are imagined to be in the real world. The official dance of Cape Verde is not batuko or funana or morna, depending on which island you visit, but rather "Cape Verdean contemporary dance," which includes all traditions.

Adaptations and Emotional Infusion: Metaphors, Hybrid objects, and Amplifying pathways

Many African dance companies perform what they believe are traditional or “tribal” dances on stage, and then throw in a big strong *arabesque* or an impressive leap, and they call the whole thing contemporary dance. No, that’s not what we are about. Movement and strength needs a feeling. A sentimental origin or rather, the movements should come from feeling. (Jeff Hessney, pers. comm. June 9, 2012).

Jeff Hessney critiques other companies, who rely on athleticism and “impressive” physical acts to render choreography contemporary. He believes that many companies who base their work in traditional choreographies often succumb to a strategy that merely adds Western movements as athletic spectacle. His critique seems ironic, especially because many audience members have commented upon Raiz di Polon’s physical power, athleticism, and strength. However, Hessney maintains that physical strength in Raiz di Polon’s work is always linked specifically to “feeling” and sentimental awareness, and that any creolized choreographic adaptations have emotional importance. This subsection outlines why emotional integrity is so important to capture in Cape Verdean culture, and how Raiz di Polon incorporates emotion and athleticism simultaneously. Metaphors, hybrid objects, and amplified pathways are some of the methods used.

The dueling relationship between emotion and athleticism is not only a double helix in Mano Preto’s choreographic choices, but evident in daily human connection. For example, I hosted a weekly debate at my apartment in Praia. On one occasion, most of the guests who had arrived to discuss politics and Cape Verdean history had finally left, but some of the women stayed behind to catch up on gossip. After we started discussing each other’s romantic lives, one of the girls said, “I think there are only two words to describe Cape Verdean men. Macho is the first word!” Everyone laughed. “They think they can have seven girlfriends and we, the ladies, can’t have seven boyfriends. They have to be the strong one, and the one with many girlfriends.”

The girls all gave a sigh as they agreed. “So what is the second word?” I asked. “Emotional!” she laughed, without hesitation. “If you accuse them of being emotionless or heartless, that’s like saying that they aren’t Cape Verdean! We Caboverdianas like to think of ourselves as emotional romantics... And man can those *machistas*⁹¹ be romantic!”⁹²

Through the context of silly banter, these women demonstrated how emotions and physical strength, as implied through discussions of masculinity, were not separate. This integration between masculine emotion and strength is parallel to Marta Savigliano’s analysis of the “whiny ruffian” as men made a public display of their emotional whining through physical dances in Argentinian tango (Savigliano 1995b, 96.) their power both in confessions of emotion and physical strength. Anthony Seeger reminds us in his essay “Dance and Music” that in many cultures music and dance are not separated linguistically, and that the two forms are implied in the same term because they are one (2012, 694). Just as dance and music are paired in Cape Verde, the words “power” and “emotion” function in a similar way. Strength comes not only from athleticism and force, but also by way of emotional integrity. While the women were discussing the imbalance of machismo, another topic that is peripheral to the focus of this dissertation, their note about gender enabled me to step away from my own American-centered understandings of corporeal signifiers to realize that being emotional did not exclude power and physical strength.

This duality of emotion and strength is reflected in Mano Preto’s influences. When asked if he had a favorite choreographer, Mano Preto replied, “Even when I was just starting to dance, I somehow always knew about Alvin Ailey. He has influenced my work. His work was always

⁹¹ *Machista* is a word for “macho person.”

⁹² Fieldnotes. Discussion group. Anonymous participants. April 7, 2012.

powerful while graceful. Muscular. Forceful” (pers. comm. 2013). Alvin Ailey was especially influential in the dance communities of other creole islands like Jamaica (Sorgel 2007).⁹³ Given that Ailey’s work is known for historical adaption and emblematic depictions of the black dancing body (DeFranz 2006), his influence upon Preto’s work is logical. Ailey’s peak fame occurred during the mid-1990s, when Raiz di Polon formed (Bremser 2011, 123-126). Mano Preto also explained that his interests in utilizing texts and storytelling were profoundly influenced by Bill T. Jones, especially after attending his classes at the Bates Dance festival in the late 1990s. “But my all-time favorite choreographer is Pina Bausch,” he explained. Pina Basuch has famously been described as the queen of “extreme expressionist/physical-theater” (Rowell 2000, 188). Preto elaborated, “I was always interested in her words, ‘I am not interested in how you move, but what moves you.’” Mano’s main choreographic influences therefore stem from American and European choreographers whose organizing principles were often based upon displays of strength and human emotion.

Emotional force has always fueled each of these traditions in the contexts where they originated. Batuko, for example, originally served as a rebellious dance to retaliate against slave owners, cheating husbands, and lost loved ones. Tabanka emerged as a week-long anti-colonial performance that mocked Portuguese colonial officials, where emotion took on the form of endurance and parody. Coladeira and Morna were couple-dances that emerged out of intensely

⁹³ For example, Stefanie Thomas, dancer in the National Dance Theater Company of Jamaica, explained that Ailey’s techniques and ideas are the foundation of contemporary dance in Jamaica, because his work greatly influenced the two or three pioneers of dance during the 1980s to mid-1990s (Stephanie Thomas, pers. comm. 2012). Mano Preto began his group in 1992, and Ailey’s influence could also have affected Cape Verde, especially because Cape Verdeans consider themselves sister nations with Jamaica and other Caribbean islands. For more information about Jamaican contemporary dance history, see Sorgel, Sabine. 2007. *Dancing Postcolonialism. The National Dance Theater Company of Jamaica.*

lyric driven music with topics like *kretcheu*,⁹⁴ love, and *sodadi*. Today, emotion related to human relationships in these couple dances is portrayed through face-to-face closeness and physical reunions between two people. However, taken out of the context of social gatherings and placed onto the stage, emotional fuel is altered, shifted, and in many cases lost—a distinction that Jamaican dance-writer Antoinette Stines says differentiates “daaance” from “daunce” in Jamaica. “Daaance,” she writes, “includes emotion and spirit... a historical consciousness demonstrated on the body” while “daunce” is more simply a set of movements strung together void of emotion, spirit, and meaning (Stines 2005, 35). Mano Preto’s choreographic adaptations aim to recreate and recombine these “daaances,” while representing himself as both a traditional and contemporary dance artist. To create a “daaance,” Preto primarily draws from the concept of *sodadi*, including portrayals of sadness, devastation, anger, and joy, all of which are inscribed within the meaning of *sodadi*. Four choreographic strategies express these various situations within “Cidade Velha.” These strategies include the use of what I call 1) hybrid visual objects, 2) free-form resemblances, 3) amplified pathways, and 4) the incorporation of text.

Hybrid Visual Objects

The coladeira steps are “easy going,” as my dance instructor friend from Mindelo tells me. “Bouncy. Step together step together.” The hips linger slightly after the soft strokes of the high pitched *cavaquinho* instrument and the feet stepping together follow the lingering hips. The movements are initiated by the waist, then movement transitions to the hips and follows by the meeting of feet. The dance resembles forró in Brazil. The man holds the woman’s back, and she holds his shoulder, their free hands are joined high in the air. [See Left, Figure 38].⁹⁵

⁹⁴ *Kretcheu* cannot be translated into English. The word means “loved one” and “dear” and “special place” simultaneously. I was a guest on a televised game show during which each contestant was asked to describe the word and what the word means to them. People called in from other islands to contribute their responses. Each person had a different response, and the game show host at the end of the show, said, “well, in summary, *kretcheu* is *kretcheu*. A word we love and we cannot explain why.” Prato de Amor. August 2012.

⁹⁵ Fieldnotes, June 2010. Dancing with friend and collaborator Dinana Marquez in Mindelo, Sao Vicente.

As one eight-year-old student in the Raiz di Polon school tells me, “There is joy in this dance, as if little shooting stars were coming out of your eyes! It is a happy dance,” she says (Pers. comm 2012). When the coladeira music seeps into the sound score of “Cidade Velha,” the dancers begin to move their feet in a coladeira pattern. They dance with one another, performing coladeira as “traditionally” as one might expect. But then they begin to break off from this structure by dancing alone, with their arms maintaining their position as if someone were dancing with them. They dance in circles with their invisible partners, and then with one another again; no one is dancing together in unison and yet everyone is dancing together. And then suddenly their torsos drop forward with hands outstretched backwards, and their hands shake in a frenzy as the bottom halves of their bodies continue to dance coladeira with the music. They are now in unison. As their hands flit back and forth, energy is “shooting” out of their hands, just like the shooting stars that the dance student had described to me. Preto’s intentions may not have been to impersonate shooting stars through the fingers, but the frenzy of movement could suggest this happiness.

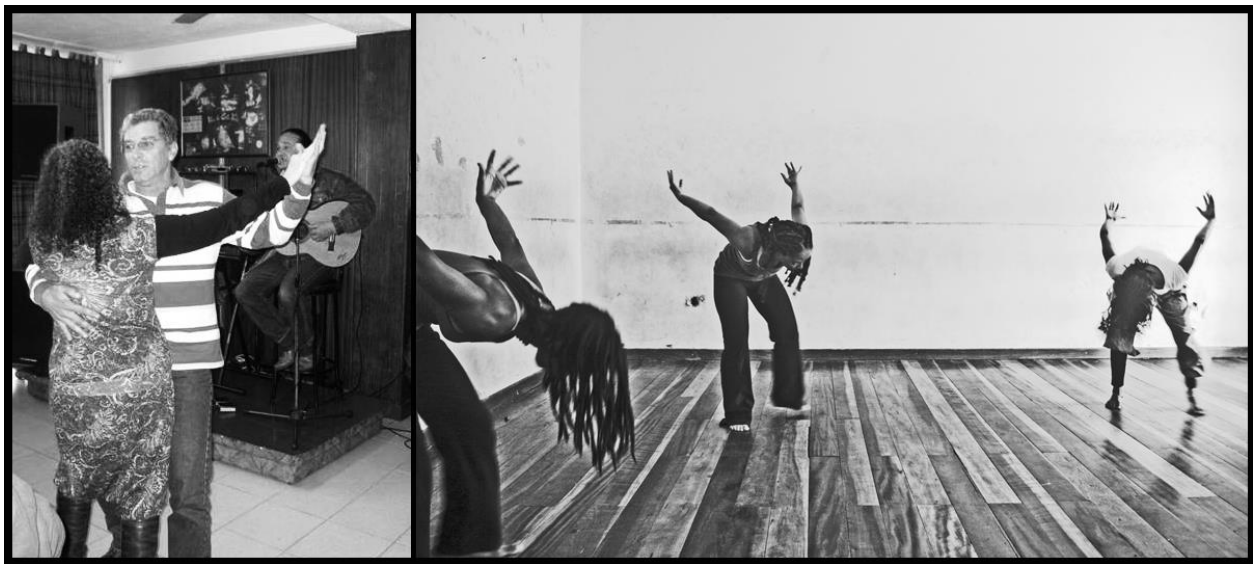


Figure 38. *Coladeira*. Left: Cape Verdeans dancing at a night club. Right: Raiz di Polon rehearsing the coladeira section.

In “Cidade Velha,” coladeira becomes a “hybrid visual object,” a term that I have borrowed from Sally Ness (1997, 75). Half of the body is “contemporized” while the lower body continues to perform the traditional steps. In Sally Ness’ example of Igorot dancers, the bottom half of the body performs ballet and the upper body half embraces trademark Filipino gestures. Ness shows how the two halves of her hybrid example represent the colonizer (the ballet lower body) and the Filipino (the native upper body). One of her arguments is that ballet becomes Filipinized and this hybridity serves to produce a kind of emancipation for the Filipino people to which the transnational ballet is tied. While also stemming from a post-colonial archipelagic society, the hybridized body in the Raiz di Polon case comes from a much different set of tensions.

First, I find it difficult to choose which half is “dominant,” which Ness swiftly distinguishes in her example. Second, contemporary dance is not as recognizable as a set technique as in the ballet example; the “contemporary dance” torso and flitting fingers is a symbol that stems directly from metaphors of emotion *about* the subject of the bottom half. The movement is almost a meta-movement in that it is an emotional interpretation of itself. The frenzy of hands becomes a representation of fire, joy, and built-up emotion. The dancers almost lose their heads and become wildly free-shaking emotional bodies as the traditional lower half continues to dance in unison with one another. In this perspective, like Ness’ Igorot bodies, the dancers are emancipated, not from the rigid European images of the ballet body but from the emotionless, globalized, traditional Cape Verdean body. The coladeira is re-authenticated with a physical symbol of emotion. Still, following Ness’ postcolonial lead, the contemporary dance body is simultaneously a representation of the global stage—the abstract dance-theater body that only the elite well-traveled concert-dance-connoisseur would understand. From this perspective

the hybrid symbol is a demonstration of the meeting points of traditional and contemporary, Cape Verdean and Global, and emotionless and emotional.

Sally Ness makes a compelling argument about these hybrid bodies and how they change as a form:

Having set up the opposing registers of traditional dance classical balletic and emotive symbols Igorot choreographic vocabularies, the ballet traditional dance proceeds to establish that while these two modes of danced discourse may be separate, they are not equal. Whereas the emotive Igorot vocabulary is given consistent stylistic and choreographic priority throughout the ballet, the movements of classical ballet become an exploitable technology. The classical ballet vocabulary is re-adjusted, modified, and "acculturated" so as to support a Philippine cultural agenda. It is in this manner that ballet becomes "Filipinized" in Igorot. (Ness 1997, 76).

Ness says that ballet was acculturated to support the Filipino agenda. A similar process is taking place on stage with Raiz di Polon's coladeira in "Cidade Velha." The two halves, one "contemporized" and one "traditional," serve to fulfill the national agenda: to reinsert emotion—in this case, thrilling explosions of happiness—into the traditional dance. Whatever his priority may be in contemporary dance—creative shapes, articulated limbs, or in previous performances, fantastic extravagant costuming and props—Mano Preto's ideas serve to enhance the tradition. The interesting question becomes: is the contemporary half re-adjusted, modified, and acculturated so as to support a Cape Verdean cultural agenda? Or is the traditional half re-adjusted, modified, and acculturated, so as to support a more contemporary Cape Verdean agenda? Mano Preto has been proudly influenced and trained by contemporary choreographers, especially in Portugal and France. Sill, his training does not necessarily make the contemporary aspects of his choreography a reflection of Europe. Both the European and Cape Verdean parts are Kriolu. As opposed to the more clear separation between ballet and Filipino idioms, which also represent multiple inner archipelago cultures in Ness' example, the split between

contemporary and traditional dance is much more difficult to define from within a global microcosm. Instead, the upper half is second-generation Kriolu—creolized between traditional and global contemporary dance techniques—and the lower half of the body is first-generation Kriolu. Like the multiple generations of Cape Verdeans coming and going, blurring the lines between first, second, third and more generations of Cape Verdeans world-wide, this particular hybrid visual object represents the new Cape Verdean Nation.

In addition to coladeira, emotional infusion through hybrid visual objects also occurs on the opposite emotional spectrum, through morna. Similar to the traditional positions of couple dancing in the jubilant coladeira, the dance of sadness, morna, is slower and includes a pause on the three-count. *One two three [pause 4]. One two three [pause 4].* The positions look identical to coladeira in a static photograph. The dancers in Raiz di Polon's morna maintain these couple-dancing postures by dancing with a rigid upper body, but one dancer in the couple is inverted. The couple—as a two-person unit object—is hybrid in the sense that the women are upside-down rather than in their traditional positions, making the contemporary adaptation related to inversion and face-to-face orientation. Like the “finger frenzy” in the upper half of the coladeira body, which is almost a meta-dance of the coladeira itself, the dragging morna body is about the mourning in morna dances.

At times in “Cidade Velha,” these hanging bodies maintain their positions, as if they too were holding on to their partner. At other times, such as in the final moment, Timas is hanging upside-down lifeless, arms dragging onto the floor without her traditional posture. The emotional weight of sodadi, which stems from a disconnection, lost love, or distance from togetherness, is embodied through the half of the dancer that is weighing on top of the other, disconnected in her inversion, lifeless and heavy. The inverted morna is one of the most powerful images in the

performance and ends the piece. In this case, like in coladeira, the traditional dance is “creolized,” in order to emphasize the deeply heavy and emotional aspects of separation and disconnect that may not have been as easy to embody as traditional morna alone.



Figure 39. *Morna* in “*Cidade Velha*.”

The batuko scene within “*Cidade Velha*” is another example in which hybrid visual objects serve as a crucial foreshadowing symbols for the rest of the scene. Timas is blown around by the wind, as signified by wind audio clips and the limbs of dancers who, using and pushing the air around them, propel her arrival at center stage. Her legs begin to shift in triplets as her thighs and bottom move back and forth, serving as the known motif for batuko. In social settings and staged renditions of batuko, the dance soloist wears a knee length pleated skirt with a *pano di terra* cloth tied at the waist. *Panos di terra*, meaning “fabric of the earth,” were said to

have been used as currency when they were hand woven during the colonial period. Now typically machine woven but still in the traditional black-and-white pattern, panos are tied with the knot at the side or back, emphasizing the swish and sway of the circulating bottom. In traditional batuko, the upper body is completely composed and the arms float to the side, except for the playful shoulder shrug or arm gesture to invite someone else to dance.



Figure 40. *Batuko Dances*. Left. Delta Cultura batuko group performing Batuko. Right: Rosy Timas in “Cidade Velha,” Raiz di Polon.

Timas has no pano, and she wears pants. However, her movements are recognizably batuko. Like the “half-half” hybrid method (upper and lower bodies separated) that we saw in coladeira, Timas begins to move her torso, arms, and head, thrashing in spits and spurts, throwing her arms backwards as if she were tossed by the wind, getting whipped, or bringing forth the pain that is deep inside of her. All of these interpretations are possible, because batuko is said to have been used as a form of catharsis and empowerment for women. Women rebelled against slave

masters' sexual advances, taking charge of their own hips. In more contemporary times, as documented by Carter and Aulette (2009), batuko has become a coping mechanism for women to vent their frustrations about gender inequality stemming from unbalanced migration. Timas embodies the *meaning* of batuko through her expressive upper body. Mano Preto praises Rosy Timas as "the best dancer in Cape Verde" because of her ability to perform this dance in this particular way. [See figure 40.]

Timas' batuko solo is arguably one of the pinnacle moments of the performance, because Timas' vagueness as a lead character solidifies when she is alone on stage. Her performance is both graceful and violent. As if she were both protesting and peacefully accepting imposed chaos, she never loses her grounding or batuko choreography even as her torso is thrown backwards and to the side. She is a victim, a warrior, innocent and experienced. As the rest of the dancers are off stage, they join the audience as witnesses to her, which increases the intense focus of her solo. This hybrid choreography, which is mixed with strength and emotional intensity, paves the transition into the rest of the batuko section, which unfolds with playful tics, alternating between light-hearted happiness and extreme sadness.

Little by little, the rest of the dancers filter into the stage like jumping vertical lines, as discussed previously. They are like rain calming the drought, or pangs of relief after the whipping and whirling pain experienced by Timas. They migrate across the stage, emphasizing once again the importance of travel—be it horizontal like migration or vertical like the rain. Suddenly the dancers are playful, which embodies and expands upon the playfulness of batuko, which began as an improvised social form. Traditional batuko dancers play with one another, often with the drummers around them or inviting audience members to come and dance with them. Here, hopping around on stage, the dancers—both men and women—all begin to dance

batuko through the childlike tires that were on stage. The tires transform into hula hoops and they dance through them. [#3 Figure 41.]

This section is directly related to the embodiment of sodadi. I am reminded of my performance “Maramar,” briefly mentioned in Chapter Two. In “Maramar,” Lucia Cardoso and the other musicians wanted to “express the new sodadi of Cape Verde.” Lucia Cardoso agreed that a concert about positive forms of sodadi would be beneficial:

Sodadi is not just about devastation and sadness and suffering. It is about opportunity. We go abroad and leave our family because we have opportunity. And, like the airport says, you can’t come back if you don’t leave. There is happiness and joy in sodadi. And most people don’t realize this. We need to sing and play about this too.⁹⁶ (Lucia Cardoso, rehearsal, February 17, 2013).

Here in the contemporary batuko of “Cidade Velha,” the dancers are playing with the tires, bouncing in them, jumping around like children, portraying that happiness that Cardoso described. But this laughter and playfulness, too, turns serious. The giggles and laughs become screams as Timas is inundated by the dancers. She reaches towards Suzanna Tavares, who appears to be a loved one, as the dancers undress surrounding her. The playful turns once again serious. We are reminded that sodadi is still rooted in suffering. The hybrid structure leading up to this section set up and foreshadowed these oscillations. Histories of slavery suddenly combined with contemporary understandings of sodadi; the staged emotionless batuko was re-emotionalized with a contemporary rendition of colonial history.

⁹⁶ Rehearsal for “Maramar,” during which we discussed the theme and song intentions for the performance.



Figure 41. *Batuko Scene in "Cidade Velha."* Café Palkus performance Sept. 2012.

Free-Form Resemblance

Another way in which emotional infusion takes place through choreography is through what I call "free-form resemblance." "Resemblance," in this phrase, is inspired by Susan

Foster's analysis of the term, which details how choreography can enable an invisible concept to become visible through a moving, living, physical metaphor related to the effect or quality of that concept (1986, 66). The words "free-form" serve here because these creative adaptations are not based in techniques like ballet, physical fitness, staging, or gesture. Instead, movements are "free" in that they are abstractions without a movement name and were designed to address a symbol specific to the performance. The coladeira and batuko examples described earlier utilize a free-form resemblance approach. The frenzy of shaking hands that occurs during the forward-bent coladeira *resemble* the emotional fireworks and happiness embedded in the dance. The hand movements are "about" the dance, so-to-speak. They bring to life the intangible quality of happiness through tangible hand activity. Similarly, the bouncing on tires and bouncing like vertical lines during the batuko scene could be seen as free-form resemblance. These acts stem from the intangible quality of nostalgia, childhood, and some kind of unrestrained bliss. Coladeira and batuko are re-infused with emotion with the addition of these strategies.

National communication serves as another intangible concept revealed through free-form resemblance. In one particular section, Tavares talks to the audience in Portuguese. While she declares her text, she lunges and crawls around the stage, and the other dancers crawl on top of one another. Everyone taps with their fingers on one another's faces like one might type frantically on a computer keyboard. People touch Tavares' face, which muffles her words slightly, even as she projects her voice louder. [See Figure 42.]



Figure 42. *Free-Form Resemblance*. Touching faces in “Cidade Velha.” Left, performance in Mindelo, São Vicente. Photo courtesy of Diogo Bento. Right, performance in Praia, Santiago.

Dancers’ facial expressions change as they are touched by the myriad of fingers. As social beings, we are not accustomed to touching one another’s faces so invasively, and this particular scene is striking because the audience can understand how the dancers are feeling physically.

When Mano Preto was asked about the relationship between hands, faces, and people, he explained, “They are reading and communicating poetry to one another” (pers. comm, August 10, 2012). Possible interpretations are numerous. If we think along the lines of *Cidade Velha*’s early history, we are reminded that enslaved people on ships could likely not communicate with one another because they were pulled from many countries along the Western coast of the African continent and mixed up as they were brought to Cape Verde (Lobban 1996). This scene could be interpreted as a reference back to the slave period, as their bodies become a way to communicate.

The actions also represent the nation’s current struggle with official and unofficial forms

of accepted communication. While Suzanna Tavares is speaking to us in Portuguese, the official language, Preto tells us that additional corporeal emotional poetry occurs between the people as if it were “off the record,” just like Kriolu in quotidian Cape Verdean life. The Portuguese text is *also* poetry and central to the performance, but more attention falls on the movement and connection between dancers than on what she says. The simultaneity of these two forms of communication—physical and verbal— demonstrates both a confusing cacophony and a balance, which represents the language tensions occurring today in Cape Verde. Finally, communication can also be extended into the topic of sodadi. As people long to communicate with distant loved ones with phone calls, letters, internet and more, human touch is desperately missing. As dancers touch themselves and one another, they embody this intangible desire linked to sodadi.

These full-bodied experiences are communicated to the audience because dancers have “real” physical reactions. That is, they are not always “acting” their desperation. As dancers have their eyes closed, they are caught unaware of some of pokes and triggered pressure points when fingers touch the face. As witnesses to these real, un-choreographed reactions, we empathize with their discomfort as they squint and twitch in response. In her work on dance and empathy in the British colonial context, Susan Foster calls this concept “kinesthetic empathy” and reminds us that “sympathy and empathy each serve to establish the grounds on which one human being could be seen as differing from another” because power relations “exist between people who feel and those who feel for or with them” (2011, 10).⁹⁷ As Tavares crawls upside-down, lunging to touch and feel the other dancers desperately trying to speak, we feel her emotional frustration through the shaking timber of her exhausted voice. Similarly, as dancers lift one another and

⁹⁷ See David Krasner’s work on “Empathy and Theater” (2006) for more information on the stages between sensing and responding kinetically. Susan Foster draws from his work in her book, *Choreographing Empathy* (2011).

share each other's weight, simultaneously remaining disconnected as they concentrate on tapping fingers, they resemble the longing for unattainable reunions. In summary, free-form resemblance in the finger-poetry scene transforms emotional topics related to communication and *sodadi* into physical scenes that enable the audience to witness and empathize.

Amplified Pathways

Another choreographic strategy used to portray emotion and *sodadi* in “Cidade Velha” is what I call amplified pathways. This is the method where Raiz di Polon has demonstrated their emblematic sense of athleticism, as they amplify traditional steps and make them even more physically exhaustive. The word “amplifying” describes the process of using the entire body with larger steps, louder vocalizations, and more muscular strength in order to augment and extend the physical pathways that the foundational traditional choreographies delineate. For example, consider the *colá* tradition in the performance. *Colá*, also known as *Kolásanjon*, stems from the São João celebrations of São Vicente and Santo Antão islands in the northern part of the archipelago. In June, the dance is often performed with a large group as part of a street festival. In the dance, participants typically employ an “X” or circular spatial pattern in which people meet in the center and pair off through direct contact of the hips, and then each dancer finds another person to contact. The entire dance involves jumping and squatting, which occurs travelling in space as well as individually in place. In the same way that the American “do-si-do” typically involves alternating partners, *colá*, too, involves partner exchanges. They leap away from one another and then repeat the movement towards one another, bumping their pelvises together. [Left Figure 43.]

In Raiz di Polon's incorporation of *colá*, the dancers utilize momentum and elongation to

amplify the bump encounter, maintaining the same path that they would normally take if they were completing the traditional movements, but even higher in the air. The *arabesque*-like leg position [Right Figure 43] serves not only as an aesthetic detail, but also as a physical strategy to propel them even further into the air and catch them as they fall to the floor. Like the hand-frenzy detail in the coladeira example, here the leaps, falls, and jumps within the colá bump amplify the feeling of the colá movement, extending the bumping encounter into a full body experience. As the dancers “bump” one another in the air, on the floor, and with the floor, the metaphor extends even further. Enhanced pathways in the colá serve to embody the positive aspects of sodadi, as the “reunion” of distant people is represented by joining bodies.



Figure 43. *Colá Dance*. Left: Colá in Santo Antão. Photo courtesy of M.E. Catela 2010. Right, Colá in “Cidade Velha” with Raiz di Polon. Photo by author.

Music and text each serve as supporting mechanisms to these enhanced pathways, not only to convey emotional metaphor, but because music and theater are more readily accepted than dance as genres of public attendance. Cristina McMahon, for example, wrote her dissertation about Cape Verdean theater because it has developed to have a strong following with residents on São Vicente Island. As previously discussed, music is the priority in Cape Verde. The incorporation of emblematic rhythms serves to enhance creative pathways by building upon

the artistic paths that are already set into place.

“We always *always* have traditional music,” said Mano Preto, after he was asked if he had ever tried creating works to other musical styles such as acoustic rock or opera. He shook his head defensively, as if angry at the very thought that Raiz di Polon might consider veering away from traditional-styled musical collaboration. Music is the renowned form of cultural gold in Cape Verde, and Cape Verde scholars like Fernando Arenas (2011) and Cesar Monteiro (2010) have detailed how traditional Cape Verdean music continues to live, breathe, and grow through the world of digitized music, international festivals, and concert tours. For this reason alone, *Musica Kauberdianu* (Cape Verdean music) absolutely must be a part of Raiz di Polon’s work.

Mano Preto has always used live musical collaboration in his works. For almost ten years, Orlando Pantera was Raiz di Polon’s chief musical collaborator. Pantera was the composer and performer known for inventing “contemporary batuko,” which, in Akintola Hubbard’s words, created a “cultural shockwave” that continues to be felt across the world more than a decade after it began (2011). In his dissertation (book forthcoming), Hubbard outlines how Tcheka’s wave of new batuko movements, which were echoed by artists like Princezito, Sara Tavares, and Lura, appropriated batuko into jazz guitar compositions, splitting away from other artists who were taking a more “commercial pop” approach. Hubbard calls the other approach the “Norberto Tavares synth-pop approach” (ibid, 77).

When Pantera died tragically in 2001 at the age of 33, Raiz di Polon lost their main collaborator, at which point other musical artists (Jeff Hessney and Sara Tavares, among others) stepped in to collaborate. More importantly, the nation lost a revolutionary icon. Pantera represented tradition, contemporariness, change, and brave creativity, even though many Sampadjudu Cape Verdeans claimed to dislike his Badiu-based sound (ibid). Pantera has been

considered one of the most revolutionary composers of Cape Verde, and yet his legendary work exists "off the record," because he died before officially recording a produced album. No one knows exactly how many songs he composed, although the majority of his songs are still performed by artists today. The Raiz di Polon dance story complements Hubbard's ethnography on contemporary batuko music. Just as Pantera changed the course of music for Cape Verde, featuring badiu music in the world music market for the first time,⁹⁸ Mano Preto has revolutionized dance. Raiz di Polon continues Pantera's legacy. Furthermore, by re-performing the collection of works that still include Pantera's compositions, Raiz di Polon continues to honor Pantera's timeless contributions, so as not to "banish the repertoire to the past" (Taylor 2003, 21).

"Cidade Velha" does not include any of Pantera's music. Nor does it include live music, which contrasts with many of Raiz di Polon's previous productions. However, "Cidade Velha" includes the music of Mario Lucio, which was intended to be replaced with live musical collaboration later on. Because Mario Lucio has been so occupied with his responsibilities as Minister of Culture, the recordings of his album "Kreol" remained in the sound score.⁹⁹ Other tracks within the performance are recorded with Jeff Hessney, producer of the company, with Timas, the lead dancer in the performance who also sings. They re-recorded a song called "O Mar" ("Ocean") by a legendary Mindelo-based musician called B. Leza. By incorporating traditional music from badiu *and* sampadjudu artists as well as through recreating musical collaborations with their own dancers, Raiz di Polon maintains Pantera's contributions through

⁹⁸ The world music market featured the Sampadjudu music of Cesaria Evora prior to Pantera's revolutionary breakthrough.

⁹⁹ Mario Lucio uses the spelling "Kreol" which is yet another variation of the adjective, "creole." His spelling is less common as the spelling, "Kriol" which I have used. Both versions are Santiago Island variants.

what Diana Taylor calls an “act of transfer” in performance: his work is embodied and honored long after his death (Taylor 2003, 54). In summary, music plays an integral role in Raiz di Polon performances by adding momentum, rhythm, textures, and feeling to the qualities of movements on stage. In addition to these roles, music amplifies Raiz di Polon's nation-building dances by maintaining the ideology of a historical legend. Raiz di Polon "enhances the pathway" by utilizing music that is meaningful.

Chapter Conclusion

Within the context of Cape Verde’s circulating influences, “Cidade Velha” confirms and expands upon Sabine Sorgel’s summary of West African contemporary dance tendencies. She writes:

African contemporary dance thus appropriates Western theatrical forms as creative mimicry (Bhabha 1994), whereby choreographers present a contemporary ritual of counter-memory (Roach 1996) and hope. While this aesthetic choice confirms Western hegemony to some extent, it undermines prevalent discourse of inferiority/superiority as these choreographers combine African traditional dance forms with European contemporary idioms. (Sorgel 2011, 90).

Sorgel calls attention to how incorporating Western theatrical forms can confirm Western hegemony and resist it simultaneously through combination. "Cidade Velha" is one such example of a performance that combines traditional dance forms with European contemporary dance idioms, and Raiz di Polon is an example of a group that erases colonial memory to replace it with Cape Verdeans’ stories of resilience and migration. Furthermore, in a nation where lines between what constitutes “Western” and “non-Western” are blurry rather than distinct, contemporary dance becomes less about reclaiming hegemonic power than a mechanism by which to negotiate a balance of many hegemonic tendencies. If traditional dance groups have

been negatively influenced by the commercial lure of music videos and imperialistic spectacle-based dances—due to Euro-American imperialism—contemporary dance undermines these negative effects by serving as an update, providing tradition with “contemporary tools” rather than mimicking it.

Strategies included in this chapter such as narrative framing, in-transit architectures, emotional adaptations, and music are only some of the approaches occurring that exemplify Raiz di Polon’s close connection with patriotism and the development of the national image as strong, connected to history, and emotionally driven. These strategies root Raiz di Polon’s work in the archipelago, and repetition has enabled Raiz di Polon to establish a lexicon that is applicable to, readable by, and inspired by cultures around the world. Movements and symbols, such as the “half-half morna couple,” are becoming both a type of brand in Cape Verde and a new tradition. “There is something in it for everyone,” says Marcia Gonzales, a Cape Verdean who recently returned from Boston (pers. comm. September 10, 2012). For the “returnee” who is attempting to remember the roots that one lost, “Cidade Velha” serves as a connection to Cape Verdean stories, rhythms and histories.

“I always support Raiz. They are always doing new things,” says another audience member.¹⁰⁰ The Cape Verdean who wants to see something “new” sees in the work a set of physical and emotional meanings that are not re-creatable in music or text, and is perhaps exposed to the world of concert dance. The foreigner artist who is fluent in the languages and systems of concert dance culture may read further into the metaphors and inter-disciplinary aspects of the performance. Members of the community who just want to support their friends indulge in seeing the famous “rock-star” company, while perhaps learning about Cape Verdean

¹⁰⁰ Anonymous audience member. Post-performance survey. September 2012.

heritage. The strategic versatility and creation of a new generation of choreographed Kriolu proves that Mano Preto and Raiz di Polon represent pioneers in Cape Verde. This new set of corporeal Kriolu is almost like a *creolized* Kriolu, or even “Kriolu-of-Kriolu,” that links diverging artistic genres, languages, and histories at the crossroads. While flash factors serve as crucial components in the “CV Matrix,”¹⁰¹ Raiz di Polon’s work is built to sustain longer by functioning as cultural agents.

Using Susan Foster’s ideas of resemblance, imitation, and replication is useful because language-related methods transform artistic ideas into socio-linguistic signifiers, which helps prove how Raiz di Polon’s creation of a corporeal Kriolu has agency. Thinking of movement as a set of linguistic tools draws upon contemporary discourses of these terms in literary and cultural criticism that consider reading a form of bodily inscription, and vice versa.¹⁰² Diana Taylor warns that “the metaphor of writing haunts European discourses,” and movement and embodiment should be able to stand alone without having to be called forms of writing (2003, 25). However, verbal and written languages are critical in contemporary Cape Verdean society and the writing metaphor is locally relevant.

As people engage in the process of representation, they are participating in the social process of creolization and in the process of professionalizing dance. They are also engaging in cultivating a myth of cultural unity in diversity. These processes enable emotion and history to boost national identity, a concept that Harvard business and branding expert Douglas Holt calls key aspects of a cultural branding system. In his book titled, *How Brands become Icons*, Holt shows that in the cultural axiom model, the requirements for a successful brand are “performing

¹⁰¹ “CV Matrix” is another appropriately titled work from 2007 that Raiz di Polon performs in their repertoire.

¹⁰² Michel Foucault 1979, Roland Barthes 1972, Hayden White 1975.

a myth that addresses an acute contradiction in society,” and in response the consumer’s role is to “participate in ritual action to experience the myth when using the product” (2004, 14).

Chapters Two and Three have addressed the first part of this branding process: Raiz di Polon addresses the contradictions of traditional verses modern expression in Cape Verdean society. Raiz di Polon “participates in action” by directly embracing both Portuguese-centered and Cape Verdean-centered histories. Raiz di Polon is a brand that represents cultural unity in diversity.

As we have learned through testimonies like those of Tony Tavares, the public has not yet reached its potential in experiencing contemporary or staged concert dance, or has not yet fully participated in the “ritual action” of going to pay for dance-theater. However, the public supports the company’s iconic originality. As Sally Ness concludes about hybrid national dances, “originality is seen as both a cross-cultural safeguard and a sign of cultural vitality and national integrity” (Ness 1997, 81). The supportive nucleus of the brand is the most important part of its nurtured success, and “the more successfully a brand performs myths that feed the desires of the followers at its nucleus, the more customers in total the brand will attract” (Holt 2004, 14).

While Holt’s statement is more aligned with money-driven definitions of success, his attention to the importance of a nucleus is key. Chapter Four considers Raiz di Polon as the active nucleus of dance in Santiago Cape Verde and explores how the training of Raiz di Polon’s Kriolu lexicon is fueling the growth of that nucleus.

CHAPTER FOUR: RAIZ DI POLON AS COMMUNITY

Introduction: Assembling Languages and Bodies



Figure 44. *Island Hopping*. Students dancing on a graffiti map of Cape Verde on the rooftop of Palacia da Cultura. The image is from a dance film project that I directed as part of “Ferias Creativas” summer arts program supported by the Ministry of Culture. 2012.

As I use my body as an instrument, language is an easy resource that I modulate in a number of ways. The Cape Verdean Creole gives me the freedom I need, because when you go from one island to another, they sound different. On the island of Santiago, where the capital Praia, a variety of more closed Creole, is spoken a little faster. On the island of San Vicente and Santo Antao there are a variety of Creoles that are more melodic and more Brazilian, in the sense that it comes in a much more quiet, more romantic. Then I allow myself to grab these different types of Creole and use them in the way that best suits me. I play several natives at once... In the final analysis, the language becomes an instrument.

—Carmen Souza, singer¹⁰³

Known for her jazz-inflected fusions in Cape Verdean music (Arenas 2011), two-time Cape Verdean Music Award winner Carmen Souza named her recent musical tour, *Katchupada*.

¹⁰³ Carmen Souza, Cape Verde’s international music star of 2013, talking about using her voice as an instrument for her recent tour called “Katchupada.” Interview by Alejandro de los Santos. In *Afribuku: Cultura Africana Contemporanea* online magazine. May 9, 2013. <http://www.afribuku.com/carmensouza/> accessed May 10, 2013.

Katchupada refers to a large party where Cape Verdeans eat *katchupa*, a traditional stew. Just as water imagery, polon trees, *sodadi*, and the historic city of Cidade Velha serve as national metaphors for multiple layers of identity, traditional foods emphasize plural identity even further. *Katchupa* is the gastronomical equivalent of Kriolu. A traditional Cape Verdean dish, *katchupa* is a slow-cooked dry stew consisting of corn and beans and a variety of meats and fish that are often leftover from other meals. The Cape Verde archipelago's limited and unpredictable offerings of produce requires creativity when creating meals.

As a mixed meal created from an unplanned selection of common, inexpensive, basic ingredients, *katchupa* is made slightly differently on each island and its ingredients can vary depending on the produce available from importers or local fields (Castro & Gama 1991; Saucier 2008). Yet *katchupa* is both distinctive and recognizable in each iteration and this has made *katchupa* a dependable comfort food for Cape Verdeans.¹⁰⁴ Marco Maquita, a Cape Verdean pilot shares, "Everyone in CV loves Katchupa! And when we are away from home, on the road, and in the air, we eat it and we feel at home." Maquita flies to many cities where there are strong Cape Verdean communities, and says, "The meal helps me feel grounded when I'm flying" (pers. comm. 2012).

Like Carmen Souza, other artists have incorporated the *katchupa* metaphor into their identity such as production company Lusafrica, who created a compilation CD called *Katchupa Rica* (Rich Katchupa). *Katchupa Rica* is a play on words because the meal itself is very inexpensive but rich in diverse flavors and eaten by everyone, "poor to rich." In Figure 45, the

¹⁰⁴ *Katchupa* is analogous to the dish called, *salamagundi*, a mixed salad of found foods famously consumed by pirates originating in England but made famous by pirates arriving to the Caribbean. Unlike *salamagundi*, which, like the pirates who consumed it, was "mysterious" in its varied inclusion of available seaside ingredients (Lane 1998, 194), *katchupa* recipes almost always contain similar ingredients, with proportional variation (Anonymous cook at restaurant Avis, Praia Santiago. Pers. comm 2012).

CD cover artwork interprets cultural identity as constantly restaged and as a meeting of languages and identities, shown here as if diverse bodies were cooked and stirred like *katchupa*. Indeed the strength, vitality, vibrancy, and makeup of Cape Verde's cultural identity depends on this melting pot process whereby ideas, languages, identities, and more are constantly mixed together. Cultural identity is depicted as something that must be combined, re-created, and mixed together to represent the Nation.

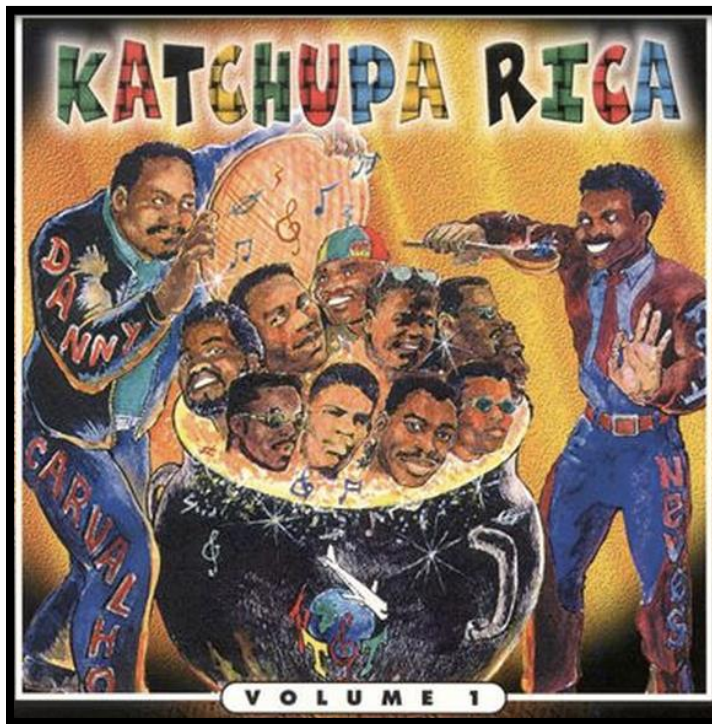


Figure 45. *Katchupa Rica*. CD cover. LusAfrican productions compilation CD, 1998. Public image, www.allmusic.com.

Adding, borrowing, and combining ingredients to create *katchupa* is another way to think about the circulating influences that are part of the nation's imaginary of itself, with artists specifically facilitating this process. In the quote that introduces this chapter, Souza talks about stirring world melodies, merging regional languages, and picking and choosing to create a language that allows the artist to linguistically “play several natives” at once. I use Carmen

Souza's words to lead into a discussion of creative process because she emphasizes how picking and choosing regional and global difference is part of an artistic responsibility for Cape Verdeans. I am interested in how "the language becomes an instrument" whether that instrument speaks through vocal percussions, guitar riffs, or articulations of the body. Mano Preto and his dance company Raiz di Polon are establishing and stirring up a movement lexicon that also chooses and reconstitutes influences to reflect "several natives." Mano Preto's experiences growing up on Santiago island and later working with various instructors abroad are reflected in his personal teaching style and also in the way that he encourages others to teach at his school. Guest teachers combine with the Raiz di Polon dancers and become both ingredients and contributing chefs in the creation of Preto's movement *katchupa*. Audience members attending performances consume the performance like comfort food.

This chapter moves from the analysis of "Cidade Velha" and shifts to an exploration of the rehearsals and training grounds of contemporary dance in Cape Verde, showing how the Nation's ideology is reinforced even further through free community dance classes and public rehearsals. Through this exploration, I show that a *corporeal creolization* is occurring in these contexts. The body is "creolized" in that the choreographies and vocabularies developed through Raiz di Polon represent a blend of traditional movements, unusual innovations, classical European vocabularies, and community-inspired issues. *Corporeal creolization* is a useful term for this project because it updates the nation's position as caught between contending movement vocabularies and blends them in a way under Cape Verdean terms.



Figure 46. *Embodied Katchupa*. Community class in the Raiz di Polon rehearsal space, reminiscent of the Katchupa Rica picture in Figure 45. Kaká Oliveira's class almost always ended with participants holding hands or shoulders and linked in a circle.

Creolization is not only a social process that encompasses the blending of hybrid identities; creolization also includes active and intentional selection processes from diverse circulating influences. The choices made by choreographers directly address the tensions caused by these influences. Corporeal creolization that occurs in the Raiz di Polon community transpires both from the movement or lexicon level as well as from decisions surrounding the specific movements: training locations, production of rehearsals, and ways that the dance community is both active and passive in facilitating the expansion of contemporary dance. Like rising star Carmen Souza, who takes pride in her ability to mix up different vocabularies in her music, the Raiz di Polon group takes pride in creating its own corporeal *katchupa* recipe to promote the company's local success.

The first section of this chapter situates Raiz di Polon's community as a cosmopolitan space. The remaining chapter is organized into three parts, beginning with the place and space where Raiz di Polon is cultivating a concert-dance nucleus within Praia. First, with an analysis of how city location and an open-door policy both nurture a tight-knit diverse community of participants and prepare the disciplined body, I also examine how the rest of the city is invited to participate through watching. Second, as we move closer to consider the teachers and students who enter the space, I explore some of the issues that arise as a result of the coming-and-going circumstances, including ongoing anxieties about what constitutes necessary dance technique, a particular controversy at the European-African crossroads. Lastly, my analysis looks closely at how discrete movement is taught, selected, and created in the rehearsal studio, using paradigms of creole linguistics to further demonstrate the presence of the corporeal Kriolu lexicon. Within this final close look, I engage the concepts of interference, detours, and borrowing as evidence of a standardizing RDP corporeal Kriolu lexicon.

In this chapter's examples of movements and ideas, I alternate between using the Raiz di Polon Company rehearsals and the student classes as examples, even though rehearsals and classes are separate activities. They both represent the moments of experimentation when company members Mano Preto, Bety Fernandes, Zecca Cardoso, Kaka Oliveira, Suzanna Tavares, Rosy Timas, and others work together to create phrases to form the Raiz di Polon vocabulary. Company rehearsals and community classes are structured in similar ways, beginning with a warm-up, proceeding to practicing exercises, learning and sharing choreography (as part of the exercises), and sometimes ending with the creation of a performance piece or "repertory." Dedicated students within the community classes comprise the "junior company." Drawing from David Shorter's use of autoethnography in challenging and

testing Western academic ways of thinking and writing, I employ a performative approach to understanding placemaking (2009, 4). As an observer and participant, I noted whether particular movements, phrases, and approaches to training processes seemed familiar or new to me. My body, with a vocabulary foundation in Western dance with training in a variety of other African-Diaspora movements, became a detector as I was able to sense when particular steps felt borrowed from the many movement languages in which my own body was fluent.

Praia: Cosmopolitan Spaces and Contending Winds

Out of all of the main cities on each Cape Verdean island, Praia could be characterized as a kind of compounded crossroads, and Raiz di Polon's artistic expression of identity is connected to the group's specific connection to Praia. In addition to hosting most foreign aid organizations and embassies, Praia is a hub for the archipelago's various island nations, as inhabitants from all over the archipelago commute or seek work in the capital. Therefore the corporeal creolization that Raiz di Polon constructs is directly connected to cosmopolitanism. "We live in a cosmopolitan society," says Francisco Carvalho of the Ministry of Communities, discussing his work on maintaining connections between the Cape Verdean Diaspora and those on the islands.¹⁰⁵ He continued:

We have to take pride in that and really facilitate and encourage connections among our extensive network so that we can maintain balance among our diverse people. The ocean is this incredible thing that divides us, and it also keeps us together because we understand how important it is to stay in contact and help each other."¹⁰⁶ (Francisco Carvalho, pers. comm. February 17, 2013).

¹⁰⁵ The Ministry of Communities is a sector of the state that deals with facilitating and strengthening the Cape Verdean network between Cape Verdean Diaspora and home islands by connecting individuals, supplying educational resources, and organizing conferences and events.

¹⁰⁶ Interview for Maramar film project. Carvalho was asked specifically about the ocean, but his response alluded to issues of distance, transience, and the Cape Verdean network.

Using water imagery, Carvalho touches upon the contrast between union and fracture so fundamental to the Cape Verdean perspective of the term cosmopolitan. Part of the reason that Cape Verde has such a diverse community is because so many people are leaving and returning, resulting in a sense of fracture. Stuart Hall provides additional insight about the word, cosmopolitan, and how class seeps into understandings of multicultural identity through notions of modernity:

I understand cosmopolitanism principally as an ideal, a utopia... I see contemporary globalization as, realistically, opening not one but two quite different possibilities simultaneously: a world driven apart into warring differences or one driven into an overriding sameness and homogenization, under the hegemony of those powerful enough to claim to be the universal instance, to represent the whole civilization. So contemporary cosmopolitanism—which, to give it its proper name, is really the latest phase of capitalist modernity operating on a global scale.

Hall continues and explains that usually one of these two outcomes—warring difference or homogenization—prevails because “the differences of power and resources override the interconnectedness... cosmopolitanism becomes the capacity of certain elites to move around within very limited circles” (Hall 2008, 345). If the city of Praia, with its archipelagic creolity and multicultural population, exemplifies the difference/homogenization binary that Hall describes, then Raiz di Polon serves as a microcosmic example of a community trying to balance that binary; by utilizing the “elite” powers with which the group has been associated, Raiz di Polon members find ways to unite people through dance.

My fieldnotes reflect the forces dividing Raiz di Polon training, which I experienced as two very different gusts of ideological winds. These split forces relate to Hall’s bigger picture of the dystopic cosmopolitan split.

The hot humid air made time pass slowly. “We need some *bruma seca*, huh?” said the auditorium manager, implying that the season’s “dry mist” winds would give us some relief from the humidity as we waited. I waited in the auditorium for one

hour hoping the dancers would show up for rehearsal as we had planned, like people were waiting for the rain this time of year. Suzanna and Zecca then blew into the rehearsal happily as if they were a calm mid-evening breeze. They knew they were late to rehearsal, but according to them, “that’s just how it is here... we have to make ends meet and work early in the morning and sometimes that means we are late. You know, that’s just how the wind blows. But come and dance with us now! We will teach you the choreography and then swap for your choreography. Let’s go!” Two winds took hold: The casual anything-goes approach to training processes, and one that involved completing a rigorous rehearsal, no matter what.¹⁰⁷

Like the leeward and windward image used by Cape Verdeans to describe the archipelagic divide, I used the wind metaphor to convey the idea—reflected from the interviews, conversations, and observations of RDP participants—that some greater force outside of the company’s control was responsible for some of dancers’ actions.



Figure 47. *Waiting*. Waiting for the Raiz di Polon Company to arrive for rehearsal in the national auditorium. May 2012.

¹⁰⁷ Fieldnotes. May 2012.

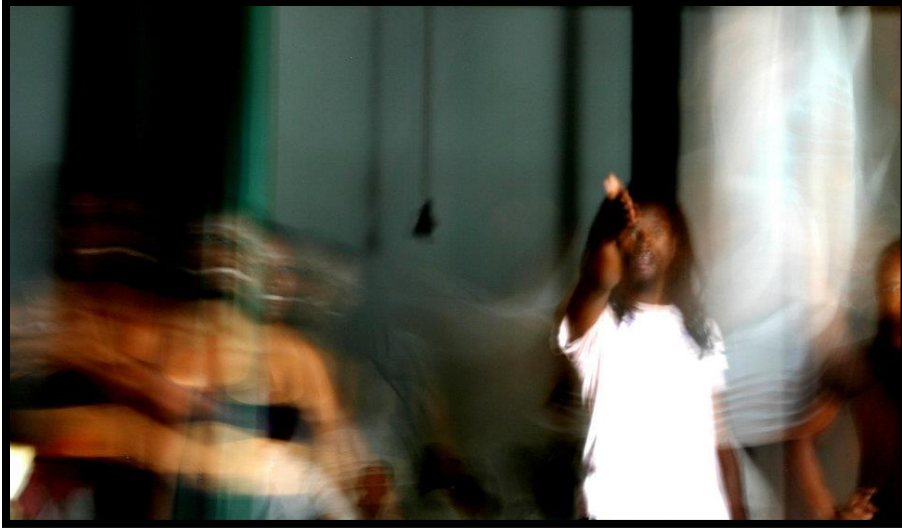


Figure 48. *Winds*. Zecca Cardoso and Suzanna Tavares dancing in the national auditorium. May 2012.

Raiz di Polon members used two competing yet complimentary philosophic winds to support the company's approach to creating a community of dancers. One approach was to maintain what Stuart Hall calls "interconnectedness" and to enable staged dances to be accessible and open to everyone who wants to participate, even those who arrive late or who arrive with varying degrees of dance experience. The other approach was to professionalize Raiz di Polon as an academy and company that would push Cape Verdeans to support dance as a profession—to enable dancers like Suzanna Tavares and Zecca Cardoso to concentrate more fully on their rehearsals and *become* dance professionals. While I was able to observe these two philosophic winds as clear articulations of the Raiz di Polon ideology, I also noted consistently that both the impetus and the consequence of these philosophies were the product of some greater force outside of the company's control. As informants explained, acceptance of powerlessness is part of the Cape Verdean cosmopolitan picture, and parallel to many situations. For example, when Amilcar Monteiro was asked why no one was protesting some detrimental construction projects on the islands' famous beaches, he explained:

This is a passive country, and many people are still stuck in the slave mentality,

especially here in the cosmopolitan capital. People don't realize that it is their own responsibility to make change, but instead, many just follow rules and act as if this outside force is responsible for problems, not them. I organized a big protest about the Electra power outages, and only 200 people came! I think sometimes in the arts it the same. Being proactive is not always proactive, but we are slowly trying to change that. (Amilcar Monteiro, pers. comm. February 10, 2013).

As Monteiro said, the effects of colonial subjugation maintain a very strong residue in the islands. At times, these powerful winds work together from the same direction to resemble Hall's image of the cosmopolitan utopia creating a buzz of diligent student participation, audience enthusiasm, and well-attended performances. At other times, these goals appear to work in opposition to one another, causing frustratingly stagnant dry spells with little creative movement, missed rehearsals, and low student participation. Tavares and Cardoso wanted to follow rules and arrive on time, but the rules, like rehearsal times, are loosely enforced because the dancers facing the difficulties are the ones who create and enforce the rules.

The fluctuation between these two winds also resembles the division that Victor Turner notes about how societies function at large, which he sees as related to the cyclical balance between *communitas* and structure.¹⁰⁸ *Communitas* is a term that Victor Turner uses to describe feelings of intense togetherness. At times, structure is temporarily suspended, only to re-cycle and reignite feelings of intense togetherness. Raiz di Polon dance classes, however, feature concurrent elements of *communitas* and structure. However, rather than thinking about rehearsals as a point along Turner's cycles, I use the metaphor of winds because working towards both a structured dance system (a system of evaluation, technique, hierarchical divisions between junior company and company, for example) and towards the maintenance of a tight-knit

¹⁰⁸ *Communitas* is a term that Victor Turner describes as feelings of intense togetherness, as outlined in his book, *The Ritual Process*, 1986. Turner sees ritual, for example, as a time during the cycle where structure is temporarily suspended, to reignite feelings of intense togetherness.

rule-less community, often occur simultaneously, which sometimes negatively affects the form's development.

Due to the lack of financial autonomy within the state's cultural sector, Raiz di Polon often receives funding from the French, Portuguese, and Brazilian Cultural Centers that sponsor and produce many of the cultural events in Praia, including Raiz di Polon performances. According to producer and business manager Jeff Hessney, Raiz di Polon's resources are mostly European Union cultural sector grants. Larger sponsorships that the company has received are almost always connected to dance festivals outside of the islands.¹⁰⁹ The tensions between keeping contemporary dance democratized and "local" while also pushing for a more professional structure are tied to these sponsorships. As Stuart Hall notes, "The differences of power and resources override the interconnectedness" (Hall 2008, 345). Raiz di Polon and the State have less power than their international fiscal sponsors. Even if Mano Preto produces work without consciously intending to show it to a European audience, he has to be aware of the expectations, standards, models, and techniques connected to the international network that helps fund the company. An example of negotiating expectations can be shown by the impact of the power imbalance between Cape Verde and the countries that often host or sponsor Lusophone artistic endeavors on the multicultural work that Raiz di Polon produces. As Krista Fabian notes about the National Dance Company of Ghana's strategies, "[T]raditional dances have to suit the needs of modern contexts to survive in urban and international markets," and awareness of other strategies and methods is key (1996, 15). Similarly, as Andrée Grau has written, people who

¹⁰⁹ Recent examples, reflecting travel to over 40 countries, include: "World Expo" in Shanghai, China 2010, "Festival del Sur" in the Canary Islands 2012, "FESTLIP" in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 2009, "PolyZentral" in Hamburg Germany 2003, "Belém Cultural Center Expo" in Lisbon, Portugal 2001.

control resources also control taste, through establishing canons, promoting one form of dance over another—usually ballet in the past—or presenting non-establishment work in such a way as to reinforce the dominant power (2000, 8).

Bety Fernandes, founding member of Raiz di Polon and an educator in Praia, explained:

Sometimes I am shy and ashamed that we don't have more technique. When I travel to Europe, for example, it is difficult not to feel those pressures. It makes me want to have more ballet training, more, you know, technical skills. So sometimes we try to incorporate those techniques here (Pers. comm. July 18 2012).

Despite the presence of these outside pressures that push Mano Preto to train his dancers to be more physically versatile, these influences do not dominate. Such a perspective would deny Raiz di Polon intellectual autonomy. The publication, *SOCA* stated the following about Raiz di Polon:

Cape Verde has never had, and never will believe that the tradition of classical dance, which, to be practiced, must be grown almost from the cradle. . . . [T]he dance as a cultural manifestation of spontaneous Cape Verdean people, was born with the very formation of the Cape Verdean society.”¹¹⁰

Raiz di Polon members are proud of their ability to “spontaneously” take on new skills as a part of their cultural ideology. Rather than emphasize outside pressures, importance lies in how Raiz di Polon must consciously work to incorporate or resist the pressures that they endure from being at the crossroads of various powerful stages. Mano Preto and dancers are aware that the global circle of sponsorship of which they are a part is tied to elite power.

Hall's ideas of power and cosmopolitan societies can also be applied to the dance community within the “island nations” of the archipelago. The lack of arts funding in Cape Verde often stirs up competition among budding artists, which often raises questions about class,

¹¹⁰ Translated from “Num Olhar a Dança CaboVerdiana.” *SOCA* online. Author unknown.
http://soca.cv/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=58:raiz-di-polon&catid=28:danca&Itemid=37
accessed August 11, 2013.

island allegiance, and preferential treatment. One dancer, who had to stop dancing due to a lack of space and financial support, would often say to me, “Raiz di Polon, Raiz di Polon, why are you focusing on them so much? They are the only company that anyone ever talks about, and they are elitist. There are other groups!” (Dinana Marquez, pers. comm. August 18, 2010). Similarly, other rising choreographers on Santiago Island who do not even perform the same kind of dance, expressed frustration that “the government only supports Raiz di Polon. What about urban dance styles like hip hop?” When I asked that dancer if he had ever applied for funding, or what support other dancers’ received that they wanted, he responded, “Well no. We didn’t apply. But they receive money from the government, I know.” The dancer’s response is understandable because grant writing, portfolio building, and other processes involved in applying for funding in Praia and abroad are learned skills that are not being taught to new Cape Verdean dancers.

Mano Preto and Jeff Hessney are aware of these emerging contestations and rivalries for attention and funding. They see competition as not a sign of division within the budding nucleus, but rather a sign that the dance community is growing. “We are the only ones really trying to make work professional,” Jeff explains. “We occasionally receive support in the form of plane tickets, for example, because we are the only ones actively focused upon refining our artistic voice through quality dance, and then later actively seeking support.” Class lines are drawn among members of the greater dance nucleus regardless of Raiz di Polon’s diverse membership, because recipients of scarce financial support are often misjudged as “elite.” As Djamila Reis, member of Raiz di Polon explains, “People assume that we are elitist or only perform for an elite audience because Mano Preto is on the Ministry of Culture, and because we receive aid to go to international festivals. But those things took place because of the work, not the other way

around” (Djamila Reis, pers. comm. 2012). She continued, “People construct these elitist lines instead of pushing their own work to justify their place in the same pool of support. We just have to keep focusing on making work that we believe in, continuing to professionalize the field, and welcoming everyone that we can to participate.”

Mano Preto and people associated with Raiz di Polon do not consider themselves to be a part of an elite community circle, although success invites that assumption. Mano Preto and Jeff Hessney have made choices over the last ten years to counteract these stigmas. They encourage people to attend performances, share their rehearsal space with other groups, and learn more about contemporary dance regardless of class or experience. Additionally, when students in the adult evening class were asked where they lived, their answers varied, from the poorer distant zones of Ponto D’Agua to wealthier areas of Palmarejo. As I visited many of these students and company members’ homes, I can testify firsthand that they live in all areas of the city.

Place and Space: Raiz di Polon as Community Institution

After we had performed concerts and started to tour abroad, so many people were watching our rehearsals. High school students especially would come to watch after school. We started letting people join us during our warm-ups and exercises. So in 2005 we turned the observers into students, and started a school to train them.

—Mano Preto, 2012

Democratic openness and community engagement are intrinsic to Cape Verdean traditional social dances and are also central to the philosophy of Associação Cultural Raiz di Polon, which now includes both the school and company. The school began with a strategy of inclusion, aimed at shifting the art form from an activity that only a select few were exploring to one in which others could participate. Company rehearsals are typically once a day, five days a week. A children’s class occurs three days each week after school, and one community adult

class takes place in the evenings four to five days a week depending on the time of year. Cynthia Novak mentions that contemporary dance in Raiz di Polon's network is encouraged to be a "way of life," not because Raiz di Polon members live together but because anyone who wants to participate is encouraged to watch, learn, ask questions, attend performances, and dance. The open cultural mentality that Cultural Minister Mario Lucio de Sousa says defines Cape Verdean people manifests through the phrase, "anyone can learn this" in the Raiz di Polon studio. This philosophy is visible through the studio's location and the ways that, even with limited space and limited resources, technique is taught with inclusion in mind.

The Raiz di Polon studio is located in Plateau, which is one of the wealthiest neighborhoods of the city. Located on a "plateau" hovering above the city, this zone hosts many of the government offices, Chinese general stores, courts, and banks. If we think along the lines of Michel Foucault's notion of the panopticon, Plateau as a zone serves as a central power as it overlooks the rest of the city. Many of plateau's wealthy offices have points of view that enable workers to observe all other areas of the city, "inducing a state of consciousness and visibility," as Plateau's powerful presence resonates (Foucault 1979, 201). Conversely, person can always see Plateau from various parts of the city below. Amilcar Monteiro explains, "When older houses were built on Santiago Island, they used to face away from the ocean and towards Praia, where the important offices were."¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Amilcar Monteiro, Manager, Sustainable Tourism Organization of Praia, February 2013, Maramar Project interview. Monteiro was elaborating upon the nation's relationship to the ocean when he explained that originally, houses faced away from the ocean and towards Plateau. But as people began to love the ocean, houses soon began to face the ocean and away from Plateau.



Figure 49. *Plateau from Below*. Plateau, the zone that sits highest in the capital, as viewed from Gamboabeach. 2012. Photo courtesy of Zé Pereira.



Figure 50. *Plateau to Below*. View from the top of Palacio da Cultura Cultural Center rooftop, looking both inland away from the water, and downwards from the top of Plateau. 2013.

Plateau is the epicenter of the elite class and would therefore not be the ideal location for a school and training grounds open to everyone. However, daily life in Plateau hosts an array of people of various class backgrounds, from the bustling produce market, to people working in general stores, to the famous *sucupira* market where goods from all over the world are sold. When people say, “I’m going to Praia” within the capital city of Praia, they mean the specific zone of Plateau, not to be confused with the word *praia* which means, beach. Almost all busses pass through Plateau on route to other zones. When I worked with dance students on a site-specific dance film, the students wanted the largest audience possible, and insisted that we do some of our filming in Plateau. Raiz di Polon company member Luís da Rosa explained that when classes and rehearsals were taught in the national auditorium in the area just below Plateau, a space that almost triples the studio floor in size, dancers preferred the location in Plateau because of its greater accessibility (Luís da Rosa, pers. comm. May 20, 2012).

Teaching in the rehearsal studio in Plateau is not an easy task. The space is very small, and students often trip on the cracks between the wooden floorboards. “Why can’t we go down to the National Auditorium? That space is so expansive and the floor is fantastic!” I asked a close friend who was a student in my class. “Sara. It seems like it is better there. But Plateau is so much more central. That five-minute walk down below to *Varzia* makes a difference between having a full class, and no class at all” (Monica Andrade, pers. comm. February 16, 2012). The convenient location in Plateau makes it more likely that students will be encouraged to participate. Participation and group togetherness outweigh having ample space to dance.

Raiz di Polon therefore grows at the geographic crossroads within the capital cosmopolitan city. Within Plateau, the Raiz di Polon studio is located on the only pedestrian street prohibited to cars and hosting the most foot traffic. More specifically, they are located at a

juncture at the end of the street where women sell hand-cooked sweets and snacks, across from a court, the PAICV office, bus stops, a school, Chinese shops, and a hair salon. The women who sell these snack items often run into the dance studio, even during the middle of a company rehearsal, to hide their goods because selling food on the pedestrian street is illegal. Ironically, the women “hide” in the artistic refuge of the rehearsal space even though the space is owned by the State. Nevertheless, this high-traffic location makes it probable a passersby will take note of the bustle inside the dance studio, which often includes vocalizations, foot stomping, and loud music, catching pedestrians slightly off guard, since the building itself is unremarkable.

“Sometimes I just like to walk by on my way to work to see if they are training. Sure, they are beautiful. But they inspire me. They are working hard at something. Something different,” said one passerby (Anonymous, pers. comm. October 20, 2012). When the two studios within the space are in use, the doors are left open to allow for air flow, attracting tourists, women selling food, and schoolchildren, who stop to watch rehearsals and performances. [See Figure 51 and Figure 53.]

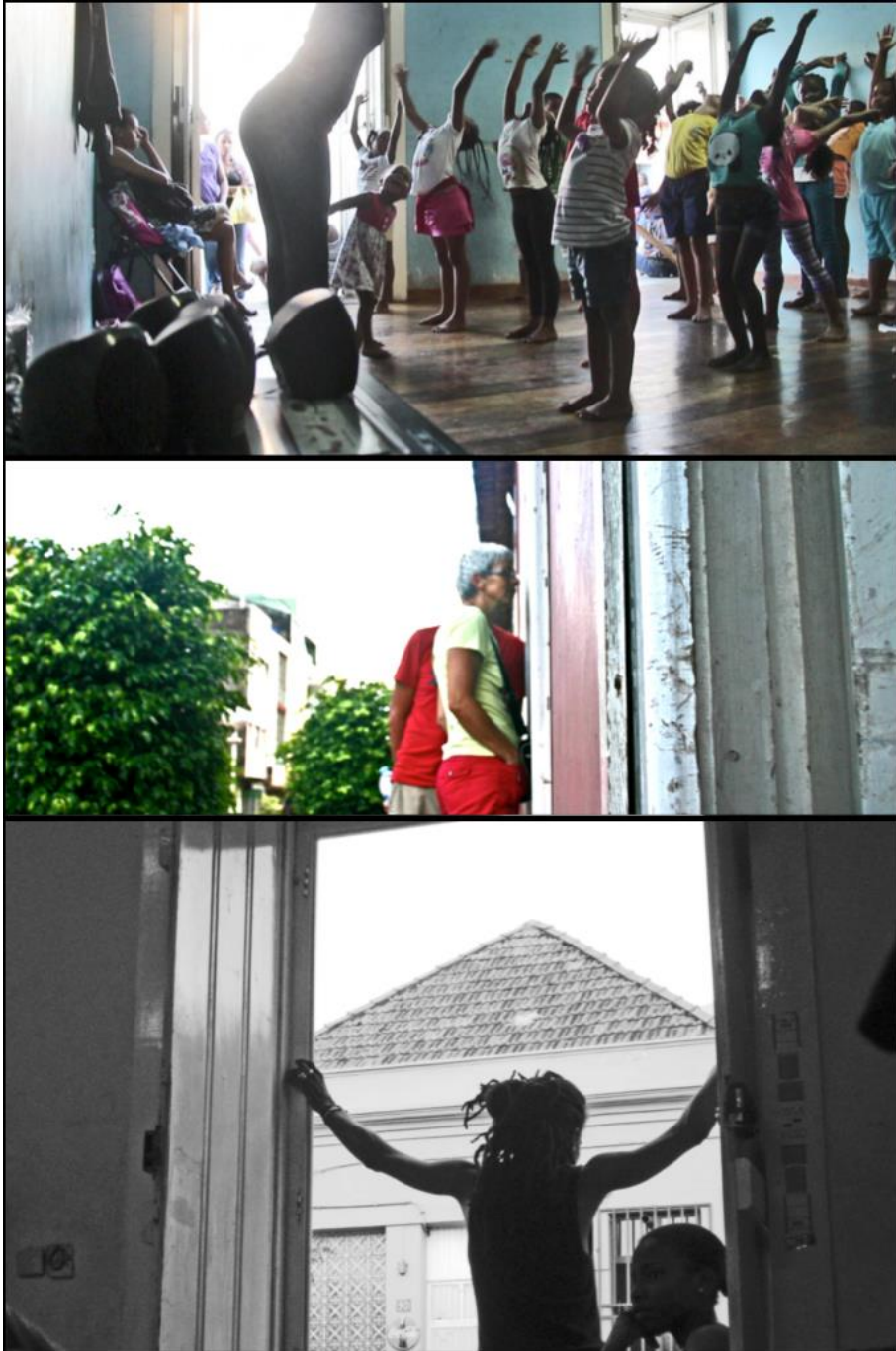


Figure 51. *Studio Montage*. Image of one of two studios in the Raiz di Polon space. TOP: “Watching and Learning.” People gathered outside the doors to watch. Ondiana, the young daughter of one of the company members, wanders in to dance with the children and begins imitating them. MIDDLE: A Portuguese tourist stands watching next to a man who works at Foto Cardoso, the camera store down the street. 2012 BOTTOM: Company member Luis da Rosa looking out from the studio while catching his breath from rehearsal. 2010.

The Raiz di Polon rehearsal space is state-owned; aside from paying electric bills for

power usage, the company does not have to pay for use of the space. State support, in the form of free space and access to the national auditorium's resources, makes it possible to offer free children and adult classes to the community. Jeff Hessney and Mano Preto permit other local groups to use the space, such as Monaroda, a dance group for disabled people; Enigma, a circus-style dance group; and Nuno Barreto, a Raiz di Polon dancer who is trying to work as an independent artist. Raiz di Polon company members previously gave community classes in schoolhouses in areas of the island where access to the arts is even scarcer. However, in the last three years funds to cover the dancers' transportation costs have been too limited and the activities were halted. Company members take pride in these community activities. The Raiz di Polon website declares, "No attention is paid to the social and economic differences that could, in other circumstances or at other times during their day (at school, at work, in their leisure time) determine their company or social milieu."¹¹²

Instructors who teach Raiz di Polon classes are not paid to teach. "We do it because we consider ourselves ambassadors," says Suzanna Tavares, who recently moved from the junior student company to the main company and who teaches the children's classes in the evenings. She continues, "We see this art as a unique and special place to explore, and I am honored to be a part of it in whatever way I can" (Suzanna Tavares, pers. comm. Oct 9, 2012). Because the classes are free, people who might not otherwise be able to afford dance classes are encouraged to participate. "In our classes, you have the president's daughter dancing next to someone from the ghetto. Those class lines don't exist here," Mano Preto says (pers. comm. July 27, 2008). For example, in Palmarejo, a wealthy area of the city, a new dance academy, Sol da Sahara, opened

¹¹² Raiz di Polon website <http://www.rafaelourique.com/raizdipolon.com/escolaenglish.html>, accessed June 1, 2013.

in 2011 and offers ballet, belly dancing, and hip hop dance. Children must pay for these classes and typically only the children in that immediate neighborhood would be able to afford to take classes. I was invited to teach ballet at Sol da Sahara. I noticed that the children attending the Palmarejo ballet class were predominantly from Palmarejo because while their parents picked them up after class, almost all of them walked home from the school. But children and adults who attend the Raiz di Polon community classes are not bound to attend because of class prices.



Figure 52. *Ballerinas*. Students in ballet class at Academia de Dança Sol de Sahara that I taught in 2012.



Figure 53. *Nucleus*. TOP: Mano Preto (doorway) overseeing multiple groups, including Enigma who dances on stilts. (People in the dance community hanging out together outside of the RDP studio before their collective performance at the 2012 Kriol Music Festival). BOTTOM LEFT: Onlookers from the pedestrian street. BOTTOM RIGHT: Monaroda, a dance group for disabled people, rehearses. 2012.

Mano Preto seeks to professionalize contemporary Cape Verdean dance and to validate the hard work that students put into the company and junior company. “Cape Verde doesn’t have a culture yet for viewing contemporary dance on stages. Sometimes it is hard to get people to pay to see what we are trying to do. Cape Verde doesn’t have the same history of going to see the ballet, theater, and dance,” said Jõao Neves, former program director of the Portuguese Cultural Center in Praia. “We support Raiz di Polon’s work because we are trying to help the community change that” (Jõao Neves, pers. comm. June 10, 2012). Bruno Amarante, a 22-year old emerging contemporary and urban dance choreographer in Praia agrees. “We need to validate dance and make it more professional, so that dancers can get the respect that they deserve,” (Bruno Amarante, pers. comm. 2012). Amarante lived part of his life in Lisbon and seeks to create a similarly thriving dance-going community there while trying to open his own dance school for urban dances like hip-hop.

Mano Preto has begun the process of professionalization by making contemporary dance more visible and a community endeavor. As Preto explains, “I believe another necessary step is in the pedagogy. I have plans to make our school into more of an academy. The establishment of a professional dance community requires the institutionalization of dance through the creation of a more rigorous school so as to develop set standards of success” (pers. comm. 2012). He believes that raising the bar of contemporary dance and establishing a more defined dance school will not only address the technical needs of dance students who aim to enter the company in the future, but it will prepare Cape Verdean society to be more “literate” in concert dance. Few Cape Verdeans will pay what seems to be reasonable ticket prices to attend concert dances—which would help the company to create more elaborate work locally—because dance is considered to be something that everyone can do socially. “Dancing is in our blood. Anyone can dance. Why

should they pay for this?” says Suzanna Tavares, trying to explain to me why so many of her friends who work as low-wage vendors would often pay for two beers (the typical equivalent of one concert ticket) but not pay to attend a performance. Raiz di Polon principle dancer Bety Fernandes, who recently open up her own small arts school for young children, believes that this appreciation stems from recruiting the participation of students. “As children experience the benefits of dance and their families become involved, so too will their friends and families in individual neighborhoods” (Bety Fernandes, pers. comm. July 18, 2012).

The idea of solidifying a pedagogy and challenging students within a community class seems to complement the idea of creating a democratic dance community in which anyone can participate. However, creating a school and establishing a rigorous pedagogy often comes into conflict with Raiz di Polon’s free open-door policy. While dancers in the company are committed to performing and rehearsing, they do not put rehearsals above paid income work outside of dance and often arrive late to rehearsals. Students often miss classes—and because there are no attendance policies and because they do not pay, they are not held accountable for the ways in which their attendance affects group cohesion. Group membership, technical mastery, and skill accumulation depend upon long-term commitment over time, which can be difficult when so much of the school’s atmosphere that encourages participants to attend is based upon loose rules, openness, and teaching one another. Raiz di Polon students and company members continue to participate based on a Foucaultian disciplinary paradigm of modernity in which students experience discipline as an internal force rather than an outside, external force (Foucault 1979, 172; O’Shea 2007, 43). Foucault applied these ideas to the ways in which prison architecture encouraged prisoners to internalize discipline, and this disciplinary model applies to RDP models of teaching.

Perpetuating discipline through an open-door community class has worked for 8 years with the school, and for over 13 years for the company; the discipline stems from dancers' and students' desire to continue to learn. "I keep coming back because there is nothing like it. It's new and familiar at the same time," says one student. RDP has both committed to the expansion of community in the dance space and also to the creation of an institution that supports the development of discipline as an internal, shifting structure. The phrase "community institution" applies to Raiz di Polon because it emphasizes how this evolving dance community represents an oxymoron: Institution implies standards of conduct and evaluation, while community implies democracy and emotional connections. Raiz di Polon seems to sway in and out of both of these categories. As a result of this undisciplined and disciplined set of bodies, a corporeal Kriolu lexicon is emerging.

Deepening the Crossroads: Exchanging and Sponging

For Raiz di Polon, intercultural exchange is not only a part of quotidian life in the cosmopolitan capital, but more specifically, arranged exchanges benefiting from the crossroads are fundamental to Raiz di Polon pedagogy. One of the most common overheard words in Cape Verde is, "*Aproveita!*" which means, "Take advantage!" Raiz di Polon's school encourages a diverse close-knit community network while simultaneously working towards a more professional academy by welcoming guest teachers with varying movement vocabularies into the rehearsals, children's' classes, and adult classes. Dance scholar Randy Martin, in his book *Critical Moves*, emphasizes how using multiple pedagogies is fundamental to institutional learning. Martin notes that, "disparate technical sensibilities are embodied in the same dancer. . . . In a formal nod to the desirability of such diversity as constitutive of a dancer's training, the

technique classes at the university are taught by different teachers on different days” (2012, 167). The concept of multiple pedagogies appears obvious because diverse training creates a versatile dancer. However, because no arts education centers or arts programs at a university currently exist in Plateau, except for one small music practice program at the University of Cape Verde, cultivating this hybrid technique manifests casually via the islands’ coming-and-going traffic and through personal invitations into the Raiz di Polon space. Personal invitations and grassroots organizing maintains an informal community atmosphere while encouraging technical diversity, without the model of a university.

Guest teachers have included someone like me, a foreigner who introduced myself as a dancer and who expressed interest in taking the open community classes before being asked to teach. During the years that I attended Raiz di Polon classes and company rehearsals, guest teachers included a yoga instructor, who was the American wife of a Cape Verdean diplomat; a gyrotonic instructor;¹¹³ a Cape Verdean-American dancer who taught Malian West African dance; a Boston-based American choreographer; a Spanish contact-improvisation dancer; and a Portuguese karate instructor—all of whom happened to be visiting for varying reasons. With the exception of Deborah Goff, the choreographer from Boston, these teaching exchanges were not planned far ahead of time. Mano Preto would often tell a handful of students that a guest teacher would likely teach that week, and the announcement was spread through word-of-mouth. Other guests have included people living within Praia, such as Cape Verdean Taibo teacher Sanjé Ramos who Mano Preto invites to diversify the Raiz di Polon Company warm-up. On the one hand, Preto’s incorporations of predominantly *foreign* instructors (or Cape Verdeans who

¹¹³ Gyrotonics, established by Juliu Horvath in Romania, a fusion of yoga and dance-like physical fitness emphasizing alignment and upright movement.

acquired a skill when abroad) place authoritative emphasis on foreign training, associating the school with a circle of well-traveled global citizens. This connection perpetuates a stereotype of elitism. However, at the same time, these guest classes emphasize the way in which various class circles are brought together on the dance floor.



Figure 54. *Get to Know You*. Stretching and getting to know one another after guest teacher Leida Tolentino's "Lamban" class (Guinea/Mali-based rhythm.) Photo below taken by a student with my camera. 2013.

Because Preto does not offer payment to guest teachers, the instructors who share their skills are doing it for the love of the community, the experience of teaching, and as part of their *sodadi* for Cape Verde. Leida Tolentino, for example, refers to her teaching as connected to *sodadi* and a give-and-take process. [See Figure 54.] She refers to the Raiz di Polon practice space as “family” space. She says:

I am Cape Verdean and I hold a special place in my heart for Raiz di Polon and the work they do. The diversity that they stand for. When I come home I always stop by and join in. Reunite. Giving a class and sharing one of my passions (West African dance idioms) that might be new for many people is like a *despedida* and a welcome home all at the same time (Leida Tolentino, pers. comm. 2013).

Although I do not have Cape Verdean parents like Tolentino, my own returns to Praia were impacted by my *sodadi* for my Raiz di Polon family, and I considered my time as part of a give-and-take process. For example, I participated in the free community class, and I felt that teaching was payment for taking the class. Furthermore, while I have over 20 years of experience as a *student* of various movement styles, a one-directional experience that is typical of Euro-American dance schools where teaching is not a part of the student experience, I have little *teaching* experience as a dance instructor. I was grateful for the opportunity to, as Preto would say, “Just learn by doing it. Don’t worry if you haven’t taught before, you are a teacher just by being a dancer.” (Mano Preto, pers. comm. 2012). “We want to take advantage of your time here, and learn something new. Share!” said Kaká Oliveira, one of the instructors who usually teaches the adult community class and was eager to give up his days for me to instruct. Similarly, Suzanna Tavares and company members do not dance and teach for payment in monetary terms. “We are ambassadors,” Suzanna tells me. “We realize that we have a large role to play. We represent both high art, and the art of the people, and we are grateful to have that opportunity. That honor is our payment.” (Suzanna Tavares, pers. comm. October 9, 2012).

Cynthia Novak, in her book *Sharing the Dance*, writes about how contact improvisation served as a tool for building community in the United States in the post-Vietnam era because “emphasis had been placed on the physical dialogue between dancers” as opposed to the “choreographic shaping of materials” in rehearsals (Novak 1998, 11). In the case of Raiz di Polon, teaching exchanges, too, provide a shift away from the choreographic shaping of materials emphasized in surrounding Cape Verdean dance groups.¹¹⁴

First, no other contemporary dance groups are experimenting with the construction of a new “contemporary dance” technique, which makes participants the “first generation” of contemporary dancers. Second, most dance groups utilize a system in which students emulate the choreography of a teacher or director, or where a lead dancer demonstrates the director’s choreography. Randy Martin calls this “pedagogical synecdoche,” where one dancer stands in for the whole and marks an economy through which dancers accumulate the teacher’s favor (Martin 1998, 165). In contrast, Raiz di Polon places an emphasis upon an exchange of ideas. In the company warm-up, for example, various company members take turns leading aspects of the warm-up. While they may have learned their warm-up ideas from Mano Preto, the alternating process ensures equality among the dancers. Being a student and a teacher are part of the same training process, which reflects how Cape Verdeans have learned music and dance traditionally (Hurley-Glowa 1997). Bety Fernandes’ account of learning dance echoes these circumstances:

Well of course my uncles and my family taught me how to dance. It was a family thing. Celebrations, you know. In the living room, just like any traditional dance. And as soon as we can dance—be it *zouk* or *coladeira* or anything—we teach our siblings. There isn’t really a line between being a student and being a teacher. And contemporary dance explorations should be the same. But also I do worry that our youth is slowly losing interest in learning traditional dances, so we are

¹¹⁴ I am not speculating here but, rather, basing this conclusion on my experience observing the rehearsals of other dance groups, including “traditional” styles and *batuko* drumming groups. In most of these groups a single director and perhaps one junior co-director leads rehearsals, placing little emphasis on diverse leadership.

concerned with all of these things. That's why the school is so important. To preserve traditions while creating new ones in their honor.



Figure 55. *Bety Fernandes*. Principle dancer and lead educator Bety Fernandes rehearses with Raiz di Polon. 2013.

Bety Fernandes' commentary raises two important issues. First, she notes the transition from learning through individual family members to learning through a school. This parallels the shifts that Janet O'Shea discusses in her book chapter "Tradition and the Individual Dance," as she examines the history of professionalization of Bharata Natyam forms. When dancer Rukmini Devi created a dance school in the 1930s, she shifted the individual one-on-one, style-focused learning method to standardizing the dance within an academy. One effect of this particular strategy was that by transitioning allegiance from individual instruction to a school, the dance became more egalitarian (O'Shea 2007, 43). In the Raiz di Polon case, however, a key difference

is that in addition to emphasizing a sense of equality in access to *learning* a dance form, creating a school also stemmed from a fear of losing the dances themselves, as fewer and fewer children and teens are as inclined to ask their family members about movement traditions or to be taught them altogether. Therefore the creation of a school has made dance more accessible to participants who might not otherwise have access to learning traditional rhythms or contemporary forms.

Bety Fernandes' commentary also highlights the blending of the teacher/student role within the Raiz di Polon School, a situation that has arisen out of necessity because there are not many self-identified dance teachers in Cape Verde. Establishing a school has enabled dance practitioners to group together and learn how to build a pedagogy, rather than relying on informal individual family demonstrations. This exchange between student and teacher has become intrinsic to Raiz di Polon training where students learn to be students and teachers simultaneously.

Ritual scholar Victor Turner defines ritual processes as related to spiritual values and rites of passage between social statuses (Turner 1982, 94-130). While classes and rehearsals at RDP do not encompass a discussion of spiritual values nor do they address a specific social transition from one status to another, a sharing philosophy creates the “intense feelings of equality and togetherness” that characterize his concept of feeling of intense togetherness called *communitas* (Turner 1969, 96). Turner says that ritual events, or as Catherine Bell terms them, “ritual-like manifestations,” serve as opportunities for *communitas* to be reignited through processes of transformation (Turner 1969, 96; Bell 1997, 93). In the case of RDP, classes taught by guests are often short lasting (one day to three weeks) and unpredictable as to when they will occur, which make each such class special. As one student tells me after my class:

We get to know these different styles—you know, Mano’s and your style of contemporary [dance], or something we usually only see on YouTube—in a very limited amount of time, so when they occur we are overjoyed with excitement. Just like when family members come to visit—we have to be grateful for how long the visits last, which makes them all the more meaningful! (Amilton Monteiro, pers. comm. August 11, 2012).

Another student describes the Raiz di Polon group with its mix of foreign guests as a process of rediscovery. “It’s like we are always getting to know one another—ourselves, classmates, and visitors—because we learn something new together, and then that changes what we know and what we teach to each other.” Then, the group name Raiz di Polon, not only denotes the now famous select group of company members and their national narratives and athletic performances, but also the nucleus of an expanding dance community. As Michael De Certeau explains, space and place are differentiated by meaning; a place becomes a space by the cultivation of meaning through social interaction (Certeau 1988, 117). For members of the Raiz di Polon community, the title denotes a *space* within Praia where the practice of exchange cultivates meaning through give-and-take, getting to know one another, and appealing *sodadi*.

Relying on intermittent passersby and vacationers who are also movement instructors is not the only method for encouraging hybrid contemporary dance community and a hybrid dance form. International musicians and dancers en route to the European and African continents often include Cape Verde in their international tours, thanks to the collaborative efforts between the Ministry of Culture and the cultural institutes like the French, Brazilian, and Portuguese Cultural Centers (CCF, CCB, and CCP). For example, when Fatou Cissé from Senegal and Maman Sani from Niger arrived to Praia to perform, the CCF and Ministry of Culture set up an exchange between Raiz di Polon and these artists during one of the company’s daytime rehearsals. While a collaborative movement class or exchange was not possible due to time constraints, all of the dancers had a chance to talk together about the meaning of contemporary dance. “I don’t see

what I do as African dance, or contemporary dance. I don't even know what contemporary dance is," said Fatou Cissé. "Everyone is going to interpret what I do differently, and that is part of what I love about performing. Meaning changes for everyone." "I agree," said Suzanna Tavares. "I think the most important thing is to really be present, and if you have something to say, meaning will find its connection among people no matter where they are from." This conversation, in which participants spoke in Portuguese, French, and Kriolu, represented a very simple and quintessential aspect of Cape Verdean contemporary dance: the getting-to-know-you exchange. Just days before this meeting, Suzanna Tavares and Zecca Cardoso were saying that they wished that they had more exposure to dancers from other parts of the world, and that they felt isolated. "When someone comes to town, we try to take advantage and you know... sponge. Even if it is a conversation. It all helps us learn, and learning is what contemporary dance is for us. A space to learn how to say what we believe in our bodies, and a space to learn about how others do the same in the world," said Tavares. And days after sharing this frustration, we were all "sponging" off of one another with two award-winning African choreographers. The Raiz di Polon Company and many members from the adult community class went to see Fatou Cissé and Maman Sani's performance. As we sat together and watched the performance together, we were all learning together.



Figure 56. *Solo by Maman Sani*. Performance by Maman Sani, from Niger, at the Auditório Nacional, sponsored by the French Cultural Center.

In some ways these various exchanges with other dancers and guest teachers resemble a localized version of a dance festival or conference, where studio space hosted by arts institutions is instead a community room, workshops planned months in advance are instead planned on the spot, and participation fees are replaced with an honor system of respect. Contemporary dancers in Cape Verde thrive on love for discovering what the form can become. In other words, this hybrid dance form is not merely a result of a cosmopolitan multicultural population. The existence of this specific style is also the result of the select few who actively seek intercultural exchange and to exercise more control over the powerlessness and perhaps randomness that comes with living in a developing country at the crossroads.

Learning from the many teachers who pass through Raiz di Polon is useful and fundamental to forming a disciplined body that is versatile in many languages. But this sponging approach comes with consequences. “We feel a lot of anxiety about not having enough technique,” says Bety Fernandes. Her comments echo the words of many other dancers in Cape

Verde, even those whom I interviewed in another dance group on the other side of the island, who said, “Contemporary dance is about free liberty and expression. But sometimes I feel like we need more technique to do it.” In a series of brief interviews I asked dancers to tell me how they would define contemporary dance, and I asked that each person dance a movement corresponding to his or her answer. Almost all offered the same response. “Freedom! Liberty! Whatever I want!” they would say, splaying their limbs openly and spinning. [See Figure 57.] Recalling Chapter Three we can employ Susan Foster’s ideas of syntax—the “principles governing the selection and combination of movements,” according to descriptions by Cape Verdean informants, an outside force was “governing” their selection of movements and urging them that this myth of technique was necessary for contemporary dance to exist (Foster 1986, 59).

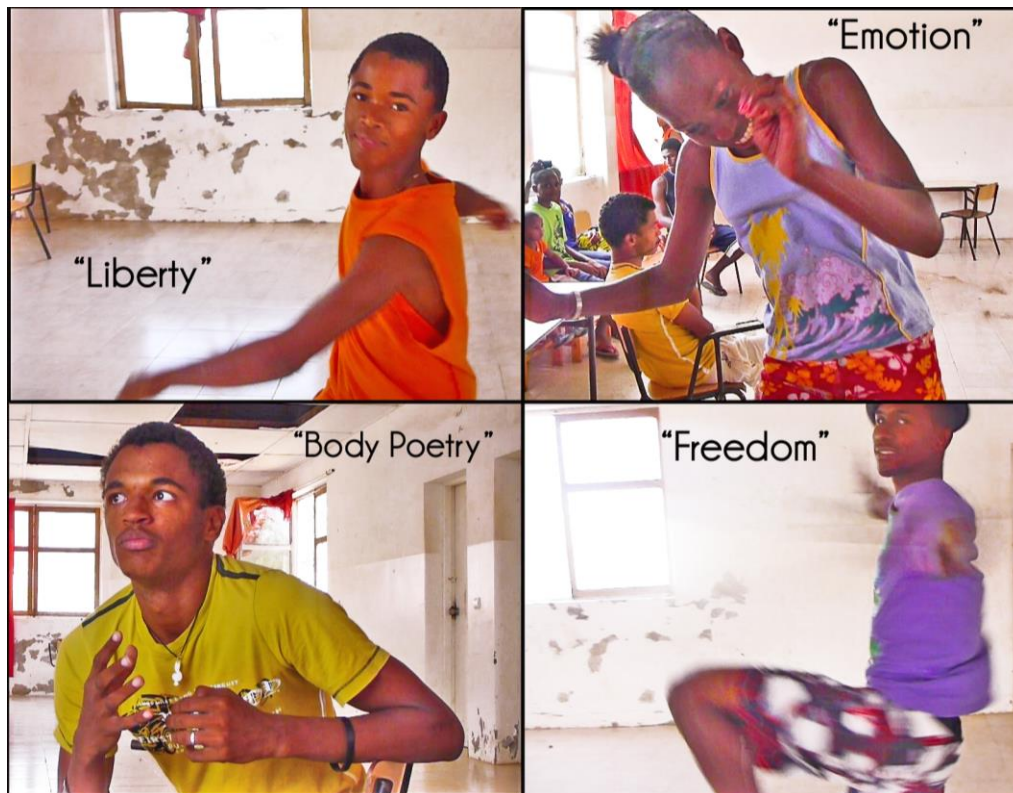


Figure 57. *Contemporary dance for me is...* Interview with the Fidjus di Bibinha Cabral dance group in Tarrafal, Santiago. The FBC group worked with German contemporary dancer Bé Von Vark in Portugal as

part of a film project; their understanding of contemporary dance forms circulates around that experience and those of neighboring groups like Raiz di Polon.

The responses in these very basic interviews conducted with Fidjus di Bibinha Cabral and students of Raiz di Polon echo the words of Sondra Fraleigh’s phenomenological study of modern dance, in which she views “freedom and individuality as the existential context of modern dance. . . . Modern dance has continuously elaborated on the notion of discovery” (Fraleigh 1987, xxiv). If modern and contemporary dance—two genre titles utilized interchangeably by people in Cape Verde—are understood as *liberal* forms, then these techniques are holding back the achievement of “complete freedom.”

Because dancers could not articulate exactly whose technique they were expected to utilize, nor could they explain why they had to master it, their talent developed in the same way as myths, in that stories of *finding* technique circulated more than understandings of what the technique *was* in pedagogical terms. Levi-Strauss provided a useful example when he “claimed that myths give order and structure to people who find themselves in situations of disorder and chaos” (Levi-Strauss 1978, 7). In Cape Verde, the oft-told story of technique as an encounter and transformable measure of success, gives hope to people trying to liberate themselves from what they perceive as an unruly and undisciplined dance scene.

Following Armin Geertz and Marshall Sahlins, ethnographer David Shorter explains that myths are “cosmological narratives that explain past events and provide models for interpreting and creating realities” and can change shape dependent upon the needs of the tellers and audience (Shorter 2009, 16). While their stories were not based upon *cosmological* narratives, RDP dancers would sometimes explain their practice based upon how close they were to having a specific technique, or how many times they had been away from the islands to find it.

Dependent upon who was discussing it, their technique would change shape in the story. For example, one dancer described technique as something that could be brought to Cape Verde: “Well when Bé [Be Von Vark from Germany] came to teach us, we *finally* got some technique,” said a Tarrafal dancer from FBC, who “finally” learned technique when German choreographer Bé Von Vark came to do a dance-film project in 2011.¹¹⁵ In other accounts, dancers implied that technique was something that you either have or don’t: “Well I don’t know what technique is exactly. We watch the American show ‘So You Think You Can Dance.’ We watch YouTube. You can just tell when people have technique.” (Bruno Amarante, pers. comm. June 7, 2012).¹¹⁶

The imprecise description of technique began to clarify in concrete words like, “tricks,” “agility,” “lightness,” “clean lines,” “control of the entire body,” and “when all dancers are perfectly together.” These elucidations reveal that technique was more specifically circulating as a metonym for European-American staged dance forms. Postcolonial after effects of European hegemony and commercial imperialism dominated personal expression and freedom associated with the dance genre. Robert Farris Thompson’s descriptions of African-based dance idioms in his book, *Aesthetic of Cool* include words like, “grounded,” “vigorous,” and “rhythmic” (2011, 25). Dancers whom I interviewed excluded these words in their descriptions because African-based approaches are not commonly associated with the word “technique.”

Aversions to Africanity resonate strongly among the Cape Verdean youth, even in the rural, *badiu* town of Tarrafal, where people openly take pride in their African roots. As dancers

¹¹⁵ I interviewed Bé Van Vark, who exclaimed, “The Cape Verdean dancers in Tarrafal were some of the most incredible people I have ever worked with. They are a very physical community and are accustomed to working with the land, and the most thrilling part of the project was empowering them to realize that they had their own techniques within their bodies, not just some of the basic skills I helped to teach them, like improvising, stretching, and ballet.”

¹¹⁶ In discussion with the rest of the KDM company group.

consider Euro-American techniques as requisite to express the Cape Verdean body, subtle residue of anti-African colonial ideas were revealed. Notions of technique as a mythological validating skill swarm as an example of yet another circulating “flash factor” (Chapter Two) in that understandings of technique would shift and fade quickly. Television, YouTube, music festivals, and music videos—where commercial dances are derived from classical ballet such as jazz, lyrical, and are performed by the powerhouses of American and European commercial culture and. —are their point of reference. Ironically, the search for corporeal liberation through technique is the opposite of liberation, as it binds dancers to hegemonic powers rather than individual self-expression.

Mano Preto both enjoyed and requested my contemporary dance class, a mix of release technique, ballet-inspired warm-ups, yoga, and capoeira, but was most interested in having me teach ballet to his students and to the company:

Sara, I want you to teach ballet to the children and to the company. We need ballet. Ballet is the root of technique all over the world. We need to have that here. I think ballet will be fundamental to improving our school.

Preto’s insistence upon teaching ballet was problematic. If I taught ballet, wouldn’t I be contributing negatively to “massive infiltration of ballet” that Marcia Siegel critiques as negatively affecting the birth of new dance forms (Siegel 2011, 194)? Mano Preto put ballet high up on a pedestal as the “root of technique all over the world,” emphasizing the European colonizer’s power by being the center of the world. Yet he has insisted repeatedly that the foundational technique in Raiz di Polon movement is Cape Verdean traditional dance.

Perhaps Preto’s enthusiasm for ballet is not problematic at all. In another context, *Técnicina Cubana*, the “uniquely Cuban contemporary dance technique,” was only possible because of the established ballet genre in the island; ballet served as a crucial revitalizing wave

that would propel the establishment of a Cuban contemporary technique (John 2012, 42). In addition, learning new techniques serves as a kind of rite of passage for dancers to later focus upon creativity, as Michèle Moss recounts about her experiences with developing jazz techniques. In a presentation called “The Dramatic Realities of Traditional Dance” at the 2007 conference, *Choreographies of Migration: Patterns of Global Mobility*,” Moss explains, “Know the roots, know the history, and then you can move forward to explore, create and innovate!” (Moss 2007, 163). Learning global techniques, then, serve as a gateway to focused national creativity.

Dances can have multiple “root” languages that can coexist as a kind of bilingualism. Dulce Almada Duarte argues that Cape Verde will not embrace bilingualism—the complete fluency of multiple languages under one language community—until the Cape Verdean languages are no longer divided by class. She explains that Portuguese is only spoken in official and very formal situations while Kriolu is spoken by the nation casually and in the subaltern community; the lingual landscape of Cape Verde reflects an example of diglossia— closely related languages used by a single language community—versus bilingualism (Duarte 2003, 45). In this way, through a process of corporeal creolization, and borrowing from several languages, Preto’s work can be seen as an attempt to shift a dance movement language metaphorically from diglossia to bilingualism.

Adopting ballet or other Western practices would not necessarily signify the adoption of that form’s entire systematic approach to dance. For example, as an instructor of ballet, I had control in the way that students perceived ballet. Unlike my teachers, who demanded soldier-like demeanors, absolute silence, and a uniform, while constantly pushing for perfection, my ballet classes were light-hearted, adapted without the ballet bar. My emphasis was upon encouraging

students to try to understand the anatomy of their own bodies rather than stressing perfection, unity, and discipline. I did this to keep students interested and encouraged, rather than implying that this form was higher in value than the dances that they learned from Mano Preto. For children's classes, arm positions and exercises were introduced as games. By contrast, the children adopted the soldier-like rigor when Preto entered the room to teach them a new *batuko* repertoire. My approach to teaching underscored the introduction of something new, without any kind of emphasis of comparative hierarchy. I hope that this helped maintain both the democratic atmosphere that was so prized in the Raiz di Polon community and the opportunity for expanded bilingual vocabulary, as I introduced ballet's steps and accompanying movement words.



Figure 58. *Trying on Ballet*. Author teaching ballet to the Raiz di Polon children's class. July 2012. Photo by the mother of one student with the author's camera.

Raiz di Polon company members and students appropriate from various visitors and

incorporate what they learn to more closely knit together their dance community through the development of a new, shared vocabulary, but members also continually borrow and sponge from their own Cape Verdean surroundings, which builds upon their understandings of their traditional dance vocabulary. For example, Mano Preto took his company to Cidade Velha during “Cidade Velha”’s creative process. In “Making of Cidade Velha,” a brief documentary clip made by RDP, company members improvise in the famous mosque of the city, smelling and breathing the air around them, and physically working with the cement and cobblestones to investigate how their bodies move in that particular atmosphere [See also Figure 29 in Chapter Three and Figure 59.] By dancing in the physical setting of Cidade Velha, dancers were not trying to imagine and imitate how people may have felt centuries ago. They were not consciously imitating a past. They were connecting to the historical town related to the piece as a group, finding movements based upon maneuvering around the physical features of the city. “Mano asked us to explore the space. And sometimes he knew what he wanted to see us try, and other times we were asked to create movement based upon how we felt individually. The concept of slavery was a collaborative concept that we came up with together,” Zecca Cardoso explains (pers. comm. 2012).

Dance and environmental studies scholar Andrea Olsen write in her book, *Body Stories*, “It is through the body that we can understand the earth and through the earth that we can understand the body;” Olsen asks that participants physically taste, smell, and utilize the senses to fully understand place (2002, 56). In this way, one can see how the cultural memory of Cidade Velha is experienced as each dancer connects with the place through their own histories, rather than, for example, through spiritual connections. An example of accessing cultural memory through spiritual connection would be that one could walk among ancestors or embody spirits,

such as in the cases of Brazilian *candomblé*. Dancers maintain a “terra terra” or “back to the roots” objective not by phenomenologically imagining what ancestors experience in that place, or by repeating traditional choreography from that place, but by weaving together individual experiences of the dancers. This experiential approach of Raiz di Polon differs from the traditional dance groups that I discussed earlier in Chapters 2 and 3, where preserving tradition is achieved through the repetition of early dance forms.

Site specific experiences can be illustrated through some of the dancers’ interpretations of their experiences in the city of Cidade Velha. I asked Rosy Timas how she developed her strong character in “Cidade Velha,” because her ability to create and perform characters is what Preto and others tell me are her strength as a dancer. She explained:

I don’t dwell on sorrow and *sodadi* and sadness. My movements are not to reenact that place or a person from that place. I am not even a character on stage. I am just me, or maybe more like a cloud. Traveling through different parts of my memory. My movements referring to my own experiences to that place. Of being in Cidade Velha. Experiences that don’t just have to do with Cape Verde. Feelings of being a stranger in my own hometown, or hearing people tell me that I sound like a foreigner when I’m from here. Those are the things that I thought about when we made movement in Cidade Velha, because being there reminded me of them. (pers. comm. 2012).

Rosy Timas’ experiences in the world were ignited through these site-specific trips to Cidade Velha. For Zecca Cardoso, the experience of visiting Cidade Velha as part of choreographic research was significant to him in terms of physical feelings, rather than phenomenologically imagining the isolation or madness that his ancestors may have experienced. “Cidade Velha is a place that is so close, and yet so distant. It’s a process to get here. We are exhausted hiking up the steps to get to the mosque. So when we explored movement, I thought about that,” explained Zecca. As I consider the construction of Raiz di Polon’s lexicon building, especially the borrowing of European-American techniques, I keep in mind that these processes

are occurring at the same time that and through the experiences of the dancers and students as they explore their personal relationships to Cape Verdean spaces and places.



Figure 59. *Making of*. Raiz di Polon exploring the real city of Cidade Velha. 2010. Photo courtesy of Raiz di Polon,

Building a Lexicon: Corporeal Kriolu

The construction of a corporeal lexicon and the interchange between cultural influences requires assigning origins and ownership to particular parts, to better understand how they assemble to become something new. African Studies scholar Leslie Rabine reminds us that the origins of particular components may not be as relevant as the systems in which they are incorporated. In *The Global Circulation Of African Fashion* Rabine uses examples that can be applied to Cape Verdean creolized movement. In discussing the construction of a uniquely Senegalese fabric, Rabine details how the incorporation of multiple symbols pulled from various parts of the world and printed as multiple images on fabric (elephants, shoes, drums, etc.) does

not necessarily create a “good African print” according to fabric-makers in Senegal. Instead, the importance of the print lies in the “mobile social history and an open geography that produce the cloth” (Rabine 2002, 138). The differences between cloth appearing to be European versus African is a matter of the codes of color, arrangements within the cloth, and the type of ink on the cloth rather than the particular symbols within a print that constitute African authenticity. As a result, a fabric with Indonesian batik, for example, could be considered more “Senegalese” than fabric containing images of a drum or baobab.

Mano Preto, too, has his own codes and systems developing what he believes creates Cape Verdean choreography. Like the borrowed images on Senegalese cloth that are copied and transformed, Preto’s borrowed movements are secondary community engagement, shapes created from a collection of movements, and the relationships between these movements to traditional music. At the same time, these symbols that are incorporated are incorporated and integrated for particular reasons which, too, can offer insight about the resulting mixed form. Like the elephant image or batik methods borrowed from Indonesia on Senegalese prints, which serve to enhance the color codes of beauty for African fabric makers and a national fabric, borrowed movements and techniques utilized to create a national dance serve to enhance invented shapes and images. In this section, I will address these reasons through various kinds of movement borrowings.

To some extent, all dance-theater professionals in the 21st century utilize a kind of corporeal creole in order to prepare their bodies for shifting standards in physical creativity and agility. Ask any working contemporary dancer or self-described “postmodern” dancer what techniques of dance is her/his specialty, and he or she will likely pause and give a contextualized explanation rather than a simple answer, often including multiple techniques that range from

recognizable Western forms like ballet or “release technique” to multiple names of teachers who have also acquired their own amalgamation of forms. At the 2009 conference on Dance in South Africa, the topic of combined techniques in the African context was debated and later published as an article, “Under Fire: Defining a contemporary African dance aesthetic—can it be done?” (Gilbert et. al. 2007). In the article, Augusto Cevilas, Mozambiquan choreographer claims, “When I talk of modern dance technique, I’m talking of all the other techniques—it’s not one technique.” He explained that plurality is underlying in modern and contemporary dancing (Gilbert et al. 2007, 108). Most recently, a teacher in the Urban Bush Women dance company in the United States gave me a DVD of her copyrighted technique “Liquid Skin”—describing the product as an “amalgamation of all the strongest techniques ranging from West African to Limon to Horton to my own street moves. For me, post-modern and contemporary means a little bit of many things” (Crystal Brown, pers. comm. 2012).

Creating a movement language that is technically, thematically, and logistically hybridized is part of being an artist. In the anthology, *The Body Eclectic: Evolving Practices in Dance Training* (Bales and Netti-Fiol 2008), a number of authors discuss how the “eclectic body” has become the norm in post-modern dance forms. In one of the essays, “Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed,” Joshua Monten writes, “Taking disparate movement styles and quoting from them directly, assembling dance spectacles eclectically, borrowing freely from various sources—these formal devices have become common in the choreography of the past thirty years” (2008, 52). My interests lie in how “eclecticism,” as Monten terms it, becomes both problematic and crucial for National dance companies who take on the role of presenting a cohesive national image. In a tiny island nation like Cape Verde, where autonomy is the most important national subject, this corporeal Kriolu is put under a strong spotlight. Raiz di Polon

dancers are not only trying to make a name for themselves for the sake of art in Cape Verde because they are the only group that does this particular set of styles but, rather, for the sake of Cape Verde as an autonomous nation. Raiz di Polon's hybridized techniques have been established in a way that warrants recognition by festival organizers worldwide and also by the State in support of their work.

The incorporation of diverse techniques can represent alliances among the Cape Verdean *ethnoscape*, much like the example that Anthony Seeger details in his examples of Indigenous Brazilian music. Seeger discusses how the incorporation of foreign songs into the Suyá Indians' repertoire selections could sometimes be linked to celebrations of intercultural marriages by "incorporating the power and material resources of strangers into the social reproduction of their own society, while they simultaneously established the otherness of the others" (Seeger 1987, 59). In a similar way, Raiz di Polon's incorporation of foreign movements blurs the lines between other and self, similar to how the Suya initially incorporated foreign melodies with intentions related to honoring and celebrating.

To move back to a discussion of dance, from a choreographic standpoint, dance scholar Marcia Siegel explains that many companies today are "using cultural material to revitalize an ongoing form" and warns us that this is not the same thing as multiculturalism. She says, "In non-western forms...some fascinating contemporary forms are getting invented—and they're not even forms. They're little ideas, poking up here and there, from people who have not been totally overcome by the massive infiltration of ballet and modern dance training around the world" (Siegel 2010, 194). Siegel also brings up the point that "multicultural" is only possible, in her opinion, without what she calls the "massive infiltration" of European hegemonic forms such as ballet. She poses an important concern: can multicultural forms exist without ballet and

Eurocentric technique? (Siegel 2010, 194). Can this “infiltration” of ballet, for example, cultivate a unique creole multicultural technique? I argue that Raiz di Polon serves as an example a multicultural form that co-exists with Eurocentric technique, but not dominated by it.

How do Raiz di Polon’s many influences become collected together in language terms? We already saw some of the choreographic strategies at play in “Cidade Velha.” How can we think even more about language down to the word and phrase level? I will continue to rely on Dulce Duarte’s linguistic studies from her book *Bilingualism or Diglossia* (2003), in which she details some of the ways that Kriolu formed in Cape Verdean society, as well as Ureil Weinrich’s book *Languages in Contact* (2011). I will examine to what degree Raiz di Polon’s developing movement lexicon could be analyzed as linguistic interplay between cultural influences, regional differences, and class divisions.

Centered within the theoretical parameters of linguistic creolization are the concepts of loss and adaptation. As François Lionnet questions, “How do subaltern Creole cultures become translated into a global context of understanding and, more importantly, what gets lost in the process?” Linguistic creolization involves a process by which certain words are dropped, changed, and added. Cape Verdean linguist Dulce Duarte believes that Cape Verdean Kriolu is undergoing a process of de-creolization where words and phrases are more readily being replaced by Portuguese words as if Kriolu were transitioning back to one of its root languages. Like many other Cape Verdean linguists in favor of officializing Cape Verdean Kriolu, Duarte believes that one of the ways to preserve Kriolu languages is to standardize them and teach them in schools (Duarte 2003, 36). Duarte’s perspective is crucial in a discussion of corporeal creolization because she questions whether or not current changes in Kriolu are the result of an ongoing updating process—what I am terming a “Kriolu of Kriolu” in the dance context—or if

these changes are considered to be a “loss” of language and shift to Eurocentric standards.

Similarly, French Caribbean creolization scholar Jean Bernabé discusses Créolité (Creoleness) as related to a kind of “recomposition” or “the world diffracted but recomposed” (Bernabé 1990, 903). Praia-based linguist Vanuza Barbosa also sees creolization in Bernabé’s terms. She explained:

The decreolization process, it isn’t just a return back to Portuguese words. Some people consider it to be everything—the incorporation of English words, like, ‘nice’ and ‘cool.’ You have many other languages mixing in with slang and dialects of Kriolu. I think the de-creolization argument is hypocritical—we cannot look at it as a loss, but rather, ongoing part of the process that we value so much in how our nation originally emerged as unique.”¹¹⁷

Dulce Almada Duarte reminds us that early forms of Kriolu were based upon the principle of union (2003, 37). Unlike many other creole nations, where creole or “pidgin” languages were only used among slaves and dominated populations, Cape Verdean Kriolu was used by *both* the dominated and dominator inhabitants of the islands during the slave era by masters, slaves, and descendants. Duarte believes that this “proto-Criolo” language, which was balanced with Mandinga, Wolof, and Portuguese among other languages, only shifted into a Portuguese-heavy dialect when Portuguese became implemented in schools (Duarte 2003, 37). She urges writers and poets to continue to publish as many works as possible in Kriolu in order to realign the imbalance in Cape Verde’s favor.

Whether we look at Kriolu as undergoing a process of re-composition (the glass half full) or de-creolization (the glass half empty), the importance lies in the ways in which Cape Verdeans take an active role in either preserving or updating Kriolu in unifying ways that they believe best represents the current nation. Mano Preto’s movement language can be seen as a form of

¹¹⁷ Vanuza Barbosa. Discussion group commentary. August 2012.

decreolization because he incorporates so many techniques and vocabularies from outside of Cape Verde into the traditional dances established in the islands. The adaptations to tradition in the performance of Cidade Velha could be understood as a form of decreolization. As an instructor of ballet, I feared that I would somehow contribute towards the decreolization of their unique lexicon should my explanations of ballet imply that they were of higher standards. At the same time, Mano Preto “recomposes” Kriolu steps and movements with unwavering focus upon the communal celebrations and togetherness intrinsic to early forms of Cape Verdean dancing.

In these processes of decreolization or reorganization, sentences and phrases undergo changes and choices. In developing a lexicon of corporeal creolization, the terms and actions that I find most relevant from the transformation of language encounters are the terms *detour*, *interference*, and *borrowing*. According to Weinreich who first coined the terms, and Dulce Almada Duarte, who later incorporated the terms in her studies of Kriolu, a *detour* in linguistics is when a person primarily speaks one language (Kriolu) and then occasionally shifts to incorporate the structural elements or vocabularies of another language (Portuguese, for example). *Interference*, by contrast, is when a second language is used almost entirely, either replacing the first language, or when the first language is spoken with the structure and grammar of the second language (Weinreich 2011, 71–72).

For example, interference would be like speaking Portuguese in a Cape Verdean play, or when Kriolu is spoken with the grammar agreements and definite pronouns of Portuguese, which do not exist in Kriolu. As McMahon showed in her dissertation work on Cape Verdean theater forms, many Cape Verdean Shakespeare adaptations incorporated both of these elements through the incorporation of Portuguese text simultaneously with Badiu staging, costumes, and props (McMahon 2008, 223–269). Another term for these language shifts relates to what scholars refer

to as “code-switching” in studies of bilingualism as well as in studies of African-Diaspora history.¹¹⁸ I will first use the strategies of “detour” and “interference” to begin my analysis because the terms have been used by Cape Verdean linguistic scholars about Kriolu. I also use these strategies because I am also interested in these occurrences as part of the code-switching processes themselves.

In “Cidade Velha,” interference is easily spotted from a theatrical standpoint. The texts recited by dancers were in Portuguese, the songs were sung in Kriolu variants, and the choreographies included predominantly traditional idioms. While the performance was Cape Verdean, it assumed elements of Portuguese through the text. The movements “detoured” from traditional movements to abstract and stylized words of a second generation Kriolu. In her dissertation on Cape Verdean theater adaptations in the Mindelact Festival, Cristina McMahon looks at how deletion and interference occurs in Cape Verdean Shakespeare plays. She considers decisions made in the *mis-en-scene* to distinguish between the Cape Verdean vs. Shakespearean settings and she examines language between Kriolu and Portuguese text (McMahon 2008).

In developing a corporeal lexicon, however, I am dealing with a more slippery slope. Choreography is much more difficult to decode and deconstruct according to ownership and origin location. Unlike McMahon, who could differentiate Portuguese from Kriolu, the *Raiz di Polon* study requires thinking about which movements are Cape Verdean verses American or Portuguese, among others, and what elements might be borrowed, adapted, new, and reorganized. Here, I will use the strategy of borrowing as an additional term by which to analyse

¹¹⁸ For example, see Samar and Majory for studies of Persian-American code switching (1998), Carol Myers-Scotton for her work with code-switching in African languages (1993), Gregory Johnson for his work with Latin American code-switching (1995), and Michael Laguerre’s studies of code-switching in Haitian-American communities (1998).

the efforts of Mano Preto. I am focusing upon choreographic borrowing not to emphasize Preto's lack of ownership of his own processes, but to highlight creativity and adaptation within the creolization process.

According to Weinreich, borrowing can take place at the speech level (accents), grammar and syntax level (how words are arranged) and the vocabulary level (words) (Weinreich 2011, 89). Words can be borrowed at the speech, structural, and vocabulary levels. I like to think of speech levels as related to the textures and dynamics of movements such as sharpness, or rigidity, or even the amplitude of a movement. I see grammar and syntax in linguistics are related to choreographic phrasing, such as the ways in which steps are connected, or the ways in which repeated sequences are organized together. I consider vocabulary in linguistics as related to specific steps or groups of steps.

From a general standpoint, we can consider Raiz di Polon's entire approach to contemporary dance as a kind of linguistic *interference*. Cape Verdean traditional music anchors all performances and rehearsals in traditional Kriolu language, which forces movements to fit rhythmically into the spaces that this music creates. An underlying presence of Cape Verdean traditional movements, are established through the regular practice of those traditional dances. At the same time, rehearsals include countless exercises that do not fall under the category of traditional Cape Verdean dance, nor are they easily identified as a particular technique. Instead they collectively create a "new" Kriolu with multiple detours or multiple borrowed words and influences.



Figure 60. *Past Present Future*. Shadows and dancers in Raiz di Polon community class with teacher Kaka Oliveira.

Borrowing for Missing Words

The most common reason for borrowing in linguistics, as Weinreich tells us in her book *Languages in Contact*, is the “need for names of certain objects” when, upon the meeting of two cultures, a new object or concept can only be defined by the word in one language (Weinreich, 2011, 55). A “need” could be related to missing a word for a particular object, such as “All Stars,” the American Converse gym shoes that arrived in Cape Verde, or a word to express an emotion, just like I have used *sodadi* in this dissertation because there is no precise English equivalent. Throughout the interviews for Project Maramar, I asked my interviewees if they would speak in Kriolu because I wanted the film to depict their stories and commentaries from their first language. One of my interviewees would often switch from Kriolu to Portuguese for

particular moments. He would slowly start speaking Portuguese altogether, after using scattered Portuguese words. When I had assumed that he was switching for my benefit, because my Portuguese is stronger than my Kriolu, he said:

No no. I do it out of habit and I don't realize it. But also because, while Kriolu has many poetic words, there aren't as many options for grammatical tenses and sometimes even words in Kriolu. You are asking me how I feel about the ocean, and I want to articulate some deep thoughts. Sometimes I just naturally switch in order to grab from my full vocabulary including Brazilian for deep thoughts, but it doesn't make me less Kriolu.

Linguistic code switching or borrowing can be illustrated at the movement level with an example of a warm-up. Mano Preto and Kaka Oliveira, the main teachers of the Raiz di Polon school, often begin their rehearsals and classes with a very athletic warm-up. With morning television shows depicting rigorous and fast aerobics demonstrations, physical fitness and machine-like athletics are part of the physical culture of Cape Verde. Outdoor exercise machines even speckle some of the public parks and lookout points. During one of the classes, in which we were doing jumping jacks, squats, and exercises with a low center of gravity, Preto said, "We need something to work on our feet. We don't ever use our feet." Responding to Preto's request to articulate the muscles of the feet, I led two or three ballet-inspired exercises based in the *tendu* and *relevé*, which work the feet and the calf muscles through foot-pointing. I utilized vocabulary from the language of contemporary ballet in order to articulate words and phrases that Mano Preto felt that the trained Raiz di Polon body lacked. *Tendu* and *relevé* exercises became integrated into the summer classes for a certain period.

I use this example because a ballet-inspired step is already part of a particular lexicon. There is a name. The *tendu*. The *relevé*. But in Raiz di Polon they merely became part of the athletic strength training that would later be a part of the muscle memory of the dancers' creativity. As the dancers later executed traditional dances like the *coladeira* and *mazurka*, which

involve weight shifts into lifted toes and ankles (a *relevé* in ballet terms), students and dancers having warmed up these muscles may possibly lift higher during the lifted transitional moments. The borrowed *tendu*, by cause and effect, became incorporated into the crafting lexicon to later more fully express traditional dance sentences.

In this example, the movement borrowed remained intact as it was incorporated into the warm-up, as opposed to perhaps morphing into a part of a movement phrase through the *mazurka* movements. This would be similar to the phrases, “Fica SHOW!” in Kriolu, which means, “It came out spectacular!” Or “Rei di NICE” which would be, “super cool!” in Kriolu. The words “show” and “nice,” American words, remain intact within the phrase, even though their meaning slightly varies from the American meaning. “Show” in this case means cool, spectacular, or worthy of showing, rather than the noun, show. The meaning as an adjective is likely to be derived from the fact that shows are spectacular and “showy.” Similarly, “nice,” in the Kriolu context implies great and cool, rather than simply well mannered or pleasant.

Borrowing for Prestige

Detours and borrowing also occur in linguistics in order to gain prestige or social class. For example, someone in the United States might say, “Oh I don’t know, it has a certain, ‘*je ne sais quoi*,’” borrowing the French phrase that means, “I don’t know what.” Or, for example, the U.S. use of the word, “kitchenette” came from the incorporation of a French-inspired suffix “ette” to give the common words a sense of class. In Kriolu, signifiers of “coolness” such as the American words “nice,” “cool,” “drink,” “damn,” “show” and “guy” are used frequently by Cape Verdeans, especially in informal social situations. As addressed in Chapter Two through the discussion of “flash factors,” verbal cues representing circulating images of cool, especially in

origins of lucrative countries such as the U.S., play a strong role in the Cape Verdean linguistic vocabulary.

Pinpointing specific examples of borrowed movements becomes problematic in my discussion of a corporeal Kriolu; being able to do so would imply that the lexicon is easy to deconstruct. I do not intend to fragmentize these movements or impose borrowing upon them as I highlight certain examples. In fact, Preto and Hessney have critiqued the ease with which people can view borrowed elements from many contemporary dance companies in other West African nations. “So many times you see these luscious movements that are clearly based in traditional forms, and then they go and they add a pirouette. They push these forms together just to make them Western. That’s just not what we are about,” Jeff says. My conclusions about borrowed and incorporated movements have been derived from feeling the movements, watching them carefully through rehearsals, and searching for connections between them as I learn Raiz di Polon’s Kriolu.

One particular example of borrowing exemplified both pedagogical and muscular tensions in a warm-up exercise. Borrowing in this situation appeared to stem from a desire to keep up with classical dance techniques.

We began the warm-up as usual, with a series of athletic exercises including jumping jacks, running, dropping and rolling, and walking in a push-up position on all fours. Exercises were often vigorous and fast, in order to maintain high energy. We used weight-sharing and partner exercises. Then we began to do a series of across-the-floor jumps that resembled the back leg extension of an arabesque, which is the classical ballet term for where one leg is extended straight high above the ground behind the body. With my background, I recognized it to be an arabesque-inspired movement, but there are no words for movements in Raiz di Polon classes. The arabesque is a trademark example of ballet. As we traveled across the floor, using the series of running and squatting that Mano gave us for choreography, we then ended the diagonal phrase with this arabesque leap. Some students expressed frustration with this particular movement, some extending their suspended leg backwards as instructed, and others backwards and slightly to the side. Students would grab their hips after doing this, noting that it

was particularly stressful on their hip joints. As a teacher, I was worried. Misalignment and trying to do an arabesque, whether or not it was an arabesque, could actually significantly pull a hip flexor or groin muscle. While the freedom in crafting a new movement language requires no rules with regards to alignment, pointed toes, or other attributes typically linked to a movement that resembles an arabesque, without the framing (and training) of ballet, this movement could actually hurt the dancers inventing this variation.¹¹⁹

When Mano Preto first asked me to teach ballet to the children and adult classes, I did not want to impose my Eurocentric structural foundation on this community. I was not asked to teach ballet because it was my most specialized skill nor because I currently dance ballet in a ballet company. I was asked to teach ballet because I, as the foreign “trained” dancer, represented a higher class of “technical” dancers. When I confirmed that I did have significant ballet training, as was presumed, Preto did not need any proof of my qualifications. The self-conscious ethnographer in me, aware of any negative impact I may have on this malleable, but rising, dance community, I was hesitant because changing the foundation of Raiz di Polon’s current style might replace the company’s foundation, which I perceived to be different from any lexicon I had yet seen. Implementing ballet could Europeanize or “decreolize” Raiz di Polon. However, Mano insisted. “It is important for us to have ballet training. It is the root of a well articulated body.”

After observing others and experiencing firsthand some physical discomfort and moments where variations of ballet were being explored in the studio, it became obvious that techniques like classical ballet were always going to be implemented, whether or not I was there to be a part of the process. Providing some safety and grounding the borrowed words by teaching alignment and anatomy through a ballet class might encourage the dancers to find even more creative and safer pathways to invent their vocabularies.

¹¹⁹ Fieldnotes. June 2012.

Baltasar Lopes Da Silva reminds us that unlike many creole dialects in Louisiana, or the French Caribbean, for example, Cape Verdean Kriolu lexicon does not have definite articles, such as “the” or “a” (Da Silva 1983, 129). Sentences are structured without these definite articles. In a corporeal sense, teaching ballet would add definite articles back into borrowed classical movement words, like the in-between preparation steps that lead to the safe execution of the arabesque. Whether or not Raiz di Polon dancers choose to later drop these preparatory steps or “definite articles” may change, but at least they can be aware of their own linguistic structure and why such “definite articles” were important in the context of the classical vocabulary.

I am speculating that the particular movement described in the earlier fieldwork note was in fact a borrowed word from ballet and inspired by forms of classical dance. However, these speculations stem from Mano Preto’s requests for me to improve the community’s “foundational technique,” as he calls it, which is a form historically tied to the European elite. To “attain social prestige” in the dance community also means increasing technical versatility, especially in techniques associated with the continent that provides Cape Verde with most of its funding: Europe. While I will not speculate that Mano Preto crafts his lexicon specifically with “The Elite” in mind, I will deconstruct some choreographic choices and teaching goals as circulating around the powerful creative influence of the European metropole.

An additional example related to borrowing for prestige relates to a very brief moment during classes and rehearsals, when setting the timing and rhythm of movements. Utilized by Mano Preto, Kaka Oliveira, and now students of the Raiz di Polon classes, when dancers begin a set of movements in rehearsal or in classes they often declare, “5, 6, 7, 8!” The phrase is used to signify, “we are about to start the sequence,” and dancers begin the set of motions immediately

afterwards. When directing a particular passage, Preto uses this to begin the piece, especially if it is rehearsed without music. During classes, the phrase is used to help students initiate their passage across the floor during diagonal pairs exercises, so that the dancers will begin together. In my own experience in music group or dance classes, counting up to the number eight, or just the latter half by saying, “5, 6, 7, 8,” is typically utilized to set the pace of choreography and to understand the time signature. Rhythms using an 8-metered rhythm are common, which is why counting to eight is very common. However, in the Raiz di Polon setting, timing was not marked. The “5, 6, 7, 8!” preparation served only to signify that the dance would start, and Mano Preto would often revert to a separate rhythm that was different from his preparatory declaration, making clicking sounds or stomping his foot to mark time after the preparation had begun.

As Barbara Browning reminds us in samba, and Robert Farris Thompson has discussed regarding many African rhythms, Western notions of marking time can often not adequately represent polyrhythmic nonwestern forms (Browning 2008, 10-13; Thompson 2011, 1-3). However, in this particular case, this preparation phrase was not introducing a set of polyrhythmic dance forms, but rather a set of movement phrases that could be executed within the time-structure of an eight-count. Instead, these exercises and phrases were often ambiguously connected to a particular rhythm in that sometimes exercises seemed to be “free form” without marked timing, while others were variations of dances that were dependent upon rhythm, like a *coladeira* or *funana*. In either case, with free-form movements or with rhythmic-specific traditional variations, the “5, 6, 7, 8” never corresponded to marking time. I believe that the phrase stems from emulating other dance classes and from participating in workshops where instructors utilize such timing methods. The “5, 6, 7, 8” has since developed to become a marker for dance class etiquette, rather than time and rhythm. While teachers and students may have

borrowed “5, 6, 7, 8” from notions of dance-class structure and etiquette, they have transformed the phrase into part of the Raiz di Polon Kriolu vocabulary to signify discipline, beginnings, and synchronicity.

Borrowing for Fuller Expressive Vocabularies

Perhaps some of the more vibrant and clear examples of corporeal linguistic borrowing stem from entire systems of techniques. Mano Preto, Bety Fernandes, and Kaká Oliveira tell me that they learned about contact improvisation through Portuguese choreographer Clara Andermatt, and for Preto, also through attending the 2000 Bates Dance Festival. This type of borrowing fits into the category of linguistic borrowing to better express oneself, like my informant who required a greater selection of words to discuss his emotions about the ocean. Contact improvisation plays an important role in the creative process of the Raiz di Polon Company. Once Preto has an artistic idea, he works at a fast pace, directing his dancers to try new things as he shapes them with each repetition. Relationships between dancers play an important role in themes related to relationships between humans and land and between loved ones. Choreographically and logistically, contact improvisation, which involves testing the limits of contact among dancers and especially in pairs, serves as a way to find new surfaces and new meaningful relationships between dancers. Kaka Oliveira, the current community class instructor, always incorporates exercises that involve weight-sharing and embodying the balance between tension and support, as noted in the circle formation that always closes his class. [See Figure 46 and Figure 67.]

Contact improvisation as a borrowed choreographic tool has enabled Mano Preto to shape and define several key specific movements. For example, the *funana* dance in social situations is

an upright pair's dance, where people dance close together within crowds of other dancers. The dance is invigorating as is the fast pace of the accordion, *ferro* (iron bar instrument) and now, drum machine.¹²⁰ In the Raiz di Polon *funana*, the close partnership between the pair of dancers takes the form of extreme weight sharing, as partners lean forward while the other falls horizontal backwards, and vice versa. As he experimented with weight shifts and improvising through contact improvisation, Mano discovered that the *funana* dance could continue freely at any point in space as long as the feet were grounded and continued the steps. Using weight sharing and contact improvisation, a borrowed technique, Raiz di Polon *funana* explores the relationship between partners not only through face-to-face encounters, but through the simultaneously grounded and unwavering *funana* feet. The linguistic interplay in *funana* between contact methods and *funana* steps marks an allegiance to Santiago culture, where *funana* is practiced.

“I felt that the performance was very Badiu,” says Patricia from São Vicente. “Especially with the *funana* piece. The vigorousness with which they moved, even though it was half upside-down... it just felt Santiago. Not from here.” The shift from “regular *funana*” to “contact *funana*” can at times appear abrupt, and perhaps we can consider this an example of detour. However, as Raiz di Polon has accumulated a reputation for his vigorous, athletic, and active choreographies, the abruptness between these shifts has over time (even in my observations over five years) felt less like interference and more like a seamless fluctuation. As Baltasar Lopez da Silva points out, bilingualism is a part of the initial phase of criolinguistics (1984, 42), which

¹²⁰ The drum machine is a phenomenon that has added much controversy to *funana* music history. As Susan Hurley Glowa has detailed in her book and essays, electronic drumbeats replaced live drum music for practical reasons. The *ferro*, a long metal rod emblematic of Santiago roots culture, looks like simple scrap metal from a bed frame. The *ferro* is clanged and scraped in time with the drum machine, which, when played fast, collectively creates driving, staccato, driving rhythms. *Funana* in some ways parallels *forró* rhythms in Brazil. See Hurley Glowa 2006, “Funana with a Drum Machine Beat.”

foreshadows how with time, these fluctuations will become more and more seamless and difficult to deconstruct. *Funana* reveals how two languages, traditional dance, and contact-inspired contemporary dance intervene with one another to maintain an allegiance to tradition while still holding Raiz di Polon to the standards of contemporary dance partnering, weight-sharing, and technically difficult standards worldwide.



Figure 61. *Traditional Funana*. Funana within “Povo das Ilhas” performance in Bairro, a lower-class zone in the Praia capital. August 2012.



Figure 62. *Contemporary Funana*. Contemporary funana within “Povo da Ilhas” performance in Bairro. August 2012.

Borrowing Accents and Phonetics

Weinreich and Duarte also note that speech patterns and phonetics can also be borrowed or resisted when multiple languages come into contact. While many creative can be used to think about how embodying this type of borrowing may emerge at the body level, I like to think of sounds and pronunciations as parallel to the textures and details of a given movement, such as the way in which an arm is held, the rigidity of posture, or the tendency to point the feet. In other words, I see embodied phonetics as accented details that distinguish a movement from one genre to the other. Rather than call these elements “style” as I did in Chapters Two and Three, here I shift to the idea of particular, specific language and from *where* a movement (or “word” in the language metaphor) may be inspired. As I think specifically about the articulation of the body and how the moving body in Raiz di Polon choreography differs from those of other Cape Verdean dance groups, I refer to the words of Bento Oliveira, who loved to describe RDP

dancers' arms as resembling trees that were "graceful while wild," or the interviewee who responded that their "frenetic energy made me feel like I was being raped!" As another example of Mano Preto's style, we can recall Chapter Three and hybridized visual objects with a "frenzy" of hands and "coladeira arms." [Refer back to Figure 38, p 189.] Arms and hands often provide Preto with an opportunity to explore alternate movement pathways while the feet remain anchored to Cape Verdean music by keeping time or maintaining the spatial patterns of traditional dance steps. Strong, flexed, extremely straight, or angled arms are noticeably repeated in "Cidade Velha" and other works. These are the textures that we will temporarily deconstruct.

As a student, I was often instructed by Preto to better emulate his style. "You are suave and fluid, but hold your arms stronger and straighter! Tac Tac Tac!" he would correct me, pushing my arms into right angles. Where might this aesthetic or detailed "accent" originate? "I draw my inspiration from everyday life," Preto says. "And I have also been inspired by many great choreographers. Bill T. Jones, for example, was one of my favorites—his philosophy, his exercises, and his overall clean precise strong dancing" (pers. comm. August 10, 2010).

If we think about some of the marked characteristics of Bill T. Jones' choreography, then, countless similarities can be noted. Both choreographers utilize strong lines from extended fingers to elongated limbs, use of text and intricate sound scores, incorporation of athletic unison movement choreographies, center of gravity lower the ground verses lifted, circular spatial patterns, partnering weight-sharing. The *Guardian* newspaper describes Bill T. Jones as a company who "has always been multiracial, and that is integral to its identity. It's also been open to a range of body types. In keeping with the theme of diversity, Jones's choreography is often multimedia—he'll use speech, text, song, or film alongside movement" (Roy 2010). According to dance biographer Martha Bremser, Bill T. Jones also accumulated a refined aesthetic focus on

the “watchwords” of “strength, stamina, congrats and differences” (Bremser 1999, 124). As a national company that embraces the idea that diversity is inherent in their identity, Bill T. Jones serves as an obvious creative inspiration for transforming diversity on stage through strong movement choices.¹²¹ To make a detailed comparison between Mano Preto’s work and that of Bill T. Jones would require more in-depth investigation. However, some generalizations can be made. For example, at the body level, Bill T. Jones, like Mano Preto, incorporates very clear, repetitive and stylized arm movements. In his work “Breathing Show,” for example, in which Jones verbally describes what he is doing so that we may interpret how he himself understands his movements, his steps tend to be initiated by the arms and fingers. This movement is self-consciously borrowed and articulated by Preto.

The significant question involved in this borrowing example is, “Why does it function?” Staccato angles and arm initiations spiral together logistically with traditional dances and with the types of arm gestures that can be seen in Cape Verdean everyday life. First, most of the Cape Verdean dances are grounded into the Earth. *Batuko* dancers typically hold their arms out towards the sides of the body or float gently without notice, while the focus of the dance occurs in the lower half of the body. Other traditional dances are commonly performed with partners, and the arms are simply there to embrace the partner with functional use. By borrowing aesthetic inspiration from choreographers like Bill T. Jones, Mano re-enlivens and stylizes the arms for expression of the dance through the full body.

From another standpoint, we can think about the movements of daily life in Cape Verde,

¹²¹ Many contentions within the Praia community reveal a large debate about Raiz di Polon’s look and presentation. Some critics of Raiz di Polon say, “The company claims to be diverse and welcome everyone, but look at all the company members: All dark black. All with dreadlocks. All lean and muscular. That is their trademark look. That is not diverse.”—Anonymous informant.

and how strong arms might help to portray the country's people, so that variations of tradition are not merely sites for decreolization, but recreolization. "I don't know, it just felt very Santiago. Very *badiu*, and not just in the ways that they were speaking, because they spoke many dialects," one student said, after seeing a performance of "Cidade Velha" in the Northern island of Mindelo. Perhaps arm strength and articulation have something to do with it.

In order to find out what daily gestures might be a part of what Michael De Certeau calls, "the practice of every daily life" in Cape Verde, I started a project, "Projeto Espera," or "Project Waiting." I worked with an adult community class in Raiz di Polon and experimented with dancing outside of the studio, which was exciting incentive for students who had never danced in public spaces nor with video. Students were asked to pick a topic common to Cape Verde. "We are always waiting!" one student laughed. "Waiting for boats, for planes to arrive. For people to start class on time. We wait for everything. We are patient people." Using the theme of waiting, students created a phrase based upon gestures, and they were asked to look at people around the city to draw inspiration.

Even though waiting was a rather static activity, I was surprised by the number of arm gestures that students crafted, in addition to the particular postures—slumping and leaning on a tree for example. "When I wait, I usually wave to people," said one student. "I held my arms out front because it was as if I was begging God to make something arrive." Perhaps these students felt inclined to dance with their arms because Raiz di Polon was their only reference, which perhaps disproves my point but still highlights how the Raiz di Polon lexicon makes people think about moving their arms. However, I want to highlight that articulating, enhancing, and tending to arm movement as daily gesture is a part of the gestural choreography in Praia's streets, as investigated by myself and my students. Borrowing from Bill T. Jones's arm-initiating

choreographies and freeing the “forgotten” arms in traditional dance, meshes linguistically with the body’s language in quotidian Cape Verdean life. Borrowing accents and phonetics in the corporeal sense, little by little, contributes towards a new language that is still connected to its people.



Figure 62. *Project Espera*. These video stills show the emphasis on arm movements and arm-initiated sequences.



Figure 63. *Project Espera*. Additional images from the *Project Espera* film project show the emphasis on arm movements and arm-initiated sequences.

Borrowing for Comic Effect

One final example of linguistic borrowing is when detours and interferences occur for comic effect, parallel to the discussion of cultural mimicry discussed in Chapter Two. Weinreich gives examples of “German speakers who borrow from Yiddish or Parisian Argot speakers from German.” In the context of Cape Verde, countless friends play with using English, Portuguese, Brazilian Portuguese, and French on a regular basis to humorously share their knowledge of other languages, and play upon the stereotypes of global people. As I said in Chapter One and Chapter Two, traveling abroad is a marker of success in Cape Verde, and so playfully including other words, like the example of the neon Nike shirt, can be a passive play upon global awareness of cool. Another example is the busy hustling taxi driver in Praia:

“Let me guess!” he laughs, changing the space within the taxi to an atmosphere of stand-up comedy. “You are Brazilian!! *Tudo beeeeemmmmm*?” he joked, emphasizing the accent difference in Brazilian Portuguese, asking, “How are youuuuu?” “No? No? haha. Okay, *Mais parlez-vous français?*” and as I shook my head smiling, telling him that his guesses were incorrect, he kept guessing, each time more comical than the next, imitating accents and words with exaggeration. “*Ami é badiu!*” I said, joking back, meaning, “I am a *badiu* person!” The taxi driver laughed. “*Badiu di Merca,*” I said. “*Badiu* from America.”

Like the taxi driver, whose comical conversations and accent imitations were utilized as a way to perform multiculturalism and to transform cultural engagement with amusement and positive pleasure, one of the dancers with a strong sense of humor would commonly code-switch to multiple languages, saying, “*Mais je ne sais quoi, quoi! Ami ka faze kel li. Yo man. Ami é de li!*” translating to “I don’t know” in French, playing upon francophone’s slang repetition of *quoi/what*, then shifting to Kriolu with “I don’t do that” then shifting to an American phrase, “Yo, man!” and ending with “I am from here!” On the one hand, this company member utilized a compounded linguistic detour simply to provide some dinnertime laughs. But at the same time, this dancer, like the taxi driver, was performing the cliché cosmopolitan person. He was

promoting the fact that he *could* speak in other languages, if he wanted. He represented the elite, well-traveled, well-educated person, saying, “See? I can speak those languages too. No big deal.” Speakers were, as Brenda Dixon Gottschild would say, comically “combining vitality with detachment” as they performed the elite “aesthetic of cool” (Gottschild 2005, 7).

I did not observe linguistic borrowing for comic effect directly related to Raiz di Polon’s corporeal creolization and contemporary dance lexicon, but this type of borrowing serves as a useful example for understanding what I mean by a Kriolu of Kriolu. *Tabanka* is one example of a Santiago-based tradition that began as parody. [Refer to page 61 in Chapter One.] Island inhabitants would provoke Portuguese colonial authority by parading and making fun of their rigorous, military strutting, while simultaneously celebrating Christian beliefs. Little research has focused upon the body in these annual rituals, but from my own observations of *tabanka* processions, women march alongside men, occasionally stopping to arch their backs, tipping their hips backwards in motion as if to “bump” the marchers behind them.

In the Raiz di Polon studio, *tabanka* has taken another variation. Men and women “chug” as many dancers say, in small shuffling steps or marching with large knee-lifting motions. Without the elaborate combination of colorful beads with white military uniforms and self-made flags, the Raiz di Polon *tabanka* is all about the movement and rhythms created with feet and arms. Comedy was only part of the initial impetus for creating *tabanka*, but as the form progressed over generations, it became a deeply practiced tradition. “Today we still have families whose roles are to be the thief and the parades are still celebrated yearly with much pride,” says Luiz Rodrigues from Achada Grande, where the tradition is still practiced. In the Raiz di Polon studio, Mano Preto borrows from the parades by incorporating strong marching dancers [See Figure 66], and in one performance piece, overlaps *batuko* with *tabanka*

movements, because the rhythms have many similarities. In this 2008 photograph, when this particular piece was performed often, the junior company dances and reorganizes *tabanka* together with *batuko*. Some scholars could argue that this variation of *tabanka* has become decreolized by removing its elements of comedy and parody. On the other hand, we could consider the focus upon a very serious body, one that pounds into the ground with force and agility, as a kind of honoring of the autonomy of the tradition itself. When the colonial presence is eliminated with the removal of “playing dress up,” what remains is the strong Cape Verdean person. “I like the *tabanka* and *batuko* the most,” Zecca says. “It feels the strongest. Physically and thematically to me. It’s a hard thing to describe. And with *batuko*, this strong strong emotional dance of the women, [motions as if it were hot] Man, it’s strong!” (Zecca Cardoso, pers. comm. 2012).



Figure 65. *Forti!* Zecca Cardoso talks about the strength of *tabanka*. June 2012.

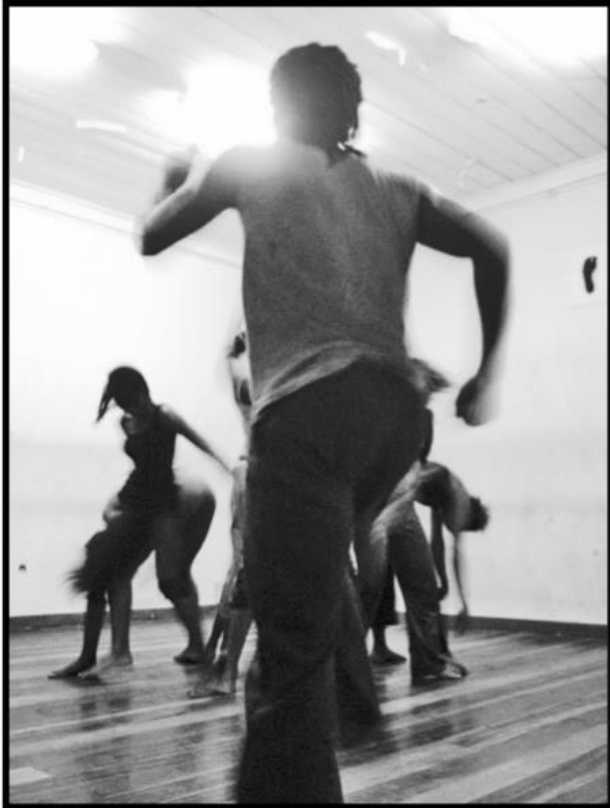


Figure 66. *Tabanka*. Zecca Cardoso dances *tabanka* while girls dance *batuko*. June 2012.

Chapter Conclusions

The first time I set foot in the Raiz di Polon open community class was memorable because it came about due to intercultural exchange and community outreach. I had been introduced to Mano Preto after volunteering with the Peace Corps to help translate in an American-Cape Verdean high-school exchange program. Mano Preto was the Cape Verdean dance instructor involved in the dance portion of this interdisciplinary exchange. After co-teaching the dance class for the camp with another American dance teacher, Mano Preto brought me over to the community class on the pedestrian street. Almost fifteen people were standing in a small room with a wooden floor. There were no mirrors. I could not tell who was teaching the class because everyone was standing in a circle with their eyes on one another (as opposed to their own image in a mirror). As they shifted from movement to movement they emulated one another, exploring sequences by what felt natural, a concept that Authentic Movement pioneer Mary Whitehouse calls “exploring the unknown” where a dancer moves uninhibited by self-awareness (in Pallaro 1999, 30).

I walked through the open door and joined the circle. From the start, egalitarian learning was an obvious founding principle in Raiz di Polon classes. Then suddenly, as if an explosion had dispersed the close circle formation that had formed, we were running in a circle to do squats as if in a military training session under the leadership of one person. Communal togetherness took a detour. But as the class continued, we eventually returned to our safe circle of equality, metaphorically through group learning, and literally, as we closed the class with an exercise in lowering to the floor and touching our toes with our eyes closed linked by hands. The Raiz di Polon brand embraced community, equality, and directed discipline.



Figure 67. *Connected*. Raiz di Polon community class. September 2012.

Expanding a community institution may not be possible, because the structure may be merely a result of limited space, a lack of resources, and a dearth of teachers. In 2010, Mano Preto shared a video with me, detailing his plans to expand the school. His plans did not manifest when I returned in 2012–2013. He had hoped to expand by creating a school where rehearsals, film-screenings, physical therapy, and multiple classes would meet, but the plans included a budget that far exceeded his and the government’s financial capacity.¹²² While the plans halted for the time being in 2012, Preto hopes that with the upcoming formation of the National Ballet of Cape Verde, which will include a larger China-sponsored budget, that his dream academy will

¹²² A link to the video of these plans can be watched here: <http://youtu.be/kgDQU5Ts13o>

be realized.

The aim of this chapter was to clarify how community building and intercultural exchange are the foundation of the professional goals of the Raiz di Polon Company, from place and space to the specific choices made within choreographic composition. The Raiz di Polon style may appear upon first glance to an outsider to include frenetic arms and muscular bodies, but within the Raiz di Polon space frenetic arms and muscular bodies represent far more than simple movement styles. Financial support for an expanded school would provide this community with the opportunity to professionalize the RDP dance company at a faster pace, but I would argue that the current system without such luxuries has thus far provided a rich pot in which to cook their corporeal *katchupa*, and could perhaps serve as a model for dancemakers world-wide.

According to Richard Schechner in his article “The End of Humanism,” language and performance in Western cultures are facing a crisis of truth, and exhibiting what he calls a “new route” that wavers between traditional, postmodern, oral, and modern forms of performance—a liminal philosophical space that is dehumanizing and void of experience. He writes, “Verbal languages—the bearers of culture, the basis of literature—are being replaced by mathematical languages... creating a world order of terrible stability” (Schechner 1979, 21). This parallels Stuart Hall’s predictions (discussed on p. 219) in regards to cosmopolitanism’s dystopic fate as being either completely homogenous or different to the point of warring. (Hall 2008, 345). Schechner differentiates the categories of modern, postmodern, traditional, and oral performance categories with a number of characteristics, using examples of rehearsing based in collectives (he labels this as “postmodern” strategy) vs. state-run rehearsals (modern) and narrative (postmodern) vs. ritual (modern) organizing principles.

I invoke Schechner’s discussion in this conclusion because in 1979 Schechner believed that a new route in performance would soon emerge—one that would fluctuate between modern, postmodern, oral, and traditional tendencies, lingering at the intersection of these categories. As a community that is both Western and nonwestern, traditional and “contemporary,” and a kind of oral tradition, Raiz di Polon’s traits play among the categories he delineates. Even though Schechner was talking about “Western performance,” Raiz di Polon’s lexicon represents this “new route.” they are both isolated from nations where concert-dance has been well-established, while simultaneously at the crossroads of these nations. In other words, Raiz di Polon exemplifies this “new route” at the problematic and confusing meeting point of his four categories. [See Figure 68.] Perhaps Cape Verdean Contemporary dance performance can offer insight into what Schechner might call a renewed “humanism” for the performance world.

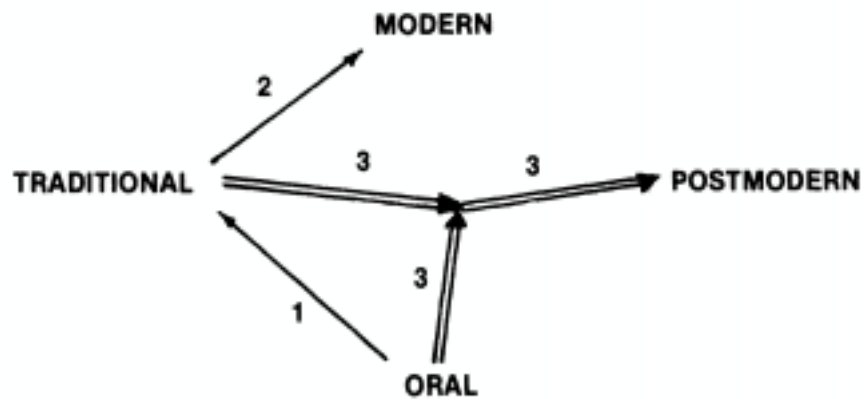


Figure 68. *Map of Performances according to Richard Schechner.* In “The End of Humanism.” *Performing Arts Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 1/2. (May, 1979), pp. 9–22.

CHAPTER FIVE: RAIZ DI POLON ON CROSSING STAGES: DETANGLING IDENTITIES



Figure 69. *Tangled*. “*Kommuni*.” A performance by author and Nuno Barreto, member of Raiz di Polon.

Introduction

Donald Cosentino, a professor in the UCLA Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance frequently advised students in his ethnography courses to always reveal the processes, imperfections, and roadblocks in one’s research, coining the phrase “always let your seams show,” as if researchers had to turn a piece of clothing inside-out to understand the problems involved in the cohesive story.¹²³ As I deepened my investigation into the nation-building efforts of Raiz di Polon as company, community, and institution, questions about my

¹²³ Donald Cosentino, Ethnography of Performance course, UCLA Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance, Spring 2007; Introduction to Folklore, Winter 2010.

research became more visible. I understood Raiz di Polon to be representing a diverse yet unifying Cape Verdean national image—a *kapucha*— for a fragmented nation that did not assert a unified identity. Yet the seams of this claim of representation often tugged apart with each performance because the Raiz di Polon artistic identity seemed to shift depending upon the audience. At times Raiz di Polon’s work shouted, screamed, and hammered the appearance of a cohesive, utopian national identity. At other times, their work evaded categories of class, nationality, and even artistic genres. However, the company itself was not changing. The interpretations of these categories were all dependent upon the audience, location, and surrounding community of their performances; discussing these contradictory claims proves how their language is able to speak to multiple audiences and how they manage to recruit a diverse audience.

This chapter details how contested perceptions of Raiz di Polon were the unexamined “seams” I needed to consider. They were quintessential patterns integral to understanding how the unusual fabric of Cape Verdean multicultural identity is stitched together. The chapter begins with a consideration of why the spectrum of interpretations for Raiz di Polon’s work is directly related to the nation’s position as a recently independent postcolonial nation at the crossroads. The chapter concludes with case studies that demonstrate how—and why—the company is perceived differently in four different performance contexts.

The Matrix of Othering/The Matrix of Identity.

[When I am performing,] I don’t think of performing a character, like a slave, or a badiu woman in Cidade Velha. I don’t even think of myself as a person, or a Cape Verdean person. I could be anywhere. It doesn’t have to be Cape Verde. When people talk to me here in Praia, where I’m from, people look at me strangely and ask me where I’m from. They tell me that I don’t sound like I’m from here. That my accent is from somewhere else. But I’m from here. It’s like I am from

nowhere. I am more like a traveling groundless cloud than a Cape Verdean person, because I'm still getting to know this place. You could say I am dancing about Cape Verdean history if that makes sense to you, but sometimes for me I am just dancing about a cloud. Sometimes I only just think about dancing as a cloud, not as a Cape Verdean. A wandering cloud that could be anyone. Anywhere. A cloud passing through the islands. (Rosy Timas, pers. comm. 2102).

Contestations regarding Raiz di Polon's artistic identity became apparent when dancer Rosy Timas shared some thoughts regarding her personal approach to dancing in "Cidade Velha." Timas clearly expressed the idea that not every Cape Verdean—including herself as the principal character in the most overtly history-based performance of the company's repertoire—sees Raiz di Polon's work as a representation of the Nation.

In conversations about "Cidade Velha," the topic of national identity was a common, essential discussion point among dancers and other Cape Verdean residents; understanding the performance as a universal experience seemed to contrast with the through-line about crafting Cape Verdean identity. Yet Rosy Timas considers herself a dancer first, and *Cape Verdean* dancer, second. As a performer, I, too, was drawn to the shapes that Raiz di Polon dancers' bodies made on stage as a collective in architectural, emotional, and physical terms; as an *American* dancer and ethnographer, however, I focused upon the national significance of their work.

The challenge posed by Rosy Timas was how to negotiate her understanding of her work as a dancer in the context of a collective, constructed identity. Was I overly emphasizing cultural specificity and "worlding" dance, as Marta Savigliano says, by focusing upon the importance of nation-building in Raiz di Polon's work? Worlding dance is a "symptom" of Othering and ethnographers must think about how dance "undoes the obsession with otherness" rather than

how it puts otherness in focus (Savigliano 2009, 171).¹²⁴ Fearing that a focus upon the binaries that Cape Verdeans often explained to me as Africanity vs. Europeanness and modernity vs. traditionalism, were symptoms of a worlding dance discourse, I wondered if my role as an ethnographer was forcing me to me to *expect* national identity to be of central importance to the meaning of Raiz di Polon's work. Their work was also applicable beyond Cape Verde. Deploying the notion of universality in dances that are usually tied to "regionalist" or "traditionalist" interpretations can help to open up tensions about how the form should be represented and interpreted, and serves to invite foreigners to participate (O'Shea 2007, 91). In the Cape Verdean context, where definitions of foreignness are hard to define, this universality serves to invite Cape Verdeans who *feel* foreign, to find themselves connected to the work, as Rosy Timas did. Timas' dancing was powerful, too, because she was dancing as a cloud.

A cloud may just be a cloud. Still, the undertones of Timas' commentary pulse with issues of placemaking because her cloud exists in direct relation to her attachment to the capital, Santiago Island, and Cape Verde. Considering the words of Cape Verdean political activist and sociologist Redy Lima, one can understand why only focusing upon her ability to imitate a cloud is so difficult. "You are not obsessed with our national identity" Redy explains during a conversation about cultural identity. "*WE* are obsessed with our national identity! We can't stop talking about it, and if we stop, we are still talking about it by not talking about it." (Redy Lima, pers. comm. 2012). In Redy Lima's terms, Timas' connection with a meandering cloud is related to Cape Verdean identity precisely because her approach avoids the question of Cape Verdean

¹²⁴ Savigliano's work examines the concept of world dance as a genre that often segregates non-Western dance from Western dance. The verb, "to world" dance or "worlding dance" describes the process of labeling particular dance forms as "world" and others just as "dance." Savigliano rethinks the concept of "worlding" and to render the concept applicable to all dance forms. See Foster, Susan *Worlding Dance* 2009.

identity altogether. Timas' association with floating clouds, provides her with a metaphor for her expression of identity-lessness. Still, Redy Lima is a sociologist. Rosy Timas is a dancer. Lima reads expression in terms of nationalism and Timas writes expression in terms of abstraction. The company's collaborative and creolized creative processes render their work readable to audiences who see clouds, *and* audiences who see the Nation.

Event producer and thespian Zé Monteiro explains that he too often must negotiate between presenting artists simply as "artists" or if he should emphasize their Cape Verdean heritage. When curating a performance series in the Cape Verdean community of Brockton, Massachusetts he often resorts to the latter.

You can't avoid talking about national identity if you write about a Cape Verdean artist in Cape Verde. Period. Whether something should be labeled as traditional, elite, African, European, modern, white, brown... all these topics mix together, and we as Cape Verdean artists discuss and debate them all the time when we see and create work. We claim that racism isn't a problem, which essentially makes it appear. We promote cultural openness because we often close things into boxes. Definitions of eliteness and realness and roots are what make us tied to the islands, and what makes us continue to return and leave. I'm not always performing and promoting Cape Verdeanness, but it is part of who we are as people. These topics are a part of us and we can't escape talking about them. And maybe for those of us who are artists, maybe we wouldn't be artists without being Cape Verdean. (Monteiro pers. comm. November 12, 2012).

Monteiro reminds us that nationalism and the complexities of patriotism are not only a common expression of postcolonial nations and peoples, but are especially relevant for Cape Verdeans because, as discussed in Chapter Two, otherness is an intrinsic part of a national identity in a nation where people are constantly leaving and returning. As outsiders, Cape Verdeans are often strangers to their own countries, as Timas says. Cape Verdean identity exists in relation to, and crossed with, different locations in the world, in part because the archipelago is a microcosm of for the trans-Atlantic crossroads—the Americas, Africa, and Europe. To leave out these

contestations and complexities of Cape Verdean vs. African vs. European aspects of contemporary dance is to miss seeing a critical part of the tensions within the art itself.

Hesitations on behalf of writers and researchers regarding the placement of patriotism in artistic identity have been discussed in postcolonial studies, especially in the 1980s as Western writers began to question the impact of their Eurocentric viewpoints on understandings of history and culture. These debates were especially heated surrounding Edward Said's work, *Orientalism*, which examined the Self, Other, and processes of "othering" cultures to define the Self (Said 1979). The key concern of "othering" is particularly important in understanding a multicultural cosmopolitan nation where defining one's identity based upon its comparative position with another culture is so embedded in the history of the nation. In recently independent postcolonial nations, subaltern people are often expected by the State to remain attached to traditionalism as a way of promoting the nation's independence. From the colonizer's perspective, subaltern people who demonstrated "Westernness" were considered mimics if they exemplified Westernness (Bhabha 1994, ii).

Ima Ibong addresses this concept in the Senegalese context, explaining that "state ideology has attempted to define contemporary African culture by the concept of negritude. . . . [N]egritude became the national discourse that decided which groups and individuals in the arts were considered mainstream and which were marginal" (Ibong 1998, 198). Ibong explains that Senegalese artists would tie their work to the Negritude movement through the use of traditional African symbols, in order to promote the nation's autonomy. Similarly, Susan Vogel explains, "African artists who have assimilated foreign elements are often described as 'Westernized' as a kind of accusation, and as a pretext for dismissal" (Vogel 1998, 28).

Issues of adhering to fixed notions of identity compound even further in the Cape Verdean context, because the nation was founded upon negotiations between traditionalism and modernity as well as Africanity and Europeanness. As a postcolonial nation with ongoing pressures to become more autonomous, Cape Verdean government officials urge artists to promote what they think Cape Verdeanness may signify. However, compared to Vogel's examples of negritude, "Cape Verdeanness" as a unifying concept is even more nebulous to define because it has always been split along the African-European spectrum, and there was no "indigenous Cape Verde" to which to return. As discussed in Chapters One and Two, the bombardment of cultural influences, unique migration/emigration flows, and the blurring of lines with regards to who is considered Cape Verdean, collectively create a situation where the majority of the population is understood as foreign in some capacity. Pressures of adhering to both modern and traditional ideals are tensions that come not only from the State, or even from the Western gaze upon Cape Verde, but from Cape Verdean residents.

I am inspired by the complex image conjured up by the title of Janet Lansdale's essay, "A Tapestry of Intertexts." In her essay, Lansdale explains how underlying connections, "intertextuality," and "woven web of relations" can convey a literary, movement, or artistic idea even more powerfully than a direct narrative (Lansdale 2010. 163). The varied connections of ideas and inspirations is itself the identifying "tapestry." Like Lansdale's woven tapestry image, contemporary dance in Cape Verde is susceptible to what I term a "matrix of othering" or "matrix of identification," and performances become labeled depending upon where in the African-European spectrum the audience is situated. In simpler terms, the greater the identification differences among the audience, the more different comparisons are put into play; the postcolonial *othering* processes are magnified among all residents. Raiz di Polon's work

functions in this identity-shifting environment because RDP was shaped by and continues to change because of their ties to the national identifications that exist in the archipelago's islands.

Perceptions of Raiz di Polon within the islands are also linked to views of their work off the islands. When touring abroad, Raiz di Polon dancers are often boxed into uncomfortable categorizations of African dance. Phrases like “tribal fusion”¹²⁵ and even “using the African penchant in erotic sensual movement”¹²⁶ are routinely used to describe their work, rather than “contemporary dances” and/or “Cape Verdean dances.” Global perception of artistic identity is being debated urgently among concert-dance practitioners world-wide, especially for choreographers within the African continent. At the 2004 JOOMBA! Contemporary Dance Festival, participants debated their concerns about the development of African contemporary dance. In the session “Under Fire: Defining a contemporary African dance aesthetic – can it be done?” Reginald Danstar laments:

Generating business in Africa in terms of dance is very limited. I'm a dancer and I can't fill a theatre because I'm too 'complicated,' especially in Africa. We must be aware. It's a fact. It's a racial issue, not in a bad way but it's based on that. For example, I live in South Africa. I'm doing contemporary dance, which comes from me. If I do contemporary dance it must be influenced by my traditional dance. If I don't comply with that people will ask, 'What are you trying to do? Are you trying to be a European?' (Douglas et. al., 2007).

Danstar's words echo the frustrations of many other contemporary dance artists who reside outside of Europe and the United States. Fatou Cisé, when conversing with Raiz di Polon dancers exclaimed, “I don't think that my solo is particularly Senegalese. But I am Senegalese.

¹²⁵ From a conversation that I had with Bety Fernandes, who told me about someone's description of their work after an RDP performance in France. October 7, 2012.

¹²⁶ Pro-Africa website review of Raiz di Polon. March 25 2011. Stable URL: <http://pro-africa.org/raiz-di-polon-num-olhar-a-danca-caboverdiana/>

My national identity is attached but not promoted. But when I perform outside of Senegal, people insist that it must be related to me as African, not me as human.”¹²⁷

Back in the archipelago, these “foreign perceptions” continue to circulate among Cape Verdean residents. After Fatou Cisé’s performance in Praia, one Cape Verdean audience member tells me that she did not understand the performance. “I don’t know, I didn’t understand it. She dressed up in different identities, this showgirl feminine woman with heels and then every-day working woman. But what was she trying to say about it? About her Africanity?”¹²⁸ I had seen the audience member attending other dance and music performances in Praia (including Kommuni performances), and her confusion in how to interpret the performance suggests that she had grown accustomed to dance as being part of the restaging of *national* identity. She did not perceive the feminist aspects of the work because it did not necessarily have to do with the artist’s Senegalese nationality. Like Cisé, who had to deal with othering processes away from her country, Timas and dancers deal with these perceptions at *home*, within the matrix of the national context. When Timas revealed, “They tell me that I don’t sound like I’m from here,” it was because she was being processed within the archipelago’s matrix of identification. Categorizing performances within a stereotypical African-European spectrum is a default strategy among many Cape Verdeans because staging national identity is a familiar context in which to understand performance.

In his work related to traveling cultures and cultural theory, cultural anthropologist Edward Bruner explains that that “strong” and “genuine” art (which I interpret as his understanding of meaningful art) is always in “constant negotiation within the realm of the

¹²⁷ Fatou Cissé. Pre-performance conversation with Raiz di Polon. July 2012.

¹²⁸ Anonymous informant. Casual conversation after Cisé’s performance.

public sphere” (Bruner 2005, 100). In Cape Verde, that public sphere is comprised of multiple identities and nations, audiences from many nations, and well-traveled people who compare what they see to where they have lived. Sorting and identifying different influences is part of living in a crossroads community, where Cape Verdeans are constantly placed in comparison with other parts of the world. Bruner’s statement not only relates to art in general—that art requires a viewer or audience—but also parallels the post-structuralist and deconstructuralist views of Ferdinand de Saussure and Jacques Derrida who believed that identity (language, culture etc.) exists in relationship to others, and that no work can have identity as a self-contained artform.¹²⁹ By being situated among shifting difference, contemporary dance is constantly perceived in many different ways. Cristina McMahon, in her essay on *tabanka* noted how scholars often contest Cape Verdean performance roots, dependent upon the political objectives of the author (McMahon 2004). I aim to change the paradigm from searching for roots in the past, to actively noting how differently people view performances today.

The next section considers the effects of Raiz di Polon’s hybrid lexicon (discussed in Chapter Three) and creolized training processes (discussed in Chapter Four) by showing how meanings and representations of contemporary dance change depending on the local stage just as they do on international stages. I consider how dance functions within the islands as a result of accruing fame by looking at four different venues in which the company participates. Contemporary dance thrives on different stages such as small music venues, international music festivals hosted in Cape Verde, commercialized contests, and performances at nonprofit fundraisers. In each setting, contemporary dance represents something different: eliteness, Europeaness, Africaness, multiculturalism, the avant-garde, tradition, Cape Verdeanness.

¹²⁹ For a useful explanation of these ideas, see “Différance” in *The Derrida Dictionary* by Simon Wortham, 2010.

Depending on the event, performers, and audience members, particular representations of meaning are highlighted more than others, overlap with each other, and contest each other.

I have selected four specific performance venues, so as to highlight how contemporary dance has become a versatile and vibrant space to represent Cape Verdean crossroads identity. I consider an international theater festival, a commercial music competition, an intimate dance performance, and my own independent dance-theater work to show how Raiz di Polon represents African “roots”, Cape Verdean history, European eliteness, the abstract avant-garde, and other symbols for various audiences. Using as a reference the multiple points of view of the Polon tree, this final section shows how Raiz di Polon’s work is constantly seen in multiple perspectives while rooted in tradition, serving as a versatile symbol for the needs of global and local venues.

Festival Mindelact: RDP as African contemporaneity in International Theater

The Mindelact Festival (Mindelo + Act= Mindelact) takes place in Mindelo on São Vicente Island and is produced by Portuguese immigrant João Branco. Branco is the director of the Mindelo Cultural Center and has played a leading role in the development of the island’s theater community for over a decade, producing the annual Mindelact Festival and directing theater groups and classes. He has written the first book about the history of Cape Verdean theater (2004). Mindelact serves not only as a site for Lusophone cultural exchange among various theater groups from around the world, but has also become a site for artistic cultural exchange through the inclusion of theater artists from non-Lusophone regions. Because there is no dance festival in the islands, and because Raiz di Polon’s work can also be described as “physical theater,” Mano Preto has participated in Mindelact for several years as a solo artist and with the company Raiz di Polon. Raiz di Polon in the 2012 Mindelact Festival context represents

badiu theater in the company's assortment of shifting identities. Raiz di Polon's lexicon must be versatile and linguistically fluent in multiple genres in order to address its many audiences, and the 2012 Mindelact performance is a useful example of how this occurs.

Concert dances are not common on São Vicente Island, but a dance community is starting to form as an extension of the thriving theater community in the city.¹³⁰ A shift can be seen by the way in which contemporary dance played a particularly crucial role in the opening of the 2012 Mindelact Festival. An opening night sequence replicating the choreography of contemporary dance-theater queen Pina Bausch was followed by a Raiz di Polon performance. The inauguration took place on the streets, as members of the Mindelo Theater Company of the Mindelo Cultural Center reenacted the famous "Season's March" from the film, *Pina* (2011), which consists of a slow and steady marching pattern with a series of gestures that evoke particular seasons and emotions: the imitation of a violin bowing movement, fists that shake together, arms raising overhead. The public gathered outside of the town market square and a small decorated car with speakers played the orchestral music from the film, and a long line of actors from the host theater company of Mindelo marched down the main street to the marina-facing Portuguese cultural center where the Mindelact Festival would be taking place. [See Figure 70.]

¹³⁰ Dance-focused performances are starting to appear within Mindelo's theater community, with the 5-year old physical theater group called Craç Otchod who has been actively presenting work, and featured during the Mindelact Festival 2012, and with the opening of Noelisa Santos' dance academy for ballet and hiphop, The Dancing House, in December of 2012.



Figure 70. *Inauguration of 2012 Mindelact Festival*. TOP: Cultural Center of Mindelo (CCM) Theater students performing “Season’s March” from the film *Pina* (2011); choreography from Pina Bausch’s Tanztheater Wuppertal. BOTTOM: Image from the film, *Pina*.

The program outlining the week’s events simply included the note, “Inauguration: CCM Theater Group,” for this opening performance, giving no reference to Pina Bausch and suggesting that the CCM Theater group would present original material. When I watched the march, I knew it was Pina Bausch choreography and music because I had recently viewed the film with Raiz di Polon students. I was surprised that João Branco chose to open the Cape

Verdean international festival of theater with a sequence from a European choreographer. Mindelact is a ten-day event that provides an opportunity for local Cape Verdean theater groups to perform alongside international artists. Pina Bausch was German, and I had assumed that the inauguration of the festival would include a Cape Verdean piece. The CCM Theater Group's replication of Pina Bausch's march posits an unusual spin upon what Janet O'Shea and Arjun Appaduri have termed "intentional cultural reproduction." Intentional cultural reproduction, O'Shea explains, is a phrase that describes when immigrants seek out emblems of cultural identity in order to culturally affiliate themselves with the culture they aim to maintain (O'Shea 2009, 54; Appaduri 1996, 180). In the Mindelact scenario, Mindelese people often consider themselves to be dual citizens, or of the Diaspora of European culture, which is different from examples that O'Shea and Appaduri give regarding the replication of nonwestern idioms in the face of ongoing Westernization. Mindelese culture has always been aligned with European culture, and replicating an iconic march has undertones of intentional cultural reproduction as Mindelese people stake a claim to their European identity, using dance and dance-theater as the primary mechanism.

Jão Branco explained how the two pieces came to introduce the 2012 festival. Branco's theater students had viewed the film, "Pina" together in one of his classes and students were enamored by the marching sequence and decided to recreate it in Mindelact. Cristina McMahon, in her dissertation on the Mindelact festival, reminds us that "Mindelo groups often pride themselves on making theater that reflects a more Western aesthetic, such as Shakespeare adaptations." McMahon examined adaptations as dynamic sites for Cape Verdeans to negotiate how their national identity is both connected to and distinct from the rest of the Western world (McMahon 2007, 119). The opening sequence serves as an example of the work of adaptations, as

the theater group used German expressionist Tanztheater choreography to represent the diverse emotions and common languages that united festival participants. But Branco explained that creative reproductions are what make Cape Verdean theater Cape Verdean. Furthermore, the dynamism of adaptations is also one of the reasons that he always invites Raiz di Polon to participate in Mindelact.

Raiz di Polon takes what is deemed traditional—movement, rhythms, etc.—and they create a new reading of it. For our plays, our works may come from Greek mythology or Shakespeare or a romance novel, but our *dramaturgy* is Cape Verdean. Raiz di Polon is the same. They don't do theater. They don't do classical. They transform into a contemporary work. That's what links them to our community, and why they are part of our theater festival. . . . If the dramaturgy is Cape Verdean, every person who lives in CV identifies with the performance. (Joao Branco, pers. comm. September 10, 2012).

Branco's use of "dramaturgy" is in some ways the theater equivalent to the work "corporeal Kriolu" that I use to describe the creative work of RDP. The process of assembling words and movements is what makes the work Cape Verdean.

Raiz di Polon's performance of "Cidade Velha" followed these marching bodies dressed in evening gowns, and the contrast was stark. First audience members walked along the street procession to observe the gestures replicating the bowing movements of violins, bodies with high-held shoulders and rigid postures, and the steady organized repetition of Pina's choreography. Compared to this inaugural march, Raiz di Polon's booming, charging, and violent performance was noticeably different, and audiences perceived it as more *badiu* and more African. During the week's program of performances, Raiz di Polon was the only performance group on the main stage that was from Santiago Island, sharing the lineup with groups from São Vicente Island (CV), Maio Island (CV), Brazil, France, Angola, Italy and Portugal. Therefore, from the production standpoint, the company's work represents *badiu* "roots" culture simply by origin.

For the performance of “Cidade Velha” the auditorium was filled to capacity of more than 200 people. During the entire 45 minute performance the audience was completely engaged. After the performance, I asked a Mindelese audience member next to me, what he thought of the performance. “You know, I *loved* it. I really didn’t know what to make of it, but I really loved it.” When I asked him to identify his favorite part he said:

I especially loved the Morna section... because, you know. I’m Mindelese so of course I love that part. But it was intense, and a vibrant way to start the festival. There were Portuguese words, and Cape Verdean songs and sometimes with theater you can tune away and then return. But with them you are heightened and in it the whole time.” (Nelson Gomez, pers. comm 2012).

For Gomez, who favored the *Sampadjudu* moments, Raiz di Polon was different in that dancers presented “heightened” theater and “intensity.”

For Patricia Silva, an actress in one of the participating local theater groups, Raiz di Polon represents the African side of the Cape Verdean European identity spectrum. She said the following after the performance:

PS: For me, all the things that they did were *badiu*. I felt very Santiago when I watched the performance.

SS: But the words they used were in Portuguese, and the movements were from all over the islands, not just Santiago.

PS: I know. But still, for me, they represent *badiu*. Their style and the whole entire thing is charged with *badiu* sensibility. Their accents and the ways that they speak. The aggressiveness that they use to work together. For me that is *badiu*. They represent *badiu*—and that’s not a bad thing. It’s just what I felt. And look at their rasta hair, and strong dark bodies. And the loudness in their bodies. (Patricia Silva, pers. comm. 2012).

Silva was not merely talking about the accents and text within the performance, but insists that the “entire thing felt *badiu*” to her. As Mano Preto and Jeff Hessney said about the performance, “‘Cidade Velha’ primarily focuses on movement. Less costumes. It differs from our past work in that it is about concentrating on the art and the body.” The creolized movement lexicon of Raiz di Polon includes a “focus on the body” and may be derived from Euro-American techniques, but

still, according to Euro-biased Mindelo residents, maintains their *badiu* core.

Silva is also not the first person to comment upon the “look” of Raiz di Polon’s cast members as related to having darker skin complexions and rastas or locks.¹³¹ Mano Preto insists that he believes that his company should include diverse people, and his inclusion of me as a guest company member affirms his statement. Yet, a Djamlia Reis says, “You cannot ignore the company’s strong look.” Reis, as a lighter-skinned dancer with parents from Italy and France, chose to utilize braided hair extensions that resemble locks in “Cidade Velha” because she “felt it would fit better with the company and with a performance related to slavery,” suggesting that locks, to her, enhanced Raiz di Polon’s look as more rooted in Africa. Reis also explained that from a logistical point of view, (recalling Chapter Three) the choreography included many headshakes signifying “no” and “madness,” and utilizing braids or locks created a more explosive bouncing frenzy.

As Kobena Mercer has written regarding black hairstyle politics, “hair is never a straightforward biological ‘fact’” and “practices socialize hair” (1987, 34). In other words, these locks are intentional, and their use speaks to the emphasis on style association in Cape Verdean society. In a series of interviews, I asked people in Mindelo and in Praia who wear locks if the look symbolized something for them, to see if there might exist a connection with the “looks” of Raiz di Polon and regional identity. Every response differed significantly and was often very personal and a matter of style taste. However, responses always aligned locks as either related to Africanity or related to “island culture.” After interviewing ten people, results showed that six of the people who mentioned a sense of “more *badiu*” or “more African” heritage were from

¹³¹ Zé Monteiro prefers the word “locks” to dreadlocks because the word “dread” to him means negativity, just as many conservative Cape Verdeans consider the look low-class. I will use the word, locks from here onward.

Santiago. Marco Medina Silva from Praia explains to me, “My dreads represented power and stories when I lived abroad. I started growing them when I lived in Brazil, and felt a lot of racism living there. My dreads gave me power and kept me rooted to home and to Africa.” (Marco Medina Silva, pers. comm. 2012.) Similarly, Zé Monteiro from Assomada (Santiago interior) discussed locks as connected to a kind of spiritualism of personal history. Monteiro does not specifically mention African identity, but his description adheres to the philosophy of *terra terra* as grounded in Santiago Island where he formerly lived before moving to Brockton, Massachusetts.

As [my locks] grew, so did my spiritual connection with myself and my hair as it became a part of my identity. Just like a family tree, each lock in my head carried memories that were just as alive as any of my family. They were roots that were reaching for the ground to plant my history and identity that I proudly carried on my back. But eventually, with time and death of close friends in CV and family members, the memories became dark and my locks became heavy and when I cut them it was almost like a rebirth. (Zé Monteiro, pers. comm. November 12, 2012)

Neither Monteiro nor Silva identify with being Rastafarian (a spiritual ideology that developed in 1930s Jamaica) and Silva specifically stated, “I am not a Rastafarian” when I inquired about his hairstyle, almost defensively separating himself from common understandings or stigmas before I could make the connection myself. His defensive clarification resonates with the common declaration that has been emphasized throughout my research interviews: “I am not African, I am Cape Verdean.” Studies about Rastafarian culture and identity are useful in considering how representations of locks are understood within Cape Verdean regional divides where degrees of African identity are claimed and contested, especially with readings of Raiz di Polon’s collective look. John Homiak, a scholar of Rastafarian culture claims that locks are considered to have Panafricanist power a concept directly related to both mystical and political philosophies of vision, memory, and time. To be able to “truly see” locks for their historic and spiritual power,

Rastafarians believe that Africa must be re-inserted into the imaginary. Homiak explains that the “sociopolitical perception which runs throughout Rasta thought [is] that the exploitation and suffering of black people has been perpetuated by a forcefully imposed alien system which, by promoting racial and cultural amalgamation, has caused them to forsake their true African identity and consciousness” (Homiak 1998, 179). Just as Rastafarian ideologies in Jamaica served as a unifying trend to reclaim African identity, locks for these *badiu* informants became a symbolic way of remaining tied to the Santiago roots that were pulled away when they had to leave Cape Verde. Silva and Monteiro do not align themselves with Panafricanism, Rastafarianism, nor are they against cultural amalgamation. However, utilizing locks as a symbol of memory and history anchors them to their experiences with coming and going and *sodadi*.

In contrast with the stories and meanings of locks of and for Praia informants, an interviewee in Mindelo described his dreads as follows: “Rastas for me are a part of my identity as a surfer. Freedom to wear your hair long and relaxed. Freedom to express myself as an artist of the water and free from our very conservative culture here in Mindelo.” (Nelson Gomez, pers. comm. August 12, 2012). Gomez’ response reflects Mercer’s analysis of “natural and free” Afros and locks, which not only “counter-valORIZED” Eurocentric products and dress, but also liberated wearers because locks are one of few styles that requires no artificial maintenance (Mercer 1989, 39). Many office regulations across the islands prohibit job applicants with locks so many choose to cut them. “I had to put up a big fight to let me keep them,” says Marco Silva, whose locks reach his waist. “Especially with more conservative—you know, more European inspired—jobs,” he explained. Returning to Raiz di Polon’s look and the Mindelact performance, when Patricia Silva and others indicate that Raiz di Polon’s “hair and look” reflects a sense of their “*badiu* identity,” they are referring to a stereotypical notion of the African aesthetic, or

“roots” look. With regards to their hair, their look could also symbolize self-expression and freedom, but in the context of Mindelo and the audience reception at the Mindelact Festival, Raiz di Polon’s look suggests the former.

Feedback from Raiz di Polon’s performance at an international venue like Mindelact highlights the *badiu* textures of “Cidade Velha” because these signifiers are offset by the host-location’s more European tendencies. While feedback like Silva and Gomez did not use the words, “more African” or “more European” in their interpretations, their mention of style as “intense” or “crazy,” aligns the work with a more “uncivilized” set of African stereotypes, like those outlined in Brenda Dixon Gottschild’s critical look at African dance stereotypes, or Robert Farris Thompson’s list of “vigorous, intense” movement characteristics (Gottschild 2005, 7; Thompson 2011, 25). Deputy member of the MPD and elite artist Abrãao Vicente had a similar review of “Cidade Velha” at Mindelact. In his well-followed blog where he often blends his identities as an artist and political figure, Vicente applauded Raiz di Polon’s work when he said, “These artists are crazy. It takes so much madness to create clarity, accurate madness to invent spaces where you cannot live without body weight. Only soul and rhythm.”¹³² From Abrãao Vicente’s perspective, the “crazy madness” and intensity of Raiz di Polon style and lexicon are interpreted as intellectual clarity in the context of Mindelact, rather than a subaltern, uncivilized form. The international stage validates the Raiz di Polon *badiu* style and thus transforms the “madness” into “soul” and “clarity.” Of course, madness was also a part of the narrative of this particular performance, because Mano Preto believes that isolation and madness characterized

¹³² Abrãao Vicente. Blog post. <http://abraaovicent.wordpress.com/2012/09/09/cabecas-a-abanar/>

Cidade Velha during the colonial era.¹³³ However, Vicente's use of madness here specifically denotes style, and not actions or events within the plot.

At Mindelact, Raiz di Polon's work is perceived as *badiu*. McMahon noted a similar audience perception response when she discussed a performance of Raiz di Polon called "Duas sem Tres" (Two without Three) by Bety Fernandes and Rosy Timas at the 2007 Mindelact Festival, using Raiz di Polon as her main example of representations of Santiagueuse women (McMahon 2008, 150). However, as a dance company among theater artists, Raiz di Polon is also seen in an additional as a performer of experimental theater. Branco is clear when he states that he has always been a colleague and fan of Mano Preto and Raiz di Polon, not only because of their persistence with including traditional forms of expression through adaptation, or because of their role as Cape Verdean dancers, but because of their role as artists who are trying to define what it means to be contemporary.

This festival is not about the performance, but about the community we create. Everyone comes back out of their own desire to be a part of the Mindelact family. And for me, art is about being a pioneer. Like Tchalé Figuera for example. [Points to a painting on the wall above him]. That painting not about being Cape Verdean, it's about seeing humanity in a contemporary way, and perhaps in some ways that is Cape Verdean. About challenging lines. Mano Preto does that. (Branco, pers. comm. 2012.)

Therefore within the scenario of an international theater festival, Raiz di Polon is labeled as *badiu*, for their vigorous and "crazy" dancing, while also "experimental contemporary theater artists," for their genre-blending.

¹³³ "Cidade Velha" was often promoted as a story that "portrays the few hopes that were raised in this environment and led people to resignation and madness, where the only outlet left was individual hunger for change." Promotional materials, courtesy of Jeff Hessney.



Figure 71. 2012 *Mindelact Festival* . TOP: “Red Velvet.” Inside the Mindelact theater at the Mindelo Cultural Center, Mario Lucio speaks to the press while Raiz di Polon rehearses before their opening night performance. BOTTOM: “Mindelact Space.” Raiz di Polon rehearsing “Cidade Velha” and re-spacing their choreography on the larger Mindelact stage. September 2012.

Talentu Strella: Raiz di Polon as Celebrities in Commercial Music



Figure 72. *Talentu Strella Stadium*. August 2012.

The soccer stadium was packed with cheering fans, an expansive stage, red carpet for VIP tabled seating, and pulsing neon signs and strobe lights that could be seen from miles away. People from all over the capital paid to secure their spot in the seated bleachers, and friends of performers and contestants waited and applauded packed like sardines in the dugout areas on the soccer field. The sight of cheering fans foreshadowed the packed stadium that would follow in February as the African Cup of Nations welcomed Cape Verde to the spotlight for the first time in history. But this was not soccer. This was the prized cultural equivalent: a musical performance.

Talentu Strella is a singing competition sponsored by the Cape Verdean beer, Strella. Strella is the only beer made in Cape Verde and is the sponsor for almost all of the music

festivals that produce revenue in the islands, with the majority of performances linked to alcohol consumption and party atmospheres. Excluding the alcohol sponsorship, the Talentu Strella show was modeled after popular televised shows like American Idol and the British X-Factor, including a panel of judges from the entertainment industry, a voting system linked to mobile phones for the Cape Verdean public, and contestants recruited from all over the islands and the Cape Verdean diaspora. Raiz di Polon was a featured set of performers throughout the night's televised events.

In countries where performance opportunities and schools are plentiful and selective, the lines distinguishing commercial from concert dance and professional dancers from amateurs are often rigid. Working dancer and graduate of UCLA's dance program Lindsay Ducos tells me, "I have to sever myself as a dancer when I work in LA. As a hiphop dancer I audition exclusively for commercial dance. Music videos. Then I feel like my degree in choreography helps for when I audition for concert dance companies. These are very different worlds, and they rarely mix together" (Lindsay Ducos, pers. comm. September 6, 2011).

Unlike the segregated dance genres generated in an urban commercially-driven city like Los Angeles, Cape Verdean performance operates within a smaller system. Stages are shared by all types of performers, and because dance is prevalent but limited in terms of patrons, the differences between professional and amateur groups, or between genres of dance are not often emphasized. Commercial venues and music videos merge with contemporary art, and staged performance programs often blend together professional and amateur performers. For example, the dissertation introduction discussed how Bety Fernandes was able to move through the musical performance of group *Simentera* outside of the national auditorium. Fernandes represented the abstract contemporary dancer among the prized traditional music as she

improvised on stage. We see this again during the Talentu Strella performance series in Praia as Raiz di Polon performed as special guests. Using excerpts from their diverse repertoire, the entire extended company, including myself, accompanied a series of musical guests and contestants for the very final performance and competition in August 2012.

Katherine Meizel, in *Idolized: Music, Media and Identity in America Idol*, suggests that shows like American Idol served to address a crisis in national identity by reaffirming and staging the American dream (Meizel 2011, 9). The myth of the American dream was in crisis during the time of the show's initial airings, because of the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Meizel argues that staging democracy through a voting system and performing ritual transformations where contestants enter as regular people and leave as celebrity idols, collectively endorsed the myth of American success during a time when post-9/11 terrorist attacks jeopardized national morale. Juliet McMains theorizes a similar concept in her analysis of the popular show Dancing with the Stars, as the show mimicked the creation of a "winning formula" where hard work would render success (McMains 2010, 262). Meizel and McMains' analyses of American Idol, Dancing with the Stars, and So You Think You Can Dance can be applied to Talentu Strella, in the sense that this show, too, serves to address a national identity crisis.

First, as an underdog nation reliant upon financial assistance from other countries, and as a nation that is literally and metaphorically often left off of world maps, Talentu Strella serves to promote Cape Verde as an autonomous nation "caught up" with other popular performance trends. Secondly, by collecting Cape Verdean performers from all over the archipelago and the Cape Verdean diasporic world, Talentu Strella serves to address regional identity divides by staging a harmonious union of talents from diverse Cape Verdean territories. In this manner, the show functions like many other Cape Verdean music festivals by staging a myth of utopian

raceless identity. And finally, because many of these contestants have no training in music and contestants often manage to win purely based upon raw talent, the show eases Cape Verdean anxieties about the necessities of leaving the islands to attain proper training. Through Talentu Strella, Cape Verdeans can become famous without training and education, within Cape Verdean soil. The lure of fame and fortune is dangled in front of the contestants and audience. Like American Idol's promotion of the American dream, Talentu Strella promotes the Cape Verdean dream: home-grown commercial and international success.

On August 14, 2012, the televised Talentu Strella finale event included guest performers and singers. Each of the final five Talentu Strella contestants would each perform two songs; and also sing a duet with one of the professional guest singers. During many of the twenty song performances, Raiz di Polon danced on stage simultaneously with the singers. The performances were improvised, as they were adapted for these songs on the spot, without opportunities to rehearse with the particular songs or singers or on the stage prior to the performance. Mano Preto matched pieces from the company repertoire with the evening's song list. For example, a *morna* duet was performed to a different *morna* song than the one typically used in that particular repertoire. Kaká Oliveira and I had created a duet for a non-profit fundraiser several months prior to Talentu Strella, and we were matched with Romeu Lurdes' original song, a slow amorphous *batuko*, just like the contemporary *batuko* song by artist, Tcheka, that we used with the original choreography. Rosy Timas and Bety Fernandes utilized choreography and props (branches) that they used in a previous performance called "Duas sem Três" to perform contemporary *batuko* choreography alongside celebrity guest musician Binno Barros.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ See McMahon (2011) for an analysis of "Duas sem Três" in the Mindelact festival of 2005.

Raiz di Polon's role in the spectacle of Talentu Strella is an example of the struggles faced by Cape Verdean dancers. Raiz di Polon's identity as a traditionally-rooted company enabled individual members with a diverse repertoire to be matched to the set of songs used in the program. Because this talent show is to select a new Cape Verdean singer, the songs selected in the competition were always either *morna*, *funana*, *tabanka*, *batuko*, or *coladeira* or a known and published contemporary version of one of these traditional genres. Raiz di Polon's fame as a company that represents tradition and teaches traditional foundations served to authenticate the songs sung by contestants. While black tie dress codes, flashy lights, and weaving television cameras promoted pop culture, traditional songs and Raiz di Polon improvisations rooted commercial splendor with, as Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger might say, "myths of tradition" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, 211).

Raiz di Polon's appearance in Talentu Strella also poses problems regarding the process of professionalization. Revisiting the homeless person in my introduction who said, "Of course I know Raiz di Polon! They are rock stars!" reminds us that we have to keep in mind that the company is now nationally and internationally famous. Whether Raiz di Polon performs in Talentu Strella in the national soccer stadium, or in the Baia das Gatas music festival on São Vicente Island (another beer-sponsored commercial event) the dance company simultaneously represents commercial fame in addition to traditional authenticity. Dancers' movements on stage were not in focus on the television screen; the camera men focused on the faces of the dancers just long enough to show that they were from Raiz di Polon, and rarely included full-bodied frames to showcase their movements. Televising the dancers' faces and recognizable silhouettes served to saturate the stage with famous bodies. As a company and collective who seek to enhance the professionalization of dance in Cape Verde, Raiz di Polon's appearance in Talentu

Strella was both detrimental yet necessary for the progress of Cape Verdean dance. On one hand, Raiz di Polon dancers were merely accessories in a superficial display of celebrated talent; dancers were not even granted time or space to rehearse their dances prior to the performance like the guest musicians who were allowed sound-checks. Talentu Strella participation was disadvantageous to furthering support for contemporary dance by taking well-orchestrated and often narrative theatrical dances and inserting them out of context within a commercial setting, equating contemporary dances with the unison dances from which the company worked so hard to distinguish.

On the other hand, Talentu Strella allowed exposure for contemporary dance and Raiz di Polon as the dancers were put forward as important symbols of Cape Verdean performance and televised for the entire archipelago, giving tremendous recognition to the company. As I walked up the stage with Kaká Oliveira to perform, I was greeted by the host of the show and I was thanked for my participation and contribution. While I too represented a mere accessory to this flashy spectacle, my white, foreign body on stage simultaneously propelled the notion of contemporary dance as global, intercultural, and worthy of public recognition and commercial funding. Arts activism professor and opera director Peter Sellars once explained to me, “You have to know your audience. I mean, really know them. And breathe their pains. And eat their food. Only then, can you speak to them in a language they will hear.”¹³⁵ Mano Preto accepted the invitation to perform in Talentu Strella not because he needed exposure to additional audiences. Preto accepted the invitation because he has lived the Cape Verdean dream and understands the audience’s desire for the Cape Verdean dream. He understands the need for promoting Cape Verdean unity. He understands how spectacle-oriented Cape Verdean audiences have become.

¹³⁵ Peter Sellars. Class lecture. Art as Social Activism, Fall 2007.

Incorporating contemporary-traditional dance within this pop culture experience served as a strategic way of highlighting contemporary dance as a marker for success, and not merely as elite intellectualism. He had to strategically speak the languages that the audiences would hear.

Art and business scholar Richard Caves writes extensively about the “superstar model” in performance commerce, where the degree of someone’s fame directly impacts the art itself. While most of his writing applies to the United States, he notes that “[t]he superstar model supplies a framework for thinking about the consequences of achieving top rank in different creative activities. One factor is the ease of bringing the superstar’s performance to even larger audiences” (Caves 2000, 74). While the audience many not have been able to fully appreciate the dancers’ movements and range of skills when combined with a music-focused event, their appearance as successful superstars in *Talentu Strella* creates the appearance of a successful large-audience model. By staging superstardom, or promoting the semblance of a “superstar model,” Raiz di Polon promotes the possibility of financial success for dancers to their stadium-sized audience. Just as Raiz di Polon has represented Africanity, eliteness, intellectual art, and tradition, in the *Talentu Strella* scenario the company transforms to represent stardom and the Cape Verdean dream to be born, based, and successful in Cape Verde.



Figure 73. 2012 *Talentu Strella* Finals with *Raiz di Polon*. *Raiz di Polon* performing in the finale of the *Talentu Estrella* singing competition. TOP: Šara Stranovsky and Kaká Oliveira performing a duet. Middle: Kaká Oliveira

and Susanna Tavares in a trademark inverted *morna* sequence. BOTTOM: Bety Fernandes and Rosy Timas performing *batuko* with their trademark branches. Photos courtesy of Tó Gomes.

Café Palkus: Raiz di Polon as intellectual elite down the street

Prior to their opening performance at the Mindelact Festival, Raiz di Polon gave an intimate presentation of “Cidade Velha” on their home stage at the performance venue, Café Palkus. Café Palkus is a small bar with an outdoor courtyard, nestled at the bottom of the three-story Palácio da Cultura Ildo Lobo (Palace of Culture) space. The café is not owned by the State like the Palácio da Cultura, and serves as a social space where government workers have coffee breaks and post-work beers with the rest of the community. Paulo Umaru, who manages the performance space, hosts bands, poets, DJs, and even *Language Link* events, an American owned language learning program for Cape Verdeans who want to learn English. The space is welcoming, casual, intimate, well-known, and requires no elaborate paperwork process to perform except for a friendly conversation with Umaru. Events are often priced between 300 and 500 escudos, the equivalent of 3.50 to 6.00 American dollars, depending on the requests of the artist or performer, and many events are free.

During the performance of “Cidade Velha”, about 40 people packed inside the courtyard. The audience members were a mix of foreign diplomats, friends of Raiz di Polon students and parents of the childrens’ school, and many professionals who work in Plateau. I was surprised that not more Raiz di Polon adult school students attended the performance, because Raiz di Polon members never pay for dance performances. On one hand, everyone seemed to know one another in the audience, supporting the feeling of a close-knit community. Finding seats and sitting down delayed the performance because so many people would stop to say hi to one another. However, the audience mainly consisted of people within the contemporary art world, which is a relatively limited if not elite audience.

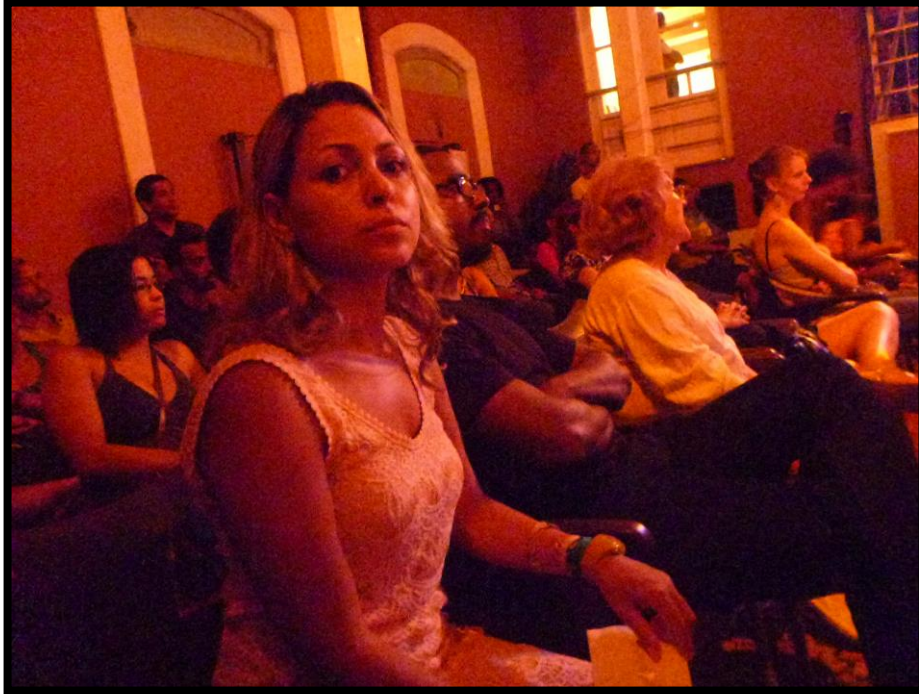


Figure 74. *Café Palkus audience*. Audience gathering for the intimate showing of “Cidade Velha.” The audience included several foreign visiting residents: Brazilian artists, Cape Verdean American businessman, two French embassy workers, and other foreign diplomats. September 2012.

Raiz di Polon has performed in street performances where people all over the city would crowd together to watch dancers pile on top of one another on cobblestones, or festival stages with lighting designed just for the musicians. Here the performance was arranged only for them as a contemporary dance event. As discussed in Chapter Three—ethnographic data derived from this specific performance—audience feedback indicated that many people did not necessarily understand the meaning of the performance. However, when I asked, “What was your favorite part of the performance,” one memorable response was, “The whole thing! Those artists. They are sophisticated. Sometimes I think they must know more than me, when I don’t understand what they are trying to say. But the whole thing, it’s like a new contemporary world. I feel something. I connect with it, and I don’t really know why, but it’s strong and it’s Cape Verdean” (Solange Ferreira, pers. comm. September 15, 2012). This response is important because it

highlights Raiz di Polon as contemporary art performers and their use of “sophisticated” language, connecting Raiz di Polon to elite art. The audience member assumed that she lacked a certain literacy in the form’s language saying, “They must know more than me,” implying that they were somehow inaccessible or learned their talents elsewhere. In Chapter Four, I recalled Suzanna Tavares’ comment about how her friends would often not pay for a Raiz di Polon performance even though it cost the same price as the many beers they would buy when going to clubs and bars. Raiz di Polon’s connection to intellectualism frightens away some potential audience members.

Jeff Hessney, as the business manager, is responsible for accepting performance invitations and promoting the company. He attributes the full but select Café Palkus audience to stereotypes of eliteness.

Sometimes people think something is elitist if it means that you have to think. That’s why people call us “crazy.” You have to think about what that performance could mean. And the work makes you think about humanity. Sometimes here in Praia, people associate thinking with school or homework or ‘elitist,’ and that relates to the nation’s history of a subjugated people. School is taught in Portuguese. ‘Life’ happens in Kriolu.’ No one wants to ‘go to school’ when they see dance (Jeff Hessney, pers. comm. June 9, 2012).

Intellectual “thinking” segregates popular art from high art in Praia specifically because of its relation to the Santiago interior. Within the cultural capital of Mindelo, Raiz di Polon’s work is perceived as intellectual physical theater, but still, *badiu*, which can sometimes be associated with a subaltern community, while within Praia, Raiz di Polon’s work is more commonly viewed as sophisticated and intellectual.

“Kommuni”: RDP as Intercultural Experiment.

Nuno Barreto has been a member of the Raiz di Polon company for almost as long as the company has been active. Barreto would arrive daily to the rehearsal space to practice his own movements and develop his own solo projects. As we often shared the rehearsal space, we decided to create a performance together. Cultural and language barriers often created professional friction between us. For example, Barreto has experience working with contact improvisation with specific Spanish and Portuguese dancers who have taught workshops in Praia, and critiqued the ways in which I practiced this technique. I explained to him that contact improvisation was not my specialty, but that I enjoyed improvisation as choreographic process, including contact improvisation. When I sometimes stopped our improvisations because I felt that they were physically unsafe, he attributed my disagreement as part of a female personality trait, saying, “I have worked with women before. I understand. I know how you can get feisty and defensive.” I was frustrated. I often felt he was making assumptions about the potential of our artwork (and even about my personality) based upon the intercultural exchanges he had experienced previously—and this was understandable given that the international dancers passing through Praia are often extremely specialized in the form they teach as they are there for a professional tour. Barreto was frustrated that I, as an American dancer, born in the country where contact improvisation was born, practiced contact improvisation differently than he had expected.

As a dancer-ethnographer who prided herself in remaining unbiased and neutral, I did not hold any expectations about Barreto’s movement interests and particular experiences in recognized techniques, but I admit that I was surprised that he was more interested in contact improvisation than in utilizing traditional Cape Verdean dances in our performance. My self-

awareness as a privileged American dancer started to play a role in the shaping of our dance, because it was playing a role in the flow of our collaboration. I felt that I had no right to be frustrated with Barreto, even when his comments felt personally sexist because I was coming from a place of privilege. If I had spoken to Barreto in the same way that a teacher would to a student by saying that we cannot impose techniques and expectations of one another onto one another, I would be coming across as pedantic. I had witnessed an American yoga teacher interacting with Raiz di Polon dancers during my 2008 pilot study, and I was appalled by the way that the instructor patronized the dancers, as if they had never been exposed to the formalities of dance-class behavior and alignment principles. I did not want to utilize my authority as an experienced dancer of various techniques in a way that could offend Barreto or place my privilege above his. I wanted our role to remain equal as colleagues, and forego the teacher-student relationship that was often given to me without choice in the Raiz di Polon classes. As I utilized embodied participant observation to understand Barreto's expectations and movement preferences, I often accepted Barreto's criticism and tried to improve rather than standing my ground and lecturing Barreto about why his comments were, at times, filled with unfair prejudices and were often offensive to me as a woman.

I use this example of the "Kommuni" collaboration in my exploration of the spectrum of Raiz di Polon performances to show how the company's histories of intercultural exchanges and the creation of a lexicon that is validated abroad were collectively having an effect upon my independent collaboration with Barreto. These tensions may play a role in future contemporary dance collaboration as company members continue to branch off to develop their own artistic identities and create their own work. I was expected to move in particular ways based upon my status as an American "professional dancer" and based upon the techniques of a selective array

of past visitors who represented the dominant Euro-American standard. Definitions of contemporary dance are constantly being reshaped even faster with such a small and select community, and even though openness is hammered as trademark to cultural process in Cape Verde, I had to shake the expectations that Barreto had of me as an American and reshape them again, just as I had to shake my expectations of Barreto as a Cape Verdean dancer.

What was quintessentially Cape Verdean about our work was how we dealt with tensions during our collaborative processes. Barreto speaks Kriolu, and at the time, I was more fluent in Brazilian Portuguese than Kriolu. Barreto and I decided to create a performance about our intercultural exchange, saturated with miscommunications, language barriers, interruptions, altercations, and creative alternatives. The title “Kommuni” represented the interrupted words communi-ty (or communi-dade in Portuguese) and communi-cation (communi-cação) that can be created as a result of cut conversations, translation errors, and tension. “Kommuni” utilizes the letter “k” in order to signify Kriolu and creolization, and “kommuni” is “interrupted” before it forms either “communi-ty” or “communi-cation.” We utilized various forms of communication to create vignettes, such as an old radio, postcards, mobile phones, and red string to represent interrupted and tangled communication, literally reenacting some of our own problematic exchanges that took place as we would coordinate rehearsals and work together. The performance merged from literal entanglement with the red string, to a fluid conversation utilizing contact improvisation. The final improvisation, which was not executed perfectly in the performance, symbolized our resolve, adaptability, learning process, and appeased tensions. Our resolution of contact improvisation became what performance studies scholar Van de Port calls “felt authentic grounding”—an expression of common ground through “registers” that bring “certain experiential fields into resonance” (Van de Port 2004, 17–19).

Working with Barreto on a contemporary dance theater performance exemplified the local implications for how global exchanges impact the creation of material in the studio. I could not escape my identity as an American, so I had to incorporate my experiences as an American within our performance. Our collaboration also helped me to experience personally the multi-dimensional and multiple identities embedded in the dance genre, contemporary dance, for Cape Verdean residents as a result of the RDP company's global fame. Representations of contemporary dance became highlighted in specific ways when Barreto and I sought some assistance with the production of our performance outside of the confines of Raiz di Polon. Because our performance included mobile phones, dropped calls, and miscommunication through these phones, Barreto believed that the local phone company, T+, would likely want to sponsor us with two new phones to use during the performance, as part of a promotion, and perhaps even provide us with complementary phone credit, which is expensive.

As we presented our work, Barreto severed his relationship from Raiz di Polon when talking to others about his new project with me, but would suddenly reclaim his Raiz di Polon relationship when we presented our project idea to the phone company. The secretary at T+ nodded her head triumphantly, "Yes, yes, Raiz di Polon, of course! Please just wait one moment. We will organize a meeting right now with my manager." For a moment, we were receiving royal treatment, because Barreto represented the international Raiz di Polon star and because I was clearly a foreigner.

In our meeting with T+, we were asked to talk about our performance, Barreto primarily spoke about our work as a dance theater performance. "What kind of dance is it?" the manager asked. "Contemporary dance... we use text, athletic movement, and Sara sings, too," he explained. "Oh, ok. *Contemporary* dance," she said, pretending that she understood. I could tell

from the pauses in her voice that she really had no idea what contemporary dance implied. “Have you seen any of Raiz di Polon’s performances?” I asked her. “Umm... well of course I know who they or you are. But I haven’t seen anything in person, just yet,” she replied. I tried to explain more about our performance, and how T+ might benefit if we were to utilize them as sponsors within our performance. In the end, we did not receive any free mobile phones or sponsorship from T+ in any way. However, the experience revealed that while contemporary dance often could blend with commercial products through performances like Talentu Strella, and contemporary dance was well respected enough by companies like T+ to consider a collaboration, T+ was not yet ready to experiment with individual artists just yet, even those associated with the company.

Adaption became a part of our final “Kommuni” performance. We had to organize a new musical collaborator days prior to the performance, because our musician entered and became a finalist in the Talentu Strella competition, and “Kommuni” was on the same night as one of the final competitions. (Ironically, this was the musician with whom I danced later, during the finals of Talentu Strella.) The show took place at Café Palkus on a Thursday evening as opposed to the more common Friday evening performance scheduling. Nuno Barreto never performs between sunset on Friday through sundown on Saturday, due to his Rastafarian religious beliefs.¹³⁶ These restrictions have caused problems for him as a touring dancer. Café Palkus was the perfect venue because of its intimacy, ease of selecting performance schedule preferences, and because we had individually established relationships to the location by living and rehearsing in Plateau just down the street. A stage was constructed from nine small wooden pallet planks after the tables

¹³⁶ Nuno Barreto has a profound story to tell as an artist, Rastafarian, and newly emerging Cape Verdean dancer. Analyzing details about his work and beliefs exceeds the focus of this dissertation. I plan to publish an essay about him specifically in the future.

and chairs marked “Superboc” and “Strella” were cleared from the space. The audience was filled with Raiz di Polon friends, and many foreigners connected to the various French, Brazilian, and Portuguese cultural centers. However, the power went out about 30 minutes prior to our performance, forcing us to adapt and change the sound setup (which relied on electronic bass amplification) and lighting. Suddenly, the performance of contemporary dance, which was surrounded by elite members of society, was transformed into a communal event, as friends began running home to their neighbors, asking for candles, gasoline powered lanterns, and battery powered musical amps for our musician. The show continued, and represented intercultural exchange, experimental process, and community togetherness rather than contemporary dance as elite, refined spectacular product, and independent project within the nucleus of Raiz di Polon.



Figure 75. *Kommuni*. TOP: From a rehearsal in the Raiz di Polon studio, author singing/dancing solo related to languages and distance through postcards. MIDDLE: Mobile phone conversation in Café Palkus. BOTTOM: Final entanglement scene with mobile phones at Café Palkus. July 2012.

Chapter Conclusions

UCLA professor and opera director Peter Sellars once said, “No artist ever wants to be put into a box. It kills the artist. But once you learn about who is creating the box and why, that’s maybe the key to seeing that the boxes never really existed at all.”¹³⁷ Sellars implied in his talk that 1) artists are sometimes their own critics and 2) that critical assessment and categorizing is an integral part of crafting a place in the artistic sphere. In a coming-and-going archipelago with stark regional divides, where cultural comparisons, culture-labeling, and redefining local identity is part of fabric that holds the nation together, putting artists into many different boxes by relabeling them is not necessarily a negative paradigm. Raiz di Polon’s sustainability is linked to these categorizations and public perceptions because their work is fueled creatively by local support while the majority of their performances occur in international exchanges abroad. As I discussed in Chapters 2 and 4, Cape Verdeans who train and work abroad are validated as professional artists, not only because they are recognized in international papers, but because they participate in venues that are designed specifically for dance when international dance festivals do not yet exist in Cape Verde.¹³⁸

Validation through performing abroad in the Cape Verdean context differs significantly from the validation-through-internationalization processes that dance forms have undergone in other parts of the world such as Argentinean tango or Cuban rumba, which were subaltern forms that became authenticated through the paradigm of class as they circulated in elite European audiences (Savigliano 1995, 9, 25, 30; Daniels 1995, 42). In both tango and rumba, social dance

¹³⁷ Quoted from memory. Peter Sellars. Public lecture. Art as Social Action course. Fall 2008.

¹³⁸ I have been working with Mano Preto with regards to the creation of a dance festival in Cape Verde. I predict that a dance-focused festival will take place in the next 3 years, especially with the creation of the Ballet Nacional. These changes will drastically affect how dance functions in Cape Verde, and I plan to make these events a part of my post-doctoral research.

forms were appropriated and “cleaned” as they were exotified abroad, before becoming popular again for all social classes back in the home nation. By contrast, Cape Verdean dances have not been appropriated abroad like early forms of Cuban salsa and Argentinian tango. In Cape Verde, the foreign validation is tied to sustainability. “We have to go abroad in order to become successful because that’s where the concert dance networks are” says Mano Preto. “In some ways, that’s what the performance ‘Cidade Velha’ is about. Going away in order to come back. It applies to the nation [‘s history of people], but also to us as a company” (Mano Preto, pers. comm. February 10, 2013).

My fieldwork took place within the archipelago because confirming that their multidimensional work was perceived differently within the islands from how it appeared to be perceived off the islands was crucial. I did not observe Raiz di Polon while they were on international tours.¹³⁹ However, conversing with dancers about their experiences revealed that the company has found its home in a number of dance festivals world-wide, especially in new festivals which have specific genre-bending themes. Such festivals include *Festlip*, the dance and theater festival of Lusophone languages in Brazil (2010), *Polycentric Kampnagel* in Germany (2003), which invites dance groups who are responding to conflict and the “tension between cultural roots of the global challenge,”¹⁴⁰ and projects such as *Dancing What is Ours* in Portugal, which was specifically designed as a Cape Verdean Diaspora project (1994). In these performances, Raiz di Polon is promoted with a spectrum of phrases, including from a “country of the margins” and “dealing with the saga of Diaspora,” to “Africa in Paradise”¹⁴¹ and their

¹³⁹ I am interested in conducting post-doctoral research that would include touring alongside the company, as an investigation of audience reactions.

¹⁴⁰ As cited from the Polycentric Kampnagel website.

¹⁴¹ See Feitosa 2010, 89. Brazilian dance publication.

“difficult to categorize style.”¹⁴² The company is often invited to perform as a representative member of the African continent, but then, Mano Preto often feels compelled to clarify that “our work does not fit into the common perception of African dance.”¹⁴³ Instead of branding a career based upon adhering to one emblematic image, Raiz di Polon’s work is spread through various theme-specific festivals related to boundary crossings and transcultural identity. I will again recall Allen Roberts’ concept of re-fabulation, the subtle appearance of repeated images in various parts of a city to change perceptions of the city itself (Roberts 2010). Similarly, as we have seen through Mindelact, commercial music venues, and other improvised performances, the subtle and often not-so-subtle appearances of Raiz di Polon in theater, dance, music, and street festivals, are re-fabulating the archipelago and encouraging residents to recognize contemporary dance as a strong, versatile warrior in the fight for national autonomy.

In Susan Foster’s collection, *Worlding Dance*, following other discussions related to globalization, ethnicity, world dances, and crossroads dances, Yutian Wong articulates what “the international dancer” means today:

The appeal of the international artist lies in the execution of a balanced performance of social legibility and bodily difference. Internationality is evidenced by the perceived ability to transcend national borders while maintaining a reified point of origin. (Wong 2011, 150)

Through these examples, I have shown that Mano Preto and the Raiz di Polon extended company have produced a lexicon that speaks to the diverse international Cape Verdean audiences,

¹⁴² “Cape Verdian Dance: intense, rough and theatrical,” in *The Power of Culture*. Online publication in the Netherlands. 2008. <http://www.powerofculture.nl/en/current/2008/october/raizdipolon>. Accessed 4/20/2013.

¹⁴³ Published in “Capeverdian Dance: intense, rough and theatrical.” *The Power Of Culture*, online magazine. The Netherlands. 2008. <http://www.powerofculture.nl/en/current/2008/october/raizdipolon>

“transcending national borders” locally and globally while maintaining a reified point of origin within Santiago Island. Raiz di Polon represents a new wave of international dance, one that is further internationalized within its own nation. By moving beyond borders within the archipelago, Raiz di Polon’s work “undoes the obsession with otherness,” as Marta Savigliano says, presenting work that is othered so much to a point of neutrality in the “matrix of othering” (Savigliano 2009).



Figure 76. *Traditional Modern International Regional Local*. Excerpt from “Cidade Velha,” showing “inverted *batuko*” with live traditional *batuko* drummers, blurring the lines between traditional and contemporary dance for the “Regional Encounter For Child Labor, Preview of Global Conference.” April 2012.

**CONCLUSIONS:
RAIZ DI POLON AS THE NATIONAL BALLET OF CAPE VERDE.**



Figure 77. *National Steps*. From Carnival festivities, February 2013 in Praia, Santiago.

Findings and Implications:

This dissertation achieved three goals. First, using feedback from dancers, musicians, activists, and other people of the archipelago, it is the first study of contemporary dance in Cape Verde. Second, I assert Cape Verde's position as an often overlooked yet rich source for valuable information on transnational identity because the archipelago's isolation and small size results in an accelerated speed of cultural change with visible and traceable impacts on global networks. At the same time, the nation's matrix-like and layered connections to these networks serve to blur the boundaries defined by its physical isolation. Last and most importantly, this dissertation has

showed how contemporary dance is serving to boost the nation's sense of independence by inspiring people to embrace local, regional, and national divisions although the nation is still dependent upon foreign aid.

In Chapter One, I showed how Cape Verde's histories of slavery, centuries of migration, and accumulated meanings of *sodadi* intensified these rifts and how language and music serve as central emblems for negotiating and mitigating tensions. In Chapter Two, I situated Raiz di Polon in the context of these musical and linguistic spheres as well as within what I term the "sea of cultural mimicry." I asserted how acts of remembering serve to reevaluate traditional values while also differentiating the group from other emerging stage-dance troupes. A close analysis of the performance "Cidade Velha" in Chapter Three demonstrated how the group has distinguished itself from other dance trends by crafting a Kriolu movement lexicon and incorporating choreographic strategies such as "hybrid visual objects," medleys, and narratives that re-play erased histories.

I used linguistic terms in Chapter Four to exemplify how creolization strategies in training and rehearsals address concomitant concerns about traditionalism and modernity. The effects of Raiz di Polon's new movement language were evaluated in Chapter Five through an analysis of multiple performance venues. Their work exhibits tremendous growth from within what I theorize as the "matrix of othering," rendering the dances relevant for various audiences. Because Raiz di Polon's work has been so effective for over fifteen years, we can draw the conclusion that the company is individually (through their leadership and distinctive approach) and collectively (through their community engagement and the exchange of performance) crafting a sustainable contemporary dance genre in the archipelago, when sustainability typically only exists in the promoted

utopian national image.

Writing as Place-Making: “Si ka ta badu, ka ta biradu.”

“Si ka ta badu, ka ta biradu.” “If you don’t leave, you cannot return.” These words are memorialized in stone at Nelson Mandela International Airport in Praia, Santiago. Every traveler passing through Praia will see the words as they come and go. This phrase, used in situations of coming and going, is expressed at almost every *despedida* (farewell party) celebration to appease emotional tears of departure. The phrase explains the powerful meaning of *sodadi*: one must experience the emotional agony of leaving in order to experience the explosive joy that comes with reuniting and rediscovering Cape Verde.

While the Cape Verdean archipelago is physically built upon static volcanic rock, for many people the islands are a “transient mobile and anchorless home”¹⁴⁴ where resources shift, loved ones leave, and the philosophy of “living in the moment” is often adopted as a survival mechanism. “Place-making,” a term that myth scholar David Shorter uses to explain how people define, discover, and deepen their ties with a particular place (2010, 252), can be difficult to accomplish when the person engaging in this process is in transition or absent from home. The act of returning is no simple task for many Cape Verdeans who have emigrated, creating unpredictable event attendance and rendering long-term place-making acts such as ritual difficult. How does one create a sense of place, establish familiarity, create connections, and “mark” a place without a stable and settled population?

Cape Verde provides an answer to this question within a culturally-observable

¹⁴⁴ Flavio Silva. Resident of Portugal returning to visit his family in Praia. Interview for Project Maramar. February 2013.

interpersonal and distance-related process. Place-making in Cape Verde exists in transitional spaces—in the circulation of stories and the acts of writing about Cape Verde as home. Just as postcards mailed to another island or letters placed inside a sea-tossed bottle serve as physical markers of exchange over divided places, so works the system here: the ongoing exchange between circulating residents in Cape Verde and opportunities to re-learn the nation’s histories connect people to the islands. Music, for example, has functioned markedly well as the nation’s prized constituter of place because of the ease with which it becomes a tradable commodity within Cape Verdean global networks. Music can be mailed, downloaded, and listened to at any moment in addition to being showcased at celebratory performance festivals. Dance also functions in place-making processes, adding embodied, more involved physical components. Unlike most of the music, which is produced abroad and circulated back to the islands, Raiz di Polon’s dances are created within Santiago and circulated outwards. Mano Preto—in collaboration with the Raiz di Polon dancers, Praia performance community, diaspora networks, and global dance-festival circuits—utilizes dance to disseminate his stories, images, and ideas of “home” in methods consistent with the cosmopolitan, travelling Cape Verdean. Preto may not have steady ground upon which to stand in the form of a predictable audience, steady funding, or even established rehearsal and performance locations, but with every story his company performs, his anchor to the islands becomes stronger and stronger.

Broader Implications

Performance Studies scholars developed their field by highlighting the human body as a loaded site of ongoing knowledge production, the result of which was to decentralize the academy’s privileging of written knowledge. As Diana Taylor says, “Western culture, wedded to

the word, whether written or spoken, enables language to usurp epistemic and explanatory power. Performance studies allows us to take seriously other forms of cultural expression as both praxis and episteme” (Taylor 2013, 13). Building upon the established practice of representing performance in writing, my inquiry employed an expanded approach, using the translation and representation of language as a central paradigm in the story of pioneer choreographer Mano Preto and his Cape Verdean crossroads lexicon.

Writing about dance is an inherently problematic undertaking. Susan Foster writes, “The claim for a writing-dancing body, formulated in response to political exigencies of this specific moment, dates itself in the kind of inscription it undertakes to make apparent” (1995, 19). In other words, approaching Raiz di Polon’s dances as a unique written lexicon in some ways requires a shifting of framework back to viewing dance through the lens of writing. By doing so, one metaphorically aligns the dances with the Eurocentric side of Cape Verde’s African-European spectrum. However, I see the process of “writing Raiz di Polon” as a way to include the problematic African-European sliding scales that define the archipelago and also as a way to transcend the problems ignited by these linear scales.

Language itself, and how to represent it in *written* form, is a critical topic of debate at the Cape Verdean crossroads today, and “writing dancing” as Susan Foster terms it, resolves this language debate. Every year since the country’s independence in 1975, officials have struggled to make Cape Verdean dialects official. In May of 2013, the President of the National Assembly said the following:

The Cape Verdean language is the post-master of Cape Verdeanness and the foundation of the nation and the state. . . . Kriolu is the trace of the largest Cape Verdean identity and a symbol of national unity and therefore must be cherished and held in prestige as it also aspires to greater dignity, in all legitimacy, by

another statute and major role.¹⁴⁵

Statements like this confirm the desire for Kriolu's official instatement, and a resolution is always perceived to be on the horizon, but a date of implementation and a detailed resolution plan have yet to be presented.

While a decision about which Kriolu to make official is imminent but not yet established, a decision *has* recently been made that Raiz di Polon will form the nucleus of the country's first National Ballet. While the word "ballet" often implies "classical ballet," it has evolved to become an international standard for "concert dance company" in many parts of the world; consider the "National Ballet de Senegal" or the "Ballet Folklórico de la Amazonia" in Brazil.¹⁴⁶ Raiz di Polon's multidimensional work represents the Kriolu, Criolu, Creole, and Crioulo, with all of the various origins and associations tied to their various spellings. For many years, Mano Preto has expressed an interest in forming a state-supported official national company that would include not only his core Raiz di Polon company, but also dancers and artists who reside in the Cape Verdean diaspora. I know about Preto's plans because he invited me to participate as a member of the company. Before I began my long-term fieldwork, Preto advised me about possible upcoming meetings, which were supposed to start in June of 2012.¹⁴⁷ But like debates regarding the officialization of Kriolu, the creation of the ballet was continually postponed for the future—until June of 2013.

On June 4th 2013, Mano Preto sent me an email:

The Ballet, Sara! The best dancer from the National Ballet of China was here in

¹⁴⁵ In Furtado (2013,) "Mário Lúcio: Oficializar o crioulo é tirá-lo da sua longa e injusta clandestinidade constitucional." A Semana Online. May 17, 2013. Accessed May 17, 2013. <http://www.asemana.publ.cv/spip.php?article88125>.

¹⁴⁶ For more information about "ballet" in national company titles, see Anthony Shay's book chapter on "The Anatomy of a Dance Company" (2002) and Francesca Castaldi's use of the term throughout her book (2006).

¹⁴⁷ I had hoped that my fieldwork would take place during the time of these inaugural meetings, so as to receive assistance in the form of airfare for my only partially-funded fieldwork.

Cape Verde. We signed many contracts! It is going to happen!!!

In writing, as in person, Mano Preto rarely expresses himself with more words than necessary. He often utilizes simple punctuation marks in his written conversations and typically speaks with simple and direct answers, adding detail and emotion only when he communicates through dance. The use of three exclamation marks in his email signified to me that *this time*, the National Ballet is going to be realized. When formed, the national company will finally allow dancers and artists who were forced to leave their homeland, like Tony Tavares (see Chapters 3 and 4), to return and be part of the affirmation of Cape Verdean contemporary dance. Such a formation solidifies my claims regarding the efficacy of Raiz di Polon's corporeal Kriolu. Furthermore, a National Ballet will symbolically bring to fruition the latter portion of the famous airport proverb, "If you don't go away, you cannot return." Even if they do not stay for longer than the duration of an artistic work, Cape Verdean artists' glorious return will finally inaugurate them as "professional" from *within* the islands, and it will mark a historical turning point for Cape Verdean dance. The creation of a National Ballet will also symbolically place Cape Verde—as an often forgotten and overlooked nation—on the map of dance.

Cynthia Novak used her ethnographic study of contact improvisation to demonstrate that dance can invent, subvert, embody, and contradict cultural values, and even change how social systems operate. By inventing a new dance technique, one new dance language shifted public perspective about how people operate in relationship to one another because the technique itself had to do with dancers' learning how to interact with one another (1996). Novak's ideas apply to the contemporary dance genre that Raiz di Polon has established over the last ten years. Rather than democratizing dance and freeing it from the clutches of ballet-based notions of beauty and technique, Raiz di Polon has grown a concert-dance genre out of community based dances,

which promotes that community value for those involved. The manner in which they have incorporated a number of “new” techniques, such as ballet and contact improvisation, is itself the “new genre,” because they are doing it in ways that maintain community values. Raiz di Polon is changing how social systems operate by training students and audiences to support dance for its intellectual, community-based, historical work, and not simply because they, as Cape Verdean people, have overcome many obstacles as a developing nation to create a dance company. Preto challenges the current “system” of concert dance not only by solidifying the very system—because one did not exist previously—but also by changing the ways that Cape Verdeans think about their own abilities and resources, demanding that existing dance groups challenge themselves without losing their foundational ideals. For example, Preto gave some constructive criticism regarding the wheelchair dance group, Mona Roda, which has received much attention from the media in its third year as a group:

They don't push themselves. The audience claps because they are proud that the dancers are dancing in wheelchairs. But that doesn't empower them. That's just sympathy. Treat them like dancers and not like disabled people in a developing nation. Hold them accountable for difficult tasks. Raise the bar. That is how you create dance and empower people.¹⁴⁸

Another new group named Kriol Dance Movement, also known as “KDM,” which describes itself as “the first Cape Verdean urban dance company,” has recently blossomed in the dance community and has similarly been put in the media's flashing spotlight. Preto has warned them, too, about the lure of quick stardom, urging them to focus on the sustainability of intellectual work. Time will tell how KDM accepts Preto's advice, and how tensions between these groups may develop, because KDM is most heavily influenced by American commercial

¹⁴⁸ Mano Preto. Personal conversation. May 2012.

hip hop and is rebelling somewhat against Mano Preto's legacy.¹⁴⁹ By creating a concert-dance community on their own terms from within the matrix of identity, Preto and Raiz di Polon have metaphorically replaced the nation's reality of dependence upon foreign aid with a nation where both the dancer and the Cape Verdean dancer are celebrated equally.



¹⁴⁹ In the future I hope to write about the Kriole Dance Movement troupe concerning issues different from those considered here.

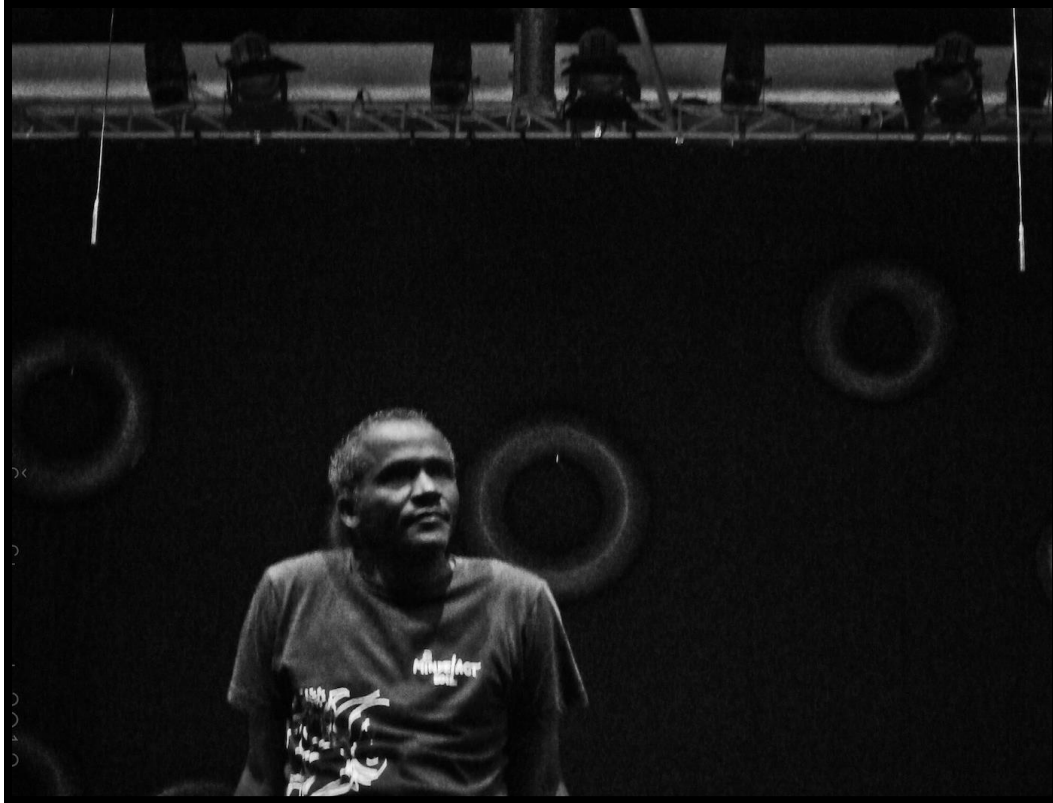


Figure 78. *New Beginnings*. Above: Raiz di Polon children rehearse at the national assembly. Below: Mano Preto directing the company, at Mindelact, September 2012.

Predictions

With the support of the Chinese Ministry of Culture, the formation of the National Ballet of Cape Verde may not change the momentum of success that Raiz di Polon has accumulated. The company has always incorporated guest teachers and performers, both with and without Cape Verdean roots. A new title may not change the way the company operates. However, with a new budget, I predict that the symbolic transformation will change the practical aspects of their choreographic approaches, and thereby instigate other changes. The announcement in May regarding the China–Cape Verde collaboration revealed that directors from the Chinese Ministry of Culture, including directors of dance, theater, radio and television, and education, will help to

support the creation of a National Orchestra and National Ballet in Praia.¹⁵⁰ These directors will also work with Cape Verdean directors to restructure the National Auditorium and provide ample supplies such as books and chairs to restructure the National Library. Production of arts will be improved with stronger publicity, larger spaces, and training sessions for technical production skills. While the details about how the dance portion of these plans will develop have not yet been made public, I predict that along with all of the changes from a greater budget, increased production, and greater arts attention, Mano Preto will finally be able to expand his school into a larger studio space, which will change the way that the company and school operate. A new studio space (like the plan proposed by Preto in Chapter 4, page 71) will make rehearsals and classes more private and will prevent passers-by from peering into the tiny studio rooms, which was a fundamental aspect of the community-based atmosphere. However, expanded space will enable more classes and rehearsals to occur simultaneously, and will provide for better recruitment of more students. With a new budget, Preto told me that he hopes to be able to continue to send teachers to other areas of the city with less access to dance, as he had done up through 2008, when limited resources discontinued his outreach efforts.

Future collaborations with Shanghai will likely impact the corporeal creolization processes that the company uses in developing its vocabularies and techniques. It will be thought-provoking to see how a China-supported national dance company will impact the group's work at the movement level. Will the Cape Verdean corporeal economy be "recolonized" by China, as Allen Roberts (2010, 6-8) suggested of the Senegalese visual

¹⁵⁰ "China apoia montagem do ballet e orquestra nacionais em Cabo Verde." Panapress online. <http://www.panapress.com/China-apoia-montagem-do-ballet-e-orquestra-nacionais-em-Cabo-Verde--3-872945-43-lang2-index.html> Last accessed Sept. 2, 2013.

economy when China became involved in the distribution of religious visual materials? The momentum that Raiz di Polon has accumulated in building a dance community may be supercharged with a new budget, but we might speculate if the possibility exists that dance may be “hijacked,” where Chinese promoters receive more benefits, robbing nationals of their stake in the market (ibid., 7). However, my dissertation has shown that Raiz di Polon’s dance community was built at the crossroads within the “matrix of identity,” which means that rapid and significant changes are part of their fundamental creative process. Furthermore, as shown in Chapter 1 (85-87) regarding the Raiz di Polon–China collaboration for Chinese Cultural Week, dance has the capacity to become a site of integration for previously segregated Chinese and Cape Verdean communities. I believe that Raiz di Polon's transformation into the National Ballet will support positive change in foreign relations between China and Cape Verde, and that Raiz di Polon will find ways to rediscover the strength of their foundation, just like the intricate roots of the Polon tree.

The Polon by the Sea is The Flower

In his article on Cape Verdean music, Mai Palmberg urges scholars not to search for Cape Verde’s many cultural “roots.” He warns his readers by saying, “There is a risk that one is looking for the roots but missing the flower” (2010, 121). While Palmberg was specifically critiquing the narrow viewpoints of some Cape Verde scholars who failed to see the dynamics of creole culture for more than its multiple roots, his emphasis on shifting perspectives to notice the dynamic, ephemeral, and meaningful “flower” in a research project is also applicable to critical ethnography, dance studies, and this particular cultural study. I began my research with the

expectations that I would document “traditional” batuko dances, thinking that my experiences as a contemporary dancer could be separated from my interest in traditional idioms. But only when I began to embrace my identities as a drummer, musician, contemporary dancer, mourning human, social being, and privileged American, could I find the project that found me. The lines between traditionalism, contemporariness, Americanness, imperialism, and Cape Verdeanness were all blurred and interrelated, and only by embracing all of these fully on a personal and observational level could I produce a collaborative work.

As Christopher Kelty argues in his essay, “Collaboration, Coordination, and Composition” (2009), meaningful humanities studies are often directly relate to establishing a shared collaboration with members of a community. Kelty defines collaboration as a process where engaging, working, or writing with another person changes one’s understanding of a given problem and “fertilizes” the creation of new interests among the people involved (Kelty 2009, 189). He explains that coordinating our projects with other scholars in other disciplines extends the life of the initial collaboration by producing new questions and new projects. My research incorporated varied communities, multiple voices, and multiple artforms (photography, video, dance, and music), and it required me to utilize multiple identities as a performer, teacher, and ethnographer. Only through these multiple perspectives and collaborations could I see the blooming flower that is Raiz di Polon. I hope that the multi-layered and multi-voiced aspects of this collaborative project will extend outward to other disciplines and pave the way for a wave of versatile artist-scholar-writers who use their multiple identities not only to see Palmberg’s meaningful “flower,” but also to see that one’s flower remains connected to a field of other flowers. I hope that this dissertation will contribute towards the generative fertilization of meaning across the Atlantic and into other academic disciplines, beginning with institutions on

Santiago Island.



Figure 79. *Smiling Flowers*. Author with Zecca Cardoso, Suzanna Tavares, Mano Preto and Rosy Timas of Raiz di Polon, sitting across the street from the rehearsal studio.

WORKS CITED

Video links by Author

- Raiz di Polon's performance of "Cidade Velha": <http://vimeo.com/68691908>
- Raiz di Polon's children's school rehearsal: <http://youtu.be/6gaF617BvkY>
- Maramar video project preview: <http://youtu.be/p1f9XQfiaKU>
- Project Espera preview: <http://youtu.be/nw2xScTSb6o>

Cited Interviews

- Anonymous (Homeless person, street conversation), interview with author, April 15, 2012.
- Marco Makita Almeida (Pilot, Palacio da Cultura), casual conversation with author, February 10, 2013.
- Isabella Almeida (Dancer, Marina Voz dance group, Marina Voz rehearsal), interview with author, August 12, 2010.
- Bruno Amarante (KDM founder, author's house), group discussion with author, July 15, 2012 and July 7, 2012.
- Monica Andrade (Dance student, RDP studio), personal communication with author, February 16, 2012.
- Vanuza Barbosa. (Linguist, author's house), group discussion with author, June 19, 2012).
- Cindy Baptista (interviewee's home), personal communication with author, June 1, 2012.
- Jão Branco (Centro Cultural do Mindelo, CCM), interview by author, September 10, 2012.
- Crystal Brown (Dance Department Chair at Middlebury College), personal communication with author, November 9, 2012.
- Lúcia Cardoso (Singing teacher, Casa di Musica University of Cape Verde), rehearsal casual conversation with author, February 6, 2012.
- Francisco Carvalho (Director Center for Communities in Praia, Federal building), interview by author, February 17, 2013.
- Marisa Correia (Director of Delta Cultura Batukadeiras, her personal bar), interview by author, unknown date, July 9, 2008).
- Luís Da Rosa (Dancer with RDP, rehearsal studio), interview with author, May 20, 2012.

Binga De Castro (Bassist, Casa di Musica), rehearsal casual conversation with author, September 15, 2013.

Isa Elias (freelance social activist with anti-racism youth organizations, interviewee's home), February 27, 2013.

Bety Fernandes (Dancer with RDP and Center for Youth in 5th of July Park), July 18, 2012.

Vanilde Fertado. (Director of GOIPM and OMCV in OMCV office), interview with author, April 12, 2012.

Luci Fonseca. Public Facebook Status update. May 20 2013. Accessed May 20 2013.

Solange Ferreira. (Telecom specialist, Café Palkus audience), post-performance interview with author, September 15, 2012.

Nelson Gomez. (Radio technology specialist, in interviewee's home), casual conversation with author, September 9, 2012.

Marcia Gonzalez. (Occupation Unknown. Café Palkus), casual interview with author, September 10, 2012.

Jeff Hessney. (Producer and manager of Raiz di Polon, RDP studio), interviews with author, June 13, 2008, August 11 2010, June 9 2012, September 8 2012.

Humberto Lelis. (City Councilman of Culture, Education and Sports, Municipal Building of Mindelo), interview with author, August 17, 2010.

Redy Lima. (Social activist, professor, and sociologist, Author's home), Discussion group commentary, Aug. 4, 2012.

Richard Lobban. (Cape Verde Historian), Phone conversation, July 26, 2013.

Dinana Marquez. (Dancer and English Teacher in Mindelo, street conversation), interview with author, August 18, 2010.

Amilcar Monteiro. (Manager for Center for Commerce and Local Tourism, Center for Commerce building) Interview with author, February 10, 2013. Also several documented email conversations.

Amilton Monteiro. (Dance student with the RDP school, rehearsal studio), personal conversation with author after class, August 11, 2012.

Ze "Movimentu Shokanti" Monteiro. (Cultural curator and hip-hop artist in Brockton, MA), telephone interview, November 12, 2012.

Marco Medina Silva. (Computer scientist), online skype interview, February 5, 2013.

Deni Mendes. (Lawyer, Kebra Kabana eatery), recorded interviews with author, April 30, 2012, September 12, 13, 2012 and February 20, 2013, and several casual unrecorded conversations throughout the months of September-October 2012.

Jão Neves. (Director of the Portuguese Cultural Center of Praia, CCP), interview with author, June 10, 2012.

Kaká Oliveira. (Dancer RDP, Achada Park square), interview with author, October 5, 2012.

Bento Oliveira. (Contemporary visual artist and member of the Cultural Ministry of Cape Verde, Palacio da Cultura)

Jão Paulo Brito. (Director of theater Ministry of Culture, Palacio da Cultura Ildo Lobo), interview with author, February 29, 2013.

Maky Rodriguez. (Computer science consultant, interviewee's home), interview with author, February 20, 2013.

Marilene Perreira (Author and director of the Brazilian Cultural Center of Praia, CCB) Interview with author, August 7, 2012.

Mano Preto. (Artistic Director and Founding member of Raiz di Polon, RDP studio) Personal communication with author outside of rehearsal, July 27 2008.
Personal interview after rehearsal, August 10, 2010.
Personal interview, September 9, 2012.
Email communications, January 12, 2013.
Casual Conversation after rehearsal, February 10, 2013.

Delson Rodeia. (Raiz di Polon school student, RDP studio), Casual conversation after class,

Ivan Santos (Director, Center for Gender Equality, Office for Gender Equality), Interview with author, March 12, 2012.

Mario Lucio de Sousa (Minister of Culture and Musician, National Assembly), ministry of culture meeting/presentation, October 6, 2012.

Flavio Silva. (Lisbon-based financial consultant returning to Cape Verde, Café Palkus), interview with author, February 10, 2013.

Patricia Silva. (Actress in the Mindelco Cultural Center Theater group, Local café), casual conversation after Mindelact festival, September 13, 2012.

Súka. (Artist name). (Director of Fidjus di Bibinha Cabral, Tarrafal square), Interview with author, July 10, 2012

Corsino Tolentino. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and education specialist), Interview with author, September 4, 2012.

Leida Tolentino (Cape Verdean living in the USA who teaches West African dance to RDP), Interview with author, February 18, 2013.

Antonio Tavares (Chorographer and dancer in Lisbon), Skype interview, January 29, 2013.

Suzanna Tavares (Dancer, Raiz di Polon, RDP studio), interview with author, October 9, 2012.

Rosy Timas. (Raiz di Polon company dancer, RDP studio), personal communication, November 7, 2012.

References

Andrade-Watkins, Claire. 2006. *Some Kind of Funny Porto Rican: A Cape Verdean American Story*. SPIA Media Productions, DVD. 83 mins.

Allen, Maria Fernanda. 2011. *The Routledge Portuguese Bilingual Dictionary*. Routledge, 2011.

Alfama, José Bernardo. 1910. *Canções Crioulas e Musicas Populares de Cabo Verde*. Lisboa: Imprensa Commercial, Calçada do Caldas.

Almada, David Hopffer. 1989. *Caboverdianidade & Tropicalismo*. Recife: Fundação Joaquim Nabuco.

Almada Duarte, Dulce. 2003. *Bilinguismo ou Diglossia? As Relações de Força entre o Crioulo e o Português na Sociedade Cabo-verdiana*. Praia: Spleen Edições.

Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edition. London: Verso.

Appaduri, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Apter, Andrew. 2007. *Beyond Words: Discourse and Critical Agency in Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Auslander, Philip. 2006. "The Performativity of Performance Documentation." *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 28(3): 1–10.

Arenas, Fernando. 2011. *Lusophone Africa: Beyond Independence*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Baker, Bruce. 2006. "Cape Verde: The Most Democratic Nation in Africa?" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 44(4): 493–511.

Bales, Melanie, and Rebecca Nettle-Fiol. 2008. *The Body Eclectic: Evolving practices in Dance Training*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.

Barthes, Roland. 1972. *Mythologies*. New York: Hill and Wang.

- Batalha, Luis and Carling, Jorgen. 2008. *Transnational Archipelago: Perspectives on Cape Verdean Migration and Diaspora*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Behague, Gerard H. 1994. *Music and Black Ethnicity: The Caribbean and South America*. Miami: North-South Center Press.
- . 2003. "Rap, Reggae, Rock or Samba: The Local and the Global in Brazilian Popular Music." In *Musical Cultures of Latin America: Global Effects, Past and Present*, edited by Steven Loza. 111–121. Los Angeles: UCLA Ethnomusicology Publications.
- . 2006. "Regional and National Trends in Afro-Brazilian Religious Music: A Case of Cultural Pluralism." *Latin American Music Review*. 27(1): 91–103.
- Bernabé, Jean, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphaël Confiant. 1990. Translated by Mohamed B. Taleb Khyar. "In Praise of Creoleness." *Callaloo* 13(4): 866–909.
- Bhabha, Homi K. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Blom, Lynn Anne and L. Tarin Chaplin. 1982. *The Intimate Act of Choreography*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Braithwaite, Lloyd. 1975. *Social Stratification in Trinidad: A Preliminary Analysis*. Kingston: Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies.
- Branco, João. 2004. *Nação Teatro: História do Teatro em Cabo Verde*. Instituto da Biblioteca Nacional e do Livro.
- Brandellero, Amanda. 2009. "Crossing Boundaries: Migrant Musicians in World Music Production in Paris" In *Living in the 21st Century City*, edited by Marco Bontje and Heike Pethe, 25–34. Amsterdam: Amsterdam Institute for Metropolitan and International Development Studies.
- Bremser, Martha and Lorna Sanders, eds. 2011. *Fifty Contemporary Choreographers*. London: Routledge.
- Brito-Semedo, Manuel. 2006. *A Construção da Identidade Nacional: Análise da Imprensa entre 1877 e 1975*. Praia: Instituto da Biblioteca Nacional e do Livro.
- . 2006. "Morabeza". In *Dicionário Temático da Lusofonia*, edited by Fernando Cristóvão, Maria Adelina Amorim, Maria Lúcia Garcia Marques, and Susana Brites Moita. First edition, 736–737. Lisboa: Texto Editora e Associação de Cultura Lusófona.
- Browning, Barbara. 1995. *Samba: Resistance in Motion*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Burton, Antoinette, ed. 1999. *Gender, Sexuality and Colonial Modernities*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, Judith. 1993. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "sex."* New York: Routledge.

- Cain, Kathleen. 2007. *The Cottonwood Tree: An American Champion*. Boulder, CO: Big Earth Publishing.
- Casey, Edward S. 1987. *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Castaldi, Francesca. 2006. *Choreographies of National Identities: Negritude, Dance and the National Ballet of Senegal*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Castro-e-Almeida, M.E., M.A. Gama-Antunes, and Vitor M. R. Marques. 1991. "Some Notes About Nutrition at Praia, Cape Verde." *International Journal of Anthropology* 6(3): 197–205.
- Carreira, Anthony. 1972. *Cabo Verde: Formação e Extinção de uma Sociedade Escravocrata (1460–1878)*. Lisbon: Centro de Estudos da Guiné Portuguesa.
- Carter, Katherine and Judy Aulette, Judy. 2009. *Cape Verdean Women and Globalization: The Politics of Gender, Culture, and Resistance*. New York: Palgrave.
- Carling, Jorge. 2004. "Emigration, Return and Development in Cape Verde: The Impact of Closing Borders." *Population, Space and Place* 10: 113–132.
- Caves, Richard E. 200. *Creative industries: Contracts between art and commerce*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Chodorow, Joan. 2007. "Inner-Directed Movement in Analysis: Early Beginnings." In *Authentic Movement: Moving the Body, Moving the Self, Being Moved*, edited by Patrizia Pallaro. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 32-25.
- Collier, John. 1986. *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method*. Albuquerque: UNM Press.
- Conquergood, Dwight. 1991. "Rethinking Ethnography: Towards a Critical Cultural Politics." *Communication Monographs* 58(2): 179–194.
- Cosentino, Donald. 1982. *Defiant Maids and Stubborn Farmers: Tradition and Invention in Mende Story Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cosentino, Donald, ed. 1995. *Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou*. Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History.
- Clifford, James. 1988. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- . 1997. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- Clifford, James and George E. Marcus, editors. 2003. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Daniel, Yvonne. 1995. *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- . 2011. *Caribbean and Atlantic Diaspora Dance: Igniting Citizenship*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.
- DeFrantz, Thomas F. 2004. *Dancing Revelations: Alvin Ailey's Embodiment of African American Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- De los Santos, Alejandro. 2013. "Kachupada. Carmen Souza." *Afribuku: Cultura Africana Contemporânea*. Accessed May 10, 2013. <http://www.afribuku.com/carmensouza/>
- DeParle, Jason. 2007. "In a World on the Move, a Tiny Land Strains to Cope." *The New York Times*. New York, June 24.
- Derrida, Jacques, and Jeffrey Mehlman. 1972. "Freud and the Scene of Writing." *Yale French Studies* 48: 74–117.
- Desmond, Jane. 1999. *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Douglas, Gilbert, Adrienne Sichel, Adedayo M. Liadi, Kettly Noël, Reggie Danster, August Cuvilas, and Faustin Linyekula. 2006. "Under Fire: Defining a Contemporary African Dance Aesthetic—Can It Be Done?" *Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies* 20(2):102–115.
- Duarte, Dulce Almada. 2003. *Bilinguismo ou Diglossia? As Relações de Força entre o Crioulo e o Português na Sociedade Cabo-Verdiana*. Praia, Cabo Verde: Spleen Edições.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. 1996. *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: Random House.
- Edmonson, Laura. 2007. *Performance and Politics in Tanzania: The Nation on Stage*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Fabian, Johannes. 2001. *Anthropology with An Attitude: Critical Essays*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Fabian, Krista N. 1996. "Professional Dance in Ghanaian Society: The Development and Direction of the Ghana Dance Ensemble." Ph.D. diss., University of Ghana.
- Fardon, Richard. 2008. "Cosmopolitan Nations, National Cosmopolitans." In *Anthropology and the New Cosmopolitanism: Rooted, Feminist and Vernacular Perspectives*, edited by Pnina Werbner, 233–261. Oxford: Berg.
- Faubion, James D., and George E. Marcus. 2009. *Fieldwork is Not What It Used to Be: Learning Anthropology's Method in a Time of Transition*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Feitosa, Angelica. 2011. "Na Outra Margem do Oceano." *Olhares: A Revista de Danca do Ceara*. 2: 89-93.

- Fêo Rodrigues, Isabel Paim de Bruges. 2002. "Crafting Nation and Creolization in the Islands of Cape Verde." Ph.D. diss., Brown University.
- Fernandez, Gabriel. 2006. *Em Busca da Nação: Notas para uma reinterpretação do Cabo Verde crioulo*. Florianópolis, Brasil: Editoria UFSC.
- Fikes, Kesha. 2000. "Santiaguense Cape Verdean Women in Portugal: Labor Rights, Citizenship, and Diasporic Transformation." Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles.
- Fikes, Kesha. 2006. "Emigration and the Spatial Production of Difference in Cape Verde." In *Race and Globalization: Transformations in the Cultural Production of Blackness*, edited by Kamari Maxine Clarke and Deborah A. Thomas, 154–70. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Foy, Colm. 1988. *Cape Verde: Politics, Economics and Society*. London: Pinter Publishers.
- Foucault, Michel. 1979. *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. Toronto: Random House of Canada.
- Foulkes, Julia. 2002. *Modern Bodies: Dance and American Modernism from Martha Graham to Alvin Ailey*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Foster, Susan. 1986. *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- .1995. *Choreographing History*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- .2011. *Choreographing Empathy*. New York: Routledge.
- Fraleigh, Sondra Horton. 1987. *Dance and the Lived Body. A Descriptive Aesthetics*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Fryer, Peter. 2000. *Rhythms of Resistance: African Musical Heritage in Brazil*. Middletown, Wesleyan University Press.
- Furtado, Geremias. 2013. "Mário Lúcio: Oficializar o crioulo é tirá-lo da sua longa e injusta clandestinidade constitucional." *A Semana Online*. May 17, 2013. Accessed May 17, 2013. <http://www.asemana.publ.cv/spip.php?article88125>.
- Geary, Patrick. 1990. *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Ghafar Samar, Reza and Marjory Meechan. 1998. "The Null Theory of Code-Switching versus the Nonce Borrowing Hypothesis: Testing the Fit in Persian-English Bilingual Discourse." *The International Journal of Bilingualism*. 2: 203–20.
- Gil, José. 2006. "The Paradoxical Body," *TDR The Drama Review* 50(4): 21–35.

- Gilroy, Peter. 1993. *The Black Atlantic*. London: Verso.
- Glazier, Stephen. 2001. *The Encyclopedia of African and African-American Religions*. New York: Routledge.
- Goffman, Erving. 1981. *Forms of Talk*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Gonçalves, Carlo Filipe. 2006. *Kap Verd Band*. Praia: Instituto do Arquivo Histórico Nacional.
- Góis, Pedro. 2005. "Low Intensity Transnationalism: The Cape Verdean Case." *Stichproben - Wiener Zeitschrift Für Kritische Afrikastudien* 5(8): 255–276.
- Gottschild, Brenda Dixon. 2005. "Crossroads, Continuities, and Contradictions: The Afro-Euro-Caribbean Triangle." In *Caribbean Dance from Abakua to Zouk: How Movement Shapes Identity*, edited by Susanna Sloat, 3–10. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- Gottlieb, Alma. 1992. *Under the Kapok Tree: Identity and Difference in Beng Thought*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Graff, Ellen. 1997. *Stepping Left: Dance and Politics in New York City*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Hammonds, Evelyn. 1994. "Black (W)holes and the Geometry of Black Female Sexuality." *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 6: 1–59.
- Hanchard, Michael George. 2004. "Black Transnationalism, Africana Studies, and the 21st Century." *Journal of Black Studies* 35(2): 139–153.
- Hannerz, Ulf. 1996. *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places*. New York: Routledge.
- Haugen, Heidi Østbø, and Jørgen Carling. 2005. "On the Edge of the Chinese Diaspora: The Surge of Baihuo Business in an African City." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28(4): 639–662.
- Hinchman, Lewis P., and Sandra K. Hinchman. 2001. *Memory, Identity, Community: The Idea of Narrative in the Human Sciences*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Homiak, John P. 1998. "From Yard to Nation: Rastafari and the Politics of Eldership at Home and Abroad," in *Rebels: African Caribbean Freedom Fighters in Jamaica*, edited by Werner Zips and Shelley Frisch, 179–182. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers.
- Hooker, Lynn. 2008. "Performing the Old World, Embracing the New: Festivalization, the Carnavalesque, and the Creation and Maintenance of the Community in North American Hungarian Folk Music and Dance Camps." *Hungarian Studies* 22(1–2): 89–108.
- Hubbard, Edward Akintola. 2011. "Creolization and Contemporary Pop Iconicity in Cape Verde." Ph.D. diss., Harvard University.
- Hurley-Glowa, Susan Margaret. 1997. *Batuko and Funana: Musical Traditions of Santiago, Republic of Cape Verde*. Ph.D. diss., Brown University.

- . 2006. “Funana with a Drum Machine Beat? Cape Verdean Identity in a Globalized World.” *International Journal of Africana Studies* 12(1): 80–92.
- . 2009. “Port of Call Cape Verde: A Discussion of Musical Forms from the Crossroads of the Luso-African Triangle.” Paper presented at the annual meeting for the Society of Ethnomusicology, Mexico City, Mexico, November 19–22, 2009.
- Holt, Douglas B. 2004. *How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding*. Cambridge: Harvard Business Review Press.
- “Interview with António Tavares.” *A Semana* online. June 5, 2004. Accessed April 1, 2013. http://www.asemana.publ.cv/spip.php?article370&var_recherche=Search&ak=1
- IRIN Africa. 2010. *Cape Verde: Atlantic Survivors Want More of the World*. IRIN News. Accessed May 21, 2013. <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=46966>
- Jackson, Michael. 1989. *Paths Toward a Clearing: Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Inquiry*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- . 2005. *Existential Anthropology: Events, Exigencies and Effects*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Jain, Vartika, S. K. Verma, and S. S. Katewa. 2009. “Myths, traditions and fate of multipurpose *Bombax ceiba* L.—an appraisal.” *Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge*. 8(4):638–644.
- John, Suki. 2012. *Contemporary Dance in Cuba: Técnica Cubana as Revolutionary Movement*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co.
- Kavoori, Anandam P. 2009. *The Logics of Globalization: Case Studies in International Communication*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Kelty, Christopher. 2009. “Collaboration, Coordination and Composition: Fieldwork after the Internet.” In *Fieldwork is Not What it Used to Be: Learning Anthropology's Method in a Time of Transition*, edited by James D. Faubion and George E. Marcus, 184–206. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. 1998. *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Korom, Frank J. 2003. *Hosay Trinidad: Muharram Performances in an Indo-Caribbean Diaspora*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Krasner, David. “Empathy and Theater.” In *Staging Philosophy: Intersections of Theater, Performance, and Philosophy*, ed. David Krasner and David Z. Saltz, 255–277. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Laguerre, Michel. 1998. *Diasporic Citizenship: Haitian Americans in Transnational America*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

- Lane, Kris E. 1998. *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500–1750*. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe.
- Lansdale, Janet. 2010. “A Tapestry of Intertexts: Dance Analysis For the Twenty-First Century.” In *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, edited by Alexandra Carter and Janet O’Shea, 158–167. New York: Routledge.
- Lessa, Almerindo, and Jacques Ruffié. 1957. *Seroanthropologia das Ilhas de Cabo Verde. Mesa Redonda sobre o Homen Caboverdiano*. Lisbon: Junta de Investigações Científicas do Ultramar.
- Levi-Strauss, Claude. 1963. *Structural Anthropology*. Translated by Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf. New York: Basic Books.
- . 1978. *Myth and Meaning*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Lima, Mesquitela. 1984. Interview by João Lopes Filho, “Conversando com Mesquitela Lima,” *ponto & virgula* 10/11: 17–22. Available at the Mindelact Documentation Center, #191.
- Lobban, Richard A. 1995. *Cape Verde: Crioulo Colony to Independent Nation*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Lobban, Richard A., and Paul Khalil Saucier. 2007. *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Cape Verde*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Madeira Santos, Maria Emilia. 2002. *História Geral de Cabo Verde*. Vol. III. Second edition. Lisbon and Praia: Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical e Instituto Nacional de Investigação Cultural.
- Manuel, Peter. 2009. *Creolizing Contradance in the Caribbean*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Marcelino, Pedro F. 2013. *O Novo Paradigma Migratório dos Espaços de Trânsito Africanos: Inclusão, exclusão, vidas precárias e competição por recursos escassos em países tampão—o caso de Cabo Verde*. Mindelo and Bissau: Ilhéu Editora and Corubal Editora.
- Marcelino, Pedro F., and Hermon Farahi. 2011. “Transitional African Spaces in Comparative Analysis: Inclusion, Exclusion and Informality in Morocco and Cape Verde.” *Third World Quarterly*, 32(5): 883–904.
- Marcus, George E. 1998. *Ethnography through Thick and Thin*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Martins, Vasco. 1988. *A Musica Tradicional Cabo-Verdiana I (a morna)*. Praia: Instituto Cabo-Verdiano do Livro e do Disco.

- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1984. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
- Marley, Bob. 1980. "Redemption Song." *Uprising*. London: EMI Records.
- Martins, Ovídio. 1983. *Independência: Edição 77*. Lisbon: Instituto Cabo-Verdiano do Livro. Monteiro, João José Tavares. 2012. "Nôs Tradison: O Que Está Sendo a Tabanka? Achada Grande Frente, Jullho 2012." *A Semana Online*. 15 August 2012. (Access date?) <http://www.asemana.publ.cv/spip.php?article79243>
- Monten, Joshua. 2008. "Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed." In *The Body Eclectic: Evolving Practices in Dance Training*, edited by Melanie Bales and Rebecca Nettle-Fiol, 52–67. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Moss, Michèle. 2007. "The Dynamic Realities of 'Traditional' Dance: Les Ballets Africains." *Congress on Research in Dance Conference Proceedings*. 39(S1): 161–165.
- McClintock, Anne. 1995. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest*. New York: Routledge.
- McMahon, Christina. 2004. "Reclaiming 'Roots' for Cape Verde: Representations of Tabanka Festivals as Sites of Cultural Contestation." Paper presented at the annual meeting for the African Studies Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, November 11-14, 2004.
- . 2007. "Embodying Diaspora: Ambivalence and Utopia in Contemporary Cape Verdean Theatre." *Theatre History Studies* 27(1): 110–138.
- . 2008. *Theatre in Circulation: Performing National Identity on the Global Stage in Cape Verde, West Africa*. Ph.D diss., Northwestern University..
- McMains, Juliet. 2010. "Reality Check: *Dancing with the Stars* and the American Dream." In *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, edited by Alexandra Carter and Janet O'Shea, 261–272. New York: Routledge.
- Meighoo, Kirk. 2003. *Politics in a Half Made Society: Trinidad and Tobago 1925–2001*. Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers.
- Meintel, Dierdre A. 1978. "Cape Verdean-Americans: Their Cultural and Historical Background" Ph.D , Brown University.
- . 1984. "Racial Categories and Race Relations: Brazil and Cabo Verde." In *Race, Culture, and Portuguese Colonialism in Cabo Verde*, edited by Deirdre Meintel. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
- . 2002. "Cape Verdean Transnationalism Old and New." *Anthropologica* 44(1): 25–42
- Melo, Sónia. 2008. "Cape Verdean Transnationalism on the Internet." In *Transnational*

- Archipelago: Perspectives on Cape Verdean Migration and Diaspora*, edited by Luís Batalha and Jørgen Carling, 161–172. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Meizel, Katherine. 2011. *Idolized: Music, Media and Identity in American Idol*. Bloomington: Indiana: University Press.
- Mercer, Kobena. 1987. "Black hair/style politics." *New Formations* 3, winter: 33-56.
- Mendes, Deni. 2010. "Migracao Estudantil." Unpublished paper. Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Campinas.
- Merriam, Alan P. 1982. *African Music in Perspective*. New York: Garland Publishing.
- Metcalf, Peter. 2002. *They Lie, We Lie: Getting On with Anthropology*. London: Routledge.
- Monteiro, Amilcar. 2013. "'Nós Caboverdianos, não somos afro-descendentes mas africanos' by Abraão Vicente." Facebook Status update. May 24, 2013. https://www.facebook.com/kauberdi?hc_location=stream.
- Monteiro, César Augusto. 2011. *Música migrante em Lisboa: trajetos e práticas de músicos Cabo-Verdianos*. Lisbon: Mundos Sociais.
- Mintz, Sidney. 1996. "Enduring Substances, Trying Theories: The Caribbean Region as Oikoumene." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 22(2): 289–311.
- Mintz, Sidney Wilfred, and Richard Price. 1992. *The Birth of African-American Culture: an Anthropological Perspective*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Murphy, John P. 2006. *Music in Brazil: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Myers-Scotton, Carol. 1993. *Social Motivations for Code-Switching: Evidence From Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Nketia, J. H. Kwabena. 1974. *The Music of Africa*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Ness, Sally. 1997. "Originality in the Postcolony: Choreographing the NeoEthnic Body of the Phillipine Ballet." *Cultural Anthropology* 12(1): 64–108.
- Novack, Cynthia. 1990. *Sharing the Dance: Contact Improvisation and American Culture*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Olsen, Andrea. 2002. *Body and Earth: An Experiential Guide*. Lebanon: University of New England Press.
- O'Shea, Janet. 2007. *At Home in the World: Bharata Natyam on the Global Stage*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.
- Ortiz, Fernando. (1940) 2003. *Cuban Counterpoint, Tobacco and Sugar*. Reprint. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Oyebade, Adebayo O. 2007. *Culture and Customs of Angola*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Palmberg, Mai. 2002. "Expressing Cape Verde: Morna, Funaná, and National Identity." In *Playing with Identities in Contemporary Music in Africa*, edited by Mai Palmberg and Annemette Kirkegaard, 117–133.. Uppsala, Finland: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

- Perrone, Charles A., and Dunn, Christopher. 2001. "Chiclete com Banana' Internationalization in Brazilian Popular Music." In *Brazilian Popular Music and Globalization*, edited by Charles A. Perrone and Christopher Dunn, 1–38. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- Pires, Adriano Gonçalves Rodrigues. 2010. *A Seca e Outros Inimigos de Cabo Verde*. Praia, Cabo Verde: Gráfica Jovem, LDA.
- "Raiz di Polon: Num Olhar a Dança CaboVerdiana." *SOCA: Sociedade de Caboverdiana de Autores*. Accessed August 11, 2013.
http://soca.cv/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=58:raiz-di-polon&catid=28:danca&Itemid=37
- Ranger, Terence. 1983. "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa." In *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, 211–262. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Redfern-Vance, Nancy. 2007. "Analyzing Narrative Data." In *Doing Cultural Anthropology: Projects for Ethnographic Data Collection*, edited by Michael V. Angrosino, 45–62. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press Inc.
- Rehm, Sigmund. 1994. *Multilingual Dictionary of Agronomic Plants*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.
- Rehm, Barbara. 1975. "A Study of the Cape Verdean Morna in New Bedford, Massachusetts." Master's thesis, Brown University..
- Roach, Joseph. 1996. *Cities of the Dead. Circum-Atlantic Performance*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Rodrigues, Isabel. 2003. "Islands of Sexuality: Theories and Histories of Creolization in Cape Verde." *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 83-103.
- Rosaldo, Renato. 1993. *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Roberts, Allen F., and Mary Nooter Roberts. 2008. "Flickering Images, Floating Signifiers: Optical Innovation and Visual Piety in Senegal." *Material Religion: The Journal of Objects, Art and Belief* 4 (1): 4–31.
- Roberts, Allen F. 2010. "Recolonization of an African Visual Economy." *African Arts* 43(1): 1–8. (If you want to use the online version, add the link; I don't have access but you can start here: <http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/afar.2010.43.1.1>)
- . 2013. *A Dance of Assassins: Performing Early Colonial Hegemony in the Congo*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press.

- Rowell, Bonnie. 2010. "United Kingdom: An Expanding Map." In *Europe Dancing: Perspectives on Theatre Dance and Cultural Identity*, edited by Andrée Grau and Stephanie Jordan, 188–212. New York: Routledge.
- Sahlins, Marshall. 1994. "Goodbye to Tristes Tropes: Ethnography in the Context of Modern World History." In *Assessing Cultural Anthropology*, edited by Robert Borofsky, 377–394. New York: Macmillan.
- Sánchez Gibau, Gina. 2008. "Cape Verdean Diasporic Identity Formation." In *Transnational Archipelago: Perspectives on Cape Verdean Migration and Diaspora*, edited by Luís Batalha and Jørgen Carling, 255–268. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Saussure, Ferdinand de. 1960. *Course in General Linguistics*. London: Peter Owen.
- Saucier, Paul Khalil. 2008. "We eat Katchupa not Clam Chowder: Mapping second generation Cape Verdean youth identity in the greater Boston area." Ph.D. diss, Northeastern University.
- Savigliano, Marta Elena. 1995. *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- . 1995. "Whiny Ruffians and Rebellious Broads: Tango as a Spectacle of Eroticized Social Tension." *Theatre Journal* 47.1: 83-104.
- . 2009. "Worlding Dance and Dancing Out There in The World," in *Worlding Dance*, edited by Susan Leigh Foster, 163–190. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Seeger, Anthony. 1987. *Why Suyá Sing: A Musical Anthropology of an Amazonian People*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1994. "Whoever We are Today, We Can Sing You a Song about It." In *Music and Black Ethnicity*, edited by Gerard H. Béhague, 1–16. Miami: North-South Center Press.
- . 1994. "Music and Dance." In *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, edited by Tim Ingold, 686–705. Routledge: New York.
- Seigel, Marcia B. 2010. "Bridging the Critical Distance." In *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, edited by Alexandra Carter and Janet O'Shea, 188-196. New York: Routledge.
- Semedo, José Maria and Maria R. Turano. 1995. *Cabo Verde: O ciclo ritual das festividades da Tabanca*. Praia: Spleen.
- Semedo, Maria Odete da Costa Soares. 2010. "As Mandjuandadi- Cantigas de Mulher na Cantigas de Mulher na Guiné-Bissau." Belo Horizonte: Pontificia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais.
- Shay, Anthony. 2002. *Choreographic Politics: State Folk Dance Companies, Representation, and Power*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

- Sklar, Deidre. 1994. "Can Bodylore Be Brought to Its Senses?" *Journal of American Folklore*, 107(423): 9–22.
- Spears, Arthur K., and Carole M. Berotte Joseph. 2012. *The Haitian Creole Language: History, Structure, Use, and Education*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Sörgel, Sabine. 2007. *Dancing Postcolonialism: The National Dance Theatre Company of Jamaica*. Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag.
- . 2011. "Transnationalism and Contemporary African Dance." In *Emerging Bodies: The Performance of Worldmaking in Dance and Choreography*, edited by Gabriele Klein and Sandra Noeth, 83–93. Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag.
- Stines, L'Antoinette. 2005. "Does the Caribbean Body Dance or Daunce? An Exploration of Modern Contemporary Dance from a Caribbean perspective." *Caribbean Quarterly* 51(3/4): 35–54
- Stoler, Ann Laura. 2010. *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Tang, Patricia. 2007. *Masters of the Sabar: Wolof Griot Percussionists of Senegal*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Tavares, José Luís. 2009. *A Cidade do Mais Antigo Nome*. Lisbon: Assírio & Alvim.
- Taylor, Bron. 2007. "Surfing into Spirituality and a New, Aquatic Nature Religion." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 75 (4): 923–951.
- Taylor, Diana. 2003. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- . 1991. "Transculturating Transculturation." *Performing Arts Journal* 13(2): 90–104.
- Thompson, Krista. 2006. *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Thompson, Robert Farris. 2005. *Tango: The Art History of Making Love*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- . 2011. *Aesthetic of the Cool: Afro-Atlantic Art and Music*. New York: Periscope Publishing.
- Tran, Phuong. "Cape Verde Musicians Draw Inspiration from Brazil During Carnival Season." *Voice of America*. October 27, 2009. Accessed May 1, 2013. <http://www.voanews.com/content/a-13-2007-02-16-voa33-66767062/564152.html>
- Turner, Victor. 1969. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969.

- Varela, João Manuel. 2008. "Brazil and the Cape Verde Islands: Some Aspects of Cultural Influence." Paper presented at the annual meeting for the Society of Ethnomusicology, Middletown, Connecticut October 25–28, 2008.
- Vassberg, David E. 1976. "African Influences on the Music of Brazil." *Luso-Brazilian Review* 13(1): 35–54.
- Weinreich, Uriel. 2011. *Languages in Contact: French, German and Romansch in Twentieth-Century Switzerland*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Welsh-Asante, Kariamu, ed. 1998. *African Dance: An Artistic, Historical and Philosophical Inquiry*. Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Wickens, Gerald E. 1982 "The Baobab: Africa's Upside-down Tree." *Kew Bulletin* 37(2): 173–209.
- Wong, Yutian. 2009. "Utopias: Michio Ito and the Trope of the International." In *Worlding Dance*, edited by Susan Leigh Foster, 144–162. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wortham, Simon Morgan. 2010. *The derrida dictionary*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Zantzing, Alfred Gei. 1986. *Songs of the Badius: Music from the Cape Verde Islands*. Produced, directed, and narrated by Alfred Gei Zantzing in cooperation with Amilcar Cabral African Youth Movement, Praia, Cape Verde. Constant Springs Productions, Inc, VHS video, 35 min.