

# ***Dagging Inna Di Dancehall***

## **Kierkegaard's Conceptualization of Subjectivity and Nietzsche's Dionysus in Relation to Jamaican Dance**

by

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

in the

Arts Education Program

Faculty of Education

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**Summer 2012**

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# Abstract

This thesis explores dance beyond entertainment, psychological, behavioural or cognitive theory; beyond conventional interpretations of performance, and beyond the disciplinary categories that tend to separate practices in contemporary Western culture. This is a study of “*Dagging*,” the Jamaican style of dancing marked by violence and raw sexual licentiousness *inna di dancehall* (in the dancehall)—a male-dominated dance space in Jamaica. The problem of *dagging* analyzed stems from the so-called “causes” of violence. Cultural theorists argue the violent situation in the dancehall and throughout Jamaica is related to the history of colonialism and slavery, poverty, the polarization of the country’s political parties, and politicians who first issued guns. Some philosophers argue the myth of ‘poverty’ is an illusion and world-historical logico-mathematical thinking is delusional.

Primary texts studied are: *The Birth of Tragedy* by Nietzsche, and the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* by Kierkegaard. I am interested in the inseparability, the embeddedness of Dionysus in all the phenomena of life. The myth of Dionysus contains statements about society and the individual not easily accessible by purely objective techniques. Nietzsche writes: the invisible forces of nature, “through whose gestures and eyes all the joy and wisdom of ‘illusion,’ together with its beauty, speak to us.” Kierkegaard’s aesthetic philosophy of subjectivity challenges the myth of poverty. Thus, this thesis marks a connection between *dagging*, the myth of Dionysus, and subjectivity. The essential question asked: ‘what’ knowledge is of the most worth to transform the individual and a society in crisis?

A philosophical methodology is used to analyze texts in relation to social issues and dance. I conclude ‘how’ to transform the individual and a society in crisis “an apolitical and passionately responsible subjectivity” is necessary.

**Keywords:** Subjectivity; Dionysus; Jamaican Dance; Dancehall; *Dagging*; Sex; Violence

*To*  
*Thomas E. Ward*  
*(5 April 1938 - 28 July 2012)*

# Acknowledgements

Because I am so grateful, to be precise, I give thanks to *That* which touches everyone and everything in order to acknowledge you all.

The profundity of my gratitude goes out to Simon Fraser University, especially my thesis supervisors, examiners, and the Assistant for Theses.

With great love and deep respect, I thank you all with all my heart.

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# Inciting Incident

*Dagging* is not 'high' art and was not intended to be scholarly. Coincidentally what I've done in this thesis is transform the dance into something beyond entertainment, psychological, behavioural or cognitive theory. The dance *dagging* no longer belongs to a subculture of ghetto *yutes* (youths) who have been beaten and brutalized by other corrupt and violent people. These *yutes* have never left the island of Jamaica so what they experience must have happened in Jamaica.

This Jamaican-style of dancing unhinges on the opposition between mimesis, a discourse that imitates, and poesis, a discourse that invents. Some scholars come to the defense of *dagging* saying it is an offense, an attack on a bygone era, the slave age. Also implicated are the neo-colonialists of Jamaica. How some critics respond to Jamaican dance is, for example, what Nietzsche calls blind rage.

This simulacrum of *dagging* specifically could be the form of a new cycle of time recycling itself, forcing history to start over. In this sense, the birth of *dagging* is due to the intrinsic nature of change within the human being.

*Dagging* is intelligible because its intelligence lies in its capacity to pass purposively from representation to reality. How the dance actualizes the self is by animating the "living" forces of body, spirit. However the crisis of *dagging* poses a problem of peace in the society. The sensibility of *dagging* can teach us to live together and treat each other fairly or it can promote hatred and denigration. Nancy Reynolds' and Malcolm McCormick's study of philosophy of art embedded in the history of twentieth century says dance acknowledges the power of African-American dance to do either/or. Einstein reminds us "there are no fixed points in space."<sup>1</sup> Where do we find the *truth* of *dagging* other than in *the birth of tragedy*?

<sup>1</sup> Reynolds & McCormick, 2003, vi.

# Preface

The overall theme of this thesis is not exclusive to Jamaica. However, the focus is the Jamaican dancehall. In no way is this thesis proposing a finished system of transformation or world-historical treatise of violence. As Kierkegaard says in *Postscript*: “System and finality are pretty much one and the same” (98). This thesis consists of fragments of many ideas borrowed from various disciplines to explore essentially Kierkegaard’s concept of subjectivity supported by Nietzsche’s interpretation of Dionysus in relation to the Jamaican dance *dagging*, and violence *inna di dancehall* in Kingston, Jamaica.

This thesis can scarcely be understood as many pearls strung on a string to make a point of dance is a pathway to transformation. The essential inquiry or question driving this research is an age-old educational one. However the problem of violence is not solved so the inquiry is fitting to our present age: *What* is the knowledge of the most worth, and *How* will it transform the individual and a society in crisis?

Herbert Spencer (1820 – 1903) first posed this question of knowledge. According to Kieran Egan, Spencer was “one of the most energetic promoters of evolutionary ideas to explain pretty well everything in sight.”<sup>2</sup> Egan believes making “knowledge” the centre is problematic and has remained unanswerable. Mainly because it will open up other critical questions like “what” and “how” much breadth and depth of that knowledge, will be required to educate the individual. Egan says the question has remained unanswered for over a century. Egan believes “the knowledge that is of most worth will vary during the course of the individual’s education and may be determined by the kind of understanding most actively being stimulated and developed.”<sup>3</sup> [my italics]

<sup>2</sup> Kieran Egan, 1997, 25.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 25.

# Introduction

The section “Techne” following this introduction is the blueprint for how to read this thesis. It is advised first and foremost to take care not to search for an Apollonian or Aristotelian logical construction of systematic Hegelian thinking. In *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (1846) Kierkegaard writes, “an existential system is impossible” (99). Essentially I draw on the works of existential philosophers: Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, and the works of Greek and African scholars, theorists and other philosophers. I include some of my educational and personal experiences. My research involved ethnographic participant-observations including strenuous use of my body above and beyond reading and writing theory. All this should add up to elucidate how I’ve come to choose the views expressed in this thesis of philosophy and dance. This thesis is offering more than a hypothesis.

I am apologetic for the limited references to African and Jamaican philosophers who have been of beneficial influence on Greek philosophy and other Occidental theories. The truth is I have been very fortunate to complete all of my formal education from primary through to doctoral studies in Canada. Unfortunately, this means I was not exposed to much African or Jamaican scholarship. Consequently the sparseness of references to non-Occident thought is unintentional. However, Kierkegaard’s ideal of a persistent striving expresses the existing subject’s ethical view of life and Greek philosophy always had a relation to Ethics. I emphasize the importance of Ethics and not looking for a logical sequence of arguments precisely because Kierkegaard says a logical system has no relation to existence.

I could not begin writing this for many months because I was troubled by how to begin. Kierkegaard’s attack upon Hegel’s System is the answer that helped to set my pen in motion. If this thesis is about Ethics and existence then somehow my personal experiences must be included. This is where the conundrum started for me. Perhaps this is the immediate beginning, yet not the true beginning. Now the problem has shifted

from beginning to the truth, which is essentially what the research explores:  
Kierkegaard's concept of *subjectivity*, the truth.

The first problem I encountered is 'how' to remain true to the research aim. Kierkegaard says, "the beginning which begins with the immediate is thus itself reached by means of a process of reflection" (*Postscript*, 102). Indeed, I passed many years, twelve to be exact, in deep reflection and at times many months of religious isolation. Here is the difficulty. In breathless haste trying to not worry about what Kierkegaard says, "no logical system may boast of an absolute beginning, since such a beginning, like pure being, is a pure chimera" (102), to get this thesis done I had to choose a beginning and an end!

How do I end my reflection when it was supposed to take me back to the beginning? Putting a stop to my reflection and start writing would imply this is not the true beginning. It is an immediate starting point to satisfy very practical objective ends. Like anything, reflection has a remarkable power of infinity. It can go on and on and on etcetera. It is precisely this research that leads me to question the truth of violence in Jamaican dance.

In search of the end of the "root" of violence in my beloved Jamaica forced me to dig deep. How did I find it? Truthfully, how is it that Christians succumb to crime and violence? The more I reflected on this problem the more I was drawn back to Jamaica. The process of inward reflection stirred up many challenging questions. Below are some of those questions but by no means is this an exhaustive list:

- How is Jamaican dance satisfying certain desires in the spectators' gaze?
- How can dance actualize the self?
- How is dance transforming the individual and a society?
- Is the dancehall culture spiritually bankrupt?
- Why did Christianity force Africans to deny dancing?
- How should Jamaican dance be performed before international audiences?
- Is Jamaican dance advocating a prophetic quest for power?
- What can dance educators do to stop violence in schools?
- What is the so-called state of nature in contemporary Jamaican dance?
- Is Jamaican dance a metaphor for the oppressed society?

- What can be done to not misinterpret the meaning or the intention of Jamaican dance?
- What is the genius of ancestral African dance in contemporary dance in Jamaica?
- What is a Jamaica brand of dance?
- How sex and violence performed in the dancehall is that the truth?

Those questions helped to slow down my incessant reflection on the problem of violence in Jamaica. And here I begin to illuminate my findings.

The implication of violence presented in this thesis is a kind of attempted suicide for the artist. This notion of suicide is adapted from Yaroslav Senyshyn's book *The Artist in Crisis*. I mention this now because the most difficult part of this thesis to write was Section 2 "Artistic Death." Consequently, you might find the topic of suicide out of place in this thesis, but I urge you to read it carefully. The discussion is about the death of an artist. Keep in mind what it means to kill someone. Isn't that a kind of selfish death wish? My aim is to illuminate the consequences of violence are more severe than one might presume and should not be taken lightly.

As profound as it sounds, suicide is absolutely the most vivid and final alternative for the artist in crisis. However, Kierkegaard says, "to be finished with life before life has finished with one, is precisely not to have finished the task."<sup>1</sup> Violence *inna di dancehall* discussed throughout this thesis is referring to the misogynistic Jamaican dance *daggering*—a live representation of "madness" in Jamaican popular culture and laden with astonishing images of explicit sexual misconduct, violence, death and destruction. The theory of inappropriate behaviour i.e. *daggering*, is psychologically damaging with critical physical and cognitive consequences. This is irresponsible subjectivity imitating the sacred act of sexual intercourse between a man and a woman. Online reports suggest this style of dancing can lead to serious bodily injuries, mainly fractured "daggers" (penis). But the consequences I argue are much more severe!

<sup>1</sup> Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (1846), Swenson and Lowrie, (Trans.) 147.

Collecting the data for this thesis wasn't without injuries to myself. While in Jamaica I was robbed, kidnapped, threatened and sexually harassed repeatedly. The beginning of this research is merely an abstract tautology. There is just too much suffering to include in one thesis. Consequently it was very difficult to decide where to begin. In Kierkegaardian terms, this beginning is, and again is not, precisely because it is the beginning (104). So, the beginning is not, and the beginning begins with nothing. To say the least, to get to the root cause of violence *inna di dancehall* in Jamaica was a venture.

Following the Techne for how to read this thesis, I present the essential "Father of Existentialism" and "The Existential Problem" explored in Jamaica, followed by aspects of the observational "Method" employed to carry out the field research. Following that I feel it is respectful to say something about the "Land of Jamaica" before I discuss "Dance in Theory." Indirectly I introduce two key insights of Kierkegaard's philosophy, namely the 'WHAT' and 'HOW' of Jamaican dance to preface a comprehensive but succinct "Philosophy of Dance."

I relate many years of journals, ethnographic field notes, observations, conference attendance, statistics, personal experiences, and literature from many academic disciplines and social contexts beyond dance. I include a brief introduction to a pioneer of dance in Jamaica, "Rex Nettleford and the National Dance Theatre Company." "Dancehall Dis/plays" prepares the discussion of "Who is the Dancer." Vis-à-vis "Zorba the Greek," "St. Vitus's Dance," and the "Theatre of Cruelty" I introduce the problem of "Madness." The god "Dionysus *Daggering Inna Di Dancehall*" is the final piece of essentially background information presented before plunging deep into the two main organs of this thesis.

My thesis has two main organs (or sections). The first major organ, Section 1 covers essentially, but not limited to the nature of *daggering inna di dancehall* in relation to Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (The Birth). The second major organ, Section 2 explores essentially but again, not limited to Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (Postscript). To my knowledge no research of this combination has ever been undertaken. In this sense, this thesis is entirely "original," a kind of "omnijective" or synthesis of Kierkegaard's subjectivity and Nietzsche's Dionysus in relation to the

Jamaican dance *dagging*. My approach to the problem of dance, violence and sexual conquest in Jamaica is in the least a highly creative novel experiment.

My main focus is Kierkegaard's concept of subjectivity. With great interdisciplinarity and courage I refer to multiple disciplines and topics all in relation to *dagging inna di dancehall*. The section parts function as connectors to synthesize the two chief organs as One. In a sense we can say Nietzsche's Dionysus represents Kierkegaard's concept of *subjectivity*. I call this synthesis *dionysic subjectivity*. In precise words, the spirit of *dagging* is Dionysus. Consequently the objective of this thesis is achieved: two-in-One. This all sounds complicated but it's actually quite simple. Just let your imagination be free and you will be moved to see that what I argue is truth. By the end it will all make sense.

To organize the thesis thematically I utilize Kierkegaard's notion of "accents" in the aesthetic realm. In this way a definite expression is achieved. What is distinguished to be the truth is not only in his ethico-religious sphere. Kierkegaard says, "*the objective accent falls on WHAT is said, the subjective accent on HOW it is said.*" It is obvious that in the ethico-religious sphere, Kierkegaard's accent is on the "how." For example, 'how' *dagging* is perceived seems to me to be the chief problem of our present age. According to Robert Bretall, In *The Present Age*, Kierkegaard develops the thesis that "the chief organ of the public is the press, which by its very nature appeals to humanity's lowest common denominator."<sup>2</sup> Cartoons that the *Corsair* published ridiculed Kierkegaard's physical peculiarities and *dionysic subjectivity*, and treated him like a madman. Incidentally a cartoon depiction of dancers *dagging* preface the first organ of this thesis to mirror how the press perceives Jamaicans.

<sup>2</sup> Kierkegaard cited in Bretall, 1938, 259.

Kierkegaard's accents is referring to *the relationship sustained by the existing individual, in his own existence, to the content of his utterance*. Subjectively, "how" is the inwardness, the truth. For example, 'how' to think about fixing an existing problem or to annul something, I believe Kierkegaard is saying the individual must decide 'what' he must do, to turn to the position of the infinite. "The passion of the infinite is the truth" (*Postscript*, 181). Let's begin.

## **Background Information**

# Techne

*Dagging inna di dancehall* is a philosophical study of a Jamaican dance in relation to Kierkegaard's conceptualization of subjectivity and Nietzsche's Dionysus. The thesis exposes 'how' the "raw sex" Jamaican dance *dagging* is doing 'what' classical European ballet could never have done.

**Illustration 1. Classic European Ballet Lift**



*Note.* Vancouver 24 hours, 1 June 2012; used with permission.

The general theme is, there is only *One*. Madness and sexual conquest, mental illness and violence are rotating discussions throughout this thesis in relation to what I call *dionysic subjectivity*.

How Jamaican dancers and musicians come together to convey meaning related to ideas of religion and politics, sexuality and violence is one of the most recognized subjects *inna di dancehall*. Dance is 'how' many people satisfy their desires. The moral panic of the press label Jamaican dance "dirty." Look at the young ballet dancers in the picture on the previous page. Is classical European ballet 'dirty'? The global dance phenomenon *dagging* analyzed in this thesis is above and beyond dirty.

Jamaican dancehall culture, music and dance have been labeled: disgusting, lewd, slack, violent, horrible, boorish, crass, and coarse and primitive.<sup>1</sup>

Dancehall culture is a representation of the world as it is. This connection is not, or not simply, one of representation of only Jamaica and all Jamaicans. Dancehall is a subculture of Jamaica. Throughout this thesis where Jamaican dance is discussed I am referring specifically to the dance *dagging* or in general dancehall culture.

The philosophical analysis of this thesis is creatively original. The layout and style is unorthodox or unconventional. In a sense, it mirrors a dance performance from beginning to end. A quasi-unscientific Kierkegaardian-*style* of argumentation is forged. The breadth and deep of analysis is multifaceted, poetic, dense, recurring, contradictory, convoluted, and hard to follow in places. By the time you reach the end it will all make sense. Trust me.

It is my recommendation that this thesis is read from beginning to end. Do not dodge or skip around. It will be more confusing to you in the end. It will frustrate you, the reader, if you try to leap over a section or skip parts. Imagine you are at the theatre watching a dance performance: you cannot get up and leave whenever you want and come back and ask the performers to begin again. The dance is 'live'. It is real. Similarly, this thesis is living. The events discussed are going on while you read.

<sup>1</sup> Hope, *Inna Di Dancehall*, 2007, 18.

A technique of performative writing is used intentionally to stir the imagination by excavating the complexity of ideas embedded in history about objectivity and subjectivity, and “refocus ‘the relation between the page and the stage, between reading, adapting, and performing’.”<sup>2</sup>

The intent of my performative writing-*style* is to position theorizing as close cousin to the complexity of performing issues of body, sex and violence *inna di dancehall*. For a more expert example of performative writing read John Galvin’s *After Dickens: Reading, Adaptation and Performance*. The book is structured (deliberately) like a drama, in three acts: *Set Up*, *Flashback*, and *Resolution*. If you understand drama, then you know it is advisable to not skip acts or scenes then look for relevance in the end, before reading all previous acts.

This thesis is not written with a linear timeline. The events overlap and play off each other in a circuitous fashion. A linear timeline would go completely against what I believe Kierkegaard’s philosophy rejected, particularly scientific timeliness. Life is not so linear nor is this thesis. Repetitions are intentional and a distinctive characteristic of African aesthetics. “It is not the refrain or chorus but the intensifying of one movement or one sequence or the entire dance until spiritual satisfaction has been reached, ecstasy, euphoria, and exhaustion. Time is a factor, but enough time rather than a set amount of time.”<sup>3</sup> Repetitions relate to the cyclical circular motion of African dance. For example, Kartel is mentioned periodically throughout. Hickling enters and exists. Each time a topic or phrase is repeated the dance of Kierkegaard is potentially bringing new evidence to build on or contradict Nietzsche’s previous insights. This is not usual business. It is performative writing.<sup>4</sup>

Some repetitions are simple others less simple and often more complex patterns. Thoughts repeat many times but each time going deeper within to get closer and closer

<sup>2</sup> Poovey, 2000, 110.

<sup>3</sup> Asante, 1997, 214.

<sup>4</sup> Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Performative\\_writing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Performative_writing)

to the truth. Consequently there is no such thing as repetition. In African dance each time a gesture or movement is repeated it changes. The reason for this Kierkegaard gives is nature. Human beings love change. Kierkegaard repeatedly uses pseudonyms to reveal something new. Therefore, his view is not replete with the notion of repetition as existing. Repetition is perhaps the most fundamental feature of dance practice and obviously a major point of anxiety for theory.

In *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle (384 - 322 B.C.E.) discusses moral virtue, like the arts, is acquired by repetition of corresponding acts. *In Some thoughts concerning education and of the conduct of the understanding* John Locke (1632 - 1704) claims *repeating the same action, till it be grown habitual in them, the performance will not depend on memory or reflection, the concomitant of prudence and age and not of childhood, but will be natural in them... When constant custom has made any one thing easy and natural to them, and they practice it without reflection, you may then go on to another* (1996, p. 30-40). For Locke, teaching by repetition or a repeated action done over and over has many advantages whichever way we consider it, he says. Thus, in one word, Aristotle says, states of character arise out of like activities. This notion of repetition emerges out of his important discussions of two conditions, which lie between virtues and vice—contenance and incontinence (Book VII, ch.1-10).

Sit back. Relax. Unleash your expectations. I hope not to bore you. Otherwise you will find your body in knots and imagination in pains. Again, the agenda promoted is *performative writing*. At the same time, the issues discussed are critical to objectivity. Therefore, a subjective philosophical approach is doing what I believe is necessary to make the point. Students in Jamaica should not be caged and subjugated to hierarchical narratives of snobbery, boorish “middle-class” people who think they have all the power vested in them to beat and kill those who do not meet their expectations of what is considered “high” art or academic writing.

## Father of Existentialism

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard (5 May 1813 – 11 November 1855) is the very young father of an enormous following of important writers behind this modern movement existentialism. Existentialism, one could argue is a movement and less of a Christian doctrine. Kierkegaard lived a very short but profound existence. He died at age 42.

Just to name few writers of the twentieth century that Kierkegaard influenced include: Karl Barth, Martin Heidegger, Gabriel Marcel, Jean Paul Sartre, Paul Tillich, Nikolai Berdyaev, Rudolf Bultmann, Walter Lowrie, Herbert Garelick, Hirsch, Holmer, Sponheim, and Thulstrup, Steven Evans, Paul Edwards, Robert Bretall.

The story of Kierkegaard's life and personality has been thoroughly researched and told many times.<sup>5</sup> His philosophy of life is sensing life's courageous and risky encounter with God. He was born in Denmark at a time when the country was the poorest in Danish history. This is the setting of a publication career for a passionately earnest Christian intellectual, religious author, poet, humorist, tragic lover, and eccentric. According to the Arbaughs, Kierkegaard's publication career is without parallel in history. One of his principle aims was to destroy the Hegelian system, on the belief that it is impossible to contain the multiplicity of life in a single system. Similarly, one of my aims is to expose Hickling's theory of *Psychohistoriography*. Kierkegaard wrote half of his works under various pseudonyms with the aim to avoid teaching or preaching. The importance of his entire works centre on his *existence as a Christian*.

<sup>5</sup> George Arbaugh and George E. Arbaugh, *Kierkegaard's Authorship*.

For Kierkegaard existence would mean the kind of being attainable by an existing and true individual. The individual must decide how he wants to live out his life. Kierkegaard decided *subjectivity* (the ethical) is truth and concerns everyone. The most difficult part of this claim is defended in his great philosophical treatise *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (1846).

*Postscript* is the focus in this thesis. The book is very large, over 600 pages in two volumes. My focus is in the plot of volume one. The plot begins with Kierkegaard's pseudonymous 'author' of the *Postscript* Johannes Climacus (John the Climber) standing at the foot of 'the ladder of heaven', inquiring about two essential problems: objectivity and subjectivity. Objectively, "the truth of Christianity," subjectively "how to climb." To put it quite simply Kierkegaard writes: "How may I, Johannes Climacus, participate in the happiness promised by Christianity."<sup>6</sup> Clearly *Postscript* is not an objective description of Christianity but a treatment of the subjective problem of how to become a Christian. Climacus sees this problem as a kind of madness. Unscientifically, Kierkegaard sets out to not do what scholars seem to assume, that what is important to Christianity is quantitative proofs. Instead he insists the qualitative 'how' of this problem.

Kierkegaard's argument is only by a kind of 'leap of faith' one can transform from non-believer to believer. According to the Arbaughs, "this transformation must come by an effort of the will and is not facilitated by intellectual comprehension of the history or doctrine of Christianity."<sup>7</sup> How Kierkegaard posits his philosophy is so decisive I cannot hope within the limits of this short thesis to cover it all. I have made the best attempt to understand the truth of Kierkegaard's *Postscript*. What is truth for Kierkegaard? According to Arthur Murphy, "to exist is to be 'in the truth,' whether what is affirmed is

<sup>6</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript*, (1846), Swenson and Lowrie, (Trans.) 20.

<sup>7</sup> George Arbaugh and George E. Arbaugh, *Kierkegaard's Authorship*, 200.

'objectively true or not, and faith is thus justified by the truth subjectively 'in' the believer."<sup>8</sup> Kierkegaard says,

Objectively the interest is focused on the thought-content, subjectively on the inwardness. At its maximum this inward 'how' is the passion of the infinite and the passion of the infinite is the truth. But the passion of the infinite is precisely subjectivity, and thus subjectivity becomes the truth... Only in subjectivity is there decisiveness. To seek objectivity is to be in error. It is the passion of the infinite that is the decisive factor, and not its content, for its content is precisely itself. In this manner subjectivity and the subjective 'how' constitute the truth.<sup>9</sup>

Why is faith, or subjectivity the highest truth? Murphy gives us two reasons: (a) it potentiates "inwardness" to the highest degree and such inwardness is the highest manner of existing for an existential individual, and (b) it is the highest manner of existing because it brings man into the right relationship to "the truth" on which his eternal happiness depends.<sup>10</sup> Kierkegaard's aim could not be to shift all support away from objective but to illuminate truth to religious faith. Therefore, it is the man of faith alone that is "in the truth" because of his inwardness, subjectivity in believing is the truth. For Kierkegaard truth is: *An objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth, the highest truth attainable for an existing individual.*<sup>11</sup> However, Senyshyn says it is insufficient to say subjectivity is truth.<sup>12</sup> The Arbaughs also say this: "it is not enough to say that Kierkegaard equates subjectivity and truth. Not only is some truth not subjective; some kinds of subjectivity have little to do with truth."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Arthur E. Murphy, On Kierkegaard's Claim That "Truth is Subjectivity." In Jerry H. Gill (Ed.) *Essays on Kierkegaard*. (Memphis: Burgess Publishing) 94.

<sup>9</sup> Kierkegaard. *Postscript*. (1846). Translated by Swenson and Lowrie, 181.

<sup>10</sup> Arthur E. Murphy. *On Kierkegaard's Claim That "Truth is Subjectivity,"* 96.

<sup>11</sup> Kierkegaard. *Postscript*. (1846). Translated by Swenson and Lowrie, 182.

<sup>12</sup> Yaroslav Senyshyn. *The Artist in Crisis*, 89.

<sup>13</sup> Arbaugh, George and E. George Arbaugh, *Kierkegaard's Authorship*, 224.

Kierkegaard's definition of truth implies a kind of objective movement or action. How is one to appropriate the teachings of Christ? Or in the case of 'John the Climber', he inquires how to participate in eternal happiness. The phrase "Follow me" implies an objective movement in the Way to appropriate the teachings. According to the Arbaughs, "Kierkegaard makes truth a quest, a 'venture which chooses an objective uncertainty with the passion of the infinite.'"<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Arbaugh, George and E. George Arbaugh, *Kierkegaard's Authorship*, 223.

## The Existential Problem

When we look back on the early 1970s in Kingston, Jamaica, violence exists everywhere. Since the late 1970s, there has been a relentless climb in violence. It has become popular, even fashionable, in the New World of Kingston for a 21st century teen-age *yute* (youth) going to school to don a hyper exotic-erotic stance and lawless parlance *badman* (formerly posse gunmen in the 1980s). A kind of Louis L'Amour westerner or lone rider he is carrying a 9-millimeter handgun or Volvo automatic close to his crotch—and all this is done in the name of politics and self-defense.

How did this start? Some researches blame politicians who first issued guns on a wide scale, particularly in and around 1980. Could this explain why the belief persist to today that Jamaican youths are born provoked out of the madness of violence and degradation? Could it be that some of these young guns of Jamaica today have no memory of the good old days? Since the late 1970s economic pressure, cost of living, decline in discipline, teenage pregnancy, poor parenting etc., according to some older heads of Jamaica this all led directly to more violence.

In Canada, from 1975 to 1996, were I was at the time of rapid increase in lawlessness and violence in Jamaica, police and some Jamaican officials believed violent feuds that have spilled over into at least a dozen other North American cities are for monetary, not political gains. Jamaican *badman* activity reaped some of the heaviest media attention in Florida, particularly Miami, New York City, and Toronto, Canada. Police in the United States were saying increasing adversarial and violent killings among Jamaicans start from nothing. Some measly argument about money suddenly becomes all-fired up. How far back should we look to find the *knowledge of the most worth to*

transform the individual and stop this crisis<sup>15</sup> of violence? This is the question of the dance *daggering* under investigation.

<sup>15</sup> “Crisis,” according to O’Connor (1987), is a period within capitalism as a historical moment during which the subjective action serves to redefine the nature of social relations within the capitalist system. Crisis is not merely an objective historical process. Crisis is also a subjective historical process—a time when it is not possible to take for granted “normal” economic, social and other relationships, it is a time for decision. For Senyshyn (2010), the suffering that can result from such a decision or termination can be an excruciating one whether it is conspicuously felt or sublimated in the most subterranean ways. For the purposes of this study, I define crisis as those periods of disruption that result in significant restructuring within capitalism, devoid of any sense of pathology. According to Delle (1998), “a crisis is a turning point; a moment of change, the results of which will benefit some at the expense of others” (33). Social theorists of capitalism argue that “crisis” is an inevitable and inherent component of the system (Habermas, 1985; Paynter, 1988; Sweezy, 1942).

## The Hypothesis

Extirpating violence *inna di dancehall* in Jamaica will obviously require what Lucius Annaeus Seneca (ca. 4 B.C. – 65 A.D.) suggested, a sound philosophy.

Sanabilibus aegrotamus malis; ipsaque nos  
in rectum genitos natura, si emendari  
velimus, iuvat.

Seneca: de ira B II, c. 131<sup>16</sup>

Seneca was one of the most popular philosophers of his day. He lived in a world that was unstable and very concerned about the consequences of anger. Seneca believed an angry person could not be just an ugly sight, but potentially a catastrophic phenomenon.

My hypothesis is transformation could come about through appropriate dance education with the intention to affect how students think. Kierkegaard is not only a philosopher but also a deep thinker. Kierkegaard's emphasis, from an educational perspective, is on meta-cognition or thinking about how one thinks. I believe Kierkegaard's view is unity is false without unity of faith. His main task I do not believe was to deal only with Christianity. Rather critical existential issues like ethical responsibility, choice, freedom, anxiety, delusion, despair, and how to think. I believe the question of how does one become an ethical "individual" is paramount to Kierkegaard's thought process. Nietzsche is expressing I believe a similar thought.

<sup>16</sup> The work from which this quotation is drawn, see Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. (Translated by Allan Bloom) *Émile*, 32.

Subjectivity is argued the knowledge of the most worth to illuminate how dance could transform the dancer and a society. I begin in Jamaica's dancehall, the most popular space of dance related violence in our present age. Violence in Jamaica is not a new crisis. This crisis has persisted since the birth of dancehall culture in Jamaica sometime around the 1950s and 1960s.

Senyshyn informs us of the appropriateness of Kierkegaard's concept of subjectivity in relation to the arts. I have profited enormously by all Senyshyn has to say about Kierkegaard's philosophy of the aesthetic stage of existence and live musical performance. Just prior to giving up on my dance practice, because I was experiencing excruciating pain from such a decision, I started reading Senyshyn's book. It gave me much more than a solid springboard to launch myself into the writing of this thesis. I am immensely grateful and feel indebted to him for introducing me to Kierkegaard's authorship.

## The Method

I have followed Garelick's approach in the tradition set by Emil Hirsch in *Kierkegaard-Studien*, to perform a technically difficult philosophic investigation of the two questions of 'what' and 'how' of Jamaican dance in relation to Kierkegaard's philosophy. This investigation is pursued vis-à-vis the concept of subjectivity posited in Kierkegaard's *Postscript*. How Kierkegaard posits his concept of subjective truth, some interesting discussions emerge around what he says about objectivity. Consequently I am compelled to include in this study what he says about objectivity as well.

For example, how should educators approach the existential problem of violent sexual conquest and *dagging inna di dancehall* in Jamaica? There is an obvious problem of literacy and issues of truth and indeterminacy. The individuals addressed in this thesis for the most part do not speak "Standard English" and some barely have a high school education. Consequently, obtaining information from Jamaicans is difficult. What are the 'tools' one ought to use to transform the behaviour associated with *dagging*? Obviously we know these individuals do know 'how' to and love to dance. However there is no research available in Vancouver or Canada about *dagging* specifically. Consequently I traveled to Jamaica to borrow literary materials and observe dancehall culture. To complete my field research I did not implicate participants. I was the sole participant-observer. The method of field research I used to observe the context involved Stanislavski's method of physical theatre.

Stanislavski's "System" or *Method of Physical Actions* is fundamental to the process of theoretical analysis. Stanislavski's teachings informed my research from both aesthetic and ethical standpoints. For example, as an actor would prepare a character for the stage, I studied the psychology of violence in Jamaican dance. What I discovered is that every physical action there is always something psychological. There is no inner experience without external physical expression; it is our bodies that transmit to others

our inner experience. Jamaican dance *inna di dancehall*, for example, is categorized as violent and sexual licentiousness. Why? Stanislavski said, “the elements of the human soul and the particles of a human body are indivisible” (as cited in Moore, 1967, p. 22).

Stanislavski believed that human action, or behaviour, which is a psychophysical process is conditioned by one’s environment. As a researcher of Jamaican dance, I felt it was essential that my total body, mind and soul, was fully immersed in the Jamaica context in order to fully appreciate the “dilemmas of black manhood” (Majors & Bilsum, 1992). For example, the stereotypical swag of a Jamaican man is distinctively recognizable in the rhythm and bounce, with a slight limp, and hands shaped to symbolize waving a firearm. This “cool pose” is typically only visible in Jamaica or predominately Jamaican communities, Toronto, New York and Atlanta in America, where the majority of Jamaicans immigrant reside.

For Stanislavski art is indirect spiritual communication. I understood undertaking this research in Jamaica in relation to Kierkegaard’s Christian notion of subjectivity meant I would be physically and spiritually affected. Stanislavski understood that a performer’s life on stage had to include her/his true self. This field in Jamaica changed my life. Dancehall performers I interacted with come with many critical psychological and spiritual problems.

The Method of physical actions Stanislavski developed could bring the performer to understand and perform uncontrolled complex emotions. I observed dancehall *affectors* (Hope, 2007) dress-up, rehearse and perform crime. According to Moore, “Stanislavski insisted on the continual polishing of an actor’s physical apparatus. Stanislavski’s belief about the incarnation of the inner life is in accord with what Leonardo da Vinci said to his disciples: “The soul does not like to be without its body because without the body it cannot feel or do anything; therefore build a figure in such a way that its pose tells what is in the soul of it.” In other words, “a gesture is a movement not of a body but of a soul” (p. 16). Like good theatre performance, the good in dance creates with intention the inner experiences of the dancer.

Dancehall *affectors* manipulate their physicality to lure their victims. Hope (2007) reveals the dramatic style dancers develop to move through the dancehall. She says,

dancers engage in “erotic and sexual displays as part of their dance styles. These dance styles are usually (but not always) driven by the creation of a new rhythm or song in the dancehall as well as by social and political developments in Jamaican society and the international arena” (p. 29). From a Stanislavskian perspective, the performance researcher must simplify his methodology. In this way, I was forced to take on the persona of an ‘erotic dancer’ in order to collect this data. Stanislavski’s *System* encourages the researcher to do as Kierkegaard insisted: strip naked to reach the profound truth, simplicity, purposeful and naturalness, or the organic behaviour of a human being. Stanislavski believed that the mastery of professional research technique could transform individuals into artists.<sup>17</sup> I did not only go to Jamaica as a researcher. My body and soul lived to the maximum like the local dancers. This meant prior to arriving in Jamaica, each time I had to step out of my comfort zone and leave behind as much as possible of my West coast prejudices.

Stanislavski believed the physical theatre performance process was an education in moral philosophy. I believe field research of this nature is an invaluable opportunity to develop more than a dancer’s or actor’s stage performance vocabulary. My previous professional training in African dance as an institution of moral education consisted of in-depth analysis of what real lived experiences is in terms of how the art of dance is created. According to Moore, Stanislavski believed the actor’s “super-super-objective” is not entertainment, far from it. So how does training in African dance prepare one to travel and live in Jamaica, under some of the harshest conditions? Professional training in dance or theatre should develop people’s taste and raise their level of consciousness. Stanislavski expressed the essential aesthetic and ethical parts of an actor’s creativity.

The first thing I found lacking in Jamaica is Ethics. Moore says Stanislavski believed the task of a director was to elevate the family of artists from the ignorant, the half-educated, and the profiteers, and to convey to the younger generation that an actor is beauty and truth. Although Stanislavski did not fully develop his method before he died

<sup>17</sup> Sonia Moore, *The Stanislavski System*, 3.

ethics impregnated all aspects of his System. “He believed that an actor without ethics is only a craftsman, and without professional technique he is a dilettante. Ethics, profound knowledge, and a highly artistic form of expression are the essence of the Stanislavski System.”<sup>18</sup>

Although Kierkegaard is exceptionally critical of “systems,” ethical beliefs formed the point of departure in Stanislavski’s teachings and the creation of his System to transform the actor. I was quite young when Stanislavski’s *System* was first introduced to me as part of preparing the physical apparatus of the performer. At the time I was majoring in developmental drama and dance at Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec. I was inspired to collect the data for this thesis by principles of Stanislavski’s *Method*. Essentially I lived the experiences and emotions of a “culture of cruelty.” My literary research analysis is corroborated by many years of observation and reflection, meditation, religious isolation, and practice in Jamaica.

By way of Stanislavski’s *Method*, I endeavoured to collect authentic information on violence in Jamaica through participatory-observation field research in Jamaica’s Blue Mountains region. This notion of *authenticity* is critical and will be repeated throughout this thesis. Therefore I should clarify now what Kierkegaard means by authentic.

Kierkegaard expressed: “the world has perhaps always had a lack of what could be called authentic individualities, decisive subjectivities, those artistically permeated with reflection, the independent thinkers who differ from the bellowers and the didacticizers.”<sup>19</sup> Indeed, I found it very challenging to locate authentic Jamaican dancers. I stayed in various neighbourhoods in Kingston, and Mavis Bank, a district up in the Blue Mountains. My search started at the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts. Most of my run-ins was with irreligious exaggerations of the subjective wanting to become objective. There is an emphasis on exaggeration in music and dance. This

<sup>18</sup> Moore, *The Stanislavski System*, 5.

<sup>19</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript*, (1846/1992), H. V. Hong & E. H. Hong (Trans. & Eds.) 66.

perversion appears to be the lack of authenticity. This lack results in imitation of presuppositions. Kierkegaard's concern for authenticity is about subjectivity. To actually become authentic is a matter of what reflective presuppositions the subject has to penetrate.

Undercover fieldwork was carried out primarily to give me an insight into the day-to-day life of ordinary Jamaican farmers and other young performers. This dissertation, then, is compiled of literary analysis of some heady philosophical ideas supported by my research observations and lived experiences among authentic and inauthentic Jamaicans.

My analysis is bodying some of the most heart wrenching emotions stirred by violence. It goes to say that this thesis is not only a review of literature. Of Stanislavski's philosophy that truly supports my hypothesis now is in this statement: according to Stanislavski, "theatre is a pulpit which is the most powerful means of influence.... With the same power which theatre can ennoble the spectators it may corrupt them, degrade them, spoil their taste, lower their passions, and offend beauty."<sup>20</sup> This is precisely what I experienced in Jamaica: an atmosphere of authentic cruelty, real violence. The similarity between death and birth in Jamaica is too large to be ignored. Performers, who are always showing off, degrade women and legally advocate killing homosexuals!

Authentic communication between the theoretical researcher and the dancehall artist is not without many obstacles or life threatening challenges. The artist demands to speak and "dagger," (referring to the dance style *daggering*) to develop his masculinity. The theoretical researcher from "foreign" is reminded that the artist is also a "teacher." I had to remind myself that I was there to "observe" while I lived among these people.

Dancehall performers have rare gifts and great understanding of human suffering. These individuals seem to know how to use the imagination for intentional purposes; and use the resources of fear and terror to command attention and respect in

<sup>20</sup> Moore, *The Stanislavski System*, 4.

and outside the dancehall. A dancehall performer's imagination, like the actor, "is in constant conflict with real life..."<sup>21</sup> No matter how fertile his imagination his personality is indivisible from the character portrayed. In this sense, cultural studies have not fully addressed the crisis if the so-called "cause" of dancehall violence in Jamaica is attributed to economic conditions. These performers by no means are "poor" or starving artists.

<sup>21</sup> Moore, *The Stanislavski System*, 22.

## The Land of Jamaica

Whether a ballerina or a “booty” dancer, you start with your feet on the ground.<sup>22</sup>

What are some of the images your mind conjures up when I say think of the Island Jamaica? Sunny beaches, Bob Marley smoking ganja, guns and big machetes perhaps? Homophobia? The Dudus drama certainly helped to “Brand Jamaica” as a nation on “the brink of civil unrest.” Jamaicans are also branded poor work ethic? Ironically vacationing tourists yearning for sex and drugs also encourage branding Jamaicans and the nation as “backward” “lazy” and “lascivious.” Clearly Jamaica could use some changes, but “re-branding?” The tsunami of subjective misnomers some are simply untruth. What good is this ‘*re-branding*’ supposed to do? Jane Nina Buchanan writes:

Education should have a component to build back the pride the people have in the land and culture and should also tie into the Buy Jamaica ethos. Politicians need to be mindful of the Brand Jamaica image when they play verbal ping pong throughout each campaign promoting crime stats and the other parties corruption.<sup>23</sup>

Buchanan and other professional business-minded people use the term branding positively, but there are intriguing anecdotes about the negative aspects of human branding. Dubois goes back to the fifth century B.C.E. to the ancient Greek historian

<sup>22</sup> Gottschild, 1996, 107.

<sup>23</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.jamaicans.com/articles/primecomments/whatisjamaicathebrand.shtml>

Herodotus. Dubois shares the following story about the “tattooed slave” preceding the Persian Wars:

Various causes of alarm were already making Aristagoras contemplate rebellion, when something else occurred to confirm his purpose; this was the arrival from Susa of a slave, the man with the tattooed scalp, sent by Histiaeus, urging him to do precisely what he was thinking of, namely, to revolt. Histiaeus had been wanting to make Aristagoras take this step, but was in difficulty about how to get a message safely through to him, as the roads from Susa were watched; so he shaved the head of his most trustworthy slave, pricked the message on his scalp, and waited for hair to grow again. Then, as soon as it had grown, he sent the man to Miletus with instructions to do nothing when he arrived except to tell Aristagoras to shave his hair off and look at his head. The message found there was, as I have said, an order to revolt.<sup>24</sup>

This is precisely why I have taken on this majestic task to suggest a brand new dance aesthetic as an integral part of Jamaica’s ethos. A new nation of dance education! I believe this proposal can begin to sterilize and cure the nation of epidemic misnomers inherited from antiquity.

Why has the African said so many times in history, “take my land and you take my life?” To the traditional Jamaican, Jamaica is of two component parts of life—water and wood. The name Jamaica is derived from an Arawak (aboriginal Indian) word “Xaymaca”, meaning *land of wood and water*. And so it is. With waterfalls, and springs, rivers and streams flowing from the forest-clad mountains to the fertile plains, Jamaica has one of the richest and most varied landscapes in the Caribbean. I believe it was Harris 1920 who said: *Land is the supreme issue of life as the provision of sustenance*. Take the land and the African will face the “bloody music.”

On the land, the naked earth the African barefoot dancer is grounded—literally and metaphorically. Grounded he/she dances to celebrate life’s natural existence. The European conception of commercial ownership of lands in Africa was/is to the

<sup>24</sup> Herodotus, 1972, *The Histories*.

indigenous peoples of Africa the most revolting kind of monopoly and self-interest. For Africans this was as absurd as owning a slave or portion of the sun's warmth.

It thus follows that owning the ground we dance upon was so alien to indigenous thought; a century ago almost any of the tribes in Africa would have shut out any immigrant entering tribal grounds not on the basis of what land he requires and at what price, rather whether or not he is fit and proper to become part of the circle of dance within the tribe. The problem with this native custom, in practice any alien may, subject to tribal sanction, become an integral part of the circle which carries with it the right to occupy a position sufficient to acquire access to land to provide sustenance.

Of course, this indigenous conception was shattered by colonialism. The consequence of this goaded the native to rebellion and the confiscation of his land rights. In East and South Africa; for example, this meant grotesque inequities like 40 million acres of land for nearly five million natives, and 260 million acres of quality fertile land for about one million immigrant whites. It is quite clear that the idea of uprooting the grounds of Reserves to obtain a satisfactory supply of labour was an immoral one. Our eyes in the past solely cannot rest given the fact that our hostile criticisms towards this system is pointing now at Europeans to-day rapidly acquiring, regardless of native welfare, "grounds" or land on which to erect modern monstrosities. This too often leads to native unrest when the "foreigner" "tourist" attempts to assert his/her Company rights to purchase commercial beachfront property in Jamaica. Based on the history of the African and his land (tropical and semi-tropical) there is undoubtedly good cause for this contention in Jamaica, but more important my concern in this thesis is the issue of education and how it relates to the "grounds" of African thought and dance.

British immigrants did not favour the idea of natives being taught better methods of agriculture on the grounds that, if they were taught to work in the Reserves, they would attain higher standards of life and would continue to work for themselves and not the white settlers. In the event of the sizes of the Reserves begin to be reduced, and then the effect might be different. By uprooting the Reserves the British sought to leave the natives uneducated and would profit from his ignorance.

The contemporary African discourse of Walter Rodney's scholarship shows how Europe under-developed Africa and how to ground with the brothers (as cited in Hickling, 2007, p. 9). In African dance the dance technique "grounding" can clearly be associated with how Rodney formulated his thesis the *Groundings With My Brothers* (Rodney, 1969, 1996).

The implications for studying ancestral or traditional dances of Africa are discussed in the section "Educational Implications" of this thesis. For a comprehensive theoretical read of educational implications see Amegago (2000). My aim is to provide a succinct philosophical background to support the value of Amegago's theory to develop traditional African performing arts curriculum. This is accomplished in constant reflection on the *Historique, Poétique et Didactic de la Danse Africaine* (Maboungou, 2005).

Scholars of African performing arts remind us that Christianity forced Africans to deny dancing upon the land yet a distinctive African dance is still firmly grounded and performed in Jamaica. These dances survived linguistic, cultural and physical enslavement. Jamaicans have retained Christian thought and African movement in body. This is the height of the paradox. How is African-Jamaican dance used to establish communication between human beings and the eternal? How dance shapes the values and ethico-religious vision of Jamaica in the dancehall is dubious.

Dancehall artists could help people to break-down barriers that have kept them stuck in the past. These artists have penetrated the barriers of international grounds. How the dancehall unregulated socio-cultural space provides latitude for dance is rather mysterious. These artists have circumvented religious restrictions. The dancehall is re-Africanizing the ground, the dance floor. The social environment of the dancehall forms the dance and the dancer. The sacred and secular where intoxicating influences are staged. The social and religious duet becomes one. The sacred-secular Cartesian duality influenced dance performance are celebrated *inna di dancehall*.

## The *What* of Jamaican Dance

*What* is considered taboo about Jamaican dance relates to a mode of misunderstanding. Jamaican dancers today reconstruct those bygone ages that existed in pre-history. Knowledge of modern “savages” and their modes of life enables us more accurately to picture and more vividly to conceive the manners and customs of our ancestors.

Critics conjure what Jamaican dancers could not otherwise know. Jamaican dance stands for a method of theorizing that re-invents what we already know in history. What the world is so fascinated by in Jamaican dance is an undeniable provocative sensual *riddim* element. Jamaicans do know how to dance! I would say Jamaican music showcases some of the best *riddimaticians* (rhythmaticians) and dancers. Some dancehall DJs have taken music so far out of the box ordinary conceptions of what constitutes music are in a daze. It is almost as if dancehall *riddim*, reggae’s rebellious child, was taking as far as it will go what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari say of music namely that it is ‘first of all a deterritorialization of the voice, which becomes less and less language.’<sup>25</sup> What is most distinctive about dancehall music of the present age is it has a sense of rhythm that is distinctly techno.

I devised an artistic and philosophical aesthetic of the present called *AFOTEK*. It is a post-rave futurist-style of technologically engineered cross-cultural interdisciplinary performance method.<sup>26</sup> *AFOTEK* is an aesthetic philosophy of dance. It explores an extraordinarily complex notion of *real riddims* (rhythms of the real), subjectivity and

<sup>25</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 1987.

<sup>26</sup> Johannes Birringer, *Body/art and technological transformations*. In Z. Detsi-Diamanti, K. Kitsi-Mitakou, & E. Yiannopoulou (Eds.), 2007.

transformation in relation to some aspects of African-Jamaican aesthetics discussed in Section 2, part 3 in this thesis. *AFOTEK*'s first principle of rhythmic existence and creation is the 'mix.' Techno music like dancehall aesthetics is a synthesis or *métissage*<sup>27</sup> of various cultural sounds that correspond to the present day cultural politics and ethnic identities. Mixing is made possible by new technologies, or to be more precise, "the process of technologies have intensified to the point that the world now tends more and more to the global."<sup>28</sup>

Procedures or methodologies of *dancehall* dances cannot be easily explained or imitated but people around the world are trying it. Why? Scattered in this thesis I give some reasons for this belief, but here is perhaps one complex reason: The self is dancer. Jamaican-born Canadian dance choreographer Jaeblyze provides an overly simplicity perspective of the difficulty in copying Jamaican dance. In an interview with *CNN News* reporter Isha Sessay, Jaeblyze says it is not an easy dance to teach because it is not a "standard" form of dance you can teach in an eight-count.<sup>29</sup> Jaeblyze believes Jamaican dance is an attitude that is not easily copied. What is this 'attitude'? In my analysis the dancehall culture has a 'madness' and beauty that is Dionysian. The dance is ninety-percent 'madness' and this is an internal, inward or innate sensibility.

The phenomenology of Kierkegaard's "moods" explains the difficulty of Jaeblyze's pretty choreographies. Jaeblyze fails in her attempt to imitate Jamaican dance with sweet Cracker Jack pop steps covered in Ken and Barbie glitter. The difficulty of mastering a Jamaican phenomenon like *dagging* is much closer to the truth of Jamaican dancehall culture than certainly anything Jaeblyze choreographs for televised dance competitions. Jaeblyze's choreographies are not exactly "authentic" dances. First, could anything produced outside Jamaica be considered 'authentic'? Second, she makes Jamaican dances for TV shows without any "real" significant

<sup>27</sup> As in the French and Canadian *métis* and Hispanic *mestizo*, or Caribbean Creole.

<sup>28</sup> Michel Gaillot, *Multiple meaning techno: An artistic and political laboratory of the present, interviews with Jean-Luc Nancy, and Michel Maffesoli*, 1998.

<sup>29</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXM4kHNCjz8>

meaningful theme, conflict, or crisis being explored. In-depth understanding of dance and dancehall culture should tell her that. Third, Jaeblaze says it is very heavily African influenced, *meaning the shoulders are down...* So, you think that is *African* dance? Again, another overly simplistic display of dance moves without any discussion of moods. Is that the difficulty? What Jaeblaze believes is “different” or difficult about dancehall dance is dubious. How does one choreograph madness? Mary Warnock tells us subjectivity cannot be taught.

Jamaican-born and bred master choreographer and dancer the Honorable Professor Rex Nettleford (1933 – 2010) tells us the Jamaican body has a particular swag or way of moving that is uniquely Caribbean. What is often said about the Jamaican dancer is not always a stereotype of hatred or bigotry. However, dancers do need to abandon the discursive to exemplify the primitive trope. Maxine Sheets and Gottschild observe that “seduction of the primitive” is a trope that has played havoc with the European psyche since the *Age of Enlightenment*. This love-hate affair of opposites is evident in the image of the black Jamaican *dagging* dancer live on stage and in *Youtube* videos. The westerner gazes with fears and phobias, along with their fantasies and desires. The primitive trope defines the Western concept of the “other” be it the Hottentot Venues in nineteenth-century London, Josephine Baker in twentieth-century Paris. Ashanti Fever in turn-of-the-century Vienna, or Skerrit Bwoy *dagging inna di dancehall*.

African culture is part of Jamaican lives, yet some do not seem to know it, and some refuse to recognize it or misuse it as entertainment. In his doctoral dissertation, Modesto Mawulolo Kwaku Amegago (2000) reports how the Western educational system intensifies this ambivalence toward African traditional cultures, including the arts. Amegago says, “the mass commodification of the arts in this contemporary era has affected the educational communicative and cultural functions of African performing arts and continues to reduce them to a state of entertainment.”<sup>30</sup> This poses a very serious

<sup>30</sup> Amegago, 2000, 3.

threat to the evaluation of traditional African knowledge, the curriculum within the learning process on the basis of ethics and aesthetics. This is perplexing in light of the innumerable wealth and knowledge of Africa.

The African legacy exists virtually in all musical forms such as blues, jazz, spirituals, gospel, soul, rap, funk, rock, reggae, and *dagging*. It permeates dance forms, from ballroom and nightclub floors to popular and concert stages. Amegago believes Christian groups who discourage youths from participating in African performance arts education outside the Christian context threaten the fabric of the society. And yet, though apparent in Western culture, African presence is vaguely recognized in education of Jamaica. This leads to the question: Who is doing the hiring?

In this thesis I do not discuss specifically the performing arts curriculum. Amegago provides a framework for cross-cultural art education for the sake of harmony. In doing so, he emerges with a curriculum of integrated African music and dance and creativity. I discussed the implications developed in Amegago's theory in my Master's Thesis: *The self is the dancer—a cross-cultural conceptualization of dance education* (Hyman, 1999).

The recognition of Western influences in modern dance in Jamaica is encouraged while the African seems to be peripheral, depending on who is speaking about dance. Toni Morrison's voice of "unspeakable things unspoken" echoes the silenced African dancer in Jamaica. That which is African is often unnamed and, as such, remains misrepresented, mute, inconsequential, and insignificant, in the eyes of many "primitive." Responding to the silence, Adorno believes "music for entertainment compliments the reduction of people to silence, the dying out of speech as expression, the inability to communicate at all. It inhabits the pockets of silence that develop between people moulded by anxiety, work and undemanding docility."<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *The Culture Industry*, 30.

A story Jamaican *daggas* ('*daggering*' dancers) want to tell, however poorly they may seem to dance it, is an aspect of African aesthetics. These dancers are irruptive. They expend a surplus of living energy in a form of self-actualizing. Judith Lynne Hanna's theory of nonverbal communication tells us to dance is an outlet for sexual and aggressive feelings. A strenuous "leaping" dance, for example, is strongly recommended in making youth obedient and self-restrained.<sup>32</sup> For Adorno, dance in the culture industry (i.e., dancehall culture) copy stages of sexual excitement only to make fun of them.<sup>33</sup> Adorno actually says people who arrogantly reject the unfamiliar is 'a neurotic mechanism of stupidity'.<sup>34</sup> What Jamaican dancers do not understand is the relationship between ethics and aesthetics; for example, how to make dances that are not fetishized projects of advertising.

The vulgarization of dance in the dancehall is colonizing large areas of the industry to the detriment of genuine performing artists. It corresponds with what Adorno says is the behaviour of the prisoner who loves his cell because he has been left nothing else to love. The "vulgar" dancehall music is precisely the new phase of displeasure in pleasure. In Plato's *Republic* the dancehall music would be tabooed. Adorno would say the music and dance *daggering* is scarcely Dionysian because it lacks taste. It is irresponsible activity. In the criticisms about dancehall's declining taste, of these is the motif of sensuality. It supposedly emasculates and harms courageous behaviour in ways that prevent promoting peace and nonviolence. This means removing prejudice at work not only in the application but also in the production of categories of thought ('savage' stereotypes, misconceptions, presuppositions) around black identity. What Wittgenstein meant by when we do philosophy, we are like savages is not unrelated to how prejudicial complaints are used to describe Jamaican dancers as "savage".

Educators ought to assist dancers to pay more attention to what movement can convey. What is worth more, the movement quality or the intention? What forces us to

<sup>32</sup> Judith Lynne Hanna, *To Dance is Human*, 189.

<sup>33</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *The Culture Industry*, 53.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

see potential oppositions of right or true and false, vulgar or beautiful is a contradiction. For example, what exactly is 'savage' or immoral about Jamaican dance could be the premise of Socratism.

Dancers recognize the immoral or unethical in what some cultural theorists and philosophers aim to do, to give a point of view that slavery in the traditional sense is responsible for multiple levels of unethical Jamaican dance. Consequently what used to be 'savage' is now a global trend. What used to be a scholastic error of anthropology has transformed itself into the realist position. What was once 'a new beginning' is actually an after-thought in postmodern era. What Jean Baudrillard says is the present is characteristic of prehistory. What matters now is not what truth means to Jamaican dancers but how it is attained. Pierce believes *the Universe as an argument is necessarily a great work of art, a great poem,—is a symphony,—just as every true poem is a sound argument*. What dance can do is designate voice or give meaning to that nature speaking to dancers. What is more natural than sound resonated with nature's life "force" that compelled humans in dance that came from God's hand?

Jamaican dancers are saying the poor and working class will be at the center. They have made the first language a collection of *riddims* (rhythms) stirring the body to poeticize self-actualization. This so-called state of natural dance is the genius of ancestral African ancestry alive in contemporary dance in Jamaica, its Dionysiac spirit, madness, intoxication, savagery in the living reservoir of live dance vocabulary. What critics have come in contact with is an ethic and aesthetic, what scholars of the late twentieth-century call hyperreality and hyperplasticity. Jamaica dance supplies a prototype, which we are unable to do without. The aim to accomplish is re-describing things that were mistaken and this makes way for innovation in reference to what Zab Maboungou pioneered calling it "contemporary" African dance ([www.nyata-nyata.org](http://www.nyata-nyata.org)).

Dance as metaphor can conjure up things still unknown opposed to tell things as they are. What Adorno has to say of the voice of the prehistoric philosopher is fitting to the thesis of forbidden possibilities. For Adorno the society which judged them comic becomes comic. I suppose the contemporary is archaic and the archaic is contemporary. What is assumed to be magical in Jamaica is presumed to be a living force operative in all dances.

What is changing is consciousness to create harmonious, correct works of art that show us how to embrace our humanity, our bodies. What Jamaican dancers do well is transform thought into movement, but what's lost is the intention of movement. Instead we have a brand. Nina Buchanan says a new label "Brand Jamaica" is needed to rebuild trust and education should have a component in it to build back pride. Aspects of dance can shape awareness of political and social contexts. A direct education that embraces the forms of traditional peoples is necessary for Jamaican dance to exist in an international context. African art, dance and music are necessary for a wide variety of intrinsically distinct modes of performance to coexist. Jamaican dancers need to develop a passionate and responsible subjectivity.

## The *How* of Jamaican Dance

'*How*' can Jamaican dance performance resolve some of the problems of violence? In Jamaica and around the world it initiates a new cycle and a new recycle, a new era of change. People can learn to live peacefully through the process of engaging in what is good in dance. The power of dance to transform is to give meaning and passion a chance.

African dances of the continent help people to pave through the post-colonial context by addressing the specific needs of the generations. The inner and the outer worlds penetrate each other is the objective of Jamaican dance. This is accomplished by genius, which is an aptitude of youth. They have got what it takes—the ability to treat abstract things like real ones. Jamaican dance is progressively governance; a performance form bringing back life by agitating the unfolding of the individual's passion in a work is a kind of genius. The rhythms and movement of Jamaican dance that advocate progressiveness is a prophetic quest for power. This is the body's power to respond to classic Jamaican music.

On the other hand, how dancehall *riddims* challenge this classic aesthetic is not always prophetic. Classic becomes contemporary in an environment that is conditioned by infinite possibilities and choices similar to the sentiments and hypersensitivity of how the poor becomes rich. In the dancehall bodily rhythms are culturally meaningful and alterable by the responses to often-vulgarized music lyrics. How body movement translates music into theory is an aspect of identity construction. The dancehall music and environment extends the imaginative repertoire for dancers to theorize. How the audience responds to Jamaican dancehall theory rests on its compassion for poor, malnutrition, greed, and moral constipation of the society.

The theory of colonialism, neo-colonialism and slavery is translated into rhythms and movement, dance and music. Indirectly this is the mood of Jamaican dancehall

culture. The culture extends the imaginative repertoire for the world to watch what Page Dubois reports: *the slave body and other objects* 'live' on stage. The Jamaican dancing body is performed to meet or reject accepted ideals of beauty. This is directly a reflection of the confusion of refusing traditional African dance and European aesthetics are one and the same. For example, how sexual conquest is performed in dancehall culture is the truth of what dancers are experiencing yet it is hurting the society.

The dancehall's "violent" "vulgar" culture speaks to a lack of self-love and self-esteem, spiritual bankruptcy, religious malnutrition, and emotional emptiness. All this could be related to militarism and inhumane consequences we see all over the world.

The dancing *dagga* is not all 'dirty'. He is not a hindrance to crossing the tight rope of hope with a right to fight off the ground. But how Jamaican dance affirms a positive Afrocentric identity could be expressed more effectively and less indefinitely.

Sexuality in Jamaican dance is significant to mobility yet viewed by Jamaica's traditionalist as "raw sex." If Jamaican artists expect to overcome criticisms and downward mobility when the same group of performers continue to make people suffer, the popularization of dance contributed to Jamaican culture must transform and bring people together. Jamaica is a rigidly gendered society with militarized homophobic laws. Notions of sexuality become very important to Jamaican dancers, especially those of the lower class.

*Dagging* is a reflection of young genius black people seen all over the world. These individuals lack understanding of sex and sensuality to maintain what Brenda Dixon Gottschild calls the "black dancing body"<sup>35</sup> and positive definition of Jamaican society.

<sup>35</sup> Gottschild, *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance: Dance and Other Contexts*.

The religious and spiritual component of Jamaican dance is generating a population yearning for hope. Yet by reproducing this inhumane treatment of the body they are resisting change. How Christianity is implicated in the dehumanizing act of enslavement resulted in the loss of respect for the land Africa and the dance.

## Dance in Theory

Inappropriate dance displays in the dancehall stem either from patterns that have evolved in the past or from lack of understanding or mis-education. Behavioural theorist Eva Essa says this is normal. However, with skilful technique, Jamaican dance educators can systematically transform inappropriate or 'slack' movement vocabulary to those that are more appropriate. Who decides what is slack? I will get to that next. More prominent among the dance technique I instruct is how rhythm is apprehended via the *art of improvisation* in African dance. Later in this thesis in the section "The Task of Transformation" I introduce an African notion of improvisation.

Appropriate Jamaican dance education can help to re-educate the individual and solve the problems of slackness. According to a prominent University academic, Professor Carolyn Cooper, the behaviour "slackness" is "potentially a politics of subversion, a metaphorical revolt against law and order; an undermining of consensual standards of decency."<sup>36</sup> Cooper also says this behaviour is "vulgar." What is *daggering* theorizing? For Cooper, it represents "a radical, underground confrontation with the patriarchal gender ideology and the pious morality of fundamentalist Jamaican society."<sup>37</sup>

By observing that sexual conquest and violence is a natural process of dancehall culture, the theory of *daggering* I am concerned with arises only within the various and often of inappropriate concepts of "bodying theory."<sup>38</sup> It's like wishing for rain standing in

<sup>36</sup> Cooper, 1993, 141.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>38</sup> "Bodying theory" is a concept Dr. Heesoon Bai and myself coin to develop and explore the prism of Egan's seminal work *The Educated Mind*.

the dessert; they are bound to be inappropriate unless one lives in a bubble society. Inappropriate because education should be an *individualizing process* in a Kierkegaardian sense, that encourages eccentricity, if necessary, and abolishing predetermined ends to bring out infinite possibilities.

What is needed in Jamaica is education in ethics and dance philosophy. There are some complex value issues like education ends that create tensions; these are not unrelated to large-scale political conflicts in the dancehall. For example, Egan posits this question: How can educators socialize students to prevailing norms and values, ensure that they accumulate the kind of knowledge that will give a truer view of the world, and help them to fulfill their potential at each stage of development? Dance educators who help to socialize students to make appropriate choices develop their understanding of consequences. In this way, dance is facilitating students learning in *how* to develop positive self-identity. Egan says “teachers are not authorities as much as facilitators, providers of the best resources, shapers of the environment in which students will learn.”<sup>39</sup>

Dance theory can facilitate Jamaican students’ understanding of subjectivity in relation to the consequences of their actions through logic and reasoning. As a result, through dance students are guided to rely on their subjective sense of integrity rather than on merely doing what they are told to do.<sup>40</sup> For example, a student is able to develop responsible and appropriate nonverbal communication presumably if he/she started learning reasonable expectations from early.

## ***Behavioural Theory***

Behavioural theorists posit inappropriate verbal and nonverbal communication; aggressive and antisocial behaviours; for example, hitting, biting, throwing objects, hurting others, swearing, name-calling, non-sharing, bribery, stealing, non-compliance;

<sup>39</sup> Egan, 1997, 17.

<sup>40</sup> Eva Essa, *A Practical Guide to Solving Preschool Behaviour Problems*, 5.

disruptive and destructive behaviours, shouting, dropping objects to make noise, tearing books, destroying property of others are learned. Children learn *how* to behave in social situations by observing others. The values of dance education in Jamaica should develop children's capacities in appropriate direct and indirect, verbal and nonverbal communication.

Those around dancers, other artists, parents, and teachers must encourage education in 'what' and 'how' of dance. For example, later in this thesis I explore 'how' *intention* in each movement is 'what' teachers ought to effectively and sensitively employ to address behavioural problems. If inappropriate behaviour is not corrected early in the classroom the result could trigger inappropriate and irresponsible subjectivity, i.e., misery, violence, and frustration performed later in the dancehall. For example, a lack of attention and corporal punishment still practiced in some schools in Jamaica equally reinforces the perceived vulgarity of violent behaviour in Jamaican dance. Durkheim believes "education perpetuates and reinforces this... by fixing in the child, from the beginning, the essential similarities that collective life demands."<sup>41</sup>

This is how a society like Jamaica maintains a certain degree of homogeneity. Central to this idea is how young people have a remarkable plasticity to adapt the knowledge learned in the classroom or home of Jamaican society. And crucial to this is how living memories and knowledge are vital to one's society is visible in live dance performances. The very structure of schooling in Jamaica, as in the West, is ideally encouraging conformity. Students learn to fit in for their own good. Now what happens when a child is not conforming to the expectations he/ she is exposed to? There appears to be very limited possibility for nonconformity in schools in Jamaica and very little effort to promote the knowledge of dance performance as useful.

According to Egan, "oral cultures long ago invented techniques to ensure that the young would efficiently learn and remember the social group's store of knowledge and

<sup>41</sup> Emile Durkheim, p. 70.

would also take on the values that sustain the structure of the society and establish the sense of identity of its individual members.”<sup>42</sup>

Although the progressivism of John Dewey, Jean Piaget’s developmentalism, and Rousseau’s nature theory are at odds with Plato’s conception of education in the *Republic*, which is viewed by some theorists as the finest treatise on education ever written to develop students’ ability to reflect and understand the world, it has influenced just about everyone who has written about education in the West.

In Plato’s idea, the appropriate content of the curriculum then is vital for the individual to access a great cultural conversation that transcends politics and conventional sets of norms and values. Plato’s idea is appropriate to the knowledge question of this thesis. Plato was particular about forms of knowledge drive development. Plato is a more time-related and epistemological view, where Kierkegaard is unarguably a psychological process. Both processes are necessary.

Rousseau, on the other hand, says education results from something internal, uninfected by social life. Rousseau believed in a developmental process of *unfolding*. Rousseau’s ideas seem to be closely related to Kierkegaard’s concept of *subjectivity*, which is focused on how *becoming* proceeds from an internal process of learning. It *honours* something within each individual. This is what is so attractive to me about Kierkegaard’s ideas.

The *nature* of students’ development, learning, and motivation was vital to Rousseau’s concept of education: “Fix your eye on nature, follow the path traced by her.”<sup>43</sup> In this way Emile is brought to learn appropriate behaviour. Allan Bloom tells us “the boy is brought to understand and respect the property of others without losing anything of his own.”<sup>44</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Egan, *The Educated Mind: How Cognitive Tools Shape Our Understanding*, 10.

<sup>43</sup> Rousseau, *Émile*, 14.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

It is apparent in Jamaica that young people have a natural inclination to dance. However, educators lack the theoretical knowledge to change the way they express their dissatisfaction with society and the world in general through dance. Some educators resist much of this form of knowledge in favour of a more traditional curriculum. Of the more radical thinkers of the 1960s, Paul Goodman (1982) put it this way: “The purpose of elementary pedagogy, through age twelve, should be to delay socialization, to protect children’s free growth... We must drastically cut back formal schooling because the present extended tutelage is against nature and arrests growth.”<sup>45</sup>

## ***Psychoanalytic Theory***

Erik Erikson’s *stages of psychosocial development* is one example of psychoanalytic theory. According to “psychosocial” stages of development it is important to take into consideration of Jamaicans who dance inappropriately. Michael Jackson style dancers in Jamaica, for example, grabbing their crotch to express a sense of subjectivity and autonomy through dance may clash with the expectations of fundamentally a Christian society. Incorporated in this thesis are aspects of Jamaica’s newest psychoanalytic approach to cultural therapy. The educator or audience who perceives this as perhaps immature yet subjective expressions rather than “slackness” can gently guide, explain, and re-channel the passion of dancers in a manner that is not harmful to their sense of self.

It is important to be sensitive to the needs of Jamaican dancers at any given stage of their development. Jamaican youths, for example, are struggling to achieve a sense of identity, evident in the need to assert their fast-developing dance steps. There are major Jamaican dance moves constantly being created (see Illustration 3). Thus, Jamaican youths need many opportunities to perform and develop dances within a safe, loving, and reasonable environment. Jamaican youths who fail to gain positive dance-identity continue to the next stage of development with a sense of doubt and despair.

<sup>45</sup> Paul Goodman, *Compulsory Mis-education and the Community of Scholars*, 86.

Throughout this thesis I carefully examine what might be the cause of inappropriate Jamaican dance. So often, inappropriate behaviour is a reaction to situations out of a person's control and a sense of inferiority. In this thesis I offer a psychoanalytic theory developed by Jamaica's distinguished scholar and professor of psychiatry at the University of the West Indies. It aims to encourage more culturally appropriate methods in the area of solving problems, which is not unrelated to solving the crisis of Jamaican dance artists. Psychoanalytic theory offers another approach to examining why Jamaicans might be 'slack' or display perceived inappropriate dance performances. This theory emphasizes the importance of examining historical factors that might be at the root of 'slackness' in Jamaica.

The perspective of some prominent psychologists in the Caribbean states a major contributor to the ubiquity of violence in Jamaica in general is "the legacy of slavery and brutal plantation life" (Matthies, Meeks-Gardner, Daley & Crawford-Brown cited in Hickling et. al., 2008). This belief appears most prominently in Frederick W. Hickling's book *Psychohistoriography: A Post-colonial Psychoanalytic and Psychotherapeutic Model*. Hickling rejects classical psychoanalytic episteme to adapt this new psychohistoriographic model. In relation to subjectivity and Jamaican dance, Hickling's view attempts to address the individual and collective connections of mind. For Hickling, the classical European "episteme" is the "centered" and inappropriately applied theory to solving problems of Caribbean people of African descent. Foucault defined the episteme as: "...the center of knowledge... the principle order... one episteme that defined the conditions of possibility of all knowledge, whether expressed in theory or silently invested in practice..." (Foucault, 1973, cited in Hickling 2). Like Hickling, Rudolf Dreikurs, author of *Children: The Challenge* (1964), considers that all inappropriate behaviour, i.e., "slack" Jamaican dance, stems from issues of power, revenge, helplessness, and attention.

Psychoanalytic theories in the Caribbean blame, for example, the British that were responsible for African slavery. Slavery disconnected African peoples from experiences, like dance, relevant to their lives. In the next section, I consider a theory of "slaveologists" (Dubois 2008), those theorists and scholars who see slaves and slavery in economic terms. My interest in this thesis is how the "slave body" (*embodiment*) in Dubois' terms, manifest in Jamaican dance to develop our understanding.

## ***Cognitive Theory***

In dealing with subjectivity and the problem of Jamaican dance, in terms of educational theory, Kieran Egan outlined five “kinds of understanding” in his book *The educated mind*. Notably, Egan conceives cognitive theory in multicultural societies is tied in with the life of society and its culture. To accomplish his primary aim in his book, to unravel some of the major strands of typical “polysemous understanding,” he draws of nineteenth-century recapitulation theories and on Vygotsky, who died in 1936.

Vygotsky’s theory very simply, Egan stated:

He argued that we make sense of the world by use of mediating intellectual tools that in turn profoundly influence the kind of sense we make. Our intellectual development, then, cannot adequately be understood in terms of the knowledge we accumulate or in terms of psychological stages like Piaget’s but requires an understanding of the role played by the intellectual tools available in the society into which a person grows.<sup>46</sup>

Body language, like oral language, is a critical composite of culture. Children internalize and imitate body language of the society in which he/she grows. In Vygotskian terms, “higher psychological processes” are internalized language(s), including somatic representations of historically organized ways of functioning. Processes of intellectual development, then, are to be recognized in the individual’s degree of mastery of somatic tools, like dance, that could lead to different ways to making meaning of the world, and will significantly inform what is re-created. So the body is not an isolable thing not related to intellectual development. So dance is constituted of its sociocultural surroundings. And its messages are products of the intellectual tools created and used in the environment.

Egan distinguished five kinds of understanding, which he called: *Philosophic*, *Romantic*, *Ironic*, *Somatic*, and *Mythic*. For Egan, the mind's prism is composite of these constituents. He shows how each kind of understanding is not unrelated to intellectual or

<sup>46</sup> Egan, *The Educated Mind*, 29.

cognitive tools, like language, the individual acquires from a society he/she grows up in. In this thesis, I focus indirectly on what Egan calls the “somatic” (dance); the “philosophic” (subjectivity); and “mythic” (Dionysus). I do this perhaps indirectly, without any intention of addressing Egan’s theory specifically. I try to show that the body and dance as a myth (and metaphor) shapes our understanding of subjectivity. Given the kind of society Jamaica is the body will perform accordingly. The Jamaican dance bares the stamp of Jamaica’s history. This is obvious in the ‘inappropriate’ dancehall dance *dagging* addressed throughout this thesis.

To recap, according to Essa, research in human development and family studies reveal behaviour, whether appropriate or inappropriate, is learned. Mother’s learned how to get a child to meet her expectations. Essa says both adaptive and problem behaviours develop in this way. What a mother does is either reinforced or not reinforced by those around them.

Beating children is acceptable discipline in some schools in Jamaica. Inappropriate beatings by mothers stem either from patterns that have evolved in their past, i.e., slavery, or from lack of understanding of what society expects of them. In Jamaica this is normal. With skills, children can be taught how to change their behaviours to avoid unacceptable beatings. Rather than how inappropriate behaviour occurs, behaviourism is concerned with what is observable to suggest how learning occurs. Abusive mothers and teachers, for example, are particularly likely to be modeling or imitating those they admire and like.

## Philosophy of Dance

The philosophy of the art of dance is not all dance is art.<sup>47</sup> A general theory of dance tends to purposefully name dances and danced movements that are recognized. Theories of dance tend to explain why people dance. As scattered to exist in the form of named dances that are recognized as scattered particulars within cultures, identified institutionally by various contextual and formal criteria.

There are still, to my knowledge, no general guidebooks on Jamaican dancehall aesthetics that combine the current scope of this thesis with strenuous philosophical thought. Much of the literature in Jamaica on the art of dance does not include dancehall and the dance *dagging*. Fair enough. It is a fairly recent phenomenon, and is it not finite art. What makes “*dagging*” “*dagging*” is the way it is taught and performed within the community that understands it and has a tolerance for its perversion. On the other hand, it could be perceived as an historical entity like St. Vitus’s epidemic.

My first problem in this thesis for a responsible dancer and researcher is to understand how to make sense of the “madness” and “vulgarity” of *dagging*. This problem led me to find a philosophy of dance that make sense of dance—to explain how dancing is something it makes sense to do. Isadora Duncan, for example, said she had three great precursors of the Dance that inspired her: two great Masters of music, and one philosopher—Beethoven, Wagner and Nietzsche (whose work rests chiefly on *The Birth of Tragedy*). Since the 18th century the fine arts has been one of the areas in which human intelligence is exercised.

<sup>47</sup> Francis Sparshott, *A Measured Pace*, 1995.

One of the general questions of dance research is what sort of meaning the art of dance exists to convey? The anomalous nature of dance led Francis Sparshott to extol a new tool was needed to deal with such a phenomenon: the concept of a *practice*, in a sense more general than those familiar in social and political philosophy, and a whole way of articulating the discussion of practices. In his book *Off the Ground: First Steps to a Philosophical Consideration of Dance*, Sparshott incorporates pretty much everything anyone might want to consider admissible into a theory of dance. It is impossible to summarize. Notably he lists: sexuality, religion, ritual, gesture, dancing bears, observations of dance and music, body, time, space, ice dancing, mime, movement, and rhythm. Virtually everything! I am not certain I agree with this idea of “anything can be dance.” Then surely *daggering* is dance, but is it in the category of the art of dance or fine arts? The part of dance that plays in the lives of Jamaican people I believe Sparshott would admit is a profound consideration. Sparshott’s view is never polemic. However, he seems to be asserting a more Hegelian doctrine in his approach reinforced by a world-historical analysis of dance. On the other hand, I find his perspective fitting for addressing anything noticeably problematic as it relates to Kierkegaard’s concept of subjectivity. Sparshott incites *dance must be considered existentially: that is in ways that presuppose no reinforcement from anything outside the individual*. Sparshott soars off the ground in his way of conceptualizing “self-transformation” to be a pivotal idea of dance aesthetics. Sparshott unites dance and philosophy, if I may say so, as a kind of existential ‘leap’ into the abyss. Kierkegaard writes:

If a dancer could leap very high, we should admire him. But if he tried to give the impression that he could fly, let laughter single him out for suitable punishment, even though it might be true that he could leap as high as any dancer ever had done. Leaping is the accomplishment of a being essentially earthly, one who respects the earth’s gravitational force, since the leaping is only momentary. But flying carries a suggestion of being emancipated from telluric conditions, a privilege reserved for

winged creatures, and perhaps also shared by the inhabitants of the moon—and there perhaps the System will first find its true readers.<sup>48</sup>

With stunning irony Sparshott steps *off the ground* into the deepest depths of the dance to make it a fine art of transformation. He believes in *whatever mode of dance ... to stand for the as a dancer or to enter the dance is to undertake what amounts to a marked change in one's way of being; and to be aware of others dancing, in however refined a way, is to be aware of them as entering upon a transformation such as one might oneself undertake.*

Dance in Jamaica is in part of what shapes the identity of the culture. As part of this inquiry, how the Jamaican dance *dagging* bears meaning. Or what sort of meaning the dance exists to convey. Perhaps there is no meaning to the dance *dagging*? Perhaps it is just supposed to be entertainment? It may be so, but then, why is the dance creating such tremendous uproar outside the country and practiced around the word? Perhaps there are attributes to this dance that we do not know. What has led young Jamaicans to dance this way? What psychic forces impel men and women to make sense of *dagging*? Could there be a certain answer to that? In which case, in this thesis, metaphorically the “spirit” of the god Dionysus is posited to be one. Sparshott suggested the notion that “the world in its entirety is most fittingly thought of as a dance, or as the product or domain of a dancing god.”<sup>49</sup> For example, in Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (v 618-27), archangel Raphael tells Adam:

Of Planets and of fixt in all her Wheelles  
Resembles nearest, mazes intricate,  
Eccentric, intervolv'd, yet regular  
Then most, when most irregular they seem:  
And in their motions harmonie Divine  
So smooths her charming tones, that Gods own ear  
Listens delighted.

<sup>48</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript*, 1846/1992, H. V. Hong & E. H. Hong (Trans. & Eds.) 124.

<sup>49</sup> Sparshott, *A Measured Pace*, 1995, 5.

Dance is a dominant metaphor that shapes our understanding of existence in a way that other arts may not. Jamaican philosophers or artists may not relate their practices to Greek gods, especially in the dancehall, the way I am. There may be good reasons for that, but the mere fact that I've chosen a subject that is little studied in relation to Jamaican culture means either that this is worthy of attention or that more research remains to be done. Alternatively the only way to find out the truth of *daggering* is to try it and see. So I ventured to Jamaica to see for myself. The more I observed the dance *daggering* I found myself not turned on. In fact quite horrified at first. That dance seemed to be different from anything I could ever imagine.

*Daggering* puts Swayzy's dirty dancing to the test. This phenomenon *daggering* is not "dirty." It's sublime Dionysian madness! The complexity of the *daggas* identity is the movement *daggering*. How it confronts us is a sort of 'madness' linked to a complex set of intentions and references to slavery. The more I looked and thought about the phenomenon, the more I was intrigued to understand how the dancer's self is transformed. Sparshott says it is misleading to say the dancer's body is either the medium or the instrument of dance: "One does not *use* oneself, and if one truly used one's body one would do so not as a wholly embodied being but as a spiritual or cerebral entity to whom the body was extraneous."<sup>50</sup>

Sparshott suggests self-transformation is partly analogous to the entry into an alternative way of being that is often felt to be central in the experience of music. Music and dance in Jamaica, as in places on Africa, is inseparable, if not identical. In other words, this is a *unity-in-diversity*, two-in-One. One could argue that practitioners have separated them or music possesses an inherent principle that makes us want to dance. In this sense, music as a mode of consciousness, the dancer becomes nothing but music. This does not mean one becomes a musician or ready to choreograph dances. Sparshott writes:

<sup>50</sup> Sparshott, 1995, 5.

In dancing, one makes one's whole bodily self into that of a dancer, most centrally by performing movements that are nothing but dance, neither utilitarian nor (as in dramatic art) social. Music and dance are often said to be in principle inseparable, and there are practice in which they are so in fact, and part of what makes them so may well be that both involve entry into an alternative mode of being; but, if they are united, it is as inside and outside of the transformation.<sup>51</sup>

*Dagging* is most vividly expressed as unity of dance and music. Music lyrics and the DJ's stage presence habitually instruct the dancer in how to conquer *punaany* (vagina). Without the *dagging riddim* the movement *dagging* would not exist. In African philosophy of art, it is the rhythm that transports the dancer. Sparshott says there is some appropriately accompanying music for every dance, and vice versa.<sup>52</sup> In this sense, we can safely use 'African-Jamaican' connection.

Since African-Jamaican dance and music are both rhythmic, the relationship between the music song "*Dagging*" and the dance *dagging* is not complex. The two fields of rhythm are homogenous structured in like ways. In Kierkegaard's aesthetic literature *Either/Or*, from the first section *Diapsalmata*, Kierkegaard turns to music, the most immediate of enjoyments. For Kierkegaard music appears to be in its most elemental form of human existence, as sheer erotic pleasure. For Kierkegaard, the Arbaughs succinctly write:

Music furnishes essential aesthetic content for experience. Every art except music—poetry for example—employs a medium of symbols. In music the lyric is not a representation. It is the 'immediate stage' of the erotic. Music is spiritually (but perhaps blindly) generated; it 'is force, life, movement, constant unrest, perpetual succession; but the unrest... does not enrich it, it... storms uninterruptedly forward as in a single breath.'<sup>53</sup>

The orgiastic relationship between the music *riddims* and *dagging* movement are intentionally erotic pleasure. Addicts? Perhaps. From the Arbaughs we get music is

<sup>51</sup> Sparshott, 1995, 6.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 216.

<sup>53</sup> Arbaugh, George and E. George Arbaugh, *Kierkegaard's Authorship*, 67.

neither good nor evil for Kierkegaard. But to seek the good and the holy the individual must despair of music. Kierkegaard would probably find absolutely nothing good, only evil *inna di daggaring riddims*.

Male lead *daggas* are led by male musicians/DJs in how to perform the steps, to hold their bodies, and to form the necessary relation with other passive females. This is a heterosexual dance but performed in primarily a sodomitic relation. What ultimately furnishes *daggaring* is a spirit. In this thesis that spirit of Dionysus, “the deep emotion with which this madness announces itself finds its expression in music and dance.”<sup>54</sup> But that spirit is not only finding expression in music and dance. According to Otto, Dionysus is also seen in innumerable places of work, including the fields. In Section 2, I introduce Dionysus in Jamaica’s coffee industry crisis to elucidate one example of how authentic African dance is born out of real day-to-day life struggles in relation to the god of vegetation Dionysus.

The limit is infinite, endless. After a while, a pattern in dance and music become more or less one. The end result is these *riddims* stimulate in young men madness to *dagger* as hard and wild as possible! The music progression drives wild and ferocious and furious, pure energy unleashed after centuries of being not free. The basic diagnostics for which African dance is famous. And, finally, the dance has a lasting effect on the dancers’ bodies—fractured penises. What is significant is the madness that is aroused by the dancehall *riddims*. Sparshott writes:

Music has a pulse or beat to which dancers keep time, dancing on, before, after, across or against the beat but always with essential reference to it... Music patters have energy patterns that can interact with dance energy patterns and have affective, dynamic, and textural properties that may be perceived as having dance analogues.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Otto, 1973, 143.

<sup>55</sup> Sparshott, 1995, 217.

The dancer's body is given up to the life of the driving dancehall *riddims*, receives it back, but in a re-organized and transfigured way. African-Jamaican rhythms and movement are intimately intertwined.

Through body movement we can see the expressive emotions in the music is angry and violent feelings. According to Sparshott, which Wagner, for example, identifies with the independent nature of dance, is inherently inartistic. The embodiment of radical music of passion, the dynamics of faith, and the force of courage is the expression of deep personal feeling has the timber of art proper but lacks specific meaning. When these three are combined the music could take on definite meaning from the obvious, so that movement principles of *daggering* become the art of 'good' dance. The *good in* dance is the dancer's passion, faith, and subjectivity.

Kierkegaard sees no good in abusive epithets, autocratic decrees. He says it is "thoughtlessness that turns riot in the licentious expressions" (37). There is tremendous passion for dancing but the object has become an approximation in its maximum. This is no longer passion of faith. Kierkegaard says it is "fatantacism" (32). *Daggering* is either dance or delusion. Dionysian 'madness' set to "raw sex" music? How could this be African dance?

## Rex Nettleford:

### The National Dance Theatre Company

Philosophies of Jamaican dance *systems* have not been carefully codified though dances are found in almost every community on the Island. Jamaican professional dancers are generally trained by masters, like Rex Nettleford, and work as apprentices for periods of nine months up to a lifetime. Training is arduous and involves learning rhythms and movement, philosophy, culture and politics. At the end of this training process trainees are 'born anew'.

According to Rex Nettleford (3 February 1933 – 2 February 2010) there is a point in the process of growth and development he calls "renewal" that manifests bodily. Renewal, like change, is a constant. The body is continually changing and being renewed. Through disciplined and rigorous dance performance Nettleford helped to produce this outcome of renewal. The story of Nettleford's company, the National Dance Theatre Company (NDTC), celebrates Jamaica's independence after over 300 continuous years of British colonial rule in Jamaica. The NDTC was founded in 1962. Artistic direction fell exclusively to Nettleford in 1967. Nettleford was Jamaica's most exalted dance artist and choreographer with an unmatched reputation for producing astounding masterpieces, true works of art that toured the world. Nettleford's work is in no way associated with what Donna Hope calls dancehall "dis/play." Dancehall dancers are considered dis/respectful or "slack" because of their style of dancing opposed to Nettleford's NDTC contemporary African-Jamaican masterpieces.

In the field of dance-theatre throughout the English-speaking Caribbean the NDTC is a flagship entity. Nettleford's books, *Roots and Rhythms* (1968) and *Dance Jamaica: Cultural Definition and Artistic Discovery* (1985) are well known in the field of dance scholarship internationally. Through its numerous tours to the UK, the USA,

Canada, the USSR, Australia, Germany, Cuba, Mexico, Panama, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Martinique, Bermuda, Puerto Rico, the CARICOM Caribbean and Finland, Nettleford and the NDTC system of dance has earned an international reputation of distinction. A remarkable thing to know about the sustainability of the NDTC is the Company is comprised of voluntary membership consisting of university students, teachers, doctors, lawyers, civil servants, farmers, clerks, telephonists, managers and supervisors, secretaries, computer analysts, radio engineers and accountants – all with the sense and sensibility of creative artistic beings. No performer or artistic participant of the NTDC receives pay. This is distinctly contrary to the dancehall dancers where it's all amount money!

In 2007, Nettleford said Jamaican dance is a true expression of faith through the creative use of the body. Dance has given hundreds of thousands of people access to the human condition. Dance, for Nettleford, “preserves the dynamic of an existence in constant motion without doing violence.”<sup>56</sup> The NDTC describes the passionate efforts of unpaid company members to forge an organic vocabulary, technique and style of Caribbean dance-art, against the background of the wider society's history of severance, suffering and survival.

Despite Nettleford's relentless effort to emancipate Jamaican's servitude the principle dance of Jamaica 21st century discussed throughout this thesis is *dagging*. A slack *dis/play* supported by a cornucopia of lascivious African derived movement and what Hope calls “punaany lyrics.”<sup>57</sup> “Punaany” is a Jamaican slang for the female genitals, the vagina, and is the most popular colloquialism in dancehall narratives.

<sup>56</sup> Nettleford, *Dance Jamaica: Renewal and Continuity*, 11.

<sup>57</sup> Hope, *Inna di dancehall*, 48.

## Dancehall:

### Dis/plays

Ninety percent of Jamaican people are of unmistakably African ancestry and dance is a way of articulating their identity and of building faith in a historical reality virtually denied by over three centuries of colonial subjugation and oppression. The themes of 'slack' Jamaican dance performances are spontaneous, improvised and shocking. They explore issues related to the implications of colonization and slavery i.e. oppression, violence and sexual abuse. Central to the reality of dancehall *dis/play* is ethos (and aesthetic) of the African presence. Dance for these performers is an expression of liberation. Oppressive conduct of neo-colonialism in Jamaican society today is also implicated in this recreational *dis/play* of 'slack' Jamaican dance.

Here *dis* is translated as an act of perceived disrespect against 'appropriate' behaviour and high art. Whether perceived or real, to 'dis' an individual or something objective usually results in violence and the extreme act of murder. 'Slack' dancers perceive Jamaica as a wicked and condemnable place where they are consistently disrespected and mistreated; denied human rights; their identities are negated; a place where they are forced to commit crime and violence to survive. Outraged dancers act out their perception of Jamaican culture through live confrontational and sexually explicit *dis/plays*. *Play* is a highly polysemous word, like dance.

I focus on this particular *dis/play* of African-Jamaican dance to contextualize this thesis with perhaps one of the most publicized examples of slackness in Jamaican culture. Associated with this is the issue of mental illness within Jamaica's wider society. It is important to note that I do not support claims of slackness in Jamaican dance and other contexts. However, I am cognizant that mental illness is prevalent on the island and potentially evident in psychoanalysis of Jamaican dance *dis/plays*. Consequently, I

am of the opinion that dance education is a way to explore a broad spectrum of social issues important to Jamaicans. Therefore, I am in perhaps a Buddhist opinion of compassion. My compassionate perspective does not mean we accept inappropriate behaviour.

This thesis exposes aspects of Jamaican culture to formulate an argument for what we could do to disseminate more dance education and enough of it to transform the individual and a society. I support a belief that Jamaicans are not wicked or slack creatures. I believe dancers in Jamaica are more oppressed. I see no other way than to have compassion in order to truly help others.

Jamaicans can and do commit horrendous crimes and acts of violence. Indeed, dance dis/ plays are sexually explicit. And I do know from personal experiences and based on my research in Jamaica, there is substantial evidence to confirm the issue of mental illness on the island is epidemic. Madness and violence, mental illness and slackness are rotating topics discussed throughout this thesis in relation to Kierkegaard's concept of subjectivity and Nietzsche's Dionysus. For example, if *slackness* is a child and Jamaica is her mother who is the father? In order to know *How* to transform an individual and a society through dance we need to know equally well *What* is at the root of the problem? The how and what are inseparable components. This returns us to the theme of the thesis: *There is only One*. In Eastern philosophy, for example, the Upanishads say *subjectivity* (the 'how' of the matter) and *objectivity* (the 'what' of the matter) are "two-in-One."

## Who Is the Dancer

In consideration of the body as a site of knowledge, on the battlefield, Lord Krishna appeared to remind Arjuna the cause of violence and the solution is within the body. To understand Krishna's philosophy of the body as a site of knowledge, it is one of the most important dialogues between the Supreme Personality of Godhead and his friend, lover, and pure devotee in ancient India. It is an immaculate conception of a devotional dance and dancer to restore memory. Every gesture performed is coming directly from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna. Could a thing like a 'lack of spiritual understanding' be the cause of violence in Jamaica?

In Indian mythology, Joseph Campbell (1904 – 1987), best known for his work in comparative religion and mythology has described Lord Shiva's dance as the Dance of the Universe. It was used to convey the dance of the primordial first yogi. Underlying Shiva's dance is mystic energy, supreme intelligence, polyrhythmic incantation, unity, and beauty of the nature of reality.

The omnipotent presence of this King of Dancers is in every dance and human dancer. Therefore, how is He implicated in the violence of the dance of Dionysus *inna di dancehall*? Lord Krishna says to Arjuna: The Lord can help each one of us. The truth according to Kierkegaard is the inner life. Kierkegaard (1846) does not deny that the ethical is present in all processes; however, the human being can only see it in himself. "For the study of the ethical, everyman is assigned to himself... His own self is as material for this study more than sufficient. This is the only place where he can study it with any assurance of certainty" (127). One of the first difficulties Kierkegaard identifies is when the complicated external in which the ethical is reflected. He says when the ethical inwardness, subjectivity is reflected externally it becomes aesthetic:

The more complicated the externality in which the ethical inwardness is reflected, the more difficult becomes the problem of observation, until it

[ethical inwardness] loses its way in something quite different, namely, in the aesthetic. (127)

“Fanatic” Jamaican dancehall *dagging* dancers do not consider the relationship between abstract thought and existence. According to Kierkegaard, the aesthete must be careful to clarify this relationship, or he could be in a process of ceasing to be a human being. For Kierkegaard: *Such an abstract thinker is a duplex being: a fantastic creature who moves in the pure being of abstract thought, and on the other hand, a sometimes pitiful professional figure which the former deposits, about as when one sets down a walking stick. When one reads the story of such a thinker’s life, one trembles to think of what it means to be a man.*

Who is a “fanatic” dancer? Mullen writes:

The fanatic “believes in” something in a closed fashion. Fanaticism is not defined by what a person believes, but by how he believes. The fanatic will not, or cannot, evaluate his own beliefs and those of his opponents objectively. He folds his arms, shuts his mind, and *clings* to his belief.<sup>58</sup>  
[my italics]

Mullen’s concept of “radical” fanaticism signifies an *attack at the roots* of some prevailing style of living, which is essentially what he believes Kierkegaard was battling, the way to change a person’s life, and essentially a bourgeois society. Mullen believes Kierkegaard fanatically employed a technique of “radical” irony to communicate *subjective* truth.<sup>59</sup> Mullen also tells us fanaticism is a “problem of courage.”<sup>60</sup> The task of becoming a subjective human being, according to Kierkegaard, “is so strenuous and yet so natural a task for everyone that one tends first as a matter of courage to apply himself to this task, and reasonably finds in the exertion thereto requisite, a sufficiency for his entire life.”<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Mullen, *Kierkegaard's Philosophy: Self-Deception and Cowardice in the Present Age*, 38-39.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>61</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript* (1846), Swenson and Lowrie (Trans.) 152.

## Dagging Inna Di Dancehall with Dionysus

Illustration 2. The Daggers Most Wanted in Jamaica



Note. From <http://thisisdiversity.com/articles/all/88/The-Daggers-Most-Wanted-in-Jamaica>; used with permission.

The Jamaican dance and dancer is one of the most fanatic seductions to life and most radical piece of live dance performance I witnessed in our present age in Jamaica. I describe it as the verve of a contagious Dionysiac 'spirit' born of dancehall culture. Jamaicans recently made international headlines after authorities officially outlawed the dance – “dagging.”<sup>62</sup> The dancing population in the Caribbean is divided into two

<sup>62</sup> “Dagging” is performed on Dancehall music. Jamaican artists RDX, Mr. Vegas, Aidonia, Spice, Bragga Dat, Major Laser, and Vybz Kartel have specifically created dagging music.

camps – the *daggas* and their critics. *Dagging* is the most hotly discussed issue in the press and on the streets of Jamaica.

*Dagging* is Jamaica's newest dance craze gone viral. What actually makes a dance like *dagging* fanatic and contagious and radically Dionysian? The first thing to know, then, is, how is *dagging* performed. *Dagging* is a heterosexual dancehall style of dancing performed on Jamaican females by males. Jamaican artists Mr. Vegas, Major Lazor, and Vybz Kartel and others helped to make this particular style of dancing famous by creating *dagging* music.

In 2011, after radical criticisms, the world-famous Jamaican *dagging* dance champion "Skerrit Bwoy" gave up 'live' *dagging* performances. Instead Skerrit Bwoy has become a Christian. *Dagging* dancehall music artist Vybz Kartel is currently in prison in Jamaica facing conspiracy to murder charges. Ironically, Kartel too is now writing Christian poems from prison and sending them to the press.

Throughout this thesis I deal specifically with Kartel's wicked popularity around *dagging* in the dancehall in Jamaica. The spiralling controversy of *dagging* has led to critical concerns of health, education and morality. The Caribbean Broadcast Commission has banned songs and videos with blatantly *dagging* content. The Commission believes it has a moral responsibility to protect children from explicit references to hardcore sex or what is popularly referred to as "dry sex," and the activities of persons engaged in public performances of the verisimilitude of sex. Jamaica's Prime Minister named the hot dancehall song and dance *dagging* "filthy." Music artists can be fined if caught promoting *dagging*-style music. Naturally artists, dancers and musicians are angered over the ban, saying it stifles their freedom and contravenes diversity.

On the health side, doctors in Jamaica have warned of the dangers of this 'filthy' style of dancing. Doctors have reported seeing dramatic increases in the number of penis injuries. African-based dances have a long history of negative criticisms. But there are other dances with similar histories. According to the Russian-born Journalist Andrei Laskatelev, in social history numerous dances have been banned. Laskatelev writes:

In the times before Islam and Christianity, when the Mother Goddess was worshipped and sex was sacred, the belly dance (called by its real name

Raks Sharqi – Oriental Dance) was already forbidden, to the eyes of men at least. In the matriarchal society of those times, Raks Sharqi was performed by women for women only, and it was kept so for a long time. Middle Eastern men instead had to enjoy a secret dance performed in coffee houses by other young men in long, unrevealing robes, with a scarf tied around the hips. Ages passed and 19th century Raks Sharqi moves became socialized and so common that some sexual spice had to be added to it. In 1893, the promoter of an Egyptian music and dance group at the Chicago World's Fair became concerned because nobody was interested in seeing his dancing show. Somehow he came up with the idea to rename the performers "belly dancers." The re-titled dance show stirred so much controversy that it immediately turned into a media sensation. The show sold out and lines stretched around the block, with thousands eager to witness the outrageous act of belly dancing. The new wave of dancing belly popularity finally led to its banning in Egypt in 1950s.<sup>63</sup>

Another ban of risky social dance was the Tango. Dance partners were not permitted to touch. When they did touch it was to be only by the hands and only at certain times. Men couldn't even think of touching a lady's back while dancing. Laskatelev says, "the morally aware people then would probably call *that daggering!*" Also, the original lyrics to the Tango, says Sergio Suppa, were outright references to sex. In fact, the name of the most famous Argentinean tango, "El Choclo," means "corn cob," and was originally a phallic reference. The Waltz was another "filthy" dance. Laskatelev reports: "this high-society habit was strongly criticized on moral grounds while struggling for its place on the dance floor." Continental religious leaders and the courts regarded the Waltz as "vulgar and sinful." It wasn't until the 1816 when the Waltz was finally included in a ball given by the Prince Regent in the very capital of strict morals, London, a blistering editorial in *The Times* a few days later stated: "We remarked with pain that the indecent foreign dance called the Waltz was introduced at the English court." In another online report, the journalist writes:

For years, Caribbean music has reflected men's apparent belief that sexual prowess and - by their extension, masculinity - was defined by a violent approach to heterosexual sex. This has in some instances been

<sup>63</sup> Retrieved from <http://thisisdiversity.com/articles/all/88/The-Daggers-Most-Wanted-in-Jamaica>

encouraged by women DJs who competed with their male counterparts not on the basis of musical talent, of 'killing a sound' as the men have done, but by highlighting their own sexual freedom and bravado: their capacity to - in sexual and other implied terms - take whatever the men could dish out. So that while we've had songs like Cabin Stabbin from Super Cat et al, we've also had Stab Up Mi Meat from Lady Saw. Now arguably, the thrusting act that might be a part of sexual intercourse could be described as stabbing, if one were given to violent metaphors, which - given the prevalence of actual, criminal, sexual violence perpetrated both within and outside of relationships - I for one am not. But it seems like we're consumed with encouraging as much violence in sex as possible. 'Stabbing' has become too tame; now we have to call it '*daggering*'.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Retrieved from <http://jezebel.com/5213000/daggering-trend-is-breaking-jamaican-dicks>.

# Madness

## *Zorba the Greek*

When my little boy Demetrios died, everybody was crying. Me, I got up and I danced. They said 'Zorba is mad'. But it was the dancing, only the dancing could stop the pain. A man needs a little madness or else he never cuts the rope and is free. (Nikos Kazantzakis: *Zorba the Greek*)

Dionysian intoxication wells up from the innermost depths of man. When the Kierkegaardian moods<sup>65</sup> are aroused, subjectivity vanishes into self-forgetfulness and madness ensues. How does one begin to talk about the values of 'mad' Jamaica dance?

The answer to this is simple. You tell it the way you live it. This section of the thesis is comprehensive and long. It explores mental illness or *madness*. Associated *with dance* not only in Jamaica, but all the material presented is intended to illuminate the crisis in the dancehall. This is a critical component of a thesis of ethics and moral philosophy, with psychological and spiritual implications.

Research tells us Jamaica is a culture of immense cruelty with deep roots in colonization and slavery. Jamaica's most revered scholars say dancers are "slack" and violent. Jamaican dancehall performances portray severe psychosis, mental illness. As profound as it sounds, scholars and historians make remarkable forays into the understanding of the relationship between "madness" and dance (Fenger & Birringer, 2011). From this perspective, I explore the values of dance to transform the individual and a society.

<sup>65</sup> Vincent McCarthy, *The Phenomenology of Moods in Kierkegaard*.

In his novel, *Zorba the Greek*, Nikos Kazantzakis (1883 - 1957) an ascetic at heart, shows a man, Zorba, who has many things to say but would rather dance them. To live without dance is unbearable to Zorba: he is a man in constant transformation. Dance is transformative. Zorba's dance is a prototype of Kazantzakis's own trials and tribulations and struggle for liberation. Zorba confessed: *only the dancing could stop the pain*. Dance helped him through every part of life. Greek writers and non-Greeks admired Zorba's daring, spontaneous, emotional passionate dances. The popularity of the novel *Zorba the Greek* offers this thesis a beautiful portrayal of the importance of dancing and how we all talk through our bodies. In this regard, we are all dancers. Reading the novel was for me like praying. The author had a profound love for Christ, which is portrayed in nearly all his writings.

Under the French philosopher Henri Bergson, Kazantzakis "*learned that all of nature, all the pluriverse, all of life was the expression of an evolutionary drive, an élan vital, an inconceivable energy which ceaselessly renews itself, a continual creativity, a leap upward, not toward a fixed, predetermined, final end, but within a teleology immanent in the life force itself, which was creating its own perfectibility as it evolved eternally.*"<sup>66</sup>

What fascinated me about Kazantzakis's life is he was the General Director of the Ministry of Care of Greece, which involved the task of leading thousands of deracinated Greeks to a new life in Macedonia. Giorgis Zorbas was his companion on this mission and led to the creation of the name of his legendary character, Alexis Zorbas. Kazantzakis's novel *Zorba the Greek* is full of authentic anecdotes of poverty and hunger, and ill health. There are many images of characters with absolutely nothing to eat; some are lucky to have some wild edible plants gathered from the fields. Kazantzakis bore a tremendous view of the ineffable forces that move the universe: "God, the Great Ecstatic, [...] speaks and struggles to speak in every way He can, with seas and with fires, with colors, with winds, with horns, with claws, with constellations

<sup>66</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.kazantzakispublications.org/en/kazantzakis.php>

and butterflies, that he may establish His ecstasy for languages.” Kazantzakis’s exceptional gift for languages allowed him access to Ancient Greek, Latin, Italian, French, English, German, Russian, Spanish, and the language we all share; speaking without words: Dance.

The final image of the 1964 film *Zorba the Greek* was that of Zorba’s dance, a symbol of the Teacher. The popularity of Zorba and his dancing in particular have lent to the creation of major music and dance productions. According to Mikis Theodorakis’s *The Anatomy of Music*, the music of Zorba has been turned into a myth just so we can have some constant entertainment. Clearly, Gestalt process theory and Nietzsche’s “process theology” is expressed in Kazantzakis’s novel, *Zorba the Greek*, (Hnaraki, 2009). Peter Bien (2001), argues, for Nietzsche, “god is the result of whatever the most energetic and heroic people value and create” (p. 312).

If loving is an aesthetic experience, then indeed dancing is ethical. If being and thing is absolutely identical, the same thing, aesthetics and ethics are one and the same. More, even, Love is Eternal so, and then, dance is a metaphor of the only constant. Dance is a constant pursuit, eternal striving! Dance is Love. Augusto Boal (2006) says, “just as we cultivate Art with love, the cultivation of Love is an art” (p. 19).

From Kazantzakis’s novel we get the picture that dance has a relationship with psychoanalysis. Even though this thesis is not to purport psychoanalytic theories, there are lots of examples of the dance and art to treat individual and social problems, including mental illness and addiction. Zorba’s dance, for example, is the opposite of Kazantzakis’s biological father, the authoritative Kapetan Michalis, who inspired his young son to yearn for freedom and abhor oppression. His father was a man who had great aspirations for him, but not to be an author. Hartocollis (1974), tells us Kazantzakis had a wish to kill his father of his childhood whom, he feared and hated most of his life (p. 209). Kazantzakis’s quest for freedom; spiritual, political, ideological started from an

very young age. “He was enthralled by the idea of the hero-saint, the man who forsakes all earthly pleasures and possessions to pursue higher ideals.”<sup>67</sup>

Johannes Birringer (2011) also speaks out about a resonant phenomenon “dancing madness” that is prevalent throughout Europe and other parts of the world. The author tracks— beyond the beginnings of the Dionysian rituals—to expound the difficult subject of *Wahnsinn* (Madness), “understood as an illness treated by clinical psychology and medical psychiatry.”<sup>68</sup>

## ***Theatre of Cruelty***

Movement and dance-based therapies are increasingly becoming more popular for their capacity to address complex medical issues, such as trauma and disassociation. In a non-reductionist and democratic, first person subject (rather than “expert”) centered way, Birringer says, “the possibilities of dance for expressing the unspeakable, engaging with preverbal and prethematic meaning subtleties are increasing.”<sup>69</sup>

Madness is commonly used metaphorically and is of great interest to dance practitioners. And in our era of major global economic crisis, warfare, revolutions and environmental devastations madness must be discussed with great care and sensitivity, particularly in relation to human subjects.

In relation to the violence and cruelty of Jamaican culture, I invite readers to explore this topic: how the “controlled” aesthetic of choreography in theatrical dance performances transforms madness, uncontrollably, unconsciously, “‘non-normative’ bodily ejaculations.”

<sup>67</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.kazantzakispublishations.org/english/NikosKazantzakhs01.html>

<sup>68</sup> J. Birringer, & J. Fenger, 2011, 30.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 36.

This includes a vast array of questions and answers, from various disciplinary perspectives discussed: what can dance exorcise? How does ecstatic dancing transform a society? What does dancing naked have to do with the art? How does the body fit into new educational theories, to stop the spread of violence and mental illness, to create sustainable communities, to prevent environmental catastrophes? The list is long and I understand the time element. So essentially what I explore in the following pages is how an understanding of madness in dance could contribute to a solution or *the knowledge of the most worth* to transform the individual and a society in crisis. Fully aware of the innumerable forms of dance, I am equally aware that science and religion alone have not solved historical problems of mental illness and violence.

The implicit assumption is *daggering* dancing is a subjective attempt to tear down the guise of normativity, boundaries; knowledge entrenched in hierarchical and oppressive structures (Government, Law, Theology, political and medical institutions). According to Birringer, the “madness” of dances performed are temporal “carnivalizations” or exorcisms of the body. The passions and torments — “paranoid struggles against the judgment of others and, in extension, the judgment of God”— as seen and heard performed live under the auspices of the *Theatre of Cruelty*. Antonin Artaud (1896 - 1948) was a well-known theatre practitioner, poet, and founder of the French *Theatre of Cruelty*.

Inspired by dance Artaud perceived the spiritual in physical terms and used unusual and disturbing theatrical elements to “affect” the audience as much as possible into “becoming” different. Artaud was deeply affected from birth. Throughout his life, he suffered from severe delusions, auditory hallucinations, internal torments and uncontrollable spasms. He endured electroshock and insulin shock therapy. Artaud says his theatre of cruelty was created:

To restore to the theatre a passionate and convulsive conception of life, and it is in this sense of violent rigor and extreme condensation of scenic elements that the cruelty on which it is based must be understood. This

cruelty, which will be bloody when necessary but not systematically so, can thus be identified with a kind of severe moral purity which is not afraid to pay life the price it must be paid.<sup>70</sup>

Birringer quotes Allen S. Weiss, quoting Anaïs Nin's "possessed" description of Antonin Artaud's passionate 1933 performance of *Le Theatre et la peste*:

... he was acting out an agony, "La Peste" in French is so much more terrible than "The Plague" in English. But no word could describe what Artaud acted on the platform of the Sorbonne ... His face was contorted with anguish; one could see the perspiration dampening his hair. His eyes dilated, his muscles became cramped; his fingers struggled to retain the flexibility. He made one feel the parched and burning throat, the pains, the fever, the fire in the guts. He was in agony. He was screaming. He was delirious. He was enacting his own death, his own crucifixion.<sup>71</sup>

Nin's description of Artaud's excruciating performance is a provocative view of the body and mind convergence, between *what* and *how* of live performance. Artaud sought to expose his audience to the dangers of life. His aim was to remove the aesthetic protective veil and commit cruelty upon the audience. Nietzsche's writing seems to have informed Artaud's thinking and use of the term cruelty. Nietzsche posits his view of the Dionysian power of standing on the edge of the abyss as positive embodiment. In dance, Nijinsky's classical ballet is constructed of movement foregrounding the experience of pain rooted in an effort to think the aesthetic as it is performed, to reflect social order and conformity and seeks to instil that order directly at the level of the body. There is no doubt that Artaud was, in Derrida's view, aggressive with a critical determination to confess a work of art is all the torment and labour of the creator's subjectivity.

Freud deduced from dramatic movement and gesture traumatic cause. If this is the case, then how do we explain Nettleford's NDTC vibrant choreographies considered emancipation proclamations and aspiring to transformation of Jamaican society? What about those "site-contingent" "grotesque" "bleached" Butoh figures that exemplify

<sup>70</sup> Antonin Artaud, (Ed. Eric Bentley), *The Theatre of Cruelty*, 66.

<sup>71</sup> Birringer, 2011, 31.m

ecstatic transformation and re-integration of community? Why is techno aesthetics or “Technicia” raves viewed as “psychedelic” celebratory rebellions and post-modern performances “hacking into the social ontology of choreography through the currently available technology” of the body with a view of re-connecting? How did street dancing, or break-dancing move off the streets and into academic circles and research laboratories, for example, at the Artificial Laboratory (Universitat Zurich), and the University of California, Riverside?

Birringer tells us the “convulsions” of the body (for example, ragtime dances) that the famous dancer Isadora Duncan abhorred troubled (her) national ideology of beauty and health. This of course is the result of intense medical discourses on the somatic that show up in psychopathological discourses—which seek to take control of life and biological processes. In this way, capitalist societies seek to control the security of the subject (individual or multitudes).

Birringer also validates the temporal dimension of Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of the flesh operating between body and world, constituting the tissue of relations between existence and world. This dimension is related to the process of becoming. It is independent of choreography, moving beyond the communicative gesture. Very simply put, William Forsythe (2008) considers choreography “the organizing principle of moving bodies in time and space.”<sup>72</sup> Forsythe says, “choreography and dancing are two distinct and very different practices” (as cited in Birringer, 2011, p. 36). Dancing is not the same as choreography.

According to Birringer, Forsythe invites us to imagine dancing as uncontrolled/involuntary forgetting and not knowing, consciousness purposeless or unconsciously proliferating with unreadable, “non-normative” bodily ejaculations. Not stumbling or flailing, as Balzac ironically observes movement “in everyday life,” but folding dynamically and uncontrollably, propelled by a vast repertoire of emotion as the

<sup>72</sup> Forsythe, 2008, cited in Birringer (2011).

throb and rhythm of the ongoing changing process of experience at both the biological and psychological levels. Forsythe believes choreography and dancing are two distinct and very different practices. He asks is it possible for choreography to generate autonomous expressions of its principles, a choreographic object, without the body?

## ***St. Vitus's Dance***

“In the German middle Ages... dancing crowds... whirled themselves... under this same Dionysian impulse.” We wonder if the dancers of Jamaica are those of St. Vitus.<sup>73</sup> During this festival it is said that the slaves, before being put to death, ruled their masters. According to Gotman (2011), St. Vitus's dance is a name given to dancing madness (p. 83). “Chorea” is another term used in medical nomenclature to describe an epidemic of the convulsive disorder characterized by involuntary movement. A concept that later originated in 19th century Germany is described as “choreomania.” The concept denotes a form of politicized dancing. The history of this concept contributes to our understanding of a “dancing disease, a strange disorder” (p. 84). Nietzsche has great contempt for the benign group of people whom relate/turn political agitation with neuropathological disturbances. This is perhaps the greatest criticism against proposals that dancehall performers are “mad.” Nietzsche writes:

There are some who, from obtuseness or lack of experiences, turn away from such phenomena as from “folk-diseases,” with contempt or pity born of the consciousness of their own “healthymindedness.” But of course such poor wretches have no idea how corpse-like and ghostly their so-called “healthy-mindedness” looks when the glowing life of the Dionysian revelers [*ravers*] roars past them” (p. 37) [*my italics*]

Gotman (2011) tells us Thomas Sydenham, for example, associated the spreading of dancing to address the broader issues in society “with a disturbance of the ‘vital spirits’

<sup>73</sup> In *Oxford English Dictionary* 1989, vol. 3, p. 170. Gotman tells us that: The Swedish pharmacologist E. Louis Backman has convincingly argued that the dances may have followed Hungarian pilgrimage routes, which were characterized by dancing and merriment. See Backman, 1952, p. 198.

and eventually neuropathological jerking, spasms, and tics” (p. 84). In *The Greeks and the Irrational*, E. R. Dobbs suggested this might be a religious ecstasy (as cited in Ehrenreich, 2006, p. 67).

Nineteenth century missionaries in British Columbia whom witnessed dancers waving long hair called it “savage” and “continual jerking [of] their heads” to be “cannibalistic.” According to The National Library of Jamaica: “European travelers to Jamaica, as well as local missionaries and colonial planters, felt that the natural dance movements of the native population were indecent, described variously as ‘lewd’, ‘lascivious’, and ‘violent.’ Such extreme attitudes persisted even after Emancipation.”<sup>74</sup>

Barbara Ehrenreich (2006) reports that an eighteenth century spectator of a Great American Revival observed of dancers “overcome by the spirit”: “Their heads would jerk back suddenly, frequently causing them to yelp, or make some other involuntary noise.” Sydenham’s ‘choreo minor’ denotes the confusion between the neurological disease and the historical event (choreo major). Ehrenreich says, “the most flamboyant form of what might be called “ecstatic dissent,” however, was the dance manias that rocked parts of northern Europe in the thirteenth century” (p. 81). She concludes moral overtones, that rocked Europe from the thirteenth century, around “dancing in the streets,” would suggest the Dionysian religion would have some influence *inna di dancehall* of Jamaica today.

There is no doubt that the early Christian missions indulged in the belief that spirits were implicated in the most technically sophisticated dance performances. The hypothesis I am concerned with is whether there is sufficient evidence in Nietzsche’s seminal work to suggest the continuing worship of the Vitus-esque Dionysus *inna di dancehall* in Kingston, Jamaica.

<sup>74</sup> Nettleford, *Dance Jamaica: Renewal and Continuity*, ii.

French doctors of the 19th century refer to the carnivalesque form of social upheaval with dancing as St. Vitus's dance.<sup>75</sup> St. Vitus's dance is a synonym for irregular, and involuntary movements of one or more limbs, or of the muscles of the face or chest. Another medical reference denotes St. Vitus's dance as an illness among the list of "incurable diseases." There is a "top ten" list of incurable diseases.<sup>76</sup> Who is St. Vitus? Dionysus? To be cured of involuntary movements of the organs or body, and disturbances of the "vital spirits," sufferers were referred to St. Vitus. "Madness" is another psychiatric definition used to describe dance.

At the "psychonational" or psychohistoriographical (Hickling, 2007), from the mid-19th century onwards, choreomania is observed in the colonies and throughout Europe (Nettleford, 2009; Ehrenreich, 2006) as vulgar, frenzied, compulsive, delirium and various other traits. The kinds of dancing often found in Africa are attributed to raving "Black" madness, "choreomania."

Before proceeding, it is important to clarify what is "Black Dance." Nettleford (2009) provides this succinct explanation:

In redefining the reality of human artistic achievement, the Jamaican enterprise has come upon or has engendered some controversy at home and abroad. The NDTC [Jamaica's National Dance Theatre Company] fits none of the current labels that reflect the prejudice of the North Atlantic. For that prejudice separates dance-art into a hierarchy of *classical* (meaning Europe's ballet) at the top, *modern* (meaning such of what is

<sup>75</sup> Charles Louis Fleury Panckoucke (Ed.), *Dictionnaire des sciences médicales, par une société de médecins et de chirurgiens* (Paris, C.L.F. Panckoucke, 1812 – 1822), Art. Incurable; Charles-Joseph Panckoucke, C.-J., et al. (ed.), *Encyclopédie méthodique*, (Paris & Liège, Packoucke & Plomteux, 1787 – 1830); Louis Jacques Bégin, *Dictionnaire des termes de médecine, chirurgie, art vétérinaire, pharmacie, histoire naturelle, botanique, physique, chimie, etc* (Paris: Crevot, Béchet, Baillière, 1823); Pierre-Hubert Nysten et al. *Dictionnaire de médecine, de chirurgie, de pharmacie, des sciences accessoires et de l'art vétérinaire de P.-H. Nysten, 12e édition, entièrement refondue* (Paris: J.-B. Baillière, 1865); Emile Littré & Charles Robin. *Dictionnaire de médecine, de chirurgie, de pharmacie, de l'art vétérinaire et des sciences qui s'y rapportent... 13e édition, entièrement refondue* (Paris: J.-B. Baillière, 1873).

<sup>76</sup> Retrieved from <http://listverse.com/2007/10/04/top-10-incurable-diseases/>

developed in white America) in the middle, and ethnic at the base (meaning everything else including something called *Black Dance* which a British writer describes as the sort of art-dance done by blacks ‘in a white world’)” (p. 19). [my insert]

It is not uncommon that dance in Jamaica, for example, is a strange “delusion.” This psychosis takes possession of the minds of non-dancers. Calling Jamaican dancers “delusional” can infuriate the human psyche. Framing the dancers as such would put their art in the category of St. Vitus’s. The demonized fervour of “choreodaemonomania” or “the devil’s dance,” is not uncommonly referenced in travel journals and colonial sighting in Africa (Gotman, 2008) and other exotic places.

In the international education guide for teachers *Travel as a Political Act* author Rick Steves tells the story of his meeting with a whirling dervish dancer. These dancers follow Rumi, the mystic poet and philosopher of divine love. They are called ‘whirling dervishes’ because as they spin in a circle they pray. This reminds me of the poem *To Dance is To Pray* by Walter Williams Junior:

*Yes, to dance is to pray  
To dance is to fear Allah  
To dance is to stand  
Yes, to dance is to preach health  
To dance is to possess wealth  
Yes, to dance is to unite  
To dance is to ignite  
Yes, to dance is to enhance  
To dance is to chance  
Yes, to dance is to dance*

Yes, *daggering* is ‘mad’ erotic dancing, but is it prayer? It is worth citing Steves’s discovery at length. What Gotman incited paints a perfect picture of Williams’s poem, and how intentional dance can transform the individual and a society. What is worth more is not the movement quality but the intention. Steves writes:

The dervish allowed me to observe his ritual on the condition that I understood what it meant to him. The dervish led me to his flat rooftop—a peaceful oasis in the noisy city of Konya—where he prayed five times a day. With the sun heavy and red on the horizon, he explained, “When we pray, we keep one foot in our community, anchored in our home. The other foots steps around and around like this, acknowledging the beautiful

variety of God's creation... touching all corners of this great world. I raise one hand up to acknowledge the love of God, and the other hand goes down like the spout of a teapot. As I spin around, my hand above receives the love from our Creator, and my hand below showers it onto all his creation." As the dervish whirled and whirled, he settled into a meditative trance. And so did I. Watching his robe billow out and his head tilt over, I saw a conduit of love acknowledging the greatness of God. This man was so different from me, yet actually very much the same. This chance interaction left me with a renewed appreciation of the rich diversity of humanity... as well as its fundamental oneness. Experiences like this one can be any trip's most treasured souvenir. When we return home we can put what we've learned—our newly acquired broader perspective—to work as citizens of a great nation confronted with unprecedented challenges. And when we do that we make travel a political act.<sup>77</sup>

Gotman tells us German psychiatrist, Ludwig Witkowski (1879) argued the "frenzied dancing" and what J. F. C. Hecker (1859) called a "disease of nations" or "dancing disease." This is analogous to mental or spiritual illness and "melancholic delirium." Robert Burton in his seminal work *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) noted melancholia as a sort of compulsive dancing. What is clear from this research is the ubiquity of "irrational" movements, from the Sufi dancers to the "Krumpers" in south central L.A. to the "mad" dancers of African colonies. References to "choreomania" in India (Dionysus traveled to the Eastern continent), and cases in Japan also appear in Francois Sirois (1973) *Les épidémies d'hystérie: revue de la littérature, réflexions sur le problème de la contagion psychopathologique, L'Union médicale du Canada*. In 1867, the Scottish physician Andrew Davidson, observing "choreomania" in Madagascar reported it is a "psycho-physical" disease. In which case, the individual is "controlled" by an uncontrollable desire to dance!

This disease affected primarily young men and women of "excitable temperament." Davidson was expanding on Hecker's integrative approach to understanding the complex relationship between the individual and his/her environment. What is lacking in Davidson's account is the aesthetic cultural and historical context.

<sup>77</sup> Rick Steves, *Travel as a Political Act. Resources for International Education*.

Davidson, like Hecker, associated the “dancing disease” with implications for policy makers.

The conditions of dance are not separate from the natural prejudices, religious, and political manifestations. For example, in Jamaica onomatopoeic dance moves discovered spread across the entire island like a presidential political campaign! Jamaican dances, like a mania, are “contagious” and can spread by visual contact alone. This is not a medical disease. Bystanders might first watch in amazement and then, overcome by the *riddims* (music provided by the bands of musicians who travel with these dancers), find themselves swept up by the dance as well.

Ehrenreich (2006) tells us Hecker’s “disease model” depicts “inquisitive females” [in Italy] did not get the disease from the poison of the tarantula’s bite, but from the mental poison which they eagerly received through the eyes.

This is all too reminiscent of Euripides’s account of the Dionysian revels: a contagious mania apparently demonically driving satyrs, pulling people away from their sane or “normal” lives. Recall, Jamaicans strive to not be normal. Hecker’s disease model also implicates Eros the ancient Greek god of love, whose appearance in Nonnus’s *Dionysiaca* drove “womanmad” Dionysus to Aura with the delicious wound of his arrow. Here Nonnus depicts Dionysus’s burning madness, like a moth to fire, with erotic desire:

I am like lovelorn Pan, when the girl flees me swift as the wind, and wanders, treading the wilderness with boot more agile than Ekho never see! . . . This love is different from all others, for the girl herself has a nature not like the ways of other maidens. What physic is there for my pain? Shall I charm her with lovers’ nod and beck? Ah when, ah when is Aura charmed with moving eyelids? . . . What man could charm the mind of Aura proof against all charms? What man could charm her - who will mention marriage, or the cestus which helps love, to this girl with no girdle to her tunic? Who will mention the sweet sting of love or the name of Kyprogeneia [Aphrodite]? I think Athena will listen sooner; and not intrepid Artemis avoids me so much as prudish Aura. If she would only

say as much as this with her dear lips - 'Bakkhos, your desire is vain;  
seek not for maiden Aura.<sup>78</sup>

*Nonnus, Dionysiaca 48. 240 ff (trans. Rouse) (Greek epic C5th A.D.)*

With very short periods of time erotic Jamaican dance moves spread epidemically across the island and around the world. *Dagging* is now practiced around the world! With every new and popular *riddim* there is a dance, a signature movement. For Davidson, these dances are often ignited by people's "morbid love of music." To add to this, Gotman gives this 17th century account cited in *De la folie* (1845) by Louis-Florentin Calmeil (1798 – 1895), the French psychiatrist remembered for his work in insanity. Calmeil wrote:

Youth [...] has a passion for balls, flying, as if compelled by some secret instinct to every party ["fête"] in sight as long as they may find some glimmer of hope for happiness ["bonheur"] there. Some care only to dance (159 – 160).

Gotman (2011) says,

The music at these balls [i.e. *inna di dancehall*] functioned as a powerful stimulant, so that [t]he impulse transmitted to the sensory nervous system via the musical instruments acts on the choreomaniacs by producing an irresistible transport, translated externally into a succession of rhythmically cadenced movements. (p. 93) [my example]

"Theo-choreomania" or "theomania" is responsible for this religious enthusiasm. Calmeil believed the faculty of reason is easily disturbed by the music and forces a rapid propagation of bizarre religious symbolism. Choreomaniacs in Jamaica spread dance like an outbreak! The complex relationship between Jamaicans and their religious and political contexts are very intimately linked. It is a dynamic interweaving of worldviews.

<sup>78</sup> Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* professes to be the history of Dionysus. This epic poem is in 48 books, the longest surviving poem in Greek from antiquity written around the 5th century A.D.

Sonjah Stanley-Niaah says dancehall's identity is as contradictory and competitive as it is sacred. Stanley-Niaah's colleague Donna P. Hope says dancehall culture actively creates a space for its "affectors" (creators of dancehall culture) and "affectees" (consumers of dancehall culture)<sup>79</sup> to exercise some level of political autonomy. It is common practice in Jamaica to interweave dance performance, fashion and God.

How is madness related to this interweaving of ethic and aesthetics? French psychiatrists tend to judge by what "appears" to be the truth. In *The Appearance of the Gods in Dionysiaca of Nonnus*, Laura Miguélez Caveró (2009) writes about the visual importance of Dionysian artists:

... outer appearance was supposed to mirror personality: badly dressed individuals were an easy prey for invectives. A well-studied case is that of emperors, who risked to be dubbed "bad emperors" or "usurpers" if they failed to wear the appropriate costumes for each occasion and to perform accordingly (p. 10).

The dancer's attention to his appearance as embodiment of his character also has several implications for the general understanding of the gender and power relations in the dancehall. The general understanding that iconography contributes visually to the *dionysiac inna di dancehall* merits several nuances. The undignified appearance of dancers is a common argument in Christian philosophical condemnations of image worship in Jamaica. As in the case of religious iconography in the dancehall, a point should be made here: the crucifix worn in Jamaica primarily by male dancers is a fashionable piece of jewellery consciously publicly displayed and validated showing off the importance of masculinity and the external self. Caveró provides this important fact:

... in the contemporary Christian world... The Coptic Mary *Galaktotrophousa*, which would seem to illustrate the Child's dependence on his mother and therefore Mary's power, has been explained as a metaphor for the Eucharist: Christ is not drinking Mary's milk (after all she

<sup>79</sup> Hope, 2007, 28-35.

was a virgin), but the *Logos*, the word of God, provided by his father. This emphasizes Christ's divinity, fully dependent on his father, while his mother is seen as completely secondary.

However, according to Nonnus, Zeus ordered Hera to grant Dionysus immortality by suckling him, thus healing his madness (35.298–340). Megaera, sometimes referred to, as an “infernal goddess” in Greek mythology is literally one of “the avengers” and cause of jealousy and envy, and punishes people who commit crimes, especially marital infidelity. Perhaps the most famous myth of this kind is Aeschylus's *Oresteia*, originally performed at the Dionysia Festival in Athens in 458 B.C.E. In the story we are told Agamemnon returns home to find out his wife Clytemnestra married her lover, Aegisthus. Agamemnon was slain by his wife. Nonnus tell us Megaera successfully instils madness into Dionysus (32. 98-150). After Hera suckles Dionysus to grant him immortality, his madness is also cured. For that, Zeus placed an image of her milk, the Milky Way, in the sky (35. 308–311).

Much can be said about how this thorny theological myth reinforces maternal feminine attributes. Furthermore, despite their dazzling appearances, could the crucifixes we see worn by Jamaican male dancers striking some kind of balance between obedience and piety, and riotous good times? Or does it ridicule elements and casting off the Coptic and theological connotations of essentially Christian attributes? This is a radical transformation of Christian ethics.

Dance and religion intimately linked in the most “lewd” and “sexualized” draw on the rhetorical tradition of refutation of myths. Then again, how “rational” was the ethic that transported Christianity to Jamaica? And I wonder if the abundance of churches in Jamaica today were intentionally erected or have something to do with a non-Christian custom to purge the society of dancehall dancing. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, for example, Ehrenreich (2006) reports, “Catholic leaders finally purged churches of unruly and ecstatic behaviour. They must have known that they could not prohibit such behaviour in the society at large. If the people were so determined to frolic, condemnations and bans would not suffice” (p. 77).

Dance in Jamaica lay hold at the heart of the people, and so generally is not separate from the operation of their Christian beliefs. Dance is not a threat to the

religious authorities. What is fascinating to me about Davidson's observation is the dance epidemic sometimes educes death. According to Gotman, Davidson noted:

This mania, in no small degree tended to bring about the rebellion, which end, in the death of the sovereign and his ministers, and determined a revolution political and social in that vast island. Such an epidemic may occur again in India or other countries where British interest may be deeply involved; and in such cases it is important that the physical should know the disease, and be able to direct the authorities to a proper view of its nature and cure (p. 136).

There is no literature, to my knowledge, of studies conducted based on Davidson's findings. However, in some accounts, Hecker suggests dancing is a cure for depression. Nevertheless, what is evident is that "dancing disease" cannot be separated from national and colonial politics in Jamaica. Curiously, the medical studies seldom comment on the aesthetic qualities of the dances, except dances possessed with a keen sense of rhythm and grace (Gotman 2011, p. 90).

The artistic and metaphysical implications of the dances seem to be overlooked. The question remains, how do we treat or transform dance manias or "dancing diseases" when epilepsy, pseudoepilepsy, dyskinesia, and folk music are all in the same category? Nietzsche offers this response: to the Apollonian and Dionysian union in the folk song just as the orgiastic movements of a people immortalize themselves in its music. A requirement of "folk" music is the violent hysteria Dionysian energy.

The French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot (1825 - 1893) who is universally known in several fields of medicine had a profound influence on Freud. Charcot's work on hysteria is remembered today. Charcot treated convulsions and other forms of choreomania with hypnosis and ovarian compression for women and testicular compression for men. Gotman says this was done to remove abdominal pain that caused tremors and other "choreoiform" motions. Charcot and his collaborators described these physical conditions as "demonical possession" (Didi-Huberman, 2003; Justice-Malloy, 1995; Goetz, 1988; Schade, 1995; Gotman, 2008; Nina-Rodrigues, 1898).

Nina-Rodrigues (1898), for example, attributes dancing mania to the social and political reform agenda of Bahía. In 1893, "religious delirium" united thousands of

disenfranchised people to follow their leader Antonio Conselheiro to political redemption (p. 380, cited in Gottman, 2011, p. 92). The revolt ended tragically, but does that make the people “mad” or suggest a medical “disease?”

Calmeil introduced the concept of “epileptic absence” to mean loss of consciousness or confusion observed in epileptic patients. For Calmeil, manic delirium is analogous to the patient’s obsession with dance. Calmeil believed dance manias were simply, literally over exuberant desire to dance. Unlike the chorea of medical patients, Jamaicans are quite happy to go to their fêtes. According to Gotman (2011), and I agree, Calmeil and his contemporaries are barking up the wrong tree. What produces suffering for these dancers is the “social ostracism” (p. 93).

Medical discourses on dance manias like Calmeil’s serve to marginalize extravagant events in Jamaica and overseas. Not surprisingly, Gotman notes how the colonial enterprise downplayed the political force of “pre-civilized” dance manias. Religious and spirited excitement is what impels dancers or ravers to engage in ecstatic activities. It is not uncommon practice for medieval medical writers to misdiagnose choreomania that has a discomfiting social or political tone. George Rosen (1968), for example, characterized choreomania of 1374 as “one of the more bizarre episodes in the history of medieval Europe” (p. 196).

We can gain some insight into the most powerful aspects of intangible life through dance studies. The links between culture and disease, and those between traditional and contemporary are unfinished. We need to know about the past in relation to our present difficulties to find lasting solutions. We need to look at the “spectral, elusive movements of bodies, moods, and events” of the past. When we look at the epic Burning Man Festival held annually since 1986 in Nevada, or summer Carnivals of the Caribbean, and the techno music raves held all around the world, could all of these fabulous dancers and music artists really have contagious epilepsy? The mind-altering experience of dancing when the body and mind is exposed to over a hundred degrees of sun heat alone is a drug.

People dance to create, to experience, to celebrate the joy of being alive! At the end of the event, on Saturday night, the Man burns. The theory behind these dancing

manias is completely *individual*. What is contagious is not the dancing; it's the violence that results from something going on in the mind and body. Is it mental illness?

Colonial writers snare at political protests as we are seeing in places like North Africa. There is a great danger in misdiagnoses. This “dancing disease” is not only in Jamaica; it is all over the world. The more subjects move their bodies the more sick or diseased? Gotman clarifies to move too much is looked at as lacking control of “individuality.” This may be the first major significant thing to understand of Nietzsche’s philosophy of Dionysus. Underneath the joyous mask and peaceful delight is its opposite—*tragedy*.

## **Section 1**

# Part 1

## ***The Madness of Dionysus***

How I approach the subject of madness and violence in the dancehall in this section of the thesis is specifically in relation to Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*. The psychological and mythological complexity of the Greek god Dionysus is difficult to discern. According to Kierkegaard, madness and truth become indistinguishable in the objective realm. The absence of inwardness is madness. Kierkegaard says, "what the age [*his age*] demands seems to have a considerable influence upon the question of madness."<sup>1</sup> [my italics] He uses Don Quixote to exemplify the prototype for subjective madness, in which the passion of inwardness embraces a particular finite fixed idea. This aberrant inwardness is both tragic and comic. For example, what concerns the individual is a fixation, like Hickling's theory of 'delusion' that really concerns nobody. The comic is the thing that concerns all men, does not concern the individual. Comic madness is more inhumane than the tragic. The appearance of a madman is deranged.

To explain madness, Nietzsche suggests we look at the question of our stronger cravings for beauty, for pleasures rooted in pain. How could our cravings for beauty be the opposite of our craving for the ugly? What could be the origin of the evil, destruction, and fatal violence in Jamaican society?

*An aside:* In my search of an understanding of the above questions in relation to Dionysus, I tripped upon myself searching for my own father and found this. The origin of my surname 'Hyman' is quite Dionysiac in tone. Hymen (the god of marriage) and son

<sup>1</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript* (1846), Swenson and Lowrie (Trans.) 74 - 75.

of the Greek god Dionysus, appeared in several books, for example, Virgil's *Aeneid* and in five other plays by Shakespeare, including *As You Like It*, where he sings the following song:

*'Tis Hymen peoples every town;  
High wedlock then be honoured.  
Honour, high honour, and renown,  
To Hymen, god of every town!*

—Act V, scene IV

In 1872, Nietzsche delivered to the world *The Birth of Tragedy* to give striking images of Dionysus, the Greek god of ecstasy and terror, of wildness and of the most blessed intoxicated delight—the mad god whose appearance sends mankind into madness. Dionysus is the “twiceborn one.”<sup>2</sup> He is the offspring of the highest father, Zeus, and a mortal woman Semele. By this he is born of two realms. He has the spirit of a dual nature and of paradox. Walter Otto tells us:

He was born in this way is not only the exultant god, the god who brings man joy. He is the suffering and dying god, the god of tragic contrast. And the inner force of this dual reality is so great that he appears among men like a storm, he staggers them, and he tames their opposition with the whip of madness.... Life becomes suddenly an ecstasy—an ecstasy of blessedness, but an ecstasy, no less of terror.<sup>3</sup>

To begin this exploration, I attribute the ‘madness’ of the Jamaican dancehall dance phenomenon *dagging*—is not unrelated to the spirit Being Dionysus. In the book chapter entitled *Myths of His Epiphany*, Otto says Dionysus’s entrance into the world was violent.<sup>4</sup> Nietzsche’s *The Birth* provides further insights into the truths of Dionysus.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Otto, *Dionysus Myth and Cult*, 65.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

A comprehensive analysis of *The Birth* is important to position the context of this thesis. My goal is to give a reflection of the spreading of Jamaican aesthetics; the hardships of Jamaicans, and most importantly the horror, the tragedy, and the violence *inna di dancehall*, which I argue, are inherently *Dionysiac*. To avoid making this thesis a historical treatise of violent dancehall dancers references to dates or specific events, which happened in Jamaica, are excluded. Instead I limit my examples to a specific “king” of dancehall music and the “Gaza god” in Jamaica—the one and only Adidja Palmer also known as “Vybz Kartel.”

This connection helps to understand Nietzsche’s *The Birth* in relation to the dancehall. Thus the conception of dancehall “god” or “king” in Jamaica and his entourage of women and young boys has striking similarities to a savage god and the dangerous wildness of Dionysus and his satyrs. Like Dionysus, who possesses the strength to force armed bands of men into madness, Kartel the “king” of dancehall music also “don” of the district Portmore, Jamaica. According to Donna Hope:

Don is a title of distinction afforded to men who are considered to be of high social, political and economic status in Jamaica. It is particularly used to denote status among men from the lower socioeconomic levels in the inner-city context. The term is commonly used in inner-city and dancehall slang and its definition draws significantly from the distinctive label Mafia overlords of the kind immortalized in the film *Godfather*.<sup>5</sup>

The Jamaican don has strong political links with the major political parties in Jamaica. Dons reportedly receive guns from politicians to carry out their dancehall and other duties. Dons run illegal or extra-legal activities inside and outside the dancehall. A don youth is aged between eighteen and thirty-something, the older dons rule the *shottas*. There are no female dons in Jamaica. *Shottas* are gunmen and ranked the lowest on the gamut of the violent masculinity that exist in the garrison culture of the dancehall. Highly romanticized for their slack movements and *punaany* lyrics. Hope tells

<sup>5</sup> Hope, 1997, 91-93.

us communities surrounding the dancehall are paralyzed by fear. The dancehall *daggas*, the dancers, glamorize and reinforce the terror of shottas, dons, and kings.

According to Hope, “the shotta is deified and perceived as a heroic figure by young inner-city men, some of whom aspire to this superordinate position. Easy access to illegal guns has only served to reinforce the practice of gun-play as a route to masculinity.”<sup>6</sup> Further, the term “shotta” is symbolic of the perpetually erect penis in the image of a gun. Shotta is rooted in patriarchal ideals of the hard phallic power that resides in the dancehall.

Kartel, also a prominent dancehall artist, wields a tremendous amount of socioeconomic power. Him and his entourage of young dons force their way through Jamaica in tumultuous fashion. I find striking similarities between the Jamaican don Vybz Kartel and Dionysus. And Kartel’s imprisonment discussed latter in this thesis is related to *the Socrates who plays music*. For these reasons *dagging* is a very appropriate metaphor for the study of Dionysus: to know what is the cause of all the “madness” and demonic violence in Jamaica and *inna di dancehall*.

From a Kierkegaardian perspective, clearly it is uncertain whether this madness is in fact mental illness. How is *dagging* “madness” or could it be a natural occurring phenomenon? “The madness which is called Dionysus is no sickness, no debility in life, but a companion of life at its healthiest.”<sup>7</sup> Otto tells us there are three paragons that emerge from Dionysiac madness— *prophecy*, *music*, and *dance*—this thesis is about dance. “The deep emotion with which this madness announces itself finds its expression in music and dance.”<sup>8</sup>

Dionysus’s chorus or satyrs consisted of male and female dancers and musicians. “In the womb of the mother,” it is said that is where Dionysus the child started

<sup>6</sup> Hope, 1997, 94-100.

<sup>7</sup> Otto, 1965, 143.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 143.

to dance.<sup>9</sup> Wherever Dionysus and his satyrs travel to, there is always wild and rapturous music and dancing. I believe the references to Dionysus's "maddening desire to dance" conjures images of dancehall performers.

The myth of Dionysus is appropriate to a multiplicity of themes related to just about every society and the individual. According to Otto, the cult of Dionysus "give us the clearest evidence of the violence with which he forces his way in—a violence which effects the myth so passionately."<sup>10</sup> I could not have successfully dealt with these contested subjects: dance, violence, sexuality, hyper-masculinity, madness, mental illness, striving for celebrity and superstar status in Jamaica without reading *The Birth*. The most profound is not the Apollonian and Dionysian characteristics as such. Nietzsche argues that to understand the harmony, self-control, moderation of life one had to be aware of the other side of life, that "barbarians" of Greek culture exist (3).

In her seminal work *Slaves and Other Objects*, Page Dubois suggest the ubiquity of slaves in ancient Greek culture must be included in classical and cultural studies, particularly in our present age when we are frantically searching for ways to stop the spread of disease. I discovered through reading *The Birth* that 'madness' or disease cannot be understood apart from the other side, or what Aristotle had to say about tragic art. We cannot overcome tragedy without harnessing the forces that made them possible. What are these forces? The climax of *The Birth* comes in contact with existentialism. Stewart Kingsley, a Jamaican scholar of dancehall aesthetics says it involves the socio-existential imperative to transcend the *normal* (there is a contradiction in Jamaica on the emphasis to *not* being normal). This precisely is what I believe Kierkegaard says we must do, resist the *leveling process* and become an *individual*. Dare to not be 'normal'. However, Jamaicans striving for celebrity and superstar status in Jamaica is reminiscent of the American Dream. In other words, Kingsley theorized Jamaicans do things to stand out. This is not necessarily entirely unrelated to what Kierkegaard means by an "outstanding individual." The dancehall dancers strive to make

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>10</sup> Otto, 1965, 79.

the unseen visible. Yet, they work equally hard to conceal this truth. The truth is concealed often by an insatiable craving for media attention and a lot of “bling bling”—material entrapments, jewellery, expensive cars, brand name sneakers and clothing coming from abroad etc. Jamaicans are hypnotized by what Camus called the “myth of unlimited production.” In other words, Senyshyn says, “ethics becomes replaced by technological efficacy, war and suave managers. This is especially true of performance managements whose managers cling to frantic efficacy at the expense of any artistic integrity.”<sup>11</sup>

With the advent of new technological advancement in Jamaica objects that are external to the body are rapidly given more and more importance than the individual’s internal processes; what is bought is more important than what is thought or what Kingsley calls “the pre-eminence of the external.” From *The Birth* we learn that “one can affirm life as sublime, beautiful, and joyous in spite of all suffering and cruelty” (11).

The second and sweetest sublime of *The Birth* is Nietzsche’s paradoxical “the death of tragedy” in section 14 and 15. Nietzsche’s criticism of Socrates necessitates the regeneration of art, and the “Socrates who practices music” (98). Socrates, the theoretical man is magnificent and also an aesthete! Socrates played an instrument and composed songs. The synthesis of Apollonian and Dionysian artistic Socrates negated is a synthesis of tragedy. We know Plato’s *Republic* had no place for the tragic poet in his ideal city. Who is the “artistic Socrates?” Could it be Nietzsche, the intellectual artist himself? We look forward to the high dramatic stage of Olympus that admits the tragic aspect of life, art with intellectual rigor. *The Birth* is able and willing to avail the visions and imaginations of the Jamaican dancehall dancers.

The birth of Jamaica’s dancehall comes out of the slave ship dances that appear in the ship logs as early as 1664 and re-emerges as plantation dances, and then dancehall moves in 1994 (Fabre, 1999; Waddell, 1970; Stanley-Niaah, 2004). Jamaicans dance the art of slavery. One of the difficulties of writing this section was

<sup>11</sup> Senyshyn, *The Artist in Crisis*, 58.

titling it. Jamaicans of all people should know the 'how' of slavery. Even more—dance! What for? African art. We can guess where the big question mark concerning the value of dancehall *dagging* exists in Jamaican culture. Is dancehall necessarily pessimistic? A sign of decline, transgression, decay, degeneration, and weak spirit instincts—as Gandhi thought it? The dancehall is a place where dancers test their strength.

From whom one can learn what it means to be subjective. What is significant in relation to the Greeks, tragic myth, among the best dancers of Jamaica it is the dancehall *dis/place* (Hope, 2007). The strongest, the most courageous *dagga*, rub, bump and grind. The tremendous phenomenon of the Dionysian had born from it the tragic dancehall *affectedors*. What might they signify? What is the significance of all this tragedy? View it as a symptom of life. The dancehall *affectedors* do not fear the truth. In his *Attempt at Self-Criticism* Nietzsche asks whether the resolve to be so scientific about everything perhaps is a kind of fear of pessimism? There is nothing experimental or scientific about the dancehall. It is real life! Right from the birth dancehall *affectedors*/performers, musicians and dancers, were attributed the profane uncongenial youth! Seen as constructed from a lot of immaturity, over green personal experiences, oversexed, all of them “backward” “ghetto *dawgs*!” (ghetto dogs).

From my research the dancehall is full of psychological innovations and affective secrets, with metaphysical youthful dances and music full of the ephebism and intrepid of youth, the moodiness of youth, independent, defiantly subjective, self-reliant even where it seems to object to authority and reverence.

In sum, my first encounter with the dancehall, it is not a place for old farts! In spite of the problems that seem to come out of the dancehall, on the other hand, considering the violence that erupts, its storm and stress, these youth *affectedors* need to be supported. Research shows that these dancers of Jamaica, so many, are affected by mental illness (Hickling, 2007), the stresses of a dehumanized life. In view of that, it really should be treated with some consideration of *The Birth*. As Nietzsche put it: to look at science (psychoanalysis) in the perspective of the artist, but at art in that of life. To not say it: many Jamaicans find the tragedy of the dancehall ponderous, embarrassing, image-mad and confused, shameful, in places saccharine to the point where they want

to hurl curses. Without any allegiance to the dancehall I have felt forsaken—to be associated with it only because I am Jamaican.

The mental anguish I suffered for more than two decades trying to logically cleanse myself of my Jamaican dancehall identity. Consequently I was forced to create a new identity to veil my tragic Jamaican ethnicity. This is how many young people learn to survive the violence and brutality of their upbringing. The key is building a new identity. I grew mistrustful and disdainful of the very art that I adore today.

The Dionysian madness of Jamaican dancehall culture is not necessarily the symptom of degeneration, decline and the opposite of the cultured middle-class. Nietzsche asks, “are there perhaps—a question for psychiatrists—neuroses of health?” Our present age is obsessed with youth and youthful qualities. A dancer’s career is limited by time, age. What a curse! To use Plato’s phrase, Nietzsche suggests madness brought the blessings of optimism. Could the madness of the dancehall be Jamaica’s triumph of optimism and rationality? Jamaican dance is a metaphysical activity. Nietzsche writes, “behind every event is an “artistic-god” who wants to experience the freedom of life—free from the shackles of contradictions compressed in his soul” (22). In this I see Kierkegaard’s term “individual”—a specific human being, a leader who must struggle to resist the leveling of the masses. “In the centuries leading up to this thesis, the activity that vexed the Church leaders,” or at least, as Ehrenreich (2006) says, “the more puritanical among them, was dancing. Just as in ancient times, the perpetrators were often female” (p. 80). Why is this important? Senyshyn (2007) says this is important because artists do not work in a vacuum unless they are economically independent (p. 41). Basically every individual has a God given purpose and right to earn a lawful living. What are these ‘shackles’ Nietzsche is referring to? I believe fundamentally, an idealistic “Christian” critic. Kierkegaard’s persuasive individualism is not apolitical or antisocial. In defense of Kierkegaard’s existential individual, Senyshyn says Kierkegaard’s critique of reason was all too frequently misinterpreted in ‘existentialist’ and ‘irrationalist’ terms... the ‘individualist’ interpretation was as fundamentally misleading as the ‘irrationalist’ interpretation, reflecting more an a priori ‘existentialist’ stereotype.

For Senyshyn the musical establishment appears to reward “machinery” and punish the freedom of individuality in live performance. To the detriment of freedom, ‘young’ performers in Jamaica today are shackled to the problem of Christian uniformity. They are doomed otherwise. Consequently they swag together. They don’t only think alike, they dress and move alike. There is a dreadful uniformity in the dancehall, and, to borrow Schonberg’s words, “an appalling lack of knowledge about the culture and performance traditions of the past.” These dancers are literally, as Schonberg writes, “slaves of this age, and it is an age that is, on the whole objective” (cited in Senyshyn, 2010, p. 44). According to Senyshyn, this is very much like what Kierkegaard was appalled by in his age “*a dreadful uniformity and by the slaves of this age who live on the whole in an objective age.*”

These dancers are shackled to the routine of practicing “lewd” dance moves with very little time to think subjectively. In light of what I observed in Jamaica, I share Nietzsche’s concern for the shackled individual and Senyshyn’s lack of subjectivity. We know that Kierkegaard devoted a great deal of his attention to the Individual. I believe we can easily relate Nietzsche’s Christian “shackles” and Kierkegaard’s idea of *leveling*. According to Senyshyn,

Kierkegaard described the leveling process as an “action” that did not originate with the individual but was rather the ‘work of reflection in the hands of an abstract power... a demon that engulfs the individual and can bring about destruction of that individual... In other words, leveling is a co-operative demon in that the tension it arouses by attempting to ‘level down’ the individual is the necessary strife by which the individual grows in his ultimate resistance to it and can become an ‘outstanding and eminent individual’<sup>12</sup>

How are the shackles of Christian leveling dancers in Jamaica not celebrating black identity of the dancehall relevant to their subjectivity? What is important is the spirit of dance that will not cease to fight for existence, to resist the leveling process. The subjectivity of the body wants to gain significance. Perverse Christianity has subjected

<sup>12</sup> Senyshyn, *The Artist in Crisis*, 51.

most prodigal elaboration of Jamaican culture. In truth, Nietzsche says, “nothing could be more opposed to the purely aesthetic interpretation and justification of the world which are taught in this book than the Christian teaches which is, and wants to be, only moral and which relegates art, every art, to the realm of lies, with its absolute standards, beginning with the truthfulness of God, it negates, judges, and damns art” (23).

Behind the condemnation of dancehall art in Jamaica, in a sense, is hostility, to life, vengeance, and full of error. According to Nietzsche all life is based on art and error. He goes on to say, “Christianity was from the beginning essentially and fundamentally, life’s nausea and disgust with life, merely concealed behind, masked by, dressed up as, faith in “another” or “better” life. Hatred of “the world,” condemnations of passions, fear of beauty and sensuality.” All this struck me the first time I visited Jamaica in 2000. I was aboard a public transportation bus when a furious, vengeful antipathy of life stormed onto the bus hurling a “Christian” point of view; that all “*battyman fi dead!*”<sup>13</sup> At the time students at the University of the West Indies were protesting violence against the LGBT community. According to Donna Hope dancehall culture’s anti-homosexual lyrics form part of a *masculinist discussion that advances the interest of the heterosexual male in Jamaica, which is a fundamentalist Christian and deeply patriarchal society.*

The unconditioned will of Christian Jamaicans to voice killing homosexuals is a moral value and the most dangerous and uncanny form of all possible forms of what Nietzsche calls “will to decline.” At the very least a sign of madness and the impoverishment of Christian values in Jamaica. For this particular antipathy of life, life must be crushed by the weight of contempt and the external NO! For Nietzsche, morality is a principle of decay and slander. Perhaps it is against morality, or at least Christian morality, that force many to run away from the abysmal Jamaican identity—an instinct that aligned itself with a fundamental opposite doctrine—purely Dionysian, *Zarathustra* artistic and anti-Christian. What is Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra* Dionysian?:

<sup>13</sup> Jamaican Patois language meaning “all homosexuals should die!”

Raise up your hearts, my brothers, high, higher. And don't forget your legs! Raise up your legs, too, good dancers; and still better: stand on your heads!... Zarathustra, the dancer; Zarathustra, the light one who beckons with his wings, preparing for flight, beckoning to all birds, ready and heady, blissfully light headed... who loves leaps and side-leaps. (27)

In the beginning, many lack the courage to do this because their parents are Christians. Stanley-Niaah believes the increasing associations with violence, vulgarity, and moral decay, contributes to the dancehall's ban from the homes of some Jamaicans, and proof of the conflicts and contradictions surrounding the dancehall space. But a language of its own is needed to express, without the constant fear. Isn't the real fear the inner suffering of self-denial and the infinite humiliation in preparation to receive the ultimate gift, a process of becoming, akin to Kierkegaard's view? Martin Luther said: "I more fear what is within me than what comes from without." Couldn't the courage required be akin to breaking the sod and disking the soil in preparation for seeding and new life?

**Illustration 3. Sample of Major Jamaican Dance Moves**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Dance Moves</b>
The early years	Cool an' Deadly, Water Pumpee, Body Move, Shoulder Move,
1980-1989	Bounce, One Foot Skank, Stuck, Della Move
1990-1991	Crab, Head Top, Poco Man Jam
1991-1992	Bike Back, Big It Up, Roun' di Worl, Santa Barbara, Bogle
1992-1993	Imitation Bogle, Butterfly, Armstrong
1993-1994	Worl' Dance, Tatti, Soca Bogle, Position, Limbo, Kung Fu
1994-1995	Erkle, Mock di Dread, Body Basics, A Capella
1995-1996	Go Go Wine
1996-1997	Sketel
1997-1998	Mr Bean, Pelpa, The Flip
1998-1999	Jerry Springer
1999-2000	Jerry Springer, Angel, Screechy
2000-2001	L.O.Y. (Lords of Yard), Zip It Up, Log On
2002-2003	Log On, On Line, Drive By, Curfew, Martial Art, Tall Up Tall Up, Higher level, Wave, Pon di River Pon di Bank, Row like a Boat, Parachute, Signal Di Plane, Blaze
2007	Bucky Bounce
2008	<b>Dagging</b>

*Note.* Adapted from "Kingston's Dancehall A Story of Space and Celebration," by Sonjah Stanley-Niaah, *Space and Culture*, Vol. 7, No. 1 2004: pp. 102 -118. DOI: 10.1177/1206331203257100

## Part 2

### ***A Mad Dancer Who Would Become the God Dionysus***

These dancers will not suicide or give up their *passion*. The art of dance in Jamaica, as it had been invested in us since birth—our God given talent. All that points to grounds to dance neurotically. Nietzsche asks this question: “What would music have to be like that would no longer be of romantic origin, like German music—but Dionysian?” Nietzsche suggests a deep bass of wrath and the lust for destruction that we hear humming underneath all of your contrapuntal vocal art and seduction of the ear, a furious resolve against everything that is *now*, a will that is not too far removed from practical nihilism and seems to say sooner let nothing be true than that *you* should be right, than that your truth should be proved right?

For Nietzsche, art is a form of Attic tragedy—the coupling of the Greek gods Apollo and Dionysus—Apollonian art of sculpture and the Dionysian art of music. The ‘will’ of Hellen is a metaphysical miracle that eventually reconciles these two forces. Nietzsche refers to these as *dreams and intoxication* (33). “Dreams,” Nietzsche quotes Hans Sachs poem: “The poet’s task is this, my friend, to read his dreams and comprehend. The truest human fancy seems to be revealed to us in dreams: all poems and versification are but true dreams’ interpretation.”

Everyone is an artist in the dream world because everything is permissible. Apollo is the deity of light, the higher truth, healing and helping, the “soothsaying” of the arts (35). The arts make life possible and worth living. Sun like, calm, free from the wilder emotions. By reflecting on the dream images we prepare ourselves for life. Nietzsche tells us Schopenhauer speaks of the Indian philosophy as “man wrapped in the veil of *maya*.” Apollo is the sublime *principle of individuation* (p. 36), through whose gestures and eyes all the joy and wisdom of *maya* speaks to us. From all quarters of the ancient world, in nearly every case, Nietzsche tells us extravagant sexual licentiousness;

the most natural instincts were unleashed in dance. He says, "either under the influence of the narcotic draught, of which the songs of all primitive men and peoples speak,

... In the German Middle Ages too, singing and dancing crowds, ... whirled themselves from place to place under this same Dionysian impulse" (36).

The significance of festivals is an artistic phenomenon. Nietzsche reminds us that pain begets joy, and that ecstasy may wring sounds of agony from us. At the very climax of joy, he says, there sounds a cry of horror or a yearning lamentation for an irretrievable loss. Like the music of the dancehall, the Dionysian music excited awe and caused disturbance.

The essence of *Hip Hop* music is symbolic of and the entire body, calling dancers to dance longer! In some accounts, writes Ehrenreich, the only cure for depression, according to the 19th-century historian J. F. C. Hecker, "was dancing, preferably outdoors and for days on end."<sup>14</sup> This sounds exactly like how street dancing and the dancehall started. At the sound of the DJ's music, the dancer awakened. Hecker reports:

... moving slowly at first, according to the measure of the music, were, as the time quickened, gradually hurried on to the most passionate dance... by music and dancing, they dispelled the melancholy."<sup>15</sup>

Not the mere symbolism of feet but the whole body dancing, every beat of the dancehall *riddim* is matched to body parts. The outdoor street dancing and dancehall *dagging* is an opportunity to symbolically express all the powers of Dionysus. This is a therapeutic celebration institutionalized as dancehall. We cannot be certain that dancing could cure depression. But what we do know is that isolation can cause depression and dance

<sup>14</sup> Ehrenreich, 2006, 151.

<sup>15</sup> Hecker, 1970, 20.

festivals break down, according to Ehrenreich, “the sufferers sense of isolation and reconnect him or her with the human community.”<sup>16</sup>

Ehrenreich says there are reports of similar cures in nineteenth century Abyssinia, or what is now Ethiopia, and in twentieth-century Somalia. Nietzsche understood very well the torment of isolation and the therapeutics of ecstasy. In Dionysian rituals I think Nietzsche glimpsed relief—as the veil of *Maya* is torn apart and each individual is reconciled as Oneness with one another.

This is not alien to anyone who moves about dancing or practices yoga. We can feel the *riddims* moving through 72,000 or more *nadis*<sup>17</sup> that constitute the channels in the human body which consciousness passes in the form of Breath (Iyengar, 1966). I believe Kierkegaard has expressed his understanding of the ancient Hindu science of *Hamsa* by saying that “all knowledge is breathing.”<sup>18</sup> The point of this is to discern that Kierkegaard was indeed familiar with other worldviews. It seems to me that Kierkegaard believed one could, as the Hindus purport, pray to God, much in the same way we should pay attention to the drawing of breath. Or we go about our business with very little conscious attention on the breath in the same way we forget to pray.

In fact, the Hindu practice *Pranayama* is used to teach students to free the mind from objects of desire to find God. The stages of *pranayama*, as I believe Kierkegaard understood, are an inner quest. The Hindu Yoga Master, B.K.S. Iyengar says, “While good habits like bathing purify the body externally, *asana* and *pranayama* cleanse it internally.” It is worth citing the great Yogi at length for this notion of breath is critical.

<sup>16</sup> Ehrenreich, 2006, 152.

<sup>17</sup> In the *Chandogya Upanishad*, the word “Nadi” comes from the Sanskrit root meaning “channel,” “flow,” or “stream.” Nadi can actually mean the channels for the flow of human consciousness, Breath. Accordingly, energy flows like an electric current through 72,000 or more channels. The life force, or Prana in Sanskrit is circulating inside these nadis. The spinal cord, or Sushumna is supposed to be the largest nadi in the body. I believe one in eight Americans practices yoga. I have been involved with various leading institutions of yoga, Ashrams, in Canada, and the United States for more than fifteen years.

<sup>18</sup> Gabriel Merigala, *Subjectivity and Religious Truth in the Philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard*, 47.

Understanding the yoga-dance relationship aids us in how to transform the individual and a society in crisis. On the notion of breath, which is the most excellent technique of African dance and yoga, Iyengar writes:

Pranayama [*breath control*] cleanses and aerates the lungs, oxygenates the blood and purifies the nerves. But more important that the physical cleansing of the body is the cleansing of the mind of its disturbing emotions like *hatred, passion, anger, lust, greed, delusion and pride*. Still more important is the cleansing of the intellect ... or reason ... are burned off in the study of the Self... The internal cleansing gives radiance and joy. It brings benevolence and banishes mental pain, dejection, sorrow and despair. When one is benevolent, one sees the virtues in others and not merely their faults. The respect which one shows for another's virtues makes his self-respecting as well and helps him to fight his own sorrows and difficulties. When the mind is lucid, it is easy to make it one-pointed. With concentration, one obtains mastery over the senses. Then one is ready to enter the temple of his own body and see his real self in the mirror of his mind.<sup>19</sup>

For example, the right and left nostrils constitute six nadis alone. Each nadi is composed of three layers, one inside the other, like insulation of an electric wire. If this seems to be alien it's only the veil of what Nietzsche says is *maya*. Nietzsche notes *maya* is "illusion." In Indian religions, *maya* is the principle deity that manifests the objective world and perpetuates the duality between dream and waking states. To clarify duality Nietzsche recognizes that all things, good or evil, are deified. This is important to understand, as it is the goal, to experience subjectivity and objectivity as not separate, but experience the discernibility of the two as one and the same. In Book IV, Rousseau writes:

... children of the two sexes have nothing apparent to distinguish them: the same visage, the same figure, the same complexion, the same voice. Everything is equal: girls are children, boys are children; the same name suffices for beings so much alike. Males whose ulterior sexual development is prevented maintain this similarity their whole lives; they are always big children. And women, since they never lose this same

<sup>19</sup> B.K.S. Iyengar, *Light On Yoga*, 36.

similarity, seem in many respects need to be anything else. But man in general is not made to remain always in childhood.<sup>20</sup>

Nietzsche writes:

For a genuine poet, ... a character is for him not a whole he has compose out of particular traits, picked up here and there, but an obtrusively alive person before his very eyes, distinguished from the otherwise identical vision of a painter only by the fact that it continually goes on living and acting. (63)

Do the high-spirited onlookers who judge and label Jamaican dancers as “barbaric,” “vulgar,” or “lewd” possess these same qualities? It was Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 - 1778) who said, “Our greatest ills come to us from others.”<sup>21</sup> Rousseau characterized modern society as people constructing entirely from opinions others their identity. Similarly, for Kierkegaard, reflection is a matter of identity created solely by imitating others. This gives rise to what he calls “the Public,” which is actually the media. In a similar vein, Swiss psychologist Carl Jung (1875 - 1961) said: *everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves.*

When I contemplate Rousseau’s Emile “reared at the bosom of nature,” or Nietzsche’s idea of maya, I see the art of Jamaican dancers as dreams to perceive the dance in nature, longing for freedom, the more the primal impulses, the suffering; the pleasurable illusion are understood as a perpetual process of becoming an individual. These dances are mere appearances continuously manifested representation of the primal energies. Nietzsche seems to believe we comprehend their interdependence intuitively. From this I believe he is saying subjectivity and objectivity are one. He writes, “and behold: Apollo could not live without Dionysus!” (46) In other words, the “barbaric” and the “vulgar” are as necessary as the Apollonian. The Dionysian and the Apollonian energies mutually augment one another. Nietzsche finds it “impossible to believe in any

<sup>20</sup> Rousseau, (Trans.) Allan Bloom. *Émile*, 211.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 48.

truly artistic production, however insignificant, if it is without objectivity.” The drunken outburst of the subjective artist is the first aesthetic experience.

Our aesthetic experience must answer the HOW of art objectives first. The process of art begins with what Nietzsche calls a “musical mood” (49). This mood is a Kierkegaardian psychological reverence that precedes the idea. This is not a mental image. Perhaps it’s a deep inner experience provoked or triggered. Dance in Jamaica, for example, we may say is a copy of the world in which dancers live and grow.

The Dionysian process of dance requires dancers to surrender his/her subjectivity. The image of stripping naked shows one’s identity as pain and pleasure. Subjectivity is the depth of identity. When we absorb Jamaican dancehall artists perform we take in, through our eyes the “orgiastic frenzy” (49). What about our other senses? Can we apprehend dance with our olfactory organ? The dancer, like the Dionysian musician, is without any images, we see pure primordial pain and it’s re-echoing. It is a tragedy if we could never see the passionately inflamed, loving and hating man to be an artist. In aesthetics, the subjective and objective are wonderfully mingled with each other.

The artist is the medium through which the subject is released in appearance. The true Artist uses “the Public” as mediums to reflect. The self is the dancer and the dance includes or contains the public. Without aesthetic phenomenon the world would not exist. Nietzsche says we are at once subject, object, actor, dancer, and spectator. That is one of the famous citing of *The Birth*: “it is only as an aesthetic phenomenon that existence and the world are eternally justified” (52).

In order to understand this, we just need to examine the language of Jamaicans and the images of slavery on the island. The force behind dancehall music seeks an expression analogous to the discrimination, according to whether their language imitated the world of slave imagery and phenomenon or the world of music. One need only reflect more deeply on the linguistic difference with regard to tone, syntactical structure, and vocabulary in Jamaican dancehall and classical music, in order to understand the significance of this contrast; indeed, it becomes palpably clear that in the orgiastic tones of dancehall, even in the time of Bob Marley, when music was infinitely less aggressive,

transported people to ecstatic jubilation. Jamaicans create dance from all the agitation of passionate madness!

When Jamaicans dance unsatisfied feelings, willing, longing, moaning and rejoicing are interpreted. This is the phenomenon of dance: Dionysus the dancer interprets the image of the world through movement. The dancer does not need to visually see the image and the concept, because he/she endures them subjectively. The dancer can express nothing that did not already lie in that “vast universality and absoluteness in the music that compelled him to dance” (55).

In comparison to what Nietzsche says about language: it can never adequately render the symbolic meaning of dance, because like music, dance “stands in symbolic relation to the primordial contradictions and primordial pain in the heart of the primal unity, and therefore symbolizes a sphere which is beyond and prior to all phenomena, compared with it, and merely symbols” (55). Hence “language” cannot adequately express the innermost heart of dance. Language in its attempt to interpret dance, can only be superficial.

Is it, then, reasonable to say the tragedy of violence *inna di dancehall* in Jamaica is seriously a threat to youths, to say nothing of the wider society. This crisis of violence we are told arose from the tragedy *Slavery*. Now clearly we have all have corporal and empirical reactions to *Roots*, a true story written by Alex Haley. The story begins with the birth of “Kunta Kinte” to Gambian parents. Spanning more than one hundred years of brutality, from continent to continent, slavery to freedom. *Roots* is a panoramic view of the American Dream bursting with all the joys, hardships of primitive African peoples through the years of slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the triumph of a family’s struggle to survive. What kind of artistic practice could be extracted?

The tradition of dancehall, which is quite explicit, speaks to us corporally and empirically. The dancehall violence, without scripts, is exactly a primitive form of this. I believe the civilized people of America feel nullified in the presence of the dancehall; and according to Nietzsche “this is the most immediate effect of the Dionysian tragedy, that the state and society and, quiet generally, the gulfs between man and man give way to an overwhelming fleeing of unity leading back to the very heart of nature” (59).

What I believe Nietzsche is saying is that at the very bottom of life is the truth, despite all the pleasurable and powerful appearances, people are all the same, regardless of generations and nations. Art is what frees us from the illusions of *maya*. Nietzsche says, “knowledge kills action; action requires the veils of illusion” (60). I think he is trying to make us afraid. The Dionysian dancehall dancer, like Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, is nauseated by his/her knowledge of what is really going on in the society. This knowledge into the essences of things inhibits choice. They see the horrible truth of Jamaica’s politics, and neo-colonialism. These dancers feel a danger looming; consequently dance emerges as a healing agent, a saving transformer. Dance is saving them from being eaten by their own kind. Dance alone can transform the nauseous horror and absurdity of a society into a place where the disenfranchised people are honoured. Dance serves as a taming of the misdirected passions. For a similarity between the Greek theatre and Jamaica’s dancehall, Nietzsche writes:

The reveling throng, the votaries of Dionysus jubilate under the spell of such moods and insights whose power transforms them before their own eyes till they imagine that they are beholding themselves as restored geniuses nature, as satyrs. The later constitution of the chorus in tragedy is the artistic imitation of this natural phenomenon, thought, to be sure, at this point the separation of Dionysian spectators and magically enchanted Dionysians became necessary. Only we must always keep in mind that the public at an Attic tragedy found itself in the chorus of the orchestra, everything is merely a great sublime chorus of dancing and singing satyrs or those who permit themselves to be represented by such satyrs. (62)

## Part 3

### ***Mad Slave and the Master Dionysus***

How the influence of Greek philosophers spread to places like Jamaica is uncertain, but what is perhaps certain is how music in the metaphysical sense again and again prompts and regenerates art in Jamaica. There is nowhere on the island where the influence of music is not present. This doesn't imply the Greeks are responsible for the advent of reggae or dancehall *riddims*. In fact, Nietzsche says, "nearly every age and stage of culture has at some time or other sought with profound irritation to free itself from the Greeks, because in their presence everything one has achieved oneself, though apparently quite original and sincerely admired, suddenly seemed to lose life and color and shrivelled into a poor copy, even a caricature" (93).

In light of Dubois's study of the ubiquity of "slaves and other objects" in Greek antiquity it is appropriate to ask if the Greeks are assuming a position of superiority in relation to Third-World culture that cannot maintain control over its cultural aesthetics. Or are the Greeks acknowledging some genealogical connection with the Egyptians, in the sense of Martin Bernal's *Black Athena*? Nietzsche goes to say, and so none feels ashamed and afraid in the presence of the Greeks, unless one prizes truth above all things and dares acknowledge even this truth: that the Greeks, as charioteers, hold in their hands the reins of our own and every other culture ... (94). Clearly I have positioned Dionysus *inna di dancehall* and other places of Jamaica with an understanding of the ubiquity of slaves and cross-cultural nature of slavery.

### **Dionysus the Master and Slave**

[W]here there is nothing in common between ruler and ruled, there can be no friendship between them either, any more than there can be justice. It is like the relation between a craftsman and his tool, or between the soul and the body or between master and slave: all these instruments it is true are benefited by the persons who use them, but there can be no

friendship, nor justice, towards inanimate things; indeed not even towards a horse or an ox, nor yet towards a slave as slave. For master and slave have nothing in common: a slave is a living tool [*empasukhon organon*], just as a tool is an inanimate slave [*apsukhos doulos*]. (8.II.6 [1161b])<sup>22</sup>

One of my aims in this section is to acknowledge slavery existed in Athenian antiquity, through this portrayal of Dionysus the musician and dancer, along with his pose of satyrs. Dubois tells us “there are substantial evidence for the ubiquity of and values of slaves in ancient Greece and in Athens in particular. Artists and artisans represented slaves on artworks and everyday objects.”<sup>23</sup> In Aristophanes’ *The Frogs*, for example, there are references to Dionysus and his slave arguing over who is more cowardly, Xanthias or the god Dionysus. One’s true identity is not bound by a cultural role. Dionysus very well could have been captured and enslaved, as he switched roles and played a slave in *The Frogs*. There are also references to both Plato and Socrates as slaves. Dionysus *inna di dancehall* as a slave master is not all positive.

Indeed, part of the problem I am trying to shed a little light on for cultural studies in Jamaica is how to overcome the anxiety of poverty and inferiority to the privileging of the Greeks and Greek antiquity as an object of elite education. Indeed, a slave has a body that should be distinguished from other bodies, but set apart by its competence for happiness, reflection and purpose? In the *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle writes, “the body is the soul’s tool born with it, a slave is as it were a member [morin] or tool of his master, a tool is a sort of inanimate slave.”<sup>24</sup> This is especially significant in the study of the mad ‘frog’ Dionysus a *slave master*.

In 1996 an American Republican running for Senator used the Bible to justify the naturalness of slavery. How far back should we go to know our future? Should we integrate the Greeks in our narratives about our present age? The non-Christian

<sup>22</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*. H. Rackham (Trans.).

<sup>23</sup> Dubois, 2008, 26.

<sup>24</sup> Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, see H. Rackham (Trans.) vol. 20, 1241b.

classical Aristotelian doctrine said “barbarians” were natural slaves.<sup>25</sup> Should the Greeks be included in our interrogation of Hickling’s “delusional” psychohistoriography? As Freud and Nietzsche insist, “every perspective is particular, internally troubled, marked by conscious or unconscious investments. One can never know or understand all the determinants of one’s inquiry, never fully represent the object. There is no single, true, whole picture of the past.”<sup>26</sup> These are important questions and scholarship on the history of slavery in antiquity and questions for future research. In this present study I am interested in the inseparability, the embeddedness of the Greek myth of Dionysus in all the phenomena of life.

Looking at life in Jamaica today we can see “how the hunger for insatiable and optimistic knowledge” has turned into art, music and dance. Art is tightly woven even with religion that is spread over the island. It is from the *spirit* of music and dance that history can be reborn.

Nietzsche’s two artistic deities of the Greeks explored in the *The Birth*; Apollo and Dionysus: Apollo transforming genius of *individuation*, and Dionysus breaks the spell of individuation. Clearly I do not mean to imply at all that dancehall music, or even the music of Kartel is either. Likewise, according to Kaufman, Nietzsche clearly did not mean to imply that all music is “Dionysian.” For example, Mozart is not mentioned in *The Birth*. Kaufman says, Mozart, for example, is expressed in other places as love and admiration. Mozart is rather “romantic” and “decadent” (100). All art, Nietzsche says must not aim at “beautiful forms.” Having recognized this strong criticism, I felt a strong need to approach the essence of dancehall tragedy and, with it, the profoundest element of the tragedy. Dancehall possesses a charm that bears itself so proudly despite the externals mainly on the assumption that all art must aim at beautiful form.

<sup>25</sup> Robin Blackburn, *The Masking of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern*. 1997.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

## Riding di *Riddims* of Slavologists

My first introduction to a dancehall experience revealed the seduction of *riddim* and dance. The dance *dagging* is the verve, a life force of a contagious and intoxicated Dionysiac music *riddims*. This touches on the fundamental thesis inquiry: When the Apollonian and the Dionysian enter into simultaneous activity, *how is the knowledge of the most worth* to stop the contagion of violence? In other words, what is the role or values of dance in education? Or more briefly: how is dance related to understanding transformation?

Senyshyn's musical perspective astoundingly explains Kierkegaard's idea of how transformation could take place: "the performing artist must then assert his individuality in such a manner that each individual reaction and interaction with the music and projection through the experience and being of the performer."<sup>27</sup> If this does not happen, there could be no possibility of transformation. Conversely, the performer succumbs to the impact of the 'masses,' society or audience—and the leveling process is set in motion. How does the individual performer prepare for the stage? I believe Kierkegaard is saying the individual must be educated aesthetically and intellectually, and spend many hours in meditation and intense practice to develop spiritual courage.

Nietzsche quotes Schopenhauer at full length, and I will provide a brief synopsis of that quote to elucidate on the relationship between dance, music, art and knowledge, body and mind, and transformational music *riddims*.

Nietzsche introduces Schopenhauer saying nature and music are two distinct expressions of the same 'will', which is knowledge. Art is an expression of the world, or nature, and music, according to Schopenhauer, is the highest phenomenal language. Everything physical and *metaphysical* is somehow related to music. Dance and music, rhythms and movement, in African culture, as in Jamaica, are inseparable.

<sup>27</sup> Senyshyn, *A Kierkegaardian Perspective on Society and the Status of the Individual as a Performing Musician*, 1999.

This is a very important insight of aesthetics. Like a powerful wild Trojan, music *riddims* takes on a whole Dionysian world upon itself and sends the dancers into a whirlwind of intoxication. The dance-music *riddims* transform performers from the greedy thirst for this existence and reminds us of a higher pleasure. The struggling artist knows this and prepares for this by means of his destruction, says Nietzsche. What is fascinatingly true about dance and music is this: the Dionysian dancehall musician/ stage performer, manipulates sounds and lyrics to recreate a sublime myth, and successfully manipulates the cognition of the dancer/listener. The dancer gets into a stable feeling that the music is the highest means to bring life into the body. Nietzsche says, “relying on this noble deception, it may now move its limbs in dithyrambic dances and yield unhesitatingly to an ecstatic feeling of freedom in which it could not dare to wallow as pure music without this deception” (126).

The music *riddims* transport the dancer, while on the other hand it gives a feeling of freedom. The tragedy is how dancehall dancers “affect” other performers and their audience when the notion of freedom is misappropriated. The music and impart an intense and convincing sense of untouchable immortality. A significant metaphysical consideration understands above all, how it is through music that the tragic spectator is assured a highest pleasure and the dancer transforms? Nietzsche says it’s through a feeling of the highest pleasure that is assured through the premonition of destruction.

The images of what happens on the stage touch the inner most sanctum of the receiver, the *affectee*. Not all listeners are *affectees* because, as Nietzsche points out, genuine artists relate to music differently. We could call this a dance of metaphysics. Music can speak directly to our highest musical emotions. The Dionysian power can destroy, while the Apollonian erupts to restore order and equilibrium: *The Apollinian lets us find delight in individuals; it attaches our pity to them, it satisfies our longing for beauty and sublime forms, and incites us to comprehend the core of life... Apollinian tears man from his orgiastic self-annihilation and blinds him into the belief that he is seeing a single image of the world, and that, through music, he is merely supposed to see it still better and more profoundly...*

Music compels us to see, Nietzsche says, “more and more profoundly than usual, and we see the action on the stage as a delicate web, the world of the stage is expanded intimately and illuminated for our spiritualized eye... Music is the real ideas of the world; drama is but the reflection of this idea. “Music, speaks out of the heart” (129). As per the intricate relationship of music and dance, nothing is explained. Nietzsche asks this profound and critical question: “What can the healing magic of Apollo not accomplish when it can even create the illusion that the Dionysian is really in the service of the Apollinian and capable of enhancing its effects—as if music were essentially the art of presenting an Apollinian content?” (128).

Having recognized that music, according to Schopenhauer, is the immediate copy of the will itself. The body I believe is needed to understand that analogy. Dance, therefore, if regarded as an expression inseparable of the music, is in the highest degree a universal language, which is related to the universality of Schopenhauer’s concept of the will. It’s universality, however, is by no means a vacuous abstraction. The body, if I may say so, is the carrier or bearer of the will and is united with it through and distinct expressiveness of rhythms. In this respect, rhythmic dance resembles nature, geometrical figures, and numbers, which are Schopenhauer’s universality of all possible objects of experience and applicable to all a prior perceptible and determinate factors. Everything that humans experience internally, effects, feelings, etc. are all manifestations of will. The infinite number of possible rhythms of the universe have a deep relation with the inmost soul and this is why “music makes every painting, and indeed every scene of real life and of the world at once appear with higher significance, certainly all the more, in proportion as its melody is analogous to the inner spirit of the given phenomenon” (202). Nietzsche refers to this as “embodied will.” This is how dance becomes perhaps analogous or metaphorically the *spirit*. Therefore we are able to set a poem to music as ritual, or a dance, visible representation of will. He says, “in general a relation is possible between a composition and a visible representation ... both are simply different expression of the same inner being of the world” (103). When dance is able to express the heart of a matter it is expressive and understood universally. This cannot be an imitation of concepts, i.e., dancehall cannot be copied or imitated.

According to the philosophy of African arts, in light of Schopenhauer’s doctrine, we understand dance as an immediate language of the inner most soul, the will, of the

dancer. In other words, beginning with the thesis *the self is the dancer* reveals a cross-cultural interdisciplinary understanding of the association between, for example, art and science. Incidentally, Kierkegaard's great philosophical treatise *Postscript* is written with great artistry, irony and humour. Ironically, according to the Arbaughs the *Postscript* was meant to bring his entire authorship to an end. "It was 'unscientific' or unpedantic as opposed to the pretentious works of the professors who, in S.K.'s judgment, obliterated personal reality in the process of explaining it and destroyed the life of the human spirit by analysis or discussion."<sup>28</sup>

The *self* is not a copy of the phenomenal world in which it exists. Rather Dionysus as the dancer expresses under the influence of music, in this case, dancehall *riddims*. The dancer is capable of penetrating deep into the interior with the aid of music-rhythms. Through music, we explore the will, motivations, passions, and sensuality of unconscious emotions. Music aids us in seeing more extensively and profoundly than ever. The dancer relies on his ability to listen.

This invisible self, or the spirit-world is embodied to acquire a higher significance. Music allows the movement to emerge, dance, in its highest significance. From this, I infer dance in Jamaica to give birth to understanding Dionysian art and the significance of the study of dance aesthetics, and particularly the dancehall tragic form. In the phenomenon of the dancehall, I have shown how dance strives to express its nature in Dionysian style. If we accept that music at its highest significance must seek to objectify in images, its unique Dionysian form, we shall find this in dance.

The nature of dancehall cannot be found in the single category of beauty and appearance that is without music. The spirit of tragic dancehall *riddims* annihilates principles of beautiful music. Nietzsche writes:

We understand music as the immediate language of the will, and we feel our fancy stimulated to give form to this invisible and yet so actively

<sup>28</sup> Arbaugh, George and E. George Arbaugh, *Kierkegaard's Authorship*, 109.

stirred spirit-world which speaks to us, and we feel prompted to embody it in an analogous example.<sup>29</sup>

Dancers transported by Dionysian music *riddims* can reach cathartic states of consciousness. Dionysian dance exercises the intuition and the body. From this, Dionysian dancehall music holds the capacity to give birth to chaos: the music, which expresses in dance knowledge of the spirit-world. The tragic dancehall hero, i.e., Kartel, is not all together a plastic artist. As a tragic figure of the *dis/place* stage, he believes in eternal Apollonian ideal life, as depicted in his poem, Kartel's dance and music is his immediate idea of this life. Kartel wants his satyrs, the *affectedors* to be as he is! To find satisfaction in Dionysiac dancehall *riddims* and movement.

Dionysiac dancehall music wishes to convince us of Jamaica's eternal joy of existence. This joy is not to be found in the external world of objects, phenomena, but in the inwardness of the individual. Nietzsche explicitly reminds us that materiality will come to a "sorrowful end," looking into the terror of our existence. The history of Greek tragedy, like everything else comes into existence in view of "the exuberant fertility of the universal will" (104). Dionysian ecstasy is indestructible. The tragic art of dancehall aesthetics was like Greek tragedy born of music. The music lyrics reveal a deeper "wisdom" than the artists themselves can put into words and concepts. The same is visible in Shakespeare's Hamlet, who talks foolishly but acts wise. Essentially, what the dancer does not do is actualize the highest spiritual significance and Platonic ideality of the music. The thing dancehall artists do not seem to know is what a sublime responsibility they hold.

The mysteries of Dionysian art are at the foundation of their striving for fame and fortune. The conflict is the striving for knowledge and the tragic worldview. The spirit of *science*, I believe Nietzsche is saying is responsible for this conflict, crises, and chaos in the dancehall and other places in Jamaica, and Socrates, is to be blamed for bringing it onto the stage? He says, "he who recalls the immediate consequences of this restlessly

<sup>29</sup> Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*. Walter Kaufman (Trans.), 103.

progressing spirit of science will realize at once that myth was annihilated by it, and that, because of this annihilation, poetry was driving like a homeless being from her natural ideal soil" (106).

Walter Otto confirms what I believe Nietzsche is saying, that myth is only poetry.<sup>30</sup> According to Otto, the poets of antiquity asked the gods to fill them with the spirit of truth. This was not a religious truth, but an artistic truth. What happens, then, when science *inimically opposes the mythopoeic power of music*? Consequently, music can no longer express the inner essence, the will itself. It is copying concepts. Socratic man, then, is responsible for a degenerative artistic culture.

## Illusion of Slavery

In the dancehall, dancers are manipulated to be imitative counterfeit of a phenomenon, the one on stage, i.e., Kartel and his dancehall "queens." These sexually explicit dance performers want to experience universality and truth. The Dionysian "king of the dancehall" represents a general mirror of Schopenhauer's will.

Dance now becomes a copy of the phenomenon itself on stage. Gang wars, violent killings, rapes and other criminal brutality against humanity breakout in the dancehall imitating the consciousness of Dionysus the destroyer, the intoxicated mad god "who gave man wine... whose presence makes man mad and incites him to lust for blood."<sup>31</sup>

Wilson (1989) reminds us that Camus states: "the only original rule of life today: to learn to live and to die, and, in order to be a man, to refuse to be a god."<sup>32</sup> Dionysus we are told was also the persecuted god, the tormented and dying god, and all whom he loved, all who followed him, had to share his tragic fate.<sup>33</sup> Is this dancehall tragedy

<sup>30</sup> Otto, *Dionysus Myth and Cult*, 15.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Wilson. (n.d.) *Albert Camus: Personality as Creative Struggle*.

<sup>33</sup> Otto, *Dionysus Myth and Cult*, 9.

arbitrary poetry rising out of the imagination? Is genuine poetry ever arbitrary? “Our imagination is arrested precisely by these superficialities. Dancers are reduced by to what Nietzsche calls the “slave of phenomena” (107). The Socratic man tormented by his own Dionysian-spirit expects persons to develop “individually” through “artistic subordinate traits” and shadow imaging. Nietzsche sees scientific knowledge is valued more highly than the artistic. However, the dancehall kings can express themselves in violent bursts of passion.

Although several of Jamaica’s most popular tragic heroes are in prison, tragedy, strictly speaking is now dying. I will not say the tragic view is everywhere visible in the dancehall and Jamaica: we only know that it has to flee from genuine art. The Alexandrian-like “theoretical man” in Jamaica seeks to dissolve myth. For example, what was Kartel invited to teach at the University of the West Indies? Nietzsche asks this very interesting question: “What aesthetic effect results when the essentially separate art-forces, the Apollinian and the Dionysian, enter into simultaneous activity? Is the Dionysian the image and the Apollonian the concept?”

Nietzsche identifies three stages of illusion: (1) *Socratic knowledge is delusional*, (2) *beautiful art*, (3) *indestructible life*. Culture he says is made up of these three stimulants: people, art, and knowledge. Our [his] current culture is ensnared by the Alexandrian mentality: “the theoretical man equipped with the greatest forces of knowledge, and *laboring* in the service of science” (110). This is much deeper than the advent of technology, the Internet. All our educational systems, methods have this in mind. The arts, particularly classical forms struggle alongside the sciences as something tolerated, but not respected with the same intention.

I have gotten use to reading newspapers headlines that state: “School Budget Cuts Take Tool On The Arts.” Arts educators are in constant fear of losing their jobs. Amid raising math scores among elementary school students, that arts have increasingly been pushed to the side despite their demonstrated academic and social benefits.

Research shows arts education can help foster many skills, from self-expression to problem solving.<sup>34</sup> For example, a 20-year-old college junior with an interest in medicine credits break-dancing class that helped his self-confidence. On the other hand, there are those senior administrators who believe art should not be considered a part of basic education, though they do not doubt its potential power. If it's so popular among students, why is arts education so limited and uneven in Jamaica? If your school has money or if you have a principal that is a real proponent of the arts, then you get it. This problem is not unique to Jamaica. Furthermore, I believe the quality of arts educators is a much bigger problem particularly in the areas of the performing arts.

Nietzsche believes the arts are forced to imitate scholarship. I believe he's saying science does not mean technology. Besides, there are incredible creative geniuses that have lifted companies like Apple to the pinnacle. It is a vision of life itself. When people speak of science what the common populace understands is applied science and the comforts of modern life it provides, such as traveling, cell phones, photocopying, Internet, satellite, and televisions.

What clashes or appears to come in conflict with the arts is not the comfort that has been brought to us by these new technological gadgets and inventions of applied science. I don't believe Nietzsche is opposed to a theory of science, which is, according to Krishnananda, "something very deep; and bordering upon philosophical and metaphysical foundations of life itself."<sup>35</sup> It goes without saying that all experimentation applied or observed, has to be external and is not segregated from what is happening to us in our own internal operations.

The conflict between physical science and art may be said to have begun somewhere toward the end of the 19th century when the geocentric interpretation shifted to the heliocentric concept of the discovery of Copernicus. More importantly, when

<sup>34</sup> Brian M. Rosenthal, "Creating an arts education for everyone," *The Seattle Times*, 29 March 2012, A1, A6.

<sup>35</sup> Sri Swami Krishnananda, *Is Modern Science a Challenge to Religion?*, 24.

Newton discovered the law of gravitation and concluded that everything that is the logical process in which the world is contained in space and time can mathematically deduce what is happening in the physical world. The real argument Nietzsche is making here I believe corroborates with Schopenhauer and Kant. Must we see God to believe He exists? Kierkegaard sums up the problem of science in *The Journals*:

... That a man should simply and profoundly say that he cannot understand how consciousness comes into existence—is perfectly natural. But that a man should glue his eye to a microscope and stare and stare and stare—and still not be able to see how it happens—is ridiculous, and it is particularly ridiculous when it is supposed to be serious... If the natural sciences had been developed in Socrates' days as they are now, all the sophists would have been scientists. One would have hung a microscope outside his shop in order to attract custom, and then would have had a sign painted saying: "Learn and see through a giant microscope how a man thinks" (and on reading the advertisement Socrates would have said: "that is how men who do not think behave").<sup>36</sup>

It follows then that what we see with our eyes really does not exist. The Socratic man fumbles trying to cut the grass from under his own feet. How do we know that we exist? Where is the Socratic syllogism by which we deduce the consequence of artistic practice? I think it was the French philosopher René Descartes who took up the question of doubt: *Some devil may be waking in my mind. It may be telling me everything in a topsy-turvy way. The world may not be there.* Descartes is also the one who declared I am thinking and, therefore, I must exist. Could we deduce if I exist, God has to exist? Because God is the Infinite and I am the finite. The finiteness of the individual proves the infinitude of the Truth of life. Now I am agreeing with Nietzsche's discussion of the threat of science that theoretical man poses before art. Here it is important what Nietzsche means by theoretical man and science. Nietzsche says:

... the theoretical man equipped with the greatest forces of knowledge, and laboring in the service of science, whose archetype and progenitor is Socrates.... the cultured man was for long time found only in the form of the scholar: even our poetical forms have forced to evolve from scholarly

<sup>36</sup> Robert Bretall, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, 430.

imitations ... we still recognize the origin of our poetic form from artificial experiments with a non-indigenous, really scholarly language.” (110)

Though Nietzsche and Kierkegaard are both critical of science, do we know what art is? How unimaginable the dancehall dancer to have appeared to Socrates. Jamaican dancers, when I have place in this thesis beside Greek philosophy for the purpose of comparison, in order to see that contemporary dancers in Jamaica are defining the limits of the Socratic knowledge and yearns for a place on the mainstream stage of “knowledge” as practical theoretician. These artists are *bodying theory*.<sup>37</sup> Generally when people think of theory they think of text, literature, books, printed information, and data. Theory is the thing scholars make to shape or educate the mind.

In pursuit of knowledge of the most worth, is theory and the body, the two principles of consideration here, segregated from each other? Has the body nothing to do with writing theory, and has the theory nothing to do with how the body performs on stage, in the classroom and life? It seems that communication is not possible without one or the other. For example, Nietzsche says, for the Alexandrian culture to be able to exist, a slave class is required. In order for the body to move a theory of movement is essential. How I dance is directly related to, communicating with, what I think. In other words, I am *bodying theory*. Let’s consider an environmentalist perspective by Holly Haworth, who writes a beautiful synopsis of the Indian theory of movement in relation to the “beginning” of creation:

When we got here, the earth began to teach us the movements of her dance, her rotation between light and dark [theory and practice]. We learned the fluid steps back and forth, from night to day, [body and mind]. The motions that would carry us from one to the next [subjective and objective]: dawn, awakening, hunger, setting forth, sustenance, return, dusk, storytelling, lying down sleep. Our bodies, like all bodies, were made for both the dark and the light. We stepped in time with the sun and

<sup>37</sup> “Bodying theory” is a term I devised to denote theorizing through live dance performance.

moon, the governing bodies of creation and rest. We were God's children.<sup>38</sup>

From Asian myths, the pioneer of Modern Dance in America Martha Graham succinctly forged, the principle for a new dance theory: "movement never lies."<sup>39</sup> From this we get a profound sense of the inseparable nature, or the *principium individuationis*: the processes by which Schopenhauer says the subject becomes integrated into stable "whole" individual. For example, the *what* and the *how* of dance is integrated. In other words, *what* I think and *how* I dance are not differentiated components. Bretall sums up Kierkegaard's thought on this matter. Bretall writes:

All the time we have been looking for truth in the object of apprehension—the 'what' of thought; suppose now that we look for it in the 'how', i.e., in the subject's relationship to what he thinks. The minute we do this we see that there is a kind of relationship of which we may say with absolute certainty that the individual who is in this relationship to an object is 'in the truth.'<sup>40</sup>

Could we say with certainty the basis of the relationship between the individual and society is an organic whole? For example, Krishnananda put it in terms of the body:

The organs of the body are related to the bodily organism itself. Though the hand and the feet can be perceived by oneself as objects of sense, they do not remain as external objects. They are organic parts of the whole body, which is the transcendence of the limbs.

Krishnananda goes on to say,

A totally disconnected object, as the world is, cannot be known by any individual consciousness. The involvement of the object of perception in the subjective operation of visualizing is necessary in order that perception can take place at all.... They are coeval in time and space...

<sup>38</sup> Hawforth, *In Search of Darkness*, 32.

<sup>39</sup> Graham, *Blood Memory*, 8.

<sup>40</sup> Bretall, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, 191.

The world is a constitution of the five physical elements, which also are the building bricks of the individual body.<sup>41</sup>

If that is the case, what is it that makes some people experience the body and mind separate? Or, theory and practice segregated? Are binary opposites to be blamed, or mal education? Nietzsche tells us it is the unintelligible phenomenon Kant and Schopenhauer called space and time. Philosophers have argued that space and time are vitally connected with every event in the world.

It is clear in *The Birth* that Schopenhauer read the Upanishads, as Krishnananda and Haworth, and interpreted the Indian evolutionary process of the universe as the adequate objectivity of the will, an immediate copy of the will itself, and therefore complements everything physical in the world. To write this thesis, I read the *Bhagavad-Gita* twice through to get a complete picture of the upanishadic wisdom as well as the way to apply it in the context of dance in discussion. According to Nietzsche, Schopenhauer says, “we might, therefore just as well call the world embodied will” (102). In modern theories, it is the nature of Dionysus, in his dual nature, holds together Life and Death, bliss and brutality. Dionysus is an elemental first spirit principle to seize upon the basic meaning of oneness:

It is only in the opposite of all agreement, in supreme tension, when the antitheses become wild and infinite, that the great mystery of oneness is proclaimed from the very depths of being. Nor is it just proclaimed. *Oneness* itself is revealed in Greek myth and cult as the deity who is mad—as Dionysus.<sup>42</sup> [my italics]

Kierkegaard also believes it is an absolute contradiction to be more than one.

This premise that we are all dancers is not entirely an accurate belief concerning the art of dance or the artistic process. The idyllic belief that every sentient being is a dancer is false. To borrow the words of Nietzsche, “this supposed reality is nothing but a

<sup>41</sup> Krishnananda, *Is Modern Science a Challenge to Religion?*, 28.

<sup>42</sup> Otto, *Dionysus Myth and Cult*, 121.

fantastically silly dawdling, at which everyone who could judge it by the terrible seriousness of true nature, and compare it with actual primitive scenes, of the beginnings of mankind, would be impelled to call out, nauseated" (118). In other words, it would be a dangerous mistake to call everybody a dancer. Indeed, dance is a specific art form.

How dance is applied metaphorically does not lie outside of the actual beginnings with traditional aesthetics, as noted in the passage immediately above by Holly Haworth. In her article *In Search of Darkness*, Haworth an environmental journalist urges us to contemplate *what is life* from the perspective of bioluminescence we cannot explain. In order to see life, like art, as not merely amusement or entertainment, we could consider it metaphorically. What role in the universe would you play? To summarize, dance as for the other arts must function as the paramount symbolic language through which community meanings are constructed and presented.

There are many artists of our modern times pushing the limits of this theory. I am amazed by the great sums of money that goes into adjudicating artists' grant proposals, the text. The non-theorist, Goethe, for Nietzsche, is a reminder of the productiveness of action, practice and the limits of Socratic knowledge. Socratic culture, he says, is a delusion of limitless power. In Jamaica, for example, we could be seeing the limits of this in the lowest strata by the dancehall culture. The wanton agitations and gyrations, desires of dancers being expressed, conjuring up of a Euripidean-type sensibility.

The problem of Jamaica today is the Alexandrian neo-colonialism requires a slave class. Consequently, the dancehall performers drift toward this class. There is nothing more terrible than artists and farmers objectified as a barbaric slave class. In the face of neo-colonialists, the very myth of dancehall resists denigration into a theoretical scholarship existence.

The dancehall frightens the fundamentalist culture of Jamaica. These artists have penetrated the academy. These artists, universally talented, know how to make use of the university domain, to point out the limits and the relativity of knowledge generally. These artists are showing decisively the limits of science's claim to universal validity and universal aims. And their import for the most part is extraordinary intrepidity and wisdom

needed to conform unobjectionable eternal truths. The work of these artists, to borrow Schopenhauer's words, is "lulling the dreamer still more soundly asleep" (112).

## Maya

Like Schopenhauer, Nietzsche tells us Kant showed that time and space, and causality really served to elevate phenomenon. Schopenhauer actually views humans and things as mere phantoms or dream images. What Schopenhauer has to say is really quite interesting in the context of "lewd," "slack," "vulgar," and "violent" dancehall performers in Jamaica. Senyshyn tells us there is an interesting twist in Kierkegaard's thought, which relates to Schopenhauer's view of human beings as "phantoms." Nietzsche tells us the aesthete stands in the same relation to the reality of dreams. Schopenhauer speaks of the veil of *maya*.

In Indian philosophy *maya* is illusion. An illusion could simply be described as a misinterpretation of the truth or veiling reality. For example, hearing human voices in the hum of something like a refrigerator. In Jamaica, for example, women and young girls have a tremendous obsession with wigs, hairpieces, and extensions. Some of these girls truly believe that when they put on their fake hair it is actually their own real hair. *Maya* doesn't really exist. The German word for illusion is *schein*. Beneath this veil is the truth. Nietzsche tells us the collapse of *principium individuationis* is the Dionysian intoxication. The outbursts, paroxysms of artistic power unveiled reveals the highest desire of the primordial being. In Indian philosophy *desire* is the longing to possess that which is not within oneself, but which is outside. The confusion in the world is considered neither outside us, nor is it inside. We are integrally related to the world. The two stand parallel to each other, inner and outer. They are inseparable. Schopenhauer sees the phenomenal world as *maya*, illusion that veils ultimate reality. Remembering that Schopenhauer read the Upanishads, in the following verse translated by a Hindu Guru, Swami Muktananda, we get a sense of human suffering caused by *maya*:

*The mind that is absorbed night and day in women  
Takes on the nature of a woman,  
The mind that is always angry burns in the fire of anger,  
The mind that is always thinking of maya  
Drowns in the pit of maya*

... the mind that is continually resting in Brahman  
eventually becomes That.

In more philosophical terms David White, a professor of religious studies writes:

...the chief cause of [the individual soul's] bondage in the objective world is ... Maya, usually considered to be an aspect of the God-(dess)'s eternal Sakti. It finds itself ... in the traditional series of categories. The Maya is the power by which the Supreme Being veils itself, so that the jiva [individual soul], enveloped by ignorance about its true cosmic nature, falls into the state of an individual subject with limited knowledge.<sup>43</sup>

This is rather interesting, and the place where Kierkegaard boldly uttered: "Truth is subjectivity." Senyshyn tells us the opposing force of what Kierkegaard calls the "individual" is the phantom public. In short, the phantom wants to level all beings to conform to uniformity. I believe this is fundamentally the cataclysmic climax of Kierkegaard's opposition to Hegel.

White's interpretation of the individual could potentially point to the truth of Kierkegaard's concept of subjectivity. In *Postscript*, Bretall tells us, in response to Hegel's concept of the "whole" is the truth (which contains everything), Kierkegaard said: "I am no part of a whole, I am not integrated, not included. To put me in this whole you imagine is to negate me...." What is the *whole* and how is it different from Kierkegaard's "outstanding individual?" For Kierkegaard – I believe he is saying "we" individuals permit the phantom to breed – because we succumb to the will or veil of *maya*. Are we deluded to think everyone and everything is part of Hegel's *whole system*? Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770 – 1831) identifies the Absolute with God. Hegel argued a philosophical system which both the past and future could be understood. Hegel conceived reality to be the "whole." This he referred to as the Absolute, or Absolute Spirit. Thus, Hegel's task of philosophy was to chart the development of Absolute Spirit.

<sup>43</sup> David White, *The Alchemical Body*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) 279.

On the other hand Kierkegaard says, like the Upanishads tell us, that we do not need to form gangs or “whole” armies, committees or groups to be “in the truth.” Kierkegaard wants us to be “outstanding,” to stand out or apart from the herd, to resist the phantom public, to remain in existence.<sup>44</sup>

In the Upanishads, *maya*, then, can also be interpreted as the veil of the gods for those lacking the insight to discern what is really real. Maya ensnares the world with creative appearances.<sup>45</sup> In this sense, the objective world is nothing but a “play of consciousness.”<sup>46</sup> In the context of the phantom public’s view of dancehall dancers as “lewd,” “slack,” “vulgar,” and “violent”; Schopenhauer, White, and others, like Kierkegaard, I believe, are saying, “anyone who really wishes to be helped to attain the highest is in fact benefited by undergoing such misfortune, and must rather desire it... the person attacked is always the stronger.”<sup>47</sup> For Kierkegaard: “The present age is essentially sensible, reflecting age, devoid of passion, flaring up in superficial, short-lived enthusiasm and prudentially relaxing in indolence.”<sup>48</sup>

With this insight, let’s look more closely at the Jamaican dancer in crisis. One of the country’s most profound characteristics is dance as entertainment. It takes the place of science as one of highest end—dance that uninfluenced by the seductive distractions of science.

Dancers need to move their bodies to a comprehensive rhythmic view of the world, and seeks to grasp, with African sensibilities, without the stigma of a slave class. Imagine a “generation” of youths with such audacity, the intrepidity of dance, with such a

<sup>44</sup> Bretall, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, 268.

<sup>45</sup> White, *The Alchemical Body*, 220.

<sup>46</sup> Swami Muktananda, *Play of Consciousness*.

<sup>47</sup> Bretall, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, 268.

<sup>48</sup> Kierkegaard (Edited and Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong). *Two Ages: the Present Age and the Age of Revolution, A Literary Review* (1846). Cited in Senyshyn (2010), 52.

heroic penchant for freedom. Imagine these stunning bold Trojan-*daggas*,<sup>49</sup> the proud nationalists audacity with which they straddle the dancehall to “grind” and “whine,” grounded, turning their backs on all doctrines of colonialism in order to dance resolutely in full erect wholeness. Would it not be necessary for this generation of dancers to desire self-expression for a serious new art, what Nietzsche calls “the art of metaphysical transformation?” (113).

## **Contagious *Riddimitis***

How dancehall dancers perform infallibility at holding their daggers, now that the aristocracy of ballet and other colonial forms of Socratic culture dominate the mainstream stage, and because these dancers no longer have its former naïve confidence in the *aeternae veritates*, is “downright disgusting!” A ‘live’ dancehall performance that was staged in the Cayman Islands and broadcast to the world via a *YouTube* video caused great political debate. The Legislative Assembly of the Cayman Islands reports young girls ages 11 to 17 years old, and adult men ‘*daggering*’. The performance called for serious action to enforce a policy to prohibit people under age of 18 from attending “public displays and participation in lewd, unacceptable and dangerous behaviour.”<sup>50</sup>

The Cayman Government’s motion indicated that government has a role to play in the licenses for street dances. The dancehall ‘*daggering*’ dance is not considered measured fun, but “disgusting” and “obnoxious.” The debate seems to be about how to legislate morality. Every generation seems to progress with what is appropriate behaviour.

<sup>49</sup> “Dagga” is the Jamaican term for a sexually provocative male dancer. Daggering is where a dagga and woman dance in a manner to simulate sexual positions, and often times, rough and “dry sex” on the dance floor. Dancehall artistes RDX and Mr. Vegas have both released daggering songs in tribute to the newly accepted term for the dance that has been present in Jamaica’s dancehall crisis for many years.

<sup>50</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.caycompass.com/cgi-bin/CFPnews.cgi?ID=1031285>

Certainly there were dances of the last decade we might find offensive today. The Government is concerned with how what Jamaicans call “dance” could damage a society’s Christian culture. Is *dagging* supposed to be Christian? I believe there are similar examples of “violent” and “dirty” dancing in many cultures, including modern dance in Canada, the United States, and Europe. Now that *dagging* is in the hands of the phantom public, the Caymanian members of parliament are shocked! But could the government solve the problem? What is most offensive about *dagging* is the moral stance of a society’s affluent aristocracy. What would be really offensive and would bother me is that adults watch children participate.

*Dagging* and other “offensive” “disgusting” “lewd” dances did not happen by accident. In light of Nietzsche’s *The Birth*, we could conclude the spirit of *dagging* is Dionysus. Pod casts are planned, filmed events produced for the world to see. Perhaps the only thing the government could do to correct the problem is to bring in trained and qualified dance educators to re-educate students. We should not look to Band–Aid the problem of violence and explicit sex in the dancehall. Surely we all arrived here through a sex act that could be argued involves elements of violence. What are the implications of a dance like *dagging*? Parents and educators have a responsibility to help the wider community to provide educational dance programs for children.

The government in Jamaica, and the Cayman I would argue has failed [the children] because of the almighty dollar. Dance education is the first to be cut. How have schools evolved so far away from the truth that we are now afraid of a concept where everyone has the right to earn a decent living, be it through the arts or science? As far as I observed, laws are firmly in place in places like Jamaica to deal with licensing bodies. It is time these government leaders look more closely at human rights violations as they unhesitatingly punish and prosecute others for “dirty” dancing. How long could government by-laws hold? I suppose it would be effective to implement educational strategies opposed to implementing old draconian laws. I believe it is not effective to talk about banning and censoring dance when in fact the problem is not the dance.

Instead, it would be more effective to talk about what is dance and how could dance education be implemented to address what sounds like a dance problem. A member of the Cayman government says, “we delude ourselves regularly, consistently

in this country by thinking that by drafting more stringent legislation and rigorous policies... that we can regain the old Cayman and traditional values... and keep sin at bay.”

The Member of Parliament, Mr. McLaughlin says, “... the actions in the video [dancehall *dagging*] showed a lack of self-respect and respect for others. He said he was particularly distraught by the fact that the males in the videos were adults and that other adults watched what was happening. We have, over the course of my lifetime, essentially lost the value of the family unit.” Certainly an 11-year-old girl *dagging* with adult male dancer, perhaps over 25-years-old, blows my mind. Those are young children lacking essentially care and love. McLaughlin believes people are getting away from God and blames the influence of Americans and television for the immorality growing like a cancer in the world. I agree with Mr. McLaughlin that the Ministry of Youth should be taking the issue very seriously. I believe a dance program should be included in a multi-organizational approach to addressing the dance crisis.

What is happening in Cayman and Jamaica is happening elsewhere. Fundamentally, Christians in Jamaica and the Cayman believe “reading the Bible” would help. Again, the crisis is blamed on the externals. Cayman Assembly minister Julianna O’Connor also believes that the deep-seeded reason for the problem is fear and the reverence of Almighty God has been greatly reduced or completely lost.” O’Connor says, “without God, there are no boundaries.” However, the boundaries around *the knowledge of the most worth* excludes dance from many schools including Caribbean Examination Council (CXC). Can we safely say ‘God’ and ‘no boundaries’ in the same sentence?

I believe my perspective on dancehall dance, whether it is ‘*dagging*’ or another form, is simple: governments are not be-all, end-all to individual and societal problems. But if the government can grant licenses for dancing in the streets, I believe it should play an equally vital role in granting young people appropriate educational opportunities to transform. Consequently the knowledge of the most worth to transform dance issues should include dance education.

The government must do something about the violence in the dancehall, and I think this is where government has to start. Teachers have a social role to fill in the

education of young minds, but this needs to coalesce with the passions of students and the environment they inhabit. It is a fabulous spectacle to see how the dance of improvisation, for example, rushes longingly toward ever-new movement forms, to embrace the sensuality of rhythm. It is certainly the sign of a new era of which every body part speaks as the fundamental joy of new Kingston dancehall culture.

Dissatisfied theoretical scholars in Jamaica cringe at their own consequences. Old-school scholars tip toe up and down the corridors of the University of the West Indies, pampering their views of a “culture of cruelty,” that deny children and students fundamental human rights, to know the truth.

The theoretical scholar, according to Nietzsche, “because he cannot comprehend the true nature of the artist, he conjures up the “artistic primitive man,” that is, the man who sings and recites verses under the influence of passion (117). Dancehall artists perform their passions to transform the principles of science.

In Jamaica we have this innermost development of this thoroughly modern variety of art, dancehall: art that responds to a powerful need, a non-aesthetic need. It is a primordial yearning for purity, power and innocence of which dancers and musicians conglutinate to rediscover a language of primitive man, a natural orgiastic artistic impulse, in order that they may break free in full song and dance with emotional “violent thrusts” of passion. It is indifference that the theoretical community conception of the dancehall is corrupt and lost. The dancehall, like opera, could be understood as, the opposition dogma of the good man... Nietzsche says:

It is enough to have perceived that the essential charm, and therefore the genesis of the new art form lie in the gratification of an altogether non-aesthetic need, in the optimistic glorification of an altogether non-aesthetic need... The ‘good primitive man wants his rights. (116)

Alongside Nietzsche’s view of opera, I place my view of that dancehall is not based on the same principles of Alexandrian culture. Dancehall, unlike opera, is born of an agricultural society, farmers, and the artistry: one of the most obvious facts in the history of all the arts in Jamaica. It was the demand of thoroughly musical performers, singers and dancers that before else, the natural rhythms of life must be understood.

Previously I mentioned in African philosophy and religion, it is argued that rhythm transport the dance and the dancer. Rhythm is as much as the soul and much nobler than the body. But what will become of the individual when the body is compared with knowledge or soul? Where at best the aim will be directed to the highest worth? Where is dance related to the knowledge of most worth to mirror the true dignity of the Dionysian subject? Closely observed, this process of dance on the individual could succeed in liberating the oppressed. It could succeed in “divesting music of its Dionysian-cosmic mission: a change, or transformation of the violent individual into the cheerful Alexandrian.

## **Renewal and Continuity**

How is the dancehall culture of music and dance to be renewed and continue to succeed? At the same time, the birth of a tragic period in Jamaica simply means, according to Nietzsche, a return to itself of Jamaican spirit, “a blessed self-rediscovery after powerful instructive influences had for a long time compelled it, living as it did in a helpless and unchaste barbarism, to servitude under their form” (121). Are we experiencing a “rebirth of tragedy” of the Dionysian spirit in Jamaica’s dancehall and rural farming communities? It is now that the highest of all teachers are needed, at present, to lead.

At the time of Nietzsche’s *The Birth* he said “there has never been another period in the history of art in which so-called culture and true art have been so estranged and opposed” (122). Culture he says is made up of three stimulants: knowledge, art, and indestructible life.

The academic programs of Jamaica’s institutions of higher education, in general, has very little to do with the performing arts. The CXC syllabuses for the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE) ([www.cxc.org](http://www.cxc.org)) do not include music, drama, theatre, or dance. CAPE is designed to provide certification of the academic vocational and technical achievement of students in the Caribbean who, having completed a minimum of five years of secondary education, wish to further their studies. The CXC offers certification including Caribbean Studies and Communications Studies, neither of which includes music or dance. The “plastic arts” are the only areas of artistic merit

recognized by the CXC. The 'plastic' artist, the product maker, triumphs over the performing artist, in all matters pertaining to culture and communication.

This must be incomprehensible for many students with a passion for the performing arts, which perhaps is to be comprehended only means of the profoundest principle of the theoretical man—the phenomenon of the Dionysian spirit that wiped out a culture of music makers and dance artists. To have an entire region of the world denied an entire cultural form, namely, dance, is testimony of a period in the history of art, the Socratic-Alexandrian, and the reborn. What will it take for school administrators in Jamaica to recognize the values of dance education and live performance? Nietzsche concludes, the gate should open for them suddenly of its own accord, from an entirely different side (123). Perhaps that other side is dancing in the streets, and the dancehall, quite overlooked in all previous cultural endeavours to oppress dance.

The dancehall symbolically gives dancers and music artists hope for a renovation of the Jamaican aristocracy. This is their faith in a rebirth of the ancestral spirit. Everything in Jamaica is becoming rigid and vigorously developed. Even the soil is turning to rinate, uncultivable in places where vegetation was abundant. Even sustainable resources are not limitless. But wherever there is music and dancing this previously described gloomy picture of Jamaica is changed. The Dionysian dancehall culture is magic. Dancers and musicians seize our eyes to look and listen to what so amply alive, immeasurable excess of life. Nietzsche says this excess is tragic, suffering, and pleasure.

How is transformation in Jamaica conceived? According to Nietzsche, "it is the people of the tragic mysteries that fights the battles against the Persians; and the people that fought these wars in turn needs tragedy as a necessary potion to recover" (124). Jamaican people had been deeply agitated through several generations, by the strongest Dionysian spasms of colonialism and slavery. This people's natural instinct is to fight! Jamaicans find expression in a dance of indifference to, indeed, in hostility to, the political/theoretical man. The dancehall is the prodigy of the principium and stage and patriotism individuationis, cannot live without an affirmation of the subjective individual. The culture requires this ecstatic dance to provide a philosophy of how to overcome, by the force of an idea, the indiscernible displeasure of the states that lie

between. Nietzsche believes people should go the path toward the most extreme secularization whose most magnificent but also most terrifying expression may be found in the Roman imperium.

The Greeks, situated between India and Rome, seduced purity to gain immortality. For Jamaicans, artists invented the dancehall. For that some of the best dancers and musicians of the contemporary epoch are to be found in the dancehall. The artist's political instinct's to chase worldly power and worldly *honour*, to attain more than a noble *honour*. Vybz Kartel, for example, an artist and businessman is making his followers feel fiery and contemplative at the same time drinking "Street Vybz Rum." The whole life of Jamaican dancehall is ensnared in tragedy. Its most potent prophylactic is the music, as the mediator of the people. The dancers absorb the most intense ecstatic rhythms, so that it truly brings healing, transformation among the audience. But then it can end in tragic violence.

How the body and soul have become contrasted, Nietzsche seems to provide no answer about it. Nietzsche says the Apollonian illusion reveals itself as what it really is—the veiling during the performance of the tragedy of the real Dionysian effect. The body performs in such a way to conceal the truth. But ultimately the body is forced to speak with Dionysian "wisdom." However, it cannot be denied that the two deities are intricately united: "Dionysius speaks the language of Apollo; and Apollo, finally the language of Dionysus" (130).

We could explore the body-mind connection in this sense. The highest *knowledge of the most worth* for the dancer is the symbolic realization of this interaction of two-in-one, mind and body, or body and soul. For example, if we consider the body the object (Apollo) and the soul the subject (Dionysus); then subjectivity and objectivity may be symbolized as non-identical twins, *indiscernibility of identicals*?

Myth according to Nietzsche is a concentrated image of the world. Without myth he says every culture loses the healthy natural power of its creativity. Myth alone saves all the powers of the imagination ... from their aimless wanderings. On the other hand, Jon Hawkes argues, "a sustainable society depends upon a sustainable culture. If a society's culture disintegrates, so will everything else ... vitality is the single most

important characteristic of a sustainable culture.”<sup>51</sup> Mythical notions are connected to religious beliefs, under which the soul grows. Myth is a kind of “mind-tool” that Egan (1997) considers in his formulation of what he calls “Mythic understanding” (p. 35). Egan believes human beings have a natural capacity to perform myths. Myths have existed since prelinguistic “mimetic” thinking. To interpret myths the *individual* must use the whole body.

Previously I introduced this idea by Kierkegaard, the individual in the masses had no importance whatsoever; “*the outstanding individual signified them all.*” In Nietzsche’s thinking, the mathematical is bent on the destruction of one individual. At one time the individual was courageous and could allow himself everything. Socratism, which tried to destroy myth, created the “mythless man” (136). What does this point to? The tremendous need to dance mythologize Jamaica’s sorrowful character, a culture that cannot be satisfied no matter how much it consumes, the consuming desire for knowledge. This dance culture is inextricably entangled in, or even identical with, the people, myth and custom. Jamaicans involuntarily relate all their experiences to beliefs. Indeed, to understand the dances in Jamaica it’s necessary to have a fundamental understanding of Jamaican culture.

As I mentioned earlier, Nietzsche says culture is made up of fundamentally three stimulants: people, art, and knowledge. How closely the people and art are related to knowledge illuminates the fundamental thesis question of *the knowledge of the most worth*. It is clear that art, music and dance, is integral to African-Jamaican people. To understand these dances as only historical constructs would smash metaphysical dimensions of its existence, with all its ethical considerations. The body is the house of all things we bring back ecstatically, the Dionysian, to guide and transport the dancer.

“Where the Apollinian receives wings from the spirit of music and soars, we thus found the highest intensification of its powers, and in this fraternal union of Apollo and Dionysus who had to recognize the apex of the Apollinian as well as the Dionysian aims

<sup>51</sup> Jon Hawkes, 2001, 21.

of art” (139). This coexistence is the most remarkable. The dancer, for example, appears to be performing for the spectator, yet at the same time he is being performed (transformation). The content of what is performed is a “metaphysical supplement of the reality of nature” (140). The dancer participates fully in the art, which is the “metaphysical intention” to transform the individual’s appearance and being.

## Closing

To close *di discussion pon di mad slave and di masta Dionysus* of music, how dance transforms the individual and a society is not a simple count yet it must be in *riddim* of time of the culture. This is the topic of the next section of this thesis. Kierkegaard comes back aptly to apply his conceptualization of subjectivity to the “individual” to stop the leveling demon of the masses and en-courage self-transformation. This is ideally what the great Mahatma Gandhi prophesized. Just days before Gandhi was assassinated, there was a terrorist attack on his life. Gandhi told the outraged chief of police to not harass his assailant but make an effort to transform him to right thoughts and actions. To be transformed the individual must attain religious courage.<sup>52</sup>

The pleasure of watching an African dance performance is in knowing that we will be transformed. This pleasure is not dancehall entertainment. But I believe the art of African-Jamaican dancehall performances could be transformative. The pleasure of the performance is not pity and fear. The myth of the performance is the *principium*. How can the ugly and tragic dancehall myth be judged as aesthetic pleasure? Nietzsche says, “we know the subjective artist only as the poor artist. Transformed is redemption from silencing” (48).

The dancer’s courageous surrender is subjective in the Dionysian process of transformation. The dancer moves from the depth of his being: his subjectivity. “It is not his passion alone that dances before us in orgiastic frenzy; but we see Dionysus” (49). A

<sup>52</sup> Bretall, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, 261.

certain musical mood precedes the idea. But most importantly we must talk about the union the identity of the dancer with the dance, the *identity of indiscernibles*. This is the basis of aesthetical metaphysics and how we arrive at *the knowledge of the most worth*.

## **Dionysian Daggas**<sup>53</sup>

*Chi non ama il vino, la donna, e il canto / Un pazzo egli sarà e non  
santo*<sup>54</sup>

(cited in Kierkegaard: *For Self-Examination, Judge For Yourself!*)

In Greek mythology, satyrs are companions to Dionysus. This troop, usually males but not exclusively, smoked pipes and roamed the forests and mountains freely. In Jamaica, the dancehall *affectedors* coupled with *affectedees* could appear, indeed to have contracted the Greek-like disease “satyriasis.” Satyrs are described as roguish but faint-hearted blokes— subversive and dangerous, yet shy and cowardly. A man who has “satyriasis” is with excessive and uncontrollable sexual desire. The female equivalent is nymphomania.

As enchanted Dionysian “affectedors” or what I call *daggering daggas* (dancing satyrs) of the dancehall, they are lovers of wine and women! According to J. H. Voss (1751 – 1842): *He who does not love wine, women, and song / Is a fool not a saint*. *Daggas* are no fools. They are ready for every physical pleasure! Wherever they are, day or night, music floods the air, heavy bass, driving rhythms, and hypnotic and ecstatic orgiastic dancing! Because of their love of Jamaican “Red Label Wine,” dancehall satyr-like *affectedors daggas* are represented holding cups, and voluptuous females appear in the explicit dancehall posters and advertisements. In *For Self-Examination*, Kierkegaard

<sup>53</sup> My interpretation of a *dagga* is adapted from the Greek word *satyros*. *New Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary* (n.d.) Winnipeg, MN, Canada: Processing & Books, Inc. *Satyr*, common attendants on Bacchus, and distinguished for lasciviousness.—*satyriasis*, a diseased venereal appetite in males.

<sup>54</sup> According to Hong & Hong, this slogan is commonly and incorrectly attributed to Luther. Kierkegaard also made the error of attributing it to Luther. It first appeared in a piece by a German poet-translator Johann Heinrich Voss (1751-1842). Voss’s piece presumably was offensive. The Italian rhyme is a perfect depiction of the desires of daggas *inna di dancehall*.

praised Luther for saying, “who loves not women, wine, and song he is a fool his whole life long.”<sup>55</sup>

Everything about the dancehall is merely a great Dionysian tragedy of chorus singing and dancing. According to the *Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, “The Greek theatre appears to have originally designed for the performance of dithyrambic choruses in *honour* of Dionysus. The centre of it was the orchéstra (‘dancing-place’), a circular space, in the middle of which stood the thumele or alter of the god. Round more than half of the orchestra, forming a kind of horse-shoe, was the théatron (‘seeing-place’) proper, circular tiers of seats, generally cut out of the side of a hill ... Behind the orchestra and facing the audience was the skéné (‘scene’)” (Harvey, 1946, p. 60).

The most publicized artistes of the dancehall are the musicians and deejays. However, dancehall culture is a space where inner city working class Jamaican *daggas* meet and celebrate conceptions in Dionysiac-style. This category of dancers consists of young satyrs, primarily males at least fifteen years old with no age limit. These satyr-like *daggas* may have some secondary education and a few may have done some tertiary studies. There is a much broader identity of dancehall *daggas* but my primary focus is the dynamic hype creators or *daggering daggas*. These *daggas* have historically been critically exiled from all other genres of Jamaican dance culture. Inevitably dancehall *daggas* aim to affect the public locally, regionally and internationally with his/her dynamic creation/re-creation and display of dancehall ideals, particularly those sexual and erotic dance moves (see *Illustration 3* for a list of these moves).

The dancehall space is a popular sociocultural space of power and domination. *Daggas* perform and others gather to watch and imitate. Hope says, “the dancehall dis/place operates as a site of revolution and transformation.”<sup>56</sup> Hope goes on to say, the dancehall mirrors the *existential place*. It provides a *space* for the lived realities of its affectors [*the creators of dancehall culture: song creators, sound system operators,*

<sup>55</sup> Kierkegaard, *For Self-Examination*, 1851, 1990, 16.

<sup>56</sup> Hope, 1997, 25.

*promoters/producers, visual creators, and Deejays*] and affectees [*consumers of dancehall's output*] [my italics] to be performed live. Hope labels these dancehall dancers “freaky hype type.” Hope confirms they are generally unemployed and depend on others for sustenance. Their flashy expensive attire is often gifts from family members abroad. The young men in particular exhibit great prowess in the dynamic dance styles, a critical component of dancehall culture. Since the early 1990s this category of dancehall dancers has been steadily increasing.

What I ascertain from dancehall “affectees” in relation to Nietzsche’s “*idealisches Zuschauer*” idealistic audience insofar as they are the true beholders of the visionary world of the dancehall god Dionysus. An idealistic spectator exist but not in the traditional sense of a public audience. Nothing is between the *dagga* and the spectator. The dancehall like the Greek theatres makes it possible for the spectator to be absorbed as a *dagga*.

In the light of this we may call the dancehall *dis/place* in its primitive form, a prototragic, in Nietzschean terms *the mirror image in which the Dionysian man contemplates himself*. This can be related to Kierkegaard’s notion of reflection in *The Present Age: A Literary Review* (1846) under the subtitle of “The Individual and ‘The Public.’” Kierkegaard proceeds to identify the problem of individuality in antiquity. For example, Kierkegaard says, “the individual in the masses had no importance whatsoever ... the outstanding individual could allow himself everything.” Kierkegaard believes that in our [his] “present age tends toward mathematical equality in which it takes so and so many to make one individual.” I believe Kierkegaard is referring to; for example, dancehall gangs form for the most outrageous purposes.

What is important about this is Kierkegaard’s insistence that the individual must be willing to take risks, in other words, to have courage, in order to do something without the fear of judgment. For Kierkegaard, courage and happiness are intimately related. The one who can reflect upon him/herself courageously will gain the moral stamina to act on decisions. Courage is an inner quality; therefore, the individual must turn within. Bretall succinctly expressed the following quotation about, not the inner reflection, which I believe Kierkegaard says is lacking in our [his] present age. Furthermore, the notion of

reflection, which I believe speaks to Nietzsche's "idea" of 'the mirror image in which the Dionysian man contemplates himself' in relation to the dancehall public.

By 'reflection' Kierkegaard means not the exercise of our intellectual faculties as such, but rather the tendency to feel one's reality as "reflected" in something external to oneself—and specifically not in another person (this would be love or religion), but in some collective organization.<sup>57</sup>

It is important to bear in mind essentially what I believe is lacking in the dancehall "dis/place," as Hope put it, in terms of the issues being addressed is not unrelated to reflection. Since the dancehall is a contested place, where artistes congregate to celebrate the art of "dissing"<sup>58</sup> and protest socio-political inequalities in the society, what Senyshyn writes is fitting:

The mirror image of the public is precisely to be reflected in a reverse image in the opposing direction of the artist's individuation. Precisely because the performing artist is the creator of the recital in its recreative immediacy and impact, the 'masses', society or audience – no insult intended – must collectively lose their conglomerate will and succumb to the essence of individuality even for a brief time. The performing artist must then assert his individuality in such manner that each member of the public must be drawn into an individual reaction and interaction with the music and its projection of it through the experience and being of the performer. If this does not occur, the performer has succumbed to the leveling process of the masses.<sup>59</sup>

The satyr-like dance troop in the dancehall is, first of all, a vision of the Dionysian mass of spectators. The *affectees*, those forming the circle, the rows all around make the performance possible. The architecture of the place appears like a luminous cloud formations—so the frame of Dionysus is revealed to them.

<sup>57</sup> Bretall, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, 260.

<sup>58</sup> "Dis" (2012). In *Urban Dictionary* online dictionary. Retrieved from <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=dis>. For example, to 'dis' someone would be to insultingly disrespect that person. Dis (1982). *The American Heritage Dictionary*. The Latin prefixes meaning "apart," "asunder," "away." (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.1982).

<sup>59</sup> Senyshyn, *The Artist in Crisis*, 49.

A dancer is a dancehall *affector* only insofar as he sees himself surrounded by *affectees* who breathe and dance before him and into whose inner nature he can see. Nietzsche says it is a “vicarious image” not a rhetorical figure (63). In other words, the more vivid the imagery is the more profound the dance. The dancer can then communicate this metaphoric image to a multitude of spirits, *affectors*. In this sense, the Dionysian dancer can metaphorically speaking, spread his/her intention by transforming him/herself into a “mask” in order to contemplate what he/she sees outside him/herself. Individuality is surrendered to step into the satyr-character *affector*. This epidemic of transformation is observed all over the island of Jamaica.

The dancehall dancers are thus essentially failing, however hard they are striving, to be “different” from all others. In our present age, I believe dancehall *affectors* are, in light of what Kierkegaard says, a “herd”<sup>60</sup> like everybody else possessed by the “phantom public” and its leveling process. However, according to Senyshyn, this process is necessary to develop “individual independence from the conformity and uniformity of the ‘herd’”.<sup>61</sup>

Although we are distinctly human animals, and since we are spirit by nature, we can only sink so far. But if we allow ourselves to be leveled we will surely sink. In light of this, I believe the Dionysian state is objectified, the individual is seen as universal, speaking of it with the symbolism of dance and music. The dancers behold namely the Dionysus nature its lord and master and is therefore “serving” a vision. Dionysus, the dancehall king of dancers, the real hero and center of attention, is not imagined.

*Inna di dancehall*, the human “king” or “queen” is visible for every eye—and thus “competitions” in the full meaning of the word takes place. Now the satyr-*affectors*’ posse or chorus have the task of exciting the mood of the *affectees* to such a Dionysian degree that, when the dancehall king and queen appear on stage, they see a visionary god or goddess, born from their own ecstasy. Involuntarily, they identify with the sufferings of

<sup>60</sup> According to Senyshyn, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche used the term “herd” in their writings.

<sup>61</sup> Senyshyn, *The Artist in Crisis*, 52.

the king or queen. Singing, dancing, and the dynamics of speech serve the epic hero. The Dionysian nature is revealed in the dance because “in the dance the greatest strength remains only potential but betrays itself in the suppleness and wealth of movement” (67). Thus the dance and music *riddims* of the performers amazes us, so we get a sense of feeling that we are looking into the inside and terrors of nature.

The dancehall kings and queens are portrayed by the “phantom public” to be understood as some of the most sorrowful figures of Jamaican society, and perhaps the world. This is largely related to the brutal violence pitted at women and homosexuals. The individual appearing to be, according to Kierkegaard, “not like everybody else,” Senyshyn says, is “the grand negation.” Thus, is “leveled.” This public “media” is a “nonentity” and master leveler of Dionysian revelers. What happens if the reveler does not participate in resisting the wraths of this nonentity? First, what is this nonentity? Kierkegaard explains this:

Only when there is no strong communal life to give substance to the concretion will the press create, this abstraction ‘the public,’ made up of unsubstantial individuals who are never united or can never be united ... and yet are claimed to be a whole. The public is a corps, ... [that] can never be called for inspection ... because itself is an abstraction. Nevertheless, if the age is reflective, devoid of passion, obliterating everything that is concrete, the public becomes the entity that is supposed to include everything. But once again this situation is the very expression of the fact that the single individual is assigned to himself.<sup>62</sup>

Going back to the former question, then, Senyshyn answers it succinctly with his response: “The inability of the individual self to participate in a developmental “qualitative movement” will lead to a form of spiritlessness; i.e., uniformity, conformity, despair and anxiety.” What Senyshyn believes has to be pointed out because that is precisely what I believe is going on *inna di dancehall* and other places in Jamaica. There is a great lack of understanding. Senyshyn provides a powerful quotation by Malantschuk to make this clearer—the real argument or premise of this thesis rests on the foundational belief that

<sup>62</sup> Senyshyn, *The Artist in Crisis*, 54.

aesthetic education in Jamaica is critical. Because, Malantschuk says, “the interior life of the single individual is on another and higher plane than that of the social and political, there is always interaction between the individual and society.”<sup>63</sup>

Despite the serious and important characters (i.e. dancehall ‘king’) they are destined to error and misery but who eventually, through tremendous punishment, spreads a magical incantation power over his followers that remains effectively loyal even if he wears shackles and behind bars. The concept of dancehall king is precisely that image which youths project in the streets of Jamaica. With what Nietzsche says in mind, the mother marrying, father murdering, riddle-solving Oedipus, it is in the dancehall we find violence born of incestuous causes. Like the Greek artist in particular who had an obscure feeling of mutual dependence when it came to the god; this feeling is symbolized ‘live’ in performance in the dancehall. However, Nietzsche tells us:

The best and highest possession mankind can acquire is obtained by sacrilege and must be paid for with consequences that involve the whole flood of sufferings and sorrows with which the offended divinities have to afflict the nobly aspiring race of men. (71)

Could this be the ethical basis of tragedy or crisis found *inna di dancehall*? The human evil, and suffering that accompanies that must be paid for “mendacious deception,” lust, rape, infidelity— a series of serious crimes against feminized beauty. The contradiction at the heart of the dancehall reveals itself as a clash of different worlds, i.e., of a divine and human one. Dancehall *affectors* have to suffer for its individuation. *Affectors* commit sacrilege and suffer. Nietzsche goes on to say,

In the heroic effort of the individual to attain universality, in the attempt to transcend the curse of individuation and to become the one world-being, he suffers in his own person the primordial contradiction that is concealed in things, which means that he commits sacrilege and suffers. (71)

<sup>63</sup> Senyshyn, *The Artist in Crisis*, 55.

For Nietzsche the Aryans understood sacrilege as masculine, and the Semites understood it as feminine. Nietzsche extols: a man commits the original sacrilege and the original sin by a woman. For Kierkegaard the individual is born in sin and as a sinner—This Kierkegaard says is the *Original Sin*.<sup>64</sup> However, it is necessary that the eternally striving individual will commit sacrilege. The impulse of the dancehall queen and king to become for youths a god and goddess, carrying them higher and higher, to fame and fortune, superstardom status in Kingston, Jamaica, and the world is what I believe *affectors* and the Dionysian have in common.

In this respect, the queen and king is a Dionysian mask. Yet his nature, at the same time, Nietzsche says “Dionysian and Apollinian.” From Goethe’s *Faust*, he says, “all that exists is just and unjust and equally justified in both” (72).

Greek tragedy had from the beginning Dionysus sufferings as the only stage tragedy. Dionysus is the tragic hero. All celebrated figures in Greek tragedy are mere masks of the original hero, Dionysus. Behind all masks is the deity or ideality of Dionysus. Dancehall satyrs ‘stray’ from the accepted standards or “ideals” of Jamaican society. Satyrs, in other words are in error not augurs. They stray on the wrong side of the law. Straying satyrs are masked dancers.

What is it called when using the same five letters spell two words that have exactly opposite meanings? Like ‘stray’ and ‘satyr’. Using Plato’s terms, Nietzsche says: “the one truly real Dionysus appears in a variety of forms, in the mask of a fighting hero, and entangled, as it were, in the net of the individual will.

The god appears talks and acts so as to resemble a straying, striving, suffering individual. That he *appears* at all with such epic precision and clarity is the work of the dream-interpreter, Apollo, who through this symbolic appearance interprets to the chorus its Dionysian state.

<sup>64</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript*, (1846/1991), 178.

It is intimated that this Dionysian state is suffering and like a transformation, and the cause of all suffering. Dionysus possesses the dual nature of cruelty and benevolence. This suffering leads to the end of individuation. This end is marked by the fundamental knowledge of the oneness of everything existent, awareness of the root cause of evil, and of art as *augury*.

The joyous hope that the spell of individuation may be broken, says Nietzsche, in peace, good fortune and wellbeing is the value of art. Art as augury can restore oneness. In Aeschylus Nietzsche recognizes the terrified ruler Zeus, fearful of his end, allies himself with the Titan Prometheus politicians. This can be seen in Jamaica through the dancehall kings or Dons allying themselves with titans. Thus the former inequalities, injustices of these titans is removed and brought to the light. Dancehall artistes use religious lyrics—“till the powerful fist of the Dionysian artist forces them into the service of the new deity. Dionysian truth takes over the entire domain ...” (74).

It was the power of music that transformed the myth that freed Prometheus from his vultures. This is reminiscent of what Seneca says, “we are sick with evils that can be cured; and nature, having brought us forth sound, itself helps if we wish to be improved.”<sup>65</sup> The sound system in Jamaica has reached its highest octave and most profound significance. This could be the most profound function of music to combat the crisis of anger and violence in the country. This is the way religion and art will not die out. According to Senyshyn the value of a dedicated live performer of music is “ideally a ‘single individual’ because he is a non-uniformist interpreter who does not view performing art as merely an exclusive vehicle of entertainment to alleviate the boredom and indolence of society. The message of the master performing artist tends to go against this inclination of the public.”<sup>66</sup>

Expressing a similar sentiment, R. G. Collingwood as for Kierkegaard views art must raise society’s consciousness. In other words, art is a power that must function as

<sup>65</sup> Rousseau, *Émile*, 481.

<sup>66</sup> Senyshyn, *The Artist in Crisis*, 56.

medicine for corruption and a diseased mind. We are reminded, “power corrupts individuals as well, but these corrupt individuals do make evils, whereas society remains and survives much longer.” I believe Nietzsche’s fundamental claim reiterates Kierkegaard’s claim that the problem of our modern age is more to do with spirituality and less with institutionalized politics. This belief is refined and especially true in light of Artaud, and *Zorba the Greek*.

## ***Daggas* and the Critic**

*Dagging* has the society divided into two: the *daggas* and their critics. *Dagging* has become the most controversial issue in the press and on the streets of the popular Jamaica paradise. Some people believe banning the dance *dagging* is long overdue. Still others think the new law is hypocritical, as controversial songs from other genres have remained untouched. Now if we speak of Jamaican cheerfulness in light of “Greek cheerfulness,” Nietzsche says it is “the cheerfulness of the slave who has nothing of consequence to be responsible for, nothing great to strive for, and who does not value anything in the past or future higher than the present” (78). It appears that dancehall art has always suffered from bad relations with the society at large. It seems to not have a proper relation with the public. But “public,” for Nietzsche is a mere word. Kierkegaard’s view is similar. Kierkegaard says,

A public is everything and nothing, the most dangerous of all powers and the most insignificant: once can speak to a whole nation in the name of the public and still the public will be less than a single real man, however unimportant.<sup>67</sup>

For Kierkegaard, “The public is the press, which by its very nature appeals to humanity’s lowest common denominator,”<sup>68</sup> and “a sinister power that has deified itself in order to escape its responsibility to an absolute morality.”<sup>69</sup> Kierkegaard’s epistemology

<sup>67</sup> Bretall, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, 267.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.

<sup>69</sup> Senyshyn. *The Artist in Crisis*, 57.

of the public press is critical to understanding some of the horrific labels African-Jamaican dancers must endure: “lewd,” “vulgar,” “licentious,” “slack,” “barbaric” (just to name a few). How do these labels undermine subjectivity? Kierkegaard must have had a critical eye on the vulgarities and irresponsibility of the press. Luther says: “*You are not only responsible for what you say, but also for what you do not say.*” Speaking primarily of his century, Kierkegaard says, *the present age is essentially a sensible, reflecting age, devoid of passion, flaring up in superficial, short-lived enthusiasm and prudentially relaxing in indolence.* He goes on to say: “that indolent mass sits with its legs crossed wearing an air of superiority, and anyone who tries to work, whether king, official, school teacher or the better type of journalist, the power or the artist, has to struggle to drag the public along with it, while the public thinks in its own superior way that it is the horse.”<sup>70</sup>

It seems to me that Kierkegaard believes the public of our [*his*] ‘age of reflection’ essentially is devoid of passion, truth, and subjectivity. Collingwood perceives this condition as a “moral disease.” Collingwood gives this explanation:

A person in whom the disease has become chronic is a person with a more or less settled conviction that amusement is the only thing that makes life worth living. A society in which the disease is endemic is in which most people feels some such conviction most of the time.<sup>71</sup>

The media irresponsibly and violently inflict pain and suffering on dancers without consideration of the power and inherent danger of the word. The result of this, according to Kierkegaard, can lead people to escape the spiritual requirements that essentially is key to becoming (‘not like everybody else’), a subjective and “outstanding” individual. Instead, the public’s role is significant to leveling down the performing artist to sex and sport. Even yoga in our present has become big business. Public media, then, according to Kierkegaard is a destructive phantom with no good intention. Kierkegaard’s harsh and priceless criticism of journalism is related to how he [Kierkegaard] himself was criticized by the press. Bretall writes:

<sup>70</sup> Bretall, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, 267.

<sup>71</sup> R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, 336.

At the time of writing *The Present Age* Kierkegaard's judgment of the Press was not the most objective imaginable, for the impudent *Corsair* had just launched against him its campaign of ridicule. Cartoons played up S.K.'s [Kierkegaard] physical peculiarities and idiosyncrasies, which were many. Everybody in Copenhagen read the *Corsair*, and S.K. became a household word; small boys hooted at him and followed him in the streets, when he tried to take his beloved walks. The "common people," whom S.K. (like many other professing aristocrats) sincerely loved and with whom he had been accustomed to mingle freely, were alienated from him and began treating him as an amiable lunatic.<sup>72</sup>

In *The Journals* (1850 – 1854), Kierkegaard's violent attacks upon the daily press are recorded. According to Bretall, this is what Kierkegaard wrote:

The lowest depth to which people can sink before God is defined by the word "Journalist." ... If I were a father and had a daughter who was seduced, I should not despair over her; I would hope for her salvation. But if I had a son who became a journalist, and continued to be one for five years, I would give him up ...<sup>73</sup>

The demoralization which comes from the press can be seen from this fact: There are not ten men in every generation who, socratically, are afraid of having a wrong opinion, but there are thousands and millions who are more frightened of standing alone, even with an opinion which is quite right, than of anything else. But when something is in the papers, it is eo ipso certain that there is always a good number of people having that opinion or about to express it.<sup>74</sup>

Indeed, if the press were to hand a sign out like every other trade, it would have to read: Here men are demoralized in the shortest possible time on the largest possible scale for the smallest possible price.<sup>75</sup>

Did Kierkegaard regret his action against *The Corsair*? Surely there must be some danger in that. From his attacks it's clear there are deeper psychological affects of the press. For Kierkegaard, and Collingwood, "art must function on a level that never

<sup>72</sup> Bretall, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, 259.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 431.

<sup>74</sup> Bretall, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, 430-431.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 431.

allows for such dangers or amusement or entertainment to undermine society's consciousness. Genuine artistic activity or 'art is the community's medicine for the worst disease of mind, the corruption of consciousness."<sup>76</sup>

What is the dancehall dancer bound to external to itself? It appears that dancehall artists are in complete possession of the audience's favour. There is no false relation between art and the public in the case of Jamaican aesthetics. How did these dancehall artists amass such riches of great respect—despite Hope's nomenclature *dis/place* that disgraces the objective nature of the dancehall? To clarify this questioning, Kierkegaard gives this example in the form of the knowledge of the truth of God. I believe Kierkegaard's view is that "if only the object to which he is related is the truth, the subject is accounted to be in the truth."<sup>77</sup> Kierkegaard makes his point in this quote:

Objectively, reflection is directed to the problem of whether this object is the true God; subjectively, reflection is directed to the question whether the individual is related to a something in such a manner that his relationship is in truth a God-relationship. On which side is the truth now to be found?<sup>78</sup>

In light of Kierkegaard's question, perhaps one could now ask, how did these dancehall artistes amass such riches of great respect—despite his disrespect for human life?

## ***Punishment***

### **The Poetics of a *Dagging* "King"**

*Dagging* "King" of the dancehall, Vybz Kartel is anxious about punishment and the death of his artistic career. It is summarized in his poem entitled: *Guilty before trial?* Kartel wrote this poem and sent it to the press from his prison cell in Kingston, Jamaica:

<sup>76</sup> Senyshyn, *The Artist in Crisis*, 56.

<sup>77</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript* (1846). Translated by Swenson and Lowrie, 178.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

The police have found me guilty and I haven't gone to trial yet, but they spread propoganda on T.V. & internet Dem a beat it in the people's mind that i'm guilty and deserve death, but the public knows how the police operate, so mi nah fret. So many people in court for allegedly taking 4, 5, 6 pickney life, So how they don't discuss that on 'CVM at sunrise'? Allegations of extrajudicial killings by security forces have already been issue, but i've never seen them on t.v. so much, talking about that, did you? Me never kill nobody yet but they say my music breeds crime, that's why they're on my case they want me imprisoned long time. I am an artiste so i know things will make the news, but don't crusade this ungodly way to distort peoples' views. Mi swear my innocence before all mankind and God, why would i risk going to jail Leaving behind 7 children, after mi nuh mad. I am not the first man. The romans soldiers have sacrificed, like me, that man was not guilty That man was Jesus Christ.<sup>79</sup>

Ironically, how many women and homosexuals have been made to suffer, all around the world, as a result of the blasphemous music by Kartel? In his poem, Kartel has attempted to construct a dialectical relation to the offense showing his anxiety. "This anxiety for the future is especially apt for the artist who, after an artistic transgression, would be anxious about 'the possible' of the 'next' concert," says Senyshyn. A poem by Kartel, sent to directly to the press is a kind of fantastical choice to show to the world his need to maintain a certain kind of artistic self-respect. Artists, like Kartel, who chose not to confess the reality of their inhumanity portrayed in chilling performances of killing is to say, according to Kierkegaard, "a man with a bad conscience cannot endure silence."<sup>80</sup> In other words, I believe Kierkegaard is saying like silence, God's punishment is not always apparent to us. Like silence, it is the unspoken or invisible punishment. This is unlike the punishment the artist endures from society.

God's punishment for an artist's transgression will ultimately lead to a kind of religious renewal and continuity. Dancehall artists do not only have a responsibility to self; they wield a great amount of power and thus, a responsibility to and for every individual and level of society. Kierkegaard says this about the three levels of individual

<sup>79</sup> Carolyn Cooper, "A Letter to Adidja 'Vybz Kartel' Palmer," *The Gleaner*, 11 March 2012. Retrieved from <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20120311/cleisure/cleisure3.html>

<sup>80</sup> Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, vol. II, (1843).

self in relation to a society: First, an existing self functions personally as a private individual (personal self). Then he also recognizes that individuals live with others in society (social self); and also have to live in a particular country as responsible, political citizens (civic self). The knowledge of the most worth explored in this thesis is a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary synthesis of self. The values of such a concept will become clearer in the next section of this thesis through the exploration of Kierkegaard's concept of subjectivity. Immediately, Senyshyn surmises it for us:

Operating on a spiritual level, then the political and social aspects of society will definitely improve. Thus, if a society is constantly maneuvering itself to relativist positions for short-term solutions, the outcome can only be a reduction or a complete erosion of the values of civilization. Thus, single individuals - artists or not - and single punishment must obey the order of divinity.

The values of what Senyshyn and Kierkegaard suggest is necessary in order for artists, like Kartel and Skerit Bwoy, to develop ethical and good behaviour. What these philosophers are saying is what the Arbaughs writes: "... purity of heart is to will one thing, the good ... To do good or will the good for any other reason – as reward or fear of punishment – is not truly to will the good."<sup>81</sup> The question remains, then, what is purity?

Kartel, who I mentioned earlier—ironically, was recently charged with conspiracy is currently in a Kingston prison pending the murder of Barrington Burton,<sup>82</sup> for example, is known for his obsession with skin bleaching and body tattoos. In fact, one aspect of Kartel's music empire is his brand of skin bleaching products for men. Like Euripides—imagine dancehall "kings" and "queens" undoubtedly feel themselves superior in masses in general despite the seemingly collective impurity and self-hate. As Kierkegaard put it

<sup>81</sup> Arbaugh, George and E. George Arbaugh. *Kierkegaard's Authorship*, 244.

<sup>82</sup> Caspar Llewellyn Smith, "Jamaican dancehall star Vybz Kartel charged with murder," *The Guardian*, 4 October 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2011/oct/04/vybz-kartel-charged-murder>.

aptly, “the present age tends toward a mathematical equality in which it takes so and so many to make one individual.”<sup>83</sup>

Skin bleaching is a growing problem in Jamaica, where young people, men and women, want to look like others. These skin bleachers, Kartel satyrs, make the masses powerful. Neil Persadsingh, a leading Jamaican dermatologist reported a Jamaican woman bleaching a baby. Only in their voices of those on stage could any conclusive judgment of Kartel’s destructive work be made. One music artist amassed enough money to create tyranny in the dance and music community. Unlike Aeschylean tragedy and Sophocles, Euripides tried to change Greek tragedy in many ways.

In 2010 Kartel was elected “Caribbean Artist” of the year.<sup>84</sup> That is not just in Jamaica. Just to give you an idea of his fame. March 2011, Kartel was invited to the University of the West Indies by a senior professor to lecture and inaugurate a new academic scholarship in his name, to be awarded to a promising student in literatures and cultural studies. In the case of a Jamaican musician who helped to popularize *dagging*, Kartel, we are not surprised by the two interwoven artistic impulses of Greek tragedy, the Apollonian and the Dionysian. The all-powerful Dionysian element cannot be separated from the superstardom; and the tragedy of what is going on in the dancehall in Jamaica. What is the value and significance of artists like Kartel?

How is an alleged murderer entitled to exist at all as an artist? Should he be exterminated from the aesthetic realm? In *Judge For Yourself* Kierkegaard recognizes the need for punishment. Kierkegaard’s historical and philosophical view on punishment is a compassionate humanitarian. Kierkegaard recognizes a criminal or murderer, as in the case of Kartel, is a form of *duality* – kind of like a Cartesian split. Senyshyn sees it as psychological and spiritual (moral) disorder; one’s inability to cope with life challenges that leads the individual to a loss of *self*.

<sup>83</sup> Bretall, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, 260.

<sup>84</sup> Miss Gaza, “The Year 2011 & Vybz Kartel.” Retrieved from <http://missgaza.com/the-year-2011-vybz-kartel>.

This is a critical consideration in identifying the knowledge of the most worth leading to transformation, which I will develop later in this thesis. Kierkegaard seems to be saying that the pain associated with this loss is silent. We cannot put words to 'how', for example, a dying soul feels. It could be equated to having a dream that is so sublime but the moment you wake up it vanishes. You remain lying in bed desperately trying to recall it but you simply cannot and never will. It is gone forever. Another way of feeling the pain of a dying soul is to imagine a demon attached to your body and you're trying to get away from it, but you can't because it is your own self. Kierkegaard's conception of self is difficult. He says, "man is spirit. But what is spirit? Spirit is the self? But what is the self? The self is a relation which relates to its own self."<sup>85</sup> In the case of the dancehall "king" Kartel, Kierkegaard writes this about the implications of anxiety and punishment:

... there exists a righteous rationality, and I put my trust in its compassion, believing that it is compassionate enough to be just; for it would not be so dreadful if I were to suffer punishment which I had deserved because I had done wrong, but I would be dreadful if I should be able to do wrong in such a way that no one punished it; and it would not be so dreadful if in the infatuation of my heart I were to awaken with anguish and horror, but this is the dreadful thing, that I might so infatuate my heart that not one could awaken it.<sup>86</sup>

According to Senyshyn, Kierkegaard believed that every transgression made by a human being could only be corrected or righted if the concurrent punishment associated with the transgression be carried out.<sup>87</sup> Transgression in this sense is much more serious than a mere musical stylistic error(s). For example, it could be a complete forgetfulness of humanity. This is especially true in Jamaican dancehall culture where "kings" like Kartel are notorious for gay bashing music lyrics and misogyny. This kind of transgression is a showing a great lack of awareness and irresponsibility. In the dancehall there is wild applause by the audience for music lyrics that bash homosexuals, and promote misogyny. Are there ethics for Jamaican dancehall artists? Some of these

<sup>85</sup> Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death* (1849), 146.

<sup>86</sup> Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, vol. II, (1843).

<sup>87</sup> Senyshyn, *The Artist in Crisis*, 23.

lyricists have had their American visa applications rejected and/or banned from performing in certain places of Canada, the United States, and Britain. Furthermore, Andrei Laskatelev reports:

Jamaican authorities have recently made international news after officially outlawing a new dance – “*dagging*.” The Jamaican prime minister named the hot dancehall hit filthy, and the island’s Broadcasting Commission has banned it from the airwaves due to its mimicry of sexual positions, with lyrics going even farther. From now on, any DJ or VJ will be fined if he breaks the new law. The dancing population has divided into two armies – the daggers and their critics. *Dagging* has become the most discussed issue in the press and on the streets of the popular Caribbean paradise.<sup>88</sup>

It is a matter of time before Kartel and others are stripped of their satyrs. Senyshyn says,

With time – they are ‘punished’ by being forgotten by the public and critics by means of the ethics of artistic integrity and survival. In the event that a transgression goes unpunished or is of such a magnitude that it escapes earthly justice, the one must not despair even if death interferes in the process of punishment.<sup>89</sup>

Senyshyn goes on to say:

Even if the world and the individual forgets the wrong, it is a legitimate artistic wrong, the world and especially the individual will suffer the ‘purgatorial fire’ of unrequited punishment. Presumably in this extremity, the ‘fire’ would burn unconsciously and cause the ambiguity of anxiety and thus tension, guilt, conflict.<sup>90</sup>

Then no artist can escape injustice and punishment. At the very least, this could mean losing one’s place in the world. Kartel, for example, is being reduced to silence.

<sup>88</sup> Retrieved from <http://thisisdiversity.com/articles/all/88/The-Daggers-Most-Wanted-in-Jamaica>

<sup>89</sup> Senyshyn, *The Artist in Crisis*, 26.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

No more concerts. But Nietzsche tells us Dionysus god is too powerful. Kartel behind bars continue to produce dancehall *riddims* that reach his followers on the outside. Even a rumour that he escaped from prison went viral within no time. Dancehall artists with heroic prowess like Kartel, and former *dagging* dance champion Skerrit Bwoy, throughout their careers remain marvellously suicidal and endure the perpetually self-propagating worship of a Dionysiac energy. But for Kierkegaard, in the following passage, God is the ultimate witness who watches over all transgressions including artistic deaths.

And then finally all is over; death rolls down the curtain—and to all this ... there was an eternally unchangeable witness ... it is with this witness that you must make your reckoning. In the instant that the minute-hand of time showed seventy years, and the man died, during all that time the clock of eternity has scarcely moved perceptibly; to such a degree is everything present for the eternal, and for Him who is unchangeable.<sup>91</sup>

Senyshyn adds, “posterity ultimately decides on the nature of this artistic ‘crime’ and the punishment that must accompany it... Thus, the legitimacy of punishment is established because free will and God work hand in hand to maintain the equilibrium between eternity and temporality-punishment forgiveness. Thus punishment becomes a necessary evil.”<sup>92</sup> What Kierkegaard and Senyshyn are, indeed, saying is a critical consideration in transforming social imbalances and violence in Jamaica’s dance community. Dancehall artists like Kartel have amassed enormous fortunes with hundreds of thousands of followers around the world. These artists have ventured wrong; therefore, *life helps them by punishing them*. According to Kierkegaard, only God in all His eternity could ultimately correct the behaviour of, for example, Kartel and his satyrs. What is eternity?

Eternity is that present which always is was and will be in the everlasting moment of the now. The highest level in the eternal is its relative capacity to move synchronically and ‘justly’ in the temporal affairs of the world in

<sup>91</sup> Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, vol. II, (1843).

<sup>92</sup> Senyshyn, *The Artist in Crisis*, 26.

appropriate punishment after the luxury of free will has been entertained by a given individual who has now departed forgets nothing.<sup>93</sup>

What is required to change dancehall artists who propagate violence and killing?  
First, according to Senyshyn:

Fear of punishment should not be a motivating factor in the actualizing of the good; for then an artist or any individual does what 'he continually really would rather not do' and thus merely goes through the mechanics of ethical behaviour; in other words, one's heart is not in it and thus becomes a negation of the good.<sup>94</sup>

According to *The Birth*, these artists appear to be fearlessness put into practice. Euripides combated the Aeschylean tragedy with an "altogether new-born demon, called Socrates" (82). The Socratic tendency changed the languages of Greek drama. Similarly the language of dancehall artists is changing. Kartel reportedly claims to no longer to be interested in violent and misogynistic lyrics. Dancehall artists are perceived as thinkers now. Euripides using his head to appeal to the heart of the spectators, what could be the aim of the non-violence design of dancehall music, in its most ideal form, would it be the un-Dionysian? Nietzsche says the power of the "aesthetic Socratism" (83). Euripides could not use the stimulants of Apollonian contemplation and the affects of Dionysian ecstasies. For Socrates, "to be beautiful everything must be intelligible" (84). This idea mirrors the Socratic dictum "knowledge is virtue." Nietzsche says, "so long as the spectator has to figure out the meaning of this or that person, or the presuppositions of this or that conflict of inclinations and purposes, he cannot become completely absorbed in the activities and sufferings of the chief characters or feel breathless pity and fear" (84).

Intoxicated artists *inna di dancehall* that created unconsciously did what was "wrong." In *The Birth* Euripides condemns these poets. Plato, too, speaks ironically

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 29.

about the poet, as not conscious, and places them as that Dionysian monster that bears the name *Zarathustra*, the soothsayer. Plato, like Euripides, showed to the world that aesthetic beauty must be conscious. This parallels Socrates' "to be good everything must be conscious." So "aesthetic Socratism" is considered the poetic quality of Euripidean activity. In order for a new dancehall aestheticism to rise, the older tragic form must die. How could Socrates claim to know "nothing" (87) what could this mean?

To the astonishment of many Jamaicans, it was ludicrous that the alleged murderer Kartel should be allowed into the University to lecture students. Those opposed to Kartel's intellectual engagement endangers the minds of Jamaicans. These celebrities are presumed to be without a proper insight, even with regard to their professions, and that they practice them only by instinct. Stripping Kartel of intellectual insight would give him an ally. He could plead insanity or madness! In light of what Nietzsche says, this dancehall Socratism threatens the hem of what would give many Jamaican students the greatest happiness. Socratism, Nietzsche says, "condemns existing art as well as existing ethics. Wherever Socratism turns its searching eyes it sees lack of insight and the power of illusion; and from this lack it infers the essential perversity and reprehensibility of what exists.

The critics of Kartel are out to shatter the beautiful dancehall world with audacious pens! Who are the demons of Jamaican-Socratism? This voice appears to dissuade and hinder all productive men. In Socrates, Nietzsche says it is instinct that becomes the critic. Kierkegaard calls it the leveling public.<sup>95</sup> Anyone familiar with Kierkegaard critique of the media will also feel how the enormous driving-wheel of logical Socratism is in motion in Jamaica, as it were, behind the critic.

To Socrates tragic art was untruthful and intellectual. Like Socrates, Plato condemned art in general, "imitation of a phantom." (90). Plato turned to a model of the novel. This was the new philosophical thought and the transformation of the Dionysian. The virtuous hero must now be a dialectician. The whole sub-stratum of the Dionysian

<sup>95</sup> Bretall, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, 261-268.

tragedy as is the chorus changed. The Socratic optimism drives tragedy out of music. Nietzsche tells us in the process the artist must now defend his actions with logic and reason – necessary in bourgeois drama. Here lies the death of tragedy and the Socratic maxims: virtue is knowledge, man's sins from ignorance, he who is virtuous is happy. Now, the virtuous hero must be a dialectician? In prison, Socrates confronts his high philosophizing conscience and practices music. Kartel practices his hand at writing Christian discourses. And yet Socrates' death in 399 B.C.E. has figured large in our world ever since, shaping how we think about heroism and celebrity, the death of an artist, state control and individual freedom. In the case of Kartel, Senyshyn points out that Kierkegaard says,

Generally people find it easy, in the case of a murder, to place the guilt upon another person's conscience; but with the help of forgiveness to put his guilt behind one's back comes very hard. But not for the lover, for he hides the multiplicity of sins.<sup>96</sup>

For Kierkegaard, suicide is the interpretation of objective striving. One can draw out the extreme consequences of this claim and seize on the profound and frenzied philosophy of Dostoyevski's *The Devils*, writes Jean Baechler:

Suicides are remarkably rare because men have a fear of suffering and of the beyond; But there must be a great deal of fear; in the end, everybody must kill himself, for life is but terror and suffering; to choose life is to choose terror and suffering; the true end of life is to overcome suffering and rear and to attain absolute freedom; that is possible only by killing oneself because to kill life is to suppress the terror and suffering that are of a piece with it; By killing oneself, one becomes God, and one proves that God does not exist, on the condition that one does so, not out of terror but in order to do away with terror: "he who kills himself only to kill fear will at once become a God."<sup>97</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Senyshyn, *The Artist in Crisis*, 31.

<sup>97</sup> Jean Baechler, *Suicides*. (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1975) 50.

## **Section 2**

# Part 1

## *The Subjective Proposition*

Before we venture into the truth of Kierkegaard's subjectivity, in relation to transformation, it is critical what the Arbaughs say must be immediately noted. Since a 'venture' is an act by which one transforms, for example, from no belief-to-belief, this will require some steps. In the section of this thesis *The Praxis of Transformation* I give examples of what I view as objective or practical 'Kierkegaardian-steps' one could take toward self-transformation. Kierkegaard's *subjectifying process*<sup>1</sup> of the Christian notion of truth is objectively grounded in this analysis. The Arbaughs clarify Kierkegaard's use of the term subjectivity is unfortunate because it cannot be separated from objectivity:

S.K. [Kierkegaard] finds objectivity so necessary that he insists that man can attain true subjectivity only by manifesting infinite concern with eternal truth so as to evidence it in his living. There is no such thing as faith but only faith-in-God, no such thing as subjectivity but only subjectivity-appropriating-objectivity... Life in all of its relations is transformed by the subjectivity-objectivity; when man chooses himself absolutely he brings the sovereignty of God into all his living.<sup>2</sup>

In this thesis Jamaican dance assumes the "objective uncertainty." Socratically speaking, Kierkegaard says "subjectivity is untruth if it refuses to understand that subjectivity is truth, but, for example, desires to become objective." For Senyshyn visible and invisible aspects of existence cannot be ignored. Senyshyn believes there is a precarious balance that must be maintained by the performer. In agreement with Senyshyn, this thesis is written to illuminate what Kierkegaard believes to be the truth in relation to Jamaican dance.

<sup>1</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript* (1846), 185-186.

<sup>2</sup> Arbaugh, George and E. George Arbaugh, *Kierkegaard's Authorship*, 225-226.

All students, teachers, and artists should benefit from this thesis. It explores the performance of a *radical*<sup>3</sup> fanatic Jamaican dance *dagging*. As I mentioned earlier, it is politically “violent” sexually explicit live dancing, largely entertainment performed by youths and mature adults *inna di dancehall* in Jamaica. Reports say doctors in Jamaica are “alarmed” by the new *dagging* dance craze due to the number of broken penis cases have tripled in Jamaica’s hospitals.<sup>4</sup>

Apparently Jamaican dance can get too rough. Dancers fracture their penises, causing extreme pain, inflammations and bruises. Those who know something about Jamaica “the land of wood and water,” this dance craze is not at all surprising. *Dagging* style of dancing is not new. This style of dancing is synonymous with the dancehall culture of living. Through the globalization of dancehall culture, the dance *dagging* has spread throughout the Caribbean, Canada, the United States, Poland, Japan, China and other places around the world. The spiritual implications of this style of dancing explored in this thesis are important, as mentioned above it relates to a kind of death for an artist.

In light of Kierkegaard’s subjective proposition, “how” a Jamaican *dagging* dancer acquires “the ethical” is the subject of this thesis. It is not my position to argue against this style of dancing. The objective is to elucidate the educational implications of Kierkegaard’s concept of subjectivity in the context of a very contentious aesthetic for obvious reasons. Is it about sex?

In light of Senyshyn’s position above, Kierkegaard’s concept of subjectivity is pursued from my perspective as an African-Jamaican dance artist and teacher. Hence the position taken that the subjective-objective cannot be ignored. From a

<sup>3</sup> “Radical” here refers to an attack on the roots of some prevailing problem. According to Kierkegaard, this can never be done directly. What exactly are these dancers attacking? I suppose they are experiencing something very frightful, perhaps their style of living is challenged, which is a large part of our values, which we need. John Mullen says if we sense a challenge, we will respond with anxiety, and fanaticism (both are problems of courage).

<sup>4</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.inquisitr.com/25536/broken-penis-cases-triple-in-jamaica-due-to-daggingdance-craze-video/>

Kierkegaardian point of view, this might sound paradoxical but it is not. John Mullen dichotomized and clarifies the existential paradox in Kierkegaard's concept of subjectivity. Mullen's explanation of the paradox makes it clear what the paradox is, removing any obscurity from Kierkegaard's philosophy. Mullen makes it clear that perhaps there is no paradox:

A person must be detached about his life, his values, and opposing values, while being at the same time committed to his own values. To be committed is to be subjective; to be detached is to be objective. A person must be both a subject (a center of commitment) and an object (an item of analysis) to himself. Yet these are opposing tendencies. They can never be made to live harmoniously together. They will always cause you trouble (anxiety) insofar as you attempt to satisfy both, and yet this is exactly what you must do. This is therefore a problem which is built into the requirements of being a person. That is what an existential paradox is, a problem (source of anxiety) which goes away only when you cease to be a complete person—in death, in insanity, in self-deception. A distinct existential problem exists with the opposing requirements of being oneself and being related to others, of self-assertion vs. relatedness.<sup>5</sup>

*In defense of himself, Kierkegaard says an explanation of the paradox makes it clear what the paradox is, removing any obscurity remaining; a correction takes the paradox away, and makes it clear that there is no paradox. But if the paradox arrives from putting the eternal and an existing human being into relation with one another, when the speculative explanation takes the paradox away, does the explanation also take existence away from the existing individual? And when an existing individual, with or without assistance from another, has arrived at or been brought to the point where it seems to him as nearly as possible that he does not exist what is he then?... The explanation is that the paradox is the paradox only to a certain degree, and it is quite in order that such an explanation should be valid for an existing individual who is an existing individual only to a certain degree.*

<sup>5</sup> John Mullen, *Kierkegaard's Philosophy: Self-Deception and Cowardice in the Present Age*. (New York: New American Library, 1981) 46-47.

As abstract as all this *dagging* sounds, it is critical. This dancehall phenomenon is not without some serious medical implications. In addition, these “dancers” are experiencing a crisis of spirituality, yet they may not think it. They overlook and neglect to take into account the implications of what looks like a comical impression upon the mind even if it is distinguished as “entertainment.” If the Spirit is Lord, this is the beginning of becoming aware of subjectivity in dance. In light of this, initial questions of dance needs to be clear. What is dance? And who is the dancers?

## **Violence**

Of course this kind of reasoning is shocking and perhaps the best reason for discrediting anyone who takes his own life. Obviously, they are not playing by the rules. I would not like the foregoing pages to be misunderstood. In no way do they constitute a right to choose violence; they are an attempt to distinguish its human dimensions. That violence is a call to freedom, dignity, and a right to happiness. Freedom, dignity, and happiness have been part of the artists’ ceaseless fight. Our present age is not making it any easier to confirm these values. In agreement with Kierkegaard and many others, Senyshyn writes:

... a transgressor or criminal cannot be properly ‘rehabilitated’ unless society as a whole and individuals, in particular, are willing to forgive the individual after the dictates of punishment have been met. Only then can one honestly say that justice has been served on the basis of the miracle of faith.<sup>6</sup>

My analysis of extreme violence is intended to establish a Kierkegaardian approach to artistic death and suicide. In the next section, “Violence in Jamaica,” *Illustration 4* shows some aggregate statistics to preface my analysis. These figures are approximations and lead only to general and vague propositions. It should be made clear that the violence vis-à-vis artistic death and suicide is an existential problem. Thus, this is primarily a philosophical investigation of the problem to consider the questions

<sup>6</sup> Senyshyn, *The Artist in Crisis*, 32.

“how” and “what” of the Jamaican crisis. This distinction is critical for understanding Kierkegaard’s concept of subjectivity. It designates a result that must be attained by a subject and in such a way the subject’s project is realized.

If someone were investigating a death, it wouldn’t be unreasonable to begin with “why.” But it would be even more appropriate to approach a Kierkegaardian thesis with ‘how’ and ‘what’, as I do.

The fundamental thesis is that violence; suicide or killing is not a solution to a problem. Violence is undertaken, like suicide, to resolve a particular problem in a certain way is an artistic death. Consequently, the exploration hinges on the how to give meaning to the problem of violence in Jamaican dance. In other words, what is happening with the subject that he understands how such an action could attain such a goal? This puts the focus on the subjective individual who is looking for a solution to a problem. The ‘how’ of the matter is critical to the whole notion of transformation beginning with the individual self. I point to two fundamental directions: (1) circumstances that bring subjects to violence; (2) the production of violent subjects. Jean Baechler says ‘man is a being who pursues ends and must resolve problems that confront him in the pursuit of ends. In this sense, human action is a free activity of the soul because it results in a project that the subject is always free to undertake or not.’ This is why, depending on whether one puts the “accent” on the how or what of the existential problem, we can decide an appropriate solution.

Violence can be interpreted as the ultimate sign of freedom. According to Baechler, the subject perceives killing, for example, as mastery over life and death through the solution to kill himself or another human being. The subject chooses freely to kill. This is to say that the same subject could also choose not to commit violence.

What is perplexing about violent killing is that it shows a kind of nonconformity to the objective masses and a kind of radical resistance to the *leveling process* of Kierkegaard’s philosophy. The problem of what it means to die. Earlier in this thesis Kierkegaard is noted: *To be finished with life before life has finished with one, is precisely not to have finished the task.* For example, according to Kierkegaard, the Sotic’s regarded suicide as a courageous deed, and others consider it cowardice. In the

same degree that life is to become subjective, the uncertainty of death comes more and more to interpenetrate subjectivity dialectically. The uncertainty is there in every moment, the ethical issue can be overcome. Perhaps this could be the case for Hickling's world-historical thesis.

Hickling's method of *Psychohistoriography* may be a starting point for understanding the problem of violence in Jamaican dancehall. Delusional psychosis may be contagious in the way St. Vitus's dancing madness is perceived to be a contagion, which I discussed earlier. If Hickling's psychological thesis is correct, it goes to say Jamaican dance is not vulgar and slack in general, although the fact remains that *dagging* for others is "disgusting!" Why? Kierkegaard says, "if the task of life is to become subjective, then every subject will for himself, become the very opposite of such a something in general."<sup>7</sup> Among other things, what is not 'disgusting' is what is happening to the subject in the moment he commits the act. It is still embarrassing for many Jamaicans to have so low a portrayal of Jamaican contemporary culture.

The subject of death comes up repeatedly in Kierkegaard's concept of subjectivity. He seems to believe death is dialectically related to becoming subjective. The question of what it means to die in this thesis is being related to Senyshyn's plea in the "Preface" of his seminal work *The artist in crisis*: "I firmly believe that it is a kind of death for an artist to give up." What is questioned is whether dancers in Jamaica have an idea of death of a performance career? Or do they think death is only something that happens to the body in old age? Kierkegaard provides this explanation:

Since the actual death is a non-being, I should have to ask whether it follow as a consequence that death is only when it is not; or whether, in other words, the ideality of thought can over death by thinking it, or whether the material is victor in death, so that a human being dies like a

<sup>7</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript* (1846). Translated by Swenson and Lowrie, 149.

dog, death being capable of being conquered only by the dying individuals apprehension of it in the very moment of death.<sup>8</sup>

If practicing Jamaican dancers cannot apprehend death by any means of any conception other than violence, there surely will be difficulties. I believe Kierkegaard's concept of subjectivity is important to this topic as it relates to the ultimate goal of transformation. It is distinguished to prepare the individual for the consequences of taking for granted spirituality and the task of life.

The task is not to prepare the practicing artist for death, but how an ethical expression for the significance of death could raise the possibilities of finding a subjective victory over death. The task for Kierkegaard is to become subjective, that thought of death is not. The development of the subject is in fact that he wants to make something of his art. This involves active interpenetration of himself by reflection.

The artist is not always thinking about death. But he really does attend to it every moment. Quite naturally then everything becomes more and more subjective. Death is subjective. We die alone. No one can know our death. Kierkegaard writes: "When a man speaks about death, and of how he has thought it and conceived its uncertainty, and so forth, it does not follow that he has really done it.... There is a more artistic way of finding out whether he lies or not," and I agree, let him dance; Martha Graham said: "movement never lies."

Dance originates from moods and the emotions and, according to Kierkegaard, "the emotional is the internal."<sup>9</sup> By becoming subjective, Kierkegaard believes the individual puts the subject of immortality to himself. Immortality is precisely the potentiation and highest development of the developed subjectivity therefore the question cannot be answered objectively. It cannot be answered in social terms. The question of immortality belongs to the subject alone. Kierkegaard says, "when I am

<sup>8</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript* (1846). Translated by Swenson and Lowrie, 150.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

conscious of my immortality I am absolutely subjective.” Immortality is the most passionate interest of subjectivity. The dancer asks not about immortality, but about his own immortality, and what it means, whether his behaviour now has anything related to his belief, or whether he becomes immortal.

The significance of this questioning is related to transforming the violence and killings in Jamaica and the dancehall. This could have something to do with relegating his task as an artist to the highest. Ultimately the question raised is how ought one to dance? The exploration in this section is the philosophical and psychological complexities of how the concept of death impacts the individual performing artist and a society.

We know the problem of violence in Jamaica hinders the lives of many who have to extinguish it and deal with those subjects. Which is in part the impossibility of quantifying the outcome and effects of violence with any certainty. One can see from the considerable reports on violence in Jamaica.

## Violence in Jamaica

**Illustration 4. Jamaica Crime and Safety Report, 2010 and 2011**

Crime	2010	2011
Larcenies	500	372
Shootings	1,650	1,322
Break-ins	3,700	3,409
Murders	1,700	1,124
Rapes	1,650	738
Robberies	3,000	3,033
Carnal Abuse	Not Reported	637
Fraud	Not Reported	121

*Note.* Adapted from US Department of State.

Jamaica with a population of approximately 2.7 million people, according to the United States Department of State, the number of murders and other violence causes

Jamaica to have one of the highest per capita homicide rates in the world. Violent crime is a serious problem, particularly in Kingston. A special concern continues to be sexual assaults perpetrated by hotel employees at resort hotels on the north coast of Jamaica.

The problem of violence in Jamaica cannot be adequately studied without careful consideration of mental illness. A violent person is sick. The theory of psychohistoriography developed by the Jamaican psychiatrist Frederick Hickling allows him to stabilize the problem of mental illness in some cases. I discuss Hickling's theory later in this thesis. In Jamaica, it is probable that a determinate number of individuals will find the solution to their problems in violence or in crime, exactly as the number of deaths, killings, murders, rapes and so forth may be determined.

What might be the kinds of relations between mental illness, subjectivity, and violence in the dancehall? Psychiatrists tend to hold that illness is by nature conducive to violence (for example, delusion). The violence and mental illnesses are on the same level, both being responses to a problem. This clarification is important because it suggests that an analysis of cases must weigh all the factors, that is, look at all the solutions the subject has attempted to resolve the fundamental problem. Baechler suggests mental trouble precede violence; suicide signals a worsening of the problem. Consequently, in my view, I agree with Baechler who writes:

Mental illness, in fact, may act in two convergent ways. By the very fact that it signifies, to a greater or lesser extent, a loss of contact with reality, the perception that the subject has of himself and his situation is eclipsed. With the aid of fantasies, the real situation is slowly replaced by a more and more frightened imaginary one. Simultaneously, and for the same reasons, the capacity to respond rationally to a problem diminishes and then disappears. Little by little suicide constitutes the only solution left. In certain cases, this progressive reduction of alternatives to a single and obligatory solution takes the form of a somehow detached injunction; a voice that clearly commands the subject to kill himself.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Baechler, *Suicides*, 25.

This passage suggests there must be a correlation between violence and mental illness, because violence is used too often in Jamaica to bear on a problem. One might assume that the solutions to problems are limited to, for example, the five outlined above. All the data suggests there is a multiplicity of variables beyond mental illness. Jamaica does not demand of its citizens to produce a determinate number of children, neither does it produce an exact statistical summary of violence. However, I believe, from my experiences over the past ten to twelve years traveling to conduct research in various countries, I believe Jamaican's social crime and violence rate is astonishing and the worst I've encountered anywhere.

The research shows that, in countries like Jamaica where reliable statistical services are not maintained, it is nearly impossible to know with any amount of certainty how many *deliberate* or *intended* deaths and killings are reported. Say for example, violence is a real solution for a vast majority of Jamaicans: then the minority resolves their problems by means of ordinary solution without having to venture of violence as anything but a theoretical concept. Why does only a minority make use of these faculties? Baechler believes in situations of extreme deprivation, the level of one's aspiration collapses. And in Jamaica the number of deprived people is not the minority. In other words, there is always a way out of any situation or problem and a minority of people find it.

What are the differences in how younger people and older Jamaicans use violence to solve a problem? In light of this particular research, it becomes more obvious as we venture into the dancehall where the crisis is a style of dancing: the percentage of violence does not increase with age but the "mode" changes. It becomes less and less *indirect partial* to increasing *direct* total with age. But the chances of death by any age group are possible. One can verify these assertions by considering evidence from incarcerations and juvenile detentions. Baechler cites the example of the Nazi concentration camps. Baechler explores the example of the conditions of life that brutally transformed human beings when plunged into situations that are universally considered as exceeding the capacity to resist. He says it is to be expected that mass suicides would occur if the means of killing oneself were readily available.

The violence in Jamaica is nothing comparable to the Hitler's psychosis or genocide, but individual testimonies about the epidemic of violence in Jamaica are available. It is quite clear that a severe crisis, with the exception of political or economic crises, touching a vast population could increase the rate of violent incidences and a narrowing of the possible solutions.

The number and severity of problems that an individual must face in Jamaica are a constant governed by a capacity "to resist." To begin to explain the complexity of Jamaican dance is difficult with some explanation of *abstraction*. Whether this complexity applies to all the entire culture is irrelevant but I did observe traditional and contemporary dancers in Jamaica. I would like to think that all dancers in Jamaica are in agreement about the complexity of Jamaican art or the circumstances that impinge on an individual.

Now whether we are dealing with the political, economic, religious, ideological, moral, or whatever sphere, the complexity of a society is always the same, infinite. If one takes the point of view of Kierkegaard's subjective *individual* the available options or solutions available to the Jamaican individual are limited. It takes less time and effort to become a knowledgeable criminal than it does to become a specialized artist. Furthermore, it is critical to know how to get along with natural and supernatural forces in Jamaica.

The ability to find typical solutions to what could appear to be typical problems within a traditional society is not so straightforward. Consequently the collection of materials for this thesis put me up against some of these forces. As mentioned earlier, I had put my life at risk, which is a form of *indirect attempted* suicide. Much of the data was outside any social determination because of the non-transmitability of acquired information. In fact, because Jamaica is a developing nation and very much still a traditional society, I would have to say, of this, it was a positive suicide attempt. This problem of violence in Jamaica is not without recognition of violence in the world. Consider the evolution of aggression in Western civilization. Daily life in the United States is extraordinarily violent. Up to about the fifteenth century, the elite passed their time either at war, in tournaments, and hunting. Baechler makes this observation about early violence and Western civilization:

Up to about the fifteenth century, before the establishment of centralized states, daily life was (for us) extraordinarily violent. The lay elite passed their time at war, hunting, or in tournaments; the people had extremely primitive manners and customs, and fights were a common occurrence; insecurity was widespread, and one risked one's life on leaving one's own village. The chronicles are full of stories of assassination, massacre, pillage, and destruction. At least until the eighteenth century, manners slowly evolved and tended to reduce violence to the point where it practically disappeared from daily life. This evolution was instigated by the establishment of centralized states. The aristocracy was domesticated by court life: it was forced to give up its personal wares and to adopt new rules for the social game where aggression appeared as intrigue and no longer as violence. Manners and customs were "civilized" at the top and, by imitation; won over larger and larger sections of the population. The progress of royal administrative control brought security to the countryside and put an end to private violence. By the nineteenth century, the situation had stabilized: courtly manners and customs spread to the whole population by way of democratization and public instruction, the civil bureaucracy, police and judiciary grew more effective and consistent; a pluralist political regime opened the possibility of a non-violence resolution of conflict. In fact, violence no longer appeared virulent, save on two occasions, in war or in riots and revolutions. In short, the West has succeeded in beating the odds against humanizing war, at least as wars have developed among Westerners.<sup>11</sup>

If, as Baechler suggests, wars are not part of our daily life, then what is breeding violence and gang wars? In Jamaica, Horace Levy says, "in a class by itself, stirring the greatest fear, though obviously connected with every other type, is gang violence, often referred to simply as 'the war'. Those fighting the war are sometimes called 'warriors', sometimes 'soldiers'. The war is between gangs representing different areas..."<sup>12</sup> Should we assume they simply have no manners or values? Very simply, in psychoanalytic terms, one could say that it is uncontrolled contained or repressed aggression. Jamaicans do not have the infinity of trades and occupations to choose from. If this was the case, and I have no statistics to back this up, it may change one's mind about violence and crime. There are diverse solutions to the problem of poverty, finding a job,

<sup>11</sup> Baechler, *Suicides*, 29.

<sup>12</sup> Levy & Chevannes. *They Cry 'Respect'! Urban Violence and Poverty in Jamaica*. (Kingston: University of the West Indies, 1996), 9.

a place to live, but Jamaican civilization simply does not have these options available. The way we might be able to reduce the violence rate is to give young people more choices, solutions to typical problems. Without a vast range of options open to them, dancers cannot invent, in a way that is sustainable. Violence in Jamaica is not elastic.

It goes without saying, I believe, an epidemic of violence could be sweeping the nation, but again, there are no clear statistics to say for sure how many violent incidences are actually reported. One can hypothesize about the various “causes” of violence. The most notable cause of *urban violence*, Chevannes and Levy identified *poverty* the number one cause of violence in Jamaica.<sup>13</sup> Surely this is not to imply violence among the wealthy middle-class is nonexistent.

There is no doubt that the catastrophe of the expansion of industrial desires has led to an expansion of gang wars. It is uncertain if the disappearance of scarcity in exchange for certainty as to where one’s next meal is coming from, more comfortable houses, more lucrative employment, education options, greater freedom, and so on, would actually reduce the incidences of violence, because prosperous people we know do revolt.

Furthermore, Baechler points out that an ideal society would not render men so happy they would cease to think about killing themselves or others. The other hypothesis, which I have already mentioned, is the one of *mental illness*, as a result of colonialism and African slavery. That argument would certainly fall within the established cycle theory of violence. Another argument put forth by Baechler is *repressed aggression*, which would be as follows: within any given society, a determined quantity of aggressiveness exists. *It must be expressed one way or another, and the best way possible is war. When no war occurs for a long period, it is internalized and is reflected by a host of deviant phenomena—crime, rebellions, internal conflicts, and so forth.*

<sup>13</sup> Levy & Chevannes, *They Cry ‘Respect!’ Urban Violence and Poverty in Jamaica*.

Thus, violence is the outlet not necessarily “chosen” by a majority of Jamaicans but a release of pent up anger. This hypothesis seems reasonable in light of Hickling’s “delusional” theory of slavery. However, I do not believe eliminating violence can be justified this way. Returning to the 14th or 15th century in Africa is just not possible to reverse evolution. A return to barbarism, as Baechler says, “would not deliver us from this evil but would make it neither more nor less frequent.”<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, my hypothesis is based on an interpretation of violence as aggression directed at the self, because the individual is prevented from being expressive. How does one go about eliminating violence and aggression in a society? This is my personal position. First, I begin with the hypothesis that we must eliminate violence as one of the solutions available. Second, we shouldn’t link it to favourable economic or political views. We can deplore it, but it is part of being human. I think at best, what we can do is give young people the “tools” and available methods to transform their lives. I am proposing a viable option is dance.

Before I conclude this section on the relation between suicide, violence and dance, it is important to note that, an essential aspect of violence, like art, touches the human condition. Baechler says it is easy enough to interpret violence, like art, as a will to power. Certainly there is an element of freedom sought by the violent person. As far as Kierkegaard’s philosophy of subjectivity is concerned, it’s preferable to interpret suicide of the performance artist, or violence in the dancehall through indirect means. This position would help to prevent one’s moral stance from intruding a problem that is internal and subjective.

My intention in this section has been to reveal the conception of suicide to bring to light the dangers of violence in the dancehall. The act of violence, in this sense, then, is the act of killing one’s own performance genius. According to Baechler, it is easier to define what freedom is in view of what it is opposed to. In *Trois Définitions de la Liberté*, Baechler argues: *freedom is opposed to oppression, coercion, and subjection, and we*

<sup>14</sup> Baechler, *Suicides*, 34.

*mustn't forget, the right to dignity.* This dignity is neither good nor bad fortune. For example, Baechler gives these examples of suicides: on the part of those who cannot bear the social stigma of contracting a venereal disease; the old person who kills himself in order to avoid infirmities; the writer or scholar who senses his faculties and his gifts are dissipating; the revolutionary who cannot support the perversion of the ideal for which he has struggled and suffered; the believer who prefers death rather than abjuration. All these people know the conditions a person deserves to feel fully human. In all cases, the "free" subject is basically acting (or not acting) to resist the imposition of externals. The subject must behave as he wishes without external interference.

This notion of freedom might sound negative because it implies everything is left to the discretion of the individual. However, Baechler confers the definition is positive because of the obligation it places on the individual subject to be actively occupied with what concerns him. Furthermore, I believe Baechler's interpretation of the freedom could corroborate Kierkegaard's argument that "it is an absolute contradiction to be more than one."<sup>15</sup> The individual must "risk something on his own." To stand alone in his resistance to being engulfed in the leveling process. It seems that what could be negative is the subject's proclamation that violence is utilitarian, a moral punishment. The fact seems to be clear. Every act of violence or suicide on the part of the performing artist is an act of will to power, or freedom.

In conclusion then, Baechler writes: man is made to be in good health; to love and be loved; to feel himself innocent and understanding towards others; to escape oppression, coercion, and subjection; to avoid humiliation and defeat; to sacrifice himself for an ideal.

<sup>15</sup> Bretall, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, 261.

## Subjective Perspective of Violence

The subjectivity of truth Kierkegaard intended is not the psychological.<sup>16</sup> Kierkegaard's subjectivity is "impassioned and dutiful." At the same time, the Arbaughs tells us Kierkegaard was a psychologist who would have a permanent place in history, because of his vivid psychological categories. Later in this thesis I introduce a phenomenological perspective of Kierkegaard's psychological categories. I relate the psychology of madness, violence and suicide to Kierkegaard's concept of *indirect* and *direct* communication. Incidentally, my first encounter with the psychology of Kierkegaard and the 'madness' of *Zorba the Greek* was in the late 80s. Through reading Christopher Durang's play *Beyond Therapy*, I started making these connections.

Kierkegaard is mentioned several times in Durang's psychological drama. The central motif of Durang's play is sex and sexuality. How people act out many of their deepest conflicts is through sex. Earlier in the section on "Madness" of this thesis, I introduced the madness of Zorba's dance. In *Beyond therapy* Act I Scene 4: Bruce says, "what's so wonderful about being sane? 'You must have madness,' Zorba the Greek says." Durang writes: "Women who get on top may wish to feel dominant. Men who prefer oral sex with women may wish to return to the womb. Couples who prefer the missionary position may wish to do anthropological work in Ghana. Everything people do is a clue to a trained psychotherapist." So there are clues that Kierkegaard had psychological insights into madness.

The violence of Jamaican dance, according to Jamaican scholars, is attributable to mental illness. Consequently in this section I explore the cause of violence with a Kierkegaardian perspective of subjectivity. Jamaica's serious economic problems have exacerbated social problems and have become the subject of political debate. High unemployment—averaging 12.5 percent—rampant underemployment, growing debt, and high interest rates are the most serious economic and social problems.

<sup>16</sup> Arbaugh, George and E. George Arbaugh, *Kierkegaard's Authorship*, 224.

The implications of these economic factors will be discussed later in this thesis in relation to the historical proposition of poverty in relation to the cause of violence. However it might be important to note here, in light of what the Arbaughs tell us, in as much as dance is spiritual, whatever is “in the realm of spirit cannot be causally ‘explained’, and is therefore ‘irrational’ at least to the extent that to be rational is to find causal explanations.”<sup>17</sup> It might be appropriate to summarize this in saying the Spirit does not *cause* violence, rather the *enablement* of God. Whatever the practical statistics of the cause of this problem of *dagging*, the psychological implications cannot be ignored.

The course that we are embarked on next looks at various topics related to psychology, subjectivity, violence, and dance in Jamaica.

For novelist Albert Camus, and psychologist Edwin Shneidman psychology is referred to as “the study of lives.”<sup>18</sup> If so, it seems perfectly appropriate that the dancer, especially if he is extraordinarily accomplished and an outstanding individual can contribute much material to the scientific analysis of the psychological crisis of Jamaican dancehall artists. Some would say the artist could help the psychologist in a profound way. He can help to formulate models of mental and spiritual life. Among other things, dance is a study of personality. According to Robert Wilson, and Henry A. Murray’s view of psychology:

Personality is a lifelong dynamic process, a configuration of thoughts, feelings, actions, woven into a pattern in social time and space; the belief that creative activity, especially the schooled creativity of art and science, is at once a crucial human characteristic—perhaps the most positive and durable of man’s attributes—and a revealing context for the analysis of psychic functioning.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Arbaugh, George and E. George Arbaugh, *Kierkegaard’s Authorship*, 223.

<sup>18</sup> See Wilson, Robert, & Edwin S. Shneidman.

<sup>19</sup> Robert Wilson, (n.d.), 249.

Although Camus is by no means a “psychologist” or an existentialist philosopher, he is somewhat like Kierkegaard in his striving, but unlike Kant and Schopenhauer in many ways. Camus’s concern is the survival of the individual *without* illusion. Camus believes the only way to grapple with psychological problems in a social order is without illusion. This involved stripping of ancient religious and philosophical verities. Camus sees no value in the old myths and Christianity. He views man is alive only in his day-to-day struggle, only in his defiant engagement with a world he never made but in which he must live; in pursuit of self-awareness and competence—not mastery—vis-à-vis his environment. Man is not pursuing happiness but already enjoying all of that blessed, condition he will ever know. Murder and suicide for Camus is an illegitimate way out of the human predicament. Camus wants man to rebel rather than commit violence to get out of what seems to be an absurd universe. As Camus writes in *The Rebel*:

This insane generosity is the generosity of rebellion, which hesitatingly gives the strength of its love and without a moment’s delay refuses injustice. In merit lies in making no calculations, distributing everything it possesses to life and to living men. It is thus that it is prodigal in its gifts to men to come. Real generosity toward the future lies in giving all to the present.

This rebelling should be a lack of meaning. Camus believes if man is fully aware and spiritually alive he wins the battle. In Jamaica, observed is a tremendous violence and despair, which is – “a psychological and spiritual disorder” – a real serious debilitating problem and genuine loss of humaneness. Consequently, fear and cruelty is palatable just about everywhere in Kingston.

Camus’ fictional characters in his novels portray characters always living in extreme tension. For example, in Camus’ brief philosophical essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*:

The gods had condemned Sisyphus to ceaselessly rolling a rock to the top of a mountain, when the stone would fall back of its own weight. They had thought with some reason that there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless *labour*.

## ***Artistic Death***

### **Suicide**

The hopeless consequence of the 'unrehabilitated' Jamaican *dagga* is a *disjunct self*.<sup>20</sup> Senyshyn's use of the term "disjunct" is related to Mullen's clarification of Kierkegaard's Hegelian-style emphasis of self. Mullen writes:

When a person "let's go," and fails to hold the self together, then its elements assume an improper relationship. The person may find that this soothes his dread, but it does so at too high a cost. From the disinterested standpoint of psychology this is despair, 'a disrelationship in a relation which relates itself to itself.'<sup>21</sup>

As I have noted previously, according to Kierkegaard, the resultant factor, for example, being suicide is sin, a crime against God. Kierkegaard is not in error to pose as a neutral observer and show that nobody has ever been "right" to suicide. Jean Baechler says, "the arguments of moralists who condemn suicide are always the same: life is not a good that the individual can get rid of; it belongs to God or to society.

According to Baechler, for moralists, it seems beyond doubt that the individual does not belong to himself: persons who commit suicide are bad characters who forget or ignore their duty.<sup>22</sup> I am dealing with the issue of violence from the perspective of suicide, which is, according to Kierkegaard the severe crime, to kill. I am choosing suicide for several reasons, but most importantly it is highlighted in Senyshyn's book in relation to the artist: "This 'suicide' for the artist may simply be a permanent giving up of performance, ..." Baechler says, "one of the common interpretations of modernity is that contemporary human beings live in a world so complex that they are unable to

<sup>20</sup> The term "disjunct" is not Kierkegaard's. Senyshyn uses the term to mean Kierkegaard's idea of a self divided against itself. The opposite of disjunct self, Senyshyn says, would be a self that was not in division against itself – a "conjunct" self. Conjunct is also Senyshyn's term.

<sup>21</sup> Mullen, *Kierkegaard's Philosophy*, 60.

<sup>22</sup> Baechler, *Suicides*, 28.

understand it all; they give up hope of doing so and sink into madness or annihilate themselves by suicide.”<sup>23</sup> One commonly calls suicide a “death to the world.”<sup>24</sup> The good news is:

If the artist avoids suicide, then his despair may lead to redemption and a conjunct self in tune with her artistic society if it consists of enough significant individuals willing to actively aid the ‘offender’ in overcoming this despair. Thus the self-knowledge attainable in despair over the forgiveness of an offence would lead to what we would call a successful ‘rehabilitation’ of the individual performer and her conjunct reintegration into a performing arts environment or society.<sup>25</sup>

I imagine Kierkegaard would consider attempted suicides and sacrifice are sin, and even when society, the press instigates it. For example, Halbwachs (1930) writes:

... a sociological definition [*of suicide*] [my italics] must principally account for the attitude of society and the different judgments that it brings to externally similar acts. From the moment that society is held to be the instigator and responsible agent for these acts and considers other ones as purely individual, even though society may have suggested, advised, and approved them, two different categories are involved.<sup>26</sup>

Suicide is a perfectly natural and universal way to solve a problem, says Jean Baechler author of the book *Suicide*. This does not mean to say it is fine or finished. Quite the opposite, it is just the beginning of problems. There is nothing mysterious about it. Perhaps the mystery, if there was one, is how people see the solution to a problem by means of suicide? Durkheim believes *the term suicide is applied to all cases of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce this result*. Durkheim’s view is rather rationalistic, assuming all human behaviour is transparent. Here, again, I wonder if Durkheim’s definition would consider attempted suicide or altruistic suicide? For example, Dr.

<sup>23</sup> Baechler, *Suicides*, 49.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>25</sup> Senyshyn, *The Artist in Crisis*, 33.

<sup>26</sup> M. Halbwachs. (1930). *Les causes de suicide*. Paris, France: Felix Alcan. 480.

Achille-Delmas believes suicide is *the act by which a fully competent man kills himself; he is able to live but he chooses, without any moral obligation, to die*. This takes us to Asia where Hindu India, for example, where *suttee* was practiced—the Indian custom that “permitted” “fully competent” widows to burning or throwing themselves on the funeral pyre of their dead husbands. This is now illegal. This suicide-sacrifice was practiced in India since fourth century B.C.E.

The most comprehensive definition that I found in view of Kierkegaard’s perspective is by the distinguished French social philosopher Jean Baechler. His view of suicide denotes *all behaviour that seeks and finds the solution to an existential problem by making an attempt on the life of the subject*. Namely, that it is perceived to be “a solution to a problem,”<sup>27</sup> opposed to it being an act:

The problems are termed *existential* in order to indicate that they concern the whole of the subject’s situation and are at the same time external and internal. One does not kill oneself for an idea unless this idea focuses on one’s aspiration or conflicts. One can reason about suicide and even convince oneself rationally of its desirability, but it is more than probable that no one has ever killed himself for an abstract reason.<sup>28</sup>

Baechler’s definition suggests behaviour is the problem, not an act. However, Baechler writes: “Thus, the emphasis is to be placed first on recruitment of the suicidal person (whether the factors involved are internal or external), next on the meaning of the suicidal act.”<sup>29</sup> Claiming that suicide is an act objectifies the problem and releases the individual from personal responsibility. Therefore it is an ongoing process, which includes attempted suicides. *Behaviour* takes the position that the individual can find a way out, change the behaviour. The problem then, is clearly internal.

In the development of Kierkegaard’s religious subjectivity, his “aesthetic literatures” establishes four moods—irony, anxiety, melancholy and despair. Vincent

<sup>27</sup> Baechler, *Suicides*, 212.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

McCarthy analyzed thoroughly and concisely these moods to illuminate Kierkegaard's religious psychology for an understanding of the whole person. I briefly introduce the phenomenology of Kierkegaardian moods later in this thesis. It is important to note here that the mechanism of moods is not identical to the workings of emotions.

According to the Arbaughs, Kierkegaard found Schleiermacher's and Hegelian speculative cognition of emotions equally unchristian. According to McCarthy, Kierkegaardian moods are internally not related to immediate external objects or emotions. The difficulty for Harry S. Broudy, the Polish-born educator and philosopher, for example, is Kierkegaard's idea of subjective *indirect* communication is confusing. Broudy acknowledges the necessity of art to evoke moods that cannot be communicated. According to the Arbaughs, Broudy has a plausible argument in saying Kierkegaard should have said, "subjectivity is a necessary condition to truth" opposed to subjectivity *is* truth.<sup>30</sup>

Strong feelings of guilt, for example, according to Mullen, Kierkegaard says, "guilt feeling is the anxiety of not having lived up to one's own moral expectations of oneself."<sup>31</sup> Mullen adds, "to be guilty is to be in debt. It is to owe something. There is therefore a demand that the debt be paid, and when it is the guilt is removed."<sup>32</sup> In Mullen's view, how is Gestalt Therapy, which uses the existential process, for example, to be viewed as a way to rid the person of guilty feelings? For Baechler learning appropriate behaviour is a way out. On the subject of despair, Senyshyn writes:

This type of despair – a psychological and spiritual disorder – is a serious and debilitating problem. The inability to escape the despair of forgiveness can lead to a loss of genuine humanness. Unchecked, this despair can lead to unrelatedness of self to itself and fear of the possibility of freedom. Although there may be no unique feeling associated with one's despair, this inability can only result in an

<sup>30</sup> Arbaugh, George and E. George Arbaugh, *Kierkegaard's Authorship*, 226.

<sup>31</sup> Mullen, *Kierkegaard's Philosophy*, 114.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

'unrehabilitated' performing artist with a disjunct self. At times an individual escapes this despair by suicide.<sup>33</sup>

In relation to this thesis of Jamaican dance, basic questions then are, *what* is the problem? And, *how* is dance to intervene in changing violent behaviour related to the *dagging*? If the problem(s) are internal, that is not dealing with a strong feeling of guilt or anxiety, melancholy, despair, revealing *how* the subject has been driven to this end is key.

At the center of this discussion is the subject who chooses to live or suicide. For the dancer, suicide could simply mean giving in to a violent activity like *dagging* instead of a performance art career and the art of dance. "A determinate individual shows his grief, in a determinate way, and finds a determinate outcome in death."<sup>34</sup> Now, according to Senyshyn, the individual's despair over the forgiveness of an offence could lead to a successful 'rehabilitation' and 'reintegration' into a performing arts career.

This is precisely what is believed to have taken place in artists like Skerrit Bwoy and other dancehall performers. Skerrit Bwoy, for example, turned to God. Apparently he is no longer part of the whole *dagging* phenomenon. He is still performing but with a vision of the meaning of art. It goes without saying that the problem although external to the individual appear real and vital. I believe Baechler is saying from the outside the problem becomes one of an internal reality that is to some extent imaginary.<sup>35</sup>

A real solution, then, must be available for the subject to explore an alternative solution to violence, killing. "It follows that totally different problems may receive an identical solution." Baechler proposes there are only five solutions to an infinite number of problems. In terms of the performance artist, in this study, I think dance is a solution, taking in consideration Baechler's theory, to transform violent behaviour before it

<sup>33</sup> Senyshyn, *The Artist in Crisis*, 32-33.

<sup>34</sup> Baechler, *Suicides*, 20.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

reaches the dancehall. Baechler proposed five distinct ways by of resolving any existential problem whatsoever:

The **first** solution can be called rational, and consists in changing the given conditions of the problem in such a way as to adjust the means to the sought-for end. Of course, one must include the subject as part of the given conditions. That is, if the world cannot be transformed in accord with one's desires, one can modify or reduce one's desires in order to obtain a satisfactory solution. A kind of bargaining is set up between the objective conditions and the aspirations of the individual or group, which ends up producing a compromise solution that contents the vast majority. The **second** solution consists in the imaginary obliteration of the objective data: The second solution cuts his ties to what is real and constructs his private reality. The **third** solution is, in a sense, the opposite of the second: when faced with the impossibility of modifying the objective, one removes, either really or in fantasy, one of the central data of the situation, namely, the subject himself. The **fourth** solution consists in removing one or several elements of the situation in order to arrange it in the subject's favour: one may call this a crime or misdemeanour. The **fifth** solution may be called an apocalypse: the pure and simple suppression of all the data, including the subject.

Yet because the numbers of ways leading to death are heterogeneous, Kierkegaard, on the other hand, says there is only one result; therefore, there must be only One solution. Only God in all His eternity could ultimately correct the behaviour. Five major religions might have inspired Baechler's five solutions. One can certainly also attain glory by art. Studies show that anamnesis of rehabilitated offenders nourished violent thoughts and shared these with their friends over long periods of time. For example, a person may be unable to explain after the incident why he attempted it. In his analysis of suicide theory, Baechler uses a vague term "attempt on the life" of the subject because the *WHAT* and *HOW* of suicide or violent killing are extremely variable. I will provide just a general outline of Baechler's vague conceptualization of *attempts on the life*.

## ***Indirect and Direct Modes of Violence***

This is what I find most interesting about Baechler's, conceptualization of suicide and death (violence) in relation to Kierkegaard's concept of subjectivity. Subjective communication, for Kierkegaard, is indirect. Direct communication, or what Kierkegaard refers to as "ordinary communication between man and man" consists precisely in immediacy is objective. The reflection of both has therefore a different type, namely of either inwardness or results and finality.<sup>36</sup> Kierkegaard writes:

Precisely because he himself is constantly in process of becoming inwardly or in inwardness, the religious individual can never use direct communication, the movement in him being the precise opposite of that presupposed in direct communication. Direct communication presupposes certainty; but certainty is impossible for anyone in the process of becoming constitutes for such an individual a deception.<sup>37</sup>

Kierkegaard uses the example of marriage to exemplify all erotic relationship is accidental and unfaithful. A woman yearning to become a wedded wife simply could not be faithful because she would have lost the "Idea" constitutive of all essential faithfulness in an erotic relationship with another. I believe suicide and violence is a form of subjective communication that can be *direct* or *indirect*. Whether violence or suicide is serious, where the outcome of death is very probable, or self-indulgent, where a fatality is excluded from the violent attempt, in either case Baechler tells us the subject is generally undecided among several intentions.

Successful suicide/violence is *direct* (objective). The subject is successful and brings about a fatal gesture (hanging, shootings, swallowing deadly poison etc.). Baechler includes death inflicted on the subject by another on the request of the subject. It is direct when the behaviour leads to immediate or imminent death. In other words, the individual's performance career is wrecked for life.

<sup>36</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript* (1846), 67.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 69n.

There is no chance of the subject returning to society as an artist.

Although Baechler recognizes that all ascetics are not violent; however, he equates entering a convent is a possible solution within the suicidal process. “Flagellation, abstinence, all the manifestations of asceticism can be taken as attenuated or symbolic forms of suicide. Entering a convent is another: one commonly calls this act a “death to the world.”

*Indirect* (subjective) suicide/violence is perhaps more *symbolic*, in the case of dreams or threatens to kill. By *indirect* suicide and violence I mean to express all behaviour could lead to the act. In other words, this is provoked Baechler says, i.e., a martyr indirectly suicides. *Indirect* violence, for example, can also take many detours, sometimes outside the control of the one attempting it. The behaviour of the person can be interpreted as he thinks about violence or suicide.

Baechler believes suicide behaviour is revealed in taking *risks*. I believe Lundberg’s theory of risk is important to pay attention to because it relates to *uncertainty* and the Jamaican context, which I will not discuss in this paper.

In light of Baechler’s theory, direct or indirect suicide and violence then, are distinguished as follows: Whether direct or indirect, Baechler draws distinctions which I find helpful to understanding the various manifestations of violence in the dancehall and subsequent “consequences”: First, suicide is violence, can be of the *present time*, in the case of a fatal shooting, or *long term* in case of toxicomania, alcoholism, poisoning.

In Erwin Shneidman’s work there are four modes of death identified, which are easily relatable to present and long term violence in the dancehall: Shneidman’s “modes of death” are in relation to Baechler’ *Absolute* or *relative* attempt.<sup>38</sup> What is striking in Baechler’s theory is the suicidal subject or the violent perpetrator is not always “looking

<sup>38</sup> Baechler says “relative” in the sense that what is involved here is a “temporary closing down, a by-passing of the subject.”

for death.” This is evident in Shneidman’s work *Orientations toward Death: A Vital Aspect of the Study of Lives*.<sup>39</sup> Shneidman outlines four “modes of death”:

1. **Cessation** (an end to conscious experience)
2. **Termination**, (cessation of physiological functions of the body, with hope the subject recovers consciousness)
3. **Interruption**, (cessation of consciousness with hope of recovery)
4. **Continuation**, (the subject doesn’t die, but will never be the same internally or externally)

According to Baechler, suicide, and I add violence, may be: *total*, (immediate par excellence and complete imminent death); *partial*, (i.e., punishment that don’t lead to death); *deliberate* or *involuntary*, (concise weighing of the pros and cons, like a check sheet of deliberation in the fullest sense which could take years or even decades, or at the moment before execution); You find acute ruptures in social equilibrium and the individual caused by extreme acts of deliberate violence, of pain, or of anger. Most violence in the dancehall is *ventured* or *intended*, (use of a method that has a high probability of death, i.e. to shoot oneself in the head, or jump from top the CN Tower). As I mentioned previously, dancehall violence can take years of planning before the act is intentionally carried out. Some time, violence in the dancehall is frankly simulated. However, this behaviour is not to be disregarded because it is characteristic of certain types of deliberate or intended violence.

Suicide is generally *chosen* or *imposed*, says Baechler. Objectively, the subject has a range of “choices” to choose from of possible solutions to a problem. What he means for example, as the slave ships crossed the Atlantic who knows how many Africans jumped overboard to their death?

<sup>39</sup> E. S. Shneidman, “Orientations toward Death: A Vital Aspect of the Study of Lives,” in White, Robert W. (Ed); Bruner, Katherine F. (Col), (1963). *The study of lives: Essays on personality in honor of Henry A. Murray*, (p. 200-227). New York, NY, US: Atherton Press, xxi, 442 pp. Retrieved from (<http://psycnet.apa.org/index.cfm?fa=buy.optionToBuy&id=2009-23851-009>).

The question is whether slave masters allowed them to kill themselves, and if this is seen as suicide. These slaves must have asked themselves: “what would happen if we don’t kill ourselves?” and when the answer was: “we would be put to death,” we might consider this is not suicide. How about suicide in concentration camps: it was easy to throw oneself on the electric barbed wire or to hang oneself at night in the barracks.

Having said this, I am inclined to wonder if Senyshyn’s view of the performing artist’s suicide is imposed or chosen, deliberate, ventured etc. Certainly there must be cases where the case is symptomatic of a civilization. Baechler writes:

It is not the same thing to allow a person condemned to death to swallow a cup of hemlock rather than forcibly slice his head off; the two practices reveal different conceptions of punishment ... It is evidence of the degree to which we have been influenced by Christianity that in discussion for or against capital punishment no one has ever suggest a third solution: to allow the condemned person to kill himself. Quite the contrary, the cells on “death row” are constructed so as to make suicide impossible and their inmates placed under constant surveillance.<sup>40</sup>

Clearly Baechler views suicide as punishment. He says, “sometimes people are consciously looking for capital punishment: to expiate who-knows-what shortcoming, they kill in order to be killed.”<sup>41</sup> For example, Claude Buffet developed a “theory” of indirect suicide:

Christ gave everyone the right to live or die, but he forbade suicide; the only solution, if one is tired of living, is to kill in order to be killed; murder, therefore, becomes the only way to leave this intolerable world and gain eternal life.<sup>42</sup>

Baechler tells us after his second trial Buffet was, in fact, executed in 1972. In a letter addressed to the President of France, Buffet demanded to receive at once the

<sup>40</sup> Baechler, 20, 36.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 17.

“grace” of the guillotine: “To kill in order to commit suicide, that’s my morality!”<sup>43</sup> Before I wrap up this discussion of the nature of violence and suicide and its relation to the performing artist in the dancehall, it is important to mention three possible consequences. The first difficulty for Baechler is *how* to trace the events that led the individual to that final moment when he kills or suicides.

For Baechler it is impossible to give an exhaustive count of a single individual’s life. I believe this is true considering the problem is generally internal. Whether internal or external, for Baechler it is, again, impossible to fit all the variables into one neat factor. He says there is always a group of factors to consider before drawing any conclusion as to the nature of suicide.

Finally, as the subject is at the center, everything really depends on the individual’s psychic disposition. Two individuals are confronted with the same crisis, one kills or retaliates in violence, and the other does not. This is where *The Principle of the Indiscernibility of Identicals* is questioned. The Principle says for example: if  $x = y$ , then  $x$  has all the properties  $y$  has (and vice versa). Is it legitimate to say that the identity was not absolute and that there certainly was a difference that distinguished the two individuals? According to Baechler, the principle does not hold for the single individual who now and then over the years thinks of suicide and then, one fine day, decides on it without knowing why himself. He writes:

Suicide, considered as a precise action, has the ontological status of an event. Just as one can accumulate factors that explain that an insurrection or a revolution happens within a given society this manner, so too the act of suicide remains mysterious *hic et nunc*. In spite of every explanation, it remains true that it could have happened either sooner or later or not at all.<sup>44</sup>

In other words, there is no single external explanation for the transition from the behaviour to the act itself. This is the element of an unknown variable or perhaps *The*

<sup>43</sup> Baechler, 36.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

*identity of indiscernibles*. The Jamaican dancehall superstar Kartel, for example, is in the apocalypse stage where he will be tried for “deliberate” violence. Symbolically Kartel represents the artistic death. His poem to the Jamaican press differs dramatically from Buffet’s letter to the French President, however, both perpetrators make references to Christ. One wishes to be executed while the other wants a fair trial.

## Part 2

### ***Objective Problems***

In this part I look at mainly two systemic problems for Kierkegaard, as they relate to two subjects of violence, dance and transformation: “History” and “Christianity.”

A system for Kierkegaard attempts to reunify the parts that are discreetly held apart by God’s will. God, according to Kierkegaard holds the moments of our existence apart. In the “Interlude” of *Fragments* Kierkegaard deals with this idea as illusion. The essential question asked is whether the past is more necessary than the future? Vincent Lanier reminds us of Santayana’s powerful aphorism: *If we do not know history, we are doomed to repeat it.* Santayana suggests the most complex essence of our existence is the notion of time: past, present, and future. For Lanier, this is critically important in any study of culture. Lanier believes the future of art education is rooted in history, not as a consequence but rather as a discernible option for the future. This suggests that any examination of art education would be greatly satisfied if art education had some kind of template. According to Lanier, this template would serve us to change the way we interpret and look at art. Kierkegaard’s question reinforces his argument that historical approximations are not relevant to the matter of subjectivity.

Existence, Kierkegaard says poses its own requirements upon the individual. A bigger question posed by Kierkegaard in relation to the System is “what are the categories which mediate between the individual and world-process, and who is it again who strings them all together on the systemic thread?” (109). Dancehall “kings” like Kartel seem to believe he strings Jamaican youths along like Dionysian satyrs, but leading them to forget what it means to be a human being; not willing to be what one is, an existing individual. Forgetting that we are all human beings and have a right to the same freedoms and liberty. Kierkegaard says the existing individual, who forgets that he

is an existing individual, will become more and more absentminded. Clearly Kartel's dancehall business "system" is finished without an ethic of care.

Perhaps the systemic problem of the dancehall is the persistent striving for fame and fortune. Material wealth is contrasted with Kierkegaard's persistent striving to become subjective.

## ***History***

Kierkegaard is vehemently opposed to, with almost angry outbursts, Hegelian philosophy of truth. It leads one to believe that Kierkegaard's truth is critical of skepticism that is inherent in the Hegelian philosophy though he is also leaning toward a fixed idea. Clearly he rejects Hegel's continuing world-historical process primarily because it objectifies the truth. He writes:

According to Hegel, truth is the continuity world-process. Each generation, each stage of this process, is valid; and yet it is only a moment of the truth. Unless we here allow ourselves to introduce a dash of charlatanry, which helps out by assuming that the generation in which Professor Hegel lived, or the generation which after him plays the role of *Imprimatur*, is the last generation, we are all in a state of skeptical uncertainty. The passionate question of truth does not even arise, since philosophy has begun by tricking the individuals into becoming objective. The positive Hegelian truth is as illusory as happiness was in paganism. The individual could not know whether he was happy until all was at an end, and so here: only the next following generation can know what the truth was in the proceeding generation. The great secret of the System—but this had better be kept among ourselves, like the secret the Hegelians are supposed to share privately—is pretty much the same as the sophism of Protagoras, that everything is relative; except that here, everything is relative in the continuing world-process.

We are in a process of eternal becoming. Kierkegaard's persistent striving represents the consciousness of being an existing individual. In no moment are we complete as long as we are in existence. The subject is aware of this fact, and hence is not deceived by "finished" systems.

It is thoughtless for the Jamaican dancehall "king" and his string of satyrs to forget that a human being is an existing individual. The freedom of many Jamaicans is being destroyed by the dancehall "system" that claims ownership of other people's lives.

In response to violence and mental illness in Jamaica, a prominent Jamaican system or method of psychotherapy has come into being by Frederick W. Hickling. Hickling's claim is mental illness, anger and violence in Jamaica is rooted in the history of European and American *psychosis*.<sup>45</sup> Hickling employs a racial dialectic to attack what he calls draconian theories of "madness," colonialism and slavery in Jamaica. While Hickling attacks the brutality of colonialism and slavery, who writes the dancehall cartel, a system that is destroying lives? How many youths are subject to these performances of hate? On the other hand, there are numerous accounts that claim what so called "mad" and "psychosis" in Jamaican dancehall culture is political and social protests against neo-colonialism, middle-class styles of living and religious bigotry in Jamaica's present age.

The question that Kierkegaard posed to world-historical figures like Hegel is of the fact that world-history is an approximation-process. It is true that Hickling has spoken of an approximate beginning; he has said himself and it is repeated here that his merit consists in his method or system. But he never tells us how his method is related to eternal consciousness. According to Kierkegaard, the ethical is our eternal consciousness. Hickling speaks of the dialectic between subject and others within the circle of reasoning and conflict resolution. For Kierkegaard, the historical material is infinite, and the imposition of Hickling's time-line is a limit and therefore must be arbitrary. Perhaps the biggest criticism is Hickling's focus on the historical remains, materials that belong to the past. The system psychohistoriography is *eo ipso* incomplete.

History is constantly coming into being through new cognition; new observations, and inquiries, new discoveries are constantly brought to light, compelling not only additions but also revisions.

<sup>45</sup> Frederick Hickling. *Psychohistoriography. A Post-Colonial Psychoanalytic and Psychotherapeutic Model*. (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press).

Just as improvements in the instruments of observation facilitate new discoveries in the natural sciences, so every improvement in the methods of critical inquiry will in the same manner affect the world-historical material.

Today small coffee farmers in Jamaica feel the conditions under which they are coerced to work is reminiscent of slavery. Slavery can be understood in terms as the expression of unequal power relations that exists between classes. Social stratification is thus created and maintained by the members of one class who control access to material objects, property, and space itself. The more powerful class controls the production and marketing of coffee, and manipulates farmers in order to maximize profit by continuously increasing their rate of profit. Farmers are alienated from the marketing, and are required *labour* for no wages as enslaved and dehumanized means of production. The capitalists at the industrial space use the power inherent within this social structure to accumulate wealth, power, and prestige. This is going on in Jamaica today.

Consequently many farmers have already fled the agricultural industry and Jamaica. How does Hickling's system account for the Japanese or more recently the Chinese firms implicated in Jamaica's neo-colonial coffee industry?

Although the Emancipation Act of 1838 was the final nail in the coffin of the West Indian plantation economy that terminated free wage *labour*, farmers in Jamaica today they are still not paid fair wages for cultivating coffee. Where are the neo-colonialists in Hickling's world-historical system?

For example, the Japanese farming Blue Mountain coffee in Jamaica is an issue challenging small coffee farmers. Under the British slave system, and capitalism, coffee was the first crop, second to sugar, of importance to be grown in Jamaica. Certain elite classes based in Europe extracted wealth at the expense of other classes in European controlled colonies like Jamaica. Small coffee farmers in Jamaica today do not have the ability or opportunity to elevate their social positions because they simply cannot accumulate wealth. What are the implications for the families of these farmers? The Japanese serve as a powerful force in the recreation of the capitalist elite. In doing so they create both a social divide and a market commodity, which they control. Do

Japanese farmers intentionally construct to dominate the industry and enslave small coffee farmers? The social reality revealed through my research is small coffee farmers in Jamaica are coerced to work through the necessity of giving their *labour* power for free.

Presently, Jamaican small coffee farming is a capitalist mode of production based on free *labour*. Under a neo-colonial system small coffee farmers do not receive wages for their *labour* power. The farmer basically works like a slave with no rights to demand wages for the *labour* of products or *labour* power. These small coffee farmers in Jamaica are alienated from the means of production, are nominally paid for their products. The Mavis Bank Coffee Factory in Jamaica first exported coffee to Japan in 1953. In recent times the Factory exports some USD \$30,000,000 in value of coffee to the world and close to 80-85% of that coffee goes to the Asian market. According to another source, the Japanese coffee company uses the Factory to process their coffee but the Japanese themselves handle all affairs related to shipping and marketing.

Anthropologist Dr. Herbert Gayle shares his views and findings on the connection between wealthy criminal Jamaicans and corruption in Jamaica. Gayle believes there are many misconceptions people have about Jamaica's criminal networks. According to Gayle, focus is placed on the small fish in the drugs trade and other criminal activities while the kingpins are often ignored. According to the United States Department of State, police corruption and police involvement in criminal activity is common in Jamaica. Jamaicans are often indifferent to police authority, adding to a perceived sense of lawlessness. The belief is that, the police are corrupt, or the feeling that nothing would come from reporting a violation. Therefore the majority of crime victims do not report crimes against them due to fear of reprisals by the police. Gayle maintains the crime and violence in Jamaica started occurring when politicians and guns came into play. During the data collection for this thesis I visited two coffee estates that are tightly secured by men with guns. These factors are in no way unique to Jamaica. It is quite clear from my research up in the Blue Mountains region of Jamaica the Chinese, for example, have found a place in the perpetuation of corruption. Evidently this is not considered in Hickling's world-historical process of slavery. What is China's role in psychohistoriography? How is neo-colonialism implicated in mental illness and violence in Jamaica today? There is no room in Hickling's system for a consideration of China's

role in the neo-colonial structures of Jamaica's present coffee crisis. In this light, Hickling's system is not finished. Kierkegaard is calling the precincts of science an abominable ethical narrow-mindedness. Or, as he says, "at the head of the herd of newspaper readers and balloting idlers," robbing others of the truth.

It is quite clear then, the problem of ethics in Jamaica is due to science itself and speculative philosophers leading a generation en masse to "dabble in universal history" (135). An actual emphasis on existence must be expressed in an essential form in view of violence in Jamaica's dancehall. As in the case of Hickling's psychohistoriography model that posited "European delusion" as the cause of violence and mental illness in Jamaica, Kierkegaard says, "the ethical is no more evident in history, where millions are involved than in one's own poor little life" (128). That could mean the cause is more evident in one's own existence, because one cannot mistake the meaning of embodiment. The ethical is embodied, the inwardness of the spirit, subjectivity. The smaller the problem is presented to the dancer, the more perspicuously it is apprehended. While Hickling thinks the whole centuries of problems need to be analyzed in order to understand the subject, Kierkegaard says, "one ought to fast from evil so also it is a mark of the true ethical apprehension of the ethical, that is fasting and sober" (128).

But this must be an emphasis on the objective and subjective relationship, without the separation of subject and object. It is clear that Kierkegaard's existence could be the opposite. He writes: "[existence] brings about a separation between subject and object, thought and being... This objective thought has no relation to the existing subject" (112). In other words, the existing subject is engaged in existing, which is indeed the case with every human being. The emphasis being made here is being purely and simply a human being is more significant than playing the so-called dancehall "king" or "queen" in this violent fashion. This is entertainment jesting hatred.

In a sense, Nietzsche's portrayal of Dionysus could be viewed, as a vivid alternative to Hickling's theory to explain what is going on in Jamaica today. In relation to Kierkegaard's idea of truth, the problem of violence belongs to the realm of the subjective. Though scholars like Gayle, Stanley-Niaah, Hickling and others may not think so. Essentially Kierkegaard's individual cannot find truth in objective historical theories.

Then historical documents are insufficient to declare with certainty the cause of violence. This corresponds with Kierkegaard's attack upon Christendom. He says, "the living word does not suffice to declare that the Church has been in existence for eighteen centuries, that it is essentially the same, that is has persisted in a wholly unaltered form" (40). The existence of the Church simply implies that it is changing. That is the meaning of existence. The quantitative process of historical systems for Kierkegaard is with tremendous denominations. There are over 600 in Jamaica alone. This quantitative process is greatly the taste of "sensuous man" (128). According to Kierkegaard's dictum, Hickling does not apprehend subjectivity, the ethical. He writes:

The ethical is thus not the primitives, the most primitive of all that the individual has within him, but rather an abstraction from the world-historical experience. We contemplate history, and seem to see that every age has its own moral substance. We become objectively puffed up, and, though existing individuals, we refuse to be content with the so-called subjective-ethical. (129)

Fundamentally, the subjective-ethical is not to be found in Hickling's genuinely speculative theory of psychohistoriography. What Hickling pledges to be realized, for Kierkegaard, is already discovered. What is not discovered is essentially what Jamaicans fail to realize: the ethical. Like the knowledge of the most worth, ethics is an old discovery and not yet learned by millions of Jamaicans. Despite the distinguished and highly prized respectable systems of historiography, Kierkegaard believes the ethical is what the age demands.

How can we say with certainty that the problem of violence started when no one, Kierkegaard says, can say when it will end? This is a remarkable insight, how will it end? The problem is Hickling and others cannot say with certainty what started it and how the violence in Jamaica will end. The remains are approximation, and this has the property of indefinitely. As it stands, the tragic dancer attaches his passion to approximations, externals, money, fame, and fortune. What will the dancehall kings and queens not do for money? Heaven knows. And if they haven't done it we can approximate their satyrs to do it. If someone were now to ask what is needed in Jamaica, it is not money. The traumatizing experiences I survived in Jamaica are enough to corroborate Kierkegaard's

philosophy. Anyone who has had the privilege of traveling to Jamaica to study or do business could confirm this. The lack of ethics in Jamaica is astounding!

This is not an exaggeration; the many businesses in developing countries employ young people who hold no credentials to give instruction in popular ethics. This is more prevalent in lower class, poor and inner city schools. The misfortune of this practice is mis-education and a barrage of implications in these communities where crisis is looming. Out in the country, where peace dwells under leafy mango trees, the little schools are a rich abundance of love compared with the city of forsaken ethics. Instead of closely attending to himself, instructors of psychology, says Kierkegaard, one who lives in the present and faces the future should not be constantly interacting with the past, world-history. This passage could help in understanding an earlier question: how would the slave body appear on stage in contemporary dance? Kierkegaard writes:

Only by closely attending to myself, can I arrive at an understanding of how an historical personality must have conducted himself while he lived; and only so do I understand him when in my understanding I preserve him alive, not in the fashion of children, who smash the watch to pieces in order to find out what makes it run, or in the fashion of speculative philosophy, which transforms the historical personality into something different in order to understand him. But I cannot, by apprehending him as dead, learn from him what it means to live; that I must experience by myself. And therefore I must first understand myself and not conversely.”  
(131)

Even a sacred dance to commemorate a birth is only, for Kierkegaard, and approximation-object. He gives the example of a baptism to argue the tragic is an historical fact; Baptisms could not be decisive eternal happiness. No proof! A baptism certificate, the word of a parent, all this for Kierkegaard is nothing to do with eternal happiness. The baptism for Kierkegaard is an illusion. He insists on the transformation of inwardness and it's actualizing in the individual, not in this sacrament of baptism. How do we know we have been baptized? Because this is understood only metaphorically—the individual remains outside himself. For Kierkegaard, Socrates is one of the most distinguished world-historical figures. Hickling is the distinguished world-historical figure in Jamaica; however, his system does not talk specifically about the lack of ethics in contemporary Jamaica. But he continues to attack the roots of European and British ethics.

There is undoubtedly a class of Jamaicans who support Hickling's hard knuckling of the truth. There are mockers and believers, who support or not, his whole system which hinges upon the history of slavery. Hickling attempts to transform the historical individual into a category of cause and effect. Mental slavery is the cause of mental illness and violence. From this standpoint, the subject is unimportant. Ethically, the individual subject is infinitely important. This point is very important and shows that the world-historical is not without ethic. "Take any human passion whatever, and let it come into contact with the ethical in the individual: this will ethically have great significance" (132). The power that governs the world creates perhaps for this individual an environment in which his life is reflected. The Indian notion of Karma represents a similar belief: that the individual's life is reflected in his given circumstances. How many more generations will we accuse our forefathers and ancestors for the wrongs of our present age? Perhaps for Kierkegaard and Schopenhauer all other significance is all an illusion. Therefore only the individual can transform himself.

Maybe slavery never existed. Subjectivity is a personal spiritual relationship with God. Because something has existed for a few thousand years does that make it an eternal truth? Christianity we know penetrated Africa and transformed the world, but this has not proved for Kierkegaard an eternal happiness. He says eighteen centuries have no greater demonstrative force than a single day, in the relation to an eternal truth. Every man must think for himself—*honour* and praise to the God who created man in his own image.

Interestingly, he claims, wealth of thought is not always proportionate to volume of words. The violence seen in Jamaican dance, according to Kierkegaard, is the result of thoughtless, passionless, gossiping people, who base their eternal happiness on things. The objective problem is really in trying to find a solution in the case of what ought to be put subjectively. The "unreflected" individual is always looking for truth outward, "toward something over against it, in endeavour toward the objective." (37)

Dancers must begin to know that objectivity is not the whole truth. Every time we say we know something, we equally do not know for certainty. It is only an approximation. When we cling to approximations, historical facts, we place ourselves in parenthesis. The subject becomes secondary to many. For example, in Chapters IV and

V of the *Fragments* Kierkegaard deals with the problem of separating the traditional from the contemporary (39). The systematic tendency to assume a research methodology is “fool-proof,” Kierkegaard says, “the System presupposes faith as something given—and this is a system that is supposed to be without presuppositions!” (18). According to Kierkegaard, the presupposition of the System that faith is given, resolves itself into a delusion in which the System has deceived itself into thinking that it knew faith.

The fundamental myth in psychohistoriography that Kierkegaard aims to destroy is the historical delusion. Psychohistoriography is perhaps the most renowned therapeutic system in the study and treatment of mental illness and violence in Jamaica. The system blames European “delusional psychosis” for the crisis. But Kierkegaard says it is a delusion itself. Hickling’s system is based on a historical objective timeline to represent violence in Jamaica. It blames colonialism and slavery of thousands years prior to 1492. This systematic analysis of violence is a “radical” racial dialectic of us vs. them or African vs. European with unreliable data chronologically graphed to study “madness.”<sup>46</sup> The presentation of this methodology is not without fanaticism.

In *Fragments*, according to Walter Lowrie, John the Climber poses this question: “Is an historical point of departure possible for an eternal consciousness; how can such a point of departure have any other than a mere historical interest; is it possible to base an eternal happiness upon historical knowledge” (18). From essentially a Kierkegaardian perspective Hickling’s system is problematic, in the sense that can happiness be based on something historical? It has very little if not nothing whatever to do with the individual’s own relationship to the truth, subjectivity. It is important to say that the treatment of the crisis would be better off to consider a multitude of perspectives.

## ***Christianity***

All the centuries of Christianity has inspired tremendous fear. Fear is very evident in Jamaica. This is a small island with hundreds of churches. However, Jamaicans have

<sup>46</sup> Hickling, *Psychohistoriography*, 17.

no fear in showing that they are Christian underneath the veil. Even whilst the individual is launching an attack against a woman in the dancehall he is Christian with a view to devour her. As he plots to murder a homosexual he is a Christian. It is as though something is admitted and remains hidden. Christianity Kierkegaard argues has threatened people to embrace it. No one can be pushed or enslaved to embrace Christianity. From this standpoint, Kierkegaard illustrates with this example:

In sawing wood it is important not to press down too hard on the saw; the lighter the pressure exerted by the sawyer, the better the saw operates. If a man were to press down with all his strength, he would no longer be able to saw at all. (55)

What is a Christian? Christianity is an affair of spirit, and so of subjectivity, and inwardness. Kierkegaard believes we are all in possession of it. Christianity is subjective, an inner transformation, an actualization of inwardness. A Christian dancer who refuses to behave like the others would be for Kierkegaard, in a most unfortunate category. These individuals resist uniformity; yet want to stand out as Christians. Jamaicans are proud to defend their Christian values from objective standpoint, the scientific historicity of the totality. However, "it is stupid," Kierkegaard says, "and is bad taste to make the admission" (50). This is the contradiction for many Jamaicans who are beaten into a relationship with Christianity. In the same way he writes:

When I place an individual who is passionately and infinitely interested in his eternal happiness, in relation to this theory [of Christianity], so that he proposes to base his happiness upon it, he becomes a comic figure... because the objectivity of the Church theory is incommensurable with his interest. (42)

The problem for Kierkegaard is the truth cannot be given or taught. Only two kinds of people he assumes can know about it: (a) an infinite passionate individual interested in eternal happiness based upon the belief in a relationship with Christianity. (b) And those in passion who reject it. I assume many of the violent offenders we find are somehow rejecting it have all his knowledge reduced to an illusion.

The Church and the Bible like historical approximations for Kierkegaard decide objectively what is and what is not truth for the individual. Kierkegaard says, "truth is

spirit, it is an inward transformation, a realization of inwardness” (37). The moment of the spirit is inward. The truth is the subject’s transformation is in him.

On 2 April 2006 Jamaica’s Sunday *Observer* proclaimed: “Pastors to run state boards...” Then Prime Minister, and recently re-elected Portia Simpson Miller announced church pastors to have a central role in state affairs. Simpson Miller believes only prayer can transform Jamaica. What about other creative human efforts? In the following passage is Kierkegaard’s critical response to, for example, the fundamental Christian reformation:

The evil in our time is not the established order with its many faults. No, the evil in our time is precisely: this evil penchant for reforming, this flirting wanting to reform, this sham of wanting to reform without begin willing to suffer and to make scarifies, this frivolous conceitedness of wanting to be able to reform without even having a conception, of how uncommonly elevated is the ideas of “to reform,” this hypocrisy of avoiding the consciousness of one’s own incompetence by being busy with the diversion of wanting to reform the Church, which our age is lest of all competent to do. When the Church needed a reformation, no one reported for duty, there was no crowd to join up; all fled away. Only one solitary man, the reformer, was disciplined in all secrecy by fear and trembling and much spiritual trial for venturing the extraordinary in God’s name. Now that all want to reform, there is uproar as if it were in a public dance hall. This cannot be God’s idea but is a foppish human device, which is why, instead of fear and trembling and much spiritual trial, there is: hurrah, bravo, applause, balloting, stumbling, hubbub, noise—and false alarm.<sup>47</sup>

Jamaica maintains a strong de facto Christian basis to the state that is manifested in virtually every action carried out at state level. Violence I assume would also signify a lack of faith. Here is the paradox of the matter. Jamaica is known for the most number of churches. However, faith and quantitative proof, according to Kierkegaard, are enemies. The number of churches in Jamaica should say nothing

<sup>47</sup> Kierkegaard, *For Self Examination and Judge for Yourselves and Three Discourses* (1851), 211.

about faith. In fact, it's quite ironic yet it speaks to the emphasis that the only true remedy for the crisis of Jamaica is faith.

Since the 1970s there has been an exponential increase in the number of churches in Jamaica. For example, there were 92 denominations in the 1970s. Today, there are over 600— out of 10 in 1865. There are so many churches in Jamaica it is said to have held at one time, perhaps still the dubious *Guinness Book of World Records* with the most churches per capita mile. Jamaica's population is approximately 2,700,868. Over 65% are "Christian." There are approximately 1,600 "churches" in Jamaica. These churches are anti-homosexual, anti-abortion, and pro-Israel. The paradox is these edifices are linked often financially and organizationally with U.S. counterparts, which tends to be pro-abortion, and pro-gay. Because of their numbers, religious groups in Jamaica hold tremendous tacit power to exert pressure and influence policy direction. Church services are said to commemorate state anniversaries and launch government programs and activities.

The National Leadership Prayer Breakfast, where political and church leaders, led by the Prime Minister, come together to discuss issues of national concern and pray for the island. This is a widely covered event. The 32nd Annual National Leadership Prayer Breakfast was held at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel on 19 January 2012. The theme was "reconciliation, rebuild, rejoice." This introduction to essentially Jamaica's Christian constituency is relevant because as the number of churches and denominations in Jamaica continue to grow, more than 1,600 'churches' can be found across the country's 4,500 sq. miles, yet, the power of the Gospel to transform lives in Jamaica is as necessary now as ever. This background should ascertain why Kierkegaard's concept of subjectivity and his other spiritual/religious insights are appropriate to this study. However, Senyshyn says the greatest weakness of Kierkegaard's notion of subjectivity is the fact that he does not refer to other worldviews.

Kierkegaard's concept is fundamentally related to the doctrine of Christianity. This is a similar problem in Jamaica. The concept of social change, as in what Jamaica needs, becomes more meaningful perspectives of faith in the process of transformation are embraced. It is now necessary for Jamaicans to consider subjectivity is sacred and secular. Faith, according to Kierkegaard can remove violence from the individual and a

society. Faith only, he says, can move mountains. To change something external to us, we must change from within ourselves. The subject cannot make a decision based on externals. One cannot be willing to change his behaviour and remain attached to the remains of approximation.

What I perceive happening in the dancehall is misdirected passion. This misdirected passion in Jamaica has attached itself to materiality, television, *Youtube* fortune, *facebook* glory and other "approximation-object." Moving into a God-relationship will produce a great deal of tension as the illusion disappears. The mode of subjectivity is eternal happiness. This is not without many sacrifices, including the hankering to possess things. This hankering, according to Kierkegaard is a deception, like the invisible it cannot be seen objectively. The Church he says exists only in the subjectivity of the individuals.

## Part 3

### ***Educational Relevance***

The attitude in schools that is being challenged is that dance is merely another gym activity. This is very common in Jamaica. What is interesting from the philosophical perspective of African aesthetics is the notion that music and dance are inseparable. For example, where there is a program of music that excludes dance can we safely say the system is incomplete? Still, can we say for certain that dance is anymore neglected in schools than say theatre, painting and drawing, poetry, architecture and other fine arts? What is the resistance of educational theories to accommodate dance?

For the most part, I believe there is significant contemporary scholarship now on dance, but the literature of dance aesthetics is still undernourished, particularly in the Caribbean and certainly Jamaica. Plato we know had underdeveloped views on dance. And Hegel downgraded dance for its failure to develop the mind. What could be future research in the field, for example, in Jamaica, is to develop the literature that celebrates a mode of 'becoming' accessible only through dance. What could be called into question is whether, for example, *dagging* is dance? Is it justified to continually intone *dance as cosmic metaphor*?

Like the great books in all cultures raise questions and ask what is worth knowing, what is worth affirming, what is justice, what is beauty and courage, the most important educational questions asked in this thesis: What is the knowledge of the most worth? The other question is more specific to subjectivity how will this knowledge actualize the individual's transformation?

What we attain from the intellectual 'tools' of cognition we use to engage the imagination is very different from how we experience the world through dance. For example, breathing alone has infinite rhythms pulsing inside the body that are explored

through dancing. The work of phenomenologists (Husserl, 1970; Merleau-Ponty, 1964) has influenced curriculum development. According to Cancienne and Snowber (2003), “phenomenological curriculum research has described the lived experience of the body as central to learning, being, knowing, and teaching.”<sup>48</sup> According to Grosz (1994), “phenomenological reflection on embodiment suggests that as individuals, we are subjects separated from the world or from others but that we have access to knowledge of the body only by living it.”<sup>49</sup> This idea is extended to the educational relevance of dance studied in this thesis.

What I present in this section is by no means close to an exhaustive discussion of educational implications. It is intended to satisfy the needs of policy makers and/or dance educators who need in plain English how Kierkegaard’s philosophy of subjectivity relates to education in general. This is a cautionary reminder that this is by no means an exhaustive treatise nor could it be. The implications are beyond what myself or anyone I think could reasonably write in a few pages like this thesis. The primary focus of this thesis has been Ethics and the transformation of dance and the dancer. Therefore, I will limit my discussion to one idea of ethics and aesthetics in relation to the body which extends to dancing.

Ethics is ideally focused on activity to prepare students for a good life. It asks that students in Jamaica submit their prejudices, assumptions, to look deeper, to remain curious, remove sloppy thinking, unexamined conventional wisdom, complacency and ethnocentrism; to submit their beliefs and values to rigorous scrutiny, that they ask a lot of “what if” or counterfactual questions, that they question their intuitions, that they confront their unexamined worldviews with historical understanding, new theories and cross-cultural perspectives. It encourages critical thinking as well as scepticism. This tradition of education is rooted in ancient philosophies, studies designed to develop powers of intelligence, observation, reasoning and imagination.

<sup>48</sup> Celeste Snowber & Mary Beth Cancienne, 2003, 238.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 238.

It is with ethical understanding and breadth (and **breath**) that young scientists, teachers, attorneys, artists or business professionals will find their way when faced with practical dilemmas in their chosen field. Why do I emphasize breath? Much earlier in this thesis I cited Kierkegaard saying, *all knowledge is breathing*. Let me put this in a simple anecdote of dance education curriculum in Jamaica.

From an initial review of the *Government of Jamaica/World Bank Reform of Secondary Education, Physical Education/Dance curriculum guides grades 7-9*<sup>50</sup> I note an important element of dance not mentioned. I took it upon myself during the research for this thesis to inform the Minister. But I received no response. The most fundamental principle of bodily intelligence is and true of any given life form, the breath, nowhere mentioned in the curriculum. The current curriculum on-line version has not been updated since I first reviewed the website in 2007. I can't say for sure if this change has occurred in printed form. Therefore, a more comprehensive study of the Government of Jamaica/World Bank Reform of Secondary Education, Physical Education/Dance curriculum guides grades 7-9 is necessary before a definitive could be produced.

If my observation is accurate then we have a change that could be implemented to enhance the values of dance education and training in the context of Kierkegaard's idea of knowledge and breath. This notion of breath is fundamental in all dances.

From a brief yet scrupulous review of the Physical Education Curriculum Guide I learned that there is not a single mention anywhere in the curriculum on breath. On page 24, in the "Introduction" of the Dance Curriculum Guides for Grades 8 & 9 it says, "to move to rhythm to dance, is a natural human reaction." Could a body move without wind and or breath passing through it?

To start a bigger conversation about the implications of dance education and training we could begin with Amegago's curriculum plan. Also see my master's thesis

<sup>50</sup> Retrieved from [http://www.moec.gov.jm/curricula/Grades7-9\\_PhysicalEducation.pdf](http://www.moec.gov.jm/curricula/Grades7-9_PhysicalEducation.pdf)

(Hyman, 1999) to understand some simple but critical changes to the curriculum that could be implemented.

No mention of breath in a Ministry of Education approved dance curriculum is obviously problematic. Furthermore, early in this thesis, I mentioned the CXC Examinations does not offer courses in the performing arts. The CXC syllabus for the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations (CAPE) ([www.cxc.org](http://www.cxc.org)) excludes music, drama, theatre, and dance. CAPE is designed to provide certification of the academic vocational and technical achievement of students in the Caribbean who, having completed a minimum of five years of secondary education, wish to further their studies (so long as it's not in the performing arts).

Overall, what seems to me, so far, for the purpose of this thesis and research in Jamaica could be to hone a component of Physical Education/Dance curriculum guides to give teachers simple but critical guidelines with more freedom to roam and explore. Without breath the birth of a child is unimaginable. Beginning in dance without introducing students to that, first and foremost principle of the body, any body, and movement—*the science of breath*, that knowledge should be the first principle of the physical dance education curriculum.

There are evolutionary aspects of autonomy and anatomy that is not within our human ability to control or transform. But curriculum specialists have the power to design and implement more strategic programs to satisfy human and social crisis. It is possible to empower the curriculum with simple, yet not so obvious, lessons in breath. Obviously certain movement and rhythms are learned as “lewd” can be brought into the classroom for critical evaluation. The current dance curriculum could be criticized as entertaining, does not address cultural trends or reflect positive images of traditional and contemporary society, and needs a new purposeful component and new dimension of consciousness.

The most prominent problem with the current curriculum is identified early in the document. In page 1 “Overview” the purpose of PE is described as “to develop ‘outer reach and inner stretch’.” That means the body’s intelligence is reacting to essentially two things inner and outer manifestations. On inner, the body is moving through mental

posture (emotion) and (instinctively) to outer situations. Modern dance education in schools is predicated upon a system of theories and practices that castrated various bodily rhythms and body parts. Why? The most striking thing about the dance curriculum in Jamaica is it's exquisite modern form, which raises innumerable ethical questions and implication for the values of Kierkegaard's philosophy.

Ethics is an ideal way to explore what it means to discover oneself and one's obligations to others. A community's flourishing is everyone's business, and an ethic of collaboration, cooperation, communication, and empathy for others is critical to the resolution of societal problems. An ethically educated person grasps the importance of personal as well as civic responsibility, of civility, inclusiveness and the need to give back to one's community.

The late Honorable Professor Rex Nettleford (1933 - 2010) left us with a profound undertaking to accomplish, to "re-engineer our Caribbean cultural enterprises and institutions with a view to designing an agenda for the future."<sup>51</sup> According to Egan and Chodakowski (2004), Stephen Mithen's *The Singing Neanderthals* has helped curriculum theorists to identify how profoundly dance, rhythms and movement are in our evolution as musical creatures. We are not these disembodied brains, so educational theorizing and curriculum planning should not go on as though humans were disembodied. It is crucial to recognize, says Egan and Chodakowski, that these brains are parts of our bodies.

The omission of the body as a site of knowledge has been a major problem in education, not only in Jamaica. More innovative contributions are coming forth now to address this issue with great force in Canada partly to minimize threats of mass production of new technologies, environmental disasters, and global human health concerns. A very important discussion is the barrage of theories and clearly not enough good practices. One bold criticism is "cultures capable of generating an alphabet and written language have tended to become environmentally destructive" (Orr, 1992).

<sup>51</sup> Rex Nettleford, *Re-engineering Caribbean Cultural Enterprises/Institutions*, 2004, 4.

Is education the problem? Before I say yes, I am conscious of the fact that what we have in education is a lot of old and complex ideas and not enough engaging, imaginative and innovative practices that are committed to solving real life problems. What is the point of putting on paper more complex theories about cognitive development that will not stimulate transformation? The problem of Jamaica is Ethics. Communication technology is making this very clear to people now. Education must be inclusive to work globally. The body is absolutely necessary in the education of the whole person. Furthermore, the process must be simple and straightforward and made available to all persons. If we want real lasting results the body must be involved. And a central feature of the body is dance.

We had as a species and have, as individuals a body before language (Donald, 1991). The body is the most fundamental “mediating tool” that shapes our understanding (Egan, 1997). Some anthropologists have suggested that spoken language may have evolved from gesture. According to Egan, even in our complex modern culture, body movement appears to be crucial to language and that the use of spontaneous gesture while speaking may be a remnant of the proto-language from which spoken language and music both originated. Nettleford believes the body’s prime function is to carry our intellect and imagination, the vital energy, and one’s soul. David Kresch coined the term “perfinkers” (cited in Bruner, 1986) to highlight perception, feeling, and thinking is unified.

If we recognize the foundational development of our bodies’ emotional core, we will be less likely to see mind and body, as somehow separate parts of our lives; however sophisticated our thinking becomes it will always be oriented and shaped by the emotions of the body within which it occurs. A central feature of Egan’s educational theory is our bodies’ sense-making tools is its emotional nature. He says these emotions will persist and develop as the most basic orientors and organizers of our cognition throughout our lives. In other words, while emotions are essential to understanding by means of the body, they are clearly not specific to this type of understanding.

The way in which we respond to the physical and social world around us depends, importantly, on our emotions: from an early age we experience profound emotional patterns such as expectation and frustration, or satisfaction, of the expectation. Basically, everything we encounter is experienced in our bodies, through

such things as loneliness and lack of comfort, or hunger and satiation, but our emotions allow us to interpret them as fear or happiness (Kresch cited in Bruner, 1986). Indeed the way we interpret events, including our later ability to critically analyze them, will always be shot through with emotions. Delight, distress, elation, horror, satisfaction, anger, compassion, or fear constitute elements of the underlying matrix that shape our responses, and thus even rationality itself.

Similarly, Lakoff and Johnson argue that our language itself evolves from our bodily experience of phenomena and that bodily-based metaphors pervade our understanding of many of the world's most fundamental physical forces and operations. Here I am proposing implications of dance education are education in literacy; to give youths the opportunity they need desperately to achieve and cultivate humanity.

We walk and talk according to particular rhythms that easily lead us into dance, and song. Jamaican bodies are unique in the world. In our present age, who is the world's fastest man? Track and field superstar Usain Bolt is only one fitting example of the profound implications of acknowledging the incredible potential of the Jamaican body. The black dancing body is not yet recognized in Jamaica. We should pay closer attention to what Nettleford and others are saying. Beginning with this aspect of our Jamaican identity, our ability to dance! Compose and perform dance! Professor Nettleford writes: "Caribbean cultural enterprises are many and varied but they have existed out of mind as source of energy for the survival strategies that Caribbean forebears crafted and honed throughout that long history of slavery and colonialism."<sup>52</sup>

Despite the negativity attached to Jamaican dance and Caribbean people, with appropriate dance education good can cometh with hard work. Through dance Nettleford and the NDTC transformed liabilities into assets through the "exercise of the creative intellectual and the creative imagination." In a Kierkegaardian sense, this can begin individually. In this sense, Nettleford says, "that process of **'becoming'** itself constitutes a cultural enterprise which should be jealously guarded, painstakingly sustained and

<sup>52</sup> Nettleford, *Re-engineering Caribbean Cultural Enterprises/Institutions*, 2004, 4.

made to be an integral part of shaping the kind of society for which we have struggled to have emerge ever since 1838 when full freedom, otherwise known as Emancipation, was achieved.”<sup>53</sup>

Without an understanding of subjectivity Nettleford’s challenge, to protect and exercise Jamaican and Caribbean intellectual and creative imagination, could not be achieved. Subjectivity goes beyond the dancehall manifestations, which form international dance and music events, and national dance competitions, which are, but only two examples of the Caribbean cultural enterprise for which Jamaica has come to be known. Kierkegaard and Nettleford both speak of *processes* rather than *product*, which are not mutually exclusive.

It is argued by Nettleford, Hickling and others that it is because of slavery why Jamaican expression has taken on the form that it has. The codes of the ethics that Caribbean peoples perform, then, are not necessarily theirs. What are the alternatives in Jamaica for students who attend dancehall events or participate in *dagging*? Transformation must begin in education where its structures are strongest and devised to protect the student’s psyche and body. Students should not abandon their creativity in the debate around “Standard This” or “Standard That.”

What Nettleford calls “re-engineering” I refer to as transformation. This means dance should be taught in schools, so should music and poetry and other fine arts. We should get back to teaching African dance as the foundation for appropriate use in the process of “becoming” an individual, which everyone is capable. This claim is consistent in Kierkegaard’s view of subjectivity, and Rogoff’s (1998) view of *the cultural nature of human development*. Human activity, especially those that involve sophisticate mental functions, like African dance, according to Vygotsky (1978), support thinking and problem-solving. For example, stories, proverbs and dialogues between adults and children, introduced in the form of dances, are all educational processes that build

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 5.

“mythic understanding” (Egan, 1997), the lesson of morality, and the ability to observe and to reason in a given situation.

The shape and trajectory of the *self* in dance education is inseparable from the social and cultural implications of human experience. Humans are social animals and connections between individuals are a critical part of the dance education process. The circle of dance, for example, helps to organize and sustain the human intellect. It also serves as template for cognitive growth. A philosophical approach to sociocultural dance education brings this clearly into focus. By using symbolic, representational tools of the culture in which the child lives, the experience helps to organize the human mind in culturally specific ways (Cole, 1996; Gauvain, 1995; Goodnow, 1990, Rogoff, 1998). According to sociocultural theory, the teacher of dance must be dynamic and very knowledgeable in the system being used in order to not mislead the student. How students deploy these skills later on is not predetermined but constructed by the child’s relation with the teacher to meet new contextual demands.

The sociocultural potential of the Jamaican dance educator is an enormous enterprise. The peculiarity of our dance-making seems to give Jamaicans, and perhaps young children more than anyone, great aesthetic delight. The educational implications include a decisive subjective stage are undoubtedly without any discontinuity in the life of the child. Education in traditional African thought already begins in the womb of the mother. When the child particularly educated in traditional modes, growing up, with songs and dances integrated into everyday gestures become benchmarks of its evolution of constant psychomotor and psychosocial development (Maboungou, 2005). These benchmarks allow the individual to not only identify its place within the community but also to make a personal contribution to strengthening that community. The music and dances often reflect his/her immediate experience.

## **Dance Education**

From essentially a Kierkegaardian perspective I argue appropriate dance education is proposed in part of the knowledge of the most worth. I use ‘appropriate’ in the context of a practical guide to solving preschool problems. Of course one could argue who decides what is appropriate dance etcetera. This is perhaps the crux of the

subjective-objective matter. This is a fundamental but very difficult moral argument. How do you decide what is “right” and “wrong?” For Kierkegaard, *subjectivity is truth*. Truth is within the individual. Mullen writes:

Most men are subjective toward themselves and objective toward all others, frightfully objective sometimes—but the task is precisely to be objective toward oneself and subjective toward all others.<sup>54</sup>

It seems clear that Kierkegaard wrote the appropriate “style of living” as only one possibility. This is perhaps where my thesis swings off and begins again. What is proposed in this section is an alternative approach to dance. According to Mullen, “any serious style of living has a technique.” Later in this thesis I discuss fundamentally three critical Kierkegaardian steps to transformation:

1. do not take religion and spirituality for granted,
2. to have courage
3. to have faith.

As we have only two feet, for the most part subjectivity/objectivity are two-in-One. When Kierkegaard’s ideas are put together we could say the mind’s body is the carrier of the spirit. For Kierkegaard, man is spirit. Mullen notes that Kierkegaard is not saying man is a spirit. Mullen explains what Kierkegaard says:

The point is that man is a spirited being. When you say, “I like a person with spirit,” you are referring to someone who is self-possessed, who thinks for himself, controls his own life, refuses to be passive, refuses to be controlled from without. To say that man is spirit is to say that he is free, where “free” means not arbitrary or random, but self-controlled.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Mullen, *Kierkegaard’s Philosophy: Self-Deception and Cowardice in the Present Age*, 39.

<sup>55</sup> Mullen, *Kierkegaard’s Philosophy: Self-Deception and Cowardice in the Present Age*, 44.

The infinite of man is most vividly apparent in the spirit of man. This is a plausible beginning. It is very difficult to imagine the outward is separate from the inward, or the ethical from the external. At a certain point it is as Wittgenstein proposed, they are one and the same. What is happening outside is a reflection of what is happening internally. It is as much pro as it is contra.

The notion of freedom in Mullen's passage is an important part of Kierkegaard's task. For performing artists, particularly those in post-colonial societies such a task is critical. Hope says slavery, an important historical experience on which rests "unnatural and insatiable sexual urges that needed the control and guidance of men—originally interpreted as white men" started in the 16th century.<sup>56</sup> Dubois, who has written extensively about slaves, and torture and truth, says this is not an uncommon oversight of modern scholars. The ubiquity of African slaves in antiquity is invisible to many researchers in cultural studies. For example, "tattooed" African slaves are clearly visible in ancient Greek culture at the beginning of the fifth century B.C.E. (Dubois, 2008). Kartel's menacing dancehall style of dress and body image covered in tattoos is a vivid ideological orientation of the "the tattooed slave" in contemporary culture.

In this sense, the two are one, inseparable. The objective problem is united with the subjective. Lowrie tells us the objective problem consists of an inquiry into the truth of Christianity. The subjective problem concerns the relationship of the individual to Christianity. To put this into dance terms quite simply: how is the dancing body related to the truth? Or how many a dancer participates in transforming violence in the dancehall?

The topic of the knowledge of the most worth relates to transforming the problem of dancehall violence; partly because the question, although posed singularly is quite accurately concerns all artists. Although I am most concerned with Kierkegaard's concept of subjectivity, it is necessary to look at what he has to say about the objective problem. Then I shall proceed to the concept of subjectivity. The latter is proposed as being unveiled since the nature of subjectivity cannot be taught. In general, Stephen

<sup>56</sup> Hope, 1997, 37-38.

Evans says the answer is that such communication must be artful or 'indirect,' since the communication to be understood must eventuate in a double reflection on the part of the recipient. The receiver must personally appropriate the content, and he is free to do this or to refrain.

According to Senyshyn, Mary Warnock says, "it cannot be passed on from one person to the next, nor added to by different researchers. It cannot be taught in the classroom."<sup>57</sup> In light of what Evans and Warnock writes, and deciding not to waste time waiting for the god Apollo to send this information from heaven to me, I ventured to live in Jamaica among Jamaican farmers and other young people. Though Kierkegaard is a teacher, his strong emphasis on subjective or indirect communication inspired me to go Jamaica to study and reflect on the crisis indirectly through participatory-observation.

Going into the dancehall and other places in Jamaica was not without tremendous risk. Yet the ethical is the dancer's highest aim. And according to Kierkegaard, it is a great risk:

A daring adventure is not merely a high-sounding phrase or a bold ejaculation, but a toilsome *labour*; a daring venture is not a tumultuous shriek, however reckless, but a quiet consecration which makes sure of nothing beforehand, but risks everything. Therefore, says the ethical, dare, dare to renounce everything, including this lofty pretentious and yet delusive intercourse with world-historical contemplation.

## **Some Aspects of African-Jamaican Dance**

We call those arts vulgar which tend to deform the body, and...degrade the mind...Practice must be used before theory, and the body be trained before the mind. (Aristotle—*Politics* Book VIII Part II & III)

African dancers chose to celebrate pelvic movements because the centre of the body – from which further life springs – is sacred. European dancers in contrast, chose under the influence of Christianity to censure pelvic movement and to celebrate instead bodily composure and

<sup>57</sup> Senyshyn, *The Artist in Crisis*, 82.

possibilities of flowing peripheral movements and extended footwork. Jamaican dancers who have worked to absorb traditions, can ripple like snakes and promenade like flamingos. Their dances can vibrate with power and float with decorum... Dance companies capable of delivering such life-informing and life-embracing messages are rare. (A reviewer of the UK Dancing Times, cited in Nettleford, 2009)

The base of the African dances I practice and teach is Congolese ([www.nyata-nyata.org](http://www.nyata-nyata.org)). These dances of Africa found in Jamaica relate to the slaves that were transported by ship from West Africa and the Congo. The approach I take in the following pages is not straightforward and juxtaposed against a backdrop of topics to illuminate aspects of African-Jamaican dance. Earlier I introduced the unity of rhythms and movement in traditional African thought in relation to Jamaican music and dance. I am continuing along this trajectory to develop what I refer to as African-Jamaican. I have no intention of painting a picture to say *dagging* is 'traditional' African dance. No. What I am illuminating are aspects of traditional or reliable African dance that resonate in the contemporary Jamaican dancehall culture. And because this is a thesis of dance I start with the first and most important aspect, Ethics, to make an African-Jamaican connection. I will continue to do this with some other fascinating philosophical and theoretical insights. Where I might seem to be off topic I urge you to recall Wittgenstein's idea '*aesthetics and ethics are one*'. My focus is on the task that dance is not separate from the ethics of our daily life.

It may help by saying first there is no single genre we can refer to as "African dance." And, again, Africa is a *con-ti-nent*. It may also be helpful to note that some scholars of African dance believe anything performed outside of the continent is could not be authentic. So there are divergence and clichés. There are many clichés that go along with the genre "African" dance: bright colorful costumes, loud 'polyrhythmic' drumming, pelvic thrusts, gyrations, bare breasted women, "raw" and "primitive" naked black men running around with spears.

I will repeat this again; slaves in Jamaica were taken from Africa, namely Western Africa and the Congo. A vast majority of people on Jamaica are descendants of African slaves. Jamaican dance, like many African-American dances have strong roots in Congolese and West

African dance forms. Where I speak of African dance I am speaking specifically of my training in and knowledge of Congolese dance. For example, later in this thesis where I discuss *Improvisation* I am referring specifically to Congolese philosophical thought. Though this principle is found in many cultural traditions not only in Africa.

The dances in Jamaica are theatrical performances as in America and Canada, etc. However, modern choreographers try to present genuine African dance with good intent.

According to ethnomusicologist Doris Green, many African languages have no word for “dance.” The word ‘dance’ comes from the language of the colonizers, says Green. What is called dance on the continent of Africa is part of social function or ceremony. African dances all have purpose and meaning. It is more important to understand, as I will illustrate later in this chapter in the section *Intention*. This is perhaps for me the most important aspect in how authenticity is defined in African dance philosophy. For example, there are specific African dances for males and females, with clear and distinct aims. As there are dances created for whatever is happening from day to day. From this vantage point, I will introduce Dr. June Francis’ research project in Jamaica’s coffee industry to illustrate two things: (1) how coffee as a metaphor is shaping understanding of Dionysus, and Kierkegaard’s concept of subjectivity/objectivity, (2) what constitutes an bona fide context of African-Jamaican dance choreography in a contemporary society. Following that, I write *Intention* is fundamentally a principle of authentic African dance.

African dance should not be viewed as a category, but parsed by intention and talent. For nearly two decades I studied and practiced authentic Congolese dance. It’s obvious now that this research and my Jamaican background have gradually altered my intention and approach to dance. Hence African-Jamaican dance is a synthesis of subjective and objective elements. As music and dance are inseparable so two-in-one becomes more pronounced in this discussion.

It is important that readers are forewarned that this is a philosophical study of the Jamaican dancing body with distinctively African ancestry. I acknowledge the term African-based in my discussion of African-Jamaican dance and dancer. I am not

mapping a comparative analysis of themes of dances or a style of dancing rather what is more complex in this thesis is to convey aspects of African dance in general than African aesthetic techniques.

In the Jamaican born *dagga* and phenomenon I recognize multiple ethnic groups in Jamaica. However the first and perhaps most vivid point of contention of *dagging*, from my research, points to a particular subculture of predominately “black” Jamaican bodies. According to Hope (2007), arising from slavery, Jamaica’s hierarchical continuum is as follows:

1. White male
2. White female
3. Coloured male
4. Coloured female
5. Black male
6. Black female

In the media it is the ‘black’ male and ‘black’ female clichéd in pelvis *dis/plays inn di dancehall*. The tragedy is many African-Americans have enriched their lives with African dances. Jamaicans have taken this aspect of their heritage and debunked its legacy.

Various scholars have devised systems to enunciate aesthetic qualities of African dance and art (Asante, 1996; Sieber, 1973; Thompson, 1973; Blacking, 1985). Now Asante believes African dance is man-made, exhibits skill, conveys meaning, is the product of conscious intent, effective, conveys a sense of unity, wholeness.”<sup>58</sup> Blacking writes:

To be effective in society, dance must mediate between nature and culture in human existence and so be transcendental in context. The intelligence of feeling should inform all action, and the insight and intuition that are nurtured by ‘artistic’ experience are essential for the quality of life;

<sup>58</sup> Asante, 1997, 217-218.

but sequential linear processing of information is required for many of the techniques of the living... witness how frequently outstanding dancers seem to 'be danced'"<sup>59</sup>

Susan Vogel (1986), the art historian, believes African aesthetic is fundamentally moral. She says the word for good and beauty are the same in many African languages: "This word usually means well made, beautiful, pleasing to the senses, virtuous, useful, correct, appropriate, and conforming to customs and expectations and stands in contrast to the word meaning vicious, useless, ill made, unsuitable."<sup>60</sup> Vogel effectively points out the important overlap of beauty and good in African aesthetic content and African aesthetic form. For Vogel the value is in the moral perfection, its function. (I will discuss this aspect as Intention).

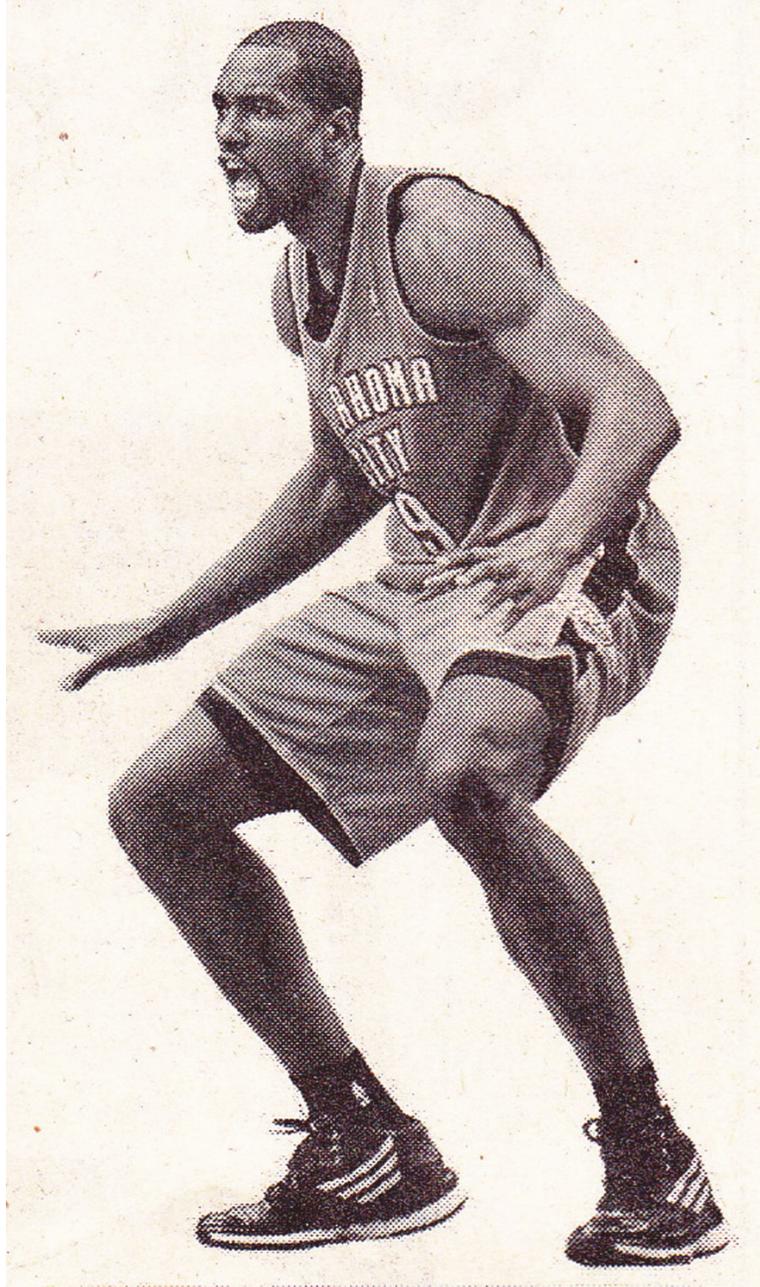
Marshall and Jean Stearns (1979) laid out six characteristics of African dance. Here are the two that relate to *dagging*: (1) African dance is centrifugal, exploding outward from the hip; (2) African dance generally imitates animals in realistic details. It is important to read Kunene (1981), and Asante (1979) to put Stearns characteristics into perspective. To a large degree how does this explain the nature of *dagging*? As a real entity, *dagging* is explosive, effectively at the centre of the press, but in Vogel's terms, is it useful communication?

<sup>59</sup> Blacking, 1985, 72.

<sup>60</sup> Vogel, 1986, 15.

## The Body of Knowledge

*Illustration 5. Classic African Dance Stance*



*Note.* The New York Times, 12 February 2012; used with permission.

From various perspectives of the body that appear in this thesis, the slave body is, by no doubt, informed and inscribed by many political, social, and cultural discourses, which have legitimized the body in its relationship to *dagging*. Therefore, we can effectively study the body, as a site of knowledge through contemporary African-Jamaican dance, and representations of *dagging* to discover the cause of mental illness and violence among black people in the African Diaspora.

As I noted previously, Jamaica possesses, more than any other country in the world, a vast number of churches yet Jamaicans are clichéd some of the most violent human beings. This reputation is re-producing the relation between religion and violence in Africa. There are many examples of religious rituals and rites of passages in African cultures alive and found in the dancehall that mirrors the sexual abuse and violence of slavery.

There is a simple and beautiful truth to boast about the island Jamaica, the soil is extremely fertile: you can drop a seed just about anywhere on the ground in Jamaica and it will root and produce fruit. Now I am saying African-Jamaicans create dances out of a simple seed. Everything in African culture can be translated back into a story, song, or dance. This is the cultural nature of oral traditions. Ironically some of these dances are stories about the slave body. Now you're probably wondering what is the relation between dance, mental illness, violence and slavery? Relativity theory. I will not get into that because it might confuse the thesis even further. But let me repeat one thing, the ubiquity of violence is not always directly related to the number of existing churches in Jamaica rather relative to the lack of *fruit of knowledge* or wrong understanding of religious notion of *the body as a site of knowledge*. Christian missionaries got it wrong from the beginning. This is what Hickling refers to as 'delusional psychosis'.

Many persons attend church on a regular basis but do they possess the "intellectual tools" or literacy skills to put theory into practice. Consequently they shun dancing in the streets of Jamaica. Why? Could a lack of sound religious/spiritual understanding of our ancestral bodies contribute to mental illness and violence?

Considering we are *bodying* the sources of African intellectual heritage, African religions and philosophies now available to us in literary texts (Asante & Abarry, 1996;

Bernal, 1991; Mbiti, 1969). In addition to the profundity of our African arts, music and dance influences in the world in education, on stage and life (Maboungou 2005; Gottschild, 2003; Sloat, 2002; Asante, 1996) there is no doubt that we also possess some of the world's most sophisticated knowledge systems. One of them is dance of the African continent. African dance is everything we live and breathe. There are no textbooks on how to learn these dances.

There is a crisis of mental illness and violence in Jamaica and people are asking what is African dance? So what's African dance? According to modern physicists we are not isolated empty bodies floating in a vast space-time ocean without a connection to other bodies. The truth is quite the opposite. If we are dancing to find a solution to violence we must be willing to accept fundamentally principles of cooperation, collaboration and communication or sink deeper into the abyss of crime and violence in Jamaica. African dance is cooperation, collaboration and communication.

When we examine incidences of reported cases of crime and violence in Jamaica over the past three decades what we see is a continuous growth, and glimmers of hope, moments of lull. This could mean two things: programs in place to address crime and violence are ineffective and, the velocity of the violent force within disconnected bodies is whirling faster and faster so bodies are colliding at an increasing rate reproducing more occurrences of violence in the external world. Then the real question seems to be not so much what is African dance but how do we put the dance back in schools and places where it is needed most? Could the answer we are looking for be *That?*

In the West, young person's searching for a path back home, to return to the *self*, found that in Eastern Mysticism, the philosophies of India, Yoga. Like Africa, India possesses a rich ancient religious/spiritual heritage. Eastern mysticism plays a fundamental role in the development of modern physics. The fund of Africa's and India's knowledge combined European philosophy could contribute to the most efficacious contemporary theory and practice needed in the world today to stop the spread of violence. The works of contemporary scholars and artists that figure prominently in this thesis contributed greatly to the development of my hypothesis that a new cross-cultural

educational paradigm of *the body* as a site of knowledge could develop our understanding of the cause of violence in the African Diaspora.

I argue that the search in the external world for a solution to the problem of violence is a most moot endeavor because the problem of violence in Jamaica is to be found within the body. As a result, African dance I argue is the most efficacious practice to address the issues of violence. The work of one prominent master of traditional and contemporary African dance Zab Maboungou (2005) appears in this thesis to support my argument that *the slave body* (Dubois, 2008) is a site of knowledge African artists study through choreography and performance to deepen understanding.

*African rhythms and movement* is due partly to one simple truth; these dances are inseparable from reality, nature, and lived experiences (Green, 1996). For example, “Rhythmic Understanding” is a kit of intellectual tools Africans discovered long ago in the jungles of Africa and developed to explain cosmic occurrences. African exploration of rhythm is intrinsic to movement created to celebrate the natural cycles of life, from birth, death, to lead a pilgrimage or boycott, manage mundane domestic activities, and to deliberate peripatetic social issues such as gang wars and sexual abuse.

From my research in traditional and contemporary African dance, all African dances certainly do not look all alike even though they contain the same philosophy of bodily rhythms and movement. Because the great number of different ethnic groups and languages of the Africa Diaspora, it would be impossible for me to give examples of each. And besides the aim of this thesis is not to produce an encyclopaedia of dance in African cultures and my intention is not to claim a position of “expert” of traditional dance in Africa. However, I will concentrate on what I mastered in and was initiated by a Master of the African dance to teach.

According to Green, African dance is a natural form because it translates the rhythms of the body and nature into movement. Maurice Senghor revealed to Green that in order for a dance to be created there must be a reason, and event. For example, what is the dance *daggering* theorizing? Therefore, one can conclude that Jamaican dance is supported by this theory. Hence I identify Jamaica’s roots in African dance by way of calling it either African-Jamaican or Jamaican-African.

## **The *Dagga's* Identity**

Since a young boy such and such parts of my Jamaican identity was in doubt. More doubts have recently resurfaced following my research experiences in Jamaica. There will be no doubt that dance fundamentally is a part of my identity and many millions of others too. The point here is that Kierkegaard believes approximation can continue indefinitely, and while he is searching for the truth objectively he says it is under covers. What most dancers are searching for is already within them. While the inquirer tries to cut the grass under his feet he dies. In other words, I believe Kierkegaard is saying most of us will die before realizing the truth is not to be found objectively. It is dubious to arrive at the truth of Christianity objectively. Why? "Christianity is spirit, spirit is inwardness, inwardness is subjectivity, subjectivity is essentially passion, and in its maximum an infinite, personal, passionate interest in one's eternal happiness" (33).

Subjectivity is personal. Subjectivity cannot be taught. Teachers can only provide an environment, a safe space and *riddims* to support the student's search for the truth. "As soon as subjectivity is eliminated from passion, and the infinite interest eliminated from passion, there is in general no decision at all" (33). For Kierkegaard all decisiveness is rooted in subjectivity. Again, this is where the "tool" intention plays a crucial role in Kierkegaard's concept of subjectivity.

## **"Primitive" *Dagging***

I will change the rhythm and discuss more specifically now the primitive and, then more importantly the "raw" of the *daggas* identity as it relates to the "rawness" of *dagging*. If what Maxine Sheets suggests is true about the unifying centre of dance, how African art, people, and knowledge systems managed to exist for so long with the trope of the "primitive" descriptive is implicated in *dagging*. In that I am asking how African dance and the dancer acquired the 'primitive'.

Observing the "seduction of the primitive", Gottschild (1995) explains that the trope has played havoc with the European psyche since the Age of Enlightenment. This love-hate affair of opposites, she says, is evident in the image of the "black dancing body" on the stage upon which European gaze with their fears and phobias, along with

their fantasies and desires (p. 100). People are obsessed with black skin while others are jealous of it.

The primitive trope defines the European concept of the “other,” be it the consciously non-European influences in the revolutionary work of artists such as Picasso, Braque, and Matisse, Hottentot Venues in nineteenth-century London, Josephine Baker in twentieth-century Paris, Ashanti Fever in turn-of-the-century Vienna, or Dancehall in Jamaica. That statement is pretty clear, and now I am repeating what I already stated in the very first few pages of this thesis: African influences are ubiquitous.

It is not possible to pigeon-hole and rather embarrassing to try to codify African dance as primitive. However, Caribbean dance is uniquely the dance of people nurtured over centuries in a dynamic Caribbean environment transcends not only the narrow classifications like primitivism but current classificatory scheme of *dance-art*, *classical*, *contemporary* or *modern*, and *ethnic*. It is mandatory to reject the primitive trope especially to re-educate people in what is dance in the Caribbean.

Nettleford reports Caribbean dance, like other definitive genres of artistic expression, is a classic mode and has much in common with the traditions of American dance theatre attributed to greats like: Katherine Dunham and Peral Primus, Geoffrey Holder and Garth Fagan, the Jamaican-born and bred choreographer (Nettleford, cited in Sloat, p. 84). Like European classical ballet, Caribbean dance is deeply rooted in its own ancestral/traditional dances of Africa.

Nearly ninety percent of all Jamaicans are descendants of Africans brought to the island to produce slave sugar for the benefit of delusional planters, colonial powers. Some say Jamaican dancers are wired but not on sugar alone. Rather since 1509 they have been fighting the spread of Spanish and later the English disease that Hickling says invaded and infected the island life. For nearly 500 years these foreigners, for their own benefit, have exploited Jamaica’s land, people and resources. Hundreds of thousands of African slaves died over centuries from this disease to produce ‘slave sugar’ that financed England’s industrial revolution. Could this mean African-Jamaican dances are born of crisis? Is *dagging* a renewal of the “raw” “primitive” trope? How might this misnomer implicate what constitutes ‘authentic’ Jamaican dance?

## The “Rawness” of *Dagging*

Now why is *dagging* called “raw?” Green writes: “In the raw, traditional African dance is the integrated art of movement that is controlled by her music which is governed by her languages.”<sup>61</sup> Another reason can be argued is the environment. Green says the *environment* plays a significant role in the way dance is developed in African cultures. For example, in the African Diapoara and certainly in Jamaica one concern is access to educational opportunities and educational resources. Little resources in underdeveloped countries limit the development of professional dance schools especially for lower income communities. From my research in dance, I found that some forms of contemporary African dance are a less complicated form to sell than say modern ballet.

An inner-city youth is more concentrated on *Hip Hop* and *Krump* movement. These urban forms utilize rhythms and movement with a multitude of gestures and in the vertical, horizontal, and sagittal planes. The whole body is engaged.

During my research of black urban forms of dance, I observed that in Canada and the United States of America, for example, where African drums are not the accompaniment for urban dances, most noticeable traditional African rhythms and movement still characterize those dances. The body of black urban dancers is carried by bodily rhythms (what I call *bodying*) to mirror issues of the Diaspora, which is unfortunately not surprising often some form of anxiety.

The American dance craze called “Jerkin” or “Jerk” and “Krump” are all street dances born of “raw” improvisation and developed by African-American youths, some of Jamaica decent. Like “Hip Hop,” these improvisational dances have spread to other parts of the globe. It is important to note that Clive Campbell, born in Kingston, Jamaica, also known as DJ Kool Herc, developed the blueprint for *Hip Hop* music and dance

<sup>61</sup> Green, 1996, 13.

culture with help from Joseph Saddler of Barbados, and later Afrika Bambaataa also from the Caribbean.

Campbell is known as the “Founding Father” of *Hip Hop*. Campbell hails from Jamaica’s early dancehall culture in Kingston. He brought to New York a new style of music and dance technique and founded the Hip Hop movement in the 1960s. This was his response to a call for an alternative to violent lawlessness of street gang culture of the Bronx, New York. The connection here to “dancing diseases” is Campbell called his dancers “b-boys” and “b-girls” for their break dance style. Dancers were expertly replicating the “break beats” of Campbell’s heavily percussive music. Campbell says the street slang “breaking,” for example, is a street dance nomenclature meaning “getting excited,” “acting energetically,” and deliberately “causing a disturbance.”<sup>62</sup> They were not epileptic or diseased. The modern medical gaze says much about dancers, particularly from a distance.

Many of these black urban dancers are *bodying* the pains of deprivation, neglect, crime, sexual abuse, and violence on a daily basis. School playgrounds, outdoor basketball courts, underneath bridges, streets corners, back alleys all these spaces become affordable studio spaces where they can commune voluntarily with their peers to dance it out. In other words, they are auto-didactics training to rise to the occasional challenge of dance-fight with self or other auto-didacts. The fight is danced till someone is “*daggered*” or “*krumped*.” This is an expression these auto-didactics invented to express their experience of transcendence and a common expression to delineate the values of African dance.

Outdoor dance in dancehall spaces is all too familiar to my own training experience and choreographing other dancers in similar ‘raw’ environments. To sell contemporary African dance in Jamaica would certainly be less complicated for obvious reasons. Inner-city youths in Jamaica are not all that different from “ghetto kids”

<sup>62</sup> Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DJ\\_Kool\\_Herc](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DJ_Kool_Herc)

elsewhere in the world or Africa in terms of the way they are *bodying* lived experiences—some more obvious than others, but the body of youths affected by gang wars, violence and sexual abuse is a crisis scientists, psychoanalysis alone cannot answer what is the solution. Modern processes to address bodily rhythms (emotional problems or psychological illness) youths of the Diaspora are *bodying* will depend on using the raw data, the footage of lived experiences and this will no doubt include the body, as a site of knowledge, in theory and practice. The body as a site of knowledge, or more specifically “the slave body” (DuBois, 2008) as a “place of discovery” (Snowber, 2003) appears thematically in contemporary African-Jamaican dance as an art of discovery.

Contemporary African-Jamaican dance becomes a critical expression and methodology to explore or develop understanding of how violence arises from the body is not a straightforward thing. Perhaps the first thing to know is the collective imagination of Jamaica is, for the most part, African-derived. The most intimate connection we have with the environment is our bodies. Kierkegaard’s concept of subjectivity is successful partly because it does not depend on textbooks to deliver its aim. The dancing body; for example, is likened to everyday life, can provide a material basis for a different connection. Dance classes can be organized to take the body through internal rhythms and movement to investigate knowledge about cultural issues. One of the gems of African dance is the circle of dance. Like the “Circle of Friends” (Chevannes, 2008), “circle of people” (Hickling, 2005), the “circle of dance” (Maboungou, 2005) represents a commensurable feature. Whether applied in violence reduction projects in schools, cultural therapy to cure mental illness, or dance performance studies the aim of the tool is also the ready deployment of a precise methodology to generate subjective understanding. Egan (1997) writes,

We had, as a species, and have as individuals, bodies before language—Language emerges from the body in the process of evolutionary and individual development, and it bears the ineluctable stamp of the body: Phrases and sentences, for example, are tied to the time we take to inhale and exhale—though when we speak we take in quick breaths and release them steadily... similarly we use language organs of perception. In other words, our body is the most fundamental mediating tool that shapes our understanding (p. 5).

Following the trajectory of Egan's general theory of education laid out in his book *The educated mind*, I write largely contemporary African-Jamaican dance is developing the body as a site of knowledge.

African dance, a kinesthetic form, and writing, a cognitive form, are combined in this philosophical investigation of violence. I argue the relationship between cognitive and affective knowing to challenge existing notions of violence in Jamaica and the African Diaspora. This challenge includes study and reflection on the metaphysical theory of the Cartesian dualism: mind and body. This leads naturally to my analysis of body as a place of discovery (Snowber & Cancienne, 2003), a routinely uncharted area of scholarly research in Jamaica; to pose critical questions; to understand theoretical concepts; the *self* as the dancer; and to represent research in the field of African dance.

Analysis of these epistemological ideas should support arguments that the historical slave body, as a site of knowledge, is important to the development of the most efficacious practices to address madness, mental illness, violence in Jamaica and the African Diaspora. Essential to this analysis of what is African dance in this section is phenomenological reflections on the body as a site of knowledge to suggest that as individuals we have access to knowledge of the body only by existing. From this perspective of phenomenology, as both African dancer and theorist of dance, I draw from lived experience to support the thesis that the approach of integrating the body, as a site of knowledge, in education through African dance, in schools could be helpful in the work of the most efficacious practices.

The dancers during formal training, like an embryo in the womb, undergo growth and the dancer becomes simply an instrument of the *spirit* in him/her. The dancer can then be led to act and speak appropriately. According to Mbiti, spirits that come into dance are friendly. The *spirit* of dance is not harmful. Disciplined and sacred dance does not mean one must cut him/herself off from society and enter seclusion, which corresponds to the gestation period of human beings. This is a reminder of what Mikhail Bakhtin's meaning of "to be." It means to be for another, through the other, for oneself. To be fully conscious of our thoughts, speech, and actions we cannot remain separate, cut off the rest of the world of others. For Bakhtin, communion with others is the best

way to develop our consciousness (of self and toward a thou). To be initiated into the mysteries of other spirits, carry both subjective and objective meanings.

### **The *Dagga's* Anxiety**

According to a 1995 report published by the Centre for Population, Community and Social Change (CPCSC), Department of Sociology and Social Work, University of the West Indies, Jamaica is a scene of escalating violence. CPCSC researchers, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, social workers, professors of cultural studies, and psychoanalysts in Jamaica attribute poverty to the fundamental cause of mental illness and urban violence. I found no data to corroborate this assumption. In a more recent report, I found researchers saying that what was necessary for transforming Jamaican society are not purely economic interventions.

What I did find is doubtless that anti-violence Jamaicans do worry daily about what he or she will have to eat or to drink. In *The Anxiety of Poverty* Kierkegaard believes that what is lacking is not the satisfaction for his appetite; it is the blessings of God that satisfy. The “poor” Christian according to Kierkegaard is without anxiety. I believe what Kierkegaard is saying is Christians have become ignorant of their riches and abundance. Certainly there are poor Christians without the anxiety of poverty. Therefore, the violent man is without a true conception of God in his world.

Poor is an outward condition, and yet it is not poor. “He prays for it and by praying for it he keeps away the anxiety.”<sup>63</sup> Kierkegaard acknowledges that it is not easy to get away from poverty, but the principle thing to do is to get away from the thought of *I am* poor, for example, by thinking constantly of God. Kierkegaard says, “the Christian goes *his* gait; he turns his eyes upward, he looks away from danger, in poverty he is without the anxiety of poverty.”<sup>64</sup> Human beings walk into pitfalls looking constantly down. He says the temptation is to look down upon the earth in hope of finding riches.

<sup>63</sup> Walter Lowrie, *Christian Discourses Etc.*, (1848), 18.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

The more one looks down upon it, the more certain is his destruction. What is this temptation? Kierkegaard says it is to live to slave... to lose one's soul. Instead of *laboring* for one's daily needs, many offenders become like a slave to spiritless activity and of his own anxiety. For Kierkegaard, the Christian who is in poverty is for this very fact in a difficult position, but not in the least forsaken. According to Plato, Kierkegaard tells us "wealth and poverty conceived Eros, whose nature partook of both."<sup>65</sup> On the other hand, he says, the poor heathen is poor, and poor, and poorer than the poorest. In Jamaica I see the crisis *inna di dancehall* is not adequately presented, much less solved. A matter of poverty seems somewhat simplistic.

This crisis I suppose is symptomatic of ethical conditions stemming from what Kierkegaard refers to as *inwardness* of the individual. The anxious soul is a child with deep-seated fears as a result of the cycle of capital punishment and parental abuse. The scholar or theoretical man with a heavy heart might not understand this. Try to imagine the power a 12-years-old child requires to withstand the force of a mad Dionysiac Jamaican parent. There is tremendous pain and suffering in Jamaican homes. It was palatable the moment I arrived on the island. As soon as I stepped off the plane and into the reality I could taste the eloquence of a cover up, the Apollonian veil trying to smother the Dionysian agony.

Political leaders and scholarly theoretical heads of schools dominate. There is no doubt that the authoritarian Jamaican teacher I caught of film threatening 2-years-old preschoolers with a strap is just another day at the office for many educators. Schools in Jamaica are still permitted to inflict corporal punishment by belt to discipline children. To get children to read and write, add and subtract—*beat it inna dem* (beat them till they learn it). It would require another thesis for me to take account of the number of traumatizing and violent occurrences I observed in Jamaica while collecting data for this thesis. Not different from colonial slavery.

<sup>65</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript* (1846), David Swenson and Walter Lowrie (Trans.) 85.

## The Passion of *Dagging*

The passion of a *dagga* ('*dagging*' dancer) I believe is the spirit of the god Dionysus. This passion is not unrelated to the French "Apache" style of dancing. In the beginning of the 20th century violent street gangs in France affected the development of the ballroom and cabaret with a dance known as *Apache*. I also found the Dionysian passion of *Dagging* and the *Apache* is vividly portrayed in a world-renowned Canadian contemporary dance in Quebec. For example, the famous French-Canadian choreographer Édouard Locke forged his contemporary dance company *La La La Human Steps* that resembles the passion of the *Apache* dance of early 1900s France. Incidentally Locke's choreographed style of dancing concretized in his famous work "Human Sex."

It is evident to me that these three styles of dance: *Dagging*, *Apache*, and *Human Sex*, are born of a similar underground aesthetic. However the 'Apache' dance, like Locke's contemporary dance company, is now an acceptable and respectable form of dance-theatre. I believe Jamaican *dagging* dancers have the same potential to become explosive, acceptable and respectable individual artists.

What is contradictory about these dances is in the incommensurability between the dancer's objectivity and his spirit. If these *daggas* ('*dagging*' dancers) are believers infinitely concerned about happiness, and it is faith that assures this eternal happiness, what are the values of this dancehall phenomenon as it is? How do *Apache-style* dancehall dancers lure people away from the "certainty" of faith? If these dancers are non-believers then these dances are not comical, since eternal happiness is not raised at all. In which case, these dancers have become, according to Kierkegaard, "too objective to concern himself about an eternal happiness" (54). *Dagga* dancers, like speculative philosophers are moving further and further away from the self and becoming just energy. Kierkegaard says Christianity does not lend itself to objective observation, precisely because it proposes to intensify subjectivity to the utmost. When the dancer is in the right attitude he is focused upon eternal happiness not violence. For Kierkegaard everyone who is in passion is infinitely interested in his eternal happiness makes himself objectively light. Precisely for this reason he abstains from violence.

Kierkegaard believes the entire age has become passionless. Of course he was talking about *his* age. But is this still the climate of our [Jamaica's] present age? Passionate dance is precisely to awaken in the individual knowledge. Knowledge in this sense is not voluminous knowledge. Passion and faith is the knowledge. "Whoever believes that there is a God and an over-ruling providence finds it easier to preserve his faith, easier to acquire something that definitely is faith and not an illusion" (30). Hence, the fundamental research question of this thesis: *what knowledge is of the most worth?*

Voluminous scientific knowledge and faith, according to Kierkegaard, do not go together. Faith can come into being by exercising passion. On the other hand, objectively, for Kierkegaard, the result of misdirected or misidentified passion is a loss of faith. If passion is eliminated, faith no longer exists. The result of this phenomenon *dagging* is intense! Passionate "Christian" Jamaican dancers perform *dagging* live, for the world to see "dry sex" in broad daylight!

Kierkegaard's philosophy is most appropriate to this study of Christian Jamaican dance. Kierkegaard says the individual seeking truth must be in one of two situations: *Either* he is in the truth of Christianity, which would exclude everything else *or* not be interested in the determination of the question. *Either/or* the answer to the question implies *decisiveness*, which relates to the passion of the *dagga*.

I decided to focus this thesis on *dagging*, the simulation of approximately one of life's, if not The, most passionate and holy acts, intercourse. Jamaicans transformed this holy act into a hotly criticized dance craze that's got everybody talking about sex now. John Bohannon a scientist and writer who runs the annual "Dance Your PhD" Contest challenges scientists to use interpretive dance to explain their research. In a recent *TED Talk*, dancers of the company Black Label Movement, and JelloSlave musicians accompanied Bohannon to discuss the "war on sex." In 2012, Bohannon says we still don't know what sex is for. "It's a beautiful puzzle, and without it we wouldn't be

here,” says Bohannon.<sup>66</sup> The goal in this thesis is to increase awareness of “how” subjectivity, in the context of *daggering* could transform the individual and a society in crisis. This thesis is encouraging artists, scientists and scholars like Bohannon and Locke.

According to Newsweek’s senior articles editor Kate Dailey, *daggering is really, really, dirty dancing... a type of dance popular with some of Jamaica’s poorest citizens.*<sup>67</sup> The question to ask here is whether *daggering* is a stain on Jamaica’s legendary dance and music heritage, or are these individuals deliberately transgressing to resist what Kierkegaard calls ‘leveling’? *Daggering* very well could be the passionate youth mastered Socratic irony, a technique of “dissing” or what Mullen calls “explaining away,” direct attacks on Jamaican culture.

Dance as entertainment could not bring one to happiness? For some critics what *daggering* brought is mostly controversy and comic reports of broken penises. These are mostly anecdotal tabloids. Besides a “boner” is boneless. Furthermore, the slang “*daggering*” is Jamaican but the concept originated approximately somewhere in Europe. Dancehall culture is a synthesis of many cultural expressions, including European and American aesthetics. *Daggering* as I mentioned above, is closely related to the European derivative *Apache*.

Clearly there are educational implications for the study of movements like *daggering* and other works of human sex beyond the constant penetration of “sexual licentiousness” and “dry sex.” For example, one could ask ‘how’ is the phenomenon *daggering* related to the history of the Apache Indians of America and in France? Many Jamaicans have given up their identities in search of a less demeaning and more meaningful life abroad. Wouldn’t this mean living the life of another? To give up even a part of one’s cultural identity could affect faith. The individual would be, in time,

<sup>66</sup> Retrieved from <http://blog.ted.com/2012/03/02/john-bohannon-and-black-label-movement-at-ted2012/>

<sup>67</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/blogs/the-human-condition/2009/06/08/really-really-dirty-dancing-more-on-daggering.html>

overcome by guilt and eventually return to claim his true self. Giving up part of one's identity would suggest a lack of faith. 'How' for Kierkegaard is related to subjectivity. Subjectivity is faith.

The objective approach to *the passion of daggaring* is simply driving people mad. "From generation to generation precisely because the individuals, the contemplative individuals, become more and more objective, less and less possessed by an infinite passionate interest." (32). Suppose dancehall culture continues in this manner. Suppose each new generation will produce a new breed of Apache-style dancehall *daggas*. What are the implications? How did this dancehall phenomenon penetrate existence to become a fully bloomed erect aesthetic with a firm cultural mission and such profound educational implications, for both *affector* and the *affectee*? In this question perhaps the theoretical scholar of dancehall aesthetics might go topsy-turvy in finding faith in dances that defy expected norms or what constitutes "appropriate" or "high" art. The more we remain at the door of faith and peer in, the less we know of the inquiry. In this view, *daggaring* is not a theoretical man's discipline because it is a practice that is apprehended with the whole body. There is no denying this is fertile ground for future research.

### ***Decisive Daggaring***

Decision is the most important function of the individual mind. No creative process can begin until a decision is made.<sup>68</sup>

I could not write this thesis had I not made a decision to do it. The process of transformation begins with decisiveness. Raymond Barker extols the science of decision to aid the individual in finding his purpose. When the individual decides, for example, I am spirit, the truth, consciousness begins to unfold and the individual's purpose becomes clearer. Barker says the individual needs no messiah to tell him or her what is purposefully already within the individual mind. This resonates with the individual

<sup>68</sup> Raymond Barker, *The Power of Decision*, 44.

Kierkegaard and his concept of subjectivity, and contempt for attempts to structure religion rationally, particularly 'Christianity' defending it logically is only to reveal its deliberate folly. In *Postscript* Kierkegaard decided existence is non-rational. The final authority is only the individual. Barker believes to change long-standing negative habit patterns in the subconscious mind is not easy, but it can be done by right decisions.

Dancers in Jamaica could benefit from understanding the importance of decision-making and how indecisiveness can debilitate and destroy passion. For Barker, decision-making is a science of mind. "Every success-motivated mind has been a decisive mind. Every failure-motivated mind has been an indecisive mind."<sup>69</sup>

A purely objective dancer is not merely imitating what he sees others on stage doing. He could be indecisive. For the most part, the dancehall "king" or "queen" are individual performers who have taken the decision to lead. Contemplative spectators will either criticize or remain indecisive. But this is where the danger lies for the spirit of dance who is disinterested in the imitative cat, the "falsum" in all objectivity (33).

Kierkegaard says terror is at our disposal in the moment of decision. The issue of transformation is rooted in decision; the decision is about eternal happiness. The essential problem of the scientific system is nothing is fixed and nothing is indefinitely decided. For Kierkegaard, all essential decision is rooted in subjectivity. He writes: "Objectively there is no truth for existing beings, but only approximations, whereas subjectively truth for them is in inwardness, because the decision of truth is in subjectivity... Decision is designed specifically to put an end to that prattle about 'to a certain degree'—so the decision is assumed."<sup>70</sup> Subjectivity is decisiveness. The most decisive expression for subjectivity is faith. Kierkegaard decided that philosophy, particularly with Hegel, has been tricking individuals into becoming objective. Kierkegaard has decided that eternal happiness can only be known at an end. And since science and history are approximations the individual in objectivity has no proof. The

<sup>69</sup> Barker, 23.

<sup>70</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript* (1846), 218-221.

secret of the System is the continuing world-process. In light of Kierkegaard's criticism of Hegel, the continuing process of discovering the body is a decision. As a dancer, my attention to the changes experienced in my body and how it moves, I can say it is in a continuous state of processing social information, history in the making. How I experience my life intellectually is not the same as how I experience it through dance, the experience of the bodily rhythms. This is what Celeste Snowber refers to as "the body as a site of knowledge." Snowber writes:

The body is, no doubt, informed and inscribed by many political, social, and cultural discourses, which have legitimized the body in its relationship to knowledge. It has been therefore helpful to understanding the body from a variety of perspectives, including performance studies, dance therapy, semiotics, communication theory, and feminist studies. For too long, the polarities rooted in Cartesian dualism posited two distinct and mutually exclusive regions of human experience: mind and body.<sup>71</sup>

The body of knowledge, like the rhythmic system, is not fixed. This is one of the criticisms of African art and dance. It is often believe that traditional cultures do not change. They do. The system of the body is continually changing. It is our only constant. Change. So it is, as Kierkegaard argues, very difficult to fix. Kierkegaard wants to internalize the truth. In a sense, he fixes the truth within the human being as though to encase it in a fixed body.

To say "decisive" is acknowledgement that happiness is internal, inwardness; however, the body doesn't disappear from the sacredness of subjective thinking. Everybody knows the importance of caring for the body as an instrument of expression. But for the most part Jamaican dancers do not have the knowledge for all safety and security in the objective world. How is Kierkegaard's "body" of knowledge implicated in his theory of man? In other words, what is the knowledge of most worth for educating body-mind synthesis?

<sup>71</sup> Celeste Snowber & Mary Beth Cancienne, "Writing Rhythm: Movement as Method." *Qualitative Inquiry*. 9, no. 2 (2003): 237-53.

A decision must be made in terms of the role the body will play in the process of transforming the individual and a society. The invisible and the visible must be embraced. The two are One. In terms of dance, this is the first thing that must be decided. Who can look at a lean and graceful ballet dancer's body hoisting his ballerina up over his head without getting a sense of exaltation? The sheer beauty of a dancer's glistening body under the sweat is enough. Here then we have the first result of decisiveness. How much should the body of knowledge be cared for? In the process of eternal striving the health of the body should not be ignored.

### **Communication**

*Daggering* is onomatopoeic because it sounds or suggests its context. Onomatopoeia is another aspect of African dance. A dagger is a fighting knife designed to thrust or stab. "Stabbing" is another word in the Jamaican dancehall vernacular used to connote sexual meaning. The movement of *daggering* is distinctive forcefulness, thrusting pelvic motion. Daggers are visible in many cultures since the 5th and 3rd century B.C.E. with exceptional references to fighting. Realistically how easy is it, in Vogel's language, to imitate animals? Earlier I mentioned why Jamaican dances generally are not simple easily imitated steps. Another reason is as follows:

Onomatopoeic dances of Jamaica emerge out of a rhythmic oral tradition that originated in various parts of Africa, primarily the Congo, Western Africa, and Ethiopia. I have traveled to seven different countries, including Jamaica and have found nobody who can imitate my style of dancing. Why? The secret is in the intent. Nobody can know my intent unless you're a mind reader. Briefly. Let me try to illustrate this with Kierkegaard's view of artistry. First, he says, "the greater the artistry, the greater the inwardness. If the author of the communication had much art, he could even afford to say that he was using art."<sup>72</sup> Kierkegaard speaks of two forms of communication, *direct* and *indirect*. "Wherever the subjective is of importance in knowledge, and where appropriation thus constitutes the crux of the matter, the process of communication is a

<sup>72</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript* (1846), 72.

work of art.”<sup>73</sup> My “intention” of faithful dance would be *indirect* because it has “secrets.” For Kierkegaard the other is an approximation, *direct* objective or ordinary communication has no secrets. Does he mean to say the entire essential content of subjective thought is essentially secret, because it cannot be directly communicated? This is the meaning of intention. It is a secret God-relationship of the individual. Kierkegaard believes the God-relationship is the secret and the thing of prime importance. Indirectly I am saying the *intention* should be the fundamental principle of dance performance technique. It is at this point objectivity and subjectivity is permitted to fuse. The two-become-One.

Essentially the problem of direct communication is it attempts to use ordinary language to convey a unique *sui generis*, existence itself. For Kierkegaard, existence cannot be communicated by “ordinary communication.”<sup>74</sup> The art of African dance in a sense is about luring people away from something ordinary. To solve problems African dancers manipulate reality to come to conclusions. We arrange dances in imaginative ways to communicate. Garelick says, for Kierkegaard, “through irony and humor, we are forced from language to confrontation and a personal appropriation: ‘the art of communication at last becomes the art of taking away.’”<sup>75</sup>

The physical objective or external movement is the result of an internal indirect inward intention. This gesture, according to Garelick’s interpretation, is “rubbish.” It is absolutely humanly impossible to imitate proper African-Jamaican dance. Here is another reason *daggering* cannot be imitated, because it is unintentionally irrational abstraction. Because music and dance in African aesthetics are inseparable, the music *riddims* we hear in the dancehall communicate meaning to the dances we see in the dancehall, on stage, and in life. African dance is a traditional ritual of everyday life. All the literature and writers on African history, philosophy, and art classify African dance in

<sup>73</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript* (1846), 60.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>75</sup> Garelick, *The Anti-Christianity of Kierkegaard. A Study of Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 1965, 11.

terms of activities relating to birth, puberty and death, war, recreation, initiation, ritual et al. Germaine Acogny, Kofi Agawu, Zab Maboungou, Afolabi Alaja-Browne, John Blacking, Rex Nettleford, Pearl Primus, Doris Green, Esilokun Kinni-Olusanyin, Robert W. Nicholls, Tracy D. Snipe, Myriam Evelyse Mariani, Katrina Hazzard-Gordon, Cynthia S'thembile West, Cheryl Willis, Felix Begho, Omofolabo Soyinka Ajayi, Kaariamuwelsh Asante, Modesto Amegago, Barbara Ehrenreich, and the list goes on. Then there are great American Dance icons like Balachine, Graham, Humphrey, Duncan, et al, who appropriated African heritage to innovate “modern” dances, yet some critics would not place African dancers in the mainstream category as their counterparts.

*Dagging inna di dancehall* in relation to the art of African dance presents us with puzzling questions, which I make no pretence to solve in this thesis. Human relationships with African aesthetic vary from society to society. Some say the ways African peoples worship God includes dancing. Through dancing Africans are trained to reach deep into the innermost parts of their being (Mbiti, 1979). It is reported that the Fon and some Yoruba of Africa, for example, have convents where trainees, normally aged between ten and sixteen years, perform dances in part of their training to become mediums or diviners to solve problems of their communities.

Most African peoples have dances to symbolize great change and initiations. Dancing can strengthen community solidarity and emphasize the uniqueness of the individual personality. Making dance a central vehicle of renewal, not merely entertainment, in the process of ‘becoming’ subjective, it will transform the individual’s behaviour – from which springs new and different personality.

One important theme that links my thesis to the continent Africa is how the black dancing ‘slave’ body, as a site of knowledge, is implicated in the dancehall. The slave body appears in contemporary dance in the West, in education, on stage and in life. My aim in this discussion is to address specifically how dancehall *dagging* could be or not related to African aesthetic.

We are not “savages” so why do Jamaicans live caged looking out through grills? Very little dancing can go on behind bars. When individuals are not free to roam, then released from behind these bars, what are the consequences? Some of these *daggas*

*inna di dancehall* give the impression of wild horses seeing the light of day for the first time after years and years of incarceration. How much of what Jamaican youths, males and females, are actually living today realistically reflected in this *dagging* phenomenon? *Dagging* could be perceived as a useless way to communicate something of reality. *Dagging* is useless when attempting to emulate existence. When something is communicated directly, Garelick says, "it displaces the proper binary relationship and converts the process of inner dialogue into a result."<sup>76</sup> Earlier I asked, in Vogel's terms, is *dagging* useful? According to Kierkegaard, ordinary language, direct communication fails to transmit processes of existence or inner states. Therefore results of direct communication are useless. Something unique cannot be communicated directly. From Kierkegaard's perspective, there is nothing unique, useful or secretive about *dagging*.

My writing of various topics discussed in this thesis is not only coming from books. I lived in Jamaica for several years to complete this research. I am also a trained African dancer and teacher. I will not take too much time to repeat the values of African dance when Amegago (2000) and many other scholars of African arts and culture have published books on dance in Africa. I recommend Asante's book (1996) for an artistic, historical and philosophical study of African dance. You will not struggle through it. You should grasp the basic tenants.

<sup>76</sup> Garelick, *The Anti-Christianity of Kierkegaard. A Study of Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 1965, 10.

**Illustration 6. Sadhu Yogi**



*Note.* Retrieved from  
[http://s431.photobucket.com/albums/qq39/maatnefer/India/?action=view&current=india-sadhu\\_yogi.jpg&mediafilter=images](http://s431.photobucket.com/albums/qq39/maatnefer/India/?action=view&current=india-sadhu_yogi.jpg&mediafilter=images); used with permission

## The Dionysian Jamaican Coffee Crisis

At the end of the 19th century followed 50 years of the spread of the North American disease, exploitation of the island's rich supply of *bauxite*, Jamaica's red earth was used in the production of aluminum to build lightweight warplanes used to fight in World War II. What the English did not realize is 1938 marked the beginning of the end of whole colonial period. By early 1953 bauxite was the new leading industry, relegating agriculture second in Jamaica, controlled by foreign corporations. And by 1957 Jamaica was the world's largest producer of bauxite and the industry made sufficiently large sums of money to help finance tourism into a major component of Jamaica's economy today. But the bauxite and sugar industries are only two examples of foreign interests in Jamaica. Jamaican Blue Mountain Coffee is a third crisis crop.

A study of Jamaica's agricultural industry is important for several reasons. Namely it debunks Hickling's system of psychohistoriography but showing that Kierkegaard is correct. World-historical systems are unfinished. Hickling's claim that British and European colonizers are to be blamed for the madness in Jamaica is completely false. The "madness" of Jamaica's neo-colonial structure is called Dionysus. This is no sickness Jamaican's inherited. I am including this discussion now to give one contemporary example of how African dances are born of crisis and the long standing problem of slavery within Jamaica's agricultural industry.

As in authentic traditional African dance philosophy, aspects of African-Jamaican dances are born of crisis of colonialism visible in Jamaica's Blue Mountain Coffee industry today. This implicates the divine nature of the mad god himself, Dionysus. Naturally this supports a possibility of contemporary slavery and neo-colonialism. The spirit of the mad god of vegetation Dionysus is driving industry heads and small coffee farmers mad.

It is madness that has given birth to *dagging*. This same madness called Dionysus is not a sickness. It is a companion to life of corruption and neo-colonialism. According to Walter Otto, this madness is present in everyone because it begins in the womb of the mother. Dionysus is also present in the coffee industry heads. As Green noted above, the environment plays a significant role in the way dance is developed in African cultures.

For this reason, Dr. June Francis, my co-supervisor, and I conducted research in *Geographical Indications* of Jamaica's coffee industry. The aim of our study was to determine during this period of global economic crisis, how the implications of *geographical indications* could help small coffee farmers in Jamaica to mediate unfair competition and reorganize the relations of power, production and marketing in order to reach and maintain their desired socioeconomic goals.

The geography, the environment, is very specific to the distinct mystic of Jamaican coffee. Place of origin, land, space is in part a material commodity and integral to *geographical indications*. Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee is identified by its source. It originates in the region of the Blue Mountains of Jamaica where it is given a quality and other unique characteristics of the natural environment. According to Senator Norman Grant Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee is "a coffee with a consistent characteristic and flavour that is unmatched, that is biologically linked with coffee that is grown in a particular region."<sup>77</sup>

What I found is the Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee, like wine, is a metaphor for Dionysiac madness. I associate Dionysus with the *spirit* of the dancehall dance *dagging*, but he is also present up in the Blue Mountains coffee-producing region where many of the dancehall king's and satyrs hail from. Essentially the enslaved *laborers* left behind the spirit of inequality in *labour*. Dr. Francis and I concluded an entirely new system between small coffee farmers and capitalist-elites of the coffee

<sup>77</sup> An Interview with Senator N. Grant, CEO of the Mavis Bank Coffee Factory. Sept. 2011.

industry to be the single most direct change needed in Jamaica to protect artists and other laborers to allow benefits to accrue, to create and maintain less violence and a more stable sustainable economy. Just as the shape of American plantations changed in the years surrounding the end of slavery, so the shape of small coffee farming in Jamaica should transform. The transformation needed is not unrelated to the transformation of the individual. In this sense objectivity and subjectivity are identified as inseparable—the ethics and aesthetics of coffee farming and one. The industry will not change unless the individual players do. According to James A. Delle:

It is through human agency that material culture is given meaning, and through human agency that material culture is in turn serves to create new meanings. By endowing specific classes of material culture with exchange value, which may not necessarily reflect its use value, capitalist agency transforms that material culture into a unique sound construction: the commodity.<sup>78</sup>

Why has the practice of violent dances endured through the ages? The answer is quite simple—Capitalism. Realizing the social relations within capitalism are inherently unequal, small coffee farmers of Jamaica see farming coffee within the boundaries of historical slavery. With this realization has come the effort to understand how relationships between farmers and large firms are materially expressed and negotiated. Traditional farmers have focused their efforts on basic survival. We found that the coffee industry in Jamaica is currently in a period when small coffee farmers are abandoning the industry and those who remain are crying out respect!

Farmers need returns and benefits for producing and picking Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee. Jamaican coffee is one of the most expensive coffees in the world. Among the most pressing concerns of small coffee farmers in Jamaica today is unfair competitive capitalism and unfair trade. Instead of engaging in dialectical contestation over wages with the Factory small coffee farmers seem more likely to abandon their domestic spaces and farms. Farmers are being defrauded of a considerable profit for

<sup>78</sup> Delle, 1998, 6.

their *labour*. This attributes to the cause of the coffee industry crisis tensions that exist between small coffee farmers and the Central Coffee Factory, and the wider society.

Many of the dancers *inna di dancehall* are migrating from Jamaica's rural farming communities to inner city dwellings in search of wealth, power and elixir! These dancers are youths of small farming communities. Many have danced already as a child in the mother's womb. Now they are taking up *dagging*.

Now the myth of Dionysus says, "there is a sacred plant in which the elixir which intoxicates." In Jamaica's Blue Mountains, Dr. Francis and I found this is the berry. Strangely enough, some scholars believe Dionysus could not have been the god of wine. But there are more ways to look at the intoxicants that produce ecstasy and coffee is certainly one of them.

Strangely the way coffee is produced is strikingly similar yet startlingly different from wine. Like wine, coffee blooms namely in autumn, when the berries on the trees are harvested. Like wine, the Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee berries need as much light and heat from the sun it can get. Almost everywhere in Greece, Plutarch reveals Dionysus is worshipped almost everywhere as the "tree god." In general the care of fruit bearing trees are ascribed to him because of their moisture and procreation. According to Otto, it is well known and certainly understandable enough that it should stand as the symbol for sexual intercourse. Ripe coffee berries are blood-red and juicy! Hence the dance *dagging*!

Another *geographical indication* of Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee that relates to Dionysus is element of moisture. In the Blue Mountains region, to the mythopoeic mind, water is the element that gives the coffee its primal 'biological' mystique. The water spirit up in the region is prophesized as the life of the coffee plants. Water is the element in which Dionysus is at home. Myths tell us that Dionysus could change his form and found in moving water. He comes out of it and returns to it. There is other evidence that depicts him as 'god of the sea'. Water is a key *geographical indication* of Jamaica Blue Mountain coffee.

Is it conceivable that the miraculous power of *geographical indications* is not only one of environment, *soil*, *altitude* and *water*, but also one of worshiping the spirit of the

divine with it? Dionysus played a large part in prophecy. Otto tells us this is partly why we find the Bacchants are filled with prophecy. Jamaican coffee farmers when filled with ecstasy are known to prophesize.

Of course there are no references to Dionysus and Jamaican coffee, so of course this is a metaphor for the god himself. However, “his theatre of operation is not vegetation in general... but a mysteriously aroused element of life which appears in an unusually clear focus in certain plants but also can be perceived in numerous aspects of the human and animal world.”<sup>79</sup> Coffee in Jamaica is looked upon as the gift of god. Dionysus is called “the one who is born of fire,” “the fiery one.” Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee gets its characteristics from the geographical environment, which includes the fiery heat of Jamaica’s tropical sun. Coffee is processed with heat and served hot! Why are children denied coffee? Like wine, coffee is intoxicating and adds fire to the body. The ethics of certain cultures might make allowances for this.

Coffee has a way of evoking a way of thinking which is reminiscent of mythopoeia thought. Farmers we interviewed regard coffee a living being. Coffee was born out of a period of chaotic boisterousness and evolved into a strong commodity, as one of the world’s most expensive products. This mysterious coffee plant, which has been the livelihood for over ten thousand small coffee farmers alone, and is one of the loveliest Dionysian gifts and his epiphany in nature. Even if Dionysian is not the god of coffee, we are forced to see that a *geographical indications* like coffee carries within it the wonders and secrets of the environment, the boundless wild nature of Jamaica’s sprawling and lush Blue Mountains.

Earlier I asked this question: Why has the African said so many times in history, “take my land and you take my life?” This is how farmers relate to coffee. With a deeper awareness of geographical indications we encounter a god which seizes the soul.

<sup>79</sup> Otto, 1973, 152.

All the world praises Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee because it brings joy; a drink of the divine Jamaican coffee transcends the present crisis and misery of neo-colonialism, the poor farmer feels himself rich, the slave dances freely *inna di dancehall*, they feel strong and powerful. The way all corruption and crisis is danced in African aesthetic! The way of dance, as Plutarch says so nicely, “frees the soul of subservience, fear and insincerity; it teaches men how to be truthful and candid with one another. It reveals that which was hidden.”<sup>80</sup>

It is true that over coffee people find the time to speak the truth, have the most earnest conversations and make blessed engagements. It must be a god that blessed Jamaica with such a crop, however corrupt the industry heads.

After the crash of Jamaica’s sugar industry, coffee was given to the farmers. The crisis experienced in the sugar-producing sector of the early nineteenth century Jamaican economy resulted as land changed ownership. Conflict arose between the enslaved *laborers* and the agrarian capitalists. The 1830s dialectic between freedom and slavery culminated in the abolition of West Indian slavery. The crisis of the sugar sector led to the development of a new sector of coffee. Capital that could have been invested in intensifying sugar production was diverted to a new crop. From the time of slavery, the Blue Mountains region has been one of the leading coffee-producing areas in Jamaica. Jamaican small coffee farmers and factory workers have been at odds for decades now over increase in wages, a union, and subsidies to purchase coffee farming materials etc. All of which have been denied. Instead laborers are being made redundant. Many small coffee farmers have already abandoned the industry and others are considering diverting their *labour* to subsistence living abroad. The present times bear a most gloomy aspect truly discouraging to coffee farming in Jamaica. Thousands of small farmers in this country will be ruined, many are already so; however those who are able to bear up through the impending difficulties supposedly will reap the benefits thereafter. The present crisis is incalculable and the end is unknown.

<sup>80</sup> Otto, 1973, 149.

In recent years, Jamaica's small coffee farmers earn less than enough to extract a living. Consequently, to subsidize their coffee farms in Jamaica, herds of farmers leave the country for short work terms to pick fruit on other agricultural farms abroad in Canada and the United States. Delle reported global historical capitalism indicates slavery is "how the British and French nations took [Jamaica] and treated [Jamaicans] like a head of beef cattle. They measured it, parceled it out, cut it up, evaluated it, fattened it up with slave *labour*, took it to the market, slaughtered it, and then ate some and threw some out."<sup>81</sup>

Delle (1998) records slavery on Jamaica coffee plantations from 1790 – 1860 to voice the struggle for power and struggle through coffee. Delle says, "African slavery created one of the most widespread and intense systems of racial segregation and oppression experienced in the history of the world" (p. 71). Much of one's identity in Jamaica is still defined by space and the racial category into which one fell. In Jamaica, as elsewhere in the British colonial world, according to Delle, "racial identity was phenotypically defined, primarily based on the relative melanin content of one's skin." Like *daggering* dancers, coffee farmers in Jamaica are typically defined as "black." How and why coffee plantations, Delle's study says loudly, were set up by European elites to manipulate the socioeconomic hierarchy of the island, "reinforce their wealth, power, and status within Jamaican society" (ix). This gave birth to large-scale coffee production, first using slave—and then later wage-based *labour* systems. Dionysus I suspect alone has the power to bend the will of the industry head to honour these farmers. This introduction to coffee industry in Jamaica's Blue Mountains is one example to understand the content of the context of *intention* in authentic African-Jamaica dances that could be created out of real living struggles.

We examined the way social spaces are controlled by elites to expose how the industry heads maintain positions of power and oppression in Jamaica. Global inequality

<sup>81</sup> Delle, 1998, vii.

in Jamaica before Emancipation lies in the answer for much of the material prosperity enjoyed by Asians and North Americans, the luxurious quality of Blue Mountain coffee.

We drink of coffee, we think of geniality, high energy, smoothness, and, perhaps, also of the dangers of health and morals. But like the Greeks of antiquity who shared in wine, and total seriousness of the symposiums of truth, pleasure and pain, enlightenment and destruction, the loveable and the horrible, dancing close in the dancehall is Dionysus. It is this unity of the energy of Dionysus with this coffee crisis dancers draw energy from with staggering force.

African-Jamaican people dance their experiences, be it in private or in the fields farming coffee or *daggering inna di dancehall*. African-Jamaican dance is rooted to the existence of the people and what is going on in the society at the time. The madness of Dionysus is engendered in the coffee crop and is shared by everyone who enjoys its mystique. This is why it is possible to relate *daggering* and the crop. "He does not live in it alone. As a genuine god, he must pervade a great realm of nature of natural phenomena with his spirit. He must be actively manifest in them in a thousand ways, and yet always remain the same."<sup>82</sup> According to Otto, the spirit of Dionysus madness pervades the whole earth. The coffee industry crisis, then, can teach us that the violence and madness of dance in Jamaica belong with the spirit of the god himself, Dionysus.

<sup>82</sup> Otto, 1973, 49.

## **Denouement**

# Ethics and Aesthetics: A Case of Two-in-One

## *Ethics*

What is Ethics? Kierkegaard writes:

Ethics and the ethical, as constituting the essential anchorage for all individual existence, have an indefeasible claim upon every existing individual; so indefeasible a claim, that whatever a man may accomplish in the world, even to the most astonishing of achievements, it is none the less quite dubious in its significance, unless the individual has been ethically clear when he made his choice, has ethically clarified his choice to himself.<sup>1</sup>

The perspicuity of Kierkegaard's reflection is the ethical loses itself in the aesthetic. Does losing oneself in something different mean whatever is lost is abolished, or has it transitioned or transformed? The understanding could be it is not lost; therefore, the ethical is somewhere in the aesthetic. They are not separate. Wherever there is an apprehension of the aesthetic an ethical is implicit. The difficulty of the dancehall crisis is critics can't find it. The ethical is so lightly regarded yet very evident in the dance *daggering*, which is now world famous.

My diagnosis of the ethic of *daggering* is not obvious to the untrained eye. You need eyes of Eros to be able to find it. This should not be an excuse for a certain magnitude of hateful and cunning criticisms nor the ignorance of how a dance craze could affect the society; for example, "where the ethical becomes a shy and different as a sparrow in a dance of cranes" (127). Ethics essentially is supposed to be lacking in the dancehall. The dance is ethical in itself because the absolute is infinitely valid and present in everyone and everything, and does not need the judgment of critics to trick dancers into giving up the art of dance. Nevertheless Jamaica needs more appropriate education in how to transform entertainment into art.

<sup>1</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript* (1846), Swenson & Lowrie (Trans.) 119-120.

*The more simplified the dance the ethical becomes more perspicuous.* This is the first of ten recommendations retrieved from Kierkegaard's concept of subjectivity and in this thesis they are discussed later in "The Praxis of Transformation".

In Kierkegaard's description of Ethics above: he is saying the ethical subjective is not quantifiable. Regardless of the individual's wealth and awards he is a subject and has an ethical responsibility to himself and the society. Clearly there are factors that do not agree or obey Christian ethics of good and evil. Circumstances and the forces that enter the deed of the individual does not want, for example, to play a significant role in the individual's decision.

The *non-ethical* comes about when the individual chooses to renounce what is the ethical, in view of the quantitative and world-historical. Kierkegaard believes "an age or an individual may be immoral in many different ways..." (120). A society like Jamaica is not without individual and state corruption with significant consequences for everyone, the individuals. He goes on to say "...one may easily be misled into confusing this with the ethical; and instead of concerning oneself infinitely with the ethical, one may existentially be betrayed into developing an unwholesome, frivolous and cowardly concern for the accidental," the objective (120).

This could explain why the dancehall era is seized with disdain. Demoralized by too assiduous an absorption in corruption and world-historical servitude. Many dancehall artists no longer have any will for the ethical except what is quantitative. No concern for anything but money. Instead of concerning themselves solely with the essential, the inner spirit, the ethical, freedom of the self. Clearly for Kierkegaard ethics is inwardness, the internal emotional *self* of the existing individual. The *self* is not the external identity of the individual, for example, one's name, gender, social security number, place of birth, or the "I-am-I" etcetera. The self is ethical. What is the self? Only the individual who *wills* to become subjective can conceive the question and ask rightly whether *I am* the self, or *am I* becoming a self? Kierkegaard believes the real or ethical subjectivity infinitely

interested in existence finds his reality in holding two factors together, the finite and the infinite. A genuine human being is a synthesis.<sup>2</sup> In other words, Mullen says,

The self is constituted as a synthesis of opposing tendencies which remain always in opposition, but which are 'held together' by spirit (will)... The human self is a break with the natural real, the natural being the realm explainable by the physical sciences. It came about in a break with nature, and it is sustained by the constant imposition of the non-natural power of spirit (will). This means that human life involves constant effort, vigilance, and courage to maintain itself as distinctly human, that is, as genuinely or authentically human.<sup>3</sup>

In *The Sickness Unto Death* Robert Bretall tells us, Kierkegaard says man is "despairingly unconscious of having a Self and an eternal Self" and in reality "willed to tear his self away from the Power."<sup>4</sup> Malantschuk writes: "The self, according to Kierkegaard, constitutes the highest form of being, namely, conscious, personal and altogether independent being. Understood this way, only God is a self in the genuine sense. Of all created beings, only man has the possibility of becoming a self, which is the very goal of human existence. But man can never become an independent self, only a 'derived self'."<sup>5</sup> For Kierkegaard:

God, who as the eternal spirit from whom all spirits are derived, might in communicating the truth, seem to be justified in sustaining a direct relationship to the derivative spirits, in quite a different sense from that in which the relationship is one between derived spirits, who having a common derivation from God, are *essentially* equal.... and only when the individual turns to his inner self, and hence only in the inwardness of self-activity, does he have his attention aroused, and is enabled to see God.<sup>6</sup>

How is the self-related to the dance? One could be an ethical dancer. The *Self* is the dancer. In this way, the task of this interdisciplinary thesis is to illuminate subjective

<sup>2</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript* (1846), Swenson & Lowrie (Trans.) 268.

<sup>3</sup> Mullen, *Kierkegaard's Philosophy: Self-Deception and Cowardice in the Present Age*, 47.

<sup>4</sup> Bretall, *Kierkegaard Anthology*, 341.

<sup>5</sup> Senyshyn, *The Artist in Crisis*, 163.

<sup>6</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript* (1846), Swenson & Lowrie (Trans.) 218.

and objective truths. Thus emphasis is in the Kierkegaardian concept of subjectivity. Kierkegaard writes the task of life is to become the ethical. The ethical quality is jealous for its own integrity, and is quite unimpressed by the most astounding quantity.

## ***Aesthetics***

Heesoon Bai's treatment of Wittgenstein's notion of "ethics and aesthetics are one and the same" in the *Case of Zen Aesthetics* is simple and clear but is it true? Bai reminds us that there is no separation between ethics and aesthetics. An insightful paper in which Bai tells us, according to Shusterman, what Wittgenstein means by [*aesthetics* (x) and *ethics* (y) *are one*]; there is no inherent separation between ethics and aesthetics; rather there exists a fundamental unitary identity between x and y. We can also say what is on one side exist on the other side. In other words, what can be said on paper in text, can be shown on stage in dance. What matters is in the intent to say something. And of course the truth is what matters. Therefore, what can be shown but not said is critically important as what is said. How the invisible might be related to the visible must be balanced. That goes to say every individual in his or her personal "secret" God-relationship, as Kierkegaard says, is in a pursuit of truth. Logical text based communication is unsatisfiable. Rather some expressions require pseudonyms. For example, Superman's secret identity is named Clark Kent. Kierkegaard's had many. He wrote *Postscript* as Johannes Climacus.

What is the process (or identity) of disambiguation to explain the truth of Wittgenstein's principle of '*one and the same*'? Wittgenstein was not a logical metaphysician but this illustration is helpful: the *Identity of Indiscernibles* formulated by German metaphysician Wilhelm Gottfried Leibniz in his *Discourse on Metaphysics*.<sup>7</sup> Essentially Leibniz's "Principle" argues any two things we can think or talk about as separate objects or entities cannot have all their properties in common unless they are identical. If two things share all the same properties, then they are the same thing. This

<sup>7</sup> Loemker, 1969, section 9, 308.

is the “Identity of Indiscernibles” principle. The identity is *indiscernible* (the same) when one idea or thing is under two names, a pseudonymous character or secret identity. Or give one name for two things. For example, my name is Nataraja R-D Hyman. I can remove the hyphen between these two entities and be either R or D. Either/or "R" possesses all the properties "D" possesses and vice versa. The properties of R and D are identical.

**Illustration 7. The Principle**

$$\forall F(Fx \leftrightarrow Fy) \rightarrow x=y$$

This is similar to the “Dissimilarity of the Diverse” by McTaggart. If two things do not share the same properties then they are not the same. The converse of the principle is called *Indiscernibility of Identicals*. If two things are identical, they have all their properties in common. They are one and the same.

**Illustration 8. The Identity of Indiscernibles**

$$x=y \rightarrow \forall F(Fx \leftrightarrow Fy)$$

Max Black argues if there is one property that is distinct, they are not the same. What does one have that the other does not have? A distinct property could be as simple as they are not *identical*. It seems to me that the disambiguation process of ethics and aesthetics “one and the same” is not a predicate contingent materiality. At the center of Wittgenstein’s proposition in 1921 is *tautology*. There are not facts to contradict or prove propositional logic false. Does that mean they have all of the same properties? They do not have to possess all the ‘same’ properties. Descartes concluded that he could not doubt the existence of himself *cogito ergo sum*, but could doubt the existence of his body. Let’s look at the example of secret identities:

Clark Kent is Superman’s secret identity. Lois Lane thinks Clark Kent cannot fly. Superman and Clark Kent are one and the same. Kierkegaard revealed that subjectivity is something “secret.” What is the distinctness that makes Lois perceive Superman and Clark Kent as two entities and not one? It is impossible or difficult for her to perceive the exactitude.

In African philosophy it has been argued that music and dance are inseparable. I imagine putting any two things together will produce a sound. That single particle sound is essentially an indiscernible identity of two things.

Essentialism for Bai is rooted in moral philosophy and in some respects a direct response to *Tractatus*' call for "aestheticized ethics." Since Wittgenstein's proclamation of the early 60s and Bai's response many decades later, I am also beginning to take stock of more and more responses like this one, on the part of scholars and artists working through concepts like "Transdisciplinary Network for Performance and Technology" and "Digital Cultures."

Bai's lengthy citation of Shusterman (1987), of which I provide only one sentence, outlines what she believes to be a fitting and appealing gestalt for what is right in a given situation or life. Gestalt philosophical assumptions fall in the area of ontology, but I will not address it in this thesis. The Gestalt perspective maintains Kierkegaard's existentialism. That is the person "knows" what is true for himself at any moment. The person's environmental situation, which I discuss in terms of authentic Jamaican dance, is a real situation, not separable from what the individual is or how he is. The crisis of the Jamaican coffee industry, for example, I maintain the Gestalt existential approach that contact between the individual (farmer) and the society (neo-colonialism or slavery) shapes what is defined as "dance" and how the "dancer" is performed. It is important to develop understanding of how Dionysus could be implicated in contemporary crisis in Jamaica. I will discuss this in the next section to show how the two are one. The crisis of the dancer is argued not separate from his environment and beyond the dancehall. This is intended to be an anecdote of 'aestheticized ethics'.

For Shusterman, Bai says, *ethics and aesthetics become one in this meaningful and sensible sense; the project of an ethical life becomes an exercise in living aesthetically*. Shusterman's account offer a conception of morality universalized, which is the fundamental character of aestheticized ethics (Bai, 1997, p. 40). Being moral, then, implies, at the fundamental level, understanding concretely others' experiences concerning for example: joy, fears, sufferings, pain, danger, punishment, and hopes. With this in mind, Bai's question, "what would happen if our traditional concepts of moral

philosophy collapsed?” is a very serious and important one. Therefore, where I discuss dance I am also referring to ethics visa-versa dancehall culture.

Bai says art education and moral education is a vehicle for enhancing human potential. However, art education should not be reduced to moral education. This is where I think Bai swings off classical moralists—Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, and others who inform us that the highest human good is moral understanding. The role of education is, like art, to innovate humanity. Is there an action that is absent of art? Buddhists label actions the art of [something or another], for example, the art of war, the art of peace, art of motorcycle repair, the art of love, the art of forgiveness. In the Buddhist conception of art, can we say “the art of *dagging*?” Could this problematize the conversation for Christian fundamentalists in Jamaica?

## The Task of Transformation

How is a Jamaican *dancehall* performer to accomplish the difficult task of Kierkegaard's concept of becoming the outstanding ethical individual? This task demands what Mullen identified, a radical and courageous fanaticism. This task requires an understanding of how being both objective and subjective to others is essential to change some prevailing style of dancing.

Mullen sites the following passage to underscore Kierkegaard's theory of man. It is a famous passage from Kierkegaard's *In Sickness Unto Death* that sums up my thesis objective. The aim of my research project is to identify the knowledge of the most worth to transform the individual and a society in crisis. Kierkegaard writes:

Man is spirit. But what is spirit? Spirit is the self. But what is the self? The self is a relation which relates itself to its own self, or it is that the relation [which accounts for] that the relation relates itself to its own self; the self is not the relation but [consists in the fact] that the relation relates itself to its own self. Man is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporary and eternal, of ... possibility and necessity, in short it is a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two factors. So regarded, man is not yet a self. In the relation between the two, the relation is the third term as negative unity, and the two relates themselves to the relation... If on the contrary the relation relates itself to its own self, the relation is then a positive third term, and this is the self.<sup>1</sup>

The aim of this thesis in relation to the above passage should set the stage for what is to come. Throughout this thesis I explore Kierkegaard's concept of subjectivity, inwardness, ethics, in relation to transformation. The individual is illuminated in

<sup>1</sup> Mullen. *Kierkegaard's Philosophy: Self-Deception and Cowardice in the Present Age*. (New York: New American Library, 1981), 44.

connection to the violence of Jamaica's dancehall culture, specifically the problem of the phenomenon *dagging*.

At age 30 Kierkegaard wrote the *Postscript* to confront a problem of Christianity. In the 19th century he learned that Christianity proposes itself as the condition for the acquirement of an eternal happiness. Kierkegaard was not oblivious to other world religions. He questioned how to establish a "proper" relationship with an eternal happiness. In other words, what are the steps one must follow to acquire an eternal happiness? This is the problem I believe Kierkegaard pursued. And this problem is not unrelated to the evil of violence in Jamaica I am pursuing in this thesis in relation to *dagging*.

## The Praxis of Transformation

If love has not been able to emancipate him from slavery: then let him consider Christianity.

(Kierkegaard: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*)

Innumerable amounts of people have been changed by slavery. How do we change them back? Since the 1960s in Jamaica revolutionaries, scholars, politicians, psychiatrists, historians, anthropologists, and artists have been despairingly challenging the "madness" of the European episteme and the whole business of "Who is God?" They believe Christianity is largely responsible for the violence of slavery in Jamaica and Africa. W.E. Burghardt Du Bois writes: "Nothing which has happened to man in modern times has been more significant than the buying and selling of human beings out of

Africa into America from 1441 to 1870. Of its world-wide meaning and effect.”<sup>2</sup> Cohen Chapman writes:

Modern slavery was created by Christians, it was continued by Christians, it was in some respects more barbarous than anything the world had yet seen, and its worst features were to be witnessed in countries that were most ostentatious in their parade of Christianity. It is this that provides the final and unanswerable indictment of the Christian Church.<sup>3</sup>

Next to the trade in sugar and bauxite was the highly important importation of *labour* into Jamaica. By the middle of the fifteenth century thousands of blacks had been imported. Hickling is one of the many Jamaicans scholars asking pressing questions: “Is the God of the Black Man, the God of our own image, the same God of the White man?” For Kierkegaard God is a subject, not an object, and therefore exists only in subjectivity in inwardness. The ‘madness’ of searching for God objectively is painful. Searching for a solution to this problem is equally maddening. Is the solution in God’s hands? Kierkegaard believes the individual can apprehend God instantly by choosing the subjective way. Faith for Kierkegaard is the category of despair. This despair is not joyous, but necessary to bring the individual to God.

In the 1970s Hickling, for example, took on the challenge of transforming the draconian European physical methods of mental patient treatments by bringing in new forms of treatment. Hickling and colleagues at the Bellevue Hospital (formerly the Jamaica Lunatic Asylum) were “transforming the draconian European mental treatment ideology of custodialization and oppression.”<sup>4</sup> Hickling showed the Hospital staff, doctors, nurses, and the University medical students that mental illness could be transformed through a fusion of arts and crafts, theatre, music and dance. Hickling introduced a therapeutic concept of “Group Therapy” to teach medical patients how to sit

<sup>2</sup> W.E. Burghardt Du Bois, *The World and Africa: An Inquiry into the part which Africa has played in World History*, (New York: International Publishers, 1965, 1966, 1967) 44.

<sup>3</sup> Cohen Chapman, *Christianity, Slavery and Labour*, 46-47.

<sup>4</sup> Hickling, *Psychohistoriography*, 13.

in a circle and reason out history and understanding “psychic centrality” within a culture of Jamaican people. This is where Hickling swings way off Kierkegaard’s philosophy.

Essentially Hickling was teaching people to understand “the collective over the individual.”<sup>5</sup> In the late 1970s Hickling then introduced hospital “agricultural therapy.” Filled with a vision that Jamaicans are abounding with talent, paradoxically, Hickling fused traditional knowledge with music, poetry and dance to transform Elsa Goveia’s [Guyanese historian] historiography as the philosophy of methodology of history, into an artistic, theatrical expression of the philosophy of the methodology of history. It has already been posited that Kierkegaard believes the subjective nature of the transformation is religious. Kierkegaard writes:

The transformation of the individual’s subjectivity, its infinite concentration in itself over against the conception of an eternal happiness, that highest good of the infinite—this constitutes the developed potentiality of the primary potentiality which subjectivity as such presents. In this way Christianity protests every form of objectivity; it desires that the primary potentiality which subjects as such presents... it desires that the subject should be infinitely concerned about himself. It is subjectivity that Christianity is concerned with.<sup>6</sup>

Transformation does not ignore the objective issue, yet the subjectivity itself is critical. Kierkegaard believes each person is only to save himself. The individual is to use all his power in deepening within himself. For Kierkegaard this transformation is a spiritual relationship, the deepening can be understood only in a figurative sense. What is, the constant effort to adapt to the change, which is characteristic of subjectivity, that it becomes indeterminateness? This is a way to potentially determine the knowledge of most worth at any given moment as along as the individual exists.

According to Kierkegaard only the Eternal can decide when the transformation is finished. The question of immortality is quite relevant to this whole subject of

<sup>5</sup> Frederick Hickling, *Psychohistoriography*, 11.

<sup>6</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript* (1846), 116.

transformation. It raises the question of where are Jamaicans going with *dagging* and violence? What are the implications of remaining open to change? There is indeterminacy about existence and this involves of each individual's relationship to God. In this relationship one must give up his finite, limited perception of the truth and be open to the possibility of indeterminateness of the determinate.

The praxis to transform oneself is a conscious decision to step out of the idea of an unchanging historical problem. The decision is to stop crime and violence. This is the task of the "subject" and his decisiveness to eliminate all traces of hateful and violent thoughts, and actions. In the Indian system of yoga, the praxis requires tremendous patience to calm the restless mind colored by innumerable past experiences and *samskara* (the accumulated residue of past thoughts and actions that could harden and become blockages). Whatever prevents the subject from making the ethical decision to avoid pain and crisis is to some degree an objective-subjective issue. When a unhealthy habit is removed it must be replaced with a healthy one. According to B.K.S. Iyengar, the process of transformation begins with first, understanding the nature of love, moderation and humility. The student above all should treasure love. From this vantage point I posit this idea: subjectivity is love. Recall Plato believes "love is identical with existence, or that, by virtue of which, life is lived in its entirety, the life which is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite."<sup>7</sup>

What Kierkegaard notes of Socrates' meaning of what is existence adds to this idea of subjectivity is love: "Existence is the child that is born of the infinite and the finite, the eternal and the temporal, and is therefore a constant striving."<sup>8</sup> According to Kierkegaard "love is a constant striving." For Iyengar, "love begets courage, moderation creates abundance and humility generates power."<sup>9</sup> To become subjective does require some skill in art as love. In this sense the aim is to transform, for example, *dagging* to the art of dance (love). According to *The American Heritage Dictionary*: a transformation

<sup>7</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript* (1846), Swenson & Lowrie (Trans.) 85.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>9</sup> B.K.S. Iyengar. *Light on Yoga*, 29.

is a change marked my magic or sorcery.<sup>10</sup> What is “magical” about the art of dance that could transform the individual and a society in crisis? First, Collingwood offers a very meaningful explanation of the word ‘magic’:

Magic is a representative where the emotion evoked is an emotion valued on account of its function in practical life, evoked in order that it may discharge that function, and fed by the generative or focusing magical activity into the practical life that needs it. Magical activity is a kind of dynamo supplying the mechanism of practical life with the emotional current that drives it. Hence magic is a necessity of every sort and condition of man, and is actually found in every healthy society.<sup>11</sup>

Collingwood’s definition of magic is dissimilar to a school of anthropologists and scientists several generations ago. There is nothing fearful about magic in Collingwood’s definition.

Freudian theory of neurosis, for example, rests on the negative side of trying to understand the relevance of magic in “savage” societies. Collingwood’s approach is strong and intimate and profitable for theorizing about artistic activities like dance. The emotions aroused by magic are not ‘savage’ or amusing. Collingwood is very clear about the consequence of art as amusement. He writes:

Danger sets in when by discharging their emotions upon make believe situations people come to think of emotion as something that can be excited and enjoyed for its own sake, without any necessity to pay for it in practical consequences... When this reaches a point of crisis, practical life, or ‘real’ life, becomes emotionally bankrupt... A moral disease has set in, whose symptoms are a constant craving for amusement and an inability to take any interest in the affairs of ordinary life, the necessary work of livelihood and social routine.<sup>12</sup>

What Collingwood says about “art as amusement” is precisely what is happening in the unprecedented growth of *dagging* in the dancehall in Jamaica. A moral crisis has set

<sup>10</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.1982).

<sup>11</sup> R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, 68.

<sup>12</sup> Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, 94.

in. Dancers have a settled conviction that the amusement and *daggering* is the thing that makes life worth living. The emotions aroused are not for the practical life of the people. A moral crisis, according to Collingwood, could drive the individual to drugs or drink, they may take to crime or violence or even suicide. The danger for a society like Jamaica is a violent death, when its members no longer participate in the traditional way of life but take to an alternative style of living. A very important point Collingwood suggests in the use of “art as magic” is relating specifically to the crisis of dance in Jamaica.

Collingwood writes:

These emotional effects, partly on the performers themselves, partly on others favourably or unfavourably affected by the performance, are the only effects which magic can produce, and the only ones which, when intelligently performed, it is meant to produce. The primary function of all magical acts, I am suggesting, is to generate in the agent or agents certain emotions that are considered necessary or useful for the work of living; their secondary function is to generate in others, friends or enemies of the agent, emotions useful or detrimental to the lives of these others.<sup>13</sup>

Collingwood is saying the effects of the emotions aroused by an intelligently performed dance can positively transform the individual and a society. Conversely certain emotions can be detrimental to the lives of these performers and the society. The task of transformation in this thesis is related to the emancipatory potential and praxis of dance. This praxis is the exact opposite of catharsis. According to Collingwood, in catharsis, “the emotion is discharged so that it shall not interfere with practical life.” bell hooks (1994, 2003) believes it is not enough to only change how we think; this must be joined by meaningful praxis. Many political movements fail, hooks argue, because “there is not enough understanding of praxis” (p. 48). In day-to-day life we must live out examples of our emancipatory potential in order to bring about change in the world. This is the perspective taken is Kierkegaard’s task of becoming subjective. Specific to the problem in Jamaican dancehall culture, the transformation is to understand art is the opposite of amusement. Everyone has a strong natural bent and passion to love and be loved. The

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 66-67.

hype in “standing out” in the dancehall could be viewed a kind of love, of music and dance. However this high-falutancy is by no means attractive to Christianity. What is witnessed in the dancehall is the subject increasingly more and more admired objective wisdom. For example, the lyrics of the international dancehall hit “tiger balm *riddim*” by Kartel exemplifies high objective falutancy:

Mi want a million dollar by a morning  
Mi waan fi rich, mi waan fi rich, rich, rich  
Mi waan fi, mi waan fi rich, mi waan fi rich  
(I want a million dollars by the morning  
I want to be rich, I want to be rich, rich, rich  
I want to be rich, I want to be rich, I want to be rich)

Loftiness has never been a consort of Christianity. The dancehall “king” Kartel is a “Christian” and rich, indeed. By showing off his wealth teaches youths the way to get *nuff gyal* (many girls) through flaunting material possessions. While Christianity, according to Kierkegaard, teaches the way to riches and abundance is to become a subject in truth. The growing obsession in the dancehall with masculinity and sexuality gave birth to the latest dance craze *daggering* in 2008. But this style of “dirty dancing” has been part of the dancehall since its inception. It’s only just gone viral. Like eating unconsciously, how is *daggering* ethical or unethical for the individual? The true ethical dancer’s enthusiasm consists in “willing to the utmost limits of one’s powers,” but at the same time never to think solely *bout daggering di next gal a pass*. As soon as the dancer thinks about either/or, according to Kierkegaard, “the energy of the will is slackened; or is abnormally developed in the direction of an unwholesome and unethical craving” (121). A popular “slack” dancehall lyric is “love punaany bad!” (I love vagina like mad!). The vocalist/ DJ demands something to such an extent that he stirs the emotions of the dancers to take on the highest pitch of displaced passion.

The dispute is obvious. Kierkegaard says passion does not exist objectively. The “passion” of the dancehall then is not true. It is quite rightly so, according to Kierkegaard, the accidental, the angular, the selfish, the eccentric, and so forth (117). True wealth is subjectivity. Since subjectivity cannot be acquired or taught, the question that challenged me throughout this research is how subjective emotions should be guided? For instance, a teacher in Jamaica who desires to make Kierkegaard’s complex philosophy accessible

to *angry* students who are also attracted to the emotional discharge of the dancehall cartel and “king” Kartel’s “vulgar, slack, sexually explicit, misogynistic and anti-homosexual lyrics”<sup>14</sup>; what is her blueprint or tool kit of transformation? She is not a magician, so what can she do? Senyshyn tells us Mary Warnock clearly defines three essential characteristics of subjective knowledge:

First it cannot be passed on from one person to the next, nor added to by different researchers. It cannot be taught in the classroom. Second, what is known subjectively always has the nature of paradox. Therefore, subjective knowledge is identical with faith. For faith alone, and not reason, can induce us to accept paradox. Faith is not an intellectual, but an emotional attribute. Kierkegaard says: ‘Christianity wishes to intensify passion to the highest pitch; but passion is subjectivity, [Senyshyn’s italics] and does not exist objectively. This is because it must necessarily be related to the actual concrete existence of a living individual.’<sup>15</sup>

## Decisive Steps to Transformation

Kierkegaard discusses fundamentally 3 steps one must perform to transform one’s own self. Before, it is important to note, these steps cannot be taught directly. **First**, Kierkegaard says the individual must not take his relationship to it for granted. In connection with this problem of violence in Jamaican dancehall there have been produced undeniably, excellent work of thorough scholarship, on the point of steps to transforming the individual and a culture of cruelty. To say that these steps to transform violence into something positive, into a certainty that is entirely different, have not worked should be rejected.

<sup>14</sup> Hope, *Inna di dancehall*, 36.

<sup>15</sup> Senyshyn, *The Artist in Crisis*, 82-83.

Hickling's creative therapeutic process has produced incredible results. In fact, more work needs to be done however; this work requires a tremendous fearlessness and faith. Luckily, prior to venturing to Jamaica, I was trained in dance to develop courage and faith. African dance practice is not a matter of course. Dance is a form of prayer and meditation. In other words, to dance is to step toward eternal happiness. Thus, the title "dancer" is a blessed existence and one that should not be taken for granted and misused for entertainment value.

Those persons using the pseudonyms "dancer" and "actor" to have status, yet abuse and violate others are delusional. Christianity, like the art of dance, I believe one is called to dance. We are not all Christians nor are we all dancers. I therefore respectfully decline from agreeing everyone is a dancer, in so far as the art form is concerned. The problem, then, *inna di dancehall* is beyond the objective sphere.

Kierkegaard is with the interest of the subjective matter, with the possibility that the cause of violence is infinite. I do not deny that some of the violent offenders could be genuine pretenders with rather severe drug addictions. What I am inclined to decline is labeling certain expressions like *dagging* the art of African dance. I have discussed this dance in detail throughout this dissertation. It is argued that *dagging* is a way of expressing carnal instincts for one who has lost a sensibility for the truth (and this is an infinite interest in the sacredness of the body). I believe it is important to point out the same desires that are experienced from violence can be attained without violence.

Perhaps some of these young people and some not so young anymore lost something like losing one's virginity before puberty. Such a loss may have extinguished mental and emotional responsiveness toward truth. Then "*They cry: 'RESPECT!'*"

The **Second** step to transformation is in a sense "embodiment." According to Kierkegaard, one must step out from under the veil and strip down stark naked, and let the light of the inner-self in truth shine. From a performance artist's perspective, Senyshyn writes:

The 'successful' performing artist – from a Kierkegaardian subjectivist point of view – must in a true sense strip naked in front of the audience and expose his subjective being as an existing human being and use the

inner core of his essence to relate to that same core of experience of the composer exemplified in his music.<sup>16</sup>

Dance, then, like Christianity, is approached as a veil or costume. Dance is a mask performed by the dancer in his attempt to reveal the truth of his existence, the subjective contents. This follows the discussion of Dionysus. I proposed Dionysus the 'mad' god is the source of the problem. Faith is the **Third** and perhaps most important transformational step in Kierkegaard's philosophy: have faith and become steeped in the truth of subjectivity. Objectively, one loses passion. Passion is a condition of faith. Dancehall artists have a lot of passion being misdirected or misidentified. Can a young person reasonably explain the cause of violence is rooted in angry displays of sexual prowess and over the top masculinity rooted in historical events? Now I will step back from the frightful dancehall to be objective toward the contents, or subjective issue of Dionysiac mad dance.

## More Steps to Transformation

In addition to Warnock's outline, above I introduce fundamentally **3 critical steps** Kierkegaard says the individual must take toward self-transformation:

1. Do not take spirituality for granted.
2. To have courage.
3. To have faith.

<sup>16</sup> Senyshyn, *The Artist in Crisis*, 85.

In the dance sphere, in light of Kierkegaard's idea of becoming subjective, here are seven recommendations for how the individual should enthusiastically be guided to become a subjective individual (*dancer*)

1. Simplify the dance and the ethical becomes more perspicuous. Kierkegaard says one of the most difficult things to understand about subjectivity is simplicity. "The plain man understands the simple directly, but when the wise man sets himself to understand it, it becomes infinitely difficult" (143). The more one thinks about the simple, the more difficult it becomes. The simple person knows the essential, while the wise man learns to know what he does not know. The ethical is related to a doing, and this is where dance becomes very simple. For Kierkegaard, "the ethical is not merely a knowing; it is also a doing that is related to a knowing, and a doing such that the repetition may in more one way become more difficult than the first doing.
2. Know the end result is not in his power; the individual will strive within the utmost of his power to choose to dance in isolation until he can control himself.
3. Dance as a soloist in order to redirect or guide his passion away from externalities (*punaany*).
4. Fear not transitioning from the non-ethical to the ethical.
5. Keep quiet or ignorant of his accomplishments.
6. Strive to further the development of his self.
7. The very *breath* of the dancer's life is the eternal, and he should understand that. For Kierkegaard, the breath constitutes the ethical even in solitude. There is no escaping the ethical. It is in everyone and touches everything. Dance and ethics are one. Kierkegaard says, "the ethical is the very breath of the eternal, and constitutes even in solitude the reconciling fellowship with all men" (136).

To summarize the ten points above, before the individual dancer himself devotes completely to scholarship, he should acquire an ethical understanding. He should continue to understand himself ethically while immersed in dance. In other words, dancers must be cognizant that they should not sell their God-relationship for money, a job. The king *inna di dancehall* is Shiva, Lord of Dancers. The dancehall "king" Kartel, for example, may perhaps be well served by choosing money and the prettiest Jamaican girls, in the finite sense, and safeguards his riches by some talent, and established empire, and binds many uneducated in obedience under the pseudonym "king" of the dancehall. But according to Kierkegaard this is pretty stupid. "Every human being is an

unprofitable servant, and the human being who is inspired by ethical enthusiasm differs from others in knowing this [the seven steps above], and in hating and abhorring every form of deception” (122). [my insertion]

The divine madness of the dancehall is not with great unexampled powers. A genuinely inspired dancehall artist can stir and influence thousands of young souls to strive for the ethical, to stop violence and sexual assault upon women. There is nothing between the king of the dancehall and God other than the ethical. Kierkegaard believes the unparalleled power of men, dancehall kings, is to *labour* so that to “transform an entire contemporary generation” (123). It is a blessed dance hall to satisfy the ethical requirement, for smiling shiny happy faces in the audience. At the same time, the king must continue to strive to will the ethical, because that is the highest duty. The personality of an ethical dancer is a composite of factors.

## Subjective Creative Process

In light of Kierkegaard’s concept the subjective existing dancer has regard to the dialectics of the process of communication. The dancer must be deeply concentrated in his own thinking as he moves through the ten-fold process of transformation. His dancing will then take on a different type of movement, namely the reflection of his inward passion. His dance will be unique in the sense that his thinking is unlike another. To dance objectively, then would involve copying. This mode of production breeds “daggerers” and cheats, not artists.

Subjective dancing will not permit the individual to want to copy; in fact, it would force the individual into a religious isolation in part of the creative process. This process is unconcerned with purely the finished product. This is because the dance in this subjective state of creation is wholly aware of his eternal process and subsequently the dance is changing and will continue to change.

The creative process of dancing subjectively is attached to the individual who desires through his inwardness to express “the life of eternity” (68). What is communicated through movement is his thinking. This is challenging because according to Kierkegaard the subjective individual wants to remain in the inwardness of his own desire, yet at the same time communicate socially with others. The individual wants to express, communicate directly but will not because the inwardness is secretive, concealed.

At the same time he says “the secret of all communication consists precisely in emancipating the recipient; and that for this reason he must not communicate himself directly” (69). Subjective thought is essentially secret, because it cannot be communicated directly. A reason the individual may not communicate is out of fear of the consequences. Unfortunately, Kierkegaard thinks the religious individual can never use direct communication. However, we know Kierkegaard’s own writings are divided into the aesthetic and the religious categories.

The creative process of subjective communication is a *God-relationship*. The individual then, according to Kierkegaard, cannot communicate with God through dance. Direct communication he says is “impossible” for anyone in the process of becoming (68). This is imagined to go against the grain of infinite possibilities. Kierkegaard employs “erotic lovers” to exemplify the deception of direct communication. Loving another is accidental. This would be the case for the individual on the path of religious isolation: *the subjective process in isolation, yet the individual also desires to communicate socially*.

It is possible then to understand the “irreligious” and “vulgar” dancehall. Kierkegaard believes the subjective realm of existence is a religious expression. We can assume then that if Kierkegaard is right, the characteristics of violent dancehall performance could be perceived as multiple layers of defraud, first, the mode of communication (“dance”); second the violence, third, it would also be a fraud upon himself because the violence would be an attempted suicide; and finally the fraud of the recipient, audience.

All this could bring the artist to despair, and crisis within himself. His thinking and actions are concentrated in the most direct form of the idea. How do dancers hide their thoughts? Kierkegaard believes it is impossible to hide the truth of our thoughts. He says we cannot contradict our thought and view of life in direct communication, because thinking and direct communication are intimately linked.

Imagine Hickling's theory of "European delusional psychosis": a Jamaican dancer is only thinking of God and asserted this principle directly; this would be a double reflection because the individual thinks about slavery but also thinks about the form of his communication it being dance. How does the slave body appear on stage? What would that look like in the dancehall? Then the dance is misunderstood. In order to imagine this would immediately shift thinking from subjective to objective thinking, which Kierkegaard says is indifferent to subjectivity. "It lacks the elusiveness and the art of a double reflection, it lacks the godly and humane solicitude in communicating itself" (70).

Unlike subjectivity, objectivity can be taught. Kierkegaard sees subjectivity as a positive, it is conscious. Objectivity when it is conscious it transforms negativity into positivity. Therefore we can begin with dance in hell or *daggering inna di dancehall* and move toward the inward recesses of the individual. The objective realm "transforms a supposed communication into an illusion" but this is when the dancer is unconscious. For dance to be an "artistic" form both objectivity and subjectivity must be present. In other words, the two are employed in the process of making art. Kierkegaard says, "artistry would always demand a reflection within the recipient, and an awareness of the form of the communication in relation to the recipients possible understanding" (70).

Kierkegaard does not banish objectivity. He places subjectivity as the religious category. Subjective communication imports itself with respecting other truths. In doing so, the individual is conscious that not everyone will have the same view. The form of a communication must be distinguished from its expression. When the thought has found its suitable expression in the movement, which is the first reflect; how do I express love?

The second reflection is the relation between the dancer and the choreographer, and reflecting the choreographer's existence or relation to the idea expressed. How

would the slave body appear on stage in contemporary dance? To explore this example quickly, take, for example, Kierkegaard's idea truth is subjectivity.

Suppose the dancer is overcome by a passionate inwardness and needs to speak to be heard; suppose he prefers to dance: what then? There would doubtless be found many aggravated assaults upon the self, who had been denied a right to communicate. The matter of prime importance is that communication is essential. Understanding is something that each individual must come to by himself. Then it would seem to me that the mode of transformation would require both art and self-control (27).

According to Kierkegaard, self-control to understand inwardly the *God-relationship* of the individual man is the thing of prime importance. Self-control in the dancehall is a critical requirement in understanding an excess of brute force could exhaust and extinguish the "artist" all together. Recall Kierkegaard says *the greater the artistry, the greater the inwardness*. From this passage we understand that the dancer can use his artistry to preserve his own inwardness. Dancers and artists need not give up on their art. One can communicate a way of the truth with communicating the truth. Consequently the creative process of subjectivity can in fact use artistic forms in the exploration of becoming truthful.

The notion of giving and receiving is one example. The process of receiving awards consists in producing commendable works of art. Suppose a dancer wished to communicate something he could no longer keep to himself but was to be kept a secret; what should he do? There is something dubious about Jamaican dancers; their emotions are deeply stirred easily. It is very difficult for them to keep silent. There is so much on the minds of people it seems as though a discipline like dance could *honour* every human being's need to express, partly because movement of the body is the part of all the days of our life. And if as Martha Graham extolled is correct, "movement never lies," then dance could qualify the knowledge of the most worth in support of the truth of Jamaican youths.

Kierkegaard says, "the process of communication is a work of art... wherever the subjective is of importance in knowledge" (73). In this passage the objective and subjective are held apart. Truth cannot, according to Kierkegaard, be communicated

directly because its essential feature is the meaning of secrecy. Objective communication is an attempt to communicate the secret but the secret cannot be communicated therefore what is communicated is an appropriation. "Everything subjective, which through its dialectical inwardness eludes a direct form of expression, is an essential secret" (74). This constitutes one's own *God-relationship*. This cannot be communicated directly. At best, what the subjective process of dance can do is help the dancer to realize he is constantly in process of becoming, always striving. The form of communication ought to match the mode of existence, so thought and action (form) must correspond.

So there is a synthesis between objectivity and subjectivity, or positive and negative. The dancer, then, is constantly moving and shifting between existence, being, and delusion, non-being. This synthesis is the grounds of Kierkegaard's theory. One's existence is a constant process of becoming: being is an existing infinite spirit. The infinite and the external is the only certainty. Hence it is necessary that everyone have a form of communication in which this understanding can grow, before death.

For Kierkegaard the existing subject is eternal, but temporal. How this is expressed in the dancehall is literal. The lyrics of killing others and the gestures depicting firearms reflect this characteristic of their thinking. They may know it, but it is surely busy with retaliation is occupied with history. Kierkegaard says anyone who can only speak in a direct form will not understand the infinite in his soul. It is always there. Through reflection on existence the individual realizes the inwardness through which he becomes conscious. The condition for a cure in the bodily realm is to keep conscious of the negativity of the infinite in existence. The genuine subject artist is always as negative as he is positive. Dancers are deceived if they are not conscious of the infinite negative characteristic of existence.

The dancehall "king" can be a leader, but also learner because he too is always striving to understand his own existence. It is customary for people to stop striving after marrying, and acquiring a certain occupation. The general belief is that the dancehall "king" or DJ has reached a place where he is comfortable and has received all *honours*; he has finished something that they (*daggas*) must have. Dancers ought to understand

that a little striving now and then is really not an option. Kierkegaard believes this is the only parsimonious marginal note for a text long since complete.

Existing is strenuous for Jamaican dancers. It is hard for them to give more than a little time here and there to continuous striving but Kierkegaard wants the individual to constantly reproduce this existential situation in his thoughts, and translates all his thinking into a process. In Jamaica we have a dance style that is never finished. With each new *riddim* there is an accompanying dance or signature step created. Dancers strive for more, better, the best, freshness, bad, mad, killa moves. It is enough to do for many dancers. The rhythms are infinite and therefore the life of dance creation is unceasingly infectious. Jamaican dancers do not feel a need to have something finished because the incessant process of becoming is active and alive within them. Kierkegaard says every human being knows the incessant becoming generates the uncertainty of the earthly life, where everything is uncertain. This is why dance is so critical. *Everyone needs to give expression to the frustrations of uncertainty.* The large majority of “poor” Jamaicans live in the realm of fear and trembling, for example, anxious about where the next meal will come from. Ethical insight leads one to discover all sorts of moods within himself. The more one inquires the more he will discover what needs to be done.

## ***Courage***

The content of the individual participates fully in the aesthetical metaphysic dance to transform. The dance practice is to bring forth a transformation demands first and foremost courage: the courage of nonviolence, dialogue, to do what we would rather not, the courage to resist the desire for vengeance and be guided by a pure heart. Gandhi believes “violence is born from a wounded spirit: a spirit burned and blistered by the fire of arrogance; a spirit splintered and frayed by the frustration of powerlessness; a spirit parched with an unquenched thirst for meaning in life; a spirit shriveled and shrunk by feelings of inferiority.”<sup>17</sup> Violence results from injured self-respect, from oppression.

<sup>17</sup> Retrieved from <http://www/sgiquarterly.org/global2005Apr-1.html>

Like Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a student of Gandhi's philosophy, believes a person whose spirit is in turmoil must practice nonviolence to transform.

Through dancing with a clear intention we get what Nietzsche means by "metaphysics of art." Nietzsche says, "the Dionysian, with its primordial joy experienced even in pain, is the common source of music and tragic myth" (141). Some humans have the obsession to see tragedy yet a longing to get beyond seeing it too. We desire to hear and at the same time long to get beyond hearing. In both states, Nietzsche recognizes a Dionysian phenomenon.

This Dionysian power can be overcome by the Apollonian power of transformation. The dance is able to carry us back to give a glimpse of ancient civilizations. Nietzsche concludes: "How great must Dionysus be among you if the god of Delos considers such magic necessary to hear your dithyrambic madness!" (144). How much did Jamaicans have to suffer to be able to dance so ecstatically? The approach to transformation is first and foremost about access to one's subjectivity. Intentionality is based on taking a stand, making a deep inner-level commitment to produce something of intrinsic value. Intentional subjectivity is not a position as much as a passion we have for or against something. Such intention is inclusive and proactive, with ongoing learning and practice.

Transformational dance process invites one to have courage. To take risks overcome obstacles. Build relationships to support and encourage others to become subjective. Take action to let go of unsustainable solutions. Confront complexity, especially the deeper individual psychological dimensions. The prevailing dance process recognizes that transformation of both, individual and societal competencies and capacities such as heightened self-awareness are the best tools for effectively educating the mind and reading the body to perform, and that anyone can acquire such skills.

Courage is the first ingredient to transform violence into *good*. By this I mean the good in dance, opposed to the "valuation bias" attached to "good" and "bad" dance. For me, how we know what is good in dance is in the dancer's *intention*. This intention is practiced by way of the art of improvisation. Consequently, the intention in the context of this thesis is transformation, for example, from violence to nonviolence.

Courage is a simple word, at the same time it is mystical. Courage is not just something used in response to crisis. Courage is critical to transformation. Learning how to dance is an ethic of courage. In a way developing the individual's power within. The Hindus believe true courage stem from the inner self. Courage and bravery is very important. Courage is a very powerful membrane that shields off negativity and transforms adversity into growth. According to the Sufi master Hafiz; it takes great courage to realize God. The Dionysian-Apollonian in Jamaican dance is weakness masquerading as courage. According to Chidvilasanada (1999), "cowardice hides behind a veil of a false courage." Courage is not about breaking rules to prove you are a man. "Courage means having faith... It's not the absence of fear."<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, cowardice makes everything more painful for everyone. Educators, for example, are dharmically responsible to en-*courage* learners. This approach to ethical dance education is virtuous. Aristotle, one of the greatest philosophers of antiquity, and in the view of many the greatest philosopher of all time wrote two treatises on ethics, *Eudemian* and *Nicomachean*. Directly, *Nicomachean Ethics* is of key importance to understand courage in artistic activity and what it could lead to. In Book III, chapter V, to the end of Book IV Aristotle is occupied with a detailed account of the virtues and vices that have been named in Book II. He starts with two of the four cardinal virtues recognized by the Greeks, and Africans, however, I am most concerned with the first, courage. Courage he describes as a mean in respect of feelings of fear. The Hindus also say courage is a virtue. As such, courage mediates many feelings. Students can truly learn a great deal if they understand the potency of fear to corrupt the mind, weaken the body, and stifle the soul.

Since Aristotle's notion of courage is concerned with passion and action, dance education by way of encouragement, engage the imagination to activate or put into action the courage to disengage with externals. The subject becomes center stage. What is expected from this kind of work could be arduous, but nevertheless, necessary.

<sup>18</sup> Gurumayi Chidvilasananda, *Courage and Contentment*, (New York: SYDA, 1999) 7.

It is far too easy to bestow praise and blame on those around us for our fame and misfortune. However, it takes great courage to become steeped in the knowledge that “we are responsible for the bad as well as for good actions” (*Nicomachean*, Bk. III, ch. V). Because we are talking about courage, its opposite is equally important in this conversation of how to transform the individual and a society in crisis. Plato asks this important question: *Can any man be courageous who has fear of death in him?*<sup>19</sup> According to Plato, certainly not.

A dancer awakening to his inner-landscape requires tremendous courage, which is an essential principal explored in Martha Graham’s philosophy of dance. Graham believed coming to dance, a dancer could not have, for example, a fear of sex or death. As part of the dancer’s creative process, she must accept sex and death as it surges through her body.

Rollo May explains: “. . . creative courage is the discovering of new forms, new symbols, new patterns on which a new society can be built.”<sup>20</sup> In other words, every creative encounter is a new assertion of courage. According to May, the artist is concerned only with expressing her own inner being. This is why dance is so difficult. It is a forging of one’s soul. And authentic creativity is even more difficult, according to May, because it is an active battle with the gods.

Dancers use courage to portray meaning in the form of images. It is with courage that they are able to live out their imaginations, that they express things that are mostly dreamt about by most human beings. Dancers portray their imaginations because they express consciousness. May defines the unconscious dimension as “the potentialities for awareness or action which the individual cannot or will not actualize.”<sup>21</sup> The collective unconscious is the source of creativity that is the spiritual element of culture. It is in this sense that Graham is concerned with the dancer’s courage.

<sup>19</sup> Cited in, Plato (1976). *Philosophies of Art and Beauty*.

<sup>20</sup> Rollo May, *The Courage to Create*, (New York: Norton and Company. 1975) 21.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

Graham was firm about a dancer's courage to journey into the unconsciousness, the unknown. A dancer must be fearless and ready to enter the depths of her interior landscapes to bring out a movement not imposed from the outside, but an inner reality. In an interview published in *Dance Magazine* (1989) Graham affirms, ". . . there has to be courage, a willingness to explore unknown feelings and daring to feel them and let them become part of your being. It's scary. Terrifying. But you [the dancer] do it because you have no choice."<sup>22</sup> In the world of Graham's imagery, 'landscape' was a vast abstraction, full of indefinable distances. The inner landscape of the dancer is besieged by what Graham called 'blood memory', and by the powers of imagination, the dancer gets in touch with the very sinews of life. A dancer's courage is what she uses to confront the past in its true mythic dimensions and to accept the consequences of love and of brutality and violence – madness to sanity, roughness to tenderness, lust to love, ecstasy to contrition, sin to rejoicing, spirituality to intense sensuality. All of these are explored in Graham's work. It is with courage that a dancer's movement achieves its full force and amplitude, like organic force seeking its proper form.

In her dance performance "Errand into the Maze," for instance, Graham crosses a dangerous area and is menaced by a man wearing a bull's head, whose hands are held in a yoke<sup>23</sup> that lies across his shoulders. The man's dominating, but not overpowering, energy came under control only when the woman exercised her own strength of character, her own courage to dominate it. Graham emphatically indicates that a dancer's real enemy is 'fear of the unknown' which can be vanquished only by facing it with courage.

The Sanskrit word is *virya*, means the act of stepping beyond the obstacles that impede the hero, the courageous one, from moving forward. It is *virya*, courage that leads us to the discovery of our own Self. It is with great courage that we struggle to change the mind to become better human beings. Courage can be as arduous as the

<sup>22</sup> "Martha Graham at 95." *Dance Magazine*. May (1989), 52.

<sup>23</sup> The yoke was an unusual device to harness the man's menacing energy. This device was used in Africa during slavery to bar black men for whippings, and to prevent sexual intimacy.

blacksmith's task of bending red-hot iron to make a horseshoe. Indeed, exploring sexuality through dance takes courage.

Jamaicans fear many things, and one thing of great concern is feelings of unworthiness. This is not a rational fear. Aristotle acknowledges there are things we should fear, and what is fearful is not the same for all; but death and disease, or feelings of oppression and unworthiness have no place in minds of young people. Chidvilasananda says, "like courage, contentment is not a passive virtue. In divine contentment, you are not merely pretending to be at peace. In fact...it is a wonderful struggle, to 'maintain' the poise of the heart."<sup>24</sup> She continues, "to know courage is to know your own worthiness." She concludes with the aphorism: *Have courage and become steeped in divine contentment*. When a student feels the experience that courage dwells within him or her, as their own character, they know their own worthiness. Jamaican dance is a worthy endeavour to help students in developing courage, the stamina to strive, to transform in the eternal process of becoming. This is what Kierkegaard ordered, a lifelong activity.

## ***Improvisation***

The art of improvisation in African aesthetics supports the development of courage within the individual. The frameworks of improvisation, as programming/educational tools should be an essential component of the transformation.

Improvisation suggests ways of perceiving, understanding, and interpreting our individual experiences of the world that may be different from others and our usual conditioning. To fully understand Jamaican dancehall one has to discard the veil, moral mask and judgment and strip down naked. This means to go beyond theories of syndromes or symptoms and cultural boundaries to realize the truth. In the article *The Art of Improvisation in African Dance* Zab Maboungou writes:

<sup>24</sup> Gurumayi Chidvilasananda, *Courage and Contentment*, 15.

Improvisation is an essential element of African dance. Much more than simply the end result Improvisation of a process.” Improvisation has no “rules” as such. The dancer’s freedom in African dance is encouraged through the act of being in rhythm within his body and no other. Maboungou articulates how the dancer uses her body in improvisation to bring forth its distinctiveness as a separate entity: “The body uses rhythm and dance to its own purpose. In this sense, the act of improvisation—an affirmation of self, as well as an act of freedom—also means participation in the true sense of the term and remains the element most crucial to participation.”<sup>25</sup>

Improvisation is at the very heart of the concept by which art and life fuse as a means to serve one and the same goal. Its capacity is to “seize the moment.” Only at this stage, she writes:

... when a certain persistence has been obtained within the rhythm, that is also to say, that a certain level of persistence has been obtained within the step, can spontaneous movement occur, modifying the original rhythmic structure, thus calling for a response. It is within this movement just described that the catalytic moment we call ‘improvisation’ tends to arise within the rhythmic context... African music and dance adapt themselves well to the contemporary context. They are easily capable of evoking and integrating innovation, permitting affirmation of individuality, while expressing in a very sophisticated manner, the dynamics of time...

The way we move is the basis of the way we think and the way we see things. As subjective individual existing human beings we have many perspectives. As individuals we have innumerable mental postures in our heads. Experiencing different perspectives generates different bodily rhythms of the same situational reality. Different gestures, different attitudes, and behaviours danced simultaneously. Through improvisation we explore how the traditional becomes contemporary. This is an aspect of recognizing transformation.

The answer lies deeply buried within individuals, communities, and institutions. Out comes the spirited principle of developmental drama and dance. For a complete

<sup>25</sup> Zab Maboungou. “The Art of Improvisation.” *Revue Noire*. (1997) 50.

analysis of spiritual principle of development I refer to the sixth chapter of the Bhagavad-Gita, the most important authority on Yoga philosophy. According to Gandhi, yoga is, the yoking of all the powers of body, mind and spirit to God; it means the disciplining of the intellect, the mind, the emotions, the will, which that Yoga presupposes; it means a poise of the soul which enables one to look at life in all its aspects evenly. Yoga, like dance, destroys pain and sorrow. Steady control of the senses, the mind, and the intellect frees one from delusion.

Through a decisive form of improvisational dance the mind is calmed and the energy properly directed into appropriate constructive behaviour. Not violence.

For transformation, for peace of mind, for stopping the spread of violence in Jamaica, we need appropriate dance methodologies and tools that generate a deep commitment based on people's profound understanding of self and the world around them. Transformation is more likely to occur when people know who they are and who they become. Lord Krishna tells Arjuna, the mind is restless and hard to control. But it can be trained by constant improvisation.

Moving from theory to practice raises basic questions: what will it take for each of us to overcome our fears that have resulted in disempowered people? How do our actions and decisions perpetuate inequalities in the world? When the mind is focused by way of improvisation we are empowered.

## ***Intention***

The intention of dance is transformation. A fundamental principle of authentic African dance is *Intention*. This is critical in how to live in alignment with others, with our values and passions and to challenge negative perceptions of what we can do with our lives. When we dance with intention we generate other ways of knowing and being in our bodies. My experience in dance is informed by the concept of subjectivity, which for me means working with concepts like *anekantavaad*, which means respect for diversity, and *ahimsa*, which means an absence of violence.

The intention, then, of transformational dance is developing understanding that dance is 90% mental. The other half is physical. In this the power of thought is critical in

the process of transformation. The subjective thinking dancer is aware of the dialectic of communication. The subjective dancer as existing essentially interested in his dancing as existing in his thinking. Training the body to execute is important. However, training the mind to be in harmony with the body is the most difficult task.

World heavyweight champions and great athletes, including dancers, are masters of intention. Dancers like Nijinsky developed a set of mental skills that eventually altered his performance on stage. Before a performance, artists use self-motivational technique: affirmations, visualizations; and perhaps self-worth epigrams. Mantras in Eastern philosophy, like a rosary in Catholicism, are repeated with a highly specific intention to reach above average performance or as the Iyengar put it: *to cross beyond the ocean of manifest world*. According to Iyengar, the word mantra is derived from the root 'man', meaning to think.

A dancer's thinking is that of inwardness, of possession, whereby it belongs to the subject and to no one else. Intentional dance is not objective; it's not mime. Dancing with Intention requires the dancer to break with cognitive egocentricity. According to Merlin Donald, this means is to break with the egocentricity of the episodic mind. Vygotsky evidenced intentionality in children. Following elementary intentional begins the child's ability to realize the intentions of others through learned to direct their gaze.

Transformational thought united with physical movement creates a firm foundation for the student to explore without fear his/her subjectivity. In this work, intention is deep and significant. Intention is not an ordinary thought. It is a spiritual "tool" that can lead the body to more than how to entertain an audience.

Dance is transformational because the dancer's intention (individual mind) is not directed merely to how to perform without any attraction for fame or gain, but to understand how ordinary movement can transform an audience (society).

The relationship between intention and physical movement is transcending Cartesian dualism. Intention as a tool can inspire confidence, devotion, discipline, deep understanding and illumination through dance. With intention as the fundamental principle, performers work hard to transmit the truth by question and analysis. Dancing with intention encourage performers to develop their mind, their questioning spirit,

hunger for knowledge, the spirit of humility, perseverance and tenacity of purpose. This is not merely curiosity. It is dynamic faith.

The body is shaped by innumerable past actions and the mind is colored by accumulated past thoughts. It requires tremendous patience to calm the mind and relax the body in order to dance subjectively without the barrage of external influences. Dancing with love and faith can produce a feeling of oneness. This is the outcome of dance intended to transform the individual and a society. Our memory is developed through exercising subjectively. The approach of dance with intention is transformational.

What do you suppose would be the outcome of a dancer's performance with the intention Love? Iyengar says, "love begets courage, courage without love is brutish."<sup>26</sup> The true intention of dance will never mislead. It will return us to the truth.

How far can we push our intentions? Some of the most instructive examples come from sports. Lynne MacTaggart tells us athletes, and I include dancers, routinely practice what is variously termed, "mental rehearsals," "implicit practice," or even "covert rehearsals."<sup>27</sup> Intention is now perceived essential to transform and improve performance. It is used in leisure and professional sports, such as rock climbing, swimming, ice-skating, weight lifting, and football. Physicists report the effects of mental practice on motor skill performance has shown effective results in learning or improving performance. Techniques involved in mental rehearsals have been exhaustively studied (McTaggart, 2007; Paivo, 1985; Rushall and Lippman, 1997; Hinshaw, 1991; Swets and Bjork, 1990). McTaggart believes virtually all Canadian Olympic athletes use mental imagery.

Intention in performance differs from positive thinking or happy thoughts. It is more like a trial run or dress rehearsal in minute detail. Nor is it blocking out the

<sup>26</sup> B.K.S. Iyengar, *Light On Yoga*, 29.

<sup>27</sup> Lynne McTaggart, *The Intention Experiment*, (New York: Free Press, 2007) 129.

innocuous presence of the audience. The aim of how to overcome the fear of subjectivity and the fear of the unknown I am proposing intentional dance to transform the mind. The effective undercurrents of intention can prod the need to practice and question.

I found intention effect to steady psychological anxiety and fears of failure. I suppose intention laboratories could re-align dancers to make more effective choices. For example, professional athletes will forecast and rehearse every aspect, step by step, of the game, including possible failures. The challenge is they do not know what to expect of their opponents before-hand, while a performer can rehearse every movement precisely before going onstage. Could we say this is akin to imagining the outcomes or how to overcome possible setbacks? The conclusion I am making is to transform the specificity of our intention is critical. This involves imagining how to stay in control in the face of adversity. This last point is crucial in terms of Jamaican dance, where dance is used to exploit and subjugate others.

Like Olympic athletes, dancers in Jamaica need to learn how to transform doubt and images of domination and failure. The most important aspect of transformation is to rehearse the intention; repetition (disciplined practice) with positive and precise intentionality. Iyengar says, "without firm foundation a house cannot stand."<sup>28</sup> Merely dancing to the sound of music does not enable the student to transform. This next example of the relationship between a teacher and a student should illuminate clearly the kind of intention associated with transformational dance education. It is the Indian story of the god Indra, and Virochana (a demon prince):

Merely listening to the words of the Guru does not enable the sisya (disciple) to absorb the teaching... (Indra and Virochana) went to their spiritual preceptor Brahma to obtain knowledge of the Supreme Self. Both stayed and listened to the same words of their Guru. Indra obtained enlightenment, whereas Virochana did not. Indra's memory was developed by his devotion to the subject taught and by the love and faith, which he had for his teacher. He had a feeling of oneness with his Guru. These were the reasons for his success. Virochana's memory was

<sup>28</sup> B.K.S. Iyengar, *Light On Yoga*, 57.

developed only through his intellect. He had remained what he originally was an intellectual giant. He returned a doubter. Indra had intellectual pride and imagined that it was condescending on his part to go to Brahma. The approach of Indra was devotional while that of Virochana was practical. Virochana was motivated by curiosity and wanted the practical knowledge which he had believed would be useful to him later to win power.

Above all, a dancer's intention should be directed to love, moderation and humility. All the great philosophical texts lay great emphasis on constant and arduous practice. Through repetition, intention is honed and illumed to guide the audience to the subjective passion within the performance. By constant practice, the intention is illuminated and becomes a beacon of light for both the individual and the audience.

Transformation is not obtained by mere theoretical discussions. Clothing the body, or unrobing it one does not obtain transformation. Intention is the secret of transformation. As by learning to read, one can master all the subjects, dancing with subjective intentionality produces transformation. That is the nature of subjectivity as being identical with the performers inward intention. The performers indirect intention is derived from subjectivity.

No conclusion can be drawn from the reliability of historical accounts. Understood in relation to dance, the transformation by which the individual becomes decisive for an eternal happiness is a "leap" (90). For Kierkegaard what makes the leap possible is the individual's internal passion. The leap is the category of decision. In this sense the leap cannot be taught. It's an act the individual performs in isolation. The leap is decisively intentional.

The relationship between the dancehall "king" and the lesser "affectors" is very easy to understand. However, the difficulty is in the illusion that the "king" has actually

taken the leap. This illusion is the record labels, girls, girls, girls, big houses, *bling bling*<sup>29</sup> etcetera. The direct relationship between the “teacher’s pet” and the “king” is not intended to teach or assist the students in how to leap. That would be *eo ipso* not a leap. It is understood that the leap is dialectical of the infinite.

In his God-relationship the dancer becomes a learner in how to transform by himself. “Every human being is taught essentially by God” (92). In this way, the dancer also learns to discipline himself artistically, and in intoxicating foods and drink. Discipline isolation, as suggested by Kierkegaard is not recommended in here. Kierkegaard’s notion of isolation is decisively a kind of religiosity.

A decisive leap to transform must be done in isolation. By this Kierkegaard is saying it cannot be forced on an individual. Furthermore, that would be impossibility. Nor can the leap be transformed into something objective; however, dance metaphors are always very helpful. Speaking of food and drink, intoxication, the leap is itself the decision to step out of drunkenness into sobriety. Kierkegaard says “anyone who has young legs and a light head can doubtless leap” (94). There is nothing deceptive about informing dancers that the body is not a repository for sloth. The leap should come naturally, sober. “When one is indisposed to make the leap, so indisposed that this passion makes chasm infinitely wide, then the most ingenious contrivance for the purpose will not help one at all” (94). To leap means one knows where he is going. Where are *daggering* dancers going?

Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief,  
Doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief

(Kierkegaard: *Postscript*)

The leap then becomes an important decision in respect to many areas of the dancer’s life. Precisely for the Christian dancer, it is not something that can be attained

<sup>29</sup> In linguistics ‘bling’ is an “ideophone” popularized by African-American creators of slang. Bling is synonymous for wealth or expensive material riches, usually flashy ostentatious jewelry, either diamond, gold, or platinum. The song “Bling Bling” released in 1999 by hop-hop artist Lil Wayne helped to popularize its usage around the world and in Jamaica.

by practice or scholarship. The *Method* by Stanislavski is one of the first examples of a performer's decisive procedure. Perhaps Kierkegaard would say this whole thesis proposing to transform oppressed human beings into dancers for peace and non-violence is completely bewitching Christianity. It may doubtless assist individuals to seek the way out of the dancehall dis/plays of crime and violence. Dance is a way out for everyone who feels it subjectively. The intention of dance is subjective.

# Love

If love has not been able to emancipate him from slavery: then let him consider Christianity. (Kierkegaard: *Postscript*)

Love is a fascinating subject for poets, philosophers and artists. Millions of people around the world are familiar with the prophetic poesy of Kahil Gibran (1883 – 1931). Gibran's poetry has been translated into more than twenty-five languages. For Gibran love is at the core of all life, the source of everything; in its presence everything is beauty; in its absence the whole world wears an ugly mask.<sup>1</sup> Gibran writes:

It is wrong to think that love comes from long companionship and preserving courtship. Love is the offspring of spiritual affinity and unless that affinity is created in a moment, it will not be created in years or even generations.<sup>2</sup>

Regardless of what we do in the external world, we must know the inwardness of love. Love is transformative. Kierkegaard says, "love is a determination of subjectivity."<sup>3</sup> In every case where the objective knowledge is the very inwardness of the subjectivity of the individual, Kierkegaard says, it is necessary for the knower to be in a corresponding condition. But the utmost tension of human subjectivity finds its expression in the infinite passionate interest in an eternal happiness. Andrew Sherfan tells us love is not created by us, but is divine. It is sent from above and directs everything in the direction it pleases. Gibran says life is divided into two parts: the frozen and the burning. Love is the latter. All love is affected by violence.

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Dib Shefan, *Kahil Gibran The Nature of Love*, (New York: Book Sales, 1971).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>3</sup> Kierkegaard, *Postscript* (1846). Translated by Swenson and Lowrie, 118.

In light of Gibran's poem cited above, when I started research on the subject of violence in Jamaica I contacted the organization L.O.V.E. (*Leave Out Violence Education*) for youths. It seemed clear to me that understanding the nature of love was absent in Jamaica's education system where the problem of violence is affecting children and young people.

LOVE is an award winning youth violence prevention organization based in Montreal, Quebec. The organization was founded on the belief that "youth challenged by violence can be agents of change, capable of transforming their own lives, investing themselves in their communities, and making the world a safer place" ([www.leaveoutviolence.com](http://www.leaveoutviolence.com)). Informally I met with the organization's founder Sheila (Twinkle) Rudberg in 1999. Over tea, I learned that Rudberg started the organization after a 14-year-old gang member in downtown Montreal killed her husband Daniel. The killer was a victim of violence himself. When I met with Twinkle the organization was just beginning to reduce violence in schools, homes and neighbourhoods in Montreal. Today LOVE's proven track record is phenomenal! For over 17 years LOVE has created and delivered hundreds of community safety programs to over 40,000 youth and community members in Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Halifax, New York, Eliat, Israel, and Uganda. Thousands of youth have transformed themselves and become leaders to help other youths to reject violence through LOVE's youth driven arts education model. LOVE's program mission is influencing attitudes and effecting positive social change in communities in many cities. LOVE's programs in media arts and leadership training support my thesis idea, to benefit the individual and society. Through the arts young people develop the skills, confidence and passion to become loving. There are countless examples of similar initiatives to change the outlook of youths, that there are other options and they are not stuck. Twinkle says, "because LOVE youth combine their experiences with their newly gained knowledge, they are uniquely effective in promoting awareness, influencing attitudes and effecting positive social change in their communities."

From my research in Jamaica, I found there was a strong elitist resistance to arts and social change. However love is needed to reduce the number of at risk youths and to build happy, constructive communities with a message of ahimsa in Jamaica.

Legendary Brazilian theatre director and creator of “Theatre of the Oppressed,” Augusto Boal (2006) says, “Art is love.” The theoretical foundation of Boal’s aesthetics of the oppressed is founded upon the premise of love, which is an aesthetic experience. He says, “Loving is Art, and Art is Love. These two processes – loving, and perceiving aesthetically the unicity of the Other, whether living Being or Thing – are absolutely identical. More even, they are the same thing” (p. 19). In art programs like the LOVE initiative, youths in Jamaica can learn to cultivate love and non-violence through dance. The cultivation of love, according to Boal is an art. Furthermore, he says every human being is an artist. However, according to Senyshyn (2010), “[Artists] have spent many years of hard work to accolade ourselves with the title – artist. For us this is a most significant word not to be abused” (p. 40). Boal (2006) believes we all possess, to some degree or other, the capacity to penetrate “unicities.” That is the aesthetic process and the artistic product.

The most important thing in Boal’s theory is the aesthetic process, which develops the art maker’s subjectivity, though it may be very desirable that it culminates in a performance, a finished artistic product or work of art for public presentation. The aesthetic process then, functions like Kierkegaard’s continuous striving to become an individual. The aim of the aesthetic performance process is it encourages participants to continue striving to make greater efforts. The process of art is love allows subjects to exercise themselves in dance practices, which are usually denied them, thus expanding their perceptions of the truth. Making dance stimulates areas in the brain. Boal says, “the brain is an ecosystem and not a computer’s hard disk. It is elastic and plastic. For this reason, the Aesthetic Process is useful in itself, and becomes more useful when it arrives at the production of an Artistic Product which can be shared with other persons (p. 18). I believe Boal is saying the work of art is capable of awakening in the audience the intentionality that led the dancer’s creation. In this sense, dance created intentionally with the aesthetic process Love can transform feelings or emotions and thoughts.

This transformation is not instant but the single second has infinite value. What this means is there is no time to waste. Love waits for no one. Love is critical and incidental with existence which is a synthesis of both finite and infinite. According to Kierkegaard “existence is the child that is born of the finite and the infinite, the eternal and the temporal. And is therefore a constant striving” (85). Love is constantly striving.

Love is transformative. The subjective individual is constantly striving for love. The dancer has within himself the infinite and is striving in the process of becoming subjective. Kierkegaard makes the point that anyone who merely makes his life the pursuit of purely objective will cease to be human. This relates to the incessant striving in the dancehall for material possessions. The crime and violence witnessed is related to the desire to be seen. These dancers have been oppressed and silenced. Now they want to have a voice, they want to be seen but unfortunately this is leading to objectification of the body.

What I find remarkable about transformational and educational programs is many youth leaders are not simply activists. They are aware of the inner and outer forces that perpetuate destruction in the world. The youth of today are interested in responding to the crisis of our present age. Monica Sharma, a trained medical doctor has been working with the United Nations for over twenty-five years. She says:

For this new breed of activists, inner transformation and social transformation are inseparably meshed. An eclectic mix of spiritual teachings and traditions informs their engagement with the suffering of the world—from meditation, yoga, and indigenous practices to personal growth workshops, the creative arts, and various somatic practices.<sup>4</sup>

Young leaders are embracing their relationship with the arts, which have always held the potential to ignite social change. The youth of today, says Sharma, “they love to ritualize, beat drums, move their bodies to an eclectic range of music, write poetry, and use media, technology, and community events to share vision with an international tribe.”<sup>5</sup> Derrick Ashang, 30, a Harvard-educated scholar, change-maker, musician, and actor, who started the Sweet Mother Project—a group of artists, social change leaders and educators around the globe use the sounds of popular culture—to stimulate cultural empowerment for people of Africa. Ashang says, “music is a profound reflection of the

<sup>4</sup> Monica Sharma. “Conscious Leadership at the Crossroads of Change,” *Shift*, Sept.-Nov., no. 12 (2006): 23.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

human spirit.” Music and dance in African tradition are inseparable. Dance can be about changing a society.

There is a return to tribalism at the root of new youth led communities. Much of this has emerged from the rave movement—and the raw food revolution! Neo-tribalism is very much about shifting the old individualistic, consumerist garrison mentality. Youth led creative movements sees the necessity to merge spirituality and social change. Sharma tells us David Nicol, founder of Citizen Circle at the California Institute of Integral Studies, is excited by the potential of “subtle activism”—engagement in collective spiritual practices that energetically shift the collective consciousness.

A prime example is the Burning Man Festivals, in which hundreds, thousands of people gather in the California desert at the same time for a period of shared intent for peace and free artistic expression. Burning Man attendees embrace the arts, which have always held the potential to ignite the imagination and reshape culture. Deep ecology and earth-based practices are returning to the wisdom of the body.

Many of today’s young leaders are influenced by the somatic practices and philosophy of yoga and African dances (*Hip Hop*). They recognize and acknowledge personal and societal transformation is an embodied one. Sharma is convinced that young people believe if we’re all part of a global consciousness, we have an innate responsibility to do something about social crises. We start by healing what is within us. Undoubtedly the practice of dance is a way of relaxing the mind so the body can perform without restraint. The right means to relaxing the mind is just as important as getting the body to move. Perhaps the most important limb of dance is breath. This is the beginning of the inner quest and question who am I?

Dance instructs students to look within to find the truth, subjectivity. Rhythmic channeling of breath guides the student in how breathing relaxes the mind and body. This helps to free the mind from a view of the end, and thereby returns the focus to a subjective passion. Finally, the student of dance is ready to learn to see the body as fit for the soul. The ultimate aim is to help students to balance her/his passion and emotions with the surrounding environments. By profound and disciplined practice, the two become one, subjectivity and objectivity.

The two have no separate existence from each other. It is like a dancer and drummer becoming one with each other. When the mind is completely relaxed the performer has the ability to transform limited perceptions of the body. This is the precarious balance that must be achieved.

## Kierkegaard's Moods

The intensification of “moods” is not without the possibility of leading to crime and violence. Vincent McCarthy’s book *The Phenomenology of Moods in Kierkegaard* posits Kierkegaard’s “moods” are essentially about the self. Other social beings are bound to be involved in triggering certain moods, but essentially McCarthy argues the essential cause of mood is on the one hand a state of non-integration and on the other hand stirrings of spirit which press in the direction of integration. In other words, one is always attuned to one mood or another. In Kierkegaard’s authorship, disequilibrium in the self brings about moods. Moods can become aimless, McCarthy tells us, if moods are not related back to “the deeper process of transformation and cohesion in the self, through the decisive act of the will.” Kierkegaard says this could be damaging. McCarthy explains:

The moods make their appearance in emotional life and announce ‘something’ going on which must be explored and each mood willingly gone through in order for it to be understood. What is transpiring is eventually seen to have deeper roots in the personality. It is not a matter of something external momentarily coloring, like a passing cloud, the emotional life, but rather something deeper and essential to the individual, whose meaning will be found only by exploring the movement.<sup>1</sup>

Hatred, love, and anger are powerful emotions that relate a subject and an object. These emotions are not the moods Kierkegaard is referring to. In moods, there are no objects. McCarthy clarifies the crises within the individual are sequentially four Kierkegaardian moods: irony, anxiety, melancholy and despair. Very succinctly, McCarthy writes:

<sup>1</sup> McCarthy, *The Phenomenology of Moods in Kierkegaard*, 1978, 126.

Melancholy is passive, pained longing for an impossible ideal object, and even when the longing becomes properly directed toward God, this is not properly speaking an “object.” Irony is a movement of rejection, which relates positively to no object. Anxiety revolves around the problem of “nothing” and its intensification in despair points back to oneself who cannot be an object for oneself.<sup>2</sup>

Consequently the more rigorous the inquiry one makes it, the more ethical one becomes, the less time there is for the complicity of moods that could reduce crime and violence. McCarthy explains:

In the moods subjectivity is intensified by the individuation produced by a mood and by the intensity of feeling in mood. By the very absence of object, mood additionally heightens the sense of subject. It forces a subject to confront his own subjectivity and presses him to probe its meaning.

Moods explored through dance performance, for example, lead to understanding oneself as a dynamic being and to the self-articulation of one's being in a new life-view. In becoming conscious of these moods McCarthy believes the individual is on the threshold of higher consciousness by learning to work through the mood rather than waiting for it to become less. McCarthy says, “each mood represents a deepening of inwardness and spiritual life.”<sup>3</sup> What serves is to give young dancers thoroughly cultivated dance programs to assist daily life in the decisive dialectical striving. This is the art of dance. Kierkegaard says we mustn't be complacent with the cultivation of this understanding, but to make use of our resources (moods) in one's daily life.

If dance is naturally part of the individual's daily thinking; that is to say she does not need to take on something unbeknown to her; dance is needed to provide a strenuous training in existence to prevent the individual from straying away from the truth. Proper dance training can lead students in an existence as spirit, intensified by reflection. This intensification should lead students to develop an eye for the truth

<sup>2</sup> McCarthy, *The Phenomenology of Moods in Kierkegaard*, 126.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

everywhere. These dancers need to be reinforced with a vision of both positive and negative anxiety and other moods. So that they do not see others with something they do not have and consequently respond in anger and violence. When we see that the proportions are not equal what should we do?

The issue of moods, anger and anxiety in Jamaica is critical. There is obviously more pathos than the comic spirit. This needs to be balanced. For example, Kierkegaard gives the example of the Socratic gaze as being both pathos and comical. What is interesting in this example is the mood of Socrates' prayer makes no use of words, only the gaze. He understood his God-relationship in total silence, another mood. Silence.

On the other hand, one can understand his *God-relationship* in dance. Unfortunately Kierkegaard believes "the inwardness of prayer, and its inexpressible sighs, are not commensurable for the muscular (aesthetic contortions)" (83). The comic, and the tragic dancers are not praying for a goal in the finite sense. They dance constantly in the process of becoming. And, this dancing is just as comic as it is tragic; as much humour as essential pathos. And his dancing reflects his mood. This process of becoming is the dancer's own existence; and the choreography is his blueprint that helps to safeguard his transformation of various moods. From which it is possible to make abstraction. How skilled the dancer is technically makes no essential difference. This is a process of eternal becoming. His mood, the exiting, is a striving, both comic and pathetic. This pathetic mood relates to the infinite transformation.

## Concluding Recap

I often wonder how many artists know of Kierkegaard's philosophy of subjectivity. It occurred to me that he has invaluable insights for everyone, artists and non-artists, teachers and students. The more profoundly one penetrates Kierkegaard's concept of subjectivity the more one becomes subjective within himself. The more one inquires within himself the more he will discover, and the more to do. It occurred to me that a life of debauchery, complicity, and violence is a much easier life to live for some. For like dance, the ethical life is not so easy. It can be exceedingly strenuous. Intellectually one needs to have a very clear conception of God, of oneself, and one's God-relationship, and the dialectics of prayer. Really, how many years of intercourse does it take to become acquainted with one's beloved? Perhaps they will be at it for decades and still discovering how to love each other. That is the nature of existence. Love is a constant striving. The point Kierkegaard is making is getting to know God is not like getting to know your romantic partner, husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend. It is conceivable that prayer might be as important and significant as art. As difficult as art is to produce, the task of becoming subjective is the highest because it promises eternal happiness. Or it comes into being for the subjective individual. To conclude then, *self-knowledge* is worth the most.

Honor your Self.  
Worship your Self.  
Meditate on your Self.  
God dwells within you as you.

(Muktananda: *Play of Consciousness*)

As this is the task of living, as long as the dancer can sustain himself, his career for life is fixed. The task of becoming subjective should furnish a human being with enough to do to suffice him for his entire life. As the individual perfects his dance, problems will fall away. The task of becoming subjective cannot be finished as long as the individual continues to exist. The power of a subjective dancer is not that of a "king"

who dominates women and kills homosexuals. The only power dancehall kings and queens have is control over themselves. This power is exercised every minute otherwise it slips away.

The truth of the individual's being is lacking beginning and end. Thus the truth becomes an approximation. Any "beginning" according to Kierkegaard is a systematic arbitrary one unless it is the strength of faith or will. The individual is a spirit existing for himself. This is critical to decisiveness. No man made law or system can truly tell the existing individual what is right or wrong for him.

The truth becomes objective when thought is pointed away from the subject. The truth becomes subjective, of inwardness, when the thought is directed to the subject and his subjectivity. Truth, in other words, is foundational to becoming an individual being. Who am I? This question cannot be answered any other way than truthfully. Surely it cannot do any one good to force a dancer to study ballet when he'd prefer to swing. This could only damage his subjective-objective identity.

The situation is this: since the individual is in a process of becoming an ethical dancer then from the start he must choose himself. How is dance helping him to understand the truth? To understand eternal truth the dancer mustn't be denied. What is needed, according to Kierkegaard, is for the identity of the individual to be understood as thought and being.

The identity is spirit. The existing spirit is related to the truth. For Kierkegaard, the impossibility of proceeding along the path of subject-object simultaneously is "inhuman" (173). Existing individual implies spirit existence. There are two ways of understanding this conundrum and Kierkegaard says the way of objective reflection makes the subject "accidental." This is interpreted as being insignificant, unimportant, and second to none. The individual's existence is reduced to a mere abstraction, a phantom. The objective validity is in the process of determinedness. The subject becomes a social security number. Historical knowledge is largely held responsible for this diminution of the truth.

Transforming subjectivity into knowledge of dates, figures, and facts. Striving to objective security is an illusion. Existence and non-existence have only subjective

significance. Everything is subject to the will of God. Subjective reflection turns its attention inwardly to the subject to realize the truth.

Objectivity vanishes in subjective reflection. Passion, he says is the culmination for the individual. In passion, the individual is made finite in his imagination. All knowledge that does not inwardly relate to existence, in the reflection of inwardness is, essentially viewed, accidental knowledge. How the subjective reflection makes its way inwardly in inwardness culminates in the knowledge of the most worth, *self-knowledge*.

For Kierkegaard, it is not the identity of the finite and the infinite I-am-I at the same time on both sides equally balanced. That, he says, is not possible for an existing individual. "All essential knowledge relates to existence" (176).

Knowledge has a relationship to the knower. According to Kierkegaard, only ethical and ethico-religious knowledge has an essential relationship to the existence of the knower. Then an important question to ask now is what does it mean to think existentially? Here is where the pendulum swings in full tilt. To think existentially, for the dancer, is not sitting at a desk all day long writing what one's purpose or meaning of life. While subjective knowledge wants to apprehend God instantly; and therefore sees how every delay as a deadly peril; objective knowledge dances the long painful road. On which side of the pendulum is the dancer in truth? Kierkegaard says:

When the question of truth is raised in an objective manner, reflection is directed objectively to the truth, as an object to which the knower is related. Reflection is not focused upon the relationship, however, but upon the question of whether it is the truth to which the knower is related. If only the object to which he is related is the truth, the subject is accounted to be in the truth. When the question of the truth is raised subjectively, reflection is directed subjectively to the nature of the individual's relationship, if only the mode of this relationship is in the truth, the individual is in the truth even if he should happen to be thus related to what is not true." (178)

Kierkegaard then gives this example to elucidate the above passage:

If one who lives in the midst of Christendom goes up to the house of God, the house of the true god, with the true conception of God in his knowledge, and prays, but prays in a false spirit; and one who lives in an idolatrous community prays with the entire passion of the infinite,

although his eyes rest upon the image of an idol: where is there most truth? The one who prays in truth to God though he worships an idol. (179-180)

One way of understanding Kierkegaard's anecdotal description of truth is in his example of accents. He says: *The objective accent falls on WHAT is said, the subjective accent on HOW it is said* (181). For example, in the dance realm, what is in itself truth could become untruth depending on "how" it is danced. What is true not everyone knows how it is to be danced. In Kierkegaard's ethico-religious sphere, "how" is most important. Here is the conundrum. Aesthetically, Kierkegaard says "how" is a contradiction and becomes untruth. The "how" is not about demeanour or expression. "How" is referring to the relationship between the individual and the inwardness of his existence. If this "how" is the truth, subjectively, how do I, as a dancer, relate to the contents of my internal, inward existence? Do I suppress it, conceal it; or do I express it in dance, objectively? What do-I-do? Do I dance it, or I do not? Here is a second conundrum, decisiveness, he says, is only in subjectivity. Objectively there is no decisiveness. The dancer must turn within in order to decide what is right and wrong. To look at what others are doing and copy that is to be in error. "In this manner subjectivity and the subjective "how" constitute the truth" (181). To reconcile the dilemma in this thesis, the "how" relates to transformation. Kierkegaard says, "in the passionate moment of decision, where the road swings away from objective knowledge,... the subjective 'how' is transformed into a striving" (182). Once striving is attached to dance it becomes a venture. And Kierkegaard said himself, the greater the risk the greater inwardness.

This striving is catalyzed by the passion of the infinite. *Truth is what propels this striving held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth, the highest truth attainable for an existing individual.* In his definition of truth Kierkegaard is saying objective determinacy is temporarily set aside. This increases the passionate inwardness of the individual. Imagine it is early morning, around 3:00AM, and you are out in nature, on a wilderness hike alone. Other than the moonlight above all is black. Ahead is a fork in the road that divides the path in three. You're without a blueprint or map or any other devices to direct you. How do you decide which road to take? The truth is precisely the venture. I contemplate Kierkegaard's definition of truth in this way: the "appropriation-process" of subjectivity embrace the "objective uncertainty." In this

way, subjectivity is intensified. It's as though all your concentration is turned completely inward. This requires faith.

Faith is the contradiction, he says, between objective uncertainty and inwardness. In other words, without, for example, venturing alone through the dark there is no faith—"without risk there is no faith, and the greater the risk the greater the faith; the more objective security the less inwardness" (182). Faith for Kierkegaard has two essential tasks:

1. To discover the improbable (paradox)
2. Hold it fast with the passion of inwardness

Passion, truth, subjectivity, inwardness, and the ethical are for Kierkegaard faith. Faith is what one believes. If I choose to keep myself in faith, according to Kierkegaard, I must hold fast to objective uncertainty. No matter what, preserving faith is the highest truth. Here is the paradox. When subjectivity is the truth, objectively the truth is a contradiction. Objectively the truth is a subjective situation. In this case, can we say objectivity now becomes the truth? Therefore subjectivity is untruth? Or can both be truth simultaneously? No. He says, "the paradoxical character of the truth is its objective uncertainty; this uncertainty is an expression for the passionate inwardness" (183).

This passion is the truth. In this way, I understand the relationship between objectivity and subjectivity. The eternal and the existing truth is a paradox. The absurd is that God has come into being, like any other individuals, and Christianity has declared itself to be the eternal essential truth, which has come into being in time. It has proclaimed itself the paradox. But this can only be a relative paradox. Objectively there is no truth, only approximations; while subjectively the truth exists for them in inwardness. The paradox emerges when the eternal truth and existence are placed in juxtaposition with one another. The existing individual is changed by existence. Can we reverse the hands of time? What's done is done. "Forward he must, backward he cannot go" (187). The eternal essential truth is the paradox. How does the paradox come into existence? In response to Hickling's question about God: Kierkegaard says God is the highest conception not to be explained in terms of other things. God is to be explored by the conception itself. The highest principle can be demonstrated only indirectly,

subjectively. To explain what God means, “before God all men are essentially equal” (205). The lordly superiority seems to Kierkegaard to be true corruption. Instead one must hold fast to this faith in life and in death. “The inwardness of the spirit, is after all, always a stranger and foreigner in the body” (214). It is clear that Kierkegaard believes that men have forgotten what it means to exist and what inwardness signifies. When he decided to give his explanation on this point he decided to use an indirect form. Inwardness is the truth, therefore, he says, “the communication of results is an unnatural form of intercourse between man and man, in so far as every man is a spiritual being, for whom the truth consists in nothing else than the self-activity of personal appropriation, which the communication of the results tend to prevent” (217).

The inwardness of the dance teacher, for example, is not a direct relationship between her and her learner. Keeping the other at a distance while one assimilates what one has learned is inwardness. One needs to turn inward to express inwardness. “Pathos is indeed inwardness” (217). It remains with the maker of the communication in spite of being expressed. It is interesting that Kierkegaard says all spirits are derived from God. Only He can sustain a direct relationship with derived spirits. Because all spirits have a common derivation from God, they are essentially equal. God, then, is present everywhere, in everything but not directly there. The individual can see God only in self-activity, inwardness. “Nature is indeed the work of God, but only the handiwork is directly present, not God” (218).

God, for Kierkegaard, is elusive because he is the truth, and by being elusive desires to keep men from error. A lovely example of parents teaching children to be objective is when a mother disciplines a child as he goes off to a party: “now be sure to behave yourself, and do as you see the other well-behaved children do” (218). The child is not to initiate anything nor have any opinion of his own. Kahil Gibran leaves us with this poem, which makes sense of this:

And a woman who held a babe against  
her bosom said, Speak to us of Children.  
And he said:  
Your children are not your children.  
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.  
They come through you but not from you,  
And though they are with you yet they

Belong not to you.  
You may give them your love but not your thoughts,  
For they have their own thoughts.  
You may house their bodies but not their souls,  
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,  
Which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.  
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like  
you.  
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.  
(Kahil Gibran: *The Prophet*)<sup>1</sup>

Essentially it is the God-relationship that makes an individual subjective. However, marionette types are easily deceptive. By imitating others they come across as the truth, the ethical. God is invisible. God is omnipresent; everywhere to be seen but also deceives by not making His presence seen. Nature, the totality of created things, is the work of God. "And yet God is not there; but within the individual man there is a potentiality (man is potentially spirit) which is awakened in inwardness to become a God-relationship, and then it becomes possible to see God everywhere" (221). The knowledge of the most worth is not to be found in history books:

Astonishment over the many volumes, and the number of lines to a page, which is like the astonishment over the vastness of nature and the countless forms of animal life, is not the true understanding (221).

That is the wise noble piety of Kierkegaard. He says a believing community is moved by the pagan determination of God in human form: beauty (222). Socrates did not have a favourable appearance. He was "very ugly, had clumsy feet, and, above all, a number of growths on the forehead and elsewhere, which would persuade anyone that he was a demoralized subject." This can also keep audiences at a distance from understanding the truth of dance. Inwardness creates a separation with each for he exists in the truth. "Every direct communication in relation to truth as inwardness is a misunderstanding" (223). In summation, "if men had forgotten what it means to exist, they had also forgotten what it means to exist as human beings." If communicated in the

<sup>1</sup> Kahil Gibran, *The Prophet*, (New York: Alfred A Knopf Publisher) 17.

form of the knowledge of the most worth, it must not be done a dogmatizing manner. Every utterance about truth must be watched.

The difficulty I had with Kierkegaard is the complexity of his philosophy seems to lack balance. It arouses tension, to the point of feeling out of control. With all his life and soul, he is concentrated in a single word, inwardness. Senyshyn believes Kierkegaard's greatest weakness in his notion of subjectivity is the fact that it is so closely related to Christianity as the one and only religion.

Kierkegaard's richly gifted mind protests against putting the subjective in a straightjacket. He represents the existential relationship between the ethical passion within an existing individual and the aesthetic. At times when I felt the spirit was not supporting me with access to this very complex individual I resolved to imagine myself becoming an individual. What happened next took me back to how this thesis ends.

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