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Likely Terpsichore?:

Dancing in the Museum of Ancient History and Archaeology

Walking through Gallery 21 of the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology in Oxford, the world's first university museum and founded in 1683 the UK's oldest, my eyes are drawn towards a marble sculpture of a seated woman. The statue is missing both its head and arms. The label next to her tells me that she is a Roman artefact (AD50-150) and that she is considered to be 'likely Terpsichore, the muse of the dance.' Headless, faceless, she is not nameless. She is somehow identifiable, despite missing her arms and the harp that would have rested on her left side. She is defined by missing the very object that defines her; she is defined by absence, by lack. Indeed, we cannot even be sure that she actually is who we think she might be; she is only *likely* Terpsichore. Faced with this fragmented woman, I am troubled. Who is she, really? She stops me in my tracks.

From January to June 2017, I was invited to undertake an artistic residency as a visiting choreographer at the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama (APGRD) at the University of Oxford, situated next door to the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology.[1] The primary aim of the residency was to create new choreographic work sited within the museum and it was during an early site visit in the residency that I first encountered the sculpture described above. Working alongside scholars in Classical Reception studies, I would build on previous work with performance ensemble Avid for Ovid, 're-imagining' the ancient Roman dance-theatre form *tragoedia saltata* (or danced tragedy) to further explore its potential, especially through its use of the mask.[2] Rather than working towards historical reconstruction *per se*, my choreographic practice-as-research would take the foundational principles of the ancient dance form—that it was/is a masked, narrative and solo practice—and use these as a springboard to create new choreographic work resonant for the 21st-century archaeological museum.

Dance in the art museum in the UK and continental Europe is once again very much in the choreographic zeitgeist but dance in the museum of ancient history and archaeology currently seems a rarer phenomenon.[3] There are historical antecedents for it: we might think of the pioneers of modern dance in the early 20th century such as Isadora Duncan working in the British Museum, for example, but why choose to dance in the

archaeological museum today? The aim of this paper is to provide a possible answer to this question: my claim is that when choreography performs as exhibit in the museum of ancient art and archaeology, the dance can be seen to offer itself up as, to use performance theorist Rebecca Schneider's reworking of philosopher Michel Foucault's term, a site of "counter-memory" (2011, 105). If and when dance in the archaeological museum becomes this site of counter-memory, might it then allow a new, alternative visibility for those bodies, most specifically those female bodies, previously misrepresented or rendered partially invisible by history? Might it allow my "likely Terpsichore" to piece together her scattered body, to rise from her seated position and to begin to dance her own story?

It was the fragmented body of "likely Terpsichore" that first drew me in, and yet I was aware that even if I could somehow attempt to reassemble her broken body through my dance practice, between the reassembled fragments there would inevitably remain cracks and gaps—lacunae between cultures and between temporalities. Might live dance performance in the archaeological museum somehow possess the potential to articulate—and even bridge—these gaps and cracks? It is this question that I hope to address here through an analysis of my choreographic practice at the Ashmolean and by connecting this practice to a series of recent critical ideas, most notably Schneider's theorising on performance as "perhaps another word for the intervallic" (2016), Georgina Guy's idea of the "lacuna" between the performed and displayed which may be "encountered anew and imagined through acts of theatre, exhibition and curation" (2015, 184) in the museum, and the notion of 'minding the gap' as outlined by both Jeff Friedman (2014) and Heike Roms (2016) in their respective studies of performative oral history. To this critical framework, I add notions of "in-betweenness" as outlined by Gabriele Brandstetter (1995) in her readings of Aby Warburg and Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Whilst acknowledging the subtle but significant differences between these multiple ideas, I argue that it is the live female dancer's dance in the museum that offers a space for revealing certain gaps or lacunae, and thereby opens up a space for other previously unrealised, alternative histories to appear. As Tony Bennett (1995) reminds us, the museum is a training-ground to think about temporality, to think about time, differently: might dance in the archaeological museum be considered as a means to think about how we might view history differently? How might choreography, like archaeology, allow us to excavate the body and the past? And what happens once this excavation is put on display and exhibited in the museum?[4]

Drawing its title from the label attached to the seated Roman statue in the Ashmolean Museum's Gallery 21 that had so struck me at the start of the residency, the dance *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)* was first performed in the museum in June 2017. The durational work, performed throughout the opening hours of the museum, is a triptych of three solo dance works. I perform each of the three solos—subtitled *'Galatea,' Myrrha* and *Philomel*—in the signature glass windows and bridges that connect the museum's galleries. The performances viewed behind glass thereby offer a visual echo of the glass vitrines enclosing ancient artefacts throughout the museum. Part exhibit, part dance installation, the solos are performed in silence (or in the relative, ambient silence of the

museum). Galatea, Myrrha and Philomel are all female characters from Roman author Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a text written contemporaneously to the development of *tragoedia saltata*, and all three solos take their root in the foundational principles of the ancient Roman dance-theatre form to somehow explore how, in the moment of performance itself, we might reconfigure a (performance) history into something new. The three solos feature three classical heroines whose voices and bodies have been appropriated throughout history (even by Ovid), and aim to reclaim a space in history (and a body in the present) for them. The solos are performed on a loop throughout the museum's opening hours; as such, they may be viewed in any order, and, significantly, even partially viewed as fragments. Housed in their glass 'display cases,' they may also be viewed and re-viewed from different perspectives; from above, from below, close-up or at a distance with the visitor chancing upon the work and choosing to spend as much or as little time with each work as they wish, in the same way as they might view another artefact in the museum's collection. In this way, the dance performance—at least for its duration—itself enters the larger museum collection.[5]

I wait in stillness, behind the glass encasing me. My eyes are closed beneath the mask. Below me, in the gallery, are the marble statues of faceless female bodies. Theirs is total stillness. Mine is not stillness, for there is always the movement, the dance of the breath, my chest rising and falling. Slowly, the breath-dance gets bigger and bigger; the ribcage expands and contracts with ever-increasing breadth and amplification. The dance begins with the breath, and extends to the movement of the shoulders and scapulae; it unfolds into a movement of the elbows floating out and upwards, wrists unfurling, breath moving like water and flowing into fingertips, my fingertips searching the air about me, sensing the space, feeling it out. The movement flows into neck and head; my eyes open, my eye-line extending as my arms move slowly outwards and then inwards again, seeking, searching, sensing, the movement rippling with every inhalation and exhalation. My eyes are wide open now and I see the statues below me and the living statues of the people watching me. I move towards the surface of the glass, cool to the touch, and my eyes meet those of those watching me. (*'Galatea'* rehearsal notes, June 2017)

The first solo of the triptych, *'Galatea',* was situated in the enclosed vitrine-like balcony high above the Ashmolean's main entrance and atrium. As such, it presented a focal point for the stream of visitors arriving at the museum and my slow, almost imperceptible movement along the glass surfaces of my 'display case' seemed in stark opposition to the hive of activity at the information kiosk directly below me. *'Galatea'* takes its starting-point from the well-known story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (10. 243-297) of the sculptor Pygmalion who carves an ivory statue so beautiful he falls in love with it. In Ovid's version, Pygmalion prays to Venus for a bride who should be the living likeness of his statue. His prayers are granted and the statue comes to life[6]. On reading Ovid, I was struck by the idea of the female both created and animated by the gaze and touch of the male creator. In the context of the arguably patrilineal space of the archaeological museum, might the reanimation of ancient statue into dancing flesh somehow offer an alternative history to Ovid's version of events? Is Galatea's (re)-animation a willing, or unwilling, one? Did she ever wish to yield to the touch of the male creator (Pygmalion,

then Ovid)? Does she wish now to yield to the touch of the 21st-century female choreographer? Or might this yielding in fact make of her re-animation a chance for her to offer her own (alternative) version of events?

The Pygmalion / Galatea episode in Ovid's text is one that is particularly rich in interplays between gaze and desire, between the live body and the statuary, and between mobility and immobility; the contemplation of the ivory maiden is a *mise-en-abyme* for the idea of the male gaze fixed upon the female statue the man has created. In her study on the gaze at work in Ovid, *A Web of Fantasies: Gaze, Image, and Gender in Ovid's Metamorphoses* (2005), Patricia Salzman-Mitchell observes that often when a woman is described in the *Metamorphoses*, as in the Pygmalion episode, the flow of narration is suddenly frozen and everything stops in the contemplation of an immobile figure, paralysed by the gaze of the viewer/narrator. Pygmalion looks at his statue and Ovid's narration stops to effectively "freeze-frame" her image. With this visual detention, a stoppage in the narrative is produced and the eyes of the external viewer/reader also experience the power to control the mobility of the female image. The female, the erotic object, is constructed as an immobile statue for the viewer to look at and enjoy. In the choreography of *'Galatea'*, as in *Myrrha* and *Philomel*, there is a subtle subversion of the live/statuary trope with a play of stillness in the dancer's live body behind the glass vitrine, herself surrounded in the museum by immobile ancient Greek and Roman sculptures. In Ovid's text, as in the choreography, the play is double as the 'statue' eventually becomes fleshy, real; what if she can look back? And what if she can move?

This play of immobility and mobility is an interesting one: in Ovid, women are not only "frozen" or "fixed" but are often on the move, such as in the story of the exiled Myrrha (*Metamorphoses* 10.298-502), wandering in the desert having committed incest with her father, and which forms the basis to the second solo in the triptych. There are interesting and significant parallels between the Myrrha and Pygmalion/Galatea episodes and indeed, in Ovid's text Myrrha's story directly follows Pygmalion's. In both episodes, the creator first falls in love with his creation and then it is the creation that desires the creator: for Pygmalion, it is the created statue he so desires that is animated into life; for Myrrha, the daughter who desires her father and the father who desires her back. At the beginning of her story as presented in Ovid, Myrrha is the object of desire of many suitors but she soon becomes the subject of desire and, with it, the subject of the gaze: and the price she pays for that is exile and abject shame. Forced out of her home, heavily pregnant with her father's child and wandering alone in the desert, not wanting to go on living but thinking death too easy an option, Myrrha begs the gods to change her into some other form. The gods answer her prayer and she is transformed into a myrrh tree, through which she gives birth to a son, Adonis. As Salzman-Mitchell puts it, "the only way out of [her] impossible situation seems to be [her] transformation" (2005, 116), her final fixing into a tree. One might argue that bodily transformation offers a resistance against immobility, the final outcome being the continuous movement of metamorphosis. However, for Myrrha, her transformation into a tree is a pinning down, a final rooting and eventually, after the labour and birth of her son Adonis through the bark, a final stillness. Certainly, in the dance solo *Myrrha,* a final "sinking down" movement, a sensation of

weight settling and coming to final stillness, follows this reading. In the choreography at least, there is an important interplay between Myrrha's movement (read: deviance, resistance) and her stillness (read: pinning down or 'fixing'). However, within this interplay of the mobile and the fixed, it is important to remember too that *Myrrha* is also a narrative of maternity. Through exhibiting labour and childbirth, *Myrrha* also offers a very female experience in the museum's traditionally patrilineal space.

Behind my glass, I pace about the empty space. This is Myrrha's space, a desert space; it is empty and lonely. My feet move quickly, move in circles and figures of eight, trying to escape but always returning to the same place. Then, all at once, there is a heavy feeling in the belly; hands fly to the womb, body drops to the floor. As body hits the floor and begins to rise again, there is a changing quality of blood, of bone, a rooting to the ground, first through palm and forearm, then through the tiny bones of the feet. I feel skin hardening; I feel the liquidity of marrow and blood flowing like sap, sinking down to meet the rising wood, yielding to it, giving in. As I dance, my body re-fleshes Ovid's written text; Myrrha's story pulls me onward, my hands once more rooting to the ground beneath my feet, fingers reaching outwards as roots grow ever deeper. The rigidity travels throughout my body, extending upwards through feet, shin, knee, thigh, pelvis, torso, shoulder, arms branching out, neck and skull stiffening until I cannot escape the shifting of weight downwards any longer and suddenly in one breath there she is: Myrrha, woman made tree, immobilised yet somehow still moving, branches gently dancing in the breeze. (*Myrrha* rehearsal notes, June 2017)

The play between mobility and immobility, between the danced and the statuary, is again at work in the triptych's third solo, *Philomel*. Philomel is a relatively minor figure in ancient Greek mythology but is frequently invoked in literary and artistic works in the Western canon and she too appears in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (6.401-674). While the myth of Philomel has many variations, Ovid's narrative is that, after being raped and mutilated by her sister Procne's husband, Tereus, who cuts out her tongue so she cannot speak of her ordeal, Philomel obtains her revenge and is then transformed into a nightingale. For the performance in the second-floor glass walkway of the Ashmolean's atrium, I chose to use Ovid's story of Philomel as a metaphor for the story of the muteness of the 'unknown' women housed in the archaeological museum[7]. Having first seen those bodies *in situ* in the museum—the "likely Terpsichore", the painted brides on Attic vases, the physically present (yet somehow absent) bodies of 'unknown' Romano-Egyptian mummified women—I had been struck by the silencing of those unknown female voices throughout history and the (mis)-appropriation of their bodies and their stories. In thinking of those women, and of Philomel too, I wanted the practice to ask how you might speak when you have no tongue. How do you tell your story when you have no voice? How do you move and communicate when you are bound, trapped and voiceless?

Behind the glass, this particular solo offered a space for subverting the idea of being looked at—for looking out, for looking back, and through performing the act of masking and unmasking, for returning the gaze (although all three solos are performed with the mask, only *Philomel* stages the acts of masking and unmasking). The first few minutes of

the solo play with the idea of the *tableau vivant*, of stillness that is never total stillness but instead a continuous slow-motion movement along and behind the glass vitrine (see also Schneider on living pictures and the connection she makes between the live/living and the still, in Schneider 2011, 138–68). This recalled allusions to the Galatea / Pygmalion trope and offered a way into introducing the mask as a potential means of bridging the gap between the mobile and the statuary, between the "live" and the "dead", between the present and the past. After a moment of looking at the mask, once I had placed it over my own face, the narrative of Philomel proper could begin. This was a furious and fast-paced choreography exploring movements of restriction and struggle, of an imprisoned body, a caged nightingale whose wings are clipped and whose music is silent.

During the very first performance of *Philomel* at the Ashmolean, I was struck by the encounter with the public. Having rehearsed in my "glass box" in relative solitude on the days when the museum was closed to the public, here I was suddenly exposed and on display. It was the strangest experience of utter objectification: as I danced behind my glass, I was watched from all sides, from above and from below by hundreds of pairs of eyes. Yet, through the mask, I found I was able to return their gaze, and to make a connection with those eyes looking at me from the other side of the glass. It was as if I was pleading them to look at me, to acknowledge me. This return of their gaze was Philomel's final, silent cry. I realised that this was not so much about a Galatea being brought to life by a Pygmalion, but a Galatea resisting petrification.

Afterwards, I am exhausted. Philomel has pulled me into action, pulled me into the dance. This is a story of struggle, of rape, of appropriation, of mutilation, of having one's voice taken away so that even screams are silent and only silence resounds in this space. Even transformation cannot transform the silence. Behind the glass, the bird flutters in her cage before coming to a final stillness but not-yet stillness. Slowly, letting my heart rate slow and my breath calm, I take off the mask and look at it; slowly, holding it at arm's length, I open my mouth wide into one final silent scream, and edge along the glass, disappearing again. (*Philomel*, rehearsal notes, 2017)

It seems particularly significant that the three solos of the triptych offer a space for subverting the idea of the visual, of being looked at and looking back (in the double sense of both returning the gaze and looking back retrospectively at history). Ideas of women looking back and of also offering 'glimpses' of female narratives to be completed by the imagination of female readers, to fill in the gaps, are significant ideas at play in Salzman-Mitchell's readings of the Galatea, Myrrha and the Philomela episodes in Ovid, and appeal to my broader project of offering a glimpse of alternative female narratives of both these characters' stories when performed in the museum. In the museum setting, the *visual* takes precedence over the written; the body takes precedence over the written word. The relationship between dancer and viewer is a visual one, viewed either collectively or, in its durational aspect, one-on-one. Yet whereas in her study Salzman-Mitchell appeals to Ovid's Philomela as a plastic artist (for she weaves a tapestry to tell the story of her rape to her sister, when she can no longer tell it verbally), I am interested in translating this representational experience back onto the body through the dance.

However, I am drawn to Salzman-Mitchell's notion of the female glimpse to be completed by the viewer, and would posit that in viewing the dance in the museum setting, the viewer-spectator somehow "completes" the alternative glimpse of an alternative, female bodily history offered by the dancer's performance. This is further reinforced by the way in which viewers could experience the work in a fragmentary fashion: walking around the museum, they might only see one of the three solos, or they might glimpse short fragments of each, seen from above, below, or face-to-face, close-up or from a distance, the live dancer seen against marble friezes and sculptures, caught in passing. Each viewer might then reassemble the performance's fragments in a different order; putting the pieces back together in a way unique to them.

This idea of completing the picture, of putting the pieces back together again, speaks to dance scholar Gabriele Brandstetter's work on the fragmentary nature of performance in the museum as offering an alternative to traditional historiography (see also Foucault on "general" history in Foucault 2008). In a recent lecture on dance in the museum, Brandstetter points to how that which she terms the 'museum in transition' can serve as a cultural model for restructuring traditional categories of narrative (2016). Following on from Jean-François Lyotard's (1979) *La Condition Postmoderne*, Brandstetter posits the "historeme" or the anecdotal or unpublished as a contrast to the *grand récit* (Lyotard's 'meta-narrative') and uses dance in the museum, citing re-doings of postmodern dance history in the museum (such as those in Boris Charmatz's *Musée de la Danse*) to state how performance can challenge critical historiography. She suggests that while traditional historiography tells history with a beginning, middle and end, it is performance in the museum that can offer an opportunity for the anecdotal (the as yet unpublished) to be revealed, and this precisely because of performance's *fragmentary* nature. The idea of the anecdotal as 'the as-yet-unpublished' may also be equated to Heike Roms' understanding of how performance (specifically re-enactment) creates a different present whereby other previously unrealised potentials may be given form. To run with the very fitting archaeological metaphor of fragments, such thinking leads me to posit that it is the fragments themselves (and the gaps between the fragments) and the process of reassembling those fragments through performance that are of import to my own choreographic project in the Ashmolean.[8]

The wider framework for my analysis here develops from a close reading of Brandstetter's seminal work, *Tanz-Lektüren: Körperbilder und Raumfiguren der Avantgarde* (1995, published in English in 2015 as *Poetics of Dance*), an historiographical approach to early 20th-century modernism across dance, literature and the visual arts. Brandstetter's use of art historian Aby Warburg's iconographic concepts of *pathos formula* and *topos formula* (as outlined in his *Mnemosyne Atlas*) constitutes a methodological proposal for 'reading' the interaction between modernist dance, literature and visual culture. Interestingly, Brandstetter's wide-ranging study begins with an analysis of the dancer in the museum of art history almost *avant la lettre*, exploring the work of Isadora Duncan, Genevieve Stebbins and Alexander Sakharoff within "the hall of statues" (2015, 63). As such, this study enables me to start to trace a lineage for the dancer in the archaeological museum and to situate my own project within the larger historiographical context.

A key point made by Brandstetter is the relationship between the modern dancer and the subject of *memoria*, the question of preserving cultural memory: the modern dancer places herself in the archive of works of antiquity in order to "*revive* them … in contemporary memory" (2015, 64, my emphasis).[9] Brandstetter employs two models for a wider investigation of *memoria* and the translations of pathos formulas across ancient art and modern dance: Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas* and Hugo von Hofmannsthal's essay "Moments in Greece" (1908), which Brandstetter defines as another 'Mnemosyne' project.[10] Yet these models differ considerably. While Warburg attempted to assemble a large-scale inventory of pathos formulas and their translations in art history since antiquity, Hofmannsthal suspended the idea of the archive altogether. In terms of my own project, it is not the differences between the models that draw my attention but the point at which they collide, despite their differences. Most notably, Brandstetter's reading of both Warburg and Hofmannsthal in fact begins to explore the notion of what might be termed 'the in-between', as each articulates the experience of how temporality shifts and morphs in both the museum and in the body (and, more specifically, in the body in the museum—although the body in this instance is a non-dancing, spectating one).

According to Brandstetter's formulation, in the second part of Hofmannsthal's essay "Moments in Greece" (which is titled "The Wanderer" and where the traveller figure meets a homeless "wanderer" and seeks to decipher his face and body), the focus lies on "reading the traces and cracks of history—as signs of *memoria* and the origins of the subject—in the human landscape of the body" (Brandstetter 2015, 74). It is important here to note the relationship made between the 'cracks' of history and the body. Furthermore, Hofmannsthal goes on to describe the traveller's experience of temporality in the museum: it is an experience of pure presence, of time as déjà vu, of encounter with the self, and of interconnectedness, "of being interwoven" between subject and object (cf. Hofmannsthal 2008, 97–98). This latter point is salient: Hofmannsthal bases his art theory on a movement relationship between an artwork and its beholder, and on the dynamic play of movement between the two. For Brandstetter, it is this idea that leads directly to dance in the museum where "the moving body becomes the eye of the observer" (2015, 84). In his own diary, Warburg also describes the dialogical relationship between observer/dancer and artwork/archive, articulating it as "the iconography of the space in-between" (see Gombrich 1984, 343). So while Warburg's focus might be on the reconstruction of the archive and Hofmannsthal's on its deconstruction, it is the ideas both have about the "cracks of history" and "spaces in-between" that are of interest to my own choreographic project in the archaeological museum.

These "cracks of history" and "spaces in-between" can, of course, also be directly related to ideas of the gap, the lacuna, and the intervallic. These ideas are currently being widely investigated and teased out in the fields of dance and performance studies, and here I can only offer a very brief overview of the vast body of current thinking in terms of where it takes my own project. In her 2014 essay "Lithic Liveness and Agential Theatricality," further developed in her keynote at PSi Melbourne in 2016, Schneider refers to Palaeolithic art and to the gesture of the hand as hail asking if we might use it to think about "the duration of gesture and the intervals between gesture's reiterations" (2014, 1).

Three terms are important here—duration, gesture, and interval—and they, in turn, point out the relationships at work between space, time and the body; relationships that are integral to any understanding of the dancer in the archaeological museum. Schneider's emphasis is on the hail as a gestural call that is extremely useful because "it preserves a temporal interval, a space for difference" (2014, 2). If the times between "call and response" (2014, 9) are highlighted by gesture, might gestural performance then be a substitute for the intervallic? Is the gesturing body a site of potentiality for the intervallic between time and space? Such thinking about gesture of course leads us directly back to Warburg's *Mnemosyne* project and the model of how the modern dancer used the gestures encountered in the pathos formulas of antiquity to create a "new" dance.[11] It follows that the next question for my project is how I, as a choreographer and dancer, myself use gesture—both encountered and performed in the archaeological museum—to exploit the intervallic.

A further layer for my own project is one articulated by Guy in her idea of the "lacuna" between the curated and the performed (2015). In the museum, I am both curating and performing dance movement [gestures]; and dance movements [gestures] are being curated, exhibited and performed. Significantly, Guy's chosen term, lacunae, points to an idea of missing pieces. I think of one of Brandstetter's chosen pathos formulas—Nike of Samothrace, the winged statue in the Louvre, goddess of victory and the "allegory of history progressing, appear[ing] in dance as the pathos formula of modernity *per se*" (2015, 124). Nike of Samothrace is a personification of time itself yet a fragmentary one, for she is a headless torso. I think too of a previous performance in the Ashmolean Museum in 2015 where I myself danced beneath a plaster cast replica of that same winged Nike: perhaps then choreography as exhibit in the archaeological museum is more a story of fragmentary replicas? It is the piecing together and exhibiting of scattered fragments through performance that can highlight the cracks of history, the spaces between, and allow the previously unrealised potential, the anecdotal, the otherwise unpublished—the very opposite of the received *grand récit*—to seep through those same cracks.

As a final thought, I would like to add classical art historian Page duBois' work on the gaze in relation to "archaic bodies-in–pieces" (1996, 55). Situating her work in the lineage of feminist art historians (Brown 1993; Kampen 1994), duBois argues for a recognition of our own relationship to the fragmented artefacts of the archaic past, be they a few lines of text, or shards of broken pottery. DuBois makes an important point, which somewhat paradoxically sits alongside Salzman-Mitchell's appeal for the viewer to "complete" the fragmentary glimpse of the female narrative:

> Rather than focusing on the restoration of lost wholes, or even the tragic impossibility of the reconstitution, rather than looking exclusively at the real, the past to which we must always have a fleeting and receding relationship, perhaps we should look also at our own desires, our investments in these lost objects, these shattered fragments of the past. What is our connection to them? What kind of consequences would

> follow from *recognizing our own positions as gazers, as viewers of the fragments of the ancient world*? (duBois 1995, 35, my emphasis)

It is perhaps incorrect to suggest that the contemporary viewer 'completes' the fragmentary glimpse of the female heroine by filling in the gaps, as this assumes that reconstitution is possible, when it never can be. Perhaps it is more apposite to look at what happens when the gaps are recognised for themselves, when the viewer in the museum recognises herself as another gazer, viewing a fragmentary performance of fragmentary stories from the ancient world. And further, what of the connection between the dancer-viewer to the fragmentary stories of the ancient women she is telling through her body? DuBois concludes her argument by citing a fragment of the Greek female lyric poet Sappho, which reads 'But I claim there will be some who remember us when we are gone' (Littlemore, *Greek Lyrics*, 41), and asks what might such remembrance be:

> Do we want simply to remember the everyday life of multitudes of women now dead, whom we can never know? Do we want to restore to them a narrative of which they have been deprived? … Perhaps if we accept the necessity of fragmentation, the ways in which our access to any past is limited, our access to any narrative determined in part by our own desires, we can contemplate a new relationship between ourselves and the archaic past, one that focuses not only on its irretrievability but also on what pleasures it offers, what identifications or estrangements it allows, how it can be used in contemporary debates about community, subjectivity, the place of art, what kinds of empowerment or utopianism or imagination of the future it enables. (1995, 53–54)

This seems to me key to an understanding of what happens when we let those classical heroines such as 'Galatea', Myrrha and Philomela dance in the museum, that principal site of memory and of remembering and recollecting history. For DuBois, the fragmentary offers an alternative to the arguably patriarchal, patrilineal reclamation of history as needing to be a process of piecing everything back together into a whole. Rather, the connection between 'now' and 'then' is necessarily fragmented: it is the gaps between the fragments of the broken body of 'likely' Terpsichore—the gap between who she actually was and who we think she might have been—the spaces between the fragments in the dance, the cracks in between the stories, that should be held up to the light to discover both what they contain and what they let slip through.

Notes

1. Elias Ashmole founded the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology in Oxford in 1683. It is the UK's oldest museum and arguably the world's earliest surviving museum. Importantly, it is part of the University of Oxford itself, and since its foundation, the triple combination of collection, teaching and research has remained the institution's distinguishing feature. It is worth bearing in

mind the high stakes of the museum's politics and history as a university teaching museum when we consider it here as a space for this dance performance practice.

2. In 2013–14, I was a participating choreographer on a University of Oxford TORCH (The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities) project titled "Ancient Dance in Modern Dancers" led by Dr Helen Slaney, Dr Caroline Potter and Dr Sophie Bocksberger, and which explored contemporary reinterpretations of the ancient Roman dance form *tragoedia saltata*. For the TORCH project, a choreographer was paired with a classicist in a workshop environment, and the interest was in examining how dancers approached and reconfigured the ancient form once given various stimuli texts by ancient Roman authors. "New" work was created from those stimuli, the emphasis being on a kinaesthetic engagement with ancient material. An offshoot of this project was performance work by independent ensemble *Avid for Ovid* comprising myself, dancers Susie Crow and Ségolène Tarte, and composer Malcolm Atkins.

3. Select examples of dance in the art museum in the UK and continental Europe over the last two years alone show the current scale of such activity and include: Boris Charmatz's *Musée de la Danse* at Tate Modern, UK in 2015; Anna Teresa de Keersmaeker's *Work / Travail / Arbeid* at Tate Modern, UK in 2016; Pablo Bronstein's *Historical Dances in an Antique Setting* at Tate Britain, UK in 2016; Manuel Pelmus and Alexandra Pirici's *Public Collection* at Tate Modern, UK in 2016, and the pan-European *Dancing Museums* project which ran from June 2015-March 2017 involving Arte Sella, Italy; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Netherlands; the Civic Museum in Bassano del Grappa, Italy; Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Austria; Le Louvre, France; MAC/VAL, France; and the National Gallery, UK.

4. It is important to note here how the practice itself places the dancer into the archaeological museum as an exhibit, in order to subvert the idea of the female body as archival "object," or artefact, historically subjected to the "gaze" (after Mulvey [1975]) of the male collector. I am thinking here of the live dancer in the archaeological museum as having the metaphorical potential to smash the glass enclosing the exhibited female remains of the Ashmolean's Romano-Egyptian mummified bodies, or to become the mobile site of an embodied experience of an ancient Athenian bride painted on an Attic vase and "silenced" for centuries, fixed in pigment.

5. I am struck by the 'event' nature of many dance performance works in the museum, widely advertised as performance events. The longer-term aim for this particular work is that it could exist for several weeks in the museum, unadvertised and to be chanced upon, as any other artefact in the museum's permanent collection might be. On one level, the durational aspect of the work provides a solution for how it might exist at least quasi-permanently in the collection. I am drawn here to Lara Shalson's 2012 reading of Kira O'Reilly's gallery-sited durational performance *Stair Falling* as "an invitation to slow down and witness the inevitable, to inhabit that experience which takes us *out of time*" (Shalson 2012, 105, my italics). Might a durational performance in the archaeological museum also take us out of time, somewhere between past and present?

6. It was important for me too that Galatea be given a name, for in Ovid the ivory maiden is nameless; Galatea being the name attributed to the statue in later versions of the story (hence the single quotation marks around her name in my version)

7. It is worth noting that Ovid's Philomela story is well-known and has been widely discussed in feminist and classical critique (de Luce 1993; Joplin 1984; Liveley 1999; Marder 1992; and Segal 1994).

8. We might also connect this to French philosopher Paul Ricoeur's explorations of intra-temporality and the complex web of relationships that exist between time (*le temps*) and narrative (*le récit*) (Ricoeur 1983, 1984, 1985). Ricoeur's theories on time and narrative are an important underpinning in my own hermeneutic phenomenological enquiry of the questions of the live dancer in the archaeological museum, as they helpfully provide a lens through which to interrogate that somewhat thorny problematic of the dancing body as simultaneously ephemeral and archival.

9. There is, of course, the salient point that by choosing to perform in the museums of ancient art and archaeology—the 18th- and 19th-century temples to art built by the educated upper-middle classes as monuments to art and culture—modern dancers ensured that modern dance acquired a certain "status" on a par with other art forms.

10. It is perhaps useful to recall here that in classical Greek thought, Mnemosyne, Memory, is the mother of the Muses—and the Museum, of course, in its most basic definition is of course the *shrine* to the Muses.

11. Interestingly, UK dance company Siobhan Davies Dance's 2016 exhibition project *Notes on Gesture,* conceived by artist Jeremy Millar and considering the status of a gesture, and the 2017 performance work *Material / rearranged / to / be* (which has so far been performed in gallery settings at the Barbican, London, UK; the Whitworth Gallery, Manchester, UK and the Blue Coat, Liverpool, UK), draw upon Warburg's idea of the recurrence of certain gestures in different times and different places, and combines Warburg's ideas on bodily communication with the latest ideas from neuroscience to explore how movement is both felt and observed.

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