materializing the impulses of a signing body as it "unlearns how to write" (155). Michaux's sign-like parodies, as they index a "performative self" actually "phenomenalized" (made individually, experimentally autonomous) by gestures of a specifically inscriptive character, are cited to illustrate in literally graphic detail how Butler's theory of subject construction, in Noland's view, needs to be rethought (167, 171).

Noland's reading of Butler, characterized as a mere "tweaking" of Butler's largely valid, suggestive formulations, is close and careful (192). Despite the modest rhetoric, however, the argument Noland makes against Butler does serious damage to Butler's staunchly constructivist theory. Noland exposes how Butler conflates discursive and corporeal signs, failing to give due attention to the ways in which the kinesthesic agency of gesture supports, complicates, and exceeds in individual experience the cultural inscriptions that gesture also always reiterates. Butler's ignorance of the fundamentally different relations that verbal and corporeal signs possess to the human body artificially inflates, from Noland's vantage point, the explanatory power of Butler's performative theory.

The general implications of Noland's kinesthetically oriented theory of agency for dance inquiry are broad and deep. If Noland's arguments are valid, individuals who embody danced creations, as well as those who compose them, must, by the very nature of what it is to be human, possess, exercise, and cultivate kinesthesic expertise enabling them to develop self-mastery in powerfully, nonconventionally conditioned, intelligent ways. Such mastery would give these individuals the ability to deal autonomously with (or, in Noland's terms, put creative "pressure" on) societal and cultural processes of subject formation. Recognizing such agency as being generally at play in dance would open up a new field of inquiry, a field of kino-societal, or possibly bio-semiotic dance studies, identifying a level playing field on which individual and cultural dimensions of subjectivity might be observed as interrelating processually in dance and choreographic practice. Such a field would require new conceptual tools and methodological approaches for its exploration. The benefits, however, potentially would be considerable. Something like justice might finally be done to the uniquely individual forms of anatomical, physiological, and kinesiological wisdom upon which the art of dance depends, and this could occur without diminishing the importance of the contribution that conventional disciplines of technique and culturally determined codes of performative interpretation also make to the rendering of dance as a meaningful social and cultural phenomenon. A whole new world of dance—in every sense of the term, "whole"—might conceivably come into view, one in which the possibilities for understanding through dance what it is to be human would expand exponentially.

Agency & Embodiment is not an easy text to peruse, although it is elegantly written and nicely illustrated. It is demanding in its density, multidisciplinarity, theoretical complexity, and diversity of subject matter. It is not for undergraduate consumption, generally speaking. However, its rewards for more advanced readers are plentiful, unusual, and enduring. It would be an outstanding text for graduate study. Dance scholars concerned with theoretical work on gender, power, creativity, subjectivity, and representation will find it of especial significance as well. The book provides a rare opportunity to think outside the standard box of dance research on subjects whose relevance to dance theory have never been more clearly illuminated. The theoretical alignments evident in its interdisciplinary scholarship can be seen as well to bear the mark of an author whose respect and understanding for the subjects of dance have few rivals in the field of contemporary critical theory.

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Erotic Triangles: Sundanese Dance and Masculinity in West Java

Erotic Triangles: Sundanese Dance and Masculinity in West Java *by Henry Spiller. 2010. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. xvii + 251 pp. $27.50 paper.*
doi:10.1017/S0149767711000428

Male-focused social dance in Sunda (West Java) has gone by a number of names, among which *ketuk tilu*, *tayuban*, *tari kursus*, and *jaipongan* are the most common. However these forms relate to a much wider range of important

music-dance practices in Southeast Asia, which focus around seductive female singer-dancers, most often called *ronggeng*. To gong chime accompaniment with soaring notes, they sing while partnering male customers who improvise choreography as the drummer in the gong chime orchestra uses his instrument to accent the man's gestures. The small steps of the woman with her sinuous rotation of wrists (*ukel*) or hips (*goyang*) contrasts with the broad stances and more martial-arts derived gestures of the male. The man may playfully try to embrace his partner but she slips away. A flourish of steps leads to the moment when, just before a gong stroke, the partners approach one another and their heads seem almost—but not quite—to touch. As the music concludes, payment will pass to the female for herself and the drummer/orchestra from the pocket of the man. Male display, female acceptance, and supportive drumming/music are the essential elements of the genre. Historically dancer-courtesans were linked with both rice rituals (with the *ronggeng* representing the rice goddess, Sri) and prostitution. While the genre was widespread in the Malay world, it was especially strong in highland West Java—even in the early colonial period, Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles (l781–1826) found *ronggeng* particularly lively here. Given that *jaipongan*, a modern staged genre inspired by *ronggeng* traditions, is one of the most prominent art innovations in late twentieth century Sundanese music/dance, and *bajidor*, an entertainment of the Subang area of West Java, remains very active today, the *ronggeng* arts continue to be central to Sundanese culture.

Erotic Triangles is an important book with deep insight into Sundanese performance. Henry Spiller is a seasoned ethnomusicologist who came to his topic through his study of *gamelan*. Mastery of the ensemble means learning drumming, and drumming in West Java is intimately related to following and, at times, leading the dancer, while simultaneously directing the *gamelan*. Spiller's path to the male dance via the drum shows in the writing, which includes drum syllables and insights direct from the drummers' mouths. He understands the male dancer, too, and empathizes with this amateur performer who approaches the spotlight resisting culturally enforced shame (*malu*) and sharing macho pride (*bangga*) to show dancing skill.

In some sense, this book is a long and dense reflection on the male-to-male drummer-to-dancer relationship/rivalry, which Spiller argues is triggered by the presence of a female *ronggeng*. Spiller sees her primarily as an object of desire situated between the two men. Using gender analysis from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Lacan—and considerations of how myth and performance work structurally from Levi-Strauss, Barthes, Butler, and Bourdieu—Spiller theorizes the two competing males. He gives pride of place to the sonically empowered drummer, seeing the solo male dancer, who appears to spontaneously improvise, to be less free than he thinks. The musical and drumming structure limits the self-presentation choices. Spiller reiterates models of power, which Ben Anderson, Clifford Geertz, and others have made popular: that which moves (dancer) is less than the still center (seated drummer). These two males with the female *ronggeng*, who evokes the rivalry, form the three sides of Spiller's erotic triangle. This contemporary gender theory analysis sees heteronormative behaviors as forming the subtext of the homosocial form, and argues that, though the *ronggeng* may appear to be a contrast to the traditional Sundanese female ideal given her sexy presence and husky voice, she is actually conforming to deep gender ideology. He grants the *ronggeng* some musical freedom, noting that her voice drifts above the *gamelan* and slides across the musical structure in ways that sometimes escape its strict form. But, as a dancer, she uses a limited movement vocabulary in comparison to her male dance partner. For Spiller, dancing/drumming is about and between men. The beautiful female is the object that provokes and symbolizes their interactions.

As an account of Sundanese social dance from the colonial period to the present, Spiller is reliable and informative, having mined Dutch colonial documents, contemporary Indonesian research on music and dance, and his own long years of field work and participation in Sundanese arts. He also provides materials on related cultures, Java and Malaysia. In the first chapter, Spiller gives background on discourses in Sundanese dance. He argues against the valorization of presentational dance (now known as Sundanese classical

dance) at the expense of the social dances he describes here. He sees classical dance as a relatively modern interpolation into Sundanese culture, linked to the rise of largely post-independence developments in art academies. The social dance forms—where the dance event allowed for competition between men for power and influence via their display behavior—are older and more pervasive. Recent promotion of Sundanese classical dance, Spiller implies, is related to post-independence cultural policies promoting "peaks/highpoints of culture" (*puncak kebudayaan*), which has encouraged Indonesian society toward a professionalization of dance.

In traditional Sundanese performances, by contrast, the important dancer was the male amateur, whether in the low class genre of *ketuk tilu*—done for harvests, rites of passage, or entertainments in urban centers—or the more aristocratic variant of *tayuban*—performed in the dance parties of the aristocrats (*menak*). The *tayuban* evolved into *tari kursus*, a genre of the elite that was taught in the early twentieth century at the Dutch-established schools for the young men who would become the colony's administrators.

In the second chapter, Spiller lays out his ideas on drumming and power. At the same time, he provides a quick overview of major Sundanese genres that focus around drumming. This includes information on relatively low class genres such as horse trance dance (*kuda lumping*) where the drum is seen as inducing and then alleviating trance, and *reog*, a genre where four drummers engage in drumming and comic banter. He explores the relationship of professional drummers with both the commoner male dancers in *ketuk tilu* and the aristocratic patron-dancers in *tayuban*. Spiller correlates the drum with cosmic power that flows from an invisible source and animates the world, taking the position that it is ultimately the drummer who holds the power because, though his instrument is heard everywhere, he is not, like the dancer and *ronggeng*, the object of visual contemplation. Power is unseen.

The third chapter begins with a Sundanese myth that may link to perceptions of the female. Spiller sees the *ronggeng* as simultaneously embodying both the goddess and the whore: representing Sri, yet also the economically greedy and demanding female of dubious reputation. Spiller gives information on historical accounts of *ronggeng* from colonial travelers and details more recent fictional depictions in stories and film. He notes the factors that have made actual *ronggeng* genres endangered since independence, but argues that this female archetype remains in more modern genres where her replacement may be a singer (*sinden*) and she may no longer actually dance. The music today, he notes, may be a synthesizer or band, but the female singer-dancer in popular *dangdut* music or the pop idol, like the hip-grinding megastar Inul, are modern variations on *ronggeng*.

By not fully addressing the vocal performance (lyrics, music, staging) of the female artist and excluding what might be a counter-example to his analysis of the female dancer as disempowered, which I note below, it may be that Spiller neglects what most viewers consider the center of *ronggeng* genre, the woman. The female remains the most inscrutable member of Spiller's equation. She is, in his analysis, lacking real subjectivity. I missed her voice.

The next chapter accesses the male dancer. Spiller gives a good understanding of protocols for the performance of a traditional dance event (i.e., how order is established by hierarchy, how one gains status via dancing, class differences in space and time, and performance behaviors). Spiller notes that the male dancer is perceived as free in his improvisation, but Spiller sees this as a myth. The dancers' choices are limited by musical structure, and often the drummer leads.

The book is particularly strong when describing the modern variants Spiller has seen: the popular *bajidor* in Subang, where male dancer-fans follow their female idols and are only allowed the fleeting *egot* (where, for a donation, the male dancer holds the hand of the female artist for a short period while she kneels at the edge of the stage on which she performs), or the *triping* (tripping) of contemporary *dangdut*, where masses of men seek floating freedom as they move to the groove in front of the stage on which a female singer invites a token male to dance near her as she sings and undulates her way through the evening.

After discussing the three people in his equation, Spiller shows how the structure can

collapse. He sees the innovation of *tari kursus* ("course-taught dance") as doomed to failure when it tried to clean up the sexually provocative activities—*tayuban*'s gropes and kisses. *Tari kursus* confined the *ronggeng* to just singing and set specific choreography for the male aristocrat (hence "course" in the name). Spiller feels this early twentieth century bowdlerization (eliminating the *ronggeng* as dancer) has resulted in making the *tari kursus* almost extinct and sees the lack of improvisation as antithetical to the core of social dance, which requires the illusion of freedom for the male dance. While this may have helped its demise, lack of funding flowing in the pockets of the former aristocrats after independence was surely a contributing factor, and global models of power, which brought Western ideas such as "real men don't dance," cannot have helped. One could also assert that the training that *tari kursus* provided was not an end in itself, but merely a step toward understanding the possible improvisations.

"By engendering drums as masculine and exoticizing the cathected object of desire (ronggeng) as feminine, male participants dance this gender ideology along with its contradictions into perpetuity" (177). The triangle of drummer being heard, *ronggeng* being seen, and the dancer moving is dependent on Western theorization, but nonetheless I value the points made. There is no doubt that this is an important book that everyone interested in Indonesian performance should read. It also carries food for thought on wider issues of gender and performance, and has a solid basis in music and dance of the region.

There are some counterpoints that might be addressed in a future extension. Discussion of the *ronggeng* genres, which used *pencak* (martial arts) with its more expansive effort-shape choices and the presentational dances in the opening, where the women danced solo, might show more female agency, as would considering links to *topeng ceribon* mask dance, where the dancer leads and has varied movement choices: Historically some *ronggeng* learned this art in Cirebon's *ronggeng* schools in the palaces, then migrated into Sunda. Regarding the dominance of the drummer, he is not usually a troupe leader: a puppet-master, a mask dancer (male or female), a clown, a female singer (*sinden*)/dancer, or a contemporary choreographer (who may be female) can and does lead in troupes and calls the shots, musically and in other ways. Historical forces might further be interrogated. *Ronggeng*-derived arts were populist and, in the Sukarno era prior to l965, often had PKI (communist party) connections. Many of these genres and the singing, dancing women involved took a hit in l965 when the PKI fell. Today, too, female-related arts are under attack with the recent "anti-pornography" laws and rising Islamist ideology. Economics, religion, and class as well as patriarchy are forces that impact *ronggeng* arts. Though this book will not be the last comment on the important topic that Spiller's work broaches, it is a great start to deeper discussion of Sunda's *ronggeng*-related arts.

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Tap Dancing America: A Cultural History

Tap Dancing America: A Cultural History
by Constance Valis Hill. 2010. New York: Oxford University Press. xvi+ 441 pp., illustrations, notes, index. $39.00 cloth.
doi:10.1017/S014976771100043X

Amidst the singing Mormons and movie stars, the 2011 Tony Awards broadcast featured a disarmingly anachronistic musical number: triple-threat Broadway star Sutton Foster, who would go on that evening to win the award for Best Actress in a Musical, leading the cast of the 2010 revival of Cole Porter's 1934 musical "Anything Goes" in a rousing rendition of the iconic title song. With hair perfectly bobbed and smiles plastered across their faces, Foster and the cast executed choreographer Kathleen Marshall's steps with an almost scary level of synchronicity. Tapping joyfully to the syncopations of Porter's song, the performers seemed to embody the possibility of a simpler, more innocent moment of American entertainment history when nothing could more purely express the unbridled optimism of the American spirit than a chorus of boys and girls hoofing together onstage.

Questions of nostalgia and anachronism are central to Constance Valis Hill's *Tap Dancing*