

Jade Boyd
PhD candidate, UBC
Centre for women's and gender studies
jadeboyd@hotmail.com

Considering Performance

Abstract

*This paper examines some of the ways in which performativity is being mediated. It locates this discussion within the spheres of performance theory (emphasizing Judith Butler's contributions) and postcolonial discourse to investigate how the performance of hybrid identities is being theorized. As means of an example the cultural practice of the carnival, as is discussed in Awam Amkpa's "Floating Signification: Carnivals and the Transgressive Performance of Hybridity" and Barbara Browning's "The Daughters of Gandhi: Africanness, Indianness, and Brazilianness in the Bahian Carnival" in May Joseph and Jennifer Natalya Fink's (1999) book *Performing Hybridity* is discussed. In conclusion, Susan Foster's argument to include body movement and choreography into theorizations of performativity is put forward as a more integrative approach to the study of hybrid performances.*

Keywords: Performance, performativity, hybridity, carnival, choreography

1. Introduction

Performance has recently become a popular site of analysis. Contemporary debates around the term performance and its cousin, performativity, are not necessarily discussed in terms of theatrical or dance experience, as was traditionally the case in Western theatrical disciplines, but rather as the interpretation of speech in action. The definitions of these terms and all that they entail remain unsettled. Just as the body is always in the process of formation and is therefore never a finished product, performativity remains a concept in the making that to some extent refuses to be fixed. This paper will discuss some of the ways in which performativity is being mediated. I will locate this discussion within the spheres of performance theory (emphasizing Judith Butler's contributions) and postcolonial discourse to investigate how the performance of hybrid identities is being theorized. I will also

discuss the difficulties, complexities, attributes, and contradictions that are part of performing hybridities. Furthermore, I will briefly touch upon the ways in which this contemporary discourse is applied to and manifests itself within the cultural practice of the carnival, as is discussed in Awam Amkpa's "Floating Signification: Carnivals and the Transgressive Performance of Hybridity" and Barbara Browning's "The Daughters of Gandhi: Africanness, Indianness, and Brazilianness in the Bahian Carnival" in May Joseph and Jennifer Natalya Fink's (1999) book *Performing Hybridity*. In conclusion, I will introduce Susan Foster's argument to include body movement and choreography into theorizations of performativity in order to propose a more integrative approach to the study of hybrid performances.

2. Performativity and Performance

Much of theorist Judith Butler's work centres on analysis and destabilization of the category of the subject. Butler (1990) asserts that all gender, rather than rooted in a fixity of being-ness or "essence" of the self, is performed and performative as it is determined through repetitive prescribed actions that constitute its reality. Rather than assuming that identity is a fixed category, Butler traces the ways in which subjects are constituted in language. The performance of gender, which Butler asserts pre-exists the performer, naturalizes gender by producing a fiction of gender authenticity. In other words, "...acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are performative in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means" (Butler 1997: 119, italics in original). Although Butler asserts that all gender is performative, she reveals that gender norms can be destabilized through the form of performance undertaken. For example, in *Gender Trouble*, Butler (1990) outlines the ways in which drag functions as both a parody of gender while also revealing the imitative structure of gender and the constructive nature of heterosexuality. Butler maintains that drag is subversive in that it denaturalizes gendered meanings to reveal the imitative aspect and fluidity of gender (Ibid.: 120). However, Butler

also cautions that not all parody is subversive and notes that there are also instances of drag that reinforce the binaries of dominant gender norms (Ibid.: 193).

In *Bodies that Matter*, Butler (1993) clarifies that although gender is performative, it is not simply a performance and should not be reduced as such; a predetermined limited range of “scripts” dictates the performance of gender. In other words, people are not free to simply decide which gender they will enact. Attempting to discuss some of the distinctions Butler has made between performance and performativity Sara Salih clarifies by stating that “...whereas performance presupposes a pre-existing subject, performativity contests the very notion of the subject” (2002: 63). Gender, therefore, is not performed as an expression of an inner-self, rather, “...gender emerges from performances that disguise their constitutive role” (McKenzie 1998: 221). Butler’s distinction between theatrical performance and discursive performativity have often been confused as well as have created confusion, although they are more clearly differentiated in her later writings (McKenzie 1998; Salih 2002).

Jon McKenzie (1998) notes that despite Butler’s focus on performativity rather than performance, Butler has contributed significantly to the fields of performance studies by expanding the discipline of performance through the introduction of performative normativity. McKenzie argues that performance genres, as theorized by anthropologists Victor Turner and Richard Schnecher, stressed notions of performative liminality (Ibid.). Such theories conceive embodied performances (such ritual or theatre) as potentially subversive in that they create liminal spaces, in-between temporal places, where social norms are played with and, at times, inverted. According to McKenzie, rather than theorizing performance as simply transgressive, Butler draws from such theories of liminality and reinterprets them in a way that includes normative performance (McKenzie 1998: 222). Normative performances are evidenced when, through performative citationality, social norms are repeated rather than contested (Ibid.). Thus Butler challenges what McKenzie calls the ‘liminal-norm’ popularized by Turner and Schnecher (the norm being an understanding of performance as subversive) by emphasizing that performances can also reinforce or re-produce cultural hegemony (Ibid.: 223).

However, perhaps the transgressive aspects of liminality are too easily assumed by McKenzie. Turner (1982) does argue that industrial leisure art forms (in which dance is included) create a temporal space which, because of the element of play, has the potential to radically critique and subvert or, inversely, to strengthen or “...justify...prevailing social and cultural mores and political orders” (Turner 1982: 40, italics added). This suggests that Turner does account for the normative possibilities of performance and that perhaps Butler re-emphasizes and expands upon Turner’s notions of liminality, rather than reinterprets it, as it seems McKenzie suggests. Nevertheless, it is clear that some are quick to theorize performance as innately radical. Understanding performative normativity clarifies the ways in which parodic performances such as drag are not always subversive. McKenzie explains that, “Drag thus may further sediment gender identities by repeating and reinforcing the orbit of hegemonic significations, while also destabilizing those very significations through exorbitant, hyperbolic repetitions that give rise to political resignifications” (McKenzie 1998: 224). Therefore, the context of performance becomes imperative.

Although Butler attempts to configure discussions of race into her theories of performativity, many have critiqued Butler for her emphasis on gender and sexuality while marginalizing discussions of race. Although Butler states that she is not prioritizing sex and gender over race, some are not convinced. For example, Salih stresses that

Butler herself has been scrupulous in *not* suggesting that any one term takes priority over another, even though the organization of Bodies [Bodies that Matter] might suggest otherwise – if not the priority of sex over race, at least the separability of the terms. [...] We may be left with questions concerning the relationship between race and the lesbian phallus, or how Butler’s description of ‘girling’ might be applied to race, since neither the lesbian phallus nor interpellation/performativity are specifically discussed in the context of race (2001: 95, italics in original).

It is clear from Salih’s comments that the simple transfer of such a theory of performativity is perhaps complicated by the visibility of raced bodies. For example, In *Bodies that Matter* Butler (1993) explains that the statement ‘it’s a boy’ or ‘it’s a girl’ by a doctor when a child

is born is an act that constructs, through the declaration, the sex and gender of a child. This gender is assumed rather than reported from fact. Naming is performative because it discursively calls into being a process...

...by which a certain 'girling' is compelled, the term or, rather, its symbolic power, governs the formation of a corporeally enacted femininity that never fully approximates the norm. This is a 'girl', however, who is compelled to 'cite' the norm in order to qualify and remain a viable subject. Femininity is thus not the product of a choice, but the forcible citation of a norm, one whose complex historicity is indissociable from relations of discipline, regulation and punishment (Butler 1993: 232).

To further emphasize the performative process of this speech-act, Butler cleverly discusses a cartoon strip which plays with this authoritative naming process by exclaiming 'it's a lesbian' in relation to the birth of a child. Hence, the performative action that calls people into being is revealed. Nevertheless, from this example it is easy to see that a simple transfer of theory here, replacing sex with race, is perhaps troubled by the "visibility" of race for although race is a construct, visibility is one of the markers of which racism is reliant upon. Visibility is not, however, self-evident in terms of meaning.

What Butler's notion of performativity reveals are the processes in which sex and gender are discursively and socially constructed and also the ways in which such processes may be destabilized. Despite the critiques, Butler's concepts are useful for understanding the ways in which sex, gender, and race are constructed rather than being natural and fixed. In a similar vein, hybridity discourse points to the ways in which the myth of race is socially constructed as reality. Those who perform hybridity and who manage to draw attention to ways in which race is being performed (consciously or not), highlight, threaten, and also live the oppressive consequences of these constructions. Butler's suggestion that there is no essence to the self, only discursive acts whose citational repetition within regimes of discourse constitute an identity, is a theoretical concept that can perhaps be applied when examining other modes of normativity realised through performativity. For example, claims to citizenship are performative acts that, through repetition, serve to

reiterate, strengthen, and also define national borders and nationalistic ideologies. Butler's theory of performative identities and Homi Bhabha's theory of colonial mimicry have been periodically compared (Salih 2001:141-142). When reading Homi Bhabha's (1994) book, *The Location of Culture*, it is difficult not to begin to connect the ways in which his attempt to destabilize the fixity of identity and reveal imitative, mimetic behaviour echo some of Butler's theories... and vice versa.

3. Hybridities

The authors in May Joseph and Jennifer Fink's (1999) edited book *Performing Hybridity* speak to the various ways in which identities are performed, constructed, deconstructed, represented, and understood. In Jose Esteban Muñoz's (1999) discussion of Richard Fung's practice of queer hybridity developed within his performance work, Muñoz links practices of colonial mimicry with queer performativity. In Amkpa's discussion of the carnival, he varies from Muñoz in that he seems to equate colonial mimicry with queer performativity, layering the term performance to draw attention to how beings are constructed. Thus within Joseph and Fink's edited book the term 'performing' seems to allude to both Butler's concept of performativity, as producing identity, and in a more general performance sense, as a way of revealing or making apparent constructions of identity through performance. In their various ways, these authors draw attention to the production of identity and, in doing so, reveal the ways in which beings are produced under specific codified regiments, and within specific power relations. The disruptive political potential of performing hybridity can be revealed through performances which draw attention to the operations of power which structure how beings are realised in order to suggest possibilities of emancipatory change. According to Joseph (1999), new hybrid identities offer new conceptions of citizenship which challenge the limits of sovereignty because they acknowledge the transitional, cumulative space of hybrid identities by drawing upon multiple histories and multiple emerging conceptions of ways of being. In this way, Joseph contends that new

hybrid identities attempt to move beyond national and ethnic borders, being simultaneously national and international.

For many postcolonial cultural theorists, such as Hall, Gilroy, Bhabha, Trinh, and Ang, hybridity is a critical, political force which functions as an active intervention that destabilizes, subverts, and undermines established powers, blurring boundaries, binaries and “pure” identities (Ang 2001:198). Although there seems to be no singular definition of the concept of hybridity, what remains central to hybridity theory is that it acknowledges the impurity of all cultures and in doing so, also suggests the impossibility of essentialist claims to authenticity and purity (Ang 2001: 198; Lionnet 1989: 27). This has specific implications for white, Western identities, which were traditionally presented as hegemonic and singular, rather than diverse and heterogeneous. To many, contemporary hybridity theory suggests that through hybridization authorities and dominant discourses can be subverted, undone and/or challenged (Lionnet 1989: 22-25). Interestingly, although hybridity is everywhere, it is often seen as an obstacle or anomaly (Ang 2001: 200).

Nevertheless, the performance of hybridity is not always disruptive. Ang (2001) notes that uncritical conceptions of hybridity are often misconstrued and oversimplified into what she calls a “liberal hybridism” in which hybridity is reduced to fusion and synthesis akin to the rhetoric of multiculturalism, rather than a concept that stresses living “together-in-difference” (Ibid.: 195; 200). For example, Ang describes an article in the 1996 Australian magazine *The Bulletin*, which features people of visibly diverse origins on the cover (Ibid.:194). The article, Ang explicates, positively exclaims that the Australian population is becoming increasingly hybrid and describes this process of hybridization as a domesticated, harmless solution for overcoming ethnic conflict and difference through amalgamation (Ibid: 194-195). Ang notes that in relation to historical and contemporary Western racist anxieties concerning miscegenation, it is progressive for *The Bulletin* to refer to the hybridization of Australia’s population as a positive thing, however, hybridity here is celebrated as a means to erase difference. In this way the uncritical use of hybridity “...becomes simply a mechanism for overcoming difference rather than living with and through it” (Ibid: 194, italics in original).

More than simply being misconstrued or uncritically appropriated, hybridity has also been critiqued for multiple reasons. Just as the term performativity (in the Butler sense) misleadingly suggests an element of choice, the term hybridity can also be harmfully suggestive. Young (1995) reveals some of the problems inherent within the term hybridity, as it implies that humans are made up of different species; Brah (1996) notes that hybridity has implicit heterosexual politics due to the development of the term's referral to inter-racial sexual intercourse; while authors such as Stam, Muñoz, Amkpa, Browning, and Mootoo draw attention to the tensions that continue to exist between sovereignty and hybridity as well as national and international citizenship (Joseph 1999:16). What is most significantly implicated within the term hybridity, however, is that the emergence of hybrid identities has often developed within contemporary and historical contexts of extreme violence.

The violence of hybridity has been enacted through physical, political, economical, and environmental means, to name a few (Anzaldúa 1987; Foley 1999; Shohat 1999). Enforced miscegenation in the wake of European colonialism is the first example that comes to mind. Anzaldúa's (1987) discussion of the difficulties of negotiating the cultural complexities of enforced (non)citizenship due to the implementation of borders in the case of Chicanas/os is another example of enforced hybridity. Of course hybridity is not always caused by violence and it is dangerous to ignore the multitude of ways hybrid identities form. Ella Shohat reminds her readers that to deny hybridity is violent as well. Shohat (1999) reveals the ways in which national myths can function to both erase and recreate hybrid identities. For example, Shohat critiques Zionist historiography by noting that it subsumes, excludes and/or devalues the experiences of Sephardic Arab Jews, creating a homogenous past steeped in the Eurocentric, unequal binaries of the East and the West (Ibid.). Similarly, Amkpa observes the ways in which the English state denies its postcolonial subjects and communities individuality while simultaneously defining them as homogenous (1999: 98).

One of the contradictions of hybridity discourse that resonates is whether the overtones of colonialism and conquest so embedded within hybridity (a term that gestures, in opposition, towards the veracity of pure form and authenticity), can be effectively

reclaimed to circumvent, complicate or disrupt oppressor/oppressed dichotomies and global formations of authoritarian control, as is suggested by Joseph (1999). In this quote Robert Stam clearly outlines some of the intricacies and dangerous characteristics of hybridity, reminding his readers that hybridity is power-laden, asymmetrical and also co-optable (1999: 60,61).

But hybridity has never been a peaceful encounter, a tension-free theme park; it has always been deeply entangled with colonial violence. Although for some hybridity is lived as just another Derridean free play, for others it is lived as pain and visceral memory. Indeed as a descriptive catchall term, hybridity fails to discriminate between the diverse modalities of hybridity, such as colonial imposition...or other interactions such as obligatory assimilation, political co-optation, cultural mimicry, commercial exploitation, top-down appropriation, bottom-up subversion (Stam 1999: 60, italics in original).

Stam's sentiments are repeated by Ella Shohat in Ang (2001), where she also includes internalized self-rejection, creative transcendence, and social conformism as parts of the diverse modalities of hybridity (Ang 2001: 197).

As a result of this violent history there are many who refuse to identify themselves as hybrid. For instance, Ien Ang identifies Ian Anderson as a "Tasmanian Aboriginal descendant of Truganini," who affirms his Indigenous identity and disidentifies with his white heritage (See Ang 2001:195-196). Anderson stresses the political importance of resisting non-Indigenous Australian pressures to acknowledge white ancestry often imposed on those living with the history of miscegenation (Ang 2001:195). Ang refers to this strategic essentialism, which is often used as a political weapon, as "strategic anti-anti essentialism" (Ibid.:196). Those who have expressed dissatisfaction with the ambiguity of the concept of hybridity itself question the ways in which political force can be mobilized and the ways in which affiliated groups can find political leverage if there is no clear definition or boundary within this oppositional third space. Claims within social movements for territorial and cultural reclamation, citizenship and national belonging, as well as equal rights (demanded for example, by Mexican Americans (Anzaldúa 1987) and

Australian Aboriginals (Foley: 1999)), therefore, often strategically reduce “...hybridity in the interests of sovereignty” (Joseph 1999: 5). In such cases, essentialist claims to identity, rather than assertions of hybridity, tend to more easily facilitate mobilization towards the countering of oppressive politics. As Joseph (1999:10) notes, the term hybridity emerges out of a nexus of affiliated terms of possibly equal weight and value that are visionary yet, also embedded within oppressive and/or derogatory connotations (see for example Bhabha’s (1994) discussion of colonial mimicry, Brah’s (1996) discussion of the terms diaspora and minority, Hall’s (1996) discussion of new ethnicities, Lionnet’s (1989) discussion of métissage, and Young’s (1995) discussion of hybridity and diaspora). Nevertheless, hybridity is a useful term to invoke when theorizing identities as fluid and complex rather than fixed or stable. Understanding the performance of hybridity is one way to theorize how the cultural practice of the carnival, for example, can be potentially politically disruptive to dominant power formations, while also operating within these normative structures. Authors Amkpa (1999) and Browning (1999) both suggest that the performance of (and within) the carnivals they discuss draws attention to, and also troubles, the structures through which subjects are realised. In the case of these two carnivals, the performance of hybridity manifests itself in various ways, challenging centred dominant norms.

4. Performing Hybridity: English and Brazilian Carnival

Both Amkpa and Browning examine the performance of carnival in England and Brazil respectively and address the ways in which carnival creates a subversive space for performative identities. Through music, song, dance, masquerade, costume and a multitude of other celebratory cultural practices (such as cooking) that accompany carnival before, during, and after the event, the carnival enunciates a variety of subjectivities and consists of a variety of contradictory discourses (Amkpa 1999). Both Amkpa and Browning resist totalizing theories of carnival and instead stress the particularity of each event dependent on, for instance, national and regional locations and political climate. Therefore, as Amkpa

points out, what defines carnival is difficult to determine (Ibid.). Nevertheless, that carnival has a discursive role in identity formation (in all its variations) and is a performative space where alterity and hybrid identities are publicly paraded does not seem to be disputed, at least between these two authors. As well, as is noted by Amkpa, similarities in performance styles exist between Caribbean and English carnivals (Ibid.: 97).

Placing England's carnival in context, Amkpa points out that although carnival creates a time and place to assert and perform being, belonging, and becoming, memory and multiplicity, the event is isolated within imperialistic geographical, temporal and ideological frameworks (1999). Amkpa obviously draws from and pays tribute to theorists such as V. N. Volosinov (1973) and Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) who have noted the contestations of normative ideologies and reversals of social hierarchies evidenced in carnival. Amkpa, however, attempts to avoid their universalizing approaches to the study of carnival by highlighting the particularity of the event as it takes place in England (Ibid.: 97-98). Although carnival in this case is a summer event, which transpires on the public streets of major English cities such as London, Leeds, Bristol, and Birmingham, the location of the parade is restricted to inner-city neighbourhoods rather than more central public space such as London's Hyde Park (Ibid.:100). The narrow movement of the parade limits the celebratory performances of fluidity and hybridity, subjectivity and citizenship, to black and working-class communities therefore making a minor impact on the dominant white culture (Ibid.). State sanctioned police forces that regulate carnival not only structure the boundaries of possibility but also become part of the performance (Ibid.: 98).

Carnival also creates a space for tourist spectatorship, for the white scopophilic and exoticising gaze, and this too becomes part of the performance as an embodied spatial practice. In her article *The Metropolitan Gaze: Travellers, Bodies and Spaces*, Vera Mackie (2000) highlights how tourist and host practices as well as discourses of desire are linked to larger global issues such as globalization and economic inequalities between countries. Articulating the interconnectedness of the colonial gaze and the tourist gaze which both function on systems of displacement which are reinforced by racial, gendered, sexual, and ethnic culturally and spatially specific hierarchies, Mackie argues that spatial displacement is integral to the production of illicit desires as it maintains the binary oppositions of

contaminated and uncontaminated spaces. Mackie explains that contaminated spaces are places where illicit desires can be fulfilled and are produced in colonial situations, within specific contexts of domination and subordination (Ibid.). Tourist spectatorship and desire take place not simply within specific nationally geographic colonial spaces but also within specific metropolitan spaces, such as the London carnival, where power inequalities also exist.

To some extent the celebratory nature of the event of carnival obscures the realities that the hybrid identities emphasised within the carnival are in many cases the consequences of the violent colonizing processes, enforced mixture, forced migration, and systemic racism as well as a reaction to the non-belonging of postcolonial subjects absent within England's singular notion of citizenship which persists throughout the rest of year. This reality is emphasized by Robert Stam's poignant words; "For oppressed people, artistic syncretism is not a game but a painful negotiation, an exercise...both of "resistance" and "surrender" (1999: 61). On a more positive note, Amkpa states that, "Recognition of the enforced hybridity of identity politics and the proactive willingness within such communities to create affiliatory politics is central to the hybridity in carnivals and other cultural practices such as popular music, dance, and fashion" (1999: 100). So while dominant, white, English subjects may be oblivious to the political origin of hybrid performances, many of the carnival participants, Britain's postcolonial subjects and communities, are conscious of the performativity of their own hybrid identities and the ways in which carnival questions "...the singularity of identity that the English state implies and denies them" (Amkpa 1999: 98).

Drawing on some similar concepts as Amkpa, Barbara Browning's (1999) detailed and complex essay, "The daughters of Gandhi: Africanness, Indianness, and Brazilianness in the Bahian Carnival," describes the various identity politics that are represented, performed, and played out within the context of the Brazilian Bahian carnival. As the title suggests, Browning relates the syncretism that exists between various African traditions, as well as European and Indigenous traditions within the context of the carnival. Browning contends that carnival blurs the distinctions between expressions of the sacred and the secular, the profane and the solemn (Ibid.). With her emphasis on carnival's blurring of

social boundaries Browning, similar to Amkpa, appears to also be strongly influenced by Bakhtin's theories of carnival, however, because she does not reference him directly, such a connection may be lost on a new reader.

According to Browning, the Bahian carnival is extravagant, in that it is the site of utopian fantasies, yet it is also "explicitly political," in that expressions of Africanness and Brazilainness remain central (Ibid.: 81). In the midst of what Browning calls a "participatory street party" of extreme political and sexual expressivity there exists intimate inversions of racial and economic hierarchies, cannibalistic inversions (in terms of sexuality), as well as fantastical performances of gender play (Ibid.: 81). Within carnival community affiliations are asserted and also more explicitly revealed to spectators, particularly Western spectators. Browning draws attention to the physical, sexual, and cultural encounters and exchanges that take place during carnival and their expressions in terms of economic, sexual, and racial politics (Ibid. 83).

Browning contends that one of the places that hybridity is realised and performed is through the samba dance and music which dominates the carnival. Samba was popularized by the blocos afro (African bloc) and is part of a movement towards Africanness that has been part of the Brazilian carnival's inclination since the 1980s (1999: 81). The political nature of the samba is examined by Browning who notes that women who dance samba are sexualised in various ways while representing "racial mixing and cultural syncretism" (Ibid.: 82). For instance, women who dance the samba are called "mulatas" regardless of visual markers such as skin colour (Ibid.: 82). Samba dance emerges from a long tradition and history of choreographies which structure the ways in which the body moves and the ways in which the moving, dancing body represents itself and is represented in the context of the carnival. That the movement of samba is stereotyped and over-simplified as simply an erotic expression serves to efface the complex cultural and historical significations within this non-linguistic movement tradition (Ibid.: 83).

Aided by musical composers, Brazilian carnival offers a re-telling of the history of Africa that articulates pan-African affiliations as well as specific affiliations between Indigenous and black Brazilians, a history that is non-linear. As Browning notes, "The brilliance is in balancing African Nationalism with attention to cultural specificity..."

(1999: 89). Browning discusses the ways in which samba music played at the carnival incorporates various forms of African diasporic music while asserting a Brazilian national identity (Ibid.: 89). Drawing on Richard Parker suggestion, Browning observes "...that the carnival itself cannibalizes Brazilian society's myth of miscegenation as a sexual and racial fusion, spitting it back out as a 'juxtaposition of differences'" (Ibid.: 93). Browning concludes that the Bahian carnival expands national, and physical boundaries, complicates easy national, cultural, racial, economic, spiritual, and sexual classifications and resists any attempts to fix notions of Brazilianness, Indianness, and Africanness.

Browning investigates Bahian carnival as not only a subversive site where notions of true, fixed identities are exposed as imitative and fluid but also a site where repetitive discursive acts are performed within normative structures. That carnival is understood here as a transgressive performance, but not only as such, is representative of the more nuanced theorizing of performance that McKenzie (1998) attributes to Butler's influences. Drawing a link between drag, as discussed by Butler (1993) in *Bodies that Matter*, and the unfixed demarcation of the sexual body in Brazil, Browning responds by noting that in Candomblé "...the body itself is both their formative precondition *and* their dispensable artifice" (1999: 87, italics in original). According to Browning, although transvestism surrounds carnival, it is not integrated into the specific "bloco" groups or within the specifically stylized choreography performed. However, a small space for shifts in gender roles does exist, a space that is "temporally bracketed and therefore unthreatening" (Ibid.: 88). The temporal play with gender in terms of transvestism celebrated at carnival is contextualised with the reality that there is a lack of tolerance for such gender configurations during the rest of the year. What Browning reveals are not necessarily the processes in which sex and gender are revealed as discursively performative, but the ways in which such processes are occasionally destabilized. Carnival provides the space for an element of play in the liminal sense described by Turner, but also allows for slippages and inversions that reveal the parodic structure of identities, as is theorized by Butler. Browning notes the theatrical element of performance within the street party but also draws attention to the ways in which racial categories are revealed as performative.

Browning and Amkpa effectively articulate how the performance of hybridity within carnival: troubles fixed notions of identity, counters stable notions of national boundaries through transnational affiliations while also asserting specific subjectivities, and allows for new conceptions of ways of being that draw on multiple, re-configured histories which suggest a non-heterogeneous past. While one way to understand carnival is through the conceptualization of the performance of hybridity, dance theorist Susan Leigh Foster (1998) argues that performative discourse is too discursively based and argues that it is imperative to assess body movements as well as speech acts. This suggestion is significant because it suggests a more thorough understanding of the cultural practice of carnival in that it also accounts for the physicality of the body. Because body movement is more than present in carnival it is important to theorize in a manner that takes this into account.

5. Theorizing Performance: Performativity as Choreography

Within Foster's (1998) article *Choreographies of Gender*, she discusses the new use of the terms "performance" and "performativity" within disciplines outside of theatre, dance, and performance studies. She comments that the new appropriation of the term/s draws from a linguistic tradition for the purpose of enlightening textual and cultural studies and does not particularly refer to body movement, as is common practice within theatre, dance, and some performance discourses. Foster sites speech-act theorist J.L Austin's (1962) studies of the performativity of language as one of the primary sources drawn upon by later performance-act theorists such as Butler (for example in Butler's studies of gender as performance in *Gender Trouble* (1990)) (Foster 1998: 3). According to Foster, the focus on the textual rather than the physical aspects of performance and performativity reinforces masculine/feminine and linguistic/non-linguistic binaries as well as the primacy of the verbal over the physical. "Only by assessing the articulateness of bodies' motions as well as speech, I would argue, can the interconnectedness of racial, gendered, and sexual differences within and among these bodies mater" (Ibid.: 4). Foster argues that the

inclusion of body movement within interdisciplinary theories of performance would provide a fuller analysis.

Although I agree with Foster that Butler is overly textual, it must be noted that Butler does recognize that the speech act is also a bodily act. Butler places importance on the body by stressing that it is the relation (and/or disjunction) between what the body does and what the body says that is significant. In *Excitable Speech*, Butler states that “In speaking, the act that the body is performing is never fully understood; the body is the blindspot of speech, that which acts in excess of what is said, but which also acts in and through what is said” (1997:11). Because of the body, “The speech act says more, or says differently, than it means to say” (Ibid.: 10). This locates the body as a powerful location of performativity (although in somewhat negative terms) that could be further expanded upon, which is something Foster attempts to do.

Foster stresses the interconnectedness of racialized, gendered, and sexual differences yet it is important to observe that her argument is primarily centred on gendered differences (as is implicated in her title). Foster does not provide examples or attempt to fully examine the ways in which the inclusion of body movement could interconnectedly be made manifest. As well, class is never discussed, although, as both cultural theorist Angela McRobbie (1998) and sociologist/dance theorist Helen Thomas (2003) note, body movement is a primary signifier of class differences.

Foster builds upon her initial argument to reveal that a concept of choreography rather than one of performance would provide a more complete and comprehensive understanding of gendered identities. Foster explains that “Although Butler emphasizes that performativity can be located only in multiple rather than single acts, the focus on reiteration stresses the repetition of acts rather than the relationality among them” (Foster 1998: 5). Foster stresses the importance of, for example, how meaning is maintained or transformed within the organisation of acts and notes that while choreography is informed by a long history of cultural values and practices, performance acts as a more singular interpretation or representation of these. While performance primarily focuses on the skill and articulation of the physical, Foster argues that choreography encompasses both the verbal and the physical, thus challenging a corporeal/verbal divide (Ibid.). As well,

“Choreography also focuses on the interrelationality of various set codes and conventions through which identity is represented” (Ibid.: 5-6). This is an extremely interesting and potentially useful concept that suggests some of the ways performance theory could also enhance theories of discursive performativity, just as McKenzie has noted Butler’s theories have influenced performance theory.

Foster’s theory seems relevant to the study of carnival in that it prioritizes body movement as well as speech-acts, however, it seems to be somewhat underdeveloped. Alternately, hybridity discourse seems to point more completely towards the ways that identities, in terms of race, gender, sex, citizenship (rather than simply a gendered identity) are constituted by the performative. Consequently, hybridity discourse is perhaps a more realised model than that proposed by Foster. Nonetheless, I believe the integration of both models would more adequately serve analyses of performing hybridity.

Theories of performativity, performance, hybridity, and choreography, provide a lens to understand cultural practices such as carnival. The two carnivals examined in this paper are demonstrative of cultural practices which allow for the representation and affirmation of identity politics asserted through specific communities and nationalisms. Although particularistic group identities are asserted, affiliated politics are also emphasized. Carnival thus provides an excellent example of the performance of hybridity in which tensions of sovereignty and hybridity coexist in a complementary way, representative of, in Ang’s words, living together-in-difference (1999: 200). Identities are performed in the theatrical sense yet the extravagance of the performance also draws attention to the performativity of various identity constructs such as race, class, and gender, allowing for possibilities of slippage within dominant codified scripts. As well, the paradoxical assertion of individuality within the context of mixing (hybrid identities) draws attention to the various ways in which markers are discursively performed and physically choreographed. Through performance, performative norms can be both reinforced and/or destabilized. Through inversions, extravagant juxtapositions, and the mixing, occasional blurring and proximity of various communities, the upper and lower classes, the oppressed and those that oppress, the sacred and the secular, those that perform conventions and those that reveal the parody of such conventions, carnival temporarily undermines hegemonic

ideologies which attempt to fix hierarchical distinctions. This blurring of boundaries through the performance of hybridity consequently offers alternate conceptualisations of reality.

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