

Interculturalism in Contemporary Dance Witnessed through *Masurca Fogo*

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This study aims to interpret interculturalism and find its meaning through the World Cities choreographed by Pina Bausch among contemporary dance works. This study analyzed Masurca Fogo, which was performed in Germany in 2018 among the World Cities. In order to achieve the purpose of this study, the primary and secondary data on Masurca Fogo were analyzed using literature research. The following results were derived by dividing into choreography process, dancers, and movements. The analysis results are as follows. First, the choreographer encountered racial and cultural diversity through activities in the United States and Germany, and tried to find an alternative to coexistence, based on a deep understanding of the life, culture, and languages of different countries. Second, a choreographer and dancers could exchange different cultural backgrounds and communicate freely through understanding and respect for each other's cultures. Third, when organizing the work, they chose to use the daily lives of people in each country as independent episodes or they broke up the boundaries between reality and the stage by using video.

Key words: Multiculturalism, Contemporary dance, World Cities, Masurca Fogo, Cultural diversity

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Introduction

This study interprets contemporary dance works from the perspective of interculturalism and finds its meaning. In order to achieve its purpose, *Masurca Fogo*, a dance piece choreographed in Lisbon, Portugal, as part of Pina Bausch's *World Cities* project - a long series of city-inspired pieces - was analyzed. It became necessary to understand that interculturalism describes work that has in its nature certain expressions of culture, language, and history from different countries, all on stage under the banner *World Cities*. The concept of interculturalism emerged owing to the increasing recognition and respect for diversity: the increasing number of people from various nationalities and cultural backgrounds within the boundaries of a country or community.

The *World Cities* begins with *Viktor*, produced by Pina Bausch at the request of Teatro Argentina in Rome, Italy in 1986. The series later featured pieces expressing emotions, relationships, and experiences of 14 countries, specifically the cities of Lisbon, Portugal; Istanbul, Turkey; Seoul, Korea; and Saitama, Japan as well as many more from Spain, Austria, the United States, Hungary, Brazil, and India. Pina Bausch spent a suitable time period in a particular country, meeting people to capture the relationship between humans and culture (Climnhaga, 2012). Tanztheater Wuppertal, the dance company led by Pina Bausch, was gaining popularity worldwide, and thus, the visibility of the troop's unique work increased. This led to the creation of *World Cities*. A new way of working began to emerge as the dance company accepted invitations for co-productions in various cities that could support the company's high production costs. Despite some controversy in the early days, the company's work has been widely praised by audiences for integrating multicultural events and sharing innovative experiences of life. The piece transformed Tanztheater Wuppertal into a world-class dance company.

The dance company's philosophy is to generously offer the audience an interpretive role, show a relaxed awareness of the world, and play a role as mediator between cultures, that is, being a messenger of freedom and mutual understanding. Free from all ideology and dogma, the dance company wishes to see the world as unbiased as possible, recognizing life in every way (<https://www.pinabausch.org>). Bausch and her company strived to enjoy a deep and intimate time with people of their host country. Their intention was not only to visit famous cities or tourist destinations but also to permeate into life and experience the special culture and daily life of citizens in the country. Owing to this, the events performed by *World Cities* incorporate unique folk music, stage sets, images, props, language, and movements that are borrowed from each country.

Masurca Fogo is a work commissioned by the organizing committee for EXPO98 Lisbon, which was held in 1998 in commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the Indian route. It was co-produced by the German Cultural Center in Lisbon and premiered in Wuppertal, Germany the same year. Since then, the work has been invited worldwide almost every year, and it is said

to be a representative piece of *World Cities*. It is necessary to study this work from the perspective of interculturalism as it can promote dialog and interaction between cultures, going beyond simply learning about the cultures of others or passively accepting multiple cultures.

Interculturalism is a means to interpret the value of cultural diversity and the possibility of cultural hybridization, while promoting positive results. This approach is in line with the culture and education policy pursued by the European Union (Hong, 2012). Earlier, skepticism about multiculturalism was evident in Europe, and as an alternative to this, various cultural and educational practices began to emerge from the perspective of interculturalism. In particular, interculturalism emphasized communication and interactivity, as a necessary perspective for understanding the performing arts scene beyond *World Cities*. The purpose of this study is to examine the meaning and practical composition of *Masurca Fogo* by establishing that interculturalism is evident in the work, since it focuses on mutual cultural exchange and mutual change beyond the simple recognition of diversity. To do this, interculturalist perspectives that appear in the work are analyzed.

This study analyzes primary and secondary data on *Masurca Fogo* through a literature research. The researcher watched *Masurca Fogo* performed in Wuppertal, Germany in 2018, and collected primary data such as articles and materials related to that performance. Today, since about 12 years have passed since the choreographer's death in 2009, primary data alone could not be used to derive sufficient research results. Therefore, in addition to the data from the performance held in Korea in 2003, the researcher accessed various media articles that reviewed or described *Masurca Fogo*, such as the German press, YouTube, and social networking services.

Following this introduction, chapter 2 examines the perspective of interculturalism in performing arts in general, and chapter 3 analyzes *Masurca Fogo* itself from the perspective of interculturalism. Finally, in chapter 4, a conclusion was drawn describing the implications of the spread of interculturalism in Europe on the performing arts scene in South Korea.

The concept and meaning of interculturalism in performing arts

The initial focus of this study is interculturalism. In Europe, interculturalism was raised as a new discourse by several scholars in the late 1990s. Some agreement was found on a theoretical framework, and this viewpoint grew to receive full-scale attention in the world performing arts arena. Though it is an omni-directional and cultural phenomenon that is not limited to performing arts, it has established itself firmly as a creative method in dance and theater today.

Interculturalism implies intercultural dialog and challenging self-separation tendencies within cultures. In other words, it effectively promotes dialog and interaction between cultures, rather than

a passive acceptance of multicultural facts existing in society (<https://en.wikipedia.org>).

Interculturalism is distinguishable from multiculturalism in that it emphasizes equality among peoples. Multiculturalism has often been criticized for minority cultural groups and hindering social integration, with political leaders in Europe vigorously declaring multiculturalism a failure of (Yonhapnews, June 21, 2011). Proponents of interculturalism agree with this critique of multiculturalism and present it as a model that emphasizes integration while acknowledging the diversity of cultures (Kim, 2017).

Parekh, an English political theorist and one of the leading scholars on interculturalism, stated that the desirable direction for a multicultural society is interactive multiculturalism. Parekh pointed out that when considering social integration, multiculturalism is limited to parallel acceptance of various cultures. He also acknowledged the cultural connectedness of mankind, the inevitability of multicultural and intercultural dialog, and the inner diversity of different cultures. Based on this observation, Parekh emphasized that multiculturalism should be expanded into a new theory that focuses on communities and individuals showing their values and learning something from others (Kim, 2012).

Canadian philosopher Taylor proposes that multiculturalism has two layers of meaning. He divided multiculturalism into its comprehensive sense a recognition and integration of diversity and its limited sense, a subcategory of that larger whole. It is multiculturalism in this limited sense that contrasts with interculturalism: multiculturalism recognizes differences, whereas interculturalism encourages integration. In effect, interculturalism officially recognizes the historical identities of ethnic groups, but does not retain them as exclusive entities, instead seeking to open up cultures among ethnic groups and make them part of an integral whole (Ha, 2020).

The experiences resulting from multicultural phenomena appeared in various forms in Europe and deepened in society (Landis & MacAulay, 2017). Currently, it is necessary to analyze the works in a new way. The works of art performed in South Korea are described from the critical perspective of multiculturalism and its emerging alternative: interculturalism.

Since culture always presupposes reciprocity, from this point of view, it can be said that interculturalism seeks universal values through discovering common denominators between the specificities and traditions of each culture. The relation between one culture and another culture is impossible without mutual interaction. All cultures have different starting points and life experiences, but through a process of fusion, relevance is found. The interculturalism in Pina Bausch's *World Cities* emerges from her original cultural understanding of the various societies in which humans live.

Representative characteristics of interculturalism can be described as deconstruction and intertextuality. Deconstruction, along with postmodernism, appeared at the end of the 20th century. It is a process of dismantling the subject the subject being the center of western metaphysics and so

reversing and decentralizing the oppressed. This approach rediscovered the value of things previously suppressed and alienated by the ideology of industrialized society. By creating a new beauty, deconstruction provides an opportunity for transforming the uniform aesthetic consciousness centered on the West. Intertextuality, in a broad sense, can be said to be the connection of all knowledge that occurs in cultural relationships: text-to-text, subject-to-subject, text-to-social. In this case, the given text includes not only literary texts but also any symbol systems and even culture as a whole (Yang, 2010).

In this context, then, interculturalism in the performing arts began with a move to move away from western and language-centered plays. Instead of an exchange between countries along geographic divisions, it became mutual exchanges based on cultural acceptance across borders. Here the prefix inter- for interculturalism means that two or more people or cultures belonging to a space exchange and interact with each other in an equal relationship (Cantle, 2012). Interculturalism, active in the art world now since the middle of the 20th century, has a tendency to create new performances by borrowing characteristics and aesthetics from other cultures. If we go back to the history of dance, there have been other cases where cultures have met, for example, the ballet company Ballets Russes and Russian choreographer Mikhail Fokine, but it is difficult to claim this was interculturalism in the true sense. *Epreuve d'amour*, performed in South Korea in 2007, is a ballet representing Chunhyang's love story, choreographed by Mikhail Fokine and performed by the Korean National Ballet. Although he adopted a Korean theme, it would be unreasonable to suggest that he choreographed it with an understanding of Korean culture at the time, since Chinese styles such as costumes were mixed together (Lee, 2018).

The reputation of Pina Bausch and Tanztheater Wuppertal emerged because of the rich experience of seeing distinctive dancers of various nationalities working together. The choreography displayed an equal relationship between the dancers, rather than a one-sided perspective from a single choreographer. This was achieved through constantly expressing the vivid feelings and emotions of the dancers, who developed the work together based on numerous questions and ideas. Evolving from this cultural interchange, Pina Bausch and the *World Cities* dancers created a complete work by unraveling the unique culture they had experienced in various trips around the world and interweaving their own personal thoughts and subjective memories (Shin, 2010). This can be seen as a representative example of a working method with an intercultural perspective.

Expression and composition of interculturalism in *Masurca Fogo*

1. Consumption and dedication for the choreography process

Pina Bausch's (1940-2009) life journey is not glamorous when compared to the recognition and fame of her work. She was born in Solingen, NRW state in western Germany, and, after studying briefly in the United States, she returned to Germany to conduct dance education and art activities in the Ruhr region (Linsel, 2013). Although she was based in one region in Germany, she became synonymous with cosmopolitanism and her ensembles gathered dancers from all over the world to create a harmonious dance troop.

This international outlook could be attributed to her activities in Europe and the United States, where she was exposed to racial and cultural diversity early on and so she subsequently tried to find alternatives in her new environment. In fact, western European countries, the United States, and Canada have been successively accepting immigrants since their independence from French and British colonial rule, therefore, it has been necessary to find a way for different races and cultures to coexist without conflict.

Pina Bausch had toured various countries since the 1980s, laying the foundations for *World Cities*. In this way, she went through a period of extensive research on countries and individual cities. The dance company absorbed specific and regional elements that would be transformed into choreography to create a work of performance art. The company members' discussion was focused on mitigating the various cultural groups and prejudices between them. When she made her work focusing on each country as a subject, she made use of the individuality of that country and tried to express it through voice, language, song, and movement, rather than having an aesthetic appearance.

Legendary works such as *Palermo Palermo* (1989), *Masurca Fogo* (1998), and *Nefs* (2003) were the result of the dance company's stays and studies in Sicily, Portugal and Turkey (Schulze-Reuber, 2008). Of course, after the premiere of each work, there was inevitable criticism of them as postcard art, but a fever for *World Cities* raised the reputation of Tanztheater Wuppertal and fascinated audiences. Through *World Cities* Bausch and her ensemble would establish themselves in the performing arts field and the performance itself became honored, loved, and unanimously respected as a high status, global work of art in Japan, the United States, Korea, and Europe.

It can be said that Pina Bausch's greatest success was in transcending migration to the world through the artistic means of Tanztheater. Looking at the actual choreography process of *World Cities*, the effort to present to audiences a deep understanding of a country's life, culture, and language can be traced. It is more than a monotonous approach of listing images or ideas about a country. The free communication between dancers of various nationalities and experiences, as well as a flexible production process also contributed to the realization of interculturalism through these works. Although

it has been suggested that the author walks in place rather than choosing a superficial change, such as a common trait and similar image that appears in her works, interculturalism was one of the core features in Bausch's art. She continued her work from a multicultural perspective with reciprocity.

2. Cultural background exchange between dancers

The success of Pina Bausch and the Tanztheater Wuppertal was very much dependent on the seasoned dancers in the ensemble (Meyer, 2017). Andrey Berezin, Ditta Miranda Jasjfi, Cristina Morganti, Nayoung Kim, Nayoung Kim, Nazaeth Panadero, Ruth Amarante, Julie Shanner Julie Shanahan, and others were charismatic actors. They dominated the stage and valued Pina Bausch's vision with passion, humility, and integrity. These troop members had been working together for a long time and playing an important role in the work by utilizing their individuality. Although double-casting is common in world-class ballet companies, Tanztheater Wuppertal could not easily change their dance roles, because the individuality of each dancer was very important. It was rare for one dancer to take the role of another. In other words, individual dancers played a central role as the subject of the work and were considered an important resource.

In *Masurca Fogo*, there is a fascinatingly beautiful dance by the Brazilian dancer Regina Advento, who seemed to shake, float, and flutter her body to the music of her own dreams. Advento acts as a psychic axis in *Masurca Fogo*, walking through the stage with enigmatic smiles while other performers trace the oval path in this work. She acts the part of a street merchant and wanders through the audience, who see her hips sway as she balances a water jug on her head.

Pina Bausch details are engraved in this work. In another section, Rainer Behr appears to be kissing Julie Shanahan, but the female dancer is too tall for him to approach. Shanahan drops a watermelon and it shatters, then Ruth Amarante brings in a chicken to peck the pieces. In another part, a surprisingly realistic walrus flies over the stage, apparently struggling. These quixotic pleasures and solo dancers are the main pillars of this work.

Dancers create characters based on mutual sharing, and recreate their artistic heritage through their own life stories in the cooperative creation process. The legacy stemming from Bausch's achievements as a post-modern choreographer and artistic director raised the status of *World Cities* becoming a valued artistic residence.

3. Reflection through movement

Pina Bausch characterized a country's culture through representing scenes. In *Masurca Fogo*, she composed episodes of everyday life and music in Lisbon, Portugal, combined with the atmosphere of its former colony Brazil. In *Nefes*, she actively embraced Turkey's massage and bath culture and

enhanced the image of Turkish women (Schulze-Reuber, 2008).

Rather than attaching special meaning to her movements, Pina Bausch focused on the images that appeared in the scene. Through those images, which acted as symbols, Bausch revealed what she wanted to talk about in her work (Park, 2019). In *Masurca Fogo*, she emphasizes a universal human problem rather than expressing the culture of the country directly. This approach avoided the somewhat abstract format often seen in Tanztheater and its choreography philosophy and methods.

The movements in Pina Bausch's work are largely appropriately borrowed from traditional folk dances or everyday movements inherent in a country's culture. In order to stage everyday movements, she asked questions so that dancers could express their feelings or emotions after experiencing the cultures of each country. Subsequently, they performed the work in a way that danced the movements after extensive communication with the dancers. Sometimes the piece looks like a simple arrangement of episodes, but then the scenes create a daily scene, and the movements are transformed into dance movements that create the unique atmosphere.

Pina Bausch used traditional movements or dances from each culture along with daily movements. In her *Masurca Fogo*, she chose blues, jazz, and waltzes to express the Brazilian mood. Female dancers run around in skirts expressing dreams, memories, love, desires, and passions, while male dancers leave a deep impression on the audience through fast tempo and acrobatic movements. They all cross and tilt their arms and legs, sometimes playing around, sometimes being chased or chasing. A female dancer wearing a retro swimsuit and a snorkeling mask slides across a temporary pool. She and the dancers who follow her only slide halfway across the stage. Through these movements, the choreographer ultimately tried to express the finiteness and entertaining aspects of our lives.

Masurca Fogo also shows the unequal relationship between men and women. The choreographer's attitude toward the female dancer can be seen through the following aspects: the limited role of women, the fear of the female dancer's struggle with and loss of beauty, and the violent attitudes of men toward the female dancer. Julie Shanahan's balloon clothes scene, which is also represented on the poster, continues to instill uncomfortable feelings and tensions in the audience. Shanahan appears decorated with balloons and goes on to tell an insignificant story about her schoolteacher, before male dancers light a cigarette and burst the balloons attached to her body.

While these scenes play out, the audience may feel uncomfortable and tense, but it is important to remember that Tanztheater as expressed by Pina Bausch at that time, was at an experimental stage, dance moves were mixed with dramatic stories and theatrical elements. Through Bausch's movement, which summarized the contradictions of daily life, the audience would feel surprised, happy, and sometimes angered. This approach intended to create a consensus for the audience and to express human emotions realistically, utilizing the most essential emotions from the inside (Lee, 1998).

Conclusion

This study analyzed *Masurka Fogo* from Pina Bausch's *World Cities*, a dance piece that embraces various cultures and expresses human life through dance, from the perspective of interculturalism. In order to achieve the purpose of this study, the research method selected conducts both a theoretical consideration and phenomenon analysis. The theoretical basis used to analyze the dance phenomena was interculturalism. The following results were derived by dividing the expressive and compositional aspects of interculturalism in *Masurca Fogo* into the following themes: the choreography process, dancers, and movements.

First, when reflecting on the life of a choreographer, it can be concluded that she encountered racial and cultural diversity through her activities in the United States and Germany. Subsequently she tried to find an alternative to coexistence, based on a deep understanding of the life, culture, and languages of different countries. Second, the core of the dance company was made up of various nationalities with diverse experiences. A choreographer and dancers could exchange different cultural backgrounds and communicate freely through understanding and respect for each other's cultures. It can be said that this work process helped to realize interculturalism. Third, when organizing the work, they chose to use the daily lives of people in each country as independent episodes or they broke up the boundaries between reality and the stage by using video. It was also found that various media such as costumes, props, music, and stage equipment were actively used to symbolize the different cultures.

This study aimed to approach the meaning of dance from a mutual cultural perspective, in order to induce solidarity, communication, and reflection through exchange. In Pina Bausch's *World Cities*, which featured *Masurca Fogo*, the unique culture of the country is implicitly expressed on the stage. Therefore, it can be pointed out as a limitation that only those who know the country well can see and hear these expressions. This is because usually the audience of a work of art sees and feels as much as they know. It would be hard to say that you have learned about Portugal or the city of Lisbon just because you have seen the work of *Masurca Fogo*. However, through this performance, audiences feel that they want to know more about the country or city, and explore related knowledge after the performance. In this respect, the choreographer is helping the audience to be more curious and explore, rather than providing the complete culture of the country through a one-time performance.

Through the choreography process and realization of a completed performance, the opening up and balanced solidarity of mutual culture is possible. This happens through the time spent and dedication displayed between dancers and audiences. Bausch has greatly expanded the core content of dance to mirror human emotions and focus on social flow. Through *World Cities*, effectively expressed through the new form of dance called Tanztheater, she succeeded in spreading one choreographer's intentions worldwide.

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