

Waltzing with Strindberg: Exploring Practices of Memory in A Dream Play

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to explore embodied practices of memory in Strindberg's drama *A Dream Play* from a dance perspective. It is demonstrated that a profound exploration of this hitherto underexplored perspective can provide a fuller and more critically productive understanding of the drama. Even if in recent years international Strindberg studies has moved away from narrowly text-oriented and biographical approaches to his work, and toward multimedia, visual and multisensory aspects of it, dance and choreography are still rare topics within the field. In the article we first look at how Strindberg employed dance in the dramatic text for *A Dream Play*, and then expand on his dance contexts. Thirdly, we turn to a TV version of *A Dream Play* from 1980 to explore in particular how the waltz, an immensely popular dance form in Strindberg's time, evokes and embodies cultural memories in the production. What is presented in the article draws on and further expands our work within the project «Dream-playing across borders: accessing the non-texts of Strindberg's *A Dream Play* in Düsseldorf, 1915–18 and beyond», at the University of Gothenburg.

ABSTRACT

Syftet med den här artikeln är att undersöka förkroppsligade minnespraktiker i Strindbergs drama *Ett drömspel* ur ett dansperspektiv. Artikeln visar att en grundläggande undersökning av detta hittills undermåligt utforskade perspektiv kan ge en fylligare och mera kritiskt produktiv förståelse av dramat. Även om den internationella Strindbergforskningen under den senaste tiden har rört sig bort från snäva textorienterade och biografiska perspektiv på hans arbete, och mot multimedia, visuella och multisensoriska aspekter av det, är dans och koreografi fortfarande sällsynta ämnen inom fältet. I artikeln kommer vi först att titta på hur Strindberg använde dans i dramatexten till *Ett drömspel*, för att sedan vidga undersökningen till hans danskontexter. Därefter tar vi oss an en TV-version av *Ett drömspel* från 1980 för att särskilt undersöka hur valsen, en enormt populär dansform i Strindbergs tid, frammanar och förkroppsligar kulturella minnen i uppsättningen. Det som presenteras i artikeln bygger på och vidareutvecklar vårt arbete i projektet «Dream-playing across borders: accessing the non-texts of Strindberg's *A Dream Play* in Düsseldorf, 1915–18 and beyond», vid Göteborgs universitet.

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Introduction: Mobilising practices of memory

The purpose of this article is to explore dance as a practice of memory in Swedish author and dramatist August Strindberg's *A Dream Play* in order to gain a more critically productive understanding of the drama. Written in 1901, published in 1902 and first performed in 1907 (including a prologue from 1906) at Svenska teatern in Stockholm, *A Dream Play* is a challenging and highly esteemed drama about human suffering, hope and transformation that is still widely read, referenced and performed around the globe (Ollén 1988, 125, 145, 157). It is also one of the most researched of Strindberg's dramas (Robinson 2008 II, 1258–1329). However, even in recent years Strindberg studies have left behind narrow aesthetic and biographical perspectives and moved towards cross-border, pluralised and media-oriented approaches, dance and choreography remain under-researched topics in the field.¹ It can be suggested that this absence is entangled with politically charged issues concerning what Diana Taylor terms «the repertoire»—practices of memory such as dance, ritual, talk, song, sound, music, visual images, architecture and so forth—in relation to work by canonised literary giants such as Strindberg. To challenge the problem of excluding «the repertoire», Taylor asks, «Whose memories 'disappear' if only archival knowledge is valorised and granted permanence?» (Taylor 2003, 36). To phrase this another way (and without wishing to create a hard dichotomy between archives and practices), in traditional history production, knowledge associated with written texts and text-based

archival documents has been highly valorised, while practices of memory have been forgotten, ignored or downplayed (McKemmish 2011, 123). When dance is written into the dramatic text, it potentially mobilises more immediate practices of cultural memory and calls on the reader to partake in a multisensory and often socio-political imaginary staging. In recognition of this, we will explore the ways in which «the repertoire», in the form of dance as a practice of memory, has a vital and multifaceted function in *A Dream Play* (the dramatic text). By applying Taylor's call to prioritise «the repertoire» in historical inquiry to dance in *A Dream Play*, the article contributes a new critical, practice-related, approach to the field of international Strindberg research.

Turning to «the repertoire»

Both authors are academics with backgrounds in professional dance. Nilsson is a dance ethnologist and is active in folk dance and popular dancing, while von Rosen is a former contemporary and classical dancer now specialising in scenography and dance history in the fields of art history and visual studies. These approaches come together in the broad understanding of dance and the turn to practices of memory applied in this article. Our backgrounds led us to read the dramatic text with and through our own «repertoire»; that is, experiences of dance as social and theatrical events, acted out and performed in time and space, and—importantly—drawing on traditions traversing generations of practitioners. Both of us felt that we, through practice, had strong links to the dancing that takes the form of text in *A Dream Play*. Throughout

the article, we will strive to clarify whether we are addressing social or theatrical dancing, dance in written text, dance music, dance as metaphor, dance as mythological device and so forth.

What is presented here draws on and further expands our previous work within the project and anthology «Dream-playing Across Borders: Accessing the Non-texts of Strindberg's *A Dream Play* in Düsseldorf, 1915–18 and Beyond» (2016) at the University of Gothenburg. In our joint article «Dancing with Strindberg: A Social Perspective» we explored dance in the dramatic text and charted the dance accessible to Strindberg in the early 1900s (von Rosen and Nilsson 2016).² The exploration included «dance» more broadly, for example dance music heard at a distance and choreography in the form of the distinct physical arrangement of bodies. As a result, we learned that various aspects of dance emerge as surprisingly productive in *A Dream Play*, and that a practice-related understanding can be difficult to express in writing. Hence, in this article, we will try to explain our approach to the dramatic text by turning to «the repertoire», the practices of dance memory as they are performed in a TV version of *A Dream Play* from 1980. The reason for choosing this version is that it emphasises practices of memory in ways that we believe help develop and clarify our argument that dance (broadly understood) is (or can be) a vital and critically productive dimension in *A Dream Play*.

The TV version is also useful because it follows the dramatic text closely and respectfully. Despite some short sections being cut, and a few words slightly altered, the drama, including the stage directions, is quite recognisable. Thus, both the original text used at the 1907 première and the TV version begin with the main character, Indra's Daughter, leaving the celestial sphere for the human world. Having arrived on earth, she enters the growing castle, and then passes through continuously shifting, often brutal but sometimes also pleasant and even fun spaces and situations. She

transforms into female roles such as mother, wife and muse, and engages with three men or aspects of the same man, the childish Officer, the dutiful Lawyer and the artistic Poet. At the end of the play, the castle burns, and she departs through fire. We draw on the Swedish authorised version of the dramatic text, including the prologue written in 1906 in *Samlade Verk* 46, accessible at Litteraturbanken.se (Strindberg and Ollén 1988). For the English translation, we use Michael Robinson's version in *August Strindberg: Miss Julie and Other Plays* (Robinson 2008).

For the analysis of the 1980 TV production of *A Dream Play* we use a DVD released in 2012 (*Ett drömspel* 1980). Directed by Johan Bergenstråhle, the production features Swedish actors Marika Lagercrantz, Sven-Bertil Taube, Börje Ahlstedt and Erland Josephson in the leading roles, and skilled performers in the other roles. The costumes can be associated with Strindberg's own time as well as indicating various other times and contexts. Scenographer Chris Collins has created a kaleidoscopic vessel or cauldron—the growing castle—that now and then reveals that it is constructed as a toy theatre of sorts. The film opens with the naked body of the Daughter in what looks like white body make-up, descending into the vessel when being born on Earth. Drawing on chanting, lamentation and water sounds, the music emphasises that this is part of some sort of birth ritual or painful theatrical transformation. While descending, her arms reach toward a higher power, the body taking the shape of a «Y».³ This choreographic gesture reappears several times in the staging, for example when, hanging in a Y-shaped tree, she gives birth to a child, and when in despair she cries out for help at a nightmarish summer resort. While our aim is not to further interpret the play for signs in the staging, we mention the entrance because of its pregnant physicality. It opens up, we suggest, a reading of the dramatic text from a «repertoire» perspective. When the Daughter in the text and the TV movie cries, «I'm sinking!» (Robinson 2008, 180), this is also a

description of an action that—in our reading—takes on a choreographic and dance-related quality to which we wish to pay attention.

Throughout the TV production, the scenographic vessel purposefully produces images and spaces that are often distorted, but are nevertheless suggestive of environments from Strindberg's time. By combining jarring and suffocating noises, a variety of natural sounds, such as waves and wind, and familiar musical references such as lamentations, ballet rehearsal music and waltzes, composer Sven-David Sandström creates a mystical, discordant, repetitive and rhythmic soundscape, which is very important for the staging, including the dance. Dance with roots in both popular and theatrical traditions takes on important functions in the staging, and it is therefore somewhat puzzling that no choreographer is listed on the DVD cover. Only in the credits at the end of the film is Jan Gunnar Bergsten mentioned as being responsible for the «dance instruction». Even if a theatrical production is necessarily a collaborative work in which it is sometimes difficult—and not always very interesting—to draw lines between who created what, we nevertheless wish to point out that the dance and choreography are not highlighted in the marketing and informational materials. Differently phrased, vital and complex practices of memory involving movement, bodies and space—Taylor's «repertoire»—are easily elided, and thus devalued and ultimately forgotten. With this said, we will now provide examples of Strindberg's employment of, first, theatrical dancing and then social dancing in *A Dream Play* (the dramatic text), analysed with the help of the 1980 TV version.

Dance as transformative device

Having arrived on Earth, the Daughter enters the castle, and after encountering the Officer, as well as his Mother, she finds herself in the theatre corridor. In the corridor, Strindberg employs words and music related to dance, and we will look more closely at

their function. When the Daughter asks the Billposter if the Portress or Doorkeeper «was a ballet dancer, wasn't she?» (Robinson 2008, 186), dance (theatrical dancing) is mentioned for the first time in the text. «Ballet» immediately triggers associations to the world of the stage, evoking its bodies, practices and spaces, as well as its hierarchies. It is intriguing that the suffering Portress, a mythological figure guarding the entrance to something holy or worthy of protection, is also a former dancer. Indeed, she is crocheting a bedspread with a starry pattern, and thus can be linked with ancient Mothers and weavers of worlds. The TV version, with its close-up shots of the actors, reveals how Strindberg makes such mythology human and ordinary, without renouncing its power. In our understanding, he urges us to deconstruct the weave and become less blinded by the imaginary lures of life and love, as well as to understand the necessity of dreams, fantasies and hope. The word «ballet» draws us into the memories of the Portress and her past as a dancer, and a different time—a memory space—begins to be almost palpable. Answering the Daughter's question, the Billposter says that the Portress «was the best one there... but when *he* up and left, he seemed to take her dancing with him... she never got any more parts» (Robinson 2008, 186). Apparently, she was once a successful performer, but when love disappeared from her life, she also lost her ability to dance. Hence, dance takes on metaphorical connotations of life and death, and serves as a metaphor for love. For Strindberg, she needed the love of a man to be able to dance, and there is no mention of the professional aspects of being a dancer.

In the theatre corridor, it is also demonstrated how choreography and dance are used to indicate change, strange or dreamlike compressions and transpositions of time and place. When Strindberg's stage instructions read «*soft music in dance rhythm is heard from above*» [italics in original], the Officer immediately remarks, «So! Rehearsals have

begin» (Robinson 2008, 191). The music—in both the dramatic text and the TV version—seems to evoke his tacit knowledge about rehearsals. It also expands the theatrical space and encourages the viewer to entertain imaginary ideas of dance rehearsals, thus activating common cultural memories and images of theatrical dancing. In the movie, it is as if the rehearsal music dances the Officer, as he rapidly grows older and drifts away. Using his stick for support, he lifts one leg, bends slightly backwards and gently turns. Through kinaesthesia—body mirroring (Reynolds and Reason 2012)—this heartening dance leaves traces in our corporeal memory and invites us to pay closer attention to the power of «*soft music in dance rhythm*» in the dramatic text.

The above-described transformation (the Officer's rapid aging) is present in the dramatic text, but the important function of dance and music as transformative mediums comes through much more strongly in the TV version, because the Officer actually dances or is danced. When a Ballet Dancer portrayed by Lotta Harryson enters the corridor on pointe, the music has stopped. She is interrupted by the Officer and speaks briefly with him, before again being caught up in the choreography. Clearly, she comes from a space inaccessible to him, and functions as a sort of messenger between the two realms of reality. The Ballet Dancer can also be understood as a physically present memory—emphasised by the actual dancing—from the Portress's past, or as a younger incarnation of her. Thus, the practice of dance, spoken or written words and music all combine to create a shimmering dream space where people and memories travel and transform through time, and now and then coalesce or meet up in strange and mysterious ways. Dance, then, fits neatly into what Strindberg writes in his author's note:

Everything can happen; everything is possible and probable. Time and place do not exist; on an insignificant basis of reality the imagination spins

and weaves new patterns: a blend of memories, experiences, spontaneous ideas, absurdities, and improvisations. The characters split, double, multiply, evaporate, condense, disperse, and converge. (Robinson 2008, 176)

Yet another example of how dance (broadly understood) functions in *A Dream Play* concerns how stillness comes across as a potent choreographic choice, contrasting with the ever-changing scenic components. When the mysterious door in the corridor is about to be opened (though it remains locked until the end of the drama), theatre workers, including the Ballet Dancer and dancers from the opera *Aida*, form a group or an ancient chorus. When the stage transforms into the Lawyer's office, the group chorus is still there. Strindberg writes, «they appear to have been standing there forever» (Robinson 2008, 195). Thus, they belong to and make physical a different time frame than that of the other people in the scene. The TV version—following the dramatic text—visualises the frozen group reappearing several times in the drama, and also has individual characters freeze, which, we argue, is an important aspect of how dance is present in the drama. In particular, the time-travelling Ballet Dancer, or perhaps a version of the Portress, shines every time she appears, strongly indicating the important function of dance as a transformative device in *A Dream Play*.

To further explore and exemplify this vital function of dance in *A Dream Play*, we will now consider how Strindberg employs social dancing. In particular, we focus on the waltz, an immensely popular dance form in Strindberg's time.

Waltzing with Strindberg

At Foulstrand, a devilish summer resort turned into a purgatory of sorts, The Poet asks the Daughter if she hears the «music and dancing up there on the hillside?» (Robinson 2008, 210). When it is revealed

that the dancing is part of a party to celebrate the return home of a wicked person, the pleasant and festive imagery and soundscape are destabilised and might crack. When the Poet says, «why don't they have a dance and supper every evening for the blameless working-girl who has never gone astray» (Robinson 2008, 210), the social dancing is linked with pressing political notions concerning class struggles and women's liberation. We argue that even if the social dancing is mentioned only briefly here, it nevertheless powerfully conveys an important political dimension of *A Dream Play*. This political charge is one of the aspects of the «repertoire» pertaining to social dancing that we will look into in what follows. In particular, we will focus on what we somewhat playfully label «waltzing with Strindberg»: how a practice-based examination of dance in *A Dream Play* can contribute to a new critical understanding of the drama.

When Foulstrand shifts to Fairhaven, the waltz appears and social dancing comes to the forefront. This is not explicitly stated in the dramatic text, but as Strindberg describes «couples dancing» (Robinson 2008, 214), the music—belonging to «the repertoire»—ought to be there as well. In the TV movie, Fairhaven comes across as an ambiguous space, neither indoors nor outdoors and brightly lit; the floor, summer dresses, umbrellas, statues and other decorative details are white or pinkish. Structurally, this lack of clarity causes it to resemble the theatre corridor, but for all its theatricality, Fairhaven is a space where social life is scrutinised in the summer when the theatre is closed. The whiteness of the floor may indicate the «snow» from Strindberg's stage directions, thus emphasising the dreamlike quality of the scene or its odd juxtaposition of place and time. The walls are black, as are the dresses of the three maidservants; behind the chandeliers is an opening through which a blue sky with some clouds is visible, resonating with the passage behind the gate in the corridor. Centre stage, and occupying the most space, is a dance floor,

although Strindberg's stage directions describe this as being positioned at a distance and visible through the windows (and only briefly perceived by the audience). Here, we actually see what the three maids representing a larger working class are looking at, but at the same time they are looking in another direction, a wonderful dramatic device that aptly choreographs the floating and dual character of the space. One might say that Strindberg's intention to reveal the world as deceptive is operating through the Lacanian gaze; the Fairhaven space looks back at us, showing the cracks and lies in its weave (Hatt and Klonk 2015, 189–192).

Through the music and dance, the entire scene becomes immersed in cultural protocols, primarily directed towards the goal of finding a partner; and secondly allowing for amusement.⁴ In the midst of this space, the Daughter and the Officer are waltzing and talking; the Daughter enjoys this, and speaks with a soft voice about the «peace and happiness of holiday!» (Robinson 2008, 214). She notices that the music and dancing are taking place in the morning, though without criticism, and the strict codes from the years around 1900 regulating when and for whom dance is allowed are not particularly evident here. However, from the 1980s perspective, dancing in the morning might seem a little odd, if tempting. The ostentatious dancing can also be seen as a class marker; only the leisure class, who do not have to work, can hold a ball in the morning. We see the Poet, the Quarantine master and the Lawyer at a table, looking drugged or not entirely present—or a bit dead—as they watch the dancing, and showing no interest in stopping actions that violate moral protocols, as traditional chaperones would do. Overall, what first appears to be a proper and pleasant dance event in Fairhaven is about to reveal its more perverse (transgressive) sides in both the dramatic text and the TV movie.

As indicated above, Strindberg writes that the three maids «on an empty box outside» hold «their arms around each other's waists, watching

the dancing» (Robinson 2008, 214). Staring at the dancing from outside, the maids embody class difference, also knowing that they can waltz at another party. In the film, we see them staring through the window, following the rhythm of the dance with their bodies, gently swaying their behinds; clearly, this distinctly choreographed trio affect the entire setting, both in the dramatic text and the movie. The Daughter approaches the maids and asks, «Why don't you girls go in and dance?» Disturbed, they turn to her and reply, «Us?» The distance between the classes becomes palpable, and the Officer explains, «But they are servants!» (Robinson 2008, 214). The Daughter seems to consider this and then agrees that it is true. We see dancing couples happily move under the blue sky, and Ugly Edith emerges, sitting alone by the piano. During all this, the waltz keeps playing, and as spectators we are immersed in its repetitive rhythm. The inquisitive Daughter wants to know why Edith is not dancing, but the Officer advises her not to interfere, as Edith, with her dishevelled hair, «has been sitting there for three hours and no one has asked her to dance» (Robinson 2008, 215). However, Edith's Mother, in a low cut-dress, urges her daughter to go in and dance. The Mother, apparently a woman who also enjoys waltzing in the morning, cannot help her daughter; Edith says that she refuses to make herself «cheap» (Robinson 2008, 215), and does not want to remind people of her ugliness. She starts to play Bach, beginning a battle with the waltz, and at first she is successful. This is the point where the waltz is first mentioned in the dramatic text. Edith's face reveals her joy when playing. She knows she is good; people come, and as they listen the waltz is silenced. Her high art of playing Bach with inspiration and skill seems to be victorious, but is nevertheless drawn into the game of finding a partner for life. Edith's mother is pleased with her daughter's playing, and focuses on men that might be there for her. Then, cruelly, a dancer with flowers in her hair captures the attention of the man Edith loves,

and off they go. Edith's feverish dream space is torn apart, and she freezes. Not only does this resonate with the Portress's story, it is also a choreographed gesture resembling the frozen movement of the time-travelling group or chorus. Thus, Edith's dreamlike moment where she expresses herself and is not silenced is deeply recognisable across time, place and genre.

After Edith's playing of Bach come the nightmarish events in school, ending when the Quarantine Master calls out, «Come and help us dance... we must dance before the plague breaks out» (Robinson 2008, 218). This evokes cultural memories of bacchanals and *danse macabres*, as well as the idea of living life as fully as possible when there is a chance to do so, even if the activities come across as sexualised and filthy. In the TV version, this friction between proper manners and the macabre is, as we see it, a key idea in the staging, indicating the contradictory and endlessly transformative character of almost every activity or feature in *A Dream Play*. This duality is present in, for example, a scene where supposedly happy newlyweds decide to drown themselves. Then the Blind Man enters, hearing all the pains of human life while a brig carrying his son glides away; Edith is there crying, and the dancer Alice is present and radiant, as the man they both love is on board. It is all repetition, and the Blind Man drifts away, or dreams himself into another realm. As he withdraws, waltz music is again heard and waltzing couples fill the space upstage. This is not explicitly part of Strindberg's stage instructions, but we would again like to point out the *structural* connection that the TV movie establishes between the events and settings in the theatre corridor and in Fairhaven. Upstage in both environments there is a passage, a portal of sorts, leading either to a theatrical stage or to an unknown realm, heaven, paradise, nothingness or something else unknown. The space is activated—made present and accessible to multisensory exchange with the audience—by dance, both ballet and waltzing. This observation and interpretation is useful

when reading the dramatic text; it helps us understand how the «repertoire», practices of memory including dance, operates. Let us look at a few more examples.

In the TV movie, the Blind Man is occupying a transitional space when the Lawyer enters and whispers something in his ear, causing him to put his hat on, turn around and walk towards the unknown. It is here that the waltz starts again. The music is seductive and has, we suggest, the power to weave the Blind Man's paradise. He then happily crosses the line between life and death, and touches his hat to signal something to the Daughter. Judging by their clothing, the dancing couples are from the 19th century. Here they represent the wheel of time, and cause the veil that holds the world together to move. The Daughter looks at the Blind Man, and when she turns in the other direction, the sound of waves and water combines with that of the waltz and everything becomes a holistic scenographic action (Harvey 1998, 64–65). Mist, or part of a cloud, fills the screen and she finds herself in a fluctuating medium, looking down at the dead newlyweds covered with eels.

The Lawyer maliciously tells the Daughter that she must repeat her painful journey, and do what she hates most again and again. Now a dark forest and strange music emerges—something that is not mentioned in the dramatic text, but which can be understood as a visualisation of the Lawyer's words, «Sin is pleasant... Which must be punished» (Robinson 2008, 221). We see three naked women with wreaths in their long blond hair dance like forest nymphs with the Quarantine Master, who keeps his clothes on; they all chase and are chased, and he cries out like an animal. This draws on early 20th century modernist dance, with its fascination with the naked body and primitive forces, but also on older myths associating the female body with nature, and sexuality with the destructive loss of control. In the cultural flow of art and media representations, the repetitions and transformations of the latter tropes seem to be

unstoppable. The waltzing couples now appear in a dance that is explicitly indecent, and the music becomes increasingly discordant. The dangerous forest returns, and a naked foot penetrates the pictorial space as part of a pantomime acting out the idea of the sinful. Threatening to divorce the Daughter if she does not return, the Lawyer has to face her refusal, as she has a higher duty to fulfil. Growing into a nasty *dance macabre*, the waltz continues as the Daughter reaches out towards the Poet, asking him to accompany her; but he shivers like a stiff marionette and sinks down in his chair. Crying is heard from Foulstrand (this is clearly stated in the dramatic text), and the waltz at Fairhaven can be read as a symbolic rape. Bumping around like a corpse being dragged, the Daughter hangs lifelessly in the arms of the cruel Lawyer while the death-waltz continues. Other couples are frenetically making out, kissing and snogging, and the waltz merges completely with violently expressive dancing, as found for example in the dance theatre tradition. It seems as if much of the endless waltzing and vibrant criticism of new forms of social dance in Strindberg's time, and many of the sexualised fantasies associated with dance (including theatrical dance), were vividly staged and acted out in the 1980s using techniques and expressions rooted in modernist dance and in the medieval *dance macabre*.⁵ Thus, we suggest that the operative force of dance in *A Dream Play* (the dramatic text) becomes more accessible through attention to practices of memory, or «the repertoire».

Conclusion: The psychological and political power of dance practices

In this article, we have employed Diana Taylors term «the repertoire»—practices of memory—to explore dance (broadly understood) as a vital component in Strindberg's *A Dream Play* (the dramatic text). To bring out the power of practice, we juxtaposed the

dramatic text with an analysis of a 1980 TV production of the drama, as the latter so clearly mobilises dance as a device for expressing transformation, travel in time and space and the double-sidedness that is characteristic of the work. As a result, we strongly suggest that paying attention to dance as a practice of memory in *A Dream Play* can provide considerably improved access to disappeared memories or lived parts of psychologically, socially and politically charged practices and contexts. As pointed out by Taylor, such living dimensions are of course difficult to archive in traditional ways, but we have demonstrated that they are also accessible through analysis if we choose the «repertoire»—dance practices for example—as a point of view.

Differing significantly from traditional text-based and biographical approaches to *A Dream Play*, an emphasis on the dance «repertoire»—the cultural memory of various dance dimensions—offers, we believe, a more creative and constructive research model that brings together danced practices and academic analysis. Following Taylor, this is political in that it helps account for memories, practices and people that otherwise are easily excluded or downplayed. Our analysis clearly demonstrates that through social dancing, social tensions and contradictions are revealed as words, music and physical action. In particular, the choreographed presence of the three maids functions as a catalyst when the equally psychological and political nastiness of the social protocols of the endless waltzing is revealed and (for a while) caused to crack by the artistic intervention of Bach's music.

We found it intriguing that, in the theatre corridor, the Portress's memories of being a ballet dancer were used to convey the presence of past events and lost dreams in an ordinary situation. Distant rehearsal music expanded the theatrical space to encompass imaginary ideas pertaining to the theatre, and the appearance of a Ballet Dancer was linked

with dreamlike compressions and transpositions of time and place in the dramatic text. The TV version's emphasis on actual dancing helped us see this more clearly. Importantly, stillness—when the group or chorus freezes—comes across as a potent choreographic choice in Strindberg's text, contrasting with the ever-transforming scenic components and indicating time travel and change of place. Frozen stillness is also used as a transformative device at Fairhaven when Ugly Edith's love dream is destroyed by a man leaving with a dancer.

In the TV production, social dancing, and the waltz in particular, comes across as a multisensory formula frequently used to represent the human world as contradictory and ambiguous. The waltz primarily functions as a seductive and transformative device, and is utilised as a medium to activate a psychologically and politically charged transitional space, so that people can move—or be moved—between life, «real» events, memory, dreaming and even death. The dramatic text also conveys this if attention is paid to the «repertoire» of physical bodies, spoken dialogue, music and so forth in time and space.

In the examples gathered in the article, dance, understood as a practice of memory in *A Dream Play*, functions as a medium for capturing contradiction, transition and transformation. We have found that the dance written into Strindberg's dramatic text can be accessed through activating practices of memory, or by «waltzing with Strindberg». To conclude, we strongly suggest that dance in *A Dream Play* has the power to mobilise more immediate practices of cultural memory, and calls on the reader to partake in a multisensory as well as psychological and socio-political imaginary staging.

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Notes

1 Two recent anthologies exemplify the new approaches: Robinson (2009) and Anna Westerståhl Stenport (2012). Particularly interesting in terms of opening up towards multimedia and visual culture is the anthology edited by Schroeder (upcoming 2017/18). von Rosen is also contributing a chapter, «Dream-playing the Archive», to the anthology. However, dance and choreography are not strong or vital topics in the field of international Strindberg research, as is exemplified in the proceedings after recent international Strindberg conferences, e.g. Ly-sell (2014), Gedin et al. (2014) and Ciaravolo (2016).

2 An early version of «Waltzing with Strindberg» was presented at the conference «Muse of Modernity? Remembering, Mediating and Modernising Popular Dance», arranged by the AHRC project *Dancing with Memory* at the University of London, 16 April 2016. See panel 3 at <https://dancingwithmemory.wordpress.com/muse-of-modernity/> (10 May 2017).

3 The play of signs will not be explored further here, but it can be mentioned that the «Y» has associations with the ruin of life in northern mythology and the sign of the unification of opposites in alchemy (von Rosen 2016, 159).

4 Importantly, popular and social dances remained by and large the same across class boundaries, even if they could vary depending on where and by whom they were performed. Clothes and settings differed more than the actual dance patterns. Thus, class cohesion feeds not on what you dance, but on with whom you dance, where and when. Our discussion on social dancing in this section of the article draws on the following studies: Mats Nilsson (2006, 254ff), Buckland (2011), McKee (2012), Ulvros (2004), Mitterauer (1991) and Nilsson (1998).

5 In the early 1900s, the waltz was a rather accepted part of social life, while newer dance forms such as the foxtrot and other types of jazz dance were considered morally dubious, dangerous and even evil. For example, the foxtrot was far more strongly charged with sexual connotations than the waltz (Nilsson 2006; Knowles 2009).

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