

## **Theatre, Dance and Performance Training (TDPT)**

### **Special Issue: *Anti-Racist Training* (to be published September 2025)**

Call for contributions, ideas, proposals and dialogue with the editors

#### **Guest Editors**

Broderick Chow ([Broderick.Chow@CSSD.ac.uk](mailto:Broderick.Chow@CSSD.ac.uk))

Samia La Virgne ([samia.lavirgne@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:samia.lavirgne@rhul.ac.uk))

#### **Training Grounds Editor**

Lauryn Pinard ([laurynpinard@gmail.com](mailto:laurynpinard@gmail.com))

#### ***Anti-Racist Training* (Issue 16.3)**

The drive towards becoming “anti-racist” institutions or practitioners has taken on renewed energy in recent years. In 2020, responding to alleged and substantiated claims of abuse, discrimination and oppression spanning decades, theatres and institutions of theatre and performance training seemingly acknowledged the systemic racism that underpins the field. Action plans were put in place, committees were formed, and policies were drafted and approved. The question, however, of whether theatre, dance, and performance training itself has moved towards becoming anti-racist, or even what anti-racist training *is*, remains unsettled.

In 1990, Paul Gilroy suggested that “there is a crisis of the political language, images and cultural symbols which [the anti-racist movement] needs in order to develop its self-consciousness and its political programme. This problem with the language of anti-racism is acutely expressed by the lack of clarity that surrounds the term ‘anti-racism’ itself” ([1990: 72](#)). This leads to anti-racist actions being seen as ineffectual or at worst, patronising and infantilising. In theatre and performance education and training—as in everyday life—the specificity of racial oppression often becomes an “add-on” to a wider conversation on equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging. If, as Ramon Grosfoguel states, racism is “a global hierarchy of superiority and inferiority along the line of the human” ([2016: 10](#)), any training that claims to be “anti-racist” must reckon with what Sylvia Wynter ([2003](#)) defines as the “coloniality of being/truth/freedom/power”, that is, the ideological project of defining Western “Man” against indigenous, Black, Global Majority and subaltern peoples that emerged with the European empires’ colonization of the “New World.” Efforts to “decolonize” or “decentre” the field, as Royona Mitra ([2019](#)) and Swati Arora ([2021](#)), among others, have pointed out, often adopt an “additive” approach, which “does not aim at structural change but works within it” (Arora 2021: 13). As the 2020 open letter [“White Colleague Listen!”](#) suggests, theatre and performance has traditionally privileged colonial knowledge systems and therefore, this produces both racist pedagogical and epistemological structures *and* racism in everyday interactions in rehearsal studios, classrooms, and corridors.

The aim of this special issue is to examine different perspectives on what an anti-racist theatre, dance, and performance training might be. It seeks to:

- Explore various ways anti-racist concepts and practices are embodied in contemporary theatre, dance, and performance training.
- Build/construct understandings of developed and developing anti-racist performance praxis.

- Provoke conversations that challenge and contest traditional Western hegemonic performance practice methodologies.
- Debate what new forms of anti-racist practice might emerge and how they can be sustained.

Questions to consider:

- How can decolonization as an approach be developed in anti-racist performance training?
- Where is the line between appropriation and appreciation in anti-racist performance training?
- How is intersectionality encompassed and addressed in anti-racist performance training?
- By what means can privileged pedagogical push-back be navigated/negotiated in traditional performance training institutions?

Themes might include:

- Culturally specific spaces of acting, dance, and performance training
- Applications of existing praxes (including but not limited to: Black Acting Methods, The Korean Approach to Actor training, Theatre of the Sphere acting method, inter/intra-cultural performance training)
- Abolitionist praxis in theatre, dance and performer training: what would we need to invest in so that our current structures would no longer need to exist?
- Racial representation and representations of race in training spaces
- Global/innovative anti-racist pedagogy
- Practical and sustainable imaginings and innovations in anti-racist performance training
- Relationship between decolonial and anti-racist praxis in performance training
- Access to and accessibility of anti-racist performance training.

We welcome submissions from authors both inside and outside academic institutions, from professional practitioners and those who are currently undergoing training or who have experiences to tell from their training histories.

Theatre, Dance and Performance Training has three sections:

- 'Articles' features contributions in a range of critical and scholarly formats (approx. 5,000-6,500 words)
- 'Sources' provides an outlet for the documentation and analysis of primary materials of performer training. We are particularly keen to receive material that documents the histories and contemporary practices associated with the issue's theme.
- 'Training Grounds' hosts shorter pieces, which are not peer reviewed, including essays (more speculative pieces 750-1250 words); postcards (up to 100 words); visual essays and scores; Speaking Images (short texts responding to a photo, drawing, visual score, etc.); and book or event reviews. We welcome a wide range of different proposals for contributions including edited interviews and previously unpublished archive or source material. We also welcome suggestions for recent books on the theme to be reviewed; or for foundational texts to be *re*-reviewed.

Innovative cross-over print/digital formats are possible, including the submission of audiovisual training materials, which can be housed on the online interactive *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training* journal blog: <http://theatredanceperformancetraining.org/>.

To signal your intention to make a contribution to this special issue in any one of the ways identified above please email an abstract (max 250 words) to Broderick Chow, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama ([Broderick.Chow@CSSD.ac.uk](mailto:Broderick.Chow@CSSD.ac.uk)) and Samia La Virgne, Royal Holloway, University of London ([samia.lavirgne@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:samia.lavirgne@rhul.ac.uk)). Training Grounds proposals are to be made to Lauryn Pinard [laurynpinard@gmail.com](mailto:laurynpinard@gmail.com) copied to Broderick and Samia. Please state clearly which type of Training Grounds submission you wish to offer.

Our deadline for these abstracts is **31<sup>st</sup> May 2024**.

#### **Issue Schedule**

- **31 May 2024:** proposals to be submitted.
- **Mid - July 2024:** Response from editors and, if successful, invitation to submit contribution
- **Early July to end October 2024:** writing/preparation period
- **End October to end December 2024:** peer review period
- **January 2025:** author revisions post peer review
- **September 2025:** publication as Issue 16.3

We look forward to hearing from you.

Broderick Chow, Samia La Virgne, Lauryn Pinard

#### **About *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training* (TDPT)**

Special Issues of *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training* (TDPT) are an essential part of its offer and complement the open issues in each volume. TDPT is an international academic journal devoted to all aspects of 'training' (broadly defined) within the performing arts. It was founded in 2010 and launched its own blog in 2015. In 2022 we reached the landmark of 50,000 downloads in one year. Our target readership comprises scholars and the many varieties of professional performers, makers, choreographers, directors, dramaturgs and composers working in theatre, dance, performance and live art who have an interest in the practices of training. TDPT's co-editors are Jonathan Pitches (University of Leeds) and Libby Worth (Royal Holloway, University of London).