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| **Centre Number:** |  |
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| **Activity 1** |
| **Christopher Bruce is a British choreographer and performer who was born in 1945. He began studying dance at the age of 11 and went on to join Rambert Ballet, which lead him to becoming the Artistic Director of the Rambert Dance Company until 2002; during this time he created over 20 works for the company.**  **Christopher Bruce’s Ghost Dances, created in 1981, communicates the theme of power through the influence of cultural factors that affected the citizens of Chile during the Chilean Pinochet Coup in 1973. After receiving a letter from human rights activist Joan Jara in 1973, whose husband was violently tortured by the military during the takeover of the government, he decided to focus this piece on the deprivation of human rights for the less affluent population, a culture who were left with no quality of life or freedom once their democracy had tragically been ended for 17 years. Christopher Bruce presents this through the “haunting portrayal of ordinary folk” (ghost dances, 1991) who wear ragged dresses and ripped suits in the section when they first enter the stage; suggesting that they lived in a culture of working class people who were completely unaware of the violent plans of the military. Along with the scruffy costumes, the upbeat dancing and the happy facial expressions further reinforces that these folk people of Chile were oblivious to the extreme power that the military and chilean police had over them, making them a vulnerable and easy target. Despite them being a minority, they still embodied signifcant amounts of power in comparison to the rest of the Chilean population, and used this to take advantage of the democracy and “engulf the lives of the peoples of South America” (ghost dances, 1991). Bruce focuses prodominantly on the idea that, no matter the culture or environment that these people were born and brought up in, eqaulity comes after death as nobody, depsite the amount of power they embody or the signifcance of their culture comapred to another, consumes overriding power. Death is the ultimate focus of power in this piece and he shows this in the opening section when there is no music and the three ghosts perform in unison, slowly walking forwards and looking directly ahead. Their identical costumes and facial makeup makes it almost impossible to tell them apart, and their use of unison and contact work suggests that the support they offer eachother stregthens their power and enables them to escape the trap of the corrupt culture of the military in Chile.**  **Bob Fosse is an American dancer, choreographer, director, screenwritor and editor, born in Washington in 1927. During his life, he received numerous amount of awards including 8 Tony Awards for his unique choreography.**  **Cultural factors duirng the 1920s/30s massively influenced Bob Fosse and this is reflected in his piece from the show “Sweet Charity” called “The Rich Man’s Frug”. Being born a time soon after the women had won the vote in 1920 and the idea of flappers has been introduced, Fosse highlights that this revealing, rebellious and sexual culture was the central to this time period and uses this as a focal point for this particular piece. During his childhood, he perfromed in Burlesque and Vaudeville houses as his mother believed that nothing untoward would happen to him, suggesting that the culture his was brought up in didn’t focus on morals and respect in public but instead they thrived on the idea of freedom and fun.The lead female dancer begins on stage on her own and executes movements such as rolling the hands back and forth whilst moving her hips in a flexible, free manner and turning the knees in to make unusal shapes with her body. This “moulding of his own imperfections into a distinct, sinuous style”(Briannametcalf.weebly.com, n.d.) drew attention to this particular culture of the 1920s and reinforced the revealing, sexual attitudes, particularly of women who were becoming more and more outspoken. Fosse presents this power of women through the focus on one individual female dancer being the center of an extremely elaborate set full of wealthy people who were all part of the same culture and shared the same morals. They soon became their own culture which was labelled “flappers” and Fosse was clearly hugely influenced by this as the smooth, intricate movements in all of his pieces emphasises the movement of cultures becoming more equal and intergrated whilst still hinting at the idea that there were still conflicting attitudes between them.** |

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| **Activity 2** |
| **Matthew Christopher Bourne is a British choreorgapher best known for his unique interpretations of traditional ballet repertoire and successful choreography for popular revivals of classical musicals. I believe that the performance and production elements that best communicate the theme fo ‘Power’ in Matthew Bourne’s Nutcracker are; character, dynamics and lighting which is what I will be focusing on in the analysis of this piece.**  **The dynamics, particularly of the music by Tchaikovsky, highlights and pinpoints focal areas that demostrate power, mainly of the wealthier, upper class characters. Having been a “fan of musical films and theatre since childhood”( Whitney, n.d.), Bruce explicitly presents the exaggerated theatrical twist to this production through the sudden and emphasised change in dynamics.In the opening section when Dr. Dross initally enters the stage, he is positioned in the centre and there is immediately a change in the tone, becoming deeper in pitch and faster in speed. This sudden change in dynamic, compared to the previously fairly happy and relaxing atsmophere, instantly communicates his signifcant power over the orphan children and the fear which he forces upon them as an advantage of this trait he carries. This intense dynamic is also central to the presentation of Clara’s growing power on Christmas Eve when the children are supposed to be sleeping. Her bravery to get up and out of bed, going against the orders of those in a higher power than herself is shown through the climatic rhythm that juxtaposes the low grumbling undertone of trombones and bassoons with the high pitched, pentrating sound of the flute and piccolo. This contrasting dynamic creates an uneasy, unsuspecting ambience for an audience however her bravery continues to grow, and with this her power too. As she gets up and moves around the room, the power of the dynamics comes from the tense atmosphere created by Clara as instruments such as the flute and violin fluctuate in sync with her hightened facial expressions, reflecting her inner thoughts and feelings about her rebellious attitude towards the rules of the orphanage; possibly inferring that her desire to own power now overwhelmes the emotional stablity she no longer has. Bourne soon reveals that this power comes to nothing as the tense dynamic falls and that clock on the wall begins to chime, gradually increasing in volume as Clara walks to the centre of the stage. This particualr scene finishes with Clara entering and changing the whole dynamic of the section, stealing the limelight from Clara and focsuing the idea of power coming from her wealth and class. As she marches around the room in the lead up to opening the cupboard doors, the music deepens and intensifies before ending with a huge climatic trumpet sound along with the aggressive sound of thunder coming from outside of the window. This change in dynamic from a seemingly peaceful and happy environment within the orphanage as potential parents come to visit, to the frightening, aggressive climax leaves the orphans vulnerable and powerless once again.**  **Through the use of the performance element ‘characters’, Bruce explicitly communicates the theme of power coming from the wealth and class of the materialistic characters such as Sugar. The production begins in the setting of a dickensian orphanage with all children dressed in the same dull, grey costumes. In comparison to the matron who wears a tall black hat with a striped shirt and a tie along with Dr. Dross who wears a long black coat and carries a whip, the clear seperation in status forces the children to lose all sense of individuality as the exploitation of power of those in a higher authority suggests that these orphans are trapped and cannot escape this power that the owners have over them all. This mistreatment of the power that Dr Dross and the matron embody forces the children to perform for the potential parents who similarly hold significant amounts of power as they determine the future of these powerless orphan. When the next section begins, the heavy footed movement of the children as they perform along with the overly emphasised facail expressions suggests that this element of power that everybody else holds expect for themselves forces them to act and behave in a specifc, yet unrealistic manner. Bourne continues to expose the theme of power through Sugar, the spoilt daughter of the matron and Dr Dross and she boasts her power through her snobbish posture and gestures as she dances with control and extension with her nose up in the air. Her power particularly comes from the ownership of something (a toy) that the other children do not have, allowing her to feel supreme and priveleged. Although her wealth provides her with this power, it is temporary and vulnerable, as her jealousy overrides this when it is challenged by the other children playing with toys too. As the show continues and Clara enters her dream, wealth still provides Sugar, now Princess Sugar, with power as she is the only one in the cloud scene with a pink dress whilst everybody else wears white and blends in with the the set. Bourne further reinforces this in the cupid section where the two cupid characters who both wear striped pyjamas and white wings, present Clara with a blue ballgown. The fairytale like atmosphere suggests that this elaborate dress could possibly provide her with the same power that Princess Sugar holds, setting her apart from everybody else and making her the focal point of the scenes. Towards the end of the production, in the ‘Knicker Bocker Glory’ scene, Bourne suggests that there is another kind of power that overrides all. All of the characters, including those that claimed significant amounts of power initally, are seen licking the floor uncontrollably, suggetsing that this overwhelming power of the sweet temptation forces them to lose all control that their powerful status initally provided them with. This “radical intepretation” (Whitney, n.d.) is what emphaises and highlights the power throughout the production, ranging from wealth and status, to the power of temptation that seemingly dominates all else.**  **Bourne suggests that the ultimate power comes from the dream itself and the way in which it has the power to lead Clara into believing in unrealistic possibilites; this presentation of this to the audience is heavily reliant on the lighting. Once the orphans have performed to the foster parents and argued over toys, they are sent to bed and the light on the stage dims. A purple tinted light rises creating a fantastical, dream-like atmosphere and as this happens Clara decides to get out of bed. This light seemingly gives her the belief that she owns some sort of power which allows her to go against those who control her including Dr Dross and the matron, and furthermore convinces her that she has escaped the orphanage and is now in a world where she has the power to find and hold on to true love. For the audience, the unnatrual lighting enhances the idea that this is actually a façade and indicates that there is something unrealistic about the sudden power she has gained. At the end of the first section in the dream, the lighting reinforces Clara to believe she is powerful and important as she is left alone on the stage with a bright spotlight on her whilst she is praying/making a wish. The intensity of the light seems to be the source of her power and which enables for her dream/wish to come true, the individual spotlight on her also focuses all and any attention to her, reinforcing her powerful persona. Similarly, Princess Peach, who is empowered by her dress, is also made to feel more important and authoritative through the pink tinted light that corresponds with her outfit; allowing her to feel as though she is the main centre of attention and more powerful than those dressed in white. In both cases, the lead female character desires to have power but in different ways, Clara wants the power to find love and live her life away from the control of the orphanage, whereas Princess Sugar desperately wants the power to overule others and be in control of the way she is percieved by others, she does this through her desire to remain as the most powerful character, in and out of the dream. Bourne uses the light to support these two characters into feeling as though they have genuine power.**  **These three elements; dynamics, character and lighting, emphasise the “hallmark of Bourne’s choreographic style” (Whitney, n.d.) and allow him to present the theme of power in a variety of ways.** |

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| **Activity 3** |
| **I am going to dicuss both Christopher Bruce’s “Swansong” and Alvin Aileys “Revelations” to determine which practitoners piece would be best suited to the performing arts festival motto; “Nothing stregthens authority so much as Silence”**  **In Christopher Bruce’s Swansong, the silence at the end of every solo of the prisoner highlights the authority that the guards have over him despite his strenuous attempts to break free of the trap that he is being held in. During his solos, particularly the first one, his movements are very controlled and strong with the extensions of arms and legs in leaps and reaches reinforcing the power he has to remain in full power of his emotional and physical stability, however, despite this powerful movement in the spotlight of an intense glare coming from the top right hand side of the stage, he is left breathless on the chair and looking directly forward in complete silence as the guards re-enter the stage. The connection between the silence and the re-appearance of the guards suggets that this is what brings them authority and power over the weak, working class prisoner. Bruce expands on this idea in the section before the guards begin to mock the prisoner; there is a moment of silence before they place a fake red nose over his face and begin to dance around him. This silence deprives the audience as well as the prisoner of any knowledge of what is soon to happen and the fear of the unknown overpowers any other form of strength or resilience from the prisoner, leaving him weak and disadvantaged comapared to the guards. Pritchard wrote that Bruce “deliberately wanted his audience to watch it without any background information”(Pritchard, 1998), and this supports the intention of wanting only those in a powerful position to be advantaged by the intense silence within the piece. This exploitation of the silence gives the guards overwhelming authority as it is only them who know what is going to happen and the silence reflects this secrecy and deprivation of warning which forces the prisoner to feel vulnerable and at risk.**  **However, on the other hand, the use of sound within Swansong completely contradicts the statement that silence stregthens authority, particularly when the guards begin to dance with their canes to a salsa style piece of music. Their loose, relaxed arms and legs show that their power is something that they are naturally granted with and they do not have to maintain this and portray this to the prisoner as the sheer amount of authority that they carry justifies anything that they do. There is a ‘cha cha’ sound that almost sounds like whispering and gossiping and this reinforces the power of the guards, not through silence but through the communication to the prisoner that they have the power to know things that he doesn’t, in the attempt to make him feel vulnerable and lose all self-control. During the sections when there is music, the significant amount of contact work as well as the use of the chair suggests that it is not actually silence that stregthens the guards power but it is the support they are provided with, from eachother and the prop, that allows them to remain in this authorative position and arrogantly communicate this to the prisoner who seems isolated and outnumbered. Bruce was influenced by a novel by Oriella Fallaci claimed that he was “particularly struck by the way in which the author describes interrogation as if it were a theatrical production” (Bruce, n.d.) suggesting that he intends to communicate the interrogation of the prsioner through theatrical methods such as props and body language and movement. Although the silence at the end of the prisoners solos reflects the enormous authority of the guards, during them there are sudden crashes of sound and continuous echoes that, instead make his power more intense, enhancing the authority that he is gaining to break free from the trap that he is in. Here, it is not the silence that gives him power, it is the strong, forceful sounds that stregthens his ability to regain power and control over himself, encouraging him to remain resilient against those in authority. In comparison to silence, it can be argued that it is death that stregthens power and authority as once the prisoner finally dies and leaves his soul behind, he has escaped the dark prison he was trapped in and has deprived the interrogators of any knowledge of his potential crime.**  **In comparison to Christopher Bruce’s work, Alvin Ailey, a American choreographer who was inspired by his difficult upbringing in a racially segregated environment, also presents the idea that “Nothing stregthens authority so much as silence”. In his piece, “Revelations”, the opening section begins in silence with all dancers on the stage in a neat clumped formation with their heads down and their arms relaxed. As the music begins and grows gradually, the movement remains still and all dancers are focused; this silence allows them to retain their authority and save their power for when the music begins, as this is what allowed Ailey to be himself out of sight of the judgemental society he grew up in. Between every section of unison, there is a moment of silence where the movements are extended fully and sustained for a while before moving back into their original postion and this almost reflects the power that they wish to hold on to as it is the only time they are given the opportunity to feel as though they are authorative and accepted. The silence suggests that this is what allows the black americans to remain in control and resilient against the isolation that they faced, which Ailey recalls from his “blood memories” (Ailey, n.d.). Similar to Bruce, Ailey uses silence to intensify the atmosphere and stregthen the uneasy atmosphere that causes the audience to feel on edge and unaware of the power that they hold from within.**  **However, in “Ive been Buked”, it is the gospel music that gives them power and strength and Ailey reflects this in his choreography which is simple but effective, isolating body parts such as the arms and the head and executing them in complete unison. This uniting of a community is clearly shown here and it is the coming together and the support that stregthens these dancers instead of remaining silent and voiceless in a society that is racially divided. The upbeat, enegtic music in “Wade in the water”, creates an uplifting and happy atmosphere which allows the dancers to feel powerful and free against those who have tried to overpower and belittle them before. Ailey shows this through the elaborate and expressive movement of the arms that he uses to present the free and powerful attitudes of his dancers, suggesting that it is not silence that will allow them to overcome this racial authority of the white americans, but fighting back and remaining resilient will allow them to stregthen their authority and significance.**  **Overall, after comparing both practitoners works, I believe that although Ailey uses silence to intensify the authority and powerful atmosphere created by those in a higher position, Bruce uses the working class prisoner and his own silence to suggest that this overpowers any other form of supremacy no matter how important or significant they are. The silence in “Swansong” definitely reflects the motto for the performing arts festival, as it is the silence that allows each character to have their moment of authority and power, and therefore I believe that this piece would be best related and ideal for headlining the festival.** |