New German Dance Studies

Edited by Susan Manning and Lucia Ruprecht
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SUSAN MANNING AND
LUCIA RUPRECHT

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SUSAN MANNING AND LUCIA RUPRECHT

We first must thank all our authors, who responded excitedly to our initial queries four years ago and who have responded to all our subsequent queries with equal enthusiasm. No edited volume can encompass all the first-rate scholarship in a field, and we are well aware of how many other authors might have added their voices to this collection. Indeed, this anthology emerged from our sense that the last decade has witnessed such a rich outpouring of scholarship on dance in German-speaking Europe that a collection was warranted. So in the broadest sense, we are indebted to all the authors who have contributed to the field, whether they are represented in this volume or not. We have attempted to survey the broader field through our introductory essay, yet we fear that we undoubtedly have included only the proverbial tip of the iceberg.

Our home institutions contributed financial support that enabled us to engage graduate students as our able assistants. At Cambridge University Charlotte Lee, Christopher Geissler, and Max Haberich translated essays written in German into (British) English. At Northwestern University Tara Rodman served as our (American English) copy editor and our project organizer, tracking all the myriad details necessary for collaboration across two continents. For granting us permission to reprint illustrations, we thank the Bauhaus Archive in Berlin, the Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz/Art Resources, the Derra de Moroda Dance Archive, Galerie Baudoin Lebon, the German Dance Archive in Cologne, the Harvard Theatre Collection, Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen in Dresden, Stiftung Archiv der deutschen Frauenbewegung, and the Transit-Film-Gesellschaft.

After years of conversations at theater and dance conferences, Susan finally sent a book proposal to Joan Catapano, associate director and editor in chief
Editors' Acknowledgments

at the University of Illinois Press, and Joan proved as wonderful an editor as Susan had always suspected she would be. But, alas, Susan had waited too long and Joan retired just after the manuscript was accepted. For more than two decades, Joan had published dance scholarship, first at Indiana University Press and then at Illinois. On behalf of the field as a whole, we extend our thanks to Joan for her many years of editorial support.

Luckily, Joan passed the job of seeing the manuscript through publication to her able associate, Danny Nasset, and we thank Danny and the remainder of the team at Illinois—Nancy Albright, Jennifer Clark, Roberta J. Sparenberg—for their professionalism. As readers for the press, Susan Foster and Helga Kraft helped us balance our address to scholars in German studies and in dance studies and we appreciate their divergent perspectives.

Lucia has spent much of her career at precisely this intersection between German cultural studies and dance studies. Working with Susan and with all the contributors to this volume has encouraged her interest in bringing the two fields together, an interest not least fueled by the increasing number of students of German who turn to her with much enthusiasm about dance and little guidance about how to find out more. It is to these students that she would like to dedicate her work on New German Dance Studies.

Susan first met Lucia in Paris at the joint conference hosted by the Society of Dance History Scholars and the Congress on Research in Dance at the Centre national de la danse. In that Paris summer, Susan reconnected with the family that had first welcomed her to Germany nearly forty years before, and she would like to dedicate her work on this volume to her adopted family—with deep affection for Tina and Konny and in loving memory of Hans, Traud, and Frank.
Contributors' Acknowledgments

All translations from German by the authors unless otherwise noted.

Chapter 1—Christina Thurner
  Translated by Charlotte Lee.

Chapter 2—Claudia Jeschke
  Translated by Lisa Jeschke.

Chapter 3—Susan Funkenstein
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Chapter 4—Susanne Franco
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Translated by Christopher Geissler.
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Chapter 10—Jens Richard Giersdorf
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Chapter 11—Sabine Huschka
Translated by Charlotte Lee.

Chapter 15—Gabriele Klein
Translated by Max Haberich.
New German Dance Studies
New German Dance Studies offers fresh histories and theoretical inquiries that will resonate not only for scholars working in the field of dance, but also for scholars working on literature, film, visual culture, theater, and performance. The volume brings together essays by scholars working inside and outside Germany, by established leaders in the field as well as new voices. Topics range from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theater dance to popular social dances in global circulation, although emphasis falls on twentieth- and twenty-first-century modern and contemporary dance. Three research clusters emerge: Weimar culture and its afterlife, a focus that is still particularly strong in German studies outside Germany; the GDR (German Democratic Republic), where our contributions work toward filling a persistent gap in East German cultural history; and conceptual trends in recent theater dance that are only slowly finding an audience outside continental Europe.

This introductory chapter sketches the intellectual and artistic trends over the last thirty years that have shaped the scholarship featured in New German Dance Studies. This overview follows the broadly chronological organization of the volume as a whole: opening essays on theater dance before 1900; then research clusters on Weimar dance, dance in the GDR, and conceptual dance; and a closing reflection on the circulation of dance in an era of globalization. Throughout we emphasize the complex interplay between dance-making and dance writing, as well as interrelations between dance practice and research and artistic and intellectual trends in German culture at large. Although we cannot detail all these interconnections, we remain aware that the essays collected in New German Dance Studies participate in broader cultural transformations even while documenting and narrating how these transformations have impacted dance research.
INTRODUCTION

From Germanistik to Kulturwissenschaft

Over the past decades, the emergence of a new type of German cultural studies (Kulturwissenschaft) has replaced more traditional separations between disciplines. Kulturwissenschaft has opened the academic field of German literature (Germanistik) to transdisciplinary inquiries on a broad range of research topics, demonstrating a new awareness of historical contexts and theoretical questions without necessarily abolishing a strong philological grounding. Mindful of the analytical demands posed by social and political structures, practitioners of German cultural studies acknowledge their British and American predecessors while maintaining strong interests in specific areas such as historical discourse analysis, the formation of knowledge, and theories of performance—all interests represented in this volume. Kulturwissenschaft does not constitute yet another trend within the methodological and theoretical debates of the late twentieth century but shows how current research operates both informed by and "after" theory.

Cultures of the body have contributed to this new kind of research, both as textlike objects for study and as alternative models to the textual paradigm. Dance studies can have a prime impact here, and it is this volume's aim to encourage and further the inclusion of dance scholarship in the broadened spectrum of research enabled by the turn of Germanistik toward Kulturwissenschaft. As Gabriele Brandstetter suggests: "It is one of dance studies' tasks to provide historical research and theoretical positions for choreographers and dancers, but also for cultural studies at large."

Christina Thurner's essay, "Affect, Discourse, and Dance before 1900," demonstrates what can be gained from a transdisciplinary approach. Her analysis of aesthetic treatises historicizes claims that see dance as an art of expression that projects emotions in an immediate fashion. As she notes, such a mythical understanding often prevails up to today. Thurner emphasizes that important aspects of a major event in the history of dance—ballet reform in the eighteenth century—were actually prescribed in aesthetic discourse before their implementation on stage. Her essay also provides crucial historical background to the renewed interest in expression in dance after 1900.

Claudia Jeschke's essay, "Lola Montez and Spanish Dance in the 19th Century," narrates the career of a performer who trafficked in staging the Spanish dancer as a figure of otherness on the stages of nineteenth-century Europe. Jeschke addresses both performative qualities and written discourse, in particular Montez's own writings, as strategies for self-fashioning. Here, discourse itself gains a performative potential, pronouncing into being a successful persona that relied on a variety of marketing tactics. Jeschke casts new light on dance history by exploring how a dilettante female performer used constructions of gender and alterity to forge a star identity for herself.
In their engagement with relatively unknown autobiographical writings and dance treatises not usually considered by anyone but specialists, both Jeschke's and Thurner's contributions exemplify the debt of *Kulturwissenschaft* to New Historicism. Both also point up the relevance today of historical stagings and discussions of alterity and affect. Above all, their essays demonstrate pre-twentieth-century dance's inextricable embeddedness within cultural discourse and practice.

The two opening essays continue a body of work situated within one of the most prolific fields of interaction between dance studies and German cultural studies to date, which can be broadly subsumed under the heading of discourse analysis. This approach highlights the discursive framing of dance, and investigations span the seventeenth to the twenty-first century. Authors writing in this area often have a background in literary studies. They explore the ways in which aesthetic, literary, and journalistic writings speak about dance and how this discourse illuminates dance history as well as the history of literature and aesthetics. Studies on dance and discourse explore the descriptive and prescriptive potential of language that relates to the physical art, but also the ways in which language may define a type of movement as dance in the first place, whether in an aesthetic, social, or political framework.

One of the most potent topoi in the history of dance writing is the assumption of the body's pre-discursive status. This assumption is implied in dance's association with the unspeakable in the sense of that which must not be expressed—the socially or politically censored—and that which cannot be expressed—the ineffable. Mobilizing literary studies to explicate dance studies, Brandstetter has identified key moments for these two types of unspeakability in the history of German literature: Goethe's *Werther*, which establishes the dancing body in the eighteenth century as a prime figure for new forms of sensitive subjectivity, but also for gendered identity and the code of intimacy that results from social censorship; and Hugo von Hofmannsthal's turn-of-the-century writings that celebrate dance together with the other silent arts as alternative sign systems at a time of fundamental revisions in the order of representation. Here and elsewhere, Brandstetter's investigations demonstrate how dance and writing reinforce, but also challenge, the assumption of the body before or beyond language.

Whatever the stated topic, many of this volume's contributions necessarily deal with dance and discourse. Dance studies demands a certain amount of dance writing, the description of what happens on stage or, in the case of Jens Richard Giersdorff's article, while walking on the street. Description thus retrospectively reanimates bodily movement while also enacting interpretive approaches to the physical event. Because of dance's unstable ontological status as a corporeal art of movement, much literary writing has revealed a melancholic awareness of the impermanence of the dancing body. More re-
cently, the renewed interest in phenomenological approaches has superseded this stance and its underlying dualism of body and mind, stage and page. Scholars now engage with the modes in which movement is thought and experienced by performers and viewers and how this kinesthetic imaginary affects our language.

Ideas of the thinking body that have arisen from such engagements often retain as much of a mythical aura as those of the unthinking body. Yet they also open up distinctive modes of research and practice where authors and artists do not dwell on the referential gap but analyze, deconstruct, or shift its implications, treating it as a fact that enables instead of disables insight. New scholarship inquires into the ideological contexts that insist on dance as fleeting, indescribable movement or, in Thurner's account, as immediate emotional expressiveness. This approach characterizes not only current directions in dance studies but also conceptual dance as a mode of creative research and critical theory. In other words, topical questions in dance research cannot be separated from the emergence of conceptual dance, and conceptual dance in turn cannot be separated from the accompanying shift from broadly sociohistorical to broadly philosophical approaches to dance history.

Similarly, the broadly sociohistorical histories of Weimar dance, dance in exile, and dance in the GDR cannot be separated from the emergence of Tanztheater in both East and West Germany, as artists and intellectuals in the 1960s and 1970s took critical stances to the founding ideologies of both German states. Nor can the turn from Tanztheater to conceptual dance be disentangled from the reconfiguration of German artistic and intellectual life after the fall of the Berlin Wall and national reunification.

From Ausdruckstanz to Weimar Dance

In the late 1970s and 1980s, German critics and historians engaged by the rise of Tanztheater began to investigate German modern dance between the two world wars, or Ausdruckstanz (dance of expression) as the practice was known. As Johann Kresnik, Pina Bausch, Susanne Linke, Gerhard Bohner, and others created socially critical and vividly theatrical alternatives to the postwar ballet boom in West Germany, Tom Schilling, Arila Siegert, and others sought to reform and revitalize the East German dance stage. Although dance training in both German states during the postwar years emphasized ballet, many of the artists who created Tanztheater also had studied with survivors of Ausdruckstanz. While Schilling had studied with Mary Wigman and Dore Hoyer, Siegert had studied with Gret Palucca in Dresden. Linke and Bohner also had studied with Wigman, while Bausch had studied with Kurt Jooss in Essen. As critics and scholars often noted, these artists' early exposure to
Ausdruckstanz informed their later rejection of the ballet boom in its varied forms in East and West Germany.

As Tanztheater became an emergent and then dominant form in the 1980s and 1990s, research into the lives and careers of individual dancers in the 1920s and 1930s revealed the breadth and depth of dance reform and experimental dance in Germany and in German-speaking Europe between the two world wars. This research inevitably engaged the question of how practitioners of Ausdruckstanz had negotiated the radical break of 1933, when the Weimar Republic gave way to the National Socialist state. Biographers of individual artists handled this question in varying ways. Some studies, such as Hedwig Müller's biography of Mary Wigman, sought to understand the choreographer's involvement with the Nazi state from the artist's own perspective during the Third Reich, emphasizing her commitment to German culture as expressed through her letters and diaries of the time. Other studies, such as Valerie Preston-Dunlop's biography of Rudolf Laban, sought to portray the artist's involvement with the Nazi state from the perspective of his 1938 exile, acknowledging his earlier employment by the Nazi cultural bureaucracy but emphasizing the hardships he endured after his employment contract had been terminated.

It was not until studies were published that examined the broader role of Ausdruckstanz under National Socialism that questions of individual culpability could be seen in relation to larger institutional and ideological dynamics. In 1993 a major exhibition staged at the Academy of Arts in Berlin traced the history of Ausdruckstanz from 1900—when the movement emerged as part of the life reform movement—through the years of the Weimar Republic—when a broad range of expressive dance practices became an integral component of the era's artistic experimentation—and into the Nazi years—when the National Socialists embraced Deutscher Tanz ("German Dance," as Ausdruckstanz was now called) as part of a Volksgemeinschaft (literally "folk community") that divided "true Germans" from Communists, Jews, homosexuals, and other "outsiders." Titled after Laban's statement that "everyone is a dancer," the catalog accompanying the show printed primary documents from the three Dancers' Congresses in 1927, 1928, and 1930 organized by proponents of Ausdruckstanz and from the German Dance Festivals in 1934 and 1935 and the 1936 Olympic Festival organized by the National Socialists, as if to underscore how the Ausdruckstanz ideal of a Tanzgemeinschaft ("dance community") had given way to the Volksgemeinschaft. Over the next decade, other scholars also published their primary research into the broader question of the alliance of Ausdruckstanz and National Socialism, and varied perspectives on the troubling alliance became subject to debate.

Further research also made clear that the methods associated with Mary Wigman, Rudolf Laban, and their disciples—the social and artistic formation
known as Ausdruckstanz—comprised only part of the flourishing dance scene of the interwar years. Valeska Gert and other cabaret dancers, the Tiller Girls and other groups of precision dancers on the revue stage, Oskar Schlemmer at the Bauhaus, the craze for jazz dance documented in silent films of the era—all these movement forms were equally significant, as were the varied systems of "aesthetic gymnastics" (Tanzgymnastik) that were central to physical culture of the Weimar years. In a review of the literature published in 2007, Susanne Franco suggested that dance historians follow the lead of film scholars and adopt the term Weimar Dance to encompass the broader range of dance and movement forms. Younger scholars immediately saw the need to do so.

Once the major contours of Weimar dance became visible, scholars could look more closely at interrelations between Weimar dance and other artistic and social practices of the time. While some scholars have considered the overlap and interplay between Weimar dance and physical culture, others have examined the overlap and interplay between Weimar dance, theater, film, and visual culture. At its best, such cross-disciplinary research challenges standard disciplinary narratives. In this volume, Susan Funkenstein’s essay, “Picturing Palucca at the Bauhaus,” examines the visual images of Palucca created by students and teachers at the Bauhaus. In so doing, Funkenstein challenges the standard literature that associates Bauhaus dance exclusively with Oskar Schlemmer. Susanne Franco’s essay, “Rudolf Laban’s Dance Film Projects,” considers how film offered Laban yet another arena within which to promote his distinctive vision of dance. Yet Franco also wonders aloud whether Laban’s apparent turn away from film in the mid-193os reflected his engagement with the National Socialist cultural bureaucracy and the opportunities it offered for his vision of mass dance.

A generation ago, the most explosive scholarship on Weimar dance focused on its entanglement with the Nazi state. More recently, scholars have examined the interplay of dance and cultural politics in Weimar dance in exile and in dance in the GDR. Such inquiries contribute to what Jürgen Habermas famously discussed as Germany’s preoccupation with a “double past,” the demand to “work off the past” of the Nazi state and the GDR without equating their status and impact.

Beginning in the 1920s and accelerating through the 1930s, German dancers emigrated to a variety of locations, and students trained in Germany broadly circulated what they had learned across Europe, the Americas, and Asia. In this volume, three authors probe the complexities of German émigré experience in the United States. Tresa Randall’s essay, “Hanya Holm and an American Tanzgemeinschaft,” counters the standard narrative of Holm’s assimilation and Americanization. Focusing on Holm’s writings during her early years in the United States, Randall demonstrates how she saw her New World milieu
through an Old World lens, conceptualizing the United States as a fragmented society (Gesellschaft) in need of a community that integrated its members and that dance could provide (Tanzgemeinschaft). Karen Mozingo’s essay, “Lotte Goslar’s Clowns,” examines the performance of clownsing in Goslar’s works, an artistic strategy that marginalized the choreographer in histories of modern dance on both sides of the Atlantic. Writing Goslar back into both histories, Mozingo articulates a richly alternative vision of how dance engages its historical time and place. And Kate Elswit’s essay, “Back Again? Valeska Gert’s Exiles,” questions what exile means for an artist whose performances relied on a strategy of estrangement. In so doing, Elswit follows Gert through her American exile and back to Germany, exploring the shifting dynamics of her reception abroad and upon her return to a very changed homeland.

After World War II, exiled dancers returned to a homeland divided first between the Soviet and Allied sectors and, from 1949 to 1990, into the Federal Republic of Germany and the GDR. During those forty years, theatrical dance took distinctive forms and developed distinctive structures for patronage in the two Germanys. Thus two interrelated histories ran parallel. In the years immediately following reunification, as West Germany absorbed the infrastructure erected in the East, histories of Germany tended to bracket East Germany as “the failed socialist experiment”—as one chapter was titled in a 1995 introduction to German cultural studies. Yet with more time and distance came more interest in probing the forty years of art and cultural politics in the GDR.

In this volume, three essays make a provocative and multifaceted contribution to the existing literature on dance in the GDR. In “Was bleibt? The Politics of East German Dance,” Marion Kant, who established her career as a critical intellectual within the GDR, looks back at how dancers during the years immediately following World War II negotiated the terrain of divided Germany: while Mary Wigman and Marianne Vogelsang ended “in the West,” Gret Palucca and Jean Weidt found themselves “in the East.” In Kant’s polemical essay, their choices are subject to intense scrutiny. In “Warfare over Realism: Tanztheater in East Germany, 1966–1989,” Franz Anton Cramer, a former managing director of the dance archive in Leipzig, intentionally takes a more distanced approach. Rereading the debate over socialist realism and revisiting the Tanztheater created by Tom Schilling at the Komische Oper in East Berlin, he invites us to set aside the earlier dismissal of Schilling’s Tanztheater by West-oriented critics and to explore the intersection of aesthetics and politics in East German dance theory and practice. In “Moving against Disappearance: East German Bodies in Contemporary Choreography,” Jens Richard Giersdorf probes the representation of East Germany by choreographers who grew up on opposite sides of the wall, Sasha Waltz and Jo Fabian. Like Fabian, Giersdorf came of age in East Germany in the 1980s, and his perspective reflects
the thrill of that first walk across Berlin and his dismay at the erasure of his experience. Despite their very different perspectives, all three authors call for a more nuanced view of East German dance and cultural history.

Strikingly, all but one of the authors in this volume writing on Weimar dance, dance in exile, and dance in the GDR are based wholly or partly outside Germany. Marion Kant divides her time between Cambridge (U.K.) and Philadelphia, while Franz Anton Cramer divides his time between Paris and Berlin. Susanne Franco teaches in Venice and in Salerno. Jens Richard Giersdorf, Karen Mozingo, Tresa Randall, Susan Funkenstein, and Kate Elswit are affiliated with colleges and universities in the United States. Many of these authors build on the significant body of work produced in Germany by Hedwig Müller, Patricia Stückemann, Franz-Manuel Peter, among others—the generation inspired and provoked by the emergence of Tanztheater in the 1980s to excavate and fathom the history and politics of Weimar dance.

The one exception is Sabine Huschka, whose essay "Pina Bausch, Mary Wigman, and the Aesthetic of 'Being Moved'" rethinks the relationship between Wigman and Bausch from a viewpoint informed by recent philosophical approaches to dance history. Challenging often-stated continuities between the two choreographers based on genealogies of pedagogical transmission, Huschka's aesthetic analysis of major choreographic concepts in Wigman and Bausch reflects back on the different politics of the body and the different social and cultural concerns that the two artists espoused. But her inquiry into the charged emotionality of Ausdruckstanz and Tanztheater also complements Thurner's investigation of dance's history as an expression of affect.

From Tanztheater to Konzepttanz

As Huschka's essay exemplifies, a significant intellectual development within Germany is the shift from the generation that focused on the politics of Weimar dance in the wake of Tanztheater in the 1980s to the generation that focuses on the philosophy of contemporary and historical dance in the wake of the emergence of conceptual dance (Konzepttanz) over the last two decades. Konzepttanz is the controversial label for works since the 1990s by choreographers such as Xavier Le Roy, Meg Stuart, Jochen Roller, Martin Nachbar, Katrin Deuffert and Thomas Pischke, Thomas Lehmen, and Eszter Salamon—to mention only some of those based in Berlin, which is a center for this type of performance. Although sometimes used in a pejorative sense, as criticizing a form of contemporary dance that is lacking in movement interest, the notion of Konzepttanz represents, in fact, a very heterogeneous body of experimental pieces that share a certain theoretical attitude: they all think about dance within the frame of dance; to do so, they often (but not always) include
language. "If the use of the notion of *Konzepttanz* is to have any meaning at all," Gerald Siegmund claims, "it must refer to the questioning of dominant techniques of movement and the bodily norms that these techniques generate, as well as to the rethinking of their status and reception in society.\(^{17}\)

As *Konzepttanz* both generates its own theory and lends itself to the theoretical gaze of the viewer, one of the most prominent current research interests concerns the relationship between dance and knowledge.\(^{18}\) If dance constitutes a culture of knowledge, in which ways does its dynamic, sensuous, and corporeal practice affect our general understanding of knowledge in diverse realms of the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences? One of the premises of *Kulturwissenschaft* is the assumption that any type of cultural enunciation can be approached like a (polysemous) text. Current German dance studies largely subscribes to this hypothesis, while offering at the same time a particularly acute understanding of aspects that involve going beyond textuality, such as physical presence and performative enactment.

In this volume, Yvonne Hardt’s essay, "Engagements with the Past in Contemporary Dance," looks at the performative reconstruction of past knowledge in new stagings of historical choreographies. She addresses practices between theoretical inquiry and performance and shows how these practices revise traditional forms of knowledge preservation such as the archive. The works addressed by Hardt are part of a combined effort of dance practice and theory to rethink history—and historiography—from the perspective of performance.\(^{19}\) Dance’s engagement with its status as an art based on physical memory thus feeds into a research focus on cultural memory within the humanities and humanistic social sciences. Whereas memory is often primarily considered as "static, architectonic, quantitative and encyclopedic," dance’s negotiation of cultural heritage as something that is passed on from body to body draws attention to "the performance aspect, the movement inherent in any active recollection [. . .]."\(^{20}\)

The "lecture performance" is a key genre in the field of *Konzepttanz*. Maike Bleeker’s essay, "Lecture Performance as Contemporary Dance," situates this trend within a genealogy of bodily knowledge and its academic dissemination that had reached its first high point in the dance conventions during the Weimar years. By analyzing particular examples of lecture performances, Bleeker demonstrates in detail the self-reflexive structures that emerge between scientific paper and corporeal act. And she explains in which ways lecture performances redefine what it means to be a dancer, seeing it as an attitude rather than a profession.

While both Hardt’s and Bleeker’s essays give evidence of new theoretical investments arising from *Konzepttanz*, Gerald Siegmund’s essay, "Negotiating Choreography, Letter, and Law in William Forsythe," considers an artist whose
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intellectual choreographies form a unique—and uniquely successful—part of Germany's dance culture.\textsuperscript{22} Reflecting on the aesthetic experience of Forsythe's productions, Siegmund explores how they provoke a theoretical rethinking of the notion of choreography. Whereas Bleeker focuses on the potential of Konzepttanz to draw attention to the fact that dance is always already exceeding physical movement, making visible the discourses, practices, norms, and regulations that influence formations of subjectivity, Siegmund engages with the ways in which Forsythe's choreographic methods allow for such formations to emerge. At once aesthetic and political, choreography is presented as a fundamentally social practice, molding subjects and enabling them to interact. Hardt's, Bleeker's, and Siegmund's articles demonstrate the insights made possible by an investment in dance literacy for contemporary cultural theory, and vice versa.

The shift in interest from the politics of Weimar dance to the philosophy of early twenty-first-century dance accompanied a changing infrastructure for dance studies: before the Fall of the Wall, dance history (Tanzgeschichte) was written mostly by journalists and published mostly in dance magazines, yearbooks, and encyclopedias. After the Fall of the Wall, as the formerly West German system absorbed East German institutions, the production of Tanzwissenschaft ("dance science" or "dance studies") entered the German university system—ironically, a move anticipated by the founding of a dance studies program in Leipzig in 1986.\textsuperscript{21}

After reunification, the Free University in Berlin became the center for Tanzwissenschaft, as Gabriele Brandstetter led the move to distinguish Tanzwissenschaft within Theaterwissenschaft ("theater science" or "theater studies"). Brandstetter's pathbreaking transdisciplinary approach has raised awareness of dance's importance within the wider field of cultural studies.\textsuperscript{24} In fact, the researchers and writers associated with this approach have become known informally as the "Berlin School." In addition, the Hochschulübergreifendes Zentrum Tanz Berlin (Inter-University Center for Dance) was founded in 2006. It is based organizationally at the two Berlin art academies, the Universität der Künste (University of the Arts) and the Hochschule für Schauspielkunst 'Ernst Busch' (University of Drama). Complementing the Free University's teaching of theoretical and historical aspects of dance, the Inter-University Center emphasizes practical guidance for aspiring contemporary dancers and choreographers.

Beyond Berlin

Within the German-speaking countries today, significant alternatives to the "Berlin School" are the dance programs at the Institute for Applied Theater
Studies in Giessen and at the Institute for Theater Studies in Bern. There are dance studies pathways within the departments of theater studies in Leipzig and Munich, and at the University of Music and Dance in Cologne. Together with Claudia Jeschke’s Department of Dance Studies in Salzburg, the Austrian center for contemporary dance and theory “Tanzquartier” in Vienna, and the Institute for Performance Studies established at the University of Hamburg by Gabriele Klein, they represent a thriving research culture.25 Whereas in Berlin and elsewhere, the focus is on “high art” and theatrical dance, Klein works from the premises of sociology, and she has written widely on popular dance and cultural theory.26 Her concluding essay to New German Dance Studies, “Toward a Theory of Cultural Translation in Dance,” uses a case study of tango to point toward a broad range of research topics made possible through ethnographic approaches and theories of globalization.

Klein’s essay takes on a special relevance when contrasted with Claudia Jeschke’s essay on Montez. As a pioneer of dance studies, Jeschke started her career when an academic position in the field was barely conceivable in German-speaking Europe, and she has subsequently helped establish academic programs in Cologne, Leipzig, and Salzburg, where she is now head of the Department of Dance Studies and director of the Derra de Moroda Dance Archives. Her publications have laid substantial methodological foundations for the study of dance, ranging from reconstructions and systematic movement analysis to new forms of historiography.27 Klein too is a pioneer; she started her career at a time when “performance studies” was not a viable practice in German-speaking Europe, and she has broadened the field of dance studies beyond the theatrical stage. The distance from Jeschke’s account of an exoticized Spanish dancer on the nineteenth-century stage to Klein’s account of tango’s global circulation frames the last three decades of scholarship on German dance.

It is our hope that the essays in New German Dance Studies will enrich both dance studies and German cultural studies. Indeed, we believe that dance studies can profit from cultural studies approaches, and cultural studies can profit from the inclusion of dance. At the intersection between fields, dancing bodies articulate forms of knowledge and practice as they negotiate psychosocial potentials and prohibitions, intellectual innovations and traditions, cultural imagination and physical reality.

Notes

1. Gabriele Brandstetter, “Intensive Suche nach einem neuen Denken: Ein Manifest für den Tanz,” Theater der Zeit 12 (2004): 22–25, here 25 (translated by Lucia Ruprecht). It has been argued before that cultural studies can profit from specialist research on embodied forms of representation and interaction; however, the discussion within dance studies tends to focus more on the benefits and problems of its own theoretical turn
toward cultural studies approaches: see programmatic publications such as Ellen W.
Goellner and Jacqueline Shea Murphy, eds., Bodies of the Text: Dance as Theory,
Literature as Dance (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995); Gay Morris,
Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance (Durham, N.C.: Duke University
Press, 1997); Dance Research Journal 41:1 (2009), Special Issue on Dance, the Disciplines,
and Interdisciplinarity; Forum for Modern Language Studies 46:4 (2010), Special Issue on
Evaluating Dance: Discursive Parameters.

2. See Gabriele Brandstetter, Tanz-Lektüren: Körperbilder und Raumfiguren der Avant-
garde (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1993); Gregor Gumport, Die Rede vom Tanz:
Körperaesthetik in der Literatur der Jahrhundertwende (Munich: Fink, 1994); Nicole Fritz-
ing, Vergessene Traktate—Archiv von Wirkungskonzepten im Tanz von
der Renaissance bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts (Munich: epodium, 2009); Alexandra
Kohl, Performing Femininity: Dance and Literature in German Modernism (Oxford: Lang,
2009); Roger Müller-Farguell, Tanz-Figuren: Zur metaphorischen Konstitution von Bewe-
gung in Texten (Munich: Fink, 1995); Lucia Buprecht, Dances of the Self in Heinrich von
Kleist, E.T.A. Hoffmann and Heinrich Heine (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006); Stefanie
Schrodter, Vom "Affect" zur "Action": Quellenstudien zur Poetik der Tanzkunst vom späten
Ballet de Cour bis zum frühen Ballet en Action (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann,
2004); Christina Thurner, Beralte Körper—bewegte Seelen: Zum Diskurs der doppelten
Bewegung in Tanztexten (Bielefeld: transcript, 2009).

3. Gabriele Brandstetter, "Tanz und Literatur: Ausstoße zu kulturwissenschaftlicher

4. See Isa Wortelkamp, Schreiben mit dem Stift in der Hand: Die Aufführung im Schrift-
zug der Aufzeichnung (Freiburg: Rombach, 2006); Gabriele Wittmann, "Dancing Is Not
Writing: Ein poetisches Projekt über die Schnittstelle von Sprache und Tanz," in Tanz

5. See Gabriele Brandstetter and Gunhild Oberzaucher-Schüller, eds., Mundart der
Wiener Moderne: Der Tanz der Greta Wiesenthal (Munich: K. Kieser, 2009); Evelyn Dörö,
Rudolf Laban: The Dancer of the Crystal (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2007); Katja
Erdmann-Rajski, Greta Palucca (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2000); Leonard Fiedler and
Martin Lang, Greta Wiesenthal: Die Schönheit der Sprache des Körpers im Tanz (Salzburg:
Residenz, 1985); Susanne Foellner, Valeska Gert: Fragmente einer Avantgardistin in Tanz
und Schauspiel der 1920er Jahre (Bielefeld: transcript, 2006); Yvonne Hardt, Politische Kör-
per: Ausdruckstanz, Choreographien des Protests und die Arbeiterkulturbewegung (Münster:
LIT, 2004); Yvonne Hardt, "Ausdrucktanz on the Left and the Work of Jean Weidt," in
Dance Discourses: Keywords in Dance Research, eds. Susanne Franco and Marina Nordera
(London: Routledge, 2007), 61–79; Yvonne Hardt, "Ausdrucktanz, Workers’ Culture, and
Masculinity in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s," in When Men Dance, eds. Jennifer Fisher
and Anthony Shay (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 258–275; Isabelle Launay,
A la recherche d’une danse moderne, Rudolf Laban—Mary Wigman (Paris: Librairie de la
Danse, 1996); Susan Manning, Ecstasy and the Demon: The Dances of Mary Wigman (Berke-
ley: University of California Press, 1993; 2nd ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota
Press, 2006); Anna and Hermann Markard, eds., Joos (Cologne: Ballett-Bühnen-Verlag,
1985); Hedwig Müller, Mary Wigman: Leben und Werk der großen Tänzerin (Weinheim:
Quadriga, 1986); Hedwig Müller et. al., Dare Hoyer-Tänzerin (Berlin: Edition Henrich,


8. Hedwig Müller and Patricia Stückemann, eds., “...jeder Mensch ist ein Tänzer”: Ausdruckstanz in Deutschland zwischen 1900 und 1945 (Giessen: Andas, 1994). The exhibition, which was shown in Dresden as well as Berlin, was titled “Weltenfriede-Jugendglück: Vom Ausdruckstanz zum Olympischen Spiel.”


10. Susanne Franco, “Ausdruckstanz: Traditions, Translations, Transmissions,” in Dance Discourses: Keywords in Dance Research, eds. Susanne Franco and Marina Nordera (Lon-
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12. See Jürgen Habermas, A Berlin Republic: Writings on Germany (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).


14. The parallel histories were visualized in an exhibit at the Academy of Arts in Berlin in 2003. See Hedwig Müller, Ralf Stabel, and Patricia Stockmann, Krokodil im Schwanensee: Tanz in Deutschland seit 1945 (Frankfurt: Anabas-Verlag, 2003).


16. On Konzepttanz, see Gerald Siegmund, Abwesenheit: Eine performative Ästhetik
jes Ianzes, William Forsythe, Jérôme Bel, Xavier Le Roy, Meg Stuart (Bielefeld: transcript, 2006); Susanne Foellmer, Am Rand der Körpere: Inventuren des Unabgeschlossenen im zeitgenössischen Tanz (Bielefeld: transcript, 2009); Pirko Husemann, Choreographie als kritische Praxis: Arbeitsweisen bei Xavier Le Roy und Thomas Lehmen (Bielefeld: transcript, 2009); André Lepecki, Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement (New York, Routledge, 2006); Helmut Ploebst, da wird da word: Neue Choreographie in der Gesellschaft des Spektakels. 9 Portraits: Meg Stuart, Vera Mantaro, Xavier Le Roy, Benoit Lachambre, Ramonud Hoghe, Emir GracolPC, João Videira, Boris Charmatz, Jérôme Bel (München: Kieser, 2001); Annamaria Jochem, Meg Stuart: Bild in Bewegung und Choreographie (Bielefeld: transcript, 2008); Tanzjournal 2 (2004), Special Issue on Konzepttanz.


11. Pina Bausch, Mary Wigman, and the Aesthetic of “Being Moved”

SABINE HUSCHKA

Throughout the history of dance performance, the body has been seen as a site of experiences that are being transposed into movement. The Ausdruckstanz of the Weimar Republic, for example, appealed under the influence of Mary Wigman to an experiential space of physical movement and the aim of this “language of dance” was to draw the audience into a communicative structure of experience. “Experience” (what Wigman termed Erlebnis) became the central aesthetic concept of her dance: from a position of profound skepticism with regard to language, the intention was to show the human being in his or her truest incarnation.

Dance research often draws a genealogy that connects Wigman’s approach to that of Pina Bausch, the central representative of German Tanztheater as it emerged in the 1970s. The aesthetic appeal of Tanztheater stems from shared corporeal and cultural experiences (Erfahrungen). It evokes a hunger for lived experience, for sensuous contact with what seems to be real. It caters to the desire to witness what is essential to humanity—from an appropriate distance, and yet with the slight tremor that comes from the feeling of being privy to what really moves people, of seeing real bodies and genuine emotions. Some German authors, among them Norbert Servos, have isolated this theatrical mode of perception as the definitive characteristic of Bausch’s work, claiming that it constitutes a “theatre of experience,” which follows the topology of immediate and global comprehensibility. Regardless of their cultural background, audience members experience here “theatre as communication of the senses” and an “authenticity of feeling” which is moving. The opinions of Servos and others evince an enthusiasm for the idea of “a meeting with reality” on stage. Illusions of immediacy blur the difference between displaying choreographed figures on stage and viewing them, and fail to acknowledge the models of representation and perception that govern emotional on-stage action.
By analyzing these aesthetic models, however, the differences between Wigman and Bausch become obvious. Bausch took a fundamentally different position compared to the one propagated by her predecessor: turning her attention away from absolute truth and toward the truthfulness of any given physical movement on stage, while retaining the appeal to feeling, she sought to develop emotionally determined forms of movement and to create a shared space of human experience beyond any essentialism. But what about the choreographed body in these theatrical spaces of experience? How do movements and gestures function to reveal a perspective on the human being? Which choreographic or theatrical means are used, at the discretion of the individual body, to produce an impression of unmediated immediacy? The radical difference between Wigman and Bausch can be detected in their aesthetics of representation, in the way in which they choreograph emotion.

Spaces of Emotion: Mary Wigman and Pina Bausch

To begin with, Wigman's style and that of Bausch, their respective physical constructions of emotion, and the politics of the body that they espoused are marked by distinctive social and cultural concerns: Wigman's aesthetic is also a philosophy of life and was developed in the years leading up to National Socialism, whereas that of Bausch was rooted in the revolutionary movement of 1968. Although the two are linked by a more fundamental principle of expression, a shared affective language of the body, historical contextualization of their styles brings to light differences in their respective aesthetics of movement, and in particular the distinction between Bausch's choreographic methods and Wigman's improvisation. Yet this distinction still obscures the two dancers' divergent politics of the body. What evidences their difference more clearly are their acts of staging and choreographing, the physical expression of emotion, and the theatrical figuration of the experience of being moved (Ergriffen-Sein): whereas Wigman's system of theatricality constructs an absolutist model of the passively moved subject, Bausch is engaged in a reflexive search for identity in the space of passive emotion (pathos).

The following analyses of choreography, and of the aesthetics and discourse of movement, seek to trace the theatrical concepts behind the range of emotions that motivate the physical movements. My argument thereby reveals the affective potential, the affirmative character, and also the politics of the body implicit in these theatrical concepts. Both choreographers work with the emotional space associated with physical movement and configure their own unique aesthetic of the experience of being moved. With diverging interests and from different historical situations, they aestheticize the human body gripped by and subjected to strong emotions. The tropes that constitute their respective aesthetics of movement, such as the exploratory touching of space
and bodies in Bausch’s work, and turning and falling in that of Wigman, seek to give rise to discrete moments of experience in order to relate these back to the body as the moving image of the emotional realm. Both choreographers aim to elaborate choreographic and theatrical moments of pathos: the point at which something befalls the body and gives rise to a particular emotion that the sentient being, in keeping with the original Greek derivation of “pathos,” experiences passively and with suffering.

With regard to the various choreographic possibilities for the affected and afflicting body and the related structure of representation comprising movement, image, and language, the following questions arise: how are the techniques of movement and the technicality of theater used to present the body in the throes of events and emotions to which it must submit? What sort of relations of structure and energy are at work here between body, movement, and space?

Choreographic Figures of Emotion—Feeling One’s Way through Space: Café Müller (1978)

The stage is in deep darkness. Songs of lamentation, women’s arias from Purcell’s The Fairy Queen, hover over the set. A woman enters almost imperceptibly from the side of the stage, which is crowded with small coffee house tables and wooden chairs strewn wildly about. The dancer (Pina Bausch) feels her way into the room, taking small steps, her eyes closed, her arms stretched out low in front of her. Her palms, directed toward the interior of the stage, lead the way. Gradually the contours of her figure become sharper and our attention is drawn to all the chairs that have been flung down, forlornly populating the stage, which hinder her movement; gently and carefully the dancer steps round each chair. The stage lighting becomes brighter. Turning slightly, the dancer reaches the wall with her left hand and stands still. Her eyes remain closed the whole time, her gaze thus sunk absently into a place beyond this one.

Now we witness somnambulant, almost un-self-conscious movements, which create a physical space that gestures both toward and away from itself and is extended by powerful, rapid, arc-shaped movements of the arm and upper body. Through the choreography, fields of movement unfold from the withdrawn scenery of the body, sinking back as it were into the space that she explores through touch. This female figure has a light, floating air, and she is dressed in a long flowing tunic. Her characteristic touching, searching movements suggest a sense of being lost. Almost stumbling on stage as she does from the wings, this figure remains bound up in another place.

The choreographed body generates a moving image of absence, enveloped in a tenderness that is both uniquely helpless and self-absorbed (Figure 11.1): gentle, personal movements accompany the general movement forward by
touch, all carried along in a flowing motion. The stage is emotionalized by a sense of touch, which constantly reaches out of kinesthesia into the surrounding space. As more figures enter the stage, one after the other, the piece indicates a drama of hopelessness and perseverance.

Turmoil is never far below the surface, and Cafe Müller maps and frames traces of memory. The desolate setting with its abandoned tables and chairs is taken over by confused figures, who act as if completely lost and whose absentminded movements exhibit the memory of social norms, but one that has long since begun to disintegrate. The signature steps and the intensified moments of time are linked in an arc of repetition that gestures back to the
memory of a past and tries in vain to bring that past into the here and now. We gain the impression that the performers act within a space that is located in an Elsewhere; their movements have an external focus that prevents their arrival at Cafe Müller. All four dancers react to one another in seemingly spontaneously arranged sequences of movement, sometimes imitatively but absentmindedly, piecing up the movements of the others, at other moments, impulsively, with wild gestures, seeking to clear the way for the blind, expanding radius of movement of the others and jerkily throwing to the side all the chairs that block the way. With these continuously interrupted chains of reaction, and with scenes that repeat over and over, the piece choreographs an echo, through which actions and emotionally intense scenes of movement become traces of the memories of forgotten deeds. Their temporality pulsates and flows over the scene in waves, which swell up and ebb away.

The choreographic design of the piece is, moreover, marked by absurd but serious patterns of reaction. Thus a scene consisting of an embrace, prematurely broken off, between a man and a woman recurs throughout the fifty-minute piece. The embrace is arranged and is built up with determination each time by a third person, another man. The loving embrace stabilizes itself for only a matter of seconds before it collapses again. The male partner in the embrace stands stoically in the middle of the stage, while the arms of the woman, who is being lifted into his arms, circle, wreathlike, around him. The man responds powerlessly to the weight of the woman and allows her to sink. She cannot hold the position by herself, and her body slides down that of the man. With ever-increasing speed the third person intervenes to rebuild the scene.

The piece, choreographed in 1978, was danced by Pina Bausch herself until her unexpected death on July 30th, 2009, and, together with Das Frühlingsopfer (Rite of Spring), was a regular feature on the program of the Tanztheater in Wuppertal. In Cafe Müller and other pieces of the 1970s and 1980s, Bausch choreographed the two physical sensations connected with movement: kinesesthesia and touch. Cafe Müller realizes itself through choreographing a corporeal loop, which operates kinesthetically, and according to which, the piece seems to comment on Jean-Luc Nancy's notion that "the body is the unity of a being outside itself." By unfolding a space in which it is possible to "be outside oneself," the stage displays choreographic movements as if they were perceptible to the sense of touch. Even the temporal periods during which the dancers move continually come across as spaces of memory recalled in performance. They do not refer back to psychological motivations but reach out to a loss that articulates itself in the body's field of movement: realities remembered and dreamed. Every action and image of movement is in a perpetual and broken state of hovering. Through these actions and images, other spaces of smoldering memory, which oscillate between absentmindedness and searching touch, are opened up in that darkened, long-abandoned room.
The choreography stages the reverberations of pastness. Emotions appear in the structure of repetition, are articulated as external events that affect the body, or find aesthetic form in the gesture of touching, whether this be constant touching of oneself, sliding off of another body or objects, sinking to the floor, or the impact of the body on chairs and tables. Thus Bausch’s aesthetics of movement diverge from the theory of expression in dance, a theory that figuratively understands the human body as actively articulating a more fundamental movement, creating speaking gestures. By contrast, the momentum of Bausch’s choreographies lies in a passive sensation always kept at a distance, an external event that has been sensed and introduced into the space of performance. Whether it is characterized by suffering, longing, or pleasure, it reveals itself as an aesthetic force, which continually leads the body and its figured movements outside itself. The personal act of searching combined with a sense of one’s own history and reality marks out a double figure of movement on the stage, one which, with every position and point of contact between body and space, evokes an Elsewhere, and points to the Elsewhere that is history.

Theatricality, Method, and Materiality

The choreographic work of Pina Bausch is characterized by an aesthetic framing of the experience of being moved. Distinctive for her style is an approach to the body as a refuge of lived, passively experienced occurrences, in order to remember and reflect upon the emotional traces that these have left. Bausch sought to emphasize experiences of life, indeed of suffering, through targeted questions posed to her dancers and transferred their personal and cultural inscriptions through choreography to the stage. The publication of Tanztheatergeschichten (Dance Theater Stories) by Raimund Hoghe, the dramaturge with whom Bausch worked for many years, together with a number of TV documentaries, such as Was tun Pina Bausch und ihre Tänzer in Wuppertal? (1983) by Klaus Wildenhahn, provide insight into individual phases of work and rehearsal. Catalogues of questions and key words for Walzer (Waltzes, 1982) or Kontakt Hof (Space of Contact, 1978) also mark out initial ideas for the range of themes that the pieces would cover. For Bausch, the aim of asking questions was to elicit honest responses—from the dancers, which, as reflections emanating from their own, true feelings, could be articulated as phrases of movement or as entire scenes.

This approach to the body, which implied a whole aesthetics of movement, and in particular, engaged the body as the prism of experience and memory marked by the influence of society and gender, created choreographic figures that shocked postwar Germany and the bourgeois culture of dance that was reestablished by the ballet boom. Bausch’s theatrical gesture of searching by
sensation staged hybrid subjects, through which ran norms of movement and
smoldering, sensual desires, always bound to a certain emptiness. Although
the pieces dealt with the moods of human beings, with joy and pain, suffering
and pleasure, sexual desire, aggression, fear and delight, they did not formalize
these states of experience in physical images or expressive codes of movement,
nor were they represented as figurative gestures of speech.

Bausch's choreography presented scenes of memory, of lived experience,
rooted in the individual, physical recollection of a life marked by society. Its
phrases and motifs of movement, its moments of play and narrative, opened
up the space of childhood for spectators and brought before them her spine­
chilling fairy tales, grimly comic anecdotes, and idiotic, farcical situations.
Drawing from the patchwork format of the cabaret or variety show, Bausch
elaborated a poetics of choreography, which used montage and alienation
to isolate the merciless and threatening aspects of social arrangements and
relations between the sexes, so that the physical and emotional field of action
would arise from the range of feelings associated with forms of exposure and
passive suffering. Moments of affect dominated the early works, with their
graphic scenes invested with melancholy but also a hint of comedy.

Pieces such as Komm, tanz mit mir (Come, Dance with Me, 1977), Renate
wandert aus (Renate Emigrates, 1977), Kontakthof (1978), and Kuschheitsle­
gende (Legend of Chastity, 1979) abduct the body from the realm of “silent”
dance, bringing it into the field of oral, linguistic articulation. With speech acts,
plotlines, group dances, choreographic formations, and solos at once elegiac
and erotic, rapt or powerful, the stage opens into a play area for the figures
who enact embodied moods. The choreographed body, in an effort to achieve
a fully sensory, more truthful kind of contact, is confronted with elemental
things. Thus the choreography requires that the dancer's body works its way
through mounds of foliage, wading through water with damp, heavy clothing,
or dancing to its limits on heavy peat.14 The real alienates the theatrical space.
The particular aesthetics of movement arises from bodies that move against
the resistance of their material surroundings.

Feelings As Scenes—Gestures of Innate Knowledge

In a conversation with Christiane Cibiec, Bausch described her method of
working: "I know very precisely what I am looking for; I may be unable to de­
scribe it with words, but in fact I don't want to."14 It is an attitude to work that
orients itself entirely toward feeling, a haven shielded from all theoretical or
reflexive explication. Bausch always returned to and insisted upon the notion
of an innate knowledge implied by her observation and choreographic forma­
ton of movement. When asked how she knew when a movement or a scene
was right; she replied: "... when I feel happy, then I know that it's right. You feel when it's right, and you feel when it's not right. But how you get there, that's another question. That I can't say." Her artistic self-understanding was given over entirely to feeling and to the sense for what is felt. "How can I put it: it's all feeling. ... Sometimes it breaks your heart. Sometimes you know it, sometimes you find it; sometimes you have to forget everything and try to start from the beginning again. You have to be very alert, very sensitive; there is no system." She placed continual emphasis on the absolute visibility of a person's feeling and state of mind, which for her could be read from the body. For "... we are ourselves with and through our bodies first and foremost, and every person is constantly expressing himself, just by being. It's all very plain to see." Bausch likewise never spoke about techniques. She took a (psycho)analytic view of constellations of gender, which she often presented as bordering on the pathological, and of instances, be they everyday or ritual, of the destabilization of one's emotional state, with the aim of condensing them into often excessive physical scenarios. The patterns of action and relationships, which are inscribed in and perpetually repeated through desiring, rebellious, or anxious bodies, would appear in a staged montage of dance, acting, and silence. The poetics of these performances arose, not from showy poses or clichéd scenes, but from the physical exaltation of being moved emotionally.

Das Frühlingsofper (1975)—which, in a tradition that established itself on the Wuppertal stage, always followed Café Müller in performance—is an apt demonstration of this. Claudia Jeschke has drawn attention to the physical state of fear, which defines the sacrificial role and which radiates energetically from the dancer's kinesthetic space within the choreographed movements of the group that frames her. The choreographic sequence settles around the dancer and gives her the appearance of involvement in a radical and profound experience. Thus she transfers the spell of her sacrificial role to the audience. Bausch's Das Frühlingsofper represents, with considerable aesthetic force, an emotionally orphaned, rejected, and homeless body, a subject necessarily alien to itself and to society. In the process she poses a question central to modernity, namely the pressing and unresolved question of the status of the body in society.

The gesture of abandonment, the gesture, indeed, of the physical abandonment of the dancer, disappeared in the later stages of Bausch's career. The focus on the material conditions of the theatrical space was replaced by a poetic order of composition and a language of stage images. Now, moving images of eroticized, desiring, dreaming, or erupted bodies are displayed within a vision of things and images endowed with an imagined, yielding quality. Airiness and fantasy reign over the settings, carried along by a compositional search for understanding. These artistically woven pieces unfold patterns for
a theme of movement already sounded at the beginning of each. The scenes are dominated by the intuition of a distant, aesthetically charged physical potential. Image projections create the illusion of a widening stage and hand over the dancer's space of movement to the realm of the imaginary (as, for example, in Rough Cut, 2005). Dancing, remembering and finding oneself in the Elsewhere becomes an illusory event in order to recall the potential presence inherent in dance. In the process, the moments of expression, finely woven nets that they are, entrap highly differentiated qualities of movement. It is as if Bausch wanted to juxtapose a dream world of abandonment, infused with sexual lust, with the social situation of the technological millennium, the endless, overpowering encouragement of wants and desires, and a rampant culture of extreme experience.

Mary Wigman in Search of Transcendence

In clear historical and aesthetic distinction from Pina Bausch, Mary Wigman explored with her early choreographic work in the 1920s the possibility that movement has an emotional foundation. This suggested itself to her via a specific state in which a feeling could be recognized. A specific experience that marked the beginnings of her art abides in her memory: In the film Mary Wigman (1886–1973): When Fire Dances between Two Poles, Wigman describes her “discovery” of dance, which nominally takes the form of savior: in dance Wigman is able to overcome physical and spiritual pain. Desolate and “desperate,” as she puts it, she began to move—alone in the room. The forlorn feeling of loneliness yielded to an ineffable happiness, which gushed through her body. Here, Wigman recounts a memory and historicizes her self-understanding as a dancer. This self-image is evidently bound up with the emotional image of release and of being moved. Wigman later gave it form in Das Tanz erlebnis (The Dance Experience). Other texts, including manifestos, school curricula, and pieces of prose, develop the experiential into an aesthetic model and move it into the center of her philosophical and choreographic thinking.

In the opening stages of her solo career after World War I, experience functions as a central aesthetic figure in Wigman's choreographic and pedagogic practice. It acquires an almost mythical weight of significance because it indicates an existential link with life and with liberation. The dance-experience, that is, pain happily overcome in dance, reveals a further dimension of meaning, which is not produced by the emotion felt, but hints, in terms of a theory of expression, at a relationship of images, of original and derivation. The sensation of happiness indicates for Wigman “the original foundation of a still undivided feeling of life” not an emotional spectrum of experience, or feeling gradated by physical intensity, but rather “wholly fulfilled being,”
which Wigman conceives of as "a fully charged inner potential." In quasi-religious language, Wigman writes: "How the dance-experience reveals itself to the individual may remain his or her secret. The dance act seeks solely to communicate a valid message. The derived image, now given form, is testimony to the original image received in experience." For Wigman, this (dance-) experience should hold the spectator in its spell.

Wigman embarks on a choreographic search for this original image, the foundation of movement, in order to create an expressive space for emotional experience that works with phantasmatic notions of a purified body and the religious and political implications of a state of profound emotion. The decisive difference to the aesthetic of Bausch’s dance theater consists arguably in the mode of representation of the experience of being moved and its cultural frame of reference. Wigman understands the external event, which impacts the body, as an act of necessary suffering and thereby emphasizes its existential nature as a symbolic act of overcoming adversity. Her early solo pieces—the cycle *Ekstatische Tänze* (Ecstatic Dances) that included *Götzens Dienst* (Service for False Gods), *Opfer* (Victim), *Der Derwisch* (The Dervish), and *Der Tempeltanz* (Temple Dance), and the cycle *Maskentänze* (Masked Dances) that included *Der Tod* (Death), *Die Qual* (Agony), *Der Wahn* (Delusion), and *Der Schrei* (Scream)—but also the later solo works *Hexentanz* (Witch Dance) and *Drehmonotonie* (Perpetual Spinning) seek to elevate the experience of pain to the level of the transcendental. Here, Wigman integrates ecstatic forms of movement, which are represented, indeed celebrated, as acts of fusion. The aesthetic goal is a celebration of the almost religious act of rendering the body communal.

**Choreographic Figures of Emotion II—**

**The Experience of Space: Drehmonotonie (1926)**

Wigman’s choreographic approach to the body develops a pedagogy of movement and seeks to bring about a transcendental experience, through which a charging of the choreographed body with emotion is achieved. Indeed, Wigman practiced and choreographed a religious elevation of the subject in this way: turning in ecstasy around a centered core-self, the subject radiates pure incorporeality. Various of Wigman’s prose works provide an insight into this: *Drehmonotonie*, for example, which can be read as the textual, descriptive version of the choreographic piece of the same name from 1926 (Figure 11.2):

... circling and turning in a spiral-sequence of rising and falling, without a beginning and without an end—a tender rocking-movement, the arms reaching out, full of pain and full of joy—rising again in self-destructive desire, swelling and shrinking, flowing back—higher and faster, and faster and faster—the
swirling current has me in its grip, the waters are rising. The whirlpool drags me down. Higher still, faster still, hunted, whipped, hounded. . . . A jolt runs right through the body, bringing it from the wildest spin to a standstill, stretched tall, raised onto tiptoe, the arms thrown aloft, clambering for a support which is not there. A breathless pause, an eternity which in reality only lasts a few seconds. And then the sudden release, the limp body falls into the deep. Only one feeling survives: the sensation of being out of body. And one wish: not to have to stand up, ever again, to lie there like this for all eternity.
Thus the sensation of bodilessness is choreographed, arising from a dramatic staging of leitmotivic movements: stepping, dashing, turning, standing still, and falling. The written version of the scene is imbued with a fascination for the bodiless state built up dramatically by the movements. In place of a transformation achieved through the figure of turning, a convention both cultural and spiritual, comes the image of being lifted out of oneself, of falling into another state. The ecstatic moment represents a conception of death, evokes a transcendental movement into another—eternal—state (Figure 11.3).

Figure 11.3. Mary Wigman in Drehmonotonie. Photo: Charlotte Rudolph. © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2010. Mary Wigman Archiv, Akademie der Künste, Berlin.
The spectrum of feeling in the opening scene—tenderness, pain, joy—introduces a dramatic aspect with an almost fantastical charge: "faster and faster," "whipped," "hounded"—a state emerges that could not be further from the ritual of the dervish, which is also based on turning, but is calm and transformative. In contrast to this meditative, monkish practice, Wigman choreographs a course of movement that is interrupted by pain. In the manner of a symbol, the gesture of pain rises out of the basic movement and sweeps aside the transformative momentum of the act of turning. In the process an image of the body gripped by emotion arises: "a jolt runs right through the body." In a deathly figure, the body reaches for a last "support which is not there" and falls to the ground.

The Gesture of Death:
The Phantasm of the Subject

Wigman incorporated a number of different motifs of turning and circling into her practice and anchored them in a religious image of the body. Their tempo and dynamics varied according to their spatial direction, circling in or around a center. The moment of ecstatic experience—associated in cultural anthropology with a turning movement—creates an inspiring source from which the body fills itself with different impressions of emotional arousal, emerging finally as an expressive image of a state of being passively moved.

The ecstatic moment, which places the body in a state of heightened, religious emotion, as it were an "oceanic" feeling with no perceptible sense of physicality, is visualized in the image of an "unconscious experience of unity." The choreographed body displays an image of pure movement: empty and transcended.

TURNING

She turns in the middle of the room with small, rapid steps, round and round herself. The steps become faster, she is stretched further over tiptoe, her body becomes tenser. Racing now she turns around her own center. Suddenly, a strange thing happens: she rises above the ground, stands still in the air, hovers calmly.

She knows quite well that she is still turning, but she no longer feels the movement. Elevated and weightless, she hovers in great serenity.

Das Drehen, part of the five-part prose work Die Tänzerin (The Dancer) again represents a bodiless state, identifiable through the sweeping aside of all sensation. The body appears in a state that flows freely into the space around it, allowing inner and outer space to collapse into one, and appears to float. But the movement, which suggests a state of Dionysian ecstasy, a merging of
spaces, dulls the body's sensations and represents an image of pure emotional dissolution. In its aesthetic form, the dance is, as Alexander Schwan has shown, “soteriologically charged” [suffused with the doctrine of salvation]. “Nothing less than the theological mystery of salvation is the goal of her dance.” Yet in it resides a subject which, its frame transcended, now becomes a pure image of movement.

_Drehmonotonie_, for Wigman, “the progenitor of all the dances which came afterwards,” likewise seeks to represent a state of no sensation as pure and absolute movement: “Rooted hypnotically to the same spot and spinning a web around herself in the monotony of the turning movement, gradually losing herself in it, until the turns seemed to dislocate themselves from the body and the surrounding area began to spin. No longer moving herself, but being moved instead, herself the center, herself the resting point in the whirlpool of rotations.” With the practice of ritual dance as a backdrop, Wigman stylizes the act of turning into a dance cult and choreographs overwhelmingly powerful gestures of pain, of death, in order to project a longed-for salvation in images of transcendence. The figure of incorporeality, which also appears for Wigman in the jump, as an “upwards-yearning into bright lightness,” bears the mark of death. Thus, Mary Wigman seeks to represent an emotional space of being moved, which receives its meaning in the soteriological image of incorporeality. The political relevance of this aesthetic ultimately becomes clear in Wigman’s self-stylization and her understanding of herself as a teacher. The mystification of death emerges in the figure of the dancer as magician, and reveals here its political gesture. Obsessed with the idea of dance as a sacred religious art, Wigman stylizes herself as a “priestess of dance” and draws with religious pathos an absolutist self-portrait, in which the self prevails as the absolute force. Wigman’s aesthetic of representation realizes a theology of dance, whose transcendentally justified formation of the self operates with gestures of powerlessness and submission. The artist-subject becomes its absolute authority. Wigman choreographs gestures of invocation, elegiac steps and positions of the hands, which create a scene of solemn actions and images of a body being guided by a higher power. The stage is ruled by expressive gestures, ordered mass-sculptures, or geometrically arranged groups. The choreographed bodies become, in the flow of being moved, visualizations of pure movement, legible in the prevailing structure of power.

Wigman’s aesthetic of dance dramatizes expressions of falling and capitulation, humility and happiness, sacrifice and holy ceremony, calls for death and signs of life. Yet all of these gain shape with reference to the “emotive formulas” of power. As political gestures, a fear-inducing shudder emanates from them, if they follow Wigman’s absolutist dictate that they produce “unity of expression and function, a corporeality through which the light shines, a form
filled with the spirit.” The choreographed body acts as a religious medium and represents the image of its absolutist (dis)empowerment: the language of divine revelation speaks from it. “She [the dancer] is a vessel whose living contents repeatedly make her glow with an intense heat, until the reciprocal process of melting is complete and only the unity of the artistic event now speaks to us.” Dance becomes an “absolute art,” for it is there that “knowledge of things stops, only experience is law; there begins dance.”

In Bausch’s Tanztheater, a certain type of understanding makes itself felt, which implicitly keeps the choreographic and theatrical space open to questions about the historical horizon of experience of its choreographed bodies. Bausch worked in the knowledge that the subject is fragile and socially conditioned. Mary Wigman, however, conceives of the foundation of movement as pertaining to a theological power relationship that fosters the notion of a unified, absolute subject. Wigman’s choreographic space, as aesthetic and theological space, isolates itself from forms of immanent knowledge. The dances and their aesthetics are motivated by an imaginary omnipotence, which appears in the guise of impotence. Its impetus is the experience of being moved.

Wigman’s choreographic approach to this experience celebrates an image of the body in the ecstasy of power, a body that is ultimately devoid of empathy. Pina Bausch’s works, by contrast, make us aware of the extent to which attention to emotionalized physical states and images of movement enables the choreographic rendering of experience and the creation of a reflective space in the inquisitive search for the subject.

Notes

1. Mary Wigman, Die Sprache des Tanzes (Stuttgart: Ernst Battenberg, 1986 [1963]). [Editors’ Note: Within a few years, Walter Sorell provided an English translation under the title The Language of Dance (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1966). The translations in this present volume are new and provide an alternative to Sorell’s flowery prose for the reader without a working knowledge of German.]


3. Servos emphasizes that Bausch’s language of movement was “understood across all borders,” Pina Bausch Tanztheater, 23.

4. Ibid., 24. However, this interpretation perpetuates a mythology that surrounds dance performance but fails to recognize that this mythology’s central meaning and function originated in the eighteenth century, was socially and politically motivated, and was linked to contemporary debates on education. Contemporary aesthetic perspectives are thus mingled
with notions from the historical discourse on dance: in the mid-eighteenth century, under the reforming influence of the *ballet d'action*, above all of Jean-Georges Noverre, the topics of the immediate effect of authentic emotions became the core of the philosophy and conventions of dance performance. Dance also had sociopolitical significance, for it was one of the agents of the increasing self-confidence of the bourgeois. An analysis of the sociocultural functions of dance in the 1930s, as opposed to the 1960s and 1970s, is beyond the scope of this article; see Franz Anton Cramer’s analyses of philosophical and cultural models of reflection in *In aller Freiheit. Tanzkultur in Frankreich zwischen 1930 und 1950* (Berlin: Parodos, 2008). For eighteenth-century aesthetics, see Sabine Huschka, "Szenisches Wissen im ballet en action. Der choreographierte Körper als Ensemble," in *Wissenskultur Tanz. Historische und zeitgenössische Vermittlungsakte zwischen Praktiken und Diskursen*, ed. Sabine Huschka (Bielefeld: transcript, 2009), 35–54; Christina Thurmer, *Beredte Körper—bewegte Seelen. Zum Diskurs der doppelten Betrachtung in Tanztexten* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2009). [Editors’ Note: See also Christina Thurmer’s essay in this volume.]

5. Cf. Schlicher, *TanzTheater. Traditionen und Freiheiten*, 220. Inge Baxmann emphasizes that dance theater forms a language of movement both critical of society and imbued with sensuality, which, in contrast to *Ausdruckstanz*, does not produce a mythologized model of the body, but sketches out a corporeality ruled by the senses (cf. Inge Baxmann, "Tanzer und die Materialität des ‘Körpers,’" in *Kommunikationsformen als Lebensformen*, eds. Ludwig Pfeiffer and Michael Walter (Munich, W. Fink, 1992) 149–168, here 158. For Jochen Schmidt, the difference lies in the understanding of the relationship between the individual and society: Wigman, he argues, celebrates community uncritically, whereas Bausch seeks critically to "strengthen the power of the individual in relation to society."


6. Even in the face of the impetus that National Socialism gave to Wigman’s work, research in German-speaking countries has struggled to break with the conception, formed in the 1980s, of Wigman as the pioneer of a more modern, “liberating” aesthetics of dance. See Hedwig Müller, *Die Begründung des Ausdruckstanzes durch Mary Wigman* (MA thesis, Cologne, 1986); *Mary Wigman. Leben und Werk der großen Tänzerin* (Weinheim: Quadriga, 1986). It is really American research into dance that has provided a political angle on Ausdruckstanz. Most balanced is Susan Manning, “Modern Dance in the Third Reich: Six Positions and a Coda,” in *Choreographing History*, ed. Susan Leigh Foster (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 169–176.

7. According to its Greek etymology, “pathos” also includes the notion of an event that impacts a being and therefore suggests “all forms of suffering as opposed to positive action,” which applies to the whole spectrum of emotions and passions. Kathrin Busch and Iris Därmann, eds., *"Pathos": Konturen eines kulturwissenschaftlichen Grundbegriffs* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2007), 7–31. The authors refer to Rainer Meyer-Kalkus’s "pathos" in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (Basel: Schwabe and Co. 1989, 199).

9. Cianc Fernandes has shown convincingly in her study that the repetition of key movements, phrases, and actions peels away, as it were, their semantics: "Repetition neither confirms nor denies the social constructions of time registered in the body. As discussed previously [Bausch] works consistently . . . bring emptiness instead of wholeness. The repetitions of a movement sequence cause more and more distortion, provoking multiple and unexpected interpretations and experiences." Cianc Fernandes, Pina Bausch and the Wuppertal Dance Theater. The Aesthetics of Repetition and Transformation (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2001), 92. Moreover, repetition disrupts the chains of signification in the on-stage action and adds an emptiness and sensuousness into their layers of meaning, which draws attention to the passive emotion of the scene.


16. Ibid., 241.

17. Bausch in conversation with Christine Cibiec.


21. Mary Wigman, "Das Tanzerlebnis," in Mary Wigman—Ein Vermächtnis, ed. Walter Sorell (Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel/Heinrichshofen, 1986), 154-156. [Editors’ Note: In 1975, Sorell had first edited a selection of Wigman’s unpublished writings in English translation. See The Mary Wigman Book (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1975). The 1986 German edition included a different selection of material. As with The Language of Dance, the translations in this essay are new and, for the reader without a working knowledge of German, provide an alternative to Sorell’s flowery language.]
Bausch, Wigman, and the Aesthetic of “Being Moved”

22. Early research into dance was caught up in this myth for a long time. See Müller, Die Begründung.
25. Ibid., 156.
27. Wigman is referring here to the dances of the dervishes, the Sufi monks who still practice today in the order of Mevlana Rumi. Their dance is based on an even turn on the spot, one arm stretched upward, one toward the ground: neither the speed nor the direction changes, nor do they fall to the floor. In the experience of turning continuously around its own axis, the body is transformed into a medium of spiritual energy.
30. Editors’ Note: Altogether the prose work narrates Die Füße (Feet), Das Drehen (Turning), Der Sprung (Jumping), Der Kreis (Circle), and Der Raum (Space). The essay was originally in a 1930 issue of Tänzgemeinschaft, the house organ for the Wigman School.
32. Wigman, Sprache des Tanzes, 38.
33. Ibid., 39.
35. Sorell, Mary Wigman, 186.
36. “Emotive formula” is a translation of art historian Aby Warburg’s term “Pathosformel.” Warburg coined it in order to describe “postures and gestures from the repertoire of antiquity, which later centuries used to represent specific states of action and psychological arousal.” Here it is used in a more general sense. See Kurt W. Forster, “Introduction,” in Warburg, The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute Publications Programs, 1999), 1–75, here 15.
38. Ibid.
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