THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

DANCE AND

REENACTMENT

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DANCE AND
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At present, contemporary dance finds itself occupied with the question of where its own history might be stored. As part of a wider enthusiasm for history that pervades many areas of society, contemporary dance also displays a clear interest—internationally as well as nationally speaking (in the German context)—in the historicity of its own form (Assmann 2006, 2007). Intensive research into this subject, as well as experimentation with memory as an artistic tool, has exposed the uncertainties within dance historicity. A wide range of transnational productions—for example, Fabian Barba’s reconstructive work on Mary Wigman, the rereading of Steve Paxton’s Satisfyin’ Lover (1967/1996) by the Albrecht Knust Quartet, and the solo Untitled by Tino Sehgal—despite their differences from one another, have all resonated with political questions about dance’s retention within memory, its material basis, and its trajectory through media.

This may express the central desire of dance’s far-reaching memory culture: to explore methods of appropriating and reactivating past knowledge, to seek out the remainders of historicity across digital media, and, through these pieces of cultural memory, to reawaken historical works and styles. As of the 1990s, above all in Europe, different methods and practices have been developed—conceived as reconstruction or as reenactment—which seek to actualize dancerly and choreographic knowledge of the past. With funding from the national subsidy program Tanzfonds Erbe from the Kulturstiftung des Bundes, Germany has, since the second decade of the twenty-first century alone, been home to over forty productions that explicitly interrogate the possibilities and conditions for, and function of, a dance heritage. According to the Kulturstiftung des Bundes,

1 Aleida Assmann has extensively shown that European societies are deeply interested in keeping the past present and creating cultural (and ritual) sites of remembrance.
its diverse program of productions “grapples with heritage” in the interest of achieving, as they programmatically refer to it, “an exemplary reappraisal of contemporary dance in Germany,” which “is expressed in the topicality of modern dance and is anchored in the here-and-now.” Implicit in this mission statement is a temporally located transmission of historical knowledge, which brings the experience of history into a contemporary dialogue. Yet the question remains unresolved of how the implicit time interval separating the past from the present flows into the reenactment. On the other hand, intuition seems to tell us that this interval is irrelevant to the visualization of past dance in the present.

Numerous independent dancers and choreographers, independent curators, and ballet companies in German municipal theaters thus have been working toward a "living memory culture" of historical knowledge and are setting many different forms of reflection into motion. This work on memory, sometimes accompanied by round table discussions and symposia (e.g., Archive/Practice [2009] Tanzarchiv Leipzig; tanzkongress Düsseldorf, 2013), has focused predominantly on dance’s twentieth-century luminaries, such as Isadora Duncan, Loïe Fuller, Anita Berber, Valeska Gert, Kurt Jooss, Mary Wigman, Gertrud Bodenwieser, Rudolf von Laban, Oskar Schlemmer, Jean Weidt, Yvonne Georgi, Clotilde and Alexander Sacharoff, Dore Hoyer, Gerhard Bohner, and Uwe Scholz, and on individual pieces by these artists, but also has included postmodern approaches to improvisation (Judson Dance Theater) and bodywork (Anna Halprin). As such, the overall socio-artistic project has been especially concerned, first, with the preceding figures and second, with the prevailing, institutionally grounded procedures for passing down dances and dance styles, as they exist within a repertoire, to realize an appropriation of modern choreography, dance styles, and approaches that differ from the participant’s own training, thus making the re-enactor, in a fairly literal sense, a stranger to them.

Standing somewhere between enshrinements and fabrications, between classically functioning reconstruction and recontextualizing arrangement of source materials, each production contrives its own unique format. Varied as they are, dance performances, lecture-demonstrations, installations, exhibitions, films, concerts, textual documentation, websites, talks, and drawings all offer fresh and relevant perspectives on the history of modern dance, which for its own part has taken on the tension between methods of inheritance and dissemination of its intellectual framework as a central concern. Dance history presents itself as a space for aesthetic reflection, recalls the remnants of an

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2 Tanzfonds Erbe (Dance Heritage Fund), a federal program funded by the Kulturstiftung des Bundes (German Federal Cultural Foundation) follows the aims of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage. "TANZFONDS ERBE does not create a museum of work and people from the past, but rather a lively commemorative culture that reveals the topicality of modern day dance." http://tanzfonds.de/en/about-us/ (accessed May 2, 2017).

3 Traditionally aesthetic and cultural dance memory is preserved through three types of processes: (1) the body-memory of the dancers, which means mimetically passing on dances and techniques from one generation of dancers to the next; (2) a set canon of dances in a company’s repertoire, creating a tradition; and (3) the gathering of different types of materials in archives.
accessible kinetic knowledge, activates memories of spectatorship, brings together choreographic artifacts in the form of notation and images, and periodically overhauls its own understanding of aesthetics by means of highly specialized research and interviews with dancers, their pupils, and their contemporaries. Dance's past seeks to present itself as both up-to-date and reiterant, paradoxical as it may sound: as overwrought as it is expansive, simultaneously (re)discovered and (re)invented. Eyeing three distinct productions through this lens—namely, Jochen Roller's *The Source Code* (2012), Christina Ciupke and Anna Till's *undo, redo and repeat* (2013), and Henrietta Horn's rendition of Mary Wigman's *Le Sacre du Printemps* (2013)—I would like to bring to light what space for reflection we have already developed for dance history, as well as to reconsider the heavily ingrained procedure we have for tapping into adopted historical knowledge. Which reflective possibilities disclosed by reenactment comprise the extent of my inquiry? Which spaces of remembering is dance able to incorporate into its art? What makes a unit of historical knowledge susceptible to reactivation, and how does memory find its correspondence to choreography? How can historical knowledge of moving bodies be reactivated?

Where will the art form of dance find itself at the end of its pursuit of an unattainable target (the past)? Which techniques and dynamics constitute the spaces in which it stages its remembrance, and which spaces reflective of historicity could enable a work of appropriating the past? These questions in particular propel Ciupke and Till's *undo, redo, repeat* (2013) and Jochen Roller's *The Source Code* (2012) forward, reverberating with renewed complexity when expressed through a reenactment and a mediated reflection on a digital project, respectively. A definitive work on conceptualizing reconstruction, Henrietta Horn's *Le Sacre du Printemps* (Wigman) (2013) contends with gaps in its own source material to point out and nuance the way in which mediation complicates the intellectual frameworks we apply to dance of the past.

## Reenacting Body-Knowledge: Encountering the Gap

Having said this, how does contemporary dance actually go about revealing its past? Or to phrase it somewhat absurdly, how does one get the past to present itself?

We can say that a conceptual setting has established itself when we understand the actionable connection between the past and the present in and as an intervalic relationship that is open to negotiation. This is the realm of notions such as *revival, remaking,*

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4 This has led to bizarre statements like one made by André Lepecki: "Jérôme Bel shows how the past is not that which vanishes at every second that passes, but rather that which presents itself in the present as a forceful absence, a set of references, signs, lines of forces, all traversing the body on stage, and defining the ground on where dance (all of us) stands" (Lepecki 2004a, 176).
restaging, reanimator, and replaying, which proliferate conceptual and, by extension, analytical ambiguity (Krutschkova 2010). Discussing practices of historical memory within the German-speaking spheres of theory reveals a conceptual disequilibrium between reconstruction and reenactment, which has, for example, been explicitly drawn out in dialogue between dance scholars Claudia Jeschke and Nicole Haitzinger. Even when Jeschke questions the validity of the very idea of reconstruction, since she relies historiographically on repertoire practices, faithfulness to the original, and authenticity, she prefers nonetheless to isolate the notion of writing as reconstruction, through which she makes a distinction between documentation and witness (Jeschke 2010). Haitzinger, on the other hand, recognizes reenactment as a form of reinvention, precisely as “contemporary artistic perspectives, in order to discover and visualize history” (“zeitgenössische künstlerische Perspektivierung, der (Er-)Findung und Visualisierung von Geschichte”), while vehemently opposing the practice of reconstruction, which she deems to be “as true to the original as possible in its repetition” (Haitzinger 2010, 181). The common thread between all these theoretical approaches lies in the recurring character of the “re;” a reminder, as it were, an indicator of a practice dedicated to its own repetition (Foellmer 2014).

Nevertheless, “repetition” as a strategy for embodied memory has neither distinguished itself within theory nor proven itself to be analytically productive. Repetition per se is bankrupt.

THE PROMISES AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS OF REENACTMENT

The underlying practical and theoretical position on how dance's styles and aesthetic positions of the past will be remembered, how their intellectual frameworks should be addressed, and how knowledge of them should be called forth—all these are, as it were, interrogations of the aesthetics of dance. Without a doubt, contemporary dance's attempt to appropriate the past represents a substantial undertaking, wrought with tensions—all the more so, given the creative consequences for this campaign, which

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5 Jeschke points out that reconstructions based on oral histories rely on communicative memory, whereas reconstructions based on documentation rely on cultural memory.
6 In regard to the theoretical figure of repetition, Susanne Foellmer, for example, differentiates between reconstructions as a “critical, distanced approach to deal with past representations, pieces or performances” (Foellmer 2014, 70) in contrast to reenactments as “an attempt to replicate past representation events and performances as faithfully as possible” (72) since reenactments seek to “reanimate an event as closely and in as much detail to the original event” [trans. footnote editor] (70).
seeks to secure the past as a mine of as yet undiscovered possibilities for export to the present, as recently illustrated in "Engagements with the Past in Contemporary Dance" (Hardt 2012). What is more, the first glimpse of that which has been lost bursts open a mine of questions about the historicity of dance that is as irresistible as it is inexhaustible. This constitutive withdrawal of the past from the present is indubitably experienced as such. It is too late to fill in the gaps in dance's memory that have thus far gone unnoticed. What sort of space for memory would best allow us to encounter the past and convey it to the present when the bodily knowledge of that past has long since been buried?

In each appropriation of bygone choreography and style there rests a gaping wound unable to be closed: knowledge of movement dies with the dancers whose muscles remembered it. The repercussions of death, the "Faktum brutum" of historiography, as Günther Heeg calls it, is especially radical in the case of dance because of its dependence on the transient body (2006, 177). Choreographers and dancers who reach toward the past grope around for it in the emptiness left behind by an ephemeral materiality. Historical dancing bodies have, by definition, been evacuated from time. A dialogue with their long since extinguished phenomenal domain, from the perspective of the present moment, is divided between movement that is their own and movement they must find foreign. The resulting gaps become the site of a new work of remembering, as the losses they mark necessitate, structure, motivate, hinder, and enable a circumstantial appropriation of the past. Only with the intercession of outsiders and third parties can a path to the becoming-present be trod, can the past be brought into presently relevant dialogue. These are the conditions necessary to stage an afterlife for the deceased moving body.

Although the ontological condition of bodily movement may be a superficial consideration, the vacancies associated with it nonetheless demand that any reconstructive work of recall situate itself within a clear practical domain, which in turn determines its attitude toward the aesthetics and politics of dance. Because the friction between artistic technique and the past seems caught up precisely in those vacancies, which are precisely what makes dance, according to its own modern aesthetic self-image, an art in the form of body/movement and its ephemeral body of knowledge. The confrontation with such an evident and even trivial loss is, in a sense, a confrontation with dance's own foundational condition which is, to be ephemeral. Any recalling of the past in dance is contingent not only on the state of dance's aesthetic substance—namely, corporeality—but also on the status attributed aesthetically to the ephemeral, upon which our understanding of all of its characteristics and features rests. Since modernity, dance has been

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7 Cf. Hardt 2012, in which she reflects on "a present that is highly reflective of the inescapability of the past" (218). Also cf. Lepeck: "With the expression, will to archive in contemporary dance, I am proposing an alternative affective, political, and aesthetic frame for recent dance Reenactments—as well as for their relations to archival forces, impulses, or systems of command. [. . .] I am suggesting that the current will to archive in dance, as performed by Reenactments, derives neither exclusively from 'a failure in cultural memory' (Foster 2004, 21–23) nor from 'a nostalgic lens' (Santone 2008, 147). I am proposing 'will to archive' as referring to a capacity to identify in a past work still non-exhausted creative fields of 'impalpable possibilities' (to use an expression from Brian Massumi [2002, 91])" (Lepeck 2010, 31).
considered an ephemeral and, more pointedly, fleeting form,\(^8\) whose actual cultural and theoretical impact has withered under the nefarious effects of the “glorification, trivialization, and marginalization of dance as an apolitical activity” (Franko 1995, 206). As American dance scholarship has made plain, it is on that sort of discourse that the looming specter of “absolute untranslatability” subsists (Foster 1995, 9). The ontological determination to theorize the ephemeral or fleeting event reduces live dance, barely hanging on to its relevance as it is, to the status of isolated incident whose textures cannot be safely mapped onto any matrix of spatial or temporal references.

This radically presentist construal unabashedly obliterates dance’s history and its historicity along with it. Yet this plain misunderstanding of the ontological disposition of dance’s ephemeralities marks an aesthetic formulation, which through the appointed practices surrounding reenactment could potentially embody a critical intervention: The transmission of the fleeting/ephemeral disposition of dance occurs through a specific memory technique, through which pieces of dance history seem to find themselves reincarnated on stage. Reenactment has the power to transpose the aesthetic gaps in dance’s memory—which themselves have no history—into a dimension of choreographic outlines for various visualization strategies. I will attempt to demonstrate in the following how these practices of reincorporation and appropriation of the past, and the collection of moves they represent, travel through constellations of space and time. Pictures, notes, observations, reviews, and memories, which make the historicity of a past dance tangible, are the components of a network that lead us to practices of embodied memory.

**RESCUING PAST KNOWLEDGE: “OCCUPYING THE VACANCIES”**

The limits of this kind of knowledge of dance become materially evident when the techniques we have for recalling dance, themselves bound to the body, come up against glaring vacancies. The death of each modern dancer and choreographer, and the subsequent disappearance of their bodily knowledge from the world, bears heavily on the amount of space (both spatial and temporal) left to bridge between the past and its reproduction. An absence of bodily knowledge and a lack of most of the details of the techniques for transfer of knowledge from teachers to students leave us in the precarious position

\(^8\) The ephemeral classifies the transience of dance as a short-lived act, a fleeting moment, inherently inhabited by an aura of disappearance. Modern discourses have basically inscribed the ontological characteristic of *ephemerion* into dance. Thus, it has become the differentiating criterion of this specific form of art and knowledge. Cf. Lepecki 2004b, 126ff. The terminology of the ephemeral became an ontological concept even before Paul Valéry; it goes back to the early 19th century, to a revised edition of *Lettres* (1803) by Jean Georges Noverre. On the difference between the transitory nature of dance and its ephemera in a historical context, cf. Huschka 2012.
of having to consider new strategies for finding dance knowledge in the current media landscape. The intensified search for novel paths toward a collective dance memory leads to a desperate search for any source, from inherited notebooks to performance recordings to photographs, that might be able to serve as a satisfying starting point for the faithful reproduction of an individual piece, or for the recapturing of a certain movement technique. Henrietta Horn's challenging reconstruction of Mary Wigman's *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1957), created along with Susan Barnett and Katharine Sehnert, is the culmination of tireless effort in the archives of the *Akademie der Künste Berlin*, collating copious previously unsorted source material, supplemented by conversations with Wigman's former dancers (Emma Lewis Thomas, Brigitta Hermann) and injecting a wealth of knowledge into the rehearsal process at Osnabrück Theater and Bielefeld Theater.

The equally thorough documenting material points out yet another outstanding absence: the central dance of The Chosen One was mysteriously missing from notes on the piece, which otherwise accounted for each scene in movement-by-movement detail. Save for a few photographs of rehearsals with Dore Hoyer, who singlehandedly fashioned and danced this role within Wigman's choreography, the entire solo passage, including its core movements, was lost. The team of reconstructionists approached this gaping vacancy from a middle ground between general contextual knowledge of then-prevalent styles of movement and specific historical knowledge of the original scenery and costumes. This practical approach to leaving the gaping holes open in the interest of a homogenous reconstruction is based on the idea that with the knowledge of the original dancers, "the choreographic gaps can be filled in reconstructing the piece." These contemporaries qua "witnesses" have in their personal experience of dancing the piece a degree of authority with which to advise on its choreography. This affords them, in a certain sense, the status of a living archive, but does not take into account their own working process of remembering, which obviates the possibility of working at recollection. Instead, one must be mindful of the fragility of memory. (See Foellmer, Chapter 13 in this volume).

What arose in this process of working with the "witnesses" were the kind of drastic issues of divergence and contradiction inherent in any system engaging multiple modes of recordkeeping. The reconstructive work here takes as its premise the idea that an "intact" performance of *Le Sacre du Printemps* is producible, and that immediate, felicitous reference to the original should be enough to recreate the experience of it. As dramaturge Patricia Stöckemann puts it, the gaps ask "not to be left alone" but to be filled "in the spirit of the work of reconstruction and in the spirit of engagement with Mary Wigman and her style" (Stöckemann 2013, project documentation).
The united yet frequently divergent recollections of the former dancers were ultimately averaged out within Henrietta Horn’s decision to choreograph the part of The Chosen One, originally choreographed and danced by Dore Hoyer. This act of reinvention remained unmarked by the aesthetic of the production. The tension-filled negotiation between the multifaceted memories of the former dancers were in the final analysis homogenized within the decision making process of Henrietta Horn such that she could create Hoyer’s dance of sacrifice out of whole cloth without it registering as a break in the performance aesthetic. The multiplicity of sources and their frictions within the choreography did not resonate. What is more, this performative act tries to illuminate the timelessness of the choreography and seeks to manifest an eternal image of Wigman’s aesthetic despite these problems.

**Dancing across Media**

European choreographers had already been working on various approaches to past dance pieces prior to this well-funded moment. These include Martin Nachbar, whose *Urheben Aufheben* (2008) recalls Dore Hoyer’s *Afectos Humanos* (1962), Jérôme Bel with *Véronique Doisneau* (2006), Lutz Förster (2009), and Cédric Andrieux (2009), as well as Boris Charmatz with *Twenty Dances for the Twentieth Century* (2009). Despite the difference in historical reference points and performance format (they span dance piece, performance, and lecture-performance), they share a reflective and nevertheless occasionally fractured relationship with the past. The focus of historical memory is not on restoration, or on reaching some pure reconstruction of historical material, but rather on modes of reenacting, on new arrangements and reincorporations. The tools currently at their disposal for engaging with the past are critical ones—ones that are always open to reconsidering the status of given historical material. All material is treated as a stand-alone source or archive of dance and has been dissected and investigated accordingly. At the heart of this system lie questions of the extent to which the “leftovers” of dance pieces and physical techniques contain memory (even in their respective materialities), how to jolt these memories back to life today, and whether they should be reactivated to begin with.

An excellent example of this in action is the long-standing tension in Martin Nachbar’s work on Dore Hoyer’s *Afectos Humanos* (1967) between physical material (including film clips) and the memories of her dancer and heir Waltraud Luley, which reveals how idiosyncratic the entire work of remembering is. In attempting to transfer a constitutive foreign source of movement material from an absent body onto a present one—formed differently at the level of history and stylistics—one discovers that in order

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**Note:** Cf. DFG-Projekt *On Remnants and Vestiges. Strategies of Remaining in the Performing Arts (ÜberReste. Strategien des Bleibens in den darstellenden Künsten)* led by Dr. Susanne Foellmer, Reader of Dance at Coventry University, GB.
for dance history to resolve these discrepancies, in effect to deal with the historicity of the individual body on its own technical and biographic-historical terms, reconstruction must work with and through constitutive difference, which is at odds with its project. Given the insurmountable technical difficulty of seamlessly embodying Dore Hoyer’s established, expressionist style, Nachbar found that decoding it successfully depended on his ability to “confront the inaccessible” (Siegmann 2010, 21). A modern, uncostumed man, dancing without the music Hoyer’s choreography was set to, Nachbar plainly exposes a gender-specific and historical difference between the two body gestalts, yet he retains the material basis of the choreography as well as Hoyer’s expressive dance style. With Urheben Aufheben (2008), he attained yet a new level of reflective possibility: Standing before a blackboard, Nachbar expounds on dance’s ability to serve as an act of recall, which is crucial for the historicity of his work and process, and goes on to choreographically illustrate and develop this point using the full stage area. Against this modest backdrop, he arrives at a choreographically reflexive and corporeally self-reconstructive performance of memory of an absence: a counterembodiment with no etiological agenda.

Larger, international dance companies have also taken notice of the intensive work in the aesthetic culture of memory. The deaths of such prominent modern choreographers as Pina Bausch and Merce Cunningham (who both passed away in 2009) have also inspired major interventions in dance epistemology as it had been practiced until that time. Death opens up urgent questions regarding the legacy of works and the possibility of their inheritance, for example, whether the repertory is in the best position to preserve them, and whether the distinctive styles and techniques on which they are based should continue to be taught. In the face of this very real withdrawal of living, of embodied dance knowledge from the world, companies and the theatrical community at large must contend with the importance of established wisdom and consider how it can now be passed down. Faced with this loss, an altered status of the knowledge of dance becomes obvious through which different types of practice are developed. The status of dance knowledge as cultural knowledge also thereby changes.

The former companies of deceased choreographers have, for their own part, responded quite differently to the question of how dances and techniques can be conveyed and mediated while cut off from the embodiment of its authors. The Cunningham Trust, founded in 2009, views itself as subject to some aesthetic as well as sociopolitical imperative “to preserve, enhance, and maintain the integrity of that choreographic and other artistic work, and make such works available for the benefit of the public” (see Noland 2013). In contrast, the Pina Bausch Foundation takes up the task of “retaining the artistic heritage of prominent dancers and choreographers both to treasure in

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12 Translator’s note: In German, the word “counter” (wieder) is a homonym of “again” (wieder).
13 These trusts and foundations have established varying policies on how estates are to be managed and the forms of preserving and passing on dance knowledge they seek.
the present and to carry with us into the future” (Pina Bausch Foundation, “Mission”). Befitting the differences in their cultural and social politics, the two institutions pursue opposite practices: while Tanztheater Wuppertal reveres Pina Bausch’s repertory of work and the aesthetic she developed over its course and wants to keep them “alive” by retaining the company and its veteran members, the Merce Cunningham Dance Company dissolved in 2011, in accordance with his will. It has opted instead to place his choreography in the hands of other dance companies, with the Cunningham Trust as steward of his repertory. These institutions do pursue comeasurable, intensive practices of archiving. The Cunningham Trust and the Pina Bausch Foundation both compile important production information and properties (such as costumes, props, and scenery), and digitize them alongside existing records (photographs, films, notes, etc.), effectively putting together a road map for proliferating these works into practice. And despite the stark difference in their perspectives on how dance as an embodied artform is best transmitted at the level of both aesthetics and politics, the sum of data and material—released in a centralized media packet—will be rewound and replayed time and time again in the service of subsequent production processes.

The functional approaches to conservation and application point to an interesting facet of this pursuit: the tenuous status of embodied knowledge opens up other practical gateways newly mindful of dance’s developing body of knowledge. Since the choreographer—as authority, guardian, and tangible vessel of this knowledge—has died, the knowledge apparatus upon which dance and choreography depend migrates elsewhere. Sources and materials resulting from and anchored in both dance practice and performance event, cumulatively constituting a transmedial network of notes, transcripts, photographs, costumes, scenic design blueprints, and films, become the vehicles for the transfer of knowledge. From this point on, knowledge of choreography and dance style emerges from negotiating with information and materials, which then become the definitive building blocks of knowing dance.

In this sense, dance knowledge is precisely post-bodily, and deploys various techniques and procedures to extract knowledge from bodies already in their own aftermaths. Nevertheless, the threshold of irretrievability for living dance knowledge that death marks is itself evidence of the absence of its embodied occurrence at exactly those moments at which the bodily, aesthetic, and cultural practices of transference become conceivable. The creation of a transmedial network of information and materials, along with the practices of appropriation that constitute this network, pave the way toward a nuanced framework for understanding where and how to invest the knowledge we have as manifestation of our intellectual culture across media. Only then will dance knowledge be recognizable as a materialized, mediatized system and process.

It therefore seems hasty to limit our understanding of dance knowledge to its position as the topos of embodied being. Implicitly, its complex disposition, embedded in

processes of embodying and imparting that are themselves dependent on our frame of media reference, unfolds between bodies and words, between bodies and writing, between bodies and images (both drawn and mental), and between bodies and bodies. This web of aesthetic knowledge rests on the active bodily implementation of verbal or textual directives, and on measurements of space, time, and image, both imagined and reasoned (Huschka 2017, forthcoming). These, above all, are the results of practicing reenactment.

**JOCHEN ROLLER’S THE SOURCE CODE**

Appropriation of the past assumes dance’s access to a library of interlocking reference materials spanning a significant time frame that speaks to the theoretical demands of its practice and their potential for reflecting history. This requisite entering into dialogue with the past calls attention to the historicity of the deceased, estranged body and to the mortality of knowledge and, likewise, in a less direct sense, to the historicity of the particular bodies involved in these practices (see Nachbar, Chapter 2 in this volume). A tangible distancing effect becomes legible with respect to that which now exists in the present, out of which effect the temporality between present and past can be grasped through a movement of appropriation. Acknowledging this distancing effect, with which memory processes for dancers and choreographers can be set into motion, sheds an especially bright light on reenactment’s true potential, which Jochen Roller ruminates on in *The Source Code* and Christina Ciupke and Anna Till aim for in *undo, redo repeat*. Both productions accomplish their memories through an interactive relationship to various source materials, which is a targeted, mediatized way of achieving the reflective status for knowledge of dance. Their goal is to make contact with “others” that our distance from the past holds at bay, while resisting the impulse to fill any gaps or absences, to be frank and transparent about the temporal obstacles at play.

With *The Source Code*, Roller sets his sights on the conceptual two-step of engaging with Gertrud Bodenwieser’s legacy of expressionist dance in the context of Australia, where she emigrated in 1938. Roller and his team of four dancers, journalist Elisabeth Nehring, and video artist Andrea Keiz first reconstructed Bodenwieser’s choreography for *Errand into the Maze* (1954), an appropriation which they termed a “recreation,” but never performed for the public. The second phase of the project saw Roller edit all materials from the research and working periods for presentation on a website—including film clips of himself and his team in training sessions with Carol Brown and Barbara Cookson of the Bodenwieser School as a means of learning Bodenwieser’s technique, some short showings of piecemeal reconstructions of choreographic fragments,

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16 Roller’s *Errand into the Maze* does not carry any references to the eponymous piece by Martha Graham.
RE ENACTMENT IN/AS GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE CIRCULATION

discussions from the three-week workshop, along with interviews with the former Bodenwieser dancers, and articles from newspapers and journals. The processes and problems of appropriation of the past\textsuperscript{17} were logged on this website, which also contained the photos, emails, letters, and more that they had accumulated from over eight weeks of Roller's prior research. As the locus of all significant research material throughout work on appropriating \textit{Errand into the Maze}, this website became an end in itself: http://www.thesourcecode.de. Far from an early change of course, the decision to forgo performing the reconstruction in favor of a digital product was the core conceit of the project. Rather than sit the public in front of a live imagining of a dance, the idea was instead to let it discover and work through the unavoidable, if implicit, problems and tensions within a transcontinental and temporally complicated process of remembering. Roller explains:

For me, it's about making the reconstruction process completely transparent, to publish everything, or as much as possible, that documents our route, even the false paths taken, as I believe that ultimately the attempt and failure to reconstruct something says as much about the choreography as succeeding in copying it perfectly.\textsuperscript{18}

At first glance, the website comes across as a hodgepodge of materials, without any chronological or other organizing structure that would identify it as completed research. The menu offers links to ten pages containing source material, such as historical photos, newspaper articles, theater programs, archival scripts laid out next to film clips of rehearsals that serve as clear introductions to the basic movement aesthetics of "Bodenwieser Technique," and journal interviews that outline the central aesthetics and themes of Bodenwieser's work at length, as well as spotlight her career in Australia after emigrating there to form her own company. The site assigns the visitor a marathon looking and reading tour of the material and the team's annotations of it from their discussions. After a certain amount of browsing, the visitor may store all the properties and links as his or her personal research path and may emerge with a brand new set of principles for appropriating the past. Roller puts it this way:

By accessing rehearsal footage, interviews, photos, letters, and other testimonies, I invite the Online audience to make their own version of the 60-year old dance piece. The re-creation process was full of errors, contradictions, analogies, theories, assumptions, and interpretations. The structure of the website mirrors the structure of that process—it's a complex web of references, comparisons, and links.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{17} Interestingly, Roller and his team faced remarkable legal difficulties in their project. It was extremely complicated to gain access to a single film recording of \textit{Errand in the Maze}. The recording in question was made in 1960, at a memorial concert commemorating Bodenwieser's death in 1959, which technically makes it a reconstruction as well.


The question of the modalities of the process of remembering follows visitors to the site, as they take up the mantle of researcher, sorting, interpreting, and appraising the source material collected before them. In so doing, they bring to the fore production-oriented issues of the meaning and purpose of the appropriation of a dance context, which is unfamiliar to all participants in the reconstruction. Paradoxically, Rollcr’s team finds motivation in a baseline skepticism toward reconstruction as a pursuit. Their skepticism comes—interestingly enough—not from the implicit imperative to trigger a genuine moment of contact with the inaccessible. The reasoning behind this critical intervention is rather revealing of the differences between knowledge of historical movement and of the contemporary body. Even down to specific gestures and energy flow, the movements cannot perfectly recapture the aesthetic result of a body (of a former student of Bodenwieser) that contained that historical knowledge. Until the bitter end of an intense training process, the movements remained foreign to the team. At the same time, dancers in the team undertaking this reconstructive work may find it essential to take stock in re-embodiment as a bona fide exercise in reflecting across bodies.

**CIUPKE AND TILL’S UNDO, REDO AND REPEAT**

In their own similarly in-depth research, Christina Ciupke and Anna Till probe for strategies of appropriation suited to unfamiliar styles of dance applicable to five major twentieth-century aesthetic touchstones: Mary Wigman, Kurt Jooss, Dore Hoyer, Pina Bausch, and William Forsythe. To that end, these two dancers ask explicitly which options exist for processing memory and plumb the practices of transferring dance knowledge. The search for potential carriers of and approaches to historical dance knowledge and bodily knowledge is always at the forefront of this research.

*Undo, redo and repeat* also features a tripartite structure—website, performance, and installation—a composing an interpersonal, transmedia structure for thinking through past dance styles and pieces. The question of passing and transferring dance knowledge emerges clearly as the chief concern. The production finds its key outlet in an interview with select people meaningfully connected to the aforementioned protagonists of the theater scene. These were Irene Sieben, who personally studied in Mary Wigman’s dance class, Reinhold Hoffman, who was a student of Kurt Jooss at the Folkwang Hochschule Essen, Martin Nachbar, who amassed an encyclopedic knowledge of Dore Hoyer through his reconstructions (see Chapter 2 in this volume), and Thomas McManus, former dancer and current ballet master at the Forsythe Company, and a chosen group of people who were, as former visitors, familiar with Pina Bausch’s work at Tanztheater.
Wuppertal. Before beginning the exercise in memory with these “witnesses,” Ciupke and Till issued them the following request:

... convey to us one physical memory that you unmistakably associate with their work. It can be a fragment you experienced as a spectator that you would like to pass on, such that it can survive historically and be remembered in the present. You provide this in the form of specific movement material, a part of a dance, a movement principle, choreographic material, an improvisational technique, a score, or anything else. (Ciupke and Till 2012)

Irene Sieben subsequently conveyed a “physical memory of Mary Wigman’s lessons” in which she demonstrated Wigman’s signature circular motif as a choreographic figuration. Martin Nachbar gave Christina and Anna a movement task to perform under the title Shaken and Stirred (Geschüttelt und gerührt), a self-affective movement scale in order to affect the audience. The task was to perform a single movement sequence in different emotionally colored modes, following the orders and the observation of the partner. Thomas McManus asked Ciupke and Till to research five images on their own and referred them to the CD of Improvisation Technologies for study. Reinhild Hoffman ultimately declined their request “to deliver the material to be reinterpreted in the form of a set of instructions, a score, or written directives for performance such that they can be remembered in today’s context.” She wanted to instead forward Ciupke and Till her piece VOR ORT (1997). The former visitors of Pina Bausch provided a challenge to the choreographers, who had to choose from a diverse collection of accounts. This process whereby the “witnesses” formulated their tasks as scores was a sort of pre-hearsal in which students, colleagues, coworkers, friends, and spectators projected their experiences and body-knowledge of the key figures onto the production work to follow. These transmitted scores and movement tasks were the starting point for the deep dives into historical reference materials on the key figures that began Ciupke and Till’s rehearsal process, through which they sought to dredge up the long-untouched sediment underneath and transpose it. The witnesses, who were, by then, acting like teachers, became integral to the intense rehearsal process that followed, which included lessons on reverse-engineering movements from the close study of a formidable portfolio of films, images, and notes, as well as (documented) interviews and abundant conversation with the “witnesses.” Through time, their historicized dance knowledge brought about a re-embodied appropriation that does not suggest physical similitude. Rather, the rehearsals...

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21 Ciupke and Till refer to these agents as “witnesses.” Most of them also became active in the production, for example working as teachers.
22 Unpublished production material. I would like to extend my thanks to Christina and Anna for generously sharing their material with me.
23 Unpublished production material.
24 VOR ORT is a solo performance by Reinhild Hoffmann, first performed September 28, 1997 in Berlin. See Chapter 13 in this volume.
paved the way for a transcorporeal process of transference and appropriation of historically marked positions, moving into a space of difference.

As the title undo, redo and repeat already suggests, repeating is the unfailing systemic linchpin enabling the appropriation of movement, the physical requisite for a redo. When dance history follows the corridor of memory all the way, repeat is what it finds standing at the far end. At the near end is the practically far plainer remake: a redo that rather comes level with a mimetically driven repetition. Yet the success of both of these operations and modes of appropriation—redo and repeat—rests on a prior undo; this much is clear from their work with their witness-teachers, whose presence shifted their overall vocabulary of the past toward the language of undoing: untied, unraveled, unleashed, and unmoored. The witnesses act as intermediaries given their, as it were, relatively immediate connection to the aesthetic knowledge of the past. Their unique, embodied historicity severs the stalemating reciprocity between that state of being erased and of being opened up, abstracted, done, long since obliterated and recalled in our consciousness. In their version of the memory and appropriation process, Clupke and Till work right on the fault line between present and past, upon which they are able to play into and away from the process of a remembered visualization in rehearsal as well as on stage.

**STAGING EMBODIMENT**

Placing its acts of recall between the past and the present and an awareness of how transmission is the constitutive process of any repetitious appropriation of the past, undo, redo and repeat elucidated the necessary way to handle the historical coordination of corporeality. These acts of re-embodiment traverse a transmedia landscape of dance knowledge, which adherence to one's own appropriation of body knowledge has long placed into question. This is apparent from the moment the performance starts. In a sustained sequence of repetitions, figured choreographically as a simultaneous cycle, Clupke and Till demonstrate the central motifs of Mary Wigman's movement style, "turning and circling," which come off quite differently in the present, far from the superhuman ideal of Wigman's own body. These scenes carve out a visual-actual space, in which Irene Sieben's lexical adjustments resonate, echoing also an audio recording of Wigman discussing the principle of "dance composition." Undo, redo and repeat strips away nearly every pretense surrounding reconstruction and reenactment, letting an unstable dance historicity play out in a reactive, volatile theatrical space. The performance carries on in this expansive fashion, covering an increasing number of surfaces in the theater with rotating projections, construing the space of historical performance

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25 Undo covers a wide semantic range, it can mean: untie, unravel, unleash, agitate, all, alarm, unnerve, paralyze, take back, delete, etc. https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/undo (accessed May 2, 2017).
as a layered, transmedial screening of memory. Constantly flanked with images, text designs, audio clips, and objects, the performers exhibit the expressionist circles, the choreographic patterning behind a Polonaise, the aforementioned piece VOR ORT, performed as a duet, the development of an emotional scene about fear, and finally an improvised sequence with live commentary. The differences between each of the protagonists' techniques, down to the very paradigms they suggest, are palpable, and yet have long since become sources and materials of reconstructive appropriations in the same vein as the passing down of memories. The result is a spontaneous, performed choreographic reflection on how the past becomes embodied, how memories become tangible in choreographic spaces that interpellate the dances of both performers into an audio-visual networking of perception, mapped out over audio recordings (corrective reminders from the witnesses recorded during rehearsals and historical clips of the protagonists themselves), projections of text designs (letters from Pina Bausch's audience), and film excerpts (interviews with the witnesses).

To hand down historical dance knowledge, one must be able, as undo, redo and repeat makes plain, to go beyond the domain of the physical body. The audience experiences the past in performance, first as a passage through memory: a deliberate reconstitution within an intermedial order of knowledge, in which the past finds itself reflected in a choreographic apparatus of perception. Embodied memory seems best understood as a choreographic and theatrical spacing of body and scene that spreads out across the arena of the present. We can invoke the past intellectually, but choreography is the key to experiencing the past as profoundly and irremediably unfamiliar. This realization is tantamount to the unveiling of a dialogical terrain capable of summoning up the past, while staying in the present and revealing the site of appropriative work to be directly on those fissures where the past is most volatile.

**Logic and Gestures of Memory**

It would behoove one who desires to construe reenactment as a critical practice of recalling history to take note of how protocols of staging and techniques of perception themselves reflect relational structures between the past and the present. Despite the wide range of practical fields included under the umbrella of established procedure for reenactment, which conducts one into the culturally, historically, and aesthetically transpired event through an apparatus of perception that is fundamentally conjoined with the present, there is an unmistakable specificity to how reenactment shines a light on the past: either as illumination, irritation, or conjuration. The past is transported to an

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26 Reenactments have become a global form of entertainment and private hobby within our prevailing event culture. Reenacting historical scenes through the lens of today's experiences has led to an idiosyncratic form of memory culture, particularly in the (performatve) arts. Cf. Arns 2007; Heeg et al. 2014; and Schlehe et al. 2010.
arena of presentness, manifested in the overall restaging and rendered through a work of representation as performed by the body. The reality of the transpired real asserts itself within the staging strategy and nestles into a spatiotemporal suspension of the present moment.27

With respect to academic discourse as well as reenactment as it is practiced in the performing arts, the physical state of the body in repetition does not necessarily represent any aesthetic act of critical reflection on the past. The stated horizon of an experience for an image-critical-practice of enlivening and inserting the past into the “here and now,” as Inka Arns and Steve Rushton stress for the arts, essentially does not occur in dance with the particular demands for visualization it imposes. The function of the bodily as enlivening instantiation of the past is largely irrelevant unless staged as such, not unlike in Fabián Barba’s A Mary Wigman Dance Evening (2010), which brought the Wigman image archive to life before the audience’s very eyes. In dance, embodiment is the reckoning with an escaping past, and the escape from a suffocating present.

Reenactment’s gestural vocabulary lies rather in the appointment of a re-embodied act of staging of historiographic appropriations of the past. (See Franko, Chapter 1 in this volume). These acts of staging do not animate history in the way Jerome de Groot qualifies reenactment (De Groot 2009, 129). History is not a truth that needs to come out, but an appropriation of the past that needs to be acted out over media, bodies, and stagings. The reminiscent act of re-embodiment transports the past into a concrete perceptual field, in which something becomes present, while retaining its potency as past. This is, in effect, the logic of reenactment: a staged act of activated memory continually carrying out the work of its own self-assertion.

**Works Cited**


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27 Ludger Schwarte proposes the term "vergegenwärtigen" which translates as calling to mind; literally: bringing into the present (Schwarte 2013, 139).


