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Dance History

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In the historiography of dance, there has been a decided shift over the last decade from histories premised on the nation state to histories promising a transnational and global approach. Investigating this shift in relation to modern dance, I first will probe the implications of the nation-state model and then summarize recent research that deliberately moves beyond this model. Whereas the nation-state model plots choreographic families, the transnational model traces networks of exchange. Whereas the nation-state model distinguishes theatrical from non-theatrical genres, the transnational model emphasizes how theatrical genres often adapt non-theatrical genres, whether social, popular, folk, indigenous or traditional. Whereas the nation-state model follows movement from centres of innovation to peripheries of derivation, the transnational model demonstrates how local conditions shape the assimilation and transformation of influences from abroad. Yet I am not advocating a rejection of the nation-state model. Rather, I am calling for histories of modern dance that integrate the nuance and detail of nation-state approaches with the sweep and generality of transnational approaches.[1]

Nation-state paradigms

The earliest histories of modern dance, written by critical advocates of the emergent genre, followed the movement across Europe, Russia, Great Britain and the United States. But this incipiently transnational history soon gave way to nationalist accounts in the mid-1930s, as German and American critics scripted nationally distinct histories. After the Second World War, histories of modern dance increasingly focused on American modern dance, as New York City supplanted European capitals as a centre for artistic innovation. In

fact, by the mid-1970s 'modern dance' had become nearly synonymous with 'American modern dance' or 'modern dance in New York City'. Don McDonagh's *The Complete Guide to Modern Dance* (1976), for example, barely mentions developments outside Manhattan. Narrating the history of modern dance in terms of 'extended choreographic families', McDonagh employs generation and genealogy as basic organizing principles.

What McDonagh overlooked were the modern dance movements taking shape in diverse contexts from Argentina, Cuba and Jamaica to Japan, India and Israel. As local critics scripted the histories of these movements, they too relied on the paradigm of the nation state. Many of these critics were subsequently commissioned to write genre-specific sections of country-by-country entries for *The International Encyclopedia of Dance* (1998), edited by Selma Jeanne Cohen. Collected together, these entries construct a model of centres and peripheries to map the dissemination of modern dance, now clearly differentiated from non-theatrical dance genres. Whereas generation informed McDonagh's *Complete Guide,* genre and nation organize Cohen's *International Encyclopedia*.

The earliest account of modern dance was not only incipiently transnational but also blurred genres by encompassing what later critics distinguished as 'modern ballet' and 'modern dance'. In 1913, German poet and critic Hans Brandenburg published *Der moderne Tanz* (*Modern Dance*), a book that went through several editions by the year 1921. The earlier editions started with chapters on Isadora Duncan, the Wiesenthal sisters, Ruth St. Denis, Dalcroze's Institute at Hellerau and Diaghilev's Ballets Russes and included material on soloists less well known today, such as Latvian-born Sent M'ahesa, Ukrainian-born Alexander Sacharoff and Amsterdam-based Gertrud Leistikow. Later editions added material on Rudolf Laban and Mary Wigman.

In 1928, Rudolf Lämmel updated Brandenburg in his chronicle of *Der moderne Tanz.* Although Duncan and Anna Pavlova still appear as early exponents, along with Bess Mensendieck, an American-born innovator of a gymnastics system popular in Europe, Lämmel mostly focuses on German artists. He locates a first high point for modern dance in the work of Wigman and Laban and then a second high point in the work of their successors Vera Skoronel, Gret Palucca and Yvonne Georgi. Limiting the geography of the movement, Lämmel chronicles what appears in retrospect as the flourishing of German modern dance during the 1920s.

Once the National Socialists came to power in 1933, state dance policy narrowed the parameters, and historiography, of modern dance even further. Codifying its principles and renaming the genre *Deutscher Tanz* (German

Dance), the National Socialists mythologized the movement as an expression of the German *Volk*. This erased its past and present circulation across national borders and made monstrous the genealogy implicit in Brandenburg's and Lämmel's accounts: whereas the earlier critics narrated a progression of artists extending, rejecting or modifying one another's innovations, the National Socialists demanded that the body politic of *Deutscher Tanz* be populated only by those who could prove 'Aryan' ancestry and cleansed of dancers with Jewish ancestry or leftist political beliefs. Within a period of just over two decades, the German historiography of modern dance went from incipiently transnational to rabidly racist.

It thus comes as no surprise that in the years after the Second World War dancers and critics who remained in Germany repressed the history of *Deutscher Tanz*. As Europe rebuilt from wartime destruction, ballet became the predominant theatrical genre, offering an international language that enabled dancers to move again across national borders and to create a shared culture seemingly above politics. Yet at the same time ballet provided a competitive arena where Europe, newly divided between East and West, could do battle. It is no accident that one of the major texts documenting the Cold War is titled *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy during the Cold War* (Caute 2003). During these years, the history of modern dance in Germany and in Europe went mostly untold.

Equally dramatic shifts marked the historiography of modern dance in the United States from the 1930s to the end of the 1970s. As in Germany, this history was written mostly by working critics, so it reflected what they saw onstage. During the 1920s and 1930s, there was lots of traffic between the United States and Europe, as dancers travelled back and forth to study and to perform (Manning 2007). But this trans-Atlantic traffic nearly stopped altogether during the years of the Second World War, and once it started again, New York City became a magnet for aspiring modern dancers. During the 1930s, US critics mostly acknowledged the trans-Atlantic circulation of modern dance, but by the 1950s and 1960s, they mostly erased the European precedents and parallels for American modern dance. Notably, they neglected to see the modern dance movements bubbling up outside the United States until the mid-1980s.

In 1933, John Martin, dance critic for the *New York Times*, published his manifesto defining *The Modern Dance* as a 'point of view' ([1933] 1972: 19), highlighting the role of Wigman in innovating the genre. In 1935, Virginia Stewart compiled a volume of essays by exponents of *Modern Dance* (also the title of the volume) including Wigman, Palucca and Harald Kreutzberg

alongside Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman and Hanya Holm. That same year Elizabeth Selden (1935) published her account of the aesthetics of modern dance, titled *The Dancer's Quest*, highlighting the work of Wigman, Humphrey and Graham along with Russian-born Benjamin Zemach and Munich-based artist Maja Lex.

In 1936, Martin published *America Dancing*, a history of modern dance that effectively wrote Wigman, along with Palucca, Kreutzberg, Zemach and Lex, out of a genealogy that now started with Duncan, proceeded to Denishawn and culminated in the 'Bennington group' (1936: 175), which included Graham, Humphrey and Weidman. Although Martin also discussed the fourth principal artist at Bennington, Holm, a German immigrant and associate of Wigman, he did not devote a separate chapter to her, since he believed that she still was in the midst of 'assimilation into the American scene' (1936: 182). Within a few years, however, Martin believed that Holm had '[accepted] the rhythms of American life as her own' ([1939] 1978: 268), and his 1939 survey *Introduction to the Dance* presented Holm as an equal to Graham, Humphrey and Weidman. Wigman too reappeared, and Kreutzberg and Kurt Jooss warranted inclusion as artists who explored a 'middle ground' between the 'expressional dance' of Wigman and her American contemporaries and the 'spectacular dance' of ballet and jazz. In this way, *Introduction to the Dance* recalled the trans-Atlantic historiography of Martin's *The Modern Dance*, Stewart's *Modern Dance* and Selden's *The Dancer's Quest*.

Ironically, *America Dancing* was the only one of Martin's three books from the 1930s not reprinted in the post-war years, and yet its focus on an exclusively American genealogy for modern dance anticipated the post-war historiography. In 1949, Margaret Lloyd, critic for the *Christian Science Monitor*, published *The Borzoi Book of Modern Dance*, an account that traces the movement from its 'forerunners' Duncan, Wigman and Denishawn to its 'new leaders'. She declares that 'Wigman's dance was as essentially German as Isadora's (for all the time she spent in Europe) was essentially American' ([1949] 1974: 12). Her chapter on Wigman also discusses Laban, Kreutzberg, Georgi and Jooss, noting their earlier accomplishments but concluding 'that the American modern dance has shot way past the Central European' movement ([1949] 1974: 21). She ascribes this partly to 'America's escape from war's effect on its territory' ([1949] 1974: 21), but more so to the American ideals of freedom and democracy. In this way, Lloyd's history of modern dance echoed the emerging rhetoric of Cold War liberalism. This rhetoric also informed her inclusion of two African American choreographers, Katherine Dunham and Pearl Primus, among the 'new leaders'. About Dunham,

she wrote, 'Like many members of the younger generation, Katherine is an eclectic modern, drawing on all forms within her experience' ([1949] 1974: 249). About Primus's solo *Strange Fruit*, 'It comes through to different people in different ways – the right way for modern dance' ([1949] 1974: 271).

More than twenty-five years later, Don McDonagh, one of the critics to succeed Martin at the *New York Times*, published *The Complete Guide to Modern Dance*. At the height of the 1970s dance boom, McDonagh witnessed the post-war avant-garde's rejection of the 'Bennington group' Martin had lionized in his writings, and his *Complete Guide* followed his earlier volume *The Rise and Fall and Rise of Modern Dance* (1970) in its emphasis on the generational shift from the 'founders' to the advocates of 'freedom and new formalism': Merce Cunningham, Erick Hawkins, Alwin Nikolais, Paul Taylor among others. A chart printed inside the front and back covers illustrates the 'extended choreographic families', organizing members of all generational cohorts according to their primary teacher or mentor.

Individual entries follow on the more than 100 artists named. It is a history premised wholly on the United States: no European modern dancer appears on

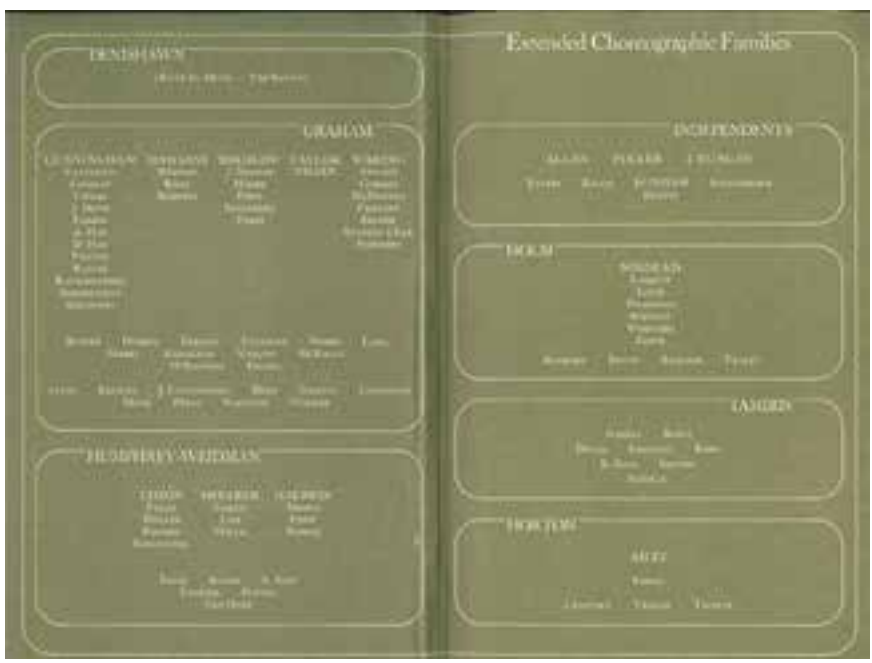

Figure 11.1 A chart illustrating Don McDonagh's *The Complete Guide to Modern Dance* (1976) includes only US-based choreographers organized according to choreographic and pedagogical 'families'. Photo credit: Doubleday Publishing.

the chart, although Wigman, Kreutzberg, Georgi and Jooss are noted in passing as a teacher or inspiration for an American dancer profiled. Thus McDonagh's *Complete Guide* details what became a standard narrative of generational succession from the mid-1960s through the 1980s: Duncan and Denishawn begat Graham, Humphrey and Weidman, who begat José Limón, Cunningham, Hawkins and Taylor, who in turn begat Yvonne Rainer, Meredith Monk, Twyla Tharp and many others.

Like Lloyd's *Borzoi Book*, McDonagh's *Complete Guide* integrates African American choreographers within the lineage of modern dance. On the chart of 'extended choreographic families', Dunham is noted as an 'independent' and the progenitor of Talley Beatty, whereas Primus and Donald McKayle are placed in a line of descent from Graham. Alvin Ailey, George Faison and James Truitte are listed in the Horton lineage, while Rod Rodgers is placed under Hawkins and Eleo Pomare under Limón. Strikingly, the *Complete Guide* takes no account of the historiography of Black Dance that had flourished over the previous decade, a historiography that was implicitly transnational in its account of how multiple genres of American dance transformed Africanist precedents. In Langston Hughes and Milton Meltzer's *Black Magic: A Pictorial History of the African-American in the Performing Arts* ([1967] 1990), Dunham, Primus, Ailey and others enter a multi-genre history of black artists in dance, drama, opera and film that starts with an account of the Middle Passage and ends with tours of US artists abroad. Lynne Fauley Emery's *Black Dance From 1619 to Today* ([1972] 1988) follows a similar trajectory while focusing on multiple genres of theatrical dance and popular dance. The genealogies scripted by Hughes and Meltzer and by Emery pay less attention to teacher–student transmission than to the transmission of cultural memory. This historiography, shaped by the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, at first supplemented but soon supplanted the Cold War liberalism of Lloyd and McDonagh's accounts.

The Black Arts historiography built on two foundational essays by pioneering artist-scholars. In 1934, two years after Zora Neale Hurston staged *The Great Day*, based in part on her ethnographic research in the Bahamas and the American South and in part on her reaction against black musicals catering to white audiences, she published 'Characteristics of Negro Expression' in Nancy Cunard's *Negro: An Anthology.* In 1941, one year after Katherine Dunham ([1941] 2005) and her company staged *Tropics and Le Jazz 'Hot'* on Broadway, a concert introducing her movement language fusing Afro-Caribbean rhythms and gestures with basic ballet and modern dance, she published 'The Negro Dance' in Sterling Brown's anthology *The Negro Caravan*. Whereas Hurston's

([1934] 1994) essay emphasizes the roots of black cultural expression within the jook and the church, Dunham's essay emphasizes the routes of black cultural expression from Africa to the Americas. As Black Studies developed from the late 1960s to the present, Hurston's and Dunham's doubling of roots and routes has informed a wealth of literature from Robert Farris Thompson's *African Art in Motion* (1974) to Brenda Dixon Gottschild's *Digging the Africanist Presence in American Performance* (1996) to Thomas DeFrantz's and Anita Gonzalez's *Black Performance Theory* (2014).

Over the last fifty years, the historiography of modern dance has responded in different ways to the historiography of Black Dance. Whereas McDonagh integrated black artists within his 'extended choreographic families', critic-historians in the late 1970s and early 1980s whitened the historiography of modern dance, in effect assigning black artists to the literature on Black Dance. In the 1990s, once Dixon Gottschild and others reopened the question of how white dancers and critics engaged black dance and dancers, white writers broadened their histories of modern dance to include artists of colour. More recently, as 'African diaspora dance' has replaced Black Dance as a field designation, its historiography to some extent parallels the shift to transnational approaches to modern dance. But whether these parallel lines ever meet remains at issue.

For a brief period in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the ascendancy of the Black Arts historiography led to a whitening of modern dance historiography. In 1979, Marcia Siegel, a critic who earlier had lamented the 'new separatism' of Black Dance in her collection *At the Vanishing Point* (1973), published *The Shapes of Change: Images of American Dance*. Authoring rich descriptions of more than forty dance works she considered foundational for American theatrical dance, Siegel foregrounds choreographers working in both ballet (George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins) and modern dance (Graham, Humphrey, Tamiris, Cunningham, Taylor, Tharp). Starting with an account of Loïe Fuller, Duncan and the 'Denishawn succession', she reiterates the US-focused genealogy of modern dance familiar from other histories: 'It's not possible to identify the real beginnings of a phenomenon as diversified and as organic to our American cultural development as modern dance' (1979: 23). Limón's *The Moor's Pavanne* (1949) and Ailey's *Revelations* (1960) are the only two works by choreographers of colour analysed in depth, and in both discussions Siegel laments the decline in 'dance quality' (1979: 169) and increase of 'commercial' appeal (1979: 288) in performances of the works.

In 1980, Sally Banes, a critical advocate for the avant-garde, published *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance*, profiling ten choreographers

and a collective The Grand Union that involved several of the artists featured separately: Rainer, Steve Paxton, Trisha Brown, David Gordon and Douglas Dunn. Her introduction concisely surveys the history of modern dance 'to show why in the 1960s a genre we now call *post-modern* dance inevitably arose' (1980: 1, italics in original). The history Banes tells is populated solely by white American choreographers: from Fuller, Duncan and St. Denis to Graham, Humphrey and Weidman to Cunningham, James Waring, Aileen Passloff and Anna Halprin. She contextualizes the revolutionary innovations of Judson Dance Theater, the workshop and concert series from 1962 to 1964 that launched the careers of her protagonists, within the 'new music, film, the visual arts, poetry, and theatre' of the day (1980: 9). Without making specific reference to art critic Clement Greenberg, Banes echoes his account of vanguard painting, arguing that 'the post-modernists proposed (as do Cunningham and Balanchine) that the formal qualities of dance might be reason enough for choreography, and that the purpose of making dances might be simply to make a framework within which we look at movement for its own sake' (1980: 15). Like Siegel, Banes subtly alters the historiography of dance modernism, introducing Balanchine's plotless ballets into the narrative. This whitened narrative of dance modernism parallels Greenbergian accounts of modernism in the visual arts while countering and complementing the historiography of Black Dance.

This whitened narrative did not survive intact for long, although its repercussions continue to be felt in the historiography of modern dance. In the 1980s a new generation of black artists emerged, intent on working between the worlds of postmodern dance and Black Dance. In so doing, they challenged critics who had scripted the whitened genealogy. In fact, in the second edition of *Terpsichore in Sneakers* (1987) Banes notes 'the recent emergence of a group of black post-modern choreographers', including Bill T. Jones, Ishmael Houston-Jones, Ralph Lemon, Blondell Cummings, Bebe Miller 'and many others' (1987: xxxv). Interestingly, in the second edition Banes also acknowledged that 'post-modern dance does not, of course, happen only in New York' (1987: xxxv), noting activity on the West Coast and in Minneapolis, Chicago and Austin. Banes also breaks from the US focus of the post-war historiography by highlighting exciting new work happening in London, Montreal, Germany, France and Japan. By 1987, vanguard choreographers from all these places had appeared in New York City, and the critics who doubled as historians could no longer assert that modern dance was as American as apple pie.[2]

In the late 1980s and 1990s, working critics became less influential as historians of modern dance, as university-based scholars took over this role.

Borrowing and adapting critical theories in the humanities, these scholars challenged the Greenbergian narrative of dance modernism, the US focus of modern dance history and the whiteness of the modern dance canon. My own scholarship was part of this move. My first monograph, *Ecstasy and the Demon* (1993; 2nd edn 2006), focused on the dances of Mary Wigman in part to recover the vital German modern dance movement that had been written out of the post-war historiography. My study traced how Wigman's choreography responded to the changing sociopolitical conditions and patronage structures of the nation state, from the years of the Wilhelmine Empire, when her early choreography crystallized while in voluntary exile on Monte Verita; to the years of the Weimar Republic, when her choreography reached its artistic high point within a vibrant cultural scene; to the years of the Third Reich, when her choreography conformed to the dictates of Nazi policy; to the post-war years of the Federal Republic, when her choreography grappled with the Cold War division of Germany. At the dramatic centre of the narrative was Wigman's complex collaboration with the National Socialists. In this way, *Ecstasy and the Demon* addressed what had been a glaring repression in the post-war historiography of German dance, which had remained silent about the many leading choreographers who had participated in the redefinition of modern dance as *Deutscher Tanz* (German Dance).

German writers were involved in similar enquiries during the 1980s and 1990s. Recovering the multifaceted dance scene from 1900 through the interwar years, they necessarily confronted the vexed years of the Third Reich. Many were inspired by the emergence of a new mode of dance modernism in the 1970s and 1980s called *Tanztheater* (dance theatre), whose innovators Pina Bausch, Susanne Linke, Gerhard Bohner and Arila Siegert had studied with Wigman, Jooss and Palucca during the post-war years (Müller and Stöckemann 1993). Other scholars extended Holocaust research to encompass theatrical dance (Karina and Kant 2003). These histories, like *Ecstasy and the Demon*, remain focused on developments within the nation state.

So too did my second monograph *Modern Dance, Negro Dance: Race in Motion* (2004). Compelled by seeing Bill T. Jones and other black postmodernists, I aimed to dismantle what seemed a segregated historiography of American modern dance by historicizing the viewing conventions for works by Tamiris, Graham, Humphrey, Limón and Cunningham, on the one hand, and works by Asadata Dafora, Hemsley Winfield, Dunham, Primus and Ailey, on the other hand. In my argument, it was a series of social and artistic changes from the Red Decade of the 1930s to the Red Scare of the 1950s that shaped the representation and performance of race in American modern dance.

My study was one of a number of revisionist works that incorporated black and white choreographers and pushed against the divide between (white) modern dance and Black Dance: John Perpener's *African-American Concert Dance: The Harlem Renaissance and Beyond* (2001), Julia Foulkes's *Modern Bodies: Dance and American Modernism from Martha Graham to Alvin Ailey* (2002), Mark Franko's *The Work of Dance: Labor, Movement, and Identity in the 1930s* (2002), Gay Morris's *A Game for Dancers: Performing Modernism in the Postwar Years, 1945–1960* (2006), Anthea Kraut's *Choreographing the Folk: The Dance Stagings of Zora Neale Hurston* (2008) and Rebekah Kowal's *How to Do Things with Dance: Performing Change in Postwar America* (2010). All of these studies bring new critical perspectives to modern dance history, and all remain bound by the historiographic paradigm of the nation state.

Tellingly, revisionist studies that move beyond the black–white binary also move beyond the borders of the nation state. Tracing how US performers from Buffalo Bill to Lester Horton 'played Indian', Jacqueline Shea Murphy's *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories* (2007) ends with an account of contemporary Native choreography in the United States and Canada. Examining how Limón's identity as a Mexican immigrant shaped his work, a topic the choreographer himself rarely addressed, Patricia Seed's edited volume *José Limón and La Malinche: The Dancer and the Dance* (2008) interprets his 1949 work from both sides of the border. Probing what Ruth St. Denis learned from immigrant South Asian dancers and students in 1905–1906 and the pedagogical methods of Indian classical dancers after 1965, Priya Srinivasan's *Sweating Saris: Indian Dance as Transnational Labor* (2012) demonstrates the multiple ways that 'offshore labour' has supported US performance. In fact, almost all the artists profiled in histories of modern dance can be viewed from transnational perspectives, and more recent scholarship does exactly that, as will become clear in the subsequent section.

During the post-war years, the nation-state paradigm also structured histories of modern dance outside the United States. This becomes clear in the history of modern dance narrated by the *International Encyclopedia of Dance*, conceptualized by Selma Jeanne Cohen in the 1970s and 1980s and revised and edited by her associates in the 1990s. The *International Encyclopedia* profiles just over 100 countries, and these national entries are organized according to genres, typically a first section or sections on folk, ritual, traditional, popular and/or social dance (categories differ according to country) and then a section or sections on theatrical dance, at times further subdivided by period or by the genres of ballet, modern and/or contemporary. Ten countries have a section

devoted to 'modern dance': Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Cuba, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Japan, Korea and Yugoslavia. These ten sections all highlight the influence of modern dancers from Germany and the United States on the development of a national style. Strikingly, the entry neither on Germany nor on the United States has a separate section titled 'modern dance'. Rather, overview entries direct readers to entries on individual artists, on *Ausdruckstanz* ('dance of expression', as German modern dance was called after the Second World War) and on modern dance technique (US choreographers only). In this way, the *International Encyclopedia* implicitly narrates German and American modern dance as major traditions, the centres from which modern dance was disseminated across Europe, Latin America and the Pacific Rim.

Several variations appear within this model of centres and peripheries. In the entries on Great Britain and France, modern dance is presented as a belated development: dancers were first influenced by Wigman and her contemporaries and then by US dancers (specifically Graham in Britain, Nikolais and Cunningham in France) before coalescing distinctive styles of their own in the 1970s and 1980s. The entries on Japan and Korea also trace how dancers first absorbed influences from Germany in the 1920s and 1930s and then from the United States in the 1950s and 1960s, but do not posit a time lag; rather, Japanese and Korean artists are seen creating forms that fuse Asian and European influences all along. The entries on Argentina and Brazil roughly follow the same pattern, dating modern dance from a Latin American tour by Isadora Duncan in 1916 to internationally recognized companies and choreographers emerging in the 1970s. In the entry on Hungary, the years of Communist rule are presented as a state-imposed interruption from the end of the Second World War until the mid-1980s, when diverse styles of modern dance re-emerged and flourished.

All these variations assume that German and American modern dance were distinct practices and imply a progress narrative, which sees developments before the 1970s as inherently derivative and celebrates developments after the 1970s for realizing a national style through the efforts of native-born, not migrant, practitioners. In other words, the *International Encyclopedia* assumes the historiography scripted by American critics from the 1930s through the 1970s and by German critics in the 1980s and 1990s. But what if the transnational history glimpsed in Brandenburg's *Der moderne Tanz* more accurately reflects the circulation of the genre? Reading across entries in the *International Encyclopedia*, it is possible to discern an alternate history of modern dance, as artists and educators move between the frames of myriad nation states.

Transnational paradigms

Over the last two decades, English-language scholars have begun to visualize this alternate history. Some studies highlight the development of modern dance movements outside Germany and the United States, often in conjunction with other genres of theatrical and non-theatrical dance: Cuba (John 2012; Schwall 2016), Jamaica (Sörgel 2007), Haiti (LaMothe 2015), Argentina (Fortuna 2019), Mexico (Reynoso 2012, 2014), Brazil (Rosa 2015), Palestine/Israel (Spiegel 2013), Australia (Card 2015), India (Meduri 1988, 2005; O'Shea 2007; Purkayastha 2014), Bangladesh (Rahman 2013), China (Ma 2016; Wilcox 2011 and 2016) and Taiwan (Chen 2012; Kwan 2013; Lin 2010). Other studies attend to international tours under private management or state sponsorship, whether by well-known artists such as Graham, Dunham and Ailey (Croft 2015; Geduld 2010; Von Eschen 2010) or by lesser-known artists such as Tórtola Valencia (Clayton 2012, 2014), Kawakami and Sadayakko (Rodman 2013; Scholz-Cionca 2016) and Choe Seung-hui (Park 2006). Yet other studies re-examine the careers of dancers who migrated across national borders both voluntarily and involuntarily: Valeska Gert (Elswit 2012), Kurt Jooss (Elswit 2017), Hanya Holm (Randall 2012), Lotte Goslar (Mozingo 2012), Si-lan Chen (Sine 2016) and Michio Ito (Preston 2012, 2016; Rodman 2017; Sorgenfrei 2014; Wong 2009). And many more enquiries into the transnational and global dimensions of modern dance are underway.

Amid this plethora of case studies, what alternate histories, and alternate historiographies, become evident? Broadly speaking, the transnational paradigms now in formation trace networks of exchange, explore how local conditions shape the assimilation and transformation of influences from abroad and highlight how modern dance and dance modernism often adapt non-theatrical genres. While studies of individual artists emphasize networks of exchange and local interactions, regional studies emphasize the intersection of theatrical and non-theatrical genres. Yet even the best single-volume summary to date, *The Modernist World* (2015), co-edited by Stephen Ross and Allana Lindgren, does not present a single model but a gamut of possible models. Hence I attempt to elucidate the parameters of an emergent historiography.

Recent publications on Michio Ito reveal a diversity of transnational approaches to modern dance. Born in Tokyo to an artistic family, Ito studied Japanese and Western styles of music and dance, and in 1911 he travelled to Berlin at age 18 to pursue further study. Seeing performances by Isadora Duncan and the Ballets Russes compelled him to focus on dance, and he enrolled at

Dalcroze's Institute at Hellerau in 1912; his training there became an important basis for his later choreography. When the First World War broke out, Ito left Germany and moved to London, where he began to present his solo dances for both intimate salon audiences and large commercial audiences. His salon performances led to his meeting W.B. Yeats, and Ito played a decisive role in Yeats's *At the Hawk's Well* (1916), a dance drama that adapted and modernized Japanese noh. Later that same year, Ito moved to New York City, and over the next twelve years he toured his repertoire of solos, codified and taught his movement language and collaborated with theatrical modernists, notably Eugene O'Neill and Martha Graham. In early 1929, he resettled in Los Angeles, continued his teaching and mentoring (Lester Horton was a student) and staged large-scale pageants. Detained as a Japanese national in 1941, he was deported to Japan during the Second World War and later staged works for the American occupation forces and for Japanese television.

After his death in 1961, students in Japan and in the United States preserved Ito's movement language and repertoire. In a biographical profile for the *International Encyclopedia* Helen Caldwell, a student from his California days, called the artist a 'Japanese exponent of American modern dance' (1998: 558); her language reveals her debt to the historiography of the nation state. In 1994, Satoru Shimazaki, a student of Ryuko Maki, who taught Ito's method in post-war Tokyo, co-wrote an essay with Mary-Jean Cowell, a US dancer and scholar who also had studied Ito's method, and they followed Ito's writings in seeing his work as '[bringing] together the East and the West' (1994: 11). Although Cowell and Shimazaki recognize what Ito might have borrowed from Japanese dance, they emphasize what he contributed to modern dance in Europe and the United States, pointing out that his codified technique predated that of Graham and Humphrey. Like Caldwell, they shape their argument in accord with the historiography of the nation state.

Given his transcontinental itinerary, it is not surprising that Ito has become a central figure in the emergent historiography of transnationalism. In a 2009 essay, 'Artistic Utopias: Michio Ito and the Trope of the International', Yutian Wong contextualizes Ito's career within Asian American immigration and labour history, focusing on the policies that allowed the artist to enter the United States in 1916 as a 'gentleman' but then deported him in 1943 as an 'enemy alien'. In her account, Ito becomes an exemplar of how the international artist, then and now, 'is mythologized as a solution to racism' (2009: 157). Tactfully critiquing Cowell and Shimazaki, Wong shows the complex interplay of race, class and nationality in Asian American subject formation, concluding that 'Ito's racially

marked dancing body, invested in social privileges allowed an "international artist," could never become an "American"" (2009: 153). Although Wong pays little attention to Ito's career in Europe or in Japan, her argument foregrounds how race, ethnicity and the unacknowledged whiteness of the modern dance canon structure the reception of artists of colour across national borders.

Complementing Wong, Carol Sorgenfrei looks at Ito's career from the perspective of Japanese studies in her 2014 essay, 'Strategic Unweaving: Itō Michio and the Diasporic Dancing Body'. Illuminating the worldview of artists and intellectuals like Ito's family, Sorgenfrei sees his choreography extending the belief that Japan, never colonized and economically strong, served as a repository for Asian culture and excelled 'in the realms of culture, spirituality, and philosophy while deeming the West, though technologically fecund, to be culturally, philosophically and spiritually sterile' (2014: 209). European modernists like Yeats espoused a similar view for different reasons, and in wartime London, when Japan sided with Britain against Germany, Ito's performances in *Hawk's Well* resonated with both Japanese and European ideas. Relying on photographs and reviews, Sorgenfrei reads Ito's performances as suggesting '*simultaneously* the masculine, militaristic superiority of the Japanese body *and* its feminine, nonthreatening universality' (2014: 213, italics in original).

Making this argument, Sorgenfrei plays off Erika Fischer-Lichte's (2014) proposal to adopt the metaphor of 'interweaving' to describe performances that bring together artists and elements from different cultures. Determined to understand Ito as the subject of his own artistry rather than as an Oriental Other, Sorgenfrei argues that he 'ultimately engaged in aesthetic *unweaving,* a political and cultural strategy valorizing the uniqueness and superiority of Japan and the Japanese body' (2014: 201, italics in original). In fact, Sorgenfrei authored her essay as a fellow at the International Research Center in Berlin headed by Fischer-Lichte, an institute funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research from 2008 to 2018 that convened artists and scholars to theorize new understandings of global performance. Yutian Wong also pursued her Ito research in the context of an institutional initiative, a three-year series of meetings convened by Susan Leigh Foster at the University of California-Los Angeles designed to 'think collectively and with global perspective about something called "world" dance' (2009: 1). Strikingly, these institutional efforts in Berlin and in Los Angeles to undo the historiography of the nation state happened in the two countries where that historiography had reached its pinnacle: Germany and the United States.

Neither Wong nor Sorgenfrei engages Ito's practice as it has been passed down from dancer to dancer. This transmission becomes an important

resource for Carrie Preston, whose essay 'Michio Ito's Shadow: Searching for the Transnational in Solo Dance' (2012) analyses the dances as currently performed and whose book *Learning to Kneel: Noh, Modernism, and Journeys in Teaching* (2016) reflects on her own experiences of learning Ito's dances. In both Preston questions what she calls 'our tendencies to assume *bad* orientalism and appropriation, as opposed to *good* multiculturalism and hybridity' (2016: 11, italics in original). Simply put, she asserts that 'Ito's desire for cultural fusion coexisted with his orientalism' (2012: 9) and that 'cultural exchange is problematic and inevitable, shaped by both misunderstanding and remarkable creativity' (2016: 12). Thus, Preston counters Wong's frame of Asian American studies and Sorgenfrei's frame of Japanese studies, arguing that Ito never saw himself in these terms but rather freely pursued 'strategic cultural syncretism and strategic orientalism' (2016: 284).

Learning to Kneel focuses on the complex process of cultural exchange that created Yeats's and Ito's 1916 production of *At the Hawk's Well*. This process of exchange involved corporeal knowledge as well as textual knowledge, and Preston analyses how Ito drew from his earlier training in Japanese classical dance and Dalcroze's eurythmics in choreographing his role as the Hawk and how Yeats, in turn, responded to his dancing by cutting more and more text from the climactic scene of *Hawk's Well*. In Preston's account, this exchange occurred within 'a series of intercultural, homosocial, and often homoerotic collaborations' (2016: 35), a network that included Yone Noguchi, a bilingual poet and critic who first introduced Yeats to noh (and father of Isamu Noguchi, who later collaborated with Martha Graham); Ernst Fenollosa, a US art historian and collector resident in Tokyo, whose widow gave his noh translations to Erza Pound; Hirata Kiichi, a colleague of Fenollosa in Tokyo who had produced literal translations of noh for his friend; Pound, whose published translations of noh (created without a knowledge of Japanese) spurred Yeats's adaptations; Kume Tamijurō and Kōri Torahiko, London friends of Ito, who accompanied his early demonstration of noh dancing with noh chanting; and Edmund Dulac, a French artist who designed the masks and costumes and wrote the music for *Hawk's Well*. The London production in turn prompted further networks of exchange as Ito staged versions of the work in New York (1918), Los Angeles (1929) and Tokyo (1939) and as European and Japanese artists continued to stage modernist noh.

Wong, Sorgenfrei and Preston all cite influential theorists of globalization in their work, from Arjun Appadurai (1996) and Kwame Anthony Appiah (2006) to Mary Louise Pratt (1992) and Jahan Ramazani (2009). While these theorists

typically use literature as illustration, scholars of Ito confront the challenge of how to translate these theorists into useable methods for dance studies. Taken together, their approaches model methods for tracing corporeal and intellectual exchanges across multiple registers and for situating these exchanges within overlapping local contexts: early twentieth-century Japan, London during the First World War, New York during the 1920s, Los Angeles during the 1930s and Japanese internment during the Second World War.[3]

In many ways, scholarly approaches to Ito's career parallel other recent enquiries on individual artists in transit. Michelle Clayton has followed the Spanish British dancer Tórtola Valencia on her tours of Latin America from 1916 to 1930, highlighting how local critics of her performances, aware that audiences across Europe and the Americas also had witnessed her dancing, projected their own positions within transnational networks. Clayton understands this not as 'modernist cosmopolitanism' but as 'comparative particularisms', 'particularisms performed by moving bodies and resignified by their shifting publics' (2014: 31). Kate Elswit has followed both Kurt Jooss and Valeska Gert from their involuntary exiles during the Nazi years to their voluntary remigrations to Germany following the Second World War. She proposes the idea and method of the 'micropolitics of exchange', the 'intricate, personalized crosscurrents, catalyzed by survival strategies that registered in the work itself and left traces in history, both marked and unmarked' (2017: 419). Thus, Elswit challenges an earlier conception of exile studies that highlights one-way movement away from Germany, a centre–periphery model as shown in a map accompanying Patricia Stöckemann's 1998 cluster of articles on the topic.

Like the scholars of Ito, Elswit traces migrants' complex moves after leaving home. What Elswit and Clayton share with Wong, Sorgenfrei and Preston is a determination to account for the multiple networks for production and reception that dancers encounter and alter as they cross national borders. Embodiment, pedagogy and person-to-person transmission become central to these border crossings.

If the local provides one alternative to the historiography of the nation state, then the regional provides another. *The Modernist World* exemplifies the regional approach, with entries on dance alongside the other arts in sections devoted to East and Southeast Asia, South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, Australia and Oceania, Europe, Latin America, Middle East and the Arab World, and Canada and the United States. In contrast to Selma Jeanne Cohen's *International Encyclopedia of Dance*, there is no implicit progress narrative; rather, the years before the 1970s are considered fascinating in their own right as dancers, practices and ideas

Figure 11.2 A map illustrating Patricia Stöckemann's 'Tanz im Exil' (1998) shows one-way movement from Germany and Austria to North and South America, Australia, Asia and the Middle East. Photo Credit: Patricia Stöckemann: 'Emigrationen aus Deutschland und Österreich' (Gestaltung: Angelika Stein), in: *Tanzdrama* Nr. 42, Heft 3/1998, S. 26f.

ceaselessly cross borders. Also in contrast to the *International Encyclopedia*, dance modernism is not divorced from social, popular, indigenous and traditional dance. On the contrary, many of the essays demonstrate the way that diverse genres mingle and fuse in dance modernism.

In 'Modern Dance in East and Southeast Asia', Jukka Miettinen notes that the term 'modern' in the region can mean either 'artists who were in direct contact with the Western modernist dance movement' or the modernization of dance that 'started earlier in Asia than the modern dance movement evolved in Europe and in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century' (2015: 42). He holds that 'the various strategies of negotiation between the indigenous traditions and modernist tendencies' account for 'the present pluralism and richness of Asia's contemporary dance scene' (2015: 43). In 'Dance in South Asia', Ketu Katrak relies on Charles Taylor's concept of 'multiple modernities' to plot modern dance in the region as 'a palimpsest of old and new, traditional and contemporary' (2015: 118). Focusing on India and its diaspora, Katrak sees influences travelling from East to West to East in the choreography of Rukmini Devi (influenced by Pavlova on tour), Madame Menaka (influenced

by St. Denis) and Astad Deboo (influenced by Murray Louis). By contrast, Chandralekha, who trained in Bharatanatyam, 'rejected its superficial religiosity, over-ornamentation, and reliance on epic stories and myths' in favour of abstraction and the 'Indian psychophysical tradition' (2015: 123); in this way, her cross-fertilization of traditions within India empowered several generations of innovators in India, Great Britain, Canada and the United States.

Essays on Africa and Latin America also highlight the interplay of 'indigenous traditions and modernist tendencies'. In 'Modernism and African Dance: Reinventing Traditions', Kariamu Welsh describes how 'African dance companies served as cultural ambassadors for newly independent African countries and thus ushered in a wave of African dance to Europe and the West' (2015: 183). These companies constructed a national culture in Ghana, Guinea and Senegal by adapting dances from various ethnic and tribal groups for stage presentation. Welsh emphasizes the intellectual and financial patronage extended to the dance companies by leaders such as Léopold Senghor, the first president of Senegal, and Fodéba Keïta, the first minister of the interior in Guinea. In 'Racialized Dance Modernisms in Lusophone and Spanish-Speaking Latin America', Jose Luis Reynoso demonstrates the role that race and class played in constructing dance modernisms in Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Cuba and Mexico. He explains how 'as dancers relied on ballet, modern dance, and indigenous and Africanist forms of expressive culture while participating in the formation of hybrid national identities, they simultaneously naturalized hierarchies of racialized class relations while marking and indigenizing whiteness' (2015: 398).

Strikingly, the essays on modern dance in Europe and the United States, the centres posited in the earlier historiography, radically revise the historiography of the nation state. In 'Embodied Modernism: Dance in Canada and the United States', Allana Lindgren weaves together the histories of modern dance in both countries, histories that are remarkably parallel and yet have been told separately. In 'Inventing Abstraction? Modernist Dance in Europe', Juliet Bellow and Nell Andrew take as their starting point a 2012 exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City that included Nijinsky, Laban and Wigman in a narrative of how abstraction developed in modern art. Critiquing the show for grafting images of and by the three artists unto an existing narrative, they offer 'a counter-history of abstraction' (2015: 330) that includes a broader range of dancers (e.g. Fuller, Duncan, Valentine de Saint-Point, Sophie Taeuber, Oskar Schlemmer and Ballets Suédois) and promises 'to redefine the central principle of modernism' (2015: 331). In their counter-history, dance does not simply reflect the modes of abstraction created in the visual arts but demonstrates how 'actual bodies,

bodily surrogates or images, and tactile or kinaesthetic sensations … all played key roles in the urge to abstraction' (2015: 331).

Taken together, the essays in *The Modernist World* dismantle the narrative of centres and peripheries that structured the history of modern dance in the *International Encyclopedia of Dance*. Yet there remains much work to be done before we achieve a fully rounded account of modern dance in transnational circulation.[4] At present, we have a wide array of new studies but few accounts that attempt to synthesize, compare and map the transnational historiography. In a 2016 essay in *PMLA*, Harsha Ram (2016) proposes the concept of scale to interlink local, national, regional and global histories of literary modernism. Might the concept of scale apply to dance historiography as well? Is there a way to nest the significant insights that result from studies of individual artists, collective networks and centres for experimentation, cultural policies of nations and shared regional histories of colonialization and modernization?

This would seem to be the next step for the historiography of modern dance: to integrate these different levels of analysis. In the end, the historiography of the nation state and the historiography of transnational circulation are not antithetical but complementary, as dancers and spectators make meanings in local, national, regional and global contexts.

Notes

1 The shift from national to transnational approaches marks the historiography of other dance genres as well. For example, earlier studies of hip hop focused on its origins within minority subcultures in the United States, whereas more recent scholarship looks at the genre's global dissemination. In this chapter, I trace the historiographic turn through my own research subfield, aware of the privilege that modern dance has accrued as a research topic over the last century. For further information on many of the artists named in this chapter, see A. C. Lindgren et al., *Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernist Dance* (forthcoming) or the online *Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism*.

2 Once Banes received her PhD and made the transition to scholar in addition to critic, she interrogated the role of black artists in the early 1960s avant-garde and integrated black artists into her studies of dance modernism. See *Greenwich Village 1963* (1993) and *Dancing Women: Female Bodies on Stage* (1998).

3 Tara Rodman (2017) adds new dimensions to our understanding of Ito and significantly revises earlier accounts through her intensive research in Japanese-language sources.

4 Harmony Bench and Kate Elswit (2016) have begun to explore digital approaches to questions of transnational circulation, a crucial direction for future research.

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