

Re-writing Dance Modernism: Networks

This book germinated from a meeting. In December 2016, Łódź hosted the international conference *How Does the Body Think? Corporeal and Movement Based Practices of the Modernism Era*. Accompanied by the exhibition *Moved Bodies: Choreographies of Modernity*, which showcased contemporary dance projects inspired by modernism, the event attracted researchers representing several different countries and generations. Among others, the list of participants included the authors of studies featured in this collection: Susan Manning and myself.¹ We were both surprised and delighted to discover that although we lived far apart, our roots were common in a geographical sense. Although she was born in the United States, Manning's family originated from the Opole region, where I was born and raised. This would not be worth mentioning had it not been for the fact that one of the conference themes, addressed in Manning's paper, concerned the interlinks between the history of dance and geography² which she considered in a contribution subsequently published under the title *Nation and World in Modern Dance*, featured in the edited collection

¹ Two other persons who actively participated in the Łódź conference and contributed to this anthology were Hanna Raszewska-Kursa and Julia Hoczyk (co-editor of this volume).

² For more on the interconnections between history and geography, see E. Soja, "History: Geography: Modernity," [in:] E. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, London – New York 1989, pp. 10–42.

*Moved Bodies. Choreographies of Modernity.*³ In her paper (and in her conversations with me), Manning emphasized the problematic nature of interpreting the history of modern dance⁴ through the national lens, which introduces contrived differences between respective dance traditions (both in terms of dance practices and historical narratives), and leads to the hegemony of the strongest ones (i.e., American and German) coupled with the marginalization of others. Following this pattern, one would expect that scholars educated in different academic systems would likewise write histories expressive of the spirit of their respective nations. Our encounter demonstrated that the situation is in fact much more complicated, and that the relation between geography and history in the context of dance studies calls for a more thorough rethinking.

The nationalization of the history of dance modernism, from the pioneering practices of Loïe Fuller and Isadora Duncan to the projects conceived by the contemporaries of Merce Cunningham and Alwin Nikolais,⁵ artificially unified the character of all sorts of dance practices that have since been habitually referred to by the ambiguous umbrella term of “dance modernism,” expressive of American or German cultural identity. Under the paradigm of cultural nationalism, the nation is superimposed on

³ S. Manning, “Nation and World in Modern Dance,” [in:] *Moved Bodies. Choreographies of Modernity*, ed. K. Słoboda, Łódź 2017, pp. 71–80.

⁴ As editors of this publication, we owe the reader a terminological clarification. In all texts contained herein, the adjective “modernist” and the noun “modernism” denote changes and tendencies connected with mature modernity within culture and art, including dance. Thus, dance modernism is most often something more than a mere dance technique or genre, although it does appear in such sense in this volume as well, most often in the Central European context (as is the case in Andrea Jeličić’s text, in which modernist dance is contrasted with classical ballet on many levels, or in Małgorzata Leyko’s contribution) and in broader cultural transformations. With reference to European and American modern dance and *Moderne Tanz*, we decided to use the term “*taniec modern*” (modern dance) in the Polish version of this book in order to distinguish between different strands of development within dance modernism which comprise the network of connections and influences that we and the authors of this anthology have thematized on many occasions. We deliberately decided not to translate the term “modern dance” as “*taniec nowoczesny*,” since the term currently refers to a completely different tradition, and as such, constitutes a potential misnomer (editors’ note: J.H., W.K.).

⁵ This American timeframe, typical of modern dance history, at least for most of the 20th century, accurately illustrates the profound entrenchment of the nationalist paradigm in dance history. In the Polish research into the history of modern and contemporary dance, a rather unreflective use of nationhood as a classification criterion can be encountered in my early work *Wizjonerzy ciała. Panorama współczesnego teatru tańca*, Kraków 2010.

artistic life, branding creative practices, as it were, with a predetermined national identity. This process can, of course, be seen as an inseparable part of modernization, whose cultural aspect – as shown by the seminal studies of Ernest Gellner⁶ and Benedict Anderson⁷ – involves the nationalization of collective identities. Seen from this perspective, the procedure of nationalization can be considered to express the essence of dance modernism. However, this is only possible if one accepts a specific definition of the latter as an imperialist project aimed at establishing cultural hegemony, in which the dominant identity category is that of nationality. Nowadays, such an understanding of modernization fails to find many adherents, yet it persists as a kind of historical cliché, if only in dance studies, which quite unreflexively rely on nationality as an interpretative key. That it is possible to think and write differently about modernism quickly became clear to me and Manning, leading us to defining the space of our meeting as a network of transatlantic flows of ideas concerning dance modernism, in which nationality and globality constantly blend to produce hybrid identities of dance artists and scholars alike. To put it bluntly: the meeting between me and Manning could not be reduced to a meeting of a Pole and an American defining themselves by national difference. Rather, our encounter almost immediately sprouted an American-Polish-global rhizome, provoking the question about the type of history of dance modernism it may produce.

Manning extended her critique of the nationalistic history of modern dance in her text “Dance History” published in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Dance Studies*, where she argued for the need to complement histories of dance modernism written from a national perspective with a global, transnational history that would replace the choreographic ‘families’ that populate histories written under the nation-state paradigm with translocal exchange networks.⁸ To some extent, the foregrounding of the idea of networks in Manning’s methodological proposal stemmed from the discussions we had via e-mail and in person during the 2018 conference “Re-writing Dance Modernism” that I organized in Cracow (and whose title was formulated by Manning).

⁶ E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalisms*, 2nd edition, Ithaca 2006.

⁷ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition, London – New York 1991.

⁸ S. Manning, “Dance History,” [in:] *The Bloomsbury Companion to Dance Studies*, ed. S. Dodds, London 2019, pp. 303–326.

In initiating the project of re-writing dance modernism, whose preliminary results are presented in this volume, the Cracow conference helped expand the network of contacts that had already started in Łódź. The rhizome began to sprawl, provoking one to draw somewhat risky yet cognitively fertile analogies. The transnational and transatlantic connection between Manning and me, a fellowship of research interests and origins, became in our eyes a reminiscence of the connections that underlay the phenomenon known today as dance modernism.⁹ Just as dance modernism developed thanks to various kinds of contacts – both direct and mediated by various types of cultural texts – gradually evolving into a global network of artists and the ideas that drove them, a similar network gradually formed during the organization of the Cracow conference, based on the networks of which Manning and me were associates (and thanks to the open call for papers): the network of authors featured in this publication, who not only met at the conference but have since been in contact with one another in various ways (in fact, some of them had already been in contact before, weaving a global network studying *Audsruckstanz* in ways that departed from the nationalist canon). It became clear that the attempt to rewrite dance modernism in the wake of the Cracow meeting, guided by Manning's call to globalize thinking about dance, should adopt the idea of networks as its methodological horizon. It was this way that the leading idea of this collection was defined.

The conference presentations and the attendant discussions made me realize that the re-writing of dance modernism postulated by Manning should not be (and is not) a purely academic project, but rather a community endeavor undertaken in a spirit of dialogue and friendship by authors united on the one hand by a common passion for dance, and on the other, by a need to expand the geographical scope of the historical phenomenon of dance modernism, as well as the range of methodological tools. The impulse behind the post-conference publication was therefore provided by the desire to network dance modernism both as a historical practice (or a network of practices) and as a collective work of its interpretation. To consider it as a continuously reshaping meta-network, i.e., a network of

⁹ Manning first underscored the transatlantic character of dance modernism in "Ausdruckstanz Across the Atlantic," [in:] *Dance Discourses: Keywords in Dance Research*, eds. S. Franco, M. Nordera, New York – London 2007, pp. 46–60. These interrelations had been previously studied by Isa Partsch-Bergsohn in *Modern Dance in Germany and the United States: Cross Currents and Influences*, Chur 1994.

networks, both in a geographical sense (which Manning and other scholars¹⁰ analyze in various ways and which constitutes the subject of a significant part of the texts published in this book), and in an ideological sense, that is, at the level of historical methodologies of body and movement work and at the level of dance studies as an academic field, which is the subject of the second group of texts in this anthology. Such a dual networking and broadening of the field – that of artistic practices and that of reflections on these practices – was made possible by the networking of the researchers whose texts are now offered to the reader. It must be stressed that this networking took place with the idea of community on the horizon, similarly to the historical practices collectively referred to as dance modernism.¹¹ All of the above carries particular methodological implications.

Although at the research level the reconstruction of dance modernism as a network of practices located in time and space and as a transtemporal and translocal discursive construct of intertextual connections are two different tasks, the overarching goal of this anthology is to indicate the necessity of networking dance modernism on both planes simultaneously, given that it has always been constituted at their junction. If we are to treat dance modernism as a transtemporal and translocal meta-network of artistic contacts founded on specific ways of understanding and practicing dance – which is the very essence of the gesture of re-writing dance modernism proposed in this book – we must grasp its historical dynamics, shaped by the creative relation between the actions of a wide range of artists (this volume indicates some extensions that can be added in this aspect) and the discourse on those actions as well as that on the notion of dance modernism itself.¹² After all, the latter has a complex, if not entangled, history (or histories), as reconstructed by Manning,¹³ Nell Andrew,¹⁴ Gabriele Brandstetter,¹⁵

¹⁰ See e.g. R. Burt, M. Huxley, *Dance, Modernism, Modernity*, London – New York 2019.

¹¹ For more on this subject, see Marion Kant's contribution to this anthology, pp. 349–369.

¹² As opposed to narrower terms such as modern dance, *moderne Tanz*, *Ausdruckstanz*, free dance, new dance, etc.

¹³ Apart from the aforementioned, see also in particular S.A. Manning, *Ecstasy and the Demon: Feminism and Nationalism in the dances of Mary Wigman*, Berkeley 1993, chapter 7: “Mary Wigman and American Dance,” pp. 255–286; *eadem*, *Modern Dance, Negro Dance*, Minneapolis – London 2004.

¹⁴ N. Andrew, *Moving Modernism: The Urge to Abstraction in Painting, Dance, Cinema*, Oxford – New York 2020.

¹⁵ G. Brandstetter, *Tanz-Lektüren. Körperbilder und Raumfiguren der Avantgarde*, Frankfurt 1995.

Ramsay Burt,¹⁶ Edward Ross Dickinson,¹⁷ Mark Franko,¹⁸ Felicia McCarren,¹⁹ Carrie J. Preston,²⁰ and Helen Thomas.²¹

Reading the works of the aforementioned authors, as well as other researchers who use the terms “modern dance” and “dance modernism,” one cannot help feeling that despite decades of research and definitional attempts, the ‘root’ phenomenon escapes systematization. According to many indications, this is so because dance modernism is not simply an entity that can be revealed as a set of specific artists, works, techniques, practices or even cultural texts, but instead, it constitutes embodied discourse in Michel Foucault’s sense, i.e., a specific way of doing and thinking of this strange ‘thing’ that dance is.²² The subject of this action is an actor-network called ‘dance modernism,’ which is self-constituting and deeply self-reflective.

With respect to broader research on artistic modernism, especially modernist literature, scholars have long concluded that the notion of modernism makes sense only as a necessarily provisional and selective ensnarement of things (practices) and words (interpretations), whose nature is defined by “the relationships among artists, their works, and the institutions and audiences that encircled them.”²³ Even if the author of these words, Michael Levenson, makes a valid point in construing modernism as a heterogenous epoch of cultural history,²⁴ one should nonetheless keep in mind that the principles of identifying respective eras are a domain of cultural history as a discipline, which itself is subject to continuous revisions. Audiences encircling modernist artists and their works stretch across

¹⁶ R. Burt, *Alien Bodies: Representations of Modernity, Race and Nation in Early Modern Dance*, London – New York 1998; R. Burt, M. Huxley, *Dance, Modernism...*, *op.cit.*

¹⁷ E.R. Dickinson, *Dancing in the Blood: Modern Dance and European Culture on the Eve of the First World War*, Cambridge – New York 2017.

¹⁸ M. Franko, *Dancing Modernism/Performing Politics*, Bloomington 1995.

¹⁹ F. McCarren, *Dancing Machines: Choreographies of the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Stanford 2003.

²⁰ C.J. Preston, *Modernism’s Mythic Pose: Gender, Genre, Solo Performance*, Oxford – New York 2011.

²¹ H. Thomas, *Dance, Modernity and Culture: Explorations in the Sociology of Dance*, London – New York 1995.

²² See M. Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences*, New York 1994; *idem*, “The Order of Discourse,” [in:] *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. R.J.C. Young, Boston, London – Henley 1981, pp. 48–78. For a discussion of Foucault’s theory of discourse, see also D. Howarth, *Discourse*, Philadelphia 2000, pp. 48–66.

²³ M. Levenson, *Modernism*, New Haven – London 2014, e-book, p. 15.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

time, and modernist texts (including dance texts)²⁵ are often marked by profound knowledge and the love of history. Critical interpretations bring to life one type of modernism or another by selecting from cultural history whatever suits their criteria for conducting a proper (from the author's point of view) analysis. Modernism in the singular form is a constellation of these particular modernisms,²⁶ or their common foundation or a kind of modernist *différance*, to use a no longer fashionable term. Again, the metaphor of a network undergoing a constant process of self-transformation seems to capture well the character of this critical constellation.

While essentially undefinable as a style or aesthetics,²⁷ modernism remains an immensely attractive 'object' of study, as manifested by the copious literature on the subject that has yielded ever more numerous studies not only on modernism itself but also its various discourses, in particular academic ones.²⁸ According to Ástráður Eysteinnsson and Vivian Liska, this entails the necessity to inquire not so much about what modernism *was*, but rather what it *is*.²⁹ One possible answer is provided by this book, which brings to life a seemingly formless, internally fractured modernism

²⁵ See e.g. the edited collection on ancient inspirations in modern dance *The Ancient Dancer in the Modern World: Responses to Greek and Roman Dance*, ed. F. Macintosh, Oxford – New York 2010. While the said anthology is not solely concerned with dance modernism in the narrow sense, i.e., with dance practices that aim to develop an alternative way of working with movement to that of ballet and to create performances that stimulate the audience to think critically about the dance medium, it nonetheless confirms the intuition of Carrie Preston, who contend that the constitutive aspect of artistic modernism is a kind of classicism, which Preston refers to as "antimodern-classicism" in *Modernism's Mythic Pose* (*op.cit.*).

²⁶ See P. Nicholls, *Modernisms: A Literary Guide*, 2nd edition, Basingstoke – New York 2009. The notion of modernisms in the plural form can be traced back to Frank Kermode and the late 1960s, as identified by A. Eysteinnsson, V. Liska, "Introduction: Approaching Modernism," [in:] *Modernism*, eds. A. Eysteinnsson, V. Liska, Amsterdam – Philadelphia 2007, pp. 2–3.

²⁷ See R. Walz, *Modernism*, 2nd edition, London – New York 2013, p. 8. Modernity is as ultimately undefinable as modernism, which – according to Michael H. Whitworth – emerged (emerges) as an artistic response to its problems (M.H. Whitworth, "Introduction," [in:] *Modernism*, ed. M.H. Whitworth Malden – Oxford 2007, p. 3). This was already pointed out by Walter Benjamin, as noted by Jean-Michel Rabaté in the introduction to his edited collection, *A Handbook of Modernism Studies*, Malden – Oxford 2013, p. 3.

²⁸ See i.e. E. Mozejko, "Tracing the Modernist Paradigm," [in:] *Modernism*, eds. A. Eysteinnsson, V. Liska, *op.cit.*, pp. 11–30; *A Handbook of Modernism Studies*, ed. J.-M. Rabaté, *op.cit.*; *Modernism and Theory: A Critical Debate*, ed. S. Ross, London – New York 2008; *The Modernism Handbook*, eds. P. Tew, A. Murray, New York 2009; *Modernism*, ed. M.H. Witworth, *op.cit.*

²⁹ A. Eysteinnsson, V. Liska, "Introduction...", *op.cit.*, p. 2.

characterized by an emphasis on the processuality of artistic practices, on the one hand, and critical analysis and the relationships that link these spheres, on the other, as well as the actors operating within and, often, between the two.

Although the authors of the following essays differ in their understandings of the term *network* (one of the authors even partially questions the validity of using it with reference to modernist dance practices, at least in the German context), one can point to such an operationalization of the term that justifies combining the methodologically and thematically highly diverse texts into a single whole. It is brought about by Felix Stalder's analysis of Manuel Castells's theory of network society. Stalder defines the concept of network – fundamental to the Spanish sociologist's theory – in the following words:

A network is an enduring pattern of interaction among heterogenous actors that define one another (identity). They coordinate themselves on the basis of common protocols, values, and goals (process). A network reacts nondeterministically to self-selected external influences, thus not simply representing the environment but actively creating it (interdependence). Key properties of a network are emergent from these processes unfolding over time, rather than determined by any of its elements (emergence).³⁰

If one assumes after Bruno Latour that each actor in the network is a network in their own right,³¹ then such an assumption disambiguates the methodology underpinning this collection. The constellation of texts it contains is not reducible to their juxtaposition, but is conceived as a force field emerging from tension between individual voices, a field that is host

³⁰ F. Stalder, *Manuel Castells: The Theory of the Network Society*, Cambridge 2006, p. 180.

³¹ "Action is not done under the full control of consciousness; action should rather be felt as a node, a knot, and a conglomerate of many surprising sets of agencies that have to be slowly disentangled. It is this venerable source of uncertainty that we wish to render vivid again in the odd expression of actor-network" (B. Latour, *Reassembling the Social: Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*, Oxford 2005, p. 44). For a dance historian accustomed to various kinds of 'influenced-by' analyses, the actor-network as an object of research is nothing surprising, although a traditional historian would struggle to conceive of Rudolf Laban, the *Lebensreform* movement, Orientalist Sufism, Monte Verità understood as a concrete space, and Mary Wigman (I hope the reader will forgive this clumsy juxtaposition, hastily pieced together for illustrative purposes) as a single 'object' of study, an actor-network that may be tentatively referred to as 'early Wigman.'

to methodological twists, transmissions in space and time, and expansions of the material (human and textual) base of the 'original' network of practices, which is also being actively expanded in various ways in other research projects conducted nowadays.³² Individual authors who are actor-networks³³ and research different types of actor-networks (artists, choreographic pieces, reconstructions of performances, artistic institutions, events), jointly amount to an author-network whose research brings to life an actor-network by means of re-writing (in one of the possible ways) of dance modernism as a notion and historical phenomenon.

Although the broadening of the geographical panorama of dance modernism to include Polish, Croatian and Czech perspectives, undertaken in several texts in this collection, seems in itself a significant contribution to the work of re-writing modernism in the spirit of what Susan Stanford-Friedman dubbed Locational Modernist Studies,³⁴ the actual focus of this anthology lies elsewhere. If modernism remains a living way of writing and making dance, if it has not so much happened in the past as it continues to happen anew, then the gestures of expanding the field should be seen as acts of reconstitution of the research object itself. At the core of these gestures one will not find a coordinated research program. One will not find a leader dictating the optics of perception, nor will one identify a common definition. Even the originator of this experiment, Susan Manning, is but one voice in this dissonant chorus that is the network of *Re-writing Dance Modernism*. What is common to all the authors, and what expresses, we believe, the similarly 'original' spirit of dance modernism as an artistic field, is the primacy of connections over nodes, the constant tendency toward transformation, amorphousness. To grasp this, it is useful to employ a reading strategy that involves tracing the connections, tensions, and junctures between individual texts. In the vein of Stanford-Friedman, this strategy can be referred to as "cultural parataxis."³⁵

³² See the bibliography in Susan Manning's essay, "Dance History."

³³ Each individual text in this anthology is distinctive in terms of its intellectual debts and the cognitive interests it pursues. This movement from inspiration and research materials toward cognitive ends has the character of a network of ideas.

³⁴ S. Stanford-Friedman, "Cultural Parataxis and Transnational Landscapes of Reading: Toward a Locational Modernist Studies," [in:] *Modernism*, eds. A. Eysteinnsson, V. Liska, *op.cit.*, pp. 35–52.

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

Although the book is divided into three parts, this is not to create an impression of coherence but merely to rhythmize it as a whole, to propose a certain rhizome of research on the notion of dance modernism along with the attendant constellation of objects and their descriptions. In *Negative Dialectics*, Theodor W. Adorno notes that:

the only knowledge which can unleash the history in the object, is that which is aware of the historical positional value of the object in its relationship to others; the updating and concentration of something already known, which it transforms. The cognition of the object in its constellation is that of the process, which it has stored up within itself.³⁶

Every trace of history, and therefore every object of historical research (in the case of dance, these may include individual choreographies but also techniques or pedagogical methods) is shaped in relation to a network of notions, ways of thinking about practice. Its identity is formed through differentiating relations with other (competing?) objects. This leads to the emergence of a constellation of objects and concepts (practice and theory) in which the main notions such as dance modernism can be distinguished. Liberating the history of the latter is a job beyond the power of individual researchers or even their networks, such as the one that produced this book. Nevertheless, this liberation takes place continuously, largely due to the inevitably incomplete efforts of actor-networks. The liberation occurs between studies, through creative yet oft-implicit dialogue, as a process of nuancing the historical perception of the constellation.

Within the confines of this book, such an approach to the task of history as a cognitive enterprise translates into a multiplicity of ways in which knowledge is updated and condensed, and into a particular sensitivity towards the transmission and translation of artistic practices across space and time. The historicity of dance modernism as a precondition for writing its history is none other than its randomness, amorphousness, if not chaoticity. Dance modernism as understood now, after decades of research, cannot be reduced to a single graph or classification. What is more, it is not and never has been linear, although it was presented in such a way, as a succession of choreographic generations. Modernism is a concept that decodes

³⁶ T.W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, transl. D. Redmond, Frankfurt 2001, p. 227.

the apparent chaos and the proliferation of ideas and experiments. If it relates to any structure, it is a rhizomatic one.³⁷ Such is the structure of this anthology, in which one will find no single style of analysis or even complete consensus on whether it is the past or the present that is the object of historical reflection. Cast into the space of reflection are more or less developed statements that embody the postulate of re-writing dance modernism from transnational and transtemporal positions, in the most diverse ways. Among these voices there are those of renowned modern dance historians (Susan Manning, Marion Kant, Susanne Franco, and Lucia Ruprecht), authors taking their first steps on this path (Jitka Pavlišová and Hanna Raszewska-Kursa), practitioners updating broadly defined modernist heritage in various ways (Claudia Fleischle-Braun, Hana Umeda, and Agata Chałupnik), and those who more or less consciously position themselves on the fringes of dance studies or are only incidentally engaged in dance research (Matthew I. Cohen, Małgorzata Leyko, Andreja Jeličić, and Wojciech Klimczyk). Together, they make up a polyphonic constellation in a state of internal flux.

In the first part of the book, titled “Methodologies: networking dance modernism,” various doubts concerning the designation of the term ‘dance modernism’ from the perspective of dance history come to the fore. Selected examples are used to analyze the challenges faced not only by professional historians but also adherents of specific traditions, reenactors of performances or amateur enthusiasts fascinated by the specific ‘spirit’ of historical practices. In the texts, one may also find original proposals to operationalize the notion of ‘network’ for the purposes of dance studies. In the opening text of the volume, I examine the possibilities of applying the notion of network borrowed from Bruno Latour to thinking about past dance practices and strategies of writing (re-writing) their history. My meditation on dance practice and the practice of writing dance history, rooted in deconstruction and referring to the vitalist ontology of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, is a tentative attempt to rethink dance modernism at the level of corporeal experience in relation to the indirect theoretical dialogue of two icons of modern dance theory: Isadora Duncan and John Martin. At the center of this theoretical project stands the notion of palimpsest as a metaphor for the pursuit of over-writing and re-writing

³⁷ See G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, transl. B. Massumi, London – New York 2003.

dance in the space of the current event³⁸ that, I believe, sits at the heart of dance modernism.

In her commentary on the idea of treating dance modernism as a network, Marion Kant pays close attention to the dominant contexts in which the latter term is used, inspecting suspiciously but not without kindness the ways in which it projects onto the past, where it did not function in the present sense. Nevertheless, in her research Kant has long been concerned with transtemporal networks (in the sense indicated above) of nurturing the legacy of 'German'³⁹ dance modernism, especially Rudolf Laban's choreological system, pointing out the dangers of an unreflective (particularly politics-wise) cult of the creative individual as part of the traditional approach to the history of modern dance. This leads her to pose crucial questions about the ways of writing dance history and, more specifically, about the custodians who defend it from being accessed; about the strategies of entering this research field; about the tools of breaching the wall of traditionalism. Such a tool can take the form of a properly defined notion of network, provided that we do not understand it exclusively as an organic community, as it has sometimes been the case within the networks of adherents to Laban's and Wigman's ideas.

Initiated by Kant, the reflection on the mechanisms of the temporal and spatial transmission of dance practices and the longing for the naturalness (construed as an abstraction from history and politics) that sometimes underpins them, is taken up by Susanne Franco, who also refers to the tradition of *Ausdruckstanz*, an object of her long-standing research. At the center of her consideration lies the problem of memory and forgetting as a key context for historical research on dance, especially the dance practiced in the Weimar Republic, which saw its controversial (to this day) continuation after the Nazis came to power. Franco suggests that the history of dance copiously borrows from the achievements of memory studies, especially the theory of collective memory developed in the latter field as a dynamic,

³⁸ For more on dance as an event, see M. Franko, "Given Moment: Dance and the Event," [in:] *Ritual and Event: Interdisciplinary perspectives*, ed. M. Franko, London – New York, 2006, pp. 125–137.

³⁹ Kant is far from an essentialist understanding of the notion of nationality, treating it as a mental shortcut that allows one to grasp the stereotypical ways of perceiving dance phenomena that developed across borders, at the same time ascribing to themselves, at various stages and for oft-opportunistic reasons, some form of national identity (Laban's project being a model example here).

rhizomatic, fragmented structure that constitutes a fundamental resource for thinking about the past. One form of cultivating and enriching the collective memory to which Franco draws particular attention in her text is that of the so-called reenactments, or creative recreations (as opposed to the illusion of faithful reconstruction) of historical performances. In her essay, Franco discusses selected examples of reenactments of pieces developed by *Ausdruckstanz* artists that amount to a transtemporal and transnational network of memory, not only of this particular dance tradition but also of the history of 'German' dance modernism that is unfolding before our eyes, shedding light on the myth of dance modernism as an intuitively comprehensible, anti-intellectual 'truth' about movement and the body, one that persists to this day.

Another kind of network is examined by Lucia Ruprecht, painstakingly investigating the part of Pierrot in Mikhail Fokine's ballet *Le Carnaval*, which she classifies as a piece of ballet modernism. What she ventures in the study reveals, with reference to queer theory, the 'subversive' character of an individual pose of the discussed character, as covered in a post-premiere report on Vsevolod Meyerhold's performance of the part. To adequately delineate this subversive potential, Ruprecht weaves an intricate web of theoretical tropes drawn from a discourse on mimicry that stretches from Paul Margueritte's 19th-century practice through Stéphane Mallarmé's reflections and Jacques Derrida's commentary on the subject to her own remarks on the past discourses. Add to this the fact that the Pierrot part analyzed by Ruprecht – initially performed by Meyerhold – was subsequently danced by such eminent dancers as Adolph Bolm, and even (erroneously) attributed to Vaslav Nijinsky, and its networked and transtemporal character becomes clearly evident. Ruprecht demonstrates that it is impossible to write a history of *Le Carnaval* today without accounting for the very different translations it carries within itself, or the process that this object of study has accumulated within itself, in Adorno's words.

The second section of this collection, titled "Transmissions: transnational trajectories of dance modernism," consists of five texts demonstrating, on the basis of selected examples, the processes of displacement of dance practices in time and space, as well as important problems encountered in the research that strives to retrieve the kinetic past from the archive for the development of contemporary dance theory and repertoire. The section begins with an essay by Claudia Fleischle-Braun, concerned with the individual fates of artists on the sidelines of historical research, whose

career paths and pedagogical influence can be construed jointly as representatives of a transnational modernism expressed primarily in the field of education. In the critical discourse, of which choreographic works are the most frequent object, pedagogical practice remains secondary, although its importance is naturally acknowledged in the case of dance modernism icons, from Duncan, through Wigman and Laban, all the way to Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and Hanya Holm. However, from the vantage point of the constitution, action, and long duration of the network, education (intergenerational transmission) is in fact more important than dance pieces. In her text, Fleischle-Braun comparatively examines such transtemporal micro-networks organized around figures-totems: Rosalia Chladek, Siegfried Leeder, and Karin Waehner. Each of them was embedded in the network of 'original' modernism somewhat differently, drawing inspiration from a different trunk to shape their respective practice, and yet each also became an autonomous pedagogical brand over time. Thanks to Fleischle-Braun's research, one can understand the organizing principles behind modernist, translocal and transtemporal dance pedagogy in Europe, and thus complement the picture emerging from the research on similar endeavors in the United States.⁴⁰

In turn, Susan Manning's contribution reexamines the protagonist of her first book, Mary Wigman, from a recently developed perspective. Reaching into the archives, she reconstructs the network of personal contacts spanning North America, Europe and, above all, Asia, bound together by Wigman but by no means limited to her work. Manning's text portrays Wigman as a creative albeit limited user of the achievements of Eastern performance traditions, while also discussing the artists and theorists with different ties to Wigman, whose work has rendered dance modernism translocal from its onset. What seems fascinating is the possibility opened up by the text to suggest similar networks for other icons of dance modernism, all too often perceived as geniuses detached from society, whose splendor 'infects' their students.

The problem of originality and imitateness in the processes of transmitting dance traditions is addressed by Matthew I. Cohen, who profiles

⁴⁰ See e.g. J. Ross, *Moving Lessons: Margaret H'Doubler and the Beginning of Dance in American Education*, Madison – London 2000; J. Mansfield Soares, *Martha Hill and the Making of American Dance*, Middletown 2009. For more on Wigman's pedagogical practice, see e.g. M.A. Santos Newhall, *Mary Wigman*, London – New York 2009, chapter 4: "Practical Exercises," pp. 133–167.

Western artists active during the modernist fever and influenced by Eastern dance traditions to the extent that they attempted to practice them. What Cohen is most interested in are the identity games that such transmissions facilitated. In this perspective, it is not so much the sin of cultural appropriation that comes to the fore, but rather the tactical benefits derived from the exotic by way of self-emancipation through art. Although the artists presented by Cohen were of Jewish descent, he does not focus on their nationality but instead explores their almost indefatigable journeys across countries, continents, scenes and genres, setting the stage for a dynamic exploration of the phantasm of 'Asia,' which he reconstructs in relation to the *oeuvre* of Herman Hesse, who was in a non-literal sense a companion of these journeys. By reinstating the near-forgotten or marginalized figures in the study of dance modernism: Takka-Takka and Yoga Taro, Julius Hans Spiegel, Fred Coolemans, and Hilde Holger, Cohen demonstrates – complementing Manning's analysis – that transcontinental dance fascinations were reciprocal and that it was out of the tension between particular translations that modernist exoticism emerged, reconstructable today precisely as a network of adaptations and interpretations, of which dance was an essential component.

The fact that this network reaches towards the present and can thus be understood as transtemporal is clearly demonstrated in the essay by the scholar and *nihon buyo* dancer Hana Umeda, who covers her performative reenactment of a dance by Sada Yakko, a Japanese artist who once greatly impressed Isadora Duncan and Loïe Fuller. As a dancer and choreographer of Polish-Japanese descent, Umeda puts the issue of cultural translation in the performing arts at the center of her artistic and research investigations, trying not so much to reconstruct the details of Sada Yakko's style of movement but rather recreate her gesture of confronting traditional Japanese and modernist Western dance strategies. Along this path, Umeda incorporates certain features of the 'original' idiom into stage structures that fit the aesthetics of contemporary dance. Knowing fully well that a completely faithful transmission of the source text – which was already a 'tainted' text from the perspective of the Japanese tradition – is impossible, Umeda writes the story of the modern encounter between the West and Japan in the dance space, using her own corporeal experience as a person with a networked identity.

The problem of intercultural encounters and of arriving at the 'truth' about historical dance practice is also addressed by Agata Chałupnik,

a theater historian taking her first steps in dance research as a practitioner of the Argentine tango. What she is particularly concerned with is the relation between the archive and the repertoire as defined by Diana Taylor,⁴¹ i.e., the question of ‘reviving’ historical practices, embodying their ‘essence’ (with respect to tango, Chałupnik seeks it by emphasizing the close union of movement and music in this practice), but also the very complicated problem of the national identity – not so much that of practitioners but rather that of practices – a problem foreshadowed by the very title of her essay, which she mainly devotes to nurturing the memory of the Jewish background of the most prominent composers of tango music in interwar Poland, and to reconstructing the prejudices they faced, which were reflected in the prejudices publicly held by some journalists towards the practice itself. Although tango is not the main object of critical discourse accompanying the notion of dance modernism, Chałupnik’s text may serve as a model of an interdisciplinary, critical and constantly revisited perspective on dance practices rooted in the heyday of modernism or, more broadly, in metropolitan modernity.

The final section, entitled “Expansions: dance modernism in Slavic Central Europe,” features case studies that show the processes of accumulation and translation in the context of Slavic countries, relatively absent from the history of dance modernism, by presenting figures from its “margins” that demand greater research attention. At the same time, each text creatively adapts the metaphor of network, although this part of the book is decidedly more descriptive than the earlier sections, as it emphasizes the expansion of the base of sources. However, in the thicket of information one will come across ideas concerning the expansion of our understanding of the notion of dance modernism that invite one towards its further exploration from a networked, and translocal point of view.

Based on selected examples of the work and pedagogical activity of female pioneers of dance modernism in Poland, Małgorzata Leyko introduces into dance studies the notion of a transcultural cross-over, borrowed from Wolfgang Iser. It allows her to grasp the specificity of the ‘Polish’ variants of dance modernism, which are more akin to classical dance, on the one hand, and to revue, on the other, than their Western counterparts. The vectors of dance flows were important in this case, since

⁴¹ D. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, Durham – London 2003.

according to Leyko, modernist innovations reached Poland mainly from the East, at least in the first stage of the formation of modernist dance practices in the early 20th century. Equally important was the institutional and cultural framework in which these practices took shape, determined by the situation of first fighting for and then celebrating the newly regained independence, which translated into a keen interest in folklore as a source of inspiration for modernist dance. At the same time, as a multicultural country Poland was a place of continuous transfers, translations and oft-surprising alliances. Leyko points to all this on the plane of microhistory by following the fates of selected pioneers: Janina Mieczysłńska, Tacjana Wysocka and Irena Prusicka. Although they were all inspired by what was happening in the international dance scene, they did it in their own ways, eclectically and frequently combining techniques and genres. This hybrid modernism is yet another proof that Stanford-Friedman is right when she postulates that research is not about modernism *per se* but rather about the processes of its adaptation to local conditions.

An analogous situation in the case of Croatia and the Czech Republic is presented by Andreja Jeličić and Jitka Pavlišová, respectively, who also point to the key role of folklore inspirations in defining the character of local variants of dance modernism. If we juxtapose Jeličić's and Pavlišová's narratives on the modernization of dance in Central Europe, it is easy to conclude that this process did not take place in isolation from what was happening in the so-called main centers, on the one hand, and that one cannot reduce it to that of simple imitation, on the other. Much like globalization today, modernism was employed to construct local identities, realize particular interests, carry out processes of cultural distinction, and communicate with the outside world. The artists whose names remain unknown beyond (and often even within) the borders of particular countries were not imitators, because the attractiveness of the modernist project consisted in the fact that (in contrast to classical ballet) it devalued imitation. In the process of nationalizing the history of dance that took place after the II World War, modernist dance practices emerging in Slavic countries were marginalized for various (usually political) reasons. Nevertheless, it was precisely their "Slaviness" that became the bargaining chip for modernists from this part of the world in the interwar period. What remains to be written is the history of the Slavic network within dance modernism and its position in the whole constellation; that it held such a position is a fact attested to in and beyond Jeličić's and Pavlišová's studies.

A still different operationalization of the notion of network can be found in the closing text of this collection by Hanna Raszewska-Kursa, in which the author examines how the International Artistic Dance Competition, held in Warsaw in 1933, was covered by the local press. Apart from providing considerable information on the event itself, which is underrepresented in the literature on the subject,⁴² as well as on the shape of the Warsaw press at the time, Raszewska-Kursa's essay offers reflections on the relation between practice and discourse, and as such, it contributes to the current intensive research on the constitutive role of perception in the formation of dance as a social practice and in its histories.⁴³ Raszewska-Kursa uses specific, well-targeted materials to demonstrate how the dance presentations featured in the competition were constituted as social events with political overtones. She is especially interested in the question of defining the contestants' identity by the press, especially their national identity, which leads her to ask a more general question, namely that about the (possible) difference between the identity of a dancer and their dance. At the same time, another question arises that concerns the possibility of objectively establishing the character of the dances presented during the contest, given that one can access them only via the mediation of 'choreographies' written by individuals who did not merely seek to give an account of what happened on stage. Seen from this perspective, every living object of a dance historian's research – a specific performance of a choreographic score, a dance competition, or pedagogical practice – is accessible only through a network of documents composed by the researcher. Collecting traces (e.g., press reports) is nothing but weaving a web in which one tries to pin down an event. In this context, dance modernism is the awareness of the inevitable failure of this mission, the impossibility of translating an event into discourse, and the ephemerality of dance celebrated in modernist theoretical discourse. This is not to suggest, however, that historical research is pointless, as clearly demonstrated by Raszewska-Kursa's text, which sheds a whole new light on a competition known solely from press articles, one that served as a tool for the consolidation of the transnational network of artistic contacts that was historical dance modernism.

⁴² The subject of international dance competitions held in the 1930s (Paris 1932, Warsaw 1933, Vienna 1934, Berlin 1936, Brussels 1939) calls for a separate study.

⁴³ See in particular K. Elswit, *Watching Weimar Dance*, New York 2014.

It goes without saying that the notion of network remains first and foremost a handy metaphor for a certain way of thinking about artistic practices in a globalizing world and the inherently collective cognitive enterprise that is academic research. It is not the task of this book to argue that this metaphor can be applied to dance modernism in any strict, technical sense. Even in Castells's terms, it is only an analogy, because it is difficult to speak of the persistence of dance modernism as a particular pattern of interaction. If anything, it is a network-nebula, a site of dispute, an unwritable story. But modernism, at least dance modernism, also appears to be a shared adventure that connects people across geographic, generational, ethnic, or gender divides. The term refers to a certain vivid longing, one for freedom and immediacy. In her text, Susanne Franco warns against an unreflective celebration of dance modernism, which is, at best, extremely naïve. At the same time, however, the ongoing work on projects such as the one that resulted in this collection tempts us not to abandon this longing. Perhaps the way to nurture it responsibly is through the networking proposed and practiced by the contributors to this anthology, emphasizing what occurs between the subjects that make up this field, the relationships that constitute these subjects as relatively autonomous, the historicity of their positions, the dialectic of memory and forgetting, the archive and fiction (or perhaps the fiction of the archive?) that fuels the histories of modernist dance as much as its current practice? Or, perhaps, the constellation of texts that comes into the Reader's hands is simply a random one? Perhaps it is but *an attempt* to re-write dance modernism? Perhaps it is only this way that one may escape the unifying violence of the term that – while supposedly meaningless⁴⁴ – continues to seduce us?

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⁴⁴ Perry Anderson once referred to modernism as the "emptiest of all cultural categories" (P. Anderson, "Modernity and Revolution," *New Left Review*, no. 144 (Mar.–Apr. 1984), p. 112 [quoted in:] *Modernism*, ed. M.H. Whitworth, *op.cit.*, p. 3).

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