

Aus:

Rita Rieger (Hg.)

Bewegungsfreiheit

Tanz als kulturelle Manifestation (1900-1950)

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Ungewöhnliche Bewegungsmuster faszinieren von 1900 bis 1950 sowohl Kunst, Technik und Medizin als auch Alltagskulturen. Die in diesem Band versammelten Einzelanalysen tänzerischer Bewegungen in Ballett, Oper, Musical, Theater, Film und Literatur zeigen die dynamische Verbindung von ästhetischen, medialen und kulturpolitischen Ansprüchen, hinterfragen neben der Tanzästhetik tradierte Konzepte wie Körper, Bewegung, Sprache, Freiheit, Kunst und Kultur und bestimmen diese neu. Die Vielfalt an gleichzeitig in Nord- und Südamerika, Europa und Asien praktizierten Tänzen sowie ihre wandelbaren kulturellen Bedeutungszuschreibungen werden charakterisiert.

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Dance, freedom and movement

Reflections on cultural manifestations 1900-1950

RITA RIEGER

»Of course: before one learns to
dance, one must learn to walk.«

NIETZSCHE

Human movement, especially in its aimless form as in dances, fascinates not only artists, writers, dance theorists or scholars of the humanities, but manifests cultural practices of modern societies the world over. Dancing movement encompasses a wide variety of extremely opposite attributes: it is both an unleashed, spontaneous movement and a strongly formalized and controlled physical process. The fascination for bodily movement transforms dance into one of the privileged mediums of expression and reflection of life and art, for dancing movement responds to rational and emotional insight and thus is seen as a means for conveying body knowledge.¹ Within this abundant research field,

1 For research on body knowledge in motion with a cultural studies approach see the articles collected in the volume of Gehm/Husemann/Wilcke (2010). Malda Denana studies dance aesthetic from an anthropological perspective and introduces examples from modernism to contemporary dance (cf. Denana 2014). The material as an element of movement in dance and choreography is studied in the articles of the edition of Kelter/Skrandies 2016. For studies from a dance ethnographic point of view see Buckland 2011 and 2006. Within the studies of dance as practice see the approaches of Baxmann 2008 and 2009; cf. also Klein 2004a and 2004b and on Tango Argentino cf. Haller 2013. For the relation of dance and literature or writing cf. Brandstetter 2015, Fischer-Geboers 2015 and 2010, Felten 2015, Links 2015, Rieger 2015, Schwan 2015, Wortelkamp 2012 and 2006. The relation of moving and being affected in contemporary dances is analyzed by Egert 2016. Recent research on dance in modernism also

this volume narrows the object by focusing, firstly, on dances as cultural manifestations, secondly, on the relation of dancing movement and ›freedom‹, and thirdly, by limiting the analyzed practices to the first half of the 20th century.

The focus on dance as cultural manifestation allows investigating cultural movements that are not limited to signifying processes.² Rotation, swirl or spirals for instance represent not only concrete movement patterns in dances but also serve as key metaphors of modernist aesthetics and cultural life, which allude to a certain atmosphere of freedom. In the 1920s the German dance theorist Rudolf von Laban defines the latter as a required quality in dance discourses: »Tanz bringt [...] Befreiung, und ich persönlich glaube, daß der Mensch die Schwelle überschritten hat, an der die Trägheit über den Freiheits- oder Leichtewunsch überwiegt.«³ The search and striving for lightness, effortlessness and simplicity as components of freedom describes one of the historic and cultural manifestations on which this volume focuses and of which it offers a kaleidoscope of views.

Considering the historicity of the discourses, the analysis of dance, movement or specific movement patterns and their relation to freedom to move or to the liberation of inner and external movement offers a metalanguage of art, freedom and culture along with a reflexive level of language, media and cultural studies. Swinging and swirling movements, suppleness, elasticity and *élan* appear as concrete and metaphoric terms to describe corporeal, intellectual and aesthetic movement patterns which affect basic concepts of cultural life.⁴ Due to the shift towards process orientation, concepts like identity, memory or the imag-

includes studies on dance photography (cf. the collected articles in Jahn/Wittröck/Wortelkamp 2016).

- 2 Susanne Leigh Foster points out that artistic and athletic movement can be analyzed as language, as narration, as speech act, as metaphor, as corporal rhetoric, as movement form, as intertextual sign system, or as ritual. Cf. Foster 2013: 31.
- 3 »Dance brings [...] release, and I personally believe that man has crossed the threshold, where inertia prevails over the desire for freedom or lightness«. Laban 1922: 10. (All translations are from the author.) »Trägheit« denotes ›inertia‹ as well as ›lethargy‹ or ›laziness‹. In the context of literary and cultural studies of modern dance see the pioneering works of Gabriele Brandstetter. In her studies she outlines the ephemeral, transitory and contingent qualities of dance which become a focus after the break with classical dance at the turn of the century, and which in consequence serve as characteristics of all arts that reflect the new technical and aesthetic epoch as defined by movement. Cf. Brandstetter 1995b.
- 4 As such movement contributes to the myth of the supple modernism and is one of its mythological elements. Cf. Hülk 2012.

inary are questioned as well as terms concerning the appreciation of art such as genre, form and beauty.⁵ Dancing movements express both dynamism and concentration on the present moment; they figure as communication form or contact area; they relate different domains and therefore reveal cultural changes. In its ambiguity dance transforms into a medium of reflection and bridge between opposite extremes of cultural life, such as tension and flow, resistance and integration, inertia and movement, negative emotions and pleasure when for instance anxiety, mourning or shock evoke delight. This characteristic of connecting extreme opposites enables a rethinking of the borders of art and science.⁶

Since the articles of this volume present a variety of perspectives on how freedom can be lived in each cultural context, in this volume ›freedom‹ denotes a relational term and practice, which manifest in cultural phenomena. The term ›freedom‹ may refer to revolutions in specific dance forms like the *Ausdrucks-tanz* in ballet. Its analysis can also discuss the liberation and control of movement and body as much as the idealization or decorporealization of the body or the transformations of gender concepts, therefore revealing the cultural and political impact of different dances. However, ›freedom to move‹ can also focus on multi-ethnic constellations of certain societies, on specific emotions which are associated with certain dance forms or movement patterns. Not least of all, the complex manifestations of dancing movement refer to a process of undoing the differentiation in media, science and arts. Succinctly, the body, the moves and postures or the texts on dances express (consciously or unconsciously) the idea or the lack of freedom.

In addition, it is a temporal limitation to the first half of the 20th century that allows concentrating on a supple relation between science, performance arts, literature and film, which promote inter- and transcultural dialogues and exchange of ideas; in contrast to this, in the post-war era of the 1950s, practices of growing individualization or the experiments with virtuality gain more importance.⁷ The interest for the relation between dancing and writing, or

5 Brandstetter 1995a: 125-132, 126.

6 In the context of aesthetic emotions inertia, lethargy or laziness refer to the discourse of *ennui* which formed the aesthetic and pathological discourse of the Fin-de-siècle. For *ennui* as counterpart to dance see the author's article on boredom, which traces some of the historical changes in the European aesthetic discourse of *ennui*. Cf. Rieger 2016: 201-218.

7 Concerning a short introduction on European dance discourses after World War II cf. Müller Farguell 2005: 14. Considering changing performance and reception before and after the Second World War in the Weimar Republic cf. Elswit 2014. Ramsay Burt studies the interest of contemporary European choreographers in ethical issues, leading

between aesthetics and ethics, characterizes dance studies of the first and the second half of the century, but related to technical, aesthetic and media innovations the focus shifts.⁸

The aim of this introduction is to elaborate the common concepts of ›movement‹ and ›freedom‹ and their cultural impacts. First, there is an outline as to what is meant by cultural manifestations of ›freedom to move‹. Apart from the above mentioned relational concept of freedom, examples of theorizing dance, or reflecting on the suppleness of literature and thought should illustrate possible cultural manifestations of freedom to move. This first part ends with considerations of rhythm as one possible approach to link language, movement and culture. Whereas the first part of the introduction highlights the theoretical and methodological frame, the second part gives a short description on the structure of the volume as well as on the articles in terms of content.

1. THE CULTURAL IMPACT OF MOVEMENT AND FREEDOM

Movement is one of the most quotidian phenomena in life. From a mechano-physical point of view, it is the local change of weight through time. To perceive movement means to perceive a temporal whole that consists of many different states. This can be applied to corporeal motion as well as to symbolic movements, since in its metaphorical use, movement also denominates aesthetic or political programs. Within the 20th century the focus in movement studies shifts towards the motional part of movement. Following Elk Franke, this change leads firstly to the fact that the body is not perceived as being moved but as the movement itself. Studying the body in motion or the movement thus reveals the incorporation of spatiotemporal cultural implications.⁹ And secondly, the treatment of movement via language needs a form of insight which guarantees free-

to ethico-aesthetic approaches at the turn of the 21st century, cf. Burt: 2016. The impact of neo-liberalism on contemporary dance is studied by Lepecki 2016.

8 Since with the second half of the century dance studies themselves become historical, more and more scholars focus on a self-reflexive moment of dance studies via analyzing the importance of memory, archive and canonization strategies within dance discourses. Cf. Wehren 2016. It is assumed that, whereas in the first half of the century writers, philosophers and theorists study dance to enrich their theories, in the second half of the century choreographers and dancers experiment more and more with the creative potentialities of theories.

9 For body knowledge and cultural history see Baxmann 2008.

dom over the ›content‹. As a consequence, Franke claims that bodily knowledge is processual¹⁰ and takes up the argument of writers, dance theorists, and philosophers from the first half of the century as will be shown.

Following the dance theory of Rudolf von Laban in *Die Welt des Tänzers*, the inherent motion of movement is, however, not only reducible to a freely flowing motion, but is also linked to an »inner attitude (conscious or unconscious) towards the motion factors of Weight, Space, Time and Flow«.¹¹ Speaking of the formal and corporeal dimension, it is a bodily trace in space and time. By analyzing the concrete bodily movement, scholars consider production details and their impact on the audience, which offer insight into cultural manifestations. Choreographers experiment with milieu, architecture and light of the performance, the physique, sex, clothing and masks of the dancer, the explicit expression of strong emotions via gestures and mime or the total lack of emotions or (where these are included) the accompanying music or spoken words. Language in turn makes the ›inner attitude‹ accessible.

This complexity allows one to speak of *movement as cultural manifestation*, the analysis of which requires a culture-theoretical approach. Andreas Reckwitz states that modern cultures develop symbolic codes in order to provide structures of sense. Within a frame of code and practice that underlies these structures of sense, the ›sense of movement‹ necessarily builds the basis for developing cultural practices and subjective attitudes interiorized as habitus and embodied in a specific form of bodily, mental and emotional acts.¹²

The focus on movement and velocity in *modernism* though reveals the necessary reaction towards new kinds of perception of time and space, of ephemerality and duration, of event and repetition, and mirrors the social, technical and aesthetic practices of the epoch. Movement is discovered as fascinating pattern in literature, building arts, philosophy and science which serves as counterpart to the shattering of modern culture,¹³ because the kinesthetic body allows the describing of society as an organic whole which is in motion. This in turn stresses the technically enabled mobility of its citizens and therefore the acceleration of life, and correspondingly the inherent motion and changeability of the social structure itself. Therefore, studies on movement, especially in their relation to freedom, are to be considered in terms of their cultural and historical changeability.

10 Cf. Franke 2004: 119-120.

11 Laban 1988: 11.

12 Cf. Reckwitz 2004: 155-156.

13 Cf. Hülk 2009: 10.

Freedom and Constraint – Dance and its Moving Traditions

The cultural manifestations of dance reveal a variety of dance discourses which present dance in its multiple forms between sports, entertainment and art, and which allow the discussion and the formation of cultural, social, aesthetic and political changes. In this context movement, and especially dancing movement, provides cultural knowledge that is not limited to rational but extended to non-propositional forms of world perception as already mentioned. According to dance practice and dance theory, freedom and constraint are closely linked to each other: constraint can not only be found in aesthetic demands of movement patterns, but is essential to dancing movement in general. It's the constraint of continuous exercise which finally leads to the physical ability to act without restrictions, to perform other than through every day movement. However, within dance theories of the first decades of the 20th century, freedom in movement appears as key metaphor for innovations in dance. Antonia Mercé alias ›La Argentina‹, for instance, describes the distinguishing features of modern ballet with the words: »the issue is to free the body from constraint, from being awkward, and to give it back its animal suppleness, the native eloquence of a creature made for movement and the harmony between feelings and gestures.«¹⁴

Liberation and release from corporeal constraints in moving patterns, the idea of a minimalized physical effort as well as the expectation to balance expression and inner states of mind are some of the key elements in dance discourse which demand a certain return to ›natural‹ movement, as Isadora Duncan also refers to in her talk *The dance of the future* (1903): »The primary or fundamental movements of the new school of the dance must have within them the seeds from which will evolve all other movements, each in turn to give birth to others in unending sequence of still higher and greater expression, thoughts and ideas.«¹⁵ In her critiques of ›sterile movements‹,¹⁶ Duncan points at the nucleus of movement which is a motion that evokes another motion instead of a fixed pose. With those fluid, lively and erratic movement patterns, modernism and the avant-garde stress a model of movement as ›motion‹ that stands against the ideal of the bourgeois tradition incorporated in the idea of a uniform or symmetrical movement.¹⁷

The fact that stability is reached by a constant dynamism corresponds with avant-garde aesthetics and draws a new perspective on literary and cultural stud-

14 Quoted in Bennahum 2000: 59.

15 Duncan 1928: 56.

16 Ibid.

17 Cf. Reckwitz 2004: 158.

ies. Nevertheless, even if it is this inherent motion that characterizes cultural and thus artistic events in the first half of the century, binary oppositions like dance as ephemeral art versus text as static art form are still reproduced. In contrast, avant-garde aesthetics show the continuation of the represented movement passing different borders as, for example, between performance and public, text and reader, or art and life. In the programs of avant-gardists, these claims appear in condensed form, demanding the return to ›nature‹, to the primitive, or to the instinctive; the aim is to express the ultimate unknown via a deeper simplicity or authenticity that should be reached by intermingling the archaic with the modern.¹⁸ Whereas the traditional social dances are seen as representation of social rules and structures, the modern social dances – such as shimmy, Charleston, one-step, fox-trot, chotis or tango¹⁹ – serve as medium to express and perform individual meaning, whilst the dances of the Black Atlantic, such as the cake walk, symbolize dance itself, pure motion in its ephemerality, aimlessness and supposed freedom.²⁰ It is to be assumed however, that in the first decades of the 20th century, besides the new notion of free motion, the idea of a well-structured movement still forms dance and movement discourses.

Freedom to move and its constraint can thus be seen as integral parts of cultural life in the first half of the 20th century. In the context of the relation between traditional and modern forms, freedom results from knowledge and practice in a certain system, which is then called into question and transformed or enriched with external elements. It is not only lightness or a conscious effort against the heavily felt earthly existence which is associated with freedom, but in this context freedom also embodies rebellion and resistance against cultural and aesthetic paradigms that are oriented towards the shiny and light, the harmony of expression and form or the idea of perfection and accuracy. Succinctly, dances as cultural manifestations refer to the motion-character of thinking traditions.

18 Cf. Ródenas Moya 2005: 309, 311.

19 From an intermedia perspective on the role of Charleston, chotis, foxtrot and flamenco in Spanish literature, film and painting of the avant-gardes cf. Links 2016. Claudia Rosiny, in turn, concentrates on the technical medium film and its relation to dance aesthetics by analyzing examples from the first decades of the century as well as of contemporary performances (cf. Rosiny 2013).

20 Cf. Ródenas Moya 2005: 312. As opposed to a Eurocentric perspective on the notion of ›freedom to move‹, in the historical context of the origins of the cake-walk see the highly interesting study of Astrid Kusser (2013). For a transcultural approach in cultural dance studies see also the papers of Johanna Roering and Frank Reza Links in this volume.

Thinking Traditions in Motion

Around 1900, freedom to move expresses a variety of innovative thoughts and circumscribes the shifts in body concepts or dance aesthetics. Dance discourses enrich traditions of thinking and inspire literature and theater aesthetics, which I would like to sketch out as examples.

Referring to the role of corporeality in body concepts and dance aesthetics, dance discourses generally reveal the emphasis on a combination of rational thought and sensual experience, and particularly the influence of sports in art. This in turn leads to a reevaluation of materiality in a narrow sense, and in a wider sense to the reconsideration of body concepts. One innovation in body discourses is that they show an orientation towards the athletic, stable, sane body that acts through ›natural‹ or acrobatic movements. In dance aesthetic, the focus shifts however, for instance, from the female dancer, who is light as a feather, to the male muscular dancer, which set dance aesthetic and gender roles in motion.²¹ At the same time, dance discourses represent artistic choreography, social movement, immaterial ritual and a medium of ›movement knowledge‹. As a consequence, writers, artists and researchers, who are fascinated by movement and freedom, take movement patterns or dances not only as thematic or formal topics but also as reflective figures of thought.

This modification of concentration from clearly defined categories to supple figures of thought reflects the protest against naturalist aesthetics and positivist over-determination of life via scientific approaches and social practices which lead into a more and more detailed process of categorization, cutting life and art into dispersed, disconnected pieces. It is thus not surprising that in the first half of the 20th century – inspired by dance – authors, choreographers and researchers have tried to break with thinking traditions by building analogies between dance, aesthetic and cognitive insight. Aimless motion and its potentiality to connect dispersed pieces were introduced in the discourses of philosophy and aesthetics of literature and theater. From the wide range of relevant philosophers, I would like to highlight the most prominent:

Within philosophical discourses, Nietzsche is the most quoted thinker of the epoch who proposes dance as thinking gesture. As such, he presents in *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1884) an aesthetic of the moving body and mind which he develops also in *Tanzlied of Also sprach Zarathustra* (1883-1885): »dass alles Schwere leicht, *aller Leib Tänzer, aller Geist Vogel werde*«. ²² Correspondingly,

21 See Simonson 2013 and the article of Ségol in this volume.

22 Nietzsche 1967: s.p. »that everything heavy shall become light, every body a dancer, every spirit a bird«. Whereas metaphors generally outline the abstract process of trans-

Henri Bergson studies the importance of movement for reality in *La Pensée et le mouvant* (1934): »Ce qui est réel, ce ne sont pas les ›états‹, simples instantanés pris par nous, encore une fois, le long du changement; c'est au contraire le flux, c'est la continuité de transition, c'est le changement lui-même.«²³ From a dance expert's point of view, Rudolf von Laban builds a model of understanding in terms of movement. Inspired by the intuitive perception of Henri Bergson and Ludwig Klages, his model of world understanding criticizes the logocentric approach and puts forward a kind of insight through the power of gestures.²⁴

Within aesthetic discourse in turn, the French poets Stéphane Mallarmé and Paul Valéry leave their indelible marks on literary aesthetics. They exhibit dance in their theoretical texts metaphorically as the ideal poetic work and draw attention to writing and thinking as a process.²⁵ Proclaiming a corporeal thinking, the French poet Stéphane Mallarmé describes the human state in terms of music metaphors: »Je crois que pour être bien l'homme, la nature en pensant, il faut penser de tout son corps, ce qui donne une pensée pleine et à l'unisson comme ces cordes de violon vibrant immédiatement avec la boîte de bois creux.«²⁶ It is

formation, the term ›gesture‹ allows the reference to a combination of bodily movement, language and thought which has not only a representative character but includes a generating one. Cf. Wulf/Fischer-Lichte 2010: 9-10.

23 Bergson 1960: 7-8. »What is real, are not the ›states‹, simple snapshots made by us, as usual, along the change; on the contrary, it's the flux, the continuity of transition, it's the change itself.«

24 Cf. Laban 1922: 59. For further information on the influence of Bergson and Klages on Laban's thinking structures cf. Baxmann 1988: 365.

25 For Stéphane Mallarmé see especially his articles *Ballets* (1886) and *Crayonné au théâtre*. For Paul Valéry the most quoted works are *Philosophie de la danse* (1936), *Danse, Degas, Dessin* (1935), the dialogues *Eupalinous ou l'Architecte suivie de L'Âme et la Danse* (1921). Apart from the interest in how dance is represented in the works of Valéry, Sabine Mainberger focuses on the till now neglected relation of dancing and writing in Valéry's oeuvre (cf. Mainberger 2012: 199-228).

26 »I think to really be human, the nature of thinking should be a thinking with one's whole body, out of which results a full and unison thought, like these strings of the violin that resonate directly with the hollow wooden body« (Mallarmé 1985: 103). Not only dance but movement in general serves as primary source for literary innovations. The Dadaists for instance combine in the ›poème gymnastique‹ corporeal movements with the recitation of poems. But also other authors and theorists from Kafka to Brecht orient themselves towards the non-verbal, towards the gestural dimension of language (cf. Kiesel 2004: 207, 223-225). Ancient rhetoricians already note that language has the effect of putting the audience into motion (see the different papers in Anke Hennig

the moving body which remembers the artists of the so-called static arts, not only of the ephemerality of the art work but also of the change and process inherent in their own works. Just as the dancing body is compared to a blank page on which the reader writes his or her concepts and perceptions, discourses are organized by their own rhythms.²⁷ The rhythmical side of literature, that is, the consistency and organization of the movement of the text, allows a conscious play with the tension and affects between work and reader. Furthermore, it is the rhythm of everyday patterns or collective social rituals that lead the reader back to their physiological body.²⁸ The ›pure art‹ of Mallarmé and Valéry appears as embodied idea; their works don't denote the use of an idea or thought but mark the practice itself.²⁹

And within the discourse of dramatic arts, theatre theorists such as Edward Gordon Craig, Antonin Artaud, Michael Chekhov or Adolphe Appia serve as demonstration for the new importance of movement. They focus on ways of communicating the motion of movement and therefore on generating events in art. Art should be experienced not only from the producer's point of view but also from the percipients perspective.³⁰ The main idea is to bring static art, such as written texts, to life. For that reason, theorists stress the ritual dimension of theatre, action and text and orient themselves towards practices which privilege nonverbal representation modes such as gestures, masks and costumes.³¹ Inter-

et al. 2008). Since the presence of dancers in cultural life and close co-operation between dancers and writers promote mutual influence, dancers like Mary Wigman, Isadora Duncan, Loïe Fuller, La Argentina, Valeska Gert, Josephine Baker, Vaclav Nijinsky etc. forced revolutions not only on stage but also in literature. For recent studies in dance and literature or the importance of dancers in cultural life. Cf. Jones 2013, Bennahum 2000, Soyka 2004.

27 Recent studies focus especially on the worldmaking process of dance. Cf. Klein/Noeth (eds.) 2011.

28 Cf. Lindley/McMahon 2008: 11. For work and rhythm see Baxmann 2009.

29 Cf. Fischer-Geboers 2010: 294.

30 In particular, theater theorists with an anti-mimetic approach reflect the generative aspect of literature. Cf. Craig 2009, Artaud 1993 and Appia 1989; for Michael Chekhov's ideas on acting cf. Chamberlain 2000. For Antonin Artaud's aesthetic see also the article of Poier-Bernhard in this volume.

31 In their search for nonverbal ways of communication, dancers, actors, and writers concern themselves with theories as well as literary texts about pantomime or the puppet such as Kleist's *Über das Marionettentheater* or Edward Gordon Craig's *The Actor and the Über-Marionette*. For the relation between German poets and dance discourse cf. Gumpert: 1994.

estingly, the notion of theorist changes as well, as practitioners are considered the most competent theorists. To approach these cultural changes, the French linguist and anthropologist Henri Meschonnic proposes to speak of cultural rhythms.

The Specific Rhythm of Language, Movement and Culture

Dance discourses put into question many rhythmic and movable conditions of cultural life such as the relationship of subject and object, of self-lost and self-finding of the individual, of nature and culture, that of art and society, of stage and audience, production and perception.³² What must be considered in an academic context is the fact that the communication of movement and its complex implications is closely related to questions of media and rhythm. In the following I would like to concentrate especially on language as a medium for several reasons:³³ Firstly, choreographers and authors in the first decades of the 20th century extensively discuss whether language and writing is an appropriate medium to communicate dance or not.³⁴ Secondly, modernist authors in particular reflect dance as analogy to language, which allows communicating characteristics of language, whereas theater theorists start their reflections in relation to or

32 Gabriele Brandstetter elaborates these elements of dance discourse, analyzing Rilke's poem *Spanische Tänzerin* cf. Brandstetter 1993: 402-403.

33 There is some overlapping between research on movement or dance in cultural or literary studies and recent studies in theory of and in dance. So common questions are: *How can we re-think the relationship of language and dance? Which idea of dance and language do we embrace? Which concepts and theories appear useful?* Cf. Brandstetter/Klein 2013: 12.

34 Concerning the relation of dancing and notation systems from a diachronic and cultural scholar's perspective see the studies of Claudia Jeschke 1983 and 1999. From a literary scholar's perspective language can be seen as the hyper medium that allows the communication of visual, auditory, haptic, olfactory or imagined impressions in a status ›as if‹. However, when photography, cinema or radio become more popular, writers especially study other art forms to improve their use of language. By integrating some of the characteristics of the new media in their texts, the writers intend to reach a more authentic relation to reality or life. That in turn allows the sharpening of the potentials and deficiencies of their own medium, which is written language (cf. Poppe 2008: 13-14, 18). See also the studies of Isa Wortelkamp 2012 and 2006 referring to dancing and reading or writing. For the impact of media and perception on the concept of reality as well as the notion of nature see Knaller 2015: 11-57. Concerning innovation in literary techniques in relation to dance studies of novel authors cf. Kontschieder 2013.

dissociation from language. And thirdly, cultural studies basically rely on language as scientific communication tool. So, movement in or through language not only refers to the historically old question about the essence of arts, but also to transmediality.

Considering the communicative aspect of dance and movement patterns, scholars draw a close link to language and subsequently to literature. Apart from the topos of the incompatibility of language and dance or movement, language was and is one of the most intelligible ways to communicate dance practice and experience. Via linguistic devices of description, ekphrasis or mimicry, it is possible to grasp dance and movement knowledge, which is well-known by poetic writers. Accordingly, the movement patterns of dances are compared to the grammatical, especially syntactic elements of language.

In the realm of literary production, movement can be considered as a constitutive element of epic art forms, since the genuine corporeal movement of the protagonists can limit the dynamic frame of the narration. And, as already mentioned, movement was and is used to describe the inner state of *movere*, the cognitive and/or social process of individual or collective development that can be related to their affects in terms of *pathos*.³⁵ Both notions, internal and external movement, are related to the form and the corporeal dimension of movement, to its manifestation as figure or gesture, which at the same time refers to its ephemerality and its aesthetic representability.³⁶ Since dance uses movement as primary source for its representation and as model for aesthetic reflections, it appears attractive for writers in different fields – from literature to journalism or philosophy.

One common basis of dance, language and culture can be seen in rhythm, as Henri Meschonnic points out in his *Critique du rythme: Anthropologie historique du langage* (1982). Following Meschonnic and his study of Benveniste, rhythm doesn't refer to the beat or to some regularity which could be measured, but is always »sans mesure«;³⁷ it is described as »form of movement«.³⁸ Rhythm indicates the organization of the discourse; it is not reducible to a sign or its meaning.³⁹ Meschonnic's notion of rhythm relates essentially to subject theory

35 Concerning inner motion in aesthetics cf. Brandstetter 2006: 154; see also Thurner 2009; for movement as constitutive element of narrations cf. Schuhen 2009: 11.

36 Concerning the familiar concept *figura* in dance analysis and particularly its performative quality see Brandstetter/Peters 2002: 10.

37 Cf. Meschonnic 1982: 143.

38 Ibid.: 70-73.

39 Cf. ibid.: 70.

and literary, social or political critique.⁴⁰ In his study of modern literature he notes the experimental approach of writers who are no longer interested in the creation of signifying texts, but in their performativity, which reveals the inherent action of the text.⁴¹

Hence, rhythm not only draws the attention to the concrete physiology of the body, but in art and culture rhythm emerges through rhyme, montage, timing and gesture, that is, through the combinations of words, images, notes and movement;⁴² and vice versa, the dance analysis of the text doesn't merely help to decode the movement pattern of the dance, but of the cultural environment or written texts. As such the gestures, steps or poses are not reducible to syntactic elements.⁴³ Thus, reading dance or movement may draw the attention to the inherent motion and practice of the making of the text, the dance and in a wider sense of the culture.

Speaking of literature, the referentiality of language is less important than the fact that literature produces experience in a process where the acting subject is ever changing: The writer transforms the literature and the literature transforms the writer, just as the readers transform the writer and the literature and themselves at the same time. The rhythm allows multiple logics that don't focus on understanding but on the fact that they exist as practices.⁴⁴

Apart from literature, cinema also finds its way to communicate, through ›moving pictures‹, the impression of experienced rhythmic motion that represents at the same time social scenes, choreography, and immaterial ritual or irrational time experience.⁴⁵ In contrast to literature, in film a certain rhythm can be formed by montage, medial interplay of visual and audible effects and the moving gestures of the camera. But in any case, the study of dance leads to a confrontation with possibilities and boundaries of media such as writing, language, moving picture and dance. Even in aesthetics, dance discourses appear at least threefold because, firstly, dance works as a cipher of the creative act; secondly, it symbolizes the process of reception; and thirdly, on a meta-level, structural analogies of dance, text and film for example can be analyzed by

40 Cf. *ibid.*: 24.

41 These shifting interests also affect literary studies, where the main question no longer is: What is literature? »Mais: que *fait* la poésie?« »But: what does poetry *do*?« *Ibid.* 62.

42 Cf. Lindley/McMahon 2008: 11.

43 Cf. Rakoczy 2008: 80.

44 In her sociological research, Gabriele Klein's approach focuses in terms of body on a similar aim, examining in her research the conditions for successful acting, the production of practice in and through movement. Cf. Klein 2004a: 138.

45 Cf. Montandon 1999: 8.

focusing on the intermedia reference, in other words on the transmutation of corporal movement in another medium such as writing or film. As such it allows redefining the specifics of speech, movement and image.

2. FREEDOM AND DANCE AS CULTURAL MANIFESTATIONS

Although it is not the aim of this volume to find a new definition of culture, the different approaches will show that there are some recurring qualities which define art and language as well as culture in a broader sense through dance: specific discourses on dance, language, art and culture in the first half of the century can be deciphered as syncretistic, self-reflexive and as dissolving boundaries.⁴⁶ Concerning syncretism, dance serves as a good practice to illustrate the intertwining of different national backgrounds that come together in stage dance, the mingling of body patterns of ›low‹ and ›high‹ culture, life and art in avant-garde aesthetics, or traditional and modern elements.⁴⁷ This multifaceted notion of culture is produced and represented by the dancing body at the same time and can be incorporated due to its repeatability and rhythm.

The study of dance replenishes reality concepts by considering variable perception modes and by activating opposite values which get in contact via tension, flux, rhythm, emotion or resonance. Mass phenomena for example are criticized and esteemed at the same time: On the one hand, political movements and their institutionalized methods of bodily practices which eventually manifest the manipulation of a large number of citizens in fascism are criticized, and similarly, there is the mass attracting media form of cinema, which artists of more traditional art forms such as theatre or literature fear. On the other hand, it is precisely the motion in and of masses that lead to a consideration of collective forms of coexistence, co-writing and cooperation, which involve crossing political and generic boundaries in art and science. When in the 19th century authors write of life at the ball to expose social movements and interpersonal interac-

⁴⁶ See especially the article of Inge Baxmann in this volume.

⁴⁷ Antonia Mercé, for example, includes body movements and costumes of the Spanish folk dances flamenco or Seguidilla in her ballet choreography and Grete Wiesenthal works with her own interpretation of the Viennese Waltz and transforms the ballroom dance to a certain element of stage dance. Cf. Gumpert 1994: 34.

tions, it is the scene of the dancing halls, where cultural codes of the 20th century are embodied.⁴⁸

But freedom as cultural indicator also appears in the shift of interests and cooperation of professionals. Artists for example are interested in psychological and medical research, just as medical practitioners are interested in text and dance production.⁴⁹ In an aesthetic context, freedom to move indicates the interactions and dialogues between the arts, art and everyday life or between subject and community. The reciprocal relationship between dance, movement and literature correlates with the effects of eurhythmics, which is synonymous with freedom and expression of inner rhythms in modernist literature.⁵⁰

The papers of this volume are grouped into three sections following the rhythm of their approaches: 1) *Freedom to move in culture and art*, 2) *Conceptualization of body, movement, language and dance* and 3) *Aesthetic and cultural spins*. All of the articles in the first part focus on the specificities of freedom to move in different aesthetic contexts. The articles of the second part stress the historical and cultural shifting in the conceptualization of movement and definite dance forms. In the third part aesthetic and cultural turns are illustrated with examples drawn from literature and film which present aspects of dance discourse as prominent elements of artistic work as well as the importance of dance in trans-media processes.

Freedom to move in Culture and Art

Freedom to move draws the attention to innovations in science, technology and arts that form cultural life in the first half of the 20th century. On the one hand, freedom to move realizes an action against traditions and norms. On the other hand, the discourse of freedom to move includes a self-reflective spin and exposes its own limits. Starting from the perspective of dance as a means to cross borders, discourses reveal a culture of the motoric and describe the new cultural ideal that is bound to elasticity and lability (Baxmann). Knowledge is no longer limited to rigid concepts but closely linked to practices, which in turn lead

48 Interestingly, the writing of those scenes doesn't necessarily need to allude to music or to describe the dances. In many novels the dances are just mentioned with their name: waltz, polka, Charleston etc. For an overview on how to write dance in a literary context see the Introduction of Alain Montandon in his edited volume (1999).

49 Cf. the article of Anna Seidl in this volume.

50 »The number of literary references to Eurhythmics in modernist fiction shows the way in which [its] ideas became a byword for physical freedom, emphasizing the outward expression of an internalized experience of rhythm.« Jones 2013: 71.

to a new approach to the concepts of body, gender and the relation of tradition to modernity. In the field of literary production, the resistance and rebellion against traditional writing forms and text genres is exemplified by the studies of Jean Cocteau's libretti, Antonin Artaud's theatre theory and Pérez de Ayala's theater critics. Cocteau's libretti reveal the complex relation of language/text and movement/dance, considering particularly the importance of standstill for both movement and action that finally leads to a revision of traditional text genres (Jeschke). Artaud in turn enhances the concept of representation by furthering a ritual theatre model that focuses especially on nonverbal expression modes. Action is no longer limited to the story of the drama, but theatre itself is defined by its action quality, which affects body and mind and revolutionizes both cultural constants as well as theatre practices of the time (Poier-Bernhard). Corresponding to these reflections on representation modes, the Spanish theater critic Ramón Pérez de Ayala discusses the inter-relation of act, word and insight, relating the current Spanish theater production to its historic development. Freedom to move is conceived as the manifestation of cultural potentialities, which is exemplified by the importance of flamenco in Spanish theater and literature in the 1920s (Rieger). The discursive counterpart of freedom to move is closely linked to organizational forms of social and cultural life. So the concrete imagined or wished freedom – whether it be in the fields of bodily movement, gender or clothing habits for Tango Argentino dancers – turns out to be a relational freedom that needs a certain preconditioned subjugation to a specific system to appear as freedom generating practice within a cultural context (Haller).

Conceptualization of Body, Movement, Language and Dance

For reasons of body culture, Gestalt and expressive psychology, or the philosophy of *élan vital*, the concepts of body and mind and those of gender are rethought throughout modern societies. Before and after World War I, uncommon movement patterns in particular engender in both scientists and authors the aim of re-defining the status of human being in terms of norm and deviation or bodily emancipation and disciplinary action. In this context, the discourse discloses a contradictory way of assessing the bizarre movements of female and male hysteria patients that are performed under hypnosis, which reveal conjunctions with historic gender roles (Seidl). Movement patterns and dance forms, however, offer modes of identification for the modern subject. This can be seen in a wider context when Salome, for instance, not only represents the symbol of the *femme nouvelle* but also the archetypical Jewish woman. By combining two biblical protagonists, Delilah and Salome, Fin-de-siècle authors like Richard

Huldschiner not only rewrite the myths, but give a glimpse of the German-Jewish cultural self-understanding by presenting the power of dance and movement (Gollance). As part of Indian cultural life, dances appear as embodied literature with the aim of expressing emotions or *rasa* on the one hand, and of enabling the subjects of the audience to free themselves from the boundaries of their illusions on the other. Contrary to the traditional differentiation of the arts, the classical Indian dances as well as the folkloristic dances conceptualize dance as a language-like system and offer a common source of both art forms (Das). Whereas dance can be seen as embodied stories, poets refer to qualities of dance to enhance the understanding of literature. In contrast to heavily-felt life, it is the lightness and effortlessness of dance which serves as a key metaphor of symbolist poetics and leads for instance Paul Valéry to find different ways of freeing language from rigid terms and transforming poetic language into something moving and light. By presenting the traces of the poetic practice, Valéry informs of a certain dance discourse and its qualities at the same time (Künstler). Another main characteristic of dance discourse is ephemerality. German expressionist poets such as Else Lasker-Schüler relate movement to concepts of time and present it in a tightened context of presence and disappearance of the dancer. The specific rhythm in the rotation of past, present and future evoked in the poem as well as the dynamic relation of tension, resistance and anxiety define the lyrical form (Tripp). Many authors build their ideas of dance by visiting stage dance performances. However, social dances also nourish dance discourse of the first part of the 20th century and in turn influence aesthetic paradigms.

Aesthetic and Cultural Spins

Mostly related to a specific form, dances transport various cultural values. Argentinian novel authors and film directors of the 1950s discover the Tango Argentino as a crucial element for representing social conflicts and therefore as a possible means of communicating a cultural poetic by means of its spoiled symptoms. The analysis of Tango Argentino enriches not only the complex relation between bodily movement, social habits, music, text and film, but also allows showing structural equivalences of dance and novel or film (Kailuweit). Furthermore, some lyrics of the *tango canción* from the 1920s to 1950 permit conclusions to be drawn about the imagination of tango dancers and the specifics of the dance as well as of an imagined idea of national identity. In these songs, authenticity of tango is related to topographical borders; it acts as a substitute for religion, and presents the chaotic and fragmentary expression of folk culture expressed in the tango lyrics (Lafuente). Similarly, the study of stage dances

from the turn of the century till the 1930s divulges cultural changes related to corporeal ideals. Through the inclusion of sport discourse in ballet aesthetics, correlations between aesthetics and social relations to the body can be deciphered. Besides the lightness of the dancing body, the sportive conception draws the attention to a solid, sane and resistant body, which affects the concept of grace (Ségol). Apart from dancing human bodies, avant-gardist aesthetics discover objects as performing source as well and expose the emotional evaluation of different social dance forms. In Martinů's *Revue de Cuisine* (1927) for instance, the kitchen equipment starts to dance and the emotional state of the plot – from seduction across pursuit to the happy end – is underlined by the rhythm of dance pieces of different cultural origins (Edeling). Thus, dance in literature and film figures as expression of inter- or transcultural encounter. In a broader sense, this aspect reflects on the notion of culture, which is seen as an inter-ethnic phenomenon that in turn forms interpersonal relations. Alberto Insúa's novel *El negro que tenia el alma blanca* (1922) and its filmic adaption present individuals who are able to put on cultural masks and transgress individual and social limits through dance (Links). So, dance discourse includes endeavors to resignify cultural stereotypes and presents a critical, self-reflexive and class-defying counter-discourse as in the musical *Stormy Weather* (1943). Within this unstable context, aesthetics of the cool present an embodied equilibrium (Roering). The various approaches put a focus on practices of movement, dance and freedom in the first half of the 20th century, unveiling the importance of the perceivable motion of the past for the present.

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