New German Dance Studies

Edited by
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Editors’ Acknowledgments

SUSAN MANNING AND LUCIA RUPRECHT

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

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After years of conversations at theater and dance conferences, Susan finally sent a book proposal to Joan Catapano, associate director and editor in chief
11. Pina Bausch, Mary Wigman, and the Aesthetic of "Being Moved"

SABINE HUSCHKA

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

Dance research often draws a genealogy that connects Wigman’s approach to that of Pina Bausch, the central representative of German Tanztheater as it emerged in the 1970s. The aesthetic appeal of Tanztheater stems from shared corporeal and cultural experiences (Erfahrungen). It evokes a hunger for lived experience, for sensuous contact with what seems to be real. It caters to the desire to witness what is essential to humanity—from an appropriate distance, and yet with the slight tremor that comes from the feeling of being privy to what really moves people, of seeing real bodies and genuine emotions. Some German authors, among them Norbert Servos, have isolated this theatrical mode of perception as the definitive characteristic of Bausch’s work, claiming that it constitutes a “theatre of experience,” which follows the topology of immediate and global comprehensibility. Regardless of their cultural background, audience members experience here “theatre as communication of the senses” and an “authenticity of feeling” which is moving. The opinions of Servos and others evoke an enthusiasm for the idea of “a meeting with reality” on stage. Illusions of immediacy blur the difference between displaying choreographed figures on stage and viewing them, and fail to acknowledge the models of representation and perception that govern emotional on-stage action.

Bausch, Wigman, and the Aesthetic of “Being Moved”

By analyzing these aesthetic models, however, the differences between Wigman and Bausch become obvious. Bausch took a fundamentally different position compared to the one propagated by her predecessor: turning her attention away from absolute truth and toward the truthfulness of any given physical movement on stage, while retaining the appeal to feeling, she sought to develop emotionally determined forms of movement and to create a shared space of human experience beyond any essentialism. But what about the choreographed body in these theatrical spaces of experience? How do movements and gestures function to reveal a perspective on the human being? Which choreographic or theatrical means are used, at the discretion of the individual body, to produce an impression of immediately immediacy? The radical difference between Wigman and Bausch can be detected in their aesthetics of representation, in the way in which they choreograph emotion.

Spaces of Emotion: Mary Wigman and Pina Bausch

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

The following analyses of choreography, and of the aesthetics and discourse of movement, seek to trace the theatrical concepts behind the range of emotions that motivate the physical movements. My argument thereby reveals the affective potential, the affirmative character, and also the politics of the body implicit in these theatrical concepts. Both choreographers work with the emotional space associated with physical movement and configure their own unique aesthetic of the experience of being moved. With diverging interests and from different historical situations, they aestheticize the human body gripped by and subjected to strong emotions. The tropes that constitute their respective aesthetics of movement, such as the exploratory touching of space
and bodies in Bausch's work, and turning and falling in that of Wigman, seek to give rise to discrete moments of experience in order to relate these back to the body as the moving image of the emotional realm. Both choreographers aim to elaborate choreographic and theatrical moments of pathos: the point at which something befalls the body and gives rise to a particular emotion that the sentient being, in keeping with the original Greek derivation of "pathos," experiences passively and with suffering.7

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

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

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

Now we witness somnambulant, almost un-self-conscious movements, which create a physical space that gestures both toward and away from itself and is extended by powerful, rapid, arc-shaped movements of the arm and upper body. Through the choreography, fields of movement unfold from the withdrawn scenery of the body, sinking back as it were into the space that she explores through touch.8 This female figure has a light, floating air, and she is dressed in a long flowing tunic. Her characteristic touching, searching movements suggest a sense of being lost. Almost stumbling on stage as she does from the wings, this figure remains bound up in another place.

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

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

The choreographic design of the piece is, moreover, marked by absurd but se-
rious patterns of reaction. Thus a scene consisting of an embrace, prematurely
broken off, between a man and a woman recurs throughout the fifty-minute
piece. The embrace is arranged and is built up with determination each time
by a third person, another man. The loving embrace stabilizes itself for only a
matter of seconds before it collapses again. The male partner in the embrace
stands stoically in the middle of the stage, while the arms of the woman, who
is being lifted into his arms, circle, wreathlike, around him. The man responds
powerlessly to the weight of the woman and allows her to sink. She cannot
hold the position by herself, and her body slides down that of the man. With
ever-increasing speed the third person intervenes to rebuild the scene.9

The piece, choreographed in 1978, was danced by Pina Bausch herself until
her unexpected death on July 27th, 2009, and, together with Das Frühlingsopfer
(Rite of Spring), was a regular feature on the program of the Tanztheater in
Wuppertal. In Café Müller and other pieces of the 1970s and 1980s, Bausch
choreographed the two physical sensations connected with movement: kines-
thesis and touch. Café Müller realizes itself through choreographing a corpo-
real loop, which operates kinesistically, and according to which, the piece
seems to comment on Jean-Luc Nancy’s notion that “the body is the unity of
a being outside itself.”10 By unfolding a space in which it is possible to “be
outside oneself,” the stage displays choreographic movements as if they were
perceptible to the sense of touch. Even the temporal periods during which
the dancers move continually come across as spaces of memory recalled in
performance. They do not refer back to psychological motivations but reach
out to a loss that articulates itself in the body’s field of movement: realities
remembered and dreamed. Every action and image of movement is in a per-
petual and broken state of hovering. Through these actions and images, other
spaces of smoldering memory, which oscillate between absentmindedness
and searching touch, are opened up in that darkened, long-abandoned room.

The choreography stages the reverberations of pastness. Emotions appear
in the structure of repetition, are articulated as external events that affect
the body, or find aesthetic form in the gesture of touching, whether this be
constant touching of oneself, sliding off of another body or objects, sinking
to the floor, or the impact of the body on chairs and tables. Thus Bausch’s
aesthetics of movement diverge from the theory of expression in dance, a
theory that figuratively understands the human body as actively articulating
a more fundamental movement, creating speaking gestures. By contrast, the
momentum of Bausch’s choreographies lies in a passive sensation always kept
at a distance, an external event that has been sensed and introduced into the
space of performance. Whether it is characterized by suffering, longing, or
pleasure, it reveals itself as an aesthetic force, which continually leads the
body and its figured movements outside itself. The personal act of searching
combined with a sense of one’s own history and reality marks out a double
figure of movement on the stage, one which, with every position and point of
contact between body and space, evokes an Elsewhere, and points to the
Elsewhere that is history.

Theatricality, Method, and Materiality

The choreographic work of Pina Bausch is characterized by an aesthetic fram-
ing of the experience of being moved. Distinctive for her style is an approach
to the body as a refuge of lived, passively experienced occurrences, in order
to remember and reflect upon the emotional traces that these have left. Bausch
sought to emphasize experiences of life, indeed of suffering, through targeted
questions posed to her dancers and transferred their personal and cultural
inscriptions through choreography to the stage. The publication of Tanzthe-
atergeschichten (Dance Theater Stories)11 by Raimund Hoghe, the dramaturge
with whom Bausch worked for many years, together with a number of TV
documentaries, such as Was ist Pina Bausch und ihre Tänzer in Wuppertal?
(1982) by Klaus Wildenhahn,12 provide insight into individual phases of work
and rehearsal. Catalogues of questions and key words for Walzer (Waltzes,
1982) or Kontakt(hof) (Space of Contact, 1978) also mark out initial ideas for
the range of themes that the pieces would cover. For Bausch, the aim of asking
questions was to elicit honest responses from the dancers, which, as reflec-
tions emanating from their own, true feelings, could be articulated as phrases
of movement or as entire scenes.

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

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

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

Feelings As Scenes—Gestures of Innate Knowledge

In a conversation with Christiane Cibiec, Bausch described her method of working: “I know very precisely what I am looking for; I may be unable to describe it with words, but in fact I don’t want to.” It is an attitude to work that orients itself entirely toward feeling, a haven shielded from all theoretical or reflexive explication. Bausch always returned to and insisted upon the notion of an innate knowledge implied by her observation and choreographic formation of movement. When asked how she knew when a movement or a scene was right, she replied: “... when I feel happy, then I know that it’s right. You feel when it’s right, and you feel when it’s not right. But how you get there, that’s another question. That I can’t say.” Her artistic self-understanding was given over entirely to feeling and to the sense for what is felt. “How can I put it: it’s all feeling. ... Sometimes it breaks your heart. Sometimes you know it, sometimes you find it; sometimes you have to forget everything and try to start from the beginning again. You have to be very alert, very sensitive; there is no system.” She placed continual emphasis on the absolute visibility of a person’s feeling and state of mind, which for her could be read from the body. For “... we are ourselves with and through our bodies first and foremost, and every person is constantly expressing himself, just by being. It’s all very plain to see.”

Bausch likewise never spoke about techniques. She took a (psycho)analytic view of constellations of gender, which she often presented as bordering on the pathological, and of instances, be they everyday or ritual, of the destabilization of one’s emotional state, with the aim of condensing them into often excessive physical scenarios. The patterns of action and relationships, which are inscribed in and perpetually repeated through desiring, rebellious, or anxious bodies, would appear in a staged montage of dance, acting, and silence. The poetics of these performances arose, not from showy poses or clichéd scenes, but from the physical exaltation of being moved emotionally.

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

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

**Mary Wigman in Search of Transcendence**

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

In the opening stages of her solo career after World War I, experience functions as a central aesthetic figure in Wigman’s choreographic and pedagogic practice. It acquires an almost mythical weight of significance because it indicates an existential link with life and with liberation. The dance-experience, that is, pain happily overcome in dance, reveals a further dimension of meaning, which is not produced by the emotion felt, but hints, in terms of a theory of expression, at a relationship of images, of original and derivation. The sensation of happiness indicates for Wigman “the original foundation of a still undivided feeling of life” suggesting not an emotional spectrum of experience, or feeling gradated by physical intensity, but rather “wholly fulfilled being.”

which Wigman conceives of as “a fully charged inner potential.” In quasi-religious language, Wigman writes: “How the dance-experience reveals itself to the individual may remain his or her secret. The dance act seeks solely to communicate a valid message. The derived image, now given form, is testimony to the original image received in experience.” For Wigman, this (dance-) experience should hold the spectator in its spell.

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

**Choreographic Figures of Emotion II—The Experience of Space: Drehmonotonie (1926)**

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

> ... circling and turning in a spiral-sequence of rising and falling, without a beginning and without an end—a tender rocking-movement, the arms reaching out, full of pain and full of joy—rising again in self-destructive desire, swelling and shrinking, flowing back—higher and faster, and faster and faster—the
Thus the sensation of bodilessness is choreographed, arising from a dramatic staging of leitmotivic movements: stepping, dashing, turning, standing still, and falling. The written version of the scene is imbued with a fascination for the bodiless state built up dramatically by the movements. In place of a transformation achieved through the figure of turning, a convention both cultural and spiritual, comes the image of being lifted out of oneself, of falling into another state. The ecstatic moment represents a conception of death, evokes a transcendental movement into another—eternal—state (Figure 11.3).

swirling current has me in its grip, the waters are rising. The whirlpool drags me down. Higher still, faster still, hunted, whipped, hounded. . . . A jolt runs right through the body, bringing it from the wildest spin to a standstill, stretched tall, raised into tiptoe, the arms thrown aloft, clambering for a support which is not there. A breathless pause, an eternity which in reality only lasts a few seconds. And then the sudden release, the limp body falls into the deep. Only one feeling survives: the sensation of being out of body. And one wish: not to have to stand up, ever again, to lie there like this for all eternity.26
The spectrum of feeling in the opening scene—tenderness, pain, joy—introduces a dramatic aspect with an almost fantastical charge: "faster and faster," "whipped," "bound"—a state emerges that could not be further from the ritual of the dervish, which is also based on turning, but is calm and transformative.\textsuperscript{27} In contrast to this meditative, monastic practice, Wigman choreographs a course of movement that is interrupted by pain. In the manner of a symbol, the gesture of pain rises out of the basic movement and sweeps aside the transformative momentum of the act of turning. In the process an image of the body gripped by emotion arises: "a jolt runs right through the body." In a deathly figure, the body reaches for a last "support which is not there" and falls to the ground.

The Gesture of Death: The Phantasm of the Subject

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

The ecstatic moment, which places the body in a state of heightened religious emotion, as it were an "oceanic" feeling with no perceptible sense of physicality, is visualized in the image of an "unconscious experience of unity.\textsuperscript{28} The choreographed body displays an image of pure movement: empty and transcended.

TURNING

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

She knows quite well that she is still turning, but she no longer feels the movement. Elevated and weightless, she hovers in great serenity.\textsuperscript{29}

\textit{Das Drehen}, part of the five-part prose work \textit{Die Tänzerin} (The Dancer) again represents a bodyless state, identifiable through the sweeping asic of all sensation.\textsuperscript{29} The body appears in a state that flows freely into the space around it, allowing inner and outer space to collapse into one, and appears to float. But the movement, which suggests a state of Dionysian ecstasy, a merging of spaces, dulls the body's sensations and represents an image of pure emotional dissolution. In its aesthetic form, the dance is, as Alexander Schwann has shown, "soteriologically charged" [suffused with the doctrine of salvation]. "Nothing less than the theological mystery of salvation is the goal of her dance.\textsuperscript{31}" Yet in it resides a subject which, its frame transcended, now becomes a pure image of movement.

\textit{Dreiemnotonie}, for Wigman, "the progenitor of all the dances which came afterwards,"\textsuperscript{32} likewise seeks to represent a state of no sensation as pure and absolute movement: "Rooted hypnotically to the same spot and spinning a web around herself in the monotony of the turning movement, gradually losing herself in it, until the turns seemed to dislocate themselves from the body and the surrounding area began to spin. No longer moving herself, but being moved instead, herself the center, herself the resting point in the whirlpool of rotations.\textsuperscript{33} With the practice of ritual dance as a backdrop, Wigman stylizes the act of turning into a dance cult and choreographs overwhelmingly powerful gestures of pain, of death, in order to project a longed-for salvation in images of transcendence. The figure of incorporeality, which also appears for Wigman in the jump, as an "upwards yearning into bright lightness,"\textsuperscript{34} bears the mark of death. Thus, Mary Wigman seeks to represent an emotional space of being moved, which receives its meaning in the soteriological image of incorporeality. The political relevance of this aesthetic ultimately becomes clear in Wigman's self-stylization and her understanding of herself as a teacher. The mystification of death emerges in the figure of the dancer as magician, and reveals here its political gesture. Obsessed with the idea of dance as a sacred religious art, Wigman styles herself as a "priestess of dance"\textsuperscript{35} and draws with religious pathos an absolutist self-portrait, in which the self prevails as the absolute force. Wigman's aesthetic of representation realizes a theology of dance, whose transcendentally justified formation of the self operates with gestures of powerlessness and submission. The artist-subject becomes its absolute authority. Wigman choreographs gestures of invocation, elegiac steps and positions of the hands, which create a scene of solemn actions and images of a body being guided by a higher power. The stage is ruled by expressive gestures, ordered mass-sculptures, or geometrically arranged groups. The choreographed bodies become, in the flow of being moved, visualizations of pure movement, legible in the prevailing structure of power.

Wigman's aesthetic of dance dramatizes expressions of falling and capitulation, humility and happiness, sacrifice and holy ceremony, calls for death and signs of life. Yet all of these gain shape with reference to the "emotive formulas\textsuperscript{36} of power. As political gestures, a fear-inducing shoulder emanates from them, if they follow Wigman's absolutist dictate that they produce "unity of expression and function, a corporeality through which the light shines, a form
filled with the spirit." The choreographed body acts as a religious medium and represents the image of its absolutist (dis)empowerment: the language of divine revelation speaks from it. "She [the dancer] is a vessel whose living contents repeatedly make her glow with an intense heat, until the reciprocal process of melting is complete and only the unity of the artistic event now speaks to us." Dance becomes an "absolute art," for it is there that "knowledge of things stops, only experience is law; there begins dance." 26

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

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

Notes

4. Ibid., 24. However, this interpretation perpetuates a mythology that surrounds dance performance but fails to recognize that this mythology's central meaning and function originated in the eighteenth century, was socially and politically motivated, and was linked to contemporary debates on education. Contemporary aesthetic perspectives are thus mingled with notions from the historical discourse on dance: in the mid-eighteenth century, under the reforming influence of the ballet d'action, above all of Jean-Georges Noverre, the topos of the immediate effect of authentic emotions became the core of the philosophy and conventions of dance performance. Dance also had sociopolitical significance, for it was one of the agents of the increasing self-confidence of the bourgeoisie. An analysis of the sociocultural functions of dance in the 1920s, as opposed to the 1960s and 1970s, is beyond the scope of this article; see Franz Anton Cramer's analyses of philosophical and cultural models of reflection in Franz Anton Cramer, In aller Freiheit. Tanzkultur in Frankreich zwischen 1920 und 1950 (Berlin: Parodos, 2008). For eighteenth-century aesthetics, see Sabine Huschka, "Stimmliches Wissen im ballet en action. Der choreographierte Körper als Ensemble," in Wissenschaft Tanz. Historische und zeitgenössische Vermittlungshäute zwischen Praktiken und Diskursen, ed. Sabine Huschka (Bielefeld: transcript, 2009), 35–54; Christina Thurner, Beruhnte Körper—bewegte Seelen. Zum Diskurs der doppelten Bewegung im Tanztheater (Bielefeld: transcript, 2009). [Editors' Note: See also Christina Thurner's essay in this volume.]


6. Even in the face of the impetus that National Socialism gave to Wigman's work, research in German-speaking countries has struggled to break with the conception, formed in the 1980s, of Wigman as the pioneer of a more modern, "liberating" aesthetics of dance. See Hedwig Müller, Die Begründung des Ausdruckstanzes durch Mary Wigman (MA thesis, Cologne, 1985); Mary Wigman. Leben und Werk der großen Tanzerin (Weinheim: Quadriga, 1986). It is really American research into dance that has provided a political angle on Ausdruckstanz. Most balanced is Susan Manning, "Modern Dance in the Third Reich: Six Positions and a Coda," in Choreographing History, ed. Susan Leigh Foster (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 169–176.

7. According to its Greek etymology, "pathos" also includes the notion of an event that impacts a being and therefore suggests "all forms of suffering as opposed to positive action," which applies to the whole spectrum of emotions and passions. Kathrin Busch and Iris Dürmann, eds., "Pathos": Konturen eines kulturwissenschaftlichen Grundbegriffs (Bielefeld: transcript, 2007), 7–31. The authors refer to Rainer Meyer-Kalkus's "pathos" in Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie (Basel: Schwabe and Co, 1989, 1995).

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


16. Ibid., 231.

17. Bausch in conversation with Christine Cibieck.


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