

This article was downloaded by: 10.3.98.93

On: 19 Jan 2019

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



The Routledge Companion to Butoh Performance

Bruce Baird, Rosemary Candelario



What we Know and what we Want to Know

Publication details

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315536132-15>

Kate Elswit, Miyagawa Mariko, Eiko Otake, Tara Rodman

Published online on: 28 Aug 2018

How to cite :- Kate Elswit, Miyagawa Mariko, Eiko Otake, Tara Rodman. 28 Aug 2018, *What we Know and what we Want to Know from: The Routledge Companion to Butoh Performance* Routledge
Accessed on: 19 Jan 2019

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315536132-15>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR DOCUMENT

Full terms and conditions of use: <https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/legal-notices/terms>

This Document PDF may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproductions, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The publisher shall not be liable for an loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

14

WHAT WE KNOW AND WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW

A roundtable on butoh and *neuer Tanz*

Kate Elswit, Miyagawa Mariko, Eiko Otake, and Tara Rodman

KATE ELSWIT (KE): The connection of butoh with early twentieth century German modern dance or *neuer Tanz* feels both known and unknown at the same time. On the one hand, there is the acknowledgement of particular German teachers and Japanese students that has grown over the past few decades to almost-requisite in the majority of texts on butoh. Key English-language texts to develop this argument include Klein (1988); Fraleigh (1999); and Sas (2003). This one-directional flow has been complicated in recent years by scholarship that highlights how the European avant-gardes of the 1920s and 1930s were already drawing extensively on Asian practices that had traveled from Japan and elsewhere, from theatre to art and decorative objects. Sondra Fraleigh and Tamah Nakamura summarize that this early period of butoh aesthetic “loops historically from Japan to the west, and goes back to Japan” (Fraleigh and Nakamura 2006, 13). On the other hand, there remain questions around these kernels of genealogy that have to do among other things with how this lineage and its influences have manifested in the work itself, such as the relationship between the aesthetics of dance theatre or *Tanztheater* and of butoh, given that both developed as forms of rebellion out of Axis countries after World War II. Such considerations often come down to various culturally-loaded understandings of expressionistic and neo-expressionistic practices. Another set of lingering questions thread through both the facts of historical connections and the reflections on practice; these have to do with the story of the butoh-*neuer Tanz* connection itself. It is also useful to ask what these myths are and what they do, in other words, the stakes inherent in how particular affinities have been traced and narrated.

In this roundtable, I have the privilege of discussing these histories and the concerns they raise with Miyagawa Mariko, who is an expert on Ohno Kazuo; Tara Rodman, whose research focuses on the circulation of modernist performance between Japan, Europe, and the United States, specifically Itō Michio; and interdisciplinary choreographer Eiko Otake, who trained in this lineage, studying with both Hijikata and Ohno as well as Mary Wigman’s student Manja Chmiel, although she herself does not identify as a butoh artist. Our conversation offers perspectives on the direct connections of technique and aesthetics, the indirect cultural contexts in which these took place, as well as the mythology that has come to surround the two. These three threads of connection are interwoven through the discussion that follows. The first section, “Teachers, Students, and Terminologies,” establishes key points of historical grounding in terms of identifying

individual people and also the language with which their work was described. Then “Tracing Artistic Forms and Features” delves into greater detail of a few examples in which the question of influence can be traced through shared aesthetic interests and features. Finally, “Transnational Stories During and After World War II” frames these concerns of direct and indirect genealogies within a global political context, including the historical alliance of Germany and Japan. Our purpose is to bring multiple perspectives into conversation in order to provide a series of anchor points as well as some provocations regarding what we know and what we want to know about the intertwined histories of *butoh* and *neuer Tanz*.

Teachers, students, and terminologies

EIKO OTAKE (EO): This is where I fit into this history: Two of my dance teachers, Hijikata Tatsumi and Ohno Kazuo, had studied with Japanese modern dance pioneer Takaya Eguchi, who went to Germany to study dance with Mary Wigman. Ohno Kazuo was his assistant teacher. Ohno also studied with Miya Misako, who also had connections to Germany. Ohno was very much interested in Vaslav Nijinsky and La Argentina, and he mentioned Wigman, too, during his classes. In both studios, I saw a lot of Nijinsky photos, and because of the Nijinsky photos, Koma and I went to the Ueno Dance Collection, which is part of the performing arts center in Ueno (the equivalent of the Library for the Performing Arts in Lincoln Center, but much smaller, at the Tokyo Bunka Kaikan). Koma and I went there to look for more Nijinsky photos. There we also saw photos of Wigman, and we were particularly impressed by Dore Hoyer.

In those photos we saw strength. Hoyer was long, whereas Wigman was more square. I remember seeing a small photo of Hoyer in Ueno; she was in a Humphrey-ish deep *plié*, and showed much more movement than Wigman. Somehow I knew that Hoyer killed herself. Hoyer was a romantic idea to me: mentally disturbed, a broken spirit. She seemed to be another version of Nijinsky. I was interested in something so fragile that it almost breaks, in which you can see society’s push and pull being worked out. I was interested in the literature part of it, the psychology of the humanity: the individual against society and particularly fascistic nations. In stories like Hoyer’s I could sense the stuff that destroys people, how humans start to break down, how those systems affect how you speak, how you chew. In a way, Dore Hoyer was my first female teacher – specifically not Martha Graham, and not Doris Humphrey. Also, reading Simone de Beauvoir I found connections to Wigman’s body as a woman’s intellect.

KE: Teacher-student relationships in the 1920s to 1950s are key features of the historical framework that binds *butoh* and *neuer Tanz*. Eiko’s own story crosses with many of the most familiar components of this framework: Hijikata and Ohno are connected to German-style modern dance first by means of Ishii Baku and Eguchi. Eguchi and his sometimes-less-mentioned wife Miya first began to take classes from Masao Takata and Seiko Takata, students of Italian ballet instructor Giovanni Vittori Rosi and later the matriarch of American modern dance Ruth St. Denis. They went to Germany after Masao’s death to study under Mary Wigman in the early 1930s. Hijikata later studied with Eguchi’s students Katsuko Masumura and Andō Mitsuko. Ohno too studied with Eguchi both before and after the period in which he was drafted into the army, but first with Ishii. Ishii began studying with Rosi and then with Yamada Kosaku, before touring his own performances in France and Germany in the early 1920s, where he not only saw Mary Wigman perform, but also integrated

eurythmics into his dance poems. Hijikata and Ohno met in the early 1950s, prior to their performance together in *Crow*, a modern dance by Mitsuko in this “German” style. These markers of pedagogy in times and places are also intertwined with formative tours and other accounts of influence. Ohno’s biography, for example, notes that he first sought out this dance training after having seen Harald Kreutzberg, who had been Wigman’s student, tour Japan in 1934, as did Gertrude Bodenwieser (for an expanded overview, see Shiba 2006). In Eiko’s version, I find Hoyer specifically interesting, as a reminder of how multi-generational these entanglements were as well.

MIYAGAWA MARIKO (MM): Looking at articles before and after World War II concerning modern dance in Japan, Eguchi and Ishii both published books and magazines. In Eguchi’s magazine, *Gendai-buyo* (Modern dance), we can find the influence of German modern dance. In the first volume of this magazine in 1953, the title used the German “Moderne Tanz” and also the English “Modern-Dance,” and there are also photos of Wigman, Laban, and Kreutzberg inside. We can also find the traces of German modern dance in Eguchi’s writings. In an article explaining how to create modern dance, Eguchi used, for example, the term “icosahedron” that is common in Rudolph Laban’s method. After World War II, Eguchi began the initiative for Japanese modern dance, and many modern dancers became members of the Japanese Art Dance Association. Ohno was also a member. He was student of Eguchi and Miya, and as a leading disciple, he gave alternative lessons. So in a way, we can say that Ohno incorporated Eguchi’s modern dance methods.

But I wonder what type of gestures Ohno had learned from German-based modern dance. There are two difficulties to interrogating this point: first, by becoming a butoh dancer, Ohno may have changed his style, and second, there were few films of Eguchi or Miya in early 20th century. This renews my feeling that we know very little about this relationship. Even though we say that Hijikata and Ohno leave the Japanese Art Dance Association after Hijikata’s performance *Kinjiki* (Forbidden Colors), what did they really take in as the technique of German modern dance? I usually point out that the one part of Ohno’s *Admiring La Argentina*, which is called “Quejas de bandoneón,” was highly influenced by German Modern dance, but except his costume looking similar to that of Kreutzberg, how can we describe the traces of history in this dance? It needs more research, but maybe it starts with movement: particular gestures, taking steps by crossing bent legs, also the leg movements that draw curves (I saw steps like this in the revival of a short piece by Miya that a contemporary dancer performed in 2014 at the New National Theater Tokyo), the way the arms swing down, and the instability of body center – these all belong to dancers of modern dance too. We can also point out the connections to other heritages of physical gesture in their writings as well. Ohno trained in this German modern dance but also he studied gymnastics and after World War II, he also became familiar with French pantomime. There is an example about the pantomime of J. L. Barrault in a 1960 article by Ohno about ways of using the body, “*Nichijō no koto kara kangaerareru hyōgen no memo*” (Notes for expression conceivable from daily life) (Ohno Kazuo, 1960). Here, Ohno referred to Barrault’s text, especially to explain a particular tread of the foot and position of the chest in a walking posture. Even years later, for example in a 1990 archival video recording of a lesson by Ohno, Ohno still referred to the position of chest (even if at that time he didn’t mention the name of Barrault).

TARA RODMAN (TR): Eiko’s reference to Nijinsky is a crucial point in this too. I know he was an important (imaginative, if not concrete) influence on Itō Michio, and my sense is that he occupied a significant place in the story and the affective pull of the new dance movement

for many Japanese dancers. Selma Landen Odom has written about Nijinsky's connection to German dance, via Jacques Dalcroze (2014). But overall, he is suggestive of perhaps an alternative genealogy – one that is similarly predicated on the weird expressiveness (and expressive weirdness) of the human body as is *Ausdruckstanz* and *butoh* – but representing, for our purposes, a different way of tracing this history.

KE: It would be useful to talk about the various terminology that is coming up here as we sort through some of these traces. My interest in this comes first as a historian of German dance, which has its own contested history. Because of dance's close relationship with German fascism, the history of German dance between the teens and early thirties was rewritten after the Second World War in another project of cultural reworking. For example, the term "Ausdruckstanz" was not regularly used until the postwar period, when it took up what Susanne Franco calls a "falsely monolithic image" of ideological and aesthetic affinity with expressionism (Franco 2007) that ultimately restricted how the scope of German dance's experiments with physicality in the first part of the twentieth century is understood (see Elswit 2014). Here the *butoh* connection is fascinating because it archives an alternate view of this historical moment. The katakana used by *butoh* artists for this German modern dance practice uses a version of the incorrectly-conjugated phrase "neue Tanz" (which should be either "der neue Tanz" or "neuer Tanz"), whereas later words such as *Ausdruckstanz* only show up in English translation of those texts. This suggests a fork in the road at the point when German modern dance traveled to Japan in the early 20th century. Another such example is the legacy of these practices in Israel. But of course neither Japan nor Israel function as static archives either, but are instead places in which practices continued to develop and change. And, as Mariko's history so clearly shows, there is no version of this story in which "German" or "Japanese" modern dance are ever singular as isolated national practices, or even paired solely together either, but rather belong within a fuller picture of transnational circulation.

MM: I would also like to further interrogate how German dance was changed and described in Japan before, during, and after World War II – "neuer Tanz," "Expressionist dance," or "modern dance?" – and how the Japanese public reacted to this dance. To consider this, Eguchi's magazine, *Gendai-buyo* (Modern dance), Ishii's *Buyo Nippon* (The Japan Dance), and also criticism that appeared before World War II are useful. The words used by *butoh* dancers themselves could also be important material.

TR: From my research, it seems that a lot of the terms Mariko suggested are in play. Itō Michio, Ishii Baku, and Yamada Kosaku all use *shinbuyō* (new dance) to describe their observations in the West. *Shinbuyō* covers both activities in Germany, as well as US practitioners – Isadora Duncan, and later others. Itō, Ishii, and Yamada, as well as journalists in the *Yomiuri* and the *Asahi*, also use the katakana, "neue tanz," when specifically referring to new German dance, as practiced by Wigman, primarily. It's worth noting that knowledge of Expressionism as a movement arrives in Japan very early. Almost as soon as Yamada Kosaku returns to Japan from his studies in Germany, he organizes an exhibition in Tokyo for Der Sturm group in 1914. In reviews of Ishii, as well as of Kreutzberg, the adjective *hyōgenteki* (expressionistic) appears frequently; however, I don't really see *hyōgenshugi* (Expressionism). My read on this is that the language of describing this type of dancing as expressionistic has circulated along with these dancers, but critics are not necessarily ascribing these dancers to the movement itself, with a capital E. I am having trouble locating examples of clear (katakana) use of *Ausdruckstanz* before the war, but that doesn't mean they don't exist! As in the United States, critics as well as the three artists above all use "The Art of the Dance" (*buyōgeijutsu*) as a clear term denoting the new dance movement.

Tracing artistic forms and features

TR: One thing I'm particularly interested in is how music plays into the butoh–neuer Tanz relationship – and perhaps suggests a recurrence of formal/aesthetic approach, rather than a direct connection. To me, eurythmics is a lost part of this story because it gets absorbed so broadly. Ishii actually learns Dalcrozian eurythmics from Yamada well before he goes to Europe himself. Much as it does in Europe and the United States, eurythmics also ends up permeating many approaches to education in Japan. After Ishii comes back from Europe, having seen Wigman, he drops music from his own work; it is at this point that he also stops using the “dance poem” title to describe his work. We again see this tension between music and dance in butoh: it's hard to think of Ohno's pieces without music, but Hijikata abandons music, citing, as did Wigman, the desire to explore the body as a singular tool of expression. Faint lines of connection are here, but I'm more inclined to recognize this as suggesting a set of parallel circumstances, reinforced – and perhaps, over-determined – in historical narratives by the many tantalizing points (and almost-points) of pedagogical transmission.

KE: And here also we are dealing with multiple definitions of “the body” – for example Hijikata's mind-body framing of *Noguchi Taïso*. If we explore the parallel nature of these circumstances, in German dance history, eurythmics is cited as holding an important place in the building blocks of modern dance, because of the way its proponents proposed more attention to the internal rhythms of the body, which were then synched to that of the cosmos by means of music. But then there is always a moment, usually associated with Laban, when eurythmics are understood to be inadequate because the body's own rhythms supersede musical rhythms. Do you think these two phases operate similarly in the context of Japanese modern dance and butoh, or is it somewhat different?

TR: It is a bit harder to comb out the strands in Japan than in Germany, where Laban clearly supersedes Dalcroze, with Wigman's move from one institute to the other as the clear signal of this shift. Yamada and Ishii are very much working from a Dalcrozian basis, especially initially. And then Eguchi Takaya, Kuni Masami, and Shigyo Masatoshi study with either Laban or Wigman. But the shift from Dalcroze to Laban-Wigman is as much a question of timing as dance ideology; dancers went abroad when they were financially able to, and then made connections with the teachers who seemed most important when they arrived. However, back in Japan, these threads seem much more mixed, as different dancers go and come back, integrating what they have seen and learned abroad with the flows of modernity in dance (both its practice and its theorization) materializing in Japan.

Another thing I am always drawn to is the (perhaps apocryphal) historical tidbit that the aesthetic of shaved heads in butoh is inspired by Harald Kreutzberg. While Hijikata was only 6 years old when Kreutzberg performed in Japan in 1934, for Ohno, the spectatorial experience was clearly significant, as Kate has noted. From the Emperor Meiji's famous haircut in 1873, the history of hair in modern Japan intertwines with a history of the political seesaw of embrace and rejection of the West. The shaved head, which can also carry connotations of doing penance, thus becomes part of the performance of weirdness central to so much of the butoh aesthetic. So many of Hijikata's dances explored what it meant to be Japanese – or perhaps, put another way, were attempts to slough off the cultural and corporeal residues of a body raised in Japan, but as butoh has circulated, its aesthetic has frequently been taken (and promoted) as an embodiment of something particularly Japanese. The shaved head is part of this assertion of a Japanese essence, even as the supposed connection to Kreutzberg is repeated. The shaved head, to me, signifies something central to how butoh both developed

and has been mythologized, and indeed, marks a pattern that characterizes the story of newer Tanz as well. Namely, that the international circulation of dance again and again plays back into either nation-based histories, or into the construction of nationally-marked forms, an identificatory claim that is located, as essence, in the physical bodies of performers. (Also of note is that Ruth Page is on tour with Kreutzberg, and she is never mentioned. At the time, she is performing pieces that also fit into the category of “modern.” But as she becomes more central to the ballet world, she gets written out of modern dance narratives, both in the United States, and it seems, in Japan).

KE: Tara’s point about the shaved head both asserting a kind of national essence at the same time as it recalls Kreutzberg is fascinating. Do you have a sense for when the connection to Kreutzberg’s shaved head first appears? Or how that gets developed? To the point about why Page disappears from some of the discussions of modern dance, I have always gotten the sense of Ruth Page and Harald Kreutzberg as two divas who happened to tour together, rather than any kind of deep artistic collaboration. The programs seem to be about 45 percent Page doing her thing, 45 percent Kreutzberg doing his thing, and then a requisite 10 percent joint material. Even in the collectible photos of that 10 percent, they still seem like they are in the midst of two simultaneous but different performances, rather than some kind of stylistic melding that pushed them both. But what do the Japanese reviews from that tour say? I’d be interested to know whether Kreutzberg appeared to audiences in Japan at the time to be something fundamentally different from Page, as the oral history that comes later would suggest. If on the other hand, reviews at the time responded to both of them as more akin, then that the next question is when Page dropped out of the recounting of that tour.

MM: For shaved hair, there are also images of soldiers, Buddhist monks, and the embryo.

The aesthetic of Kreutzberg had a huge influence on Japanese dancers in 1930s. In that one article I mention, Page was not regarded as a “modern dancer” but the writer described her career as that of a ballerina. For Kreutzberg’s performance in Tokyo, critics had completely opposite opinions; some applauded him, but others wrote negative reviews. To me, it is interesting that, in the process of reception (both before and after World War II), Japanese critics focused on only Kreutzberg as well. It is not only in the reception by butoh dancers, but also in these writings by modern dancers and critics, that Page did not frequently appear, especially after World War II. So why did Japanese dancers tend to omit the visits of Page, who came to Japan twice?

TR: In terms of the reception of Kreutzberg and Page in Japan, Kate, you’re right; they are differentiated from the beginning. Both are received quite positively, but reviews in the *Yomiuri* and the *Asahi* all devote far more space to Kreutzberg, who is hailed as a pre-eminent dancer of the modern era, and is praised for his natural movement and expressiveness. Interestingly, Ishii Baku reviewed one of their performances in the *Yomiuri* (Ishii 1934). He observes that Page performs a classical repertoire, and then some pieces that resolutely turn to the newly emerging dance art (*kurashikku kara shinkō buyō geijutsu he no omoikitta keikōburi dearu*). Kreutzberg’s dancing, meanwhile, has several decidedly dramatic works, and because of that, Ishii believes he is the more popular performer. He notes that because of this quality, Kreutzberg’s pieces might better be called “silent dramas” or “pantomimes” (*mokugeki*) rather than “dance” (*buyō*). What’s interesting here is that the question of whether dances should be classified as silent dramas, pantomimes, or something else is central to Ishii and Yamada’s own early experiments. So in extending this classification question to Kreutzberg’s dancing as well, Ishii is asserting a fundamental similarity between his own work and that of the German dancer. When the prominent dance critic Ushiyama Mitsuru reviewed the same Kreutzberg–Page recital, he identified it as

“vanguard” (*kyūsenpō*) dance – a label that Ishii, of course, understands as applying to his own work as well. Thus here, terminology becomes a way of locating oneself within an international movement, and of asserting alignment.

This question of what spectators understand themselves to see, and how they articulate it, seems central to the connection between pre-war German modern dance and butoh. It’s another way of getting at the shaved head story. As far as I have found, it is Susan Blakely Klein (1988) who asserts that the shaved head can be traced back to Kreutzberg. I’m not sure if this appears in the Japanese literature. But many critics and scholars see Kreutzberg in particular as a ghost of/in butoh. To reference only two prominent examples, both Sondra Fraleigh (1999 and 2010) and Miryam Sas (2003) see Ohno in Kreutzberg and Kreutzberg in Ohno, identifying the dancers’ gestures, gaze, and presence as ghostly echoes of each other, in an entanglement of corporeal resemblance that supplements, and even, perhaps, supersedes, a narrative of chronological lineage.

Transnational stories during and after World War II

KE: What if we shift attention to the stakes of this story’s telling, rather than accepting it as background? Take how nationalistic and anti-nationalistic sentiment play into the postwar project of Japanese cultural reworking. By this I mean that it could have been important that German dance was “outside” and prewar in establishing a mythology of butoh’s own origins, as distinct from Japanese modernism. For example, Hijikata famously touches on this national imaginary when he writes in 1960 about his desire to study this particular form of dance because it was German and therefore fulfilled his need for something hard or tough (Hijikata 2000[1960], 36).

Here are two extreme examples of this argument: In 1990, Eva van Schaik provocatively proposed that “any supposed ties between prewar Ausdruckstanz and postwar Japanese butoh are purely hypothetical, if they exist at all” (von Schaik 2013[1990], 52–53). She suggests that this show of respect towards European teachers coincided with a rejection of the “‘coca-cola’ mindset,” in other words that the investment in German dance was related to reclaiming a form of Japanese culture less tainted by American influence. Building a more robust argument of this nature about Hijikata specifically, Dind draws a connection between the European influences Hijikata claimed, including French underground literature, and his strong distaste for the sugar associated with American soldiers (Dind 2016). While both the van Schaik and the Dind texts may be more speculative than historically reliable, it is nonetheless worth taking this as a starting point for the larger question of: what else, beyond the transmission of skills and techniques associated with physical practice, might be at stake in narrating such affinities.

MM: French researcher Sylviane Pagès investigated the relationship between butoh and German expressionist dance, although she only focused on the case of France. She argues that the discovery of butoh in France reveals the fact that French dance history has concealed the influence of German expressionist dance after World War II. Even though many French dancers who trained in German expressionist dance were active in France in the postwar period, in order to create the myth of the “explosion of contemporary dance” (*la nouvelle danse française*), French discourse suppressed the German expressionism of the past, and concluded that the French dancers made these new dance movements from a tabula rasa (Pagès 2015, 220–245). Later in the 1980s, when butoh arrived in France, French artists and observers rediscovered

the gestures of the past, the gestures of expressionism. Thus, butoh has a power to bring the hidden history of German modern dance in France to light. I think that Pagès' argument is interesting because she says that contemporary dancers find in the gestures of butoh dancers the gestures of expressionism that are suppressed or completely forgotten. Drawing on the work of Hubert Godard, Pagès argues that what were transmitted from Expressionism to butoh were not dance forms or styles, but gestures and their ground (in the gestalt psychology sense of figure and ground). What is being indicated here by the term "ground" is all the processes for generating gestures, what Godard called "pre-movements" – the way of adjusting one's posture so as to enable action, the way the dancers employ their senses, and the dancer's relationship with gravity and space (Pagès 2015, 16–17).

KE: That's a fascinating argument that also ties to so many recent arguments about how we need to look to the ways in which practices that are passed from body to body may archive relationships with the potential to contradict or extend affinities expressed verbally.

Eiko, on the subject of affinities . . . In a 1998 interview with Deborah Jowitt, you talk about your rebellion, meaning that you could not romanticize your own teachers; however, German dancers, including newer generations such as Dore Hoyer, became "like kind of romantic figures for our soul" (Otake and Koma 1998, 26). I'm interested in what this romance was and how it manifested. One of the more classical forms of romance that produces travel is the exotic, but I get the sense from you that in this case you are using it for something that feels familiar. And I've seen you talk about there being a similar "smell" between Germany and Japan.

EO: By "smell," I mean a feeling that comes from the knowledge of the war and the history of totalitarian regimes. With "romantic" in that Jowitt interview, I meant the sense of attraction without precise knowledge; the sense of "the other." We went to Germany not from a knowledge base, but out of a curiosity. The fact that Hijikata and Ohno talked about it was probably very influential. But we wanted to go somewhere, so we thought we might as well go to Germany. It's not like I sat down and thought about those things, but it makes sense. It was not so much that we wanted to study with or dance like Hoyer or Wigman; we were attracted to their stories. That made us want to go to Germany. We had the romantic idea of going to Europe, also inspired by people from a few generations before us like Ogai Mori, a well-known writer from the Meiji period. He was a high-ranking doctor in the military who went to Germany to study, and famously wrote *Maihime* (Dancing Girl). I wasn't going to go to Italy or France. I was interested in Spain, but wouldn't go because of Franco. My colleagues were coming to America on grants, but I was never interested in American modern dance: too much freedom, too many smiles, too many tears, too American. I saw Graham on stage and saw Duncan on film. We spent time at the American Center in Tokyo, where we found *Dance Magazine*, but unlike the photos of Wigman and Hoyer we found at Ueno, that was just information for us, dance critics' names and contact information.

At Ueno we saw shape and line, a hardness of life, conflict; that dance was not as straightforward. We saw parallels to being Japanese in different ways. Not that I admired Germany, but I could smell it. If you think of important Japanese modern dancers, many of them are from the far north. Baku Ishii is from Akita. Kazuo Ohno went to junior high and high school in Akita (from Hokkaido). He lived with his uncle who went to America and came back. Eguchi is also from Akita, which I associate with coldness, starvation, starvation deaths. Japanese modern dance already has a flavor of twisted darkness – hardness of the life, not about sun. There is a similar darkness to Germany: cold, damp, hardness. Tuberculosis. There was also the issues of accountability about the war. Japan never apologized, but Germany did.

- KE: I know you talk about this at length in the Jowitt interview, but can you say a bit about your experiences there?
- EO: We arrived in Munich via the USSR in 1972. This was the year of the Munich Olympics. The city had a vibrant youth culture. We corresponded with Wigman, but she was too sick to teach at that time. Someone suggested we contact Manja Chmiel in Hannover, and we went there. Wigman wrote back, and said: *good that you are studying with Manja*. In Frankfurt, we had a presenter who had been a good friend of Hoyer. She didn't like our performance (Koma was throwing eggs), but she did show us all her photos of Dore Hoyer. While we were in Germany, we befriended Pina Bausch and Susanne Linke. We met Jochen Schmidt, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* dance critic, who brought us back to perform in Germany frequently until he passed away. I think the rawness and nakedness of our aesthetics, the sense of the existential in our work was what made us successful in Germany. At the same time, I studied in Germany for only 6 or less months, and that was more about finding my and our voice as artists. The telling thing is that I am still in touch with many of my American friends such as Anna Halprin but not with people in Germany any more.
- MM: I am interested in teachers who studied in Germany in 1920–1930s, Eguchi, Miya, Ishii – although Ishii's position is a little bit different – and how they behaved during and after the war period. Miya wrote a book in 1995 called *Rikugunshō haken gokuhi jūgun buyōdan* (War dance group sent by the Japanese army ministry), and also there was an exhibition in Yokohama in February 2017 that showed the photo of Eguchi and Miya dancing for soldiers at the battlefield (Sakaguchi and Nishida 2017). This shows that Eguchi and Miya supported the war by visiting the front to comfort soldiers, as well as Ishii creating performances that enhanced national prestige. I think these actions could be regarded as a cooperation with militarism or totalitarianism in some respect. Of course, it was necessary to continue their artistic activities and almost all Japanese were in the same situation and cooperated with the wartime regime. Away from the front, at home, dance was also part of a method to train the “healthy (or robust) body,” and Ishii wrote a book about how to teach the dance to children. This became part of textbook for teaching children *Yuugi*. *Yuugi* was a kind of dance which contains the elements of gymnastics and music, and was performed by students of elementary school. In the pre-war period and during World War II, this *Yuugi* was connected to the ideology of Japanese government manifest in slogans like “fukoku-kyōhei,” enriching the nation and building up the military. They needed to strengthen Japanese people, and dance was also involved in this plan (see Tsuboi 2002).

One difference from German dance's case is that these kinds of actions weren't officially interrogated after World War II, as Eiko says. Japanese modern dancers didn't discuss their responsibility, the way the connection between German modern dance and Nazi ideology was discussed. Even if war criminals were prosecuted, a problem still remains in Japan, which was that it was difficult for most of the people in Japan who had cooperated with the war effort, and most of the people who went off to the battlefield – even if they were conscripts – to interrogate their own war responsibility. After the war, Japanese modern dancers went back to the same methods, including German based modern dance, and restarted their creations (the cover of a magazine edited by Eguchi in 1953 clearly shows this point, with the title written in Japanese and German). It is also interesting in comparison to what you bring up about rewriting the history of German dance, Kate. I am curious whether there was any reconsideration in Japan about this dance after the war: How could the Japanese keep this method really influenced by German dance? Did views on it change? What was maintained of those German influences and what was not in the post-war period of the Japanese dance scene? And if butoh maintained some elements of German dance, how could it be regarded as a rebellion?

TR: I agree with Mariko that a major point of difference is the issue of war collaboration and responsibility. As she says, nearly everyone in Japan was involved in the war in some way or another. In Japan, mobilization for empire – a goal, which had been ongoing since the end of the 19th century and which the vast majority of the population embraced – segued quickly and smoothly into mobilization for war. And so the general populace, including artists, scholars, journalists, and so on, by and large found a way to either actively contribute to the war effort, or to continue to pursue their own professional goals, by way of assisting the war effort.

MM: I want to add in the example of Ohno here. He studied Modern dance with Eguchi and Miya after studying one year under Ishii, but he was forced to pause his career due to military service. At that time, Ohno was not a professional dancer, so he had to serve in the Japanese army, and during this long period from 1938 to 1946, he could not take any lessons. Hijikata, by contrast, was too young to go to the military service and so he stayed in Akita prefecture, where he writes that he saw the Hitlerjugend who visited in 1938. It also seems interesting that Ohno choreographed the opening ceremony for the National Sports Festival (athletic meet) in Kanagawa prefecture in 1955 and its title was *Bi to chikara* (Beauty and Strength). I can't help but recall the 1925 film *Weg zu Kraft und Schönheit* (Paths to Strength and Beauty) by Wilhelm Prager, which was translated as *Bi to chikara e no michi* in Japanese. Now, I know nothing about Prager's film, but if the aesthetic of Prager's film celebrated what would later become associated with Nazi ideals of good proportion, orderly marching, force, and so on, it is a curious connection that Ohno's mass gymnastics (mass game) had the same title. Does it show us that an aesthetic of the pre-war period continued after 1945 in Japan? I know the film is not as linked to the Nazis as something like Leni Riefenstahl, but Prager's position seems unclear. Do you know something about this point?

KE: Something like Prager's film is very much linked to the German physical culture movement and the obsession with health and pushing the body that then makes an appearance in Nazi ideology (see Kant 2011) – I think of this as a kind of moving bodies to move minds – but the same ideas were also important drivers for the development of modern dance too. They all fall into the same idea soup and cannot be so easily disentangled. But the examples you bring up have me wondering about the state of other German cultural practices in Japan after the fall of the Axis powers. I presume dance is not the only artistic or cultural form to travel that would have been identified as “German” in Japan in the first half of the twentieth century.

So we have talked about the *butoh*-*neuer Tanz* connection in terms of teacher-student histories, of aesthetic affinities, and also some of these national and transnational contexts in and around the World War II. But, looking beyond dance, what interdisciplinary comparisons are we missing that might be helpful to placing this question within a broader post-war context?

TR: This is speculative, but printmaking and architecture are the first areas I would investigate in attempting this type of interdisciplinary comparison. Printmaking, of course, has a very long history in Japan and was immensely influential in the West. The wood cut print also has a renaissance in German expressionism, which was undoubtedly informed by Japanese prints, but explicitly echoed earlier German traditions. In postwar Japan (and continuing today) there has been a resurgence of interest in the woodblock print, a resurgence that most obviously plumbs Japan's own past, but perhaps also offers a model similar to dance for considering a historiography of affinity between Japan and Germany. Taking a different tack, architecture might offer a parallel way to think about the question of form and fascism, and what artists/architects/intellectuals do with the legacy of World War Two artistic production and with the notion of nationalist aesthetic essentialism.

- MM: Another place to look would also be to follow-up on the more general influence of German physical culture. It's not just in this short time period, but the gymnastics taught in schools, for example, had a connection to German or European physical culture in 19th to 20th century.
- TR: So, if Kate's initial prompt pointed us to the stakes behind the familiar narratives of lineage and chronology, what has emerged for me from this discussion, particularly resonating with Eiko's recollections, is that we might envision the connection between early twentieth-century German dance and butoh as, in part, a lateral link. Although we can (and must!), of course, place these two movements historically, the sense of affective affiliation that seems to drive the link between the two, seems as much about a sense of familial, corporeal, national history resemblance, as it is about concrete links of transmission. If Eiko recalls a particular affective pull to Germany, and the earlier generation of German dancers, then that move is reiterated in critical accounts, such that the ways of *seeing* pre-war German dance and butoh overlap, and perhaps even begin to co-constitute each other.

Works cited

- Dind, Julie Valentine. 2016. "The Sought For Butoh Body: Tatsumi Hijikata's Cultural Rejection and Creation." *Transcommunication* 3, no. 1: 49–68.
- Elswit, Kate. 2014. *Watching Weimar Dance*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fraleigh, Sondra. 1999. *Dancing into Darkness: Butoh, Zen, and Japan*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- . 2010. *Butoh: Metamorphic Dance and Global Alchemy*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Fraleigh, Sondra and Tamah Nakamura. 2006. *Hijikata Tatsumi and Ohno Kazuo*. New York: Routledge.
- Franco, Susanne. 2007. "Ausdruckstanz: Traditions, Translations, Transmission." In *Dance Discourses: Keywords in Dance Research*. Edited by Susanne Franco and Marina Nordera, 80–98. London: Routledge.
- Hijikata Tatsumi. 2000 (1960). "Inner Material/Material." Translated by Nanako Kurihara and reprinted in *TDR: The Drama Review* 44, no. 1: 36–42.
- Ishii Baku. 1934. "Page and Kreutzberg's Dancing." *Yomiuri Shinbun*, April 30, 1934.
- Kant, Marion. 2011. "The Moving Body and the Will to Culture." *European Review* 19, no. 4: 579–594.
- Klein, Susan Blakely. 1988. *Ankoku Butō: The Premodern and Postmodern Influences on the Dance of Utter Darkness*. Ithaca: Cornell East Asia Series.
- Odom, Selma Landen. 2014. "The Dalcroze Method, Marie Rambert, and Le Sacre du Printemps." *Modernist Cultures* 9, no. 1: 7–26.
- Ohno Kazuo. 1960. "Nichijō no koto kara kangaerareru hyōgen no memo." In *Pantomime Jan Nubo Recital* program, 2–3.
- Otake, Eiko and Takashi Koma. 1998. "Interview with Eiko and Koma." New York Public Library for the Performing Arts Dance Division Oral History Archive interview with Deborah Jowitt. MGZMT 3–2124.
- Pagès, Sylvianne. 2015. *Le butō en France: Malentendus et Fascination*. Pantin: Centre national de la danse.
- Sakaguchi Katsuhiko and Nishida Rumika. 2017. "Rescuing Archival Materials from Oblivion: Crisis of Primary Source Materials" *Dance Archive Network* 2 (March 17, 2017). www.kazuooohnodancestudio.com/common/pdf/DANnews_fixB2.pdf
- Sas, Miryam. 2003. "Hands, Lines, Acts: Butoh and Surrealism." *Qui Parle* 13, no. 2: 19–51.
- Shiba, Mariko. 2006. "Modern Dance in Japan: The Influence of the Western Culture and What Japan Created on its Own." *Journal of Cultural Studies* 6, no. 1: 117–125.
- Tsuboi Hideto. 2002. "Senjika wo odorushintai: Shōkayūgi kara 'Kokumin buyō' made." *Gendaishisō* 30, no. 1 (July): 222–241.
- von Schaik, Eva. 2013 (1990). "The Mistrust of Life: Relations in Dance: Connections between Butoh, Ausdruckstanz and Dance Theatre in Contemporary Experimental Dance." Reprinted in *The Pina Bausch Sourcebook: The Making of Tanztheater*. Edited by Ray Climenhaga, 49–54. New York: Routledge.