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# WATCHING WEIMAR DANCE

KATE ELSWIT

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## **INTRODUCTION**

A cartoon published in Berlin in 1929 depicts the phenomenon of kickline groups in the Weimar Republic through six captioned panels, each from the vantage point of a different imagined spectator (fig. I.1). While this series of perspectives illustrate the variety of frames that can be adopted in viewing a single dance, it also suggests simultaneously the difficulty in reconstituting the troupe's performance, since no drawing can actually represent "The Girls ... seen as they are," to quote the first caption. Even though that top panel is the most familiar image of such troupes—a line of seven Girls with one leg raised, their arms linked around one another's shoulders—it is least satisfying in capturing how the dances remained, which is to say, not arrested in a singular form but already in the moment of performance transformed by the creative twists of apprehension, and subsequently by the intermedial translations of recording. In this cartoon they proliferate and layer: the second—"seen by the ballet-master"—shows only their unison legs and heeled shoes; the third—"seen by the young man"—depicts an asexual image of naked, pudgy, curly-haired cupids holding bows with arrows notched; the fourth—"seen by a lady"—is only their hats and dresses, the bodies having disappeared altogether; the fifth—"seen by the critic"—shows a motley assortment of vastly different bodies and legs in which one stands on her hands and another looks suspiciously butch; and the sixth—"seen by the impresario"—depicts bags of money with uniform arms and legs.<sup>1</sup>

Here we see how what I call "archives of watching" function, revealing some of the multiple meanings the dance accumulated depending on who was looking and how.<sup>2</sup> Even though the cartoon represents the perspective of its artist, Bernardo Leporini, the satire suggests it was meant to resonate with values shared by a larger set of spectators. Looking back, it is not from the objectively labeled image rendered "as they are" by the first frame, but through the five subsequent transpositions that we gain nuanced information. The second through

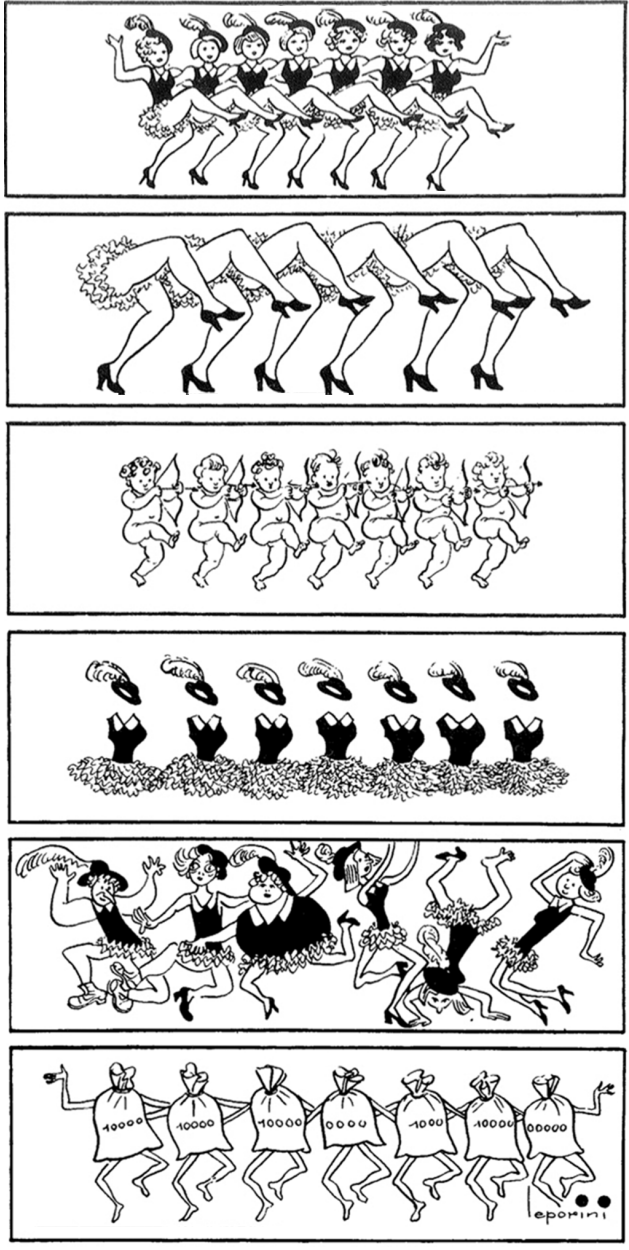


Figure I.1 “The Girls,” 1929 illustration by Bernardo Leporini.

sixth panels suggest the dancers' disciplined movement, their questionable sexuality, their relationships to newly mass-produced fashion, their afterlives in the spotlight, and their central place as a lucrative fad of Weimar culture. While Leporini's five imagined spectators might appear distracted in comparison to the baseline of perfect encounters he depicts in the top panel, they in fact participate in a theatrical meaning-making process that was quite common to the time. They shift between traditional stage perspectives on dance—including line, shape, and rhythm—and the offstage experience one might have when seeing these bodies on the street: the dancers as people, their physiques and how they carry themselves, the commerce that surrounds them, or their attire. At the same time as each is incomplete in flattening the kickline's performance to a single strand of signification, each also archives what audiences brought to the theatre, ultimately revealing how the performance came to have meaning for those present through active negotiation at the intersection of multiple fields of possibility.

Simply put, dances operate differently across times and bodies. Reviews, cartoons, and other artifacts of reception related to the period from the First World War through the rise of the Third Reich in Germany exhibit the range of what spectators were willing to let dancers be and do. The speculative work of audience members who sat alone together in the dark, making sense of the temporary events in front of them, reveals so much about a moment that was itself radically experimental not only in its arts but also in its politics and culture. Such wandering spectatorship was not entirely free; it came out of some of the same cultural and historical situations as the dance itself and was constrained by some of the same mores and beliefs. And yet, while such accounts track the rich interconnections that are so easily overlooked in hindsight, they do not exclude the possibility that subjectivities could be altered through the process of encounter. By taking multiple perspectives together, we start to see a composite yet still dispersed picture, not unlike this cartoon, of how these performances existed in a changing world. Rather than proposing such performances to be fixed, understanding this world through its polyvocal reception history also offers a different way into its dance.

It is no accident that this cartoon's movement between stage and street comes from the Weimar Republic. It was a time and place that was particularly fertile for the spectatorship of all bodies, when extra-theatrical experiences had trained audiences to "read" certain meanings into physicality, at the same time as theatrical dance was drawing attention to the medium of bodies as dance's raw material. A 1933 magazine article "Let Lips Speak! Your Mouth Gives You Away, Even if You Remain Silent," for example, promised the use of "lipology" as one of the many means through which to decode the nature of the whole person through one part of the body (fig. I.2).<sup>3</sup> Yet, although bodies were



**Figure I.2** “Let Lips Speak! Your Mouth Gives You Away, Even if You Remain Silent.” *Uhu*, April 1933.

called upon—whole or in parts—to stand as indicative of people, the legacy of the First World War was that they could also be acted upon and changed.<sup>4</sup> The type of insight shown in these print images was not restricted to esoteric scholars or art snobs. As part of the preoccupation with physicality that was a defining characteristic of modernity, information about training and watching bodies was purchase-able in affordable booklets and reiterated on the pages of popular magazines. And it changed how people made and understood dance, because such capacities did not disappear when entering a studio or theatre. In this time and place, the specially cultivated bodies of theatrical dance were viewed as human bodies whose physicality shaped their meaning in ways that were intentional and inadvertent, products of production and reception, albeit sometimes differently. Although many Weimar dance spectators whose commentaries remain were at most amateurs in the genre, they brought to their task a different kind of expertise: the capacity to make their own sense from the bodies they saw on stage in a manner that situated concert halls and cabaret stages in dialogical relation to everything that surrounded them.

*Watching Weimar Dance* historicizes and theorizes the spectatorship of dances in and from Germany between 1916 and 1932—at home, on tour, and later returning from exile after World War II—in order to elaborate a culturally situated model of watching, one that allows dance to intervene in Weimar studies through, rather than despite, the instabilities of performance. Among many artistic and cultural changes during the first third of the twentieth century in



Germany were some of the formative innovations in modern dance that experimented with the medium's capacity to use bodies for expressive purposes. In this book I show how the era's dance was understood in terms of meanings produced by bodies on the street as well as those on stage. The core of *Watching Weimar Dance* involves closely reading audience responses to dances at that time, focusing on accounts of events that could never have actually happened on a stage. Reports that performers died or became half-machine archived not only the physicality of past performance but also the ways audiences used the temporary world of the stage to negotiate pressing social issues, from female visibility within commodity culture to the functioning of human-machine hybrids in an era of increasing technologization. The reception of these performances in their time also revises and complicates understandings of *Ausdruckstanz* (expressionistic dance) as the representative dance of this moment in Germany. Through these chapters I tell a story that places staged physicality within the world around it, and uses the surrounding world to help reshape the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion by which the diverse dance forms around the Weimar Republic tend to be understood. At the same time, a recurrent theme is that the temporary worlds of performance not only are symptomatic of a historical moment but also allowed those present to test possibilities immanent in it.

Recognizing the flexible relationship between on- and offstage bodies is key to revisiting dances associated with early twentieth-century Germany, bringing concert dance together with the experimental physicality of revue, cabaret, and theatre performances. I began to look closely at reviews and other contemporary artifacts of spectatorship because I did not understand why so many publicly visible dancers were cited by later historians as exceptions to a central handful of figures. Archives of watching offered me a way to incorporate many choreographers and dancers trapped outside the taxonomy of *Ausdruckstanz*, the term that has come to structure our understanding of early twentieth-century German dance, even though it was not actually in regular usage until after the Second World War, as I show in chapter 5. Instead, the commentaries I found helped me to re-imagine Weimar dance on terms more directly related to pervasive yet diverse choreographic investigations into the potential of the body, which fed into and grew out of understandings of bodies circulating in the wider culture.

For a long time, studies of Weimar-era culture avoided including dance because its periodization matched neither that of many other arts nor the three phases that tend to divide its political landscape.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, dance scholarship has often isolated such practices by emphasizing the metaphysical, expression-oriented goals of the era's work over its practical realization, among other things because of how elements of that practice continued past

1933.<sup>6</sup> By thinking reciprocally of the specifically cultivated bodies of theatrical dance as already ordinary, day-to-day bodies, and thus exploring how dances were seen in terms of relevant concerns for a broader population and vice versa, this project contributes toward situating the period's concert dance within off-stage concerns regarding bodies, at the same time as it uses that situation to rethink the era's dance.<sup>7</sup> The overlapping and often contradictory framings of stage and street archived in these accounts of watching reaffirm the importance of physicality to Weimar dance, while placing dance clearly within the radically experimental social, cultural, and political laboratory that was the Weimar Republic, rather than isolated from it. By revealing how dance was called upon to engage with questions of its time concerning perception, modern identities, and social participation, they also suggest more durational historical questions about that dance's legacies, including its relationships to German fascism and later twentieth-century dance theatre.

The next five chapters draw their themes of reception from key tropes of the period in which the performances arose and to which they spoke: bodies as mortal, bodies as machines, bodies as commodities, bodies as political, and bodies as enduring history. However, rather than demonstrating their manifestations in dance, this book treats such themes as limit cases. Each troubles the notion that the dance performances could have occurred as they were reported to occur. Beyond the boundaries of physical embodiment, each theme suggests opportunities to deal with audiences' engagements as affective, creative, and translative, as well as situated in a particular time and place. This project of bridging the gap between the historical remains of dance events and the physicality of what could (and could not) have occurred on stage demands a methodology resistant to unproductive bifurcations between history, theory, and practice which imply that the act of recovery might somehow exclude the work of theorization, or that imagining how dances were is not a project heavily reliant on a knowledge of staged possibilities and impossibilities. At stake, then, is the interdependence between these elements. The historical work of remapping the boundaries of Weimar dance and its legacies comes from and gives back to the methodological work of shifting beyond an indicative relationship—where dance explains culture, which explains dance—to speak instead about cultural framing in a manner that acknowledges dance's presence and effect as heterogeneous and idiosyncratic aesthetic manifestations.<sup>8</sup> Working with the instabilities of performance as a time-based art that proliferates in so many fragmentary ways offers the opportunity to do just that. The final chapters highlight the specificity of these engagements through American responses to German dance on tour in the early thirties (chapter 4), and the return of exiled Weimar-era dance to West Germany after the Second World War (chapter 5). In this sense, it is not so strange to begin with a

cartoon that depicts British revue entertainers, because German commentators engaged with performances of the Tiller Girls and other such kickline troupes in a critical way that was not paralleled in their home newspapers. From the perspective of spectatorship, the core issue is not where their dance originated but how it was seen, what people did with it when they saw it, and how the remains of that interpretive activity function as a rich affective archive for both dance and early twentieth-century German culture.

By drawing out common elements between specific instances of performance, these themes combine diverse dance practices, which were performed in disparate venues. As I show in the second chapter, this reflects the meaning-making practices of contemporaneous audiences who made connections between the various things they experienced or imagined. However, despite its range, *Watching Weimar Dance* is not meant to exhaustively catalogue the scope of dance around the time of the Weimar Republic, just as it is not an ethnographic account of the spectators themselves. Rather, by focusing on the reception of several publicly visible figures, sometimes in more than one way, this book attends to the work that audiences did while sitting in theatres, offstage yet quite active, and how this was represented in public and private domains. I consider responses to two concert dance figures: Mary Wigman, who was seen as the artistic epitome of the era's "absolute" dance, and Kurt Jooss, who sought to move beyond the expressive excess of modern dance conventions toward an early dance theatre. At the same time, I look at figures who tend to be cited as exceptions to the dominant trends of Weimar dance, including the risqué cabaret performances of Anita Berber and the grotesque ones of Valeska Gert, the precision revue dancing of the Tiller Girl troupes, and the experimental work of Oskar Schlemmer, who directed the Bauhaus theatre. The reciprocity between stage and street that is archived in individuals' accounts of watching these performances highlights exchanges between heterogeneous manifestations of the period's dance and heterogeneous aspects of its culture. I also follow such shifts between those varied dancing bodies and everyday bodies, by comparing dance commentaries to visions of such bodies in other media, from texts and images in the popular press and advertising, to the dramatic scripts of Bertolt Brecht and of the Swiss poet Albert Talfhoff, the literature of Viennese author Arthur Schnitzler, the poetry of Billie Wilder and of Paul Zech, the cultural criticism of Frankfurt School theorists Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer, and the postwar revue film of Georg Jacoby.

Let's return to that cartoon by Leporini. So often when dance has been called to stand as evidence for cultural trends, its concerns as dance have been overshadowed—a problem I seek to address here.<sup>9</sup> Throughout this book, my premise is that, just as no account captured the ideal spectatorship experience

depicted in the first panel, it is insufficient to quote a page from the choreographer's notebook, to do a thick description of a photograph, or even to paraphrase unquestioningly a critic's description, and ask such singular texts or even images to stand alone for the performance event.<sup>10</sup> Rather, a more pragmatic approach to the nature of live performance might suggest that the "as they are" of the first panel would actually be better used to describe the layering of the five subsequent panels, each of which imagines a different audience member who chose to attend to some elements and not others and, in so doing, also brought different knowledge and preoccupations to the experience of watching. It is not that one is more correct than the other but, rather, that when layered, their discrepancies offer the opportunity to recuperate whatever it was about that physicality of their performance and its place in the world that may have caused such accounts to emerge. Working with multiple frames thus relieves pressure on archives of watching to produce certain predetermined meanings.<sup>11</sup>

Artifacts of dance spectatorship can therefore be seen not in terms of a singular mapping of movement onto culture or vice-versa but, rather, as evidence for a range of possible responses that were made available through the specifics of the performance and those who attended it.<sup>12</sup> By situating the physical practice of dance in relation to the dynamics of spectatorial exchange within Weimar culture, in this book dance becomes a means to consider how historical bodies both materialized through, but also eluded, material factualness; how bodies and apprehensions of those bodies were not only produced by but also were producers of culture. Watching is a relational practice, full of productive uncertainties between where dancing bodies end and the bodies perceiving them begin. Viewed as such, archives of watching are likewise destabilizing. My treatment thus offers a way for performance history to take up Brian Massumi's proposal for cultural studies methods to move beyond fixed positions that capture the body in an explanatory cultural freeze-frame.<sup>13</sup>

## THE NEGOTIATIONS OF WATCHING

In a 1935 letter, Kurt Tucholsky observed that "A country is not only what it *does*—it is also what it tolerates, what it puts up with."<sup>14</sup> Tucholsky's indictment of Jews, for not recognizing this and thus missing the passive horizontal support garnered by fascism after the Weimar Republic, suggests the imperative of thinking about culture in terms of the active selections its constituents make concerning what they will or will not be involved with. How these Weimar-era performances were understood and what they did for those who encountered them was not something stable, but was the result of negotiations that

drew upon the many forms of training with which audiences entered various performance spaces—training that was often shared by the performance makers. Performance is always about, as Baz Kershaw puts it, “the transaction of meaning, a continuous negotiation between stage and audience to establish the significance of the signs and conventions through which they interact.” Although such transactions are based in a certain set of shared terms, Kershaw suggests that it is always ultimately the audience members’ choice whether or not to allow the performance’s world to have bearing on their real one, and in what ways.<sup>15</sup> However, as accounts of watching Weimar dance show, such agency was complicated because the inverse was also true; it was not only a question of how Weimar audiences allowed the fantasy world of temporary performance events to have bearing on their own but also how they brought their own world’s fantasies to bear on those of the performances. Over and over, writings and other engagements with Weimar dance show spectators using those events in order to test not just what was but also what might be possible.

That the negotiation that occurred in the theatre was both in the world and yet suspended from it is particularly important, because the uncertain period in Germany’s history has come to be understood as a laboratory for all kinds of experiments in modernity. Characterizing the radical subjunctive mode in which so many cultural critics functioned in the Weimar Republic’s economy of experience, historian Peter Fritzsche observes that “Weimar echoed with the ‘tap, tap, tap’ of the surveyor on uncertain ground: the effort to take bearings and discover historical potential.”<sup>16</sup> Such experiences were produced, among other things, through encounters with the seemingly exotic or foreign.<sup>17</sup> However, theatres also served as sites for generative, imaginative encounters. In a moment obsessed by the potential immanent to it, I see dance’s temporary events at times being used as rehearsals for modern citizenship, providing opportunities for spectators to test possibilities in a suspended space without necessarily committing. “Theatre and performance,” Jill Dolan writes, “offer a place to scrutinize public meanings, but also to embody, and even if through fantasy, enact the affective possibilities of ‘doings’ that gesture toward a much better world.”<sup>18</sup> In this optimistic light, we can see the utopian potential of so many ideas circulating at the time; more pessimistically, we can also see a failure to commit to the real world or the diffusion of tensions that Peter Jelavich identifies in his indictment of the era’s cabaret as “safety valve, where the spectators would ‘let off steam’ through laughter, and then proceed to live as they always had.”<sup>19</sup> In working out what they saw on stage, commentators left traces of not only multiple ways of dealing with their present but also, sometimes, their future.<sup>20</sup>

A study of watching belongs to this historical moment in Germany alongside theatre’s “discovering the spectator,” as Erika Fischer-Lichte summarizes

it.<sup>21</sup> Dance not only went through its own crises in representation, as I explain in chapter 1, but also played a role in changing ideas of other theatre-going experiences, beginning with Richard Wagner's late nineteenth-century vision of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* so theatrical that the spectator "forgets the confines of the auditorium, and lives and breathes now only in the artwork."<sup>22</sup> By the early twentieth century, many productions had shifted focus from the exchange between onstage characters to structuring events that were meant to be created in the interplay between stage and audience. The audience down below was, as dramatist Georg Kaiser put it in 1918, "one who sees for himself," responsible for "his own constructive, transformative power that allows the work on the stage above to flow from all tributaries."<sup>23</sup> However, this self-reflexivity concerning practices of apprehension also belongs within a larger, historically specific conversation about modern modes of perception, in particular the tension between attention and distraction. Jonathan Crary points out that concepts of purified aesthetic perception arose in the late nineteenth century because the process of modernization had brought to the fore "the resplendent possibilities, ambivalent limits, and failures of an attentive individual."<sup>24</sup> By the Weimar period, there was deep interest in the political efficacy of distraction as a tactic that could be tested through new media forms, and thus used to train citizens for the future. However, even as Frankfurt School theorists like Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin are known for turning to film and radio as prototypes for such alternative modes of reception, they also theorized more general tactics for watching that privileged the work of the spectator in a given historical moment.<sup>25</sup> Given this context, it makes sense to base even an argument about live performance on a more distracted model of viewing.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time, earlier understandings of watching can be put together with contemporary concerns about the realities of participation. So much has been written in dance, theatre, and performance studies about spectatorship in the past few decades.<sup>27</sup> Moving beyond early phenomenology, the idiosyncrasies of feeling have dismantled the ideal spectator in contemporary performance, simultaneously resisting the distance of deconstructionist approaches while raising critical concerns about how community is constituted.<sup>28</sup> Questions about the orientation of historical practitioners and artifacts toward a spectator have also been important to recent studies.<sup>29</sup> Because they hinge on experience, such theories of spectatorship often return to failure or misapprehension in a manner that recalls and elaborates historical discussions of what distraction could produce, although connections between the two are rarely, if ever, drawn. By putting them together, it is possible to work into that past moment, thinking, as Mark Franko puts it, "both . . . *with*, but not *within*, the models of the historical period under scrutiny and also to develop those models in the direction of relevant terms for contemporary analysis."<sup>30</sup>

The thinking-with models of spectatorship that I develop in the following chapters come first from archives of watching themselves—from newspaper clippings and scrapbooks to more formal essays and books of the period. They follow through on propositions made not only by cultural critics but also by reviewers and other audience members. Such archives of watching are archives of affect. In reading Weimar-era dance reviews with a contemporary consciousness, we find extraordinary evidence for how audiences were involved in their own close readings, actively making sense of their time spent in the theatre by connecting the dances they saw with other spectatorial experiences, as well as with the offstage worlds in which they participated. For example, whereas the biases of contemporary scholarship may tend to separate past genres of performance as “high” and “low,” I found Weimar commentators debating such questions as whether the kickline groups in revues were in fact a more perfect form of modern concert dance. Mieke Bal writes about the need to work with cultural objects on their own terms, treating them “as things always-already engaged, as interlocutors within the larger culture from which they have emerged.”<sup>31</sup> In other words, any theorization of those artifacts that emerged after and around dances needs to recognize the cultural work they produce and which produces them. Such theorization needs to understand, to borrow from Kurt Weill’s 1928 formulation, how “the simple, naive listener without presuppositions or traditions . . . brings along a healthy sense for fun and seriousness, good and bad, old and new, which has been honed by work, sport, and engineering.”<sup>32</sup> I often use the generic term “commentators” to underscore the expertise to which Weill refers.

Unpacking such traces depends upon the understanding that—despite the modernist dream of immediate exchange—performance never delivers up an unmediated body. Archives of watching are archives of dispersion, and of how staged events were transformed through the work audiences invested in watching. The fundamental questions to which I return are: How can we unpack such remediated accounts of already mediated experience, using them to speculate on the kinds of filters through which they were processed? How can we work with such archival objects in order to understand the embodied experiences of thinking-in-watching that produced them? And what might such traces also tell us about the irrecoverable dance events that were their occasion?<sup>33</sup> Encounters with staged bodies are mediated among other things by on- and offstage techniques of the body, by memories and other things of nonsensuous perception, by all of the complex negotiations that structure what Jacques Rancière calls “the distribution of the sensible.”<sup>34</sup> Traces of these already-mediated experiences remain through the ekphrastic transformations by which they became texts, pictures, and other artifacts.<sup>35</sup> But it is not that one—the experience or the document—is more mediated or more intersubjective than another.<sup>36</sup> Both

are transformative; both proliferate, turning a single performance event into multiple possible responses through a process that is creative, affective, and translative, but always within a constellation of possibilities. Chapter 3, for example, begins with a situation in which it is unclear whether a novella influenced a dancer, or the dancer influenced its writer, or the novella influenced others who wrote about things the dancer never did.

My approach throughout this book has been to not write about a performance without first locating several accounts of it, a level of public chatter that structures my choice of case studies.<sup>37</sup> These accounts tend to be written reviews, supplemented by essays, photographs, cartoons, interviews, film clips, letters, fiction, and promotional materials. From this substantial collection of primary sources the singularity of individual encounters emerges, even as they contribute to building a heterogeneous model of spectatorship that concerns the apprehension and assimilation of dances into the larger community through and for which they were produced.<sup>38</sup> I have uncovered no records of truly “lay” audiences (if such a thing could exist)—only various shades of expert spectatorship ranging from Frank Thiess, the novelist who knew nothing about dance but who wrote an intriguing study of its aesthetics, and the amateur physical culture enthusiast Rudolph Gebauer, whose dozens of scrapbooks archive a particular view of the period’s bodies; to better known artists from other media who were interested in particular dancers, such as an essay by film director Sergei Eisenstein.<sup>39</sup> And yet, all of these commentators drew on their own widespread varieties of expertise concerning what a body is and how it fits into the world.<sup>40</sup> Because dancers of this period traveled a considerable touring circuit, I was also able to compare Berlin’s cosmopolitan perspectives to those of smaller regions, at a moment when great disparities were perceived between the two.<sup>41</sup>

Central to engaging with the transformations that these materials archive is the understanding that watching’s various misrepresentations and fixations are grounded in the theatrical apparatus under which representation is supposed to occur. Weimar commentators at times seem to occupy the critical scholar’s position that Priya Srinivasan calls the “unruly spectator”; they refuse to separate the “bodily encumbrances” that constituted the performing bodies from their performance and, in shifting to see from different perspectives, also observe themselves.<sup>42</sup> Often in Weimar accounts, the moments at which authors seem to become preoccupied with something quite different than what the artists intended were the moments when they became distracted by the celebrity of the dancers or by their limited capacity to carry out the performance’s set tasks. Those moments grounded in the conditions of the performance tend to be the ones to trigger the slippage of accounts from onstage to off. As Nicholas Ridout argues, such “accessories”—“the apparently marginal or unwanted events of the theatrical encounter, that will turn out, of course, to be somehow



vital to it”—have fallen out of the view of scholarship. And yet it is through the compromised theatrical situation itself that audiences recognize the larger event in which they are implicated: “For each instance of the face-to-face encounter gone wrong, I argue that there is a particular feeling and that each feeling has meaning. What we experience as affect in these moments of undoing is an apprehension of our own position in relation to the economic and political conditions of our theatre-going.”<sup>43</sup> Such dropped connections produce not one account but many, and the proliferation of accounts on behalf of artists and spectators become ways to work through how audiences allowed dance to exist in the world: what appeared to them to be on stage and why, and how their relation to that compromised encounter might stand for other relations.

There is a claim that has been edging in here, but let me make it explicit. It is that watching’s negotiation of meanings between artists and audiences in relation to their existence in a particular time and place encompasses not only the reception of dance performances in a narrow sense but also choreography—the act of structuring movement to be seen. Staging movement is as subject to misfires as apprehending it. That Weimar dance artists interacted with the same conditions as their audiences influenced choreographic practices, not least because dance of this period was valued in being experiential, with dance-making often driven by an improvisational component. And yet, the freedom-within-constraint of such impulse-based rehearsal processes often caused performers to draw upon learned behaviors and habits without fully interrogating their inherent values. Even when artists set out with more top-down creative strategies, transpositions occurred between the offstage conception and the staged realization. Chapters 2 and 4 revolve specifically around ambitious projects that drew upon offstage themes with the intent to create transformative staged events; both Oskar Schlemmer’s *Triadic Ballet* and Albert Talhoff and Mary Wigman’s *Totenmal* anticipated their ideal audiences’ ability to follow the challenging performances away from their respective culturally charged impetuses toward more metaphysical goals. Yet, as I show, the disjunctions between audience accounts and what those performance-makers intended can be traced not only to the presence of those themes elsewhere that distracted spectators but also to choices made (and not) in materializing those projects on stage.

Each chapter is supported by a simple, if dogmatic, premise that much of what was reported could not have ever actually happened with or to the bodies dancing on stage. As I researched this book, I drew attention to myself by making strange shapes in archives, while trying to figure out what was physically possible and what was not; or, working in reverse, wondering what kinds of attitude or gesture could have evoked some of the fantastical descriptions I was reading. In chapter order, performers did not die onstage, they did not become

half-machine, they rarely stripped entirely naked, they could not avoid relating to immediate history, and they did not dance a piece absolutely identically to how it was danced nineteen years earlier. From a pragmatic position, none of these things was actually possible, and yet, when commentator after commentator suggested them, then, at some level, they did happen. It was just that happening happened somewhere between onstage and off. Assertions like these archive some of the diverse connections audiences were drawing while watching Weimar dance. The first chapter eases into this project by asking what had to happen for dances to evoke death while still fulfilling the modernist premise of the dancing body as participating in a form of direct expression. The subsequent three chapters shift increasingly from onstage understandings of bodies into offstage ones, showing how misapprehensions of staged bodies allowed audiences to test key cultural preoccupations. I conclude in the final chapter by using the same methods of closely reading reviews, but connect the offstage concerns archived by their misapprehensions back to a more genre-specific argument in order to elaborate some of the revisions that made later accounts of Weimar dance so untrustworthy.

## WEIMAR BODIES, WEIMAR DANCE

I turn now to contextualizing the chapters that follow, and introduce them amid an overview of the cultural and artistic situation in which they were embedded. My use of “Weimar dance” as a generic term follows suggestions that it is time for dance scholarship to adopt the model set by film studies’ shift from “Expressionist film” to “Weimar cinema” in order to better account for the heterogeneous choreographic and teaching strategies of German dance in the first third of the twentieth century.<sup>44</sup> Just as film scholars aimed to emphasize the diversity of practices in the era, of which the Expressionist genre and style was only a small fraction, and thus to better situate the medium within the fullness of the cultural-historical moment, a similar renaming can loosen the hold of the retrospectively applied term *Ausdruckstanz*. It can destabilize the practices for which it has been asked to stand and denaturalize their history, thus calling into question the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion put into place by some later histories of that period’s dance. Yet, as the choice of dates covered by this study should suggest—including some work done during the First World War, as well as jumping ahead to after World War II—“Weimar” functions as a placeholder rather than container, one capable of standing for a diverse set of practices that influenced and were influenced by the long Weimar Republic in various ways.<sup>45</sup>

Called in its time by various permutations and combinations of the words “new,” “free,” “artistic,” “expressionist,” and “modern,” *Ausdruckstanz* was not

regularly used to describe German dance between the 1910s and early 1930s until after the Second World War, as I elaborate in chapter 5, which situates the postwar return of exiled Weimar choreographer Kurt Jooss's *The Green Table* to West Germany amid the era's requisitioning of earlier dance in service of denazification. In broader definitions, what we know as Ausdruckstanz comprised choreographic and pedagogic strands that presented amateur movement choirs and various levels of professional practices, ranging from chamber dance to more elaborate formal concerts. All of these were ultimately linked by a core experimentation with the medium's capacity to use bodies for expressive purposes. In its narrowest definitions, the choreographer and dancer Mary Wigman has become almost hegemonic: the figure most often discussed as the "pinnacle" or the "epitome" of German expressive dance practices in her time as well as in retrospect.<sup>46</sup> Yet once Wigman and other choreographers had continued their practices under the Third Reich and afterwards, the postwar project of reconstruction required a certain amount of reordering to distinguish past from present. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Ausdruckstanz became the term used in both East and West Germanys to imagine new dance practices by contrast to earlier ones. And in the 1980s, the term was repurposed again in constructing a lineage for the dance theatre that we associate with choreographers like Pina Bausch. I initially turned to spectatorship to find a new vantage point: if the afterlife of Ausdruckstanz was so layered, then what had people at the time seen?

The problem is not the terminology of *Ausdruck* in itself, which had widespread currency at the time. It is that the Ausdruckstanz narratives changed how Weimar dance was understood, since many publicly visible dancers and choreographers had to be excluded at times to support its changing constraints. This becomes evident when historicizing a figure like Jooss, who was first included within early postwar definitions of Ausdruckstanz and then remade as an exception to them.<sup>47</sup> Whereas the majority of this book deals with spectatorship before 1933, chapter 5, "Watching After Weimar: Dance's Intellectual Property and the Protection of Memory," takes up larger questions of retrospective watching—specifically this problem of exclusion in the post-World War II moment during which understandings of Weimar dance were consolidated. I use the copyright suit that Kurt Jooss filed against Georg Jacoby and Marika Röck's musical revue film *Sensation in San Remo*, after the return of his 1932 *The Green Table* (*Der Grüne Tisch*) to West Germany in 1951, in order to show how one of the pieces most directly associated in retrospect with connecting interwar and postwar German dance was not unproblematically so but, rather, figured actively in reconstituting the postwar dance community in the Federal Republic. Whereas reviews in other countries during the intervening nineteen years had tended to focus on difference, reception of *The Green Table's* 1951

performances engaged with the piece on the impossible terms of sameness. In this moment, Jooss's stylistic fusion of modern and classical dance was cited as an unfinished form of late Ausdruckstanz and used to bridge interwar and postwar dance, in the process justifying continuities with fascist aesthetics through, rather than despite, the legacy his work carried. By contrast, remaking Jooss decades later as a progenitor to dance theatre required positioning him as an exception both to Ausdruckstanz and to the postwar ballet boom. This final chapter thus points toward the dangers of recycling such unstable terminology without historicization.

Since Tanztheater brought about a renewed interest in Ausdruckstanz, studies have proliferated on its survival under National Socialism,<sup>48</sup> its transnational connections,<sup>49</sup> and its relationships to experiments in other media.<sup>50</sup> Much scholarly writing has been devoted to fitting excluded dancers into Ausdruckstanz, or alternatively, to accommodating them into other existing placeholders, such as avant-garde performance.<sup>51</sup> And others argue for it as an altogether generic term capable of encompassing all dancerly manifestations established in the first third of the twentieth century as reaction and protest against ballet's canon of codified forms.<sup>52</sup>

The complex problematics of this placeholder are well known among many of the dance scholars who carefully navigate its boundaries. For example, Jens Richard Giersdorf makes the important introductory qualification "referred to as Ausdruckstanz" for his study, which substantially contributes to rethinking Ausdruckstanz's afterlife in East Germany.<sup>53</sup> However, the ramifications of maintaining such a placeholder at all appear particularly striking when others less familiar with them attempt to engage with Weimar dance—for example, an essay that connects Oskar Schlemmer's practice to the period's other theatre experiments by disavowing his resemblance to its dominant dance. In it, theatre scholar Kay Kirchmann makes the claim that "No one will seriously contest that Schlemmer's concept of dance and dancers is indebted to [E. Gordon Craig's] *Über-Marionette* and not to the cosmic, soulful body à la Mary Wigman," concluding misleadingly that Schlemmer should have told Wigman and Jooss that they "are all dancers of the soul; we [Schlemmer's Bauhaus performers] dance with our bodies," as though Wigman's and Jooss's work was not based in physical expressivity, nor Schlemmer's in metaphysics.<sup>54</sup> Such revisions reaffirm the uneven terrain on which they stand, rather than digging deeper to understand the relation between physicality and expressive potential in German dance's early twentieth-century experiments and how it related to the notions of Ausdruck that were being developed in other media. By taking these things for granted, Kirchmann also misses the opportunity to ask why such connections have been occluded.<sup>55</sup>

Susanne Franco not only identifies the need to rethink Ausdruckstanz but also proposes the viability of tracing shared understandings between onstage and off in order to do so, when she calls for “a new definition of Ausdruckstanz that can embrace ideological polyvalence and artistic variety” and ultimately define a new methodology for study “whose fruitfulness relies on decoding certain mechanisms of signification that can restore depth to the initial reasons for the success of Ausdruckstanz or that can visually translate the most ranking cultural issues of its time.”<sup>56</sup> Practices of watching dance and those of constructing movement to be seen come together during this period under a shared investment in what might be called physical dramaturgy, inscribed not only *in* and *through* the bodies that danced onstage but also *onto* them in the process of their apprehension.<sup>57</sup> Even as they recognized that perception differed wildly, both performers and audiences believed in the bodies that constituted Weimar dance as a medium that was legible to a certain extent. It is not that this was the only period in which the physicalities of dancing bodies were perceived as meaningful in a manner that slipped between stage and street; that the performances I examine often seem unsurprising today *is* what is so surprising about them.<sup>58</sup> However, dance’s production and reception were influenced in the time and place under discussion by a situation where changing conceptions of bodies in several extra-theatrical spheres influenced both what was being set on stage and how it was perceived. Following longer trajectories but catalyzed by the First World War, bodies were entrusted with communicative values by artists and philosophers, as well as by more expansive populations; given elevated importance and yet also understood to be manipulable. It is possible to think of Weimar dance’s onstage bodies in terms of offstage ones because the idea of dance being legible as a physical activity linked a new register of choreography to an expanded register of comprehension. To draw out how dramaturgy was negotiated between physicality and imagination in this moment, as the following chapters do, requires a basic understanding of the conditions under which that occurred.<sup>59</sup>

The first factor in understanding why the modern body was used and viewed in a way distinct from previous eras of dance was the modernist concern with representation around the turn of the twentieth century that led artists to interrogate processes of communication. As language, for example, came to be seen as inadequate and even untrustworthy, bodies offered the means to “think with the heart,” as the fictional Lord Chandos put it in Hofmannsthal’s famous 1902 letter.<sup>60</sup> Modern dance is often seen to emerge as a physical alternative or supplement to language, one that was intuitive and irrational, sense oriented and capable of dealing with flux. Many studies focus on how bodily experience informed other genres—for example, its fruitful provocations as literary

metaphor and movement's incorporation into drama.<sup>61</sup> Yet, the same crises of representation that caused movement (and stillness) to be appropriated by other forms also impacted dance's concerns about its own medium. The discovery of the spectator showed that modernity was bound up with the recognition that perspective, vision, and perception were not absolute. One looked not through but at the work, turning its means of production and its form into part of its content. This is summarized by philosopher J. M. Bernstein as "acknowledgment," meaning that every modernist work had to declare itself in some way for the medium as a whole, a declaration that could only be accomplished by foregrounding itself as part of that medium.<sup>62</sup> In the case of dance, there was a reevaluation of the medium's conventions and of assumptions concerning its bodily materials and the ways its signification occurred. Thus, to apply to dance Bernstein's proposition that "A modernist painting can only speak for painting as a whole by exposing itself *as painting, as such*,"<sup>63</sup> a modernist dance was only be able to speak for dance as a whole by exposing itself *as dance, as such*, a testing process that materialized in the work.

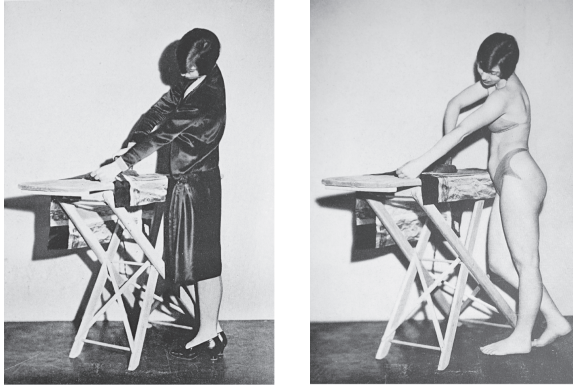
Dance's early twentieth-century experiments with physical expressivity all had to deal in some way with the fact that dance was made from human bodies. As the dance theorist Hans Brandenburg wrote in 1921: "The content and medium, but also the tool and the means of representation in dance, is the human, and indeed not only the spiritual, psychical human; rather and even predominantly, the corporeal, spatially visible human."<sup>64</sup> Dance became increasingly self-aware of its physical medium through figures such as the music educator Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, whose Eurhythmics consisted of movements performed in rhythm so as to fix the experience of the dancer's biological rhythms to those of the cosmos. In a small volume on music-less dance, Fritz Böhme discussed the debt owed to Jaques-Dalcroze for showing people that the body possessed expression (*Ausdruck*), but asserted that the crucial step lay beyond him in "the development of movement- and physical-feeling that is independent of music, and the creation of an art, that is built upon the inner rhythmic rules of the moving body."<sup>65</sup> Böhme saw this next step as that of the former architect, Master Freemason, Rosicrucian, and movement reformer Rudolf Laban, who became known as the father figure of German modern dance for privileging the body's own natural movement rhythms over music's received knowledge of rhythm. What is important here is that this interrogation of dance's physical medium was, as Brandenburg suggested, accompanied by attention to its content; the shift toward the experience of movement was crucial in reconceptualizing how the medium of dance could be communicative.<sup>66</sup>

In its loosest terms, *Ausdruckstanz* was thus a modern form of dance for which the intended content of the dance determined the bodily action and quality chosen to convey it.<sup>67</sup> As I will argue, this relationship between form

and content had implications for understanding not only the creation but also the reception of all dance of the period, whether or not it has been subsumed under the term *Ausdruckstanz*. That “Ausdruck” appears regularly in both noun and verb forms in texts of this period when discussing the physical capacity for expression—from the use of *Ausdrucksbewegung* in the conservative philosopher Ludwig Klages’s theorizations of rhythm to the body theorist Hans W. Fischer’s use of *Ausdrucksschönheit* to describe the body’s expressive beauty<sup>68</sup>—suggests that the term is not inappropriate, but that it is instead worth considering what *ausdrücken* stood for: the act of conveying, which demanded that choreographers investigate their use of the body for expressive purposes.<sup>69</sup>

The first chapter, “Impossible Spectacles: Death, Dance, and Direct Expression,” begins by exploring what people were watching when they watched Weimar dance, through the complications of staging death in danced form during a time when dance was undergoing such dramatic upheavals, with its significance increasingly derived from the physicality of the movement itself. Numerous treatises written around the time of the Weimar Republic made claims for the “direct” expression viable through dance’s legible bodies and thus valorized the medium as a modernist form because they felt that the human body could not lie. Although mortality was often used in the post-World War I moment to establish urgency and solemnity, in seeking to use the nascent modern dance’s expressive capacities of the dancing body to portray increasingly real conditions of humanity, choreographers turned to dances of death, which must always remain a phantasm on stage. Here, I introduce the era’s assertions of unmediated dance experience before turning to the physical dramaturgy of three dances of death: Kurt Jooss’s weighted portrayal of the character of Death in the dance drama *The Green Table*, Valeska Gert’s embodiment of the act of dying in her grotesque *Death (Der Tod)*, 1922), and the proximity of cabarettist Anita Berber’s dance *Cocaine (Kokain)*, 1922) to her own drug addictions. Each of these spectacles both complicate and clarify the period’s understanding of expressivity as located in the bodies of the dancers, whose experience of their own physicality was crucial for those watching. Rather than arguing against the rhetoric of early twentieth-century treatises on dance as direct expression, chapter 1 thinks with and beyond them to situate these stagings of death in relation to more precise shifts between the bodies’ experiences and their repeatedly staged entry into such extreme situations, situating their dance in the perceptual oscillation between what could and could not physically happen on stage.

These onstage experiments in bodily expressivity drew from and fed back into offstage investments through which audiences were developing and testing mechanisms for generating and altering physical meaning-making in their



**Figure I.3** Bess Mensendieck's *It's Up to You* (1931) shows a woman ironing dressed and undressed with incorrect (this page) and correct (facing page) posture.

daily lives.<sup>70</sup> The second factor, then, to consider is that choreographers and audiences shared an understanding that human physicality possessed a unique capacity for both exposing and changing the self. Manifesting in the form of heterogeneous practices that emphasized exercise, nudity, nature, and sunlight as means to change the body, and thus the whole person, the most consistent characteristic across the specifically German physical culture movements that peaked between 1890 and 1936 was their situation of bodies as simultaneously both authentic—sites to reckon with truth—and manipulable—sites of work. Prized for their beauty, honesty, and functionality, bodies were created rather than innate, as indicated in Fischer's introduction to a 1928 book on the subject: "Above all, physical beauty is the harmony, which the body demonstrates in fully developed movement; to create this beauty of movement is known as body culture."<sup>71</sup> What is striking about this formulation is how bodies were not conceived statically but, rather, in motion and thus their potential emerged through active cultivation. From a performance standpoint, then, there is not so strict a distinction between the cool body of *Neue Sachlichkeit* and the ecstatic body that has been identified with expressionistic practices, both of which were lived and yet cultivated and therefore alterable.<sup>72</sup>

Take the popular 1931 fitness manual *It's Up to You* by the Vienna-based American physician Bess Mensendieck, which built its argument from juxtaposed photographs of women clothed and naked, doing housework—like ironing and carrying trays of lemonade—with correct and incorrect posture (fig. I.3). The captions almost invariably contained a scathing remark on bad posture, which was equated with laziness and lack of intelligence, accompanied by a statement on the importance of nudity for learning, such as "We realize more clearly from the unclothed body, the harmful consequence of adopting such a slumping, negligent posture for the mere act of listening to a telephone



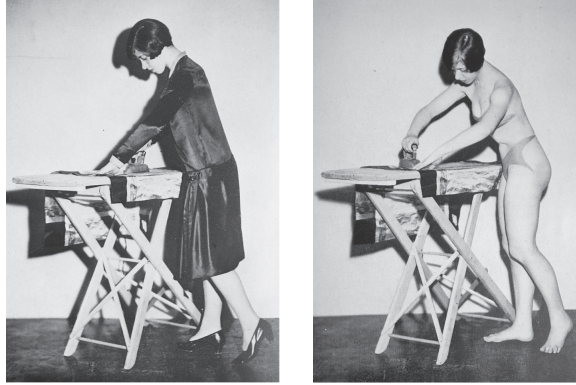


Figure I.3 *continued*

message.<sup>73</sup> They imply, as do so many texts of this period, that all this woman needed in order to change her personality was to change her physicality. If she was “negligent” when she did not use perfect posture, it is noteworthy that a few physical exercises were all this woman needed to amend that constitutive flaw.<sup>74</sup> Amid what Helmut Lethen calls a “classification mania,”<sup>75</sup> such physical typology empowered the general population to “read” aspects of physicality, as visible in Mensendieck’s negligent woman or the article on lip shape, which in fact used the German verb *lesen*. However, these examples also show how body culture offered a means to develop the self, already functioning by the turn of the century as what Michael Cowan calls a kind of “performative therapy.”<sup>76</sup> By the Weimar Republic, the combination of physical awareness and movement analysis available to audiences in a larger public sphere suggested that bodies not only embodied modernity but also actively enacted it by choosing their own physiques and thus their identities, a skill easily transferrable to the staging and spectatorship of dancing bodies.<sup>77</sup>

Chapters 2 and 3 focus on case studies where the social framework entered through public performance threatened to eclipse the theatrical in negotiations of physical dramaturgy once human bodies were understood to be communicative even before they performed codified steps on stage. “Imagining the Dancing Machine” shows how certain novel physical practices were taken by audiences as a means to test the successful functioning of hybrid human-machine types at a moment of increased technologization. This second chapter asks how human dancers, who never overtly incorporated technology as medium or thematic content, came to be seen as half-machine in much of the written commentary that surrounded their performances. Beginning with Bertolt Brecht’s *A Man’s A Man* (*Mann ist Mann*, 1926), I introduce the cultural efficacy of a new human-machine type that could be physically constituted. Whereas Brecht’s play intentionally used images of damaged and reconstituted bodies in order to suggest new social possibilities, the novel uses of bodies by

Bauhaus theatre director Oskar Schlemmer's experimental performances and by the British Tiller Girls' kicklines were meant to remain formal choices, even though they caused audiences to imagine that the dances participated in a similar debate. Schlemmer's *Triadic Ballet* (*Das Triadische Ballett*, 1922), which used various scenographic techniques to explore the inherent mechanics of the human body, was often pejoratively seen by audiences to mechanize those bodies, among other reasons because of the difficulty that the dancers faced with the unwieldy costumes. By contrast, the Girl troupes came to be seen as a more successful model of machinic principles because of the seeming effortlessness by which they performed movements that actually required significant physical labor. The underlying argument of this chapter is that what has been seen by scholars as discursive properties of the dances might themselves be better understood as in fact pressing social issues that the physical properties of these dances led spectators to confront.

Whereas the second chapter shows how spectators brought offstage preoccupations to their temporary fantasies at the theatre, the third chapter shows how such processes of engagement became themselves part of the dramaturgy of these Weimar events. "Three Stories About Private Parts" considers the stakes of a series of performances by female dancers whose appearances were addressed in terms of unveiling, even though they removed little or no clothing. At a moment when female visibility was being renegotiated amid a rising consumer culture, I ask what changes, once we recognize accounts of these dancers' bareness as a way for commentators to work through a series of questions regarding the threshold between personal and public, using theatrical spectacle to explore the spectacle of the female body under consumer capitalism. The historical slipperiness between cabarettist Anita Berber and Arthur Schnitzler's 1924 novella *Fräulein Else* helps propose that the difficulties of some performances as objects of study today are suggestive of them as having been difficult to apprehend in their own time. The three stories that follow concern the many misnomers about the supposedly desexualized Tiller Girls, including the unacknowledged fact that the most infamous performances attributed to them were danced by another troupe; the tautological logic between gossip about Berber's lurid offstage life and her scantily clothed stage dances, which were together called to stand for images of glitter and doom; and Gert's fully-clothed prostitute dance *Canaille* (1919) that was discussed as a true example of "the notorious Berlin nude dances" because of her vulnerability in performance. Together, chapters 2 and 3 develop the book's core project of taking seriously misapprehensions as a resource for understanding the relation between dance's on- and offstage work in a Weimar context.

Although the modernist crises in representation and dance's specific investigations within it converged with the physical culture movements in the 1910s

in Germany, all have longer trajectories. However, this moment of physical dramaturgy was also catalyzed by a more immediate third factor, the First World War. I will only introduce the war briefly, since its impact is elaborated in almost all of the five chapters that follow, but its force should not be underestimated.<sup>78</sup> It is difficult not to see the Weimar Republic retrospectively in terms of the German fascism that arose within its unstable democracy, engendered by the same experimentalism as many of the cultural attempts for which the period is celebrated.<sup>79</sup> But, as Anton Kaes argues in terms of the “shell shock” of Weimar cinema, we need to be thinking in terms that are more post-traumatic than pre-fascistic to understand how the powerful psychic traces of World War I shaped the cultural productions of the era that followed.<sup>80</sup> In this sense, this study’s investment in the Weimar Republic is less about the period identified with uncertain political compromises between Right and Left, so much as the period after the rupture of the Great War—one in which, among other places, new publics were formed and tested at the theatre.<sup>81</sup>

In terms of watching dance specifically, World War I heightened the potential for physical enactment and for staking meaning on the alterable material of the human body, because its legacy included a massive scale of real and visible bodily injury. If, according to the maker of the conservative 1925 fitness film *Paths to Strength and Beauty* (*Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit*), early-twentieth-century Germany was characterized by “a new generation . . . for whom the care of their bodies is synonymous with existence,”<sup>82</sup> then conversely, mass-scale physical trauma to those bodies constituted an ontological crisis. Yet the same emphasis on physical self-determination—the idea that individuals were capable of changing their physicality and, in doing so, their psyche, as Mensendieck demonstrated—which had been developing in Germany over the preceding century, also provided an apparatus for coping with such threats. As I elaborate in chapter 2, World War I established that bodies could be deconstructed as well as reconstructed, facilitating such changes and further enabling what might be seen as progressive desanctification, after which bodies were no longer set apart by their intrinsically whole nature, but instead were entirely alterable by human means. This functioning was seen as vital not only to individual bodies but also to the national body for which they were asked to stand.<sup>83</sup>

The fourth chapter, “The Politics of Watching: Staging Sacrifice Across the Atlantic,” begins with Mary Wigman’s 1930 collaboration with Swiss poet Albert Talhoff to produce *Call of the Dead* (*Totenmal*, 1930), which was highly controversial, among other reasons for its expense and its seemingly ambivalent politics. The multimedia spectacle’s invocation of the World War I dead was meant to be “apolitical,” even though it has retrospectively been read ideologically in light of political changes at the time and the rise of fascism in

Germany. A year and a half later, between 1931 and 1932, Wigman toured her solo dance cycle *Sacrifice* (*Opfer*, 1931) around the United States and Canada, where audiences responded to *Opfer*'s similar themes of martyrdom and human fate in terms of changing art, but disavowed any connections between the touring dancer's performance of sacrifice and day-to-day life during the early years of the Great Depression. This chapter considers watching as a form of political activity by comparing divergent audience responses on both sides of the Atlantic to these two late Weimar-era performances that were constructed from similar components. Both cases reveal the ideological charge of underreading. Approaching dance's politics from the larger structures that govern how they were perceived and the terms under which they were called art, I use a heterogeneous model of spectatorship to develop an argument that contributes to discussions about the fate of dance after the Weimar Republic from a position that neither neglects its continuities nor situates dance as a dress rehearsal for German fascism. This sets up chapter 5's questions regarding the afterlife of Weimar dance.

Put together, these three factors facilitated a particular stage situation for the negotiations of watching: the aesthetic process of acknowledgment that arose through the crisis in representation drew attention to the medium of bodies as dance's artistic material. The physical culture movements contributed to the choreographers' and audiences' facilities for interpreting bodies as communicative. And the more immediate war changed notions of the sanctity of bodies, so that it was not unreasonable for those bodies to be acted upon and changed. Although audience experiences drew upon these preconditions, they were not restrictive but, rather, set the terms for the imaginative transformations already understood by performance-makers. Each of the following chapters reveals how audiences negotiated these dances both within their cultural moment and by reaching beyond it.

There is one last thing about the Leporini cartoon. I began by focusing on the vantage points of the five imagined spectators—the ways in which each of their panels reveals certain values and preoccupations when they cross from stage to street, and how such layered frames can be taken together as more accurate depictions of spectatorial experience. Just as each individual performance might be seen from various perspectives, each of the chapters that follow elaborates a different frame of watching. However, there is also something else about the structure of its satire. Not only does the cartoonist presume that these particular perspectives will be familiar to his audience, but also that the very idea of multiple, layered viewpoints on a single performance will resonate as well. This is the richness of so many inhabitants of the "archives of watching": that, when paid

careful enough attention, they suggest how they themselves should be seen. While this type of analysis need not be limited to the Weimar Republic, the level of self-consciousness concerning not only bodies but also the very nature of spectatorship itself makes it a time and place to begin.

The chapters follow a loosely chronological structure to outline different modes of watching through which audiences engaged with Weimar dance. That said, it is not necessary to take a sequential path through the book. The first chapter functions as a prelude, focusing on the spectatorial labor necessary to reconcile the ideal of Weimar dance with its practical realization. The second and third chapters begin the more dense cultural work, dealing with moments at which accounts of spectatorship increasingly dragged the dancers offstage into cultural preoccupations that were nonetheless revealing about the staged practice that was their occasion. And the fourth and fifth chapters test the parameters of such culturally situated watching, first geographically and then temporally. The retrospective watching of the fifth chapter also offers a framework within which to rethink received parameters of *Ausdruckstanz* that have framed understandings of Weimar-era dance. Across all five chapters, the theatrical scene becomes an occasion for working through the constellations of possibilities that fed each experience of watching, a means to see the Weimar Republic making and remaking itself while sitting in the dark.

## **NOTES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. Reprinted in *Tanz und Karikatur*, ed. Ulrich Steiner (Overath bei Köln: Ulrich Steiner, 1984). Although the source of this particular caricature is unknown, the Italian cartoonist Bernardo Leporini was based in Berlin at the time and published his art in many popular journals. The Tiller Girls were a favorite subject, to judge by a 1931 cartoon in *Revue des Monats* entitled “The Tiller Girls and the Beggar,” which depicted a line of Girls leaving the stage door, each with purses open in her left hand and a coin in her right to drop into his hat.
2. My hesitation in taking this example too far is that the cartoon categorically restricts its vantage points to particular gendered identities and occupations. See Susan Manning’s proposal for “cross-viewing” as a resistance to the prescriptive nature of essentializing spectatorial reactions around social identities. *Modern Dance, Negro Dance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), xvii–xx.
3. “Lasst Lippen sprechen! Dein Mund verrät dich, auch wenn du schweigst,” *Uhu* 9, no. 7 (1933): 40–43.
4. This can also be seen as part of the shift Richard Sennett observes with the nineteenth-century divergence from the Enlightenment view of “natural character” toward the idea of a personality, in which “when one’s appearances change, there is a change in self.” *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 152. See also Harold B. Segel, *Body Ascendant: Modernism and the Physical Imperative* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).
5. For a long time, historians most often divided the Weimar Republic into three parts, with studies of many art forms, including cabaret and painting, tending to be mapped onto this tripartite structure: (i) its unsettled beginnings from the abdication of the Kaiser just after the First World War and the first democratic elections into the hyperinflation that peaked in the early twenties; (ii) the stabilization period of the mid-1920s; and (iii) the unstable combination of radicalism and conservatism that followed the stock market crash. However, more recent scholarship has placed pressure on the idea of the arts following rather than building this social-political history, as well as the discreteness of the period itself.

6. One of the first studies to counter this approach was Susan Manning's, which challenged the Weimar "master narrative" by connecting Mary Wigman's early work to later periods through lines of feminism and nationalism. *Ecstasy and the Demon: The Dances of Mary Wigman* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 4–5.
7. Recent scholarship bringing the two into closer contact includes (from German) Michael Cowan, *Technology's Pulse: Essays on Rhythm in German Modernism* (London: IGRS Books, 2011); and (from dance) Yvonne Hardt, *Politische Körper: Ausdruckstanz, Choreographien des Protests und die Arbeiterkulturbewegung in der Weimarer Republik* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2004).
8. In this, I am following models for more eccentric alignments of dance and politics suggested, among others, by Andrew Hewitt, *Social Choreography: Ideology as Performance in Dance and Everyday Movement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); and Rebekah Kowal, *How To Do Things with Dance: Performing Change in Postwar America* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2010).
9. See the critique in Amy Koritz, "Re/Moving Boundaries: From Dance History to Cultural Studies," in *Moving Words: Rewriting Dance*, ed. Gay Morris (London: Routledge, 1996).
10. This is particularly common when dances are called into the service of literary or art historical projects on Weimar culture, in which they often assume an essentialized status; the materiality of the dancers' bodies becomes the means to substantiate claims made in the service of larger cultural theorizations, without recognizing the inherent instabilities of dance as a historical subject. For example, Koss's otherwise fascinating essay is ultimately limited by a reliance on the compositional elements of still photography, rather than a consideration of the qualities of the bodies in motion. See Juliet Koss, "Bauhaus Theater of Human Dolls," *Art Bulletin* 85, no. 4 (2003).
11. In this way, spectatorship offers a way out of some of the oppositions that have been constructed between meaning and presence, as outlined in Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *The Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004). See also Mieke Bal's proposition for a plurality of frames that foreground the active intervention of the scholar, in a way that resists a more totalizing explanatory mode; *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 143.
12. As Knowles writes, published reviews and responses can be approached "not as evidence of what audiences-in-general felt and understood—and therefore what the performance 'really meant'—but as evidence of meanings and responses that specific performances in particular locations made available. Reviewers' and others' responses, then, serve as evidence of what readings were more or less possible or likely as negotiated meanings." Ric Knowles, *Reading the Material Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 21.
13. Because of this relational perspective, watching is a way to track the movements of thought that reveal how bodies extend into not only concrete but also abstract dimensions. Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 3–5, 31.

14. Kurt Tucholsky, "Brief an Arnold Zweig," 1935, reprinted in *Ausgewählte Briefe: 1913–1935*, ed. Mary Gerold-Tucholsky and Fritz J. Raddatz (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 1962), 336.
15. Baz Kershaw, *The Politics of Performance: Radical Theatre as Cultural Intervention* (London: Routledge, 1992), 17, 28. An exemplary dance-oriented study of such negotiation is Ann Daly's inquiry into the dialogical construction of Isadora Duncan's bodily identities between her and her audiences in relation to American culture, in *Done into Dance: Isadora Duncan in America* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1995).
16. Peter Fritzsche, "The Economy of Experience in Weimar Germany," in *Weimar Publics / Weimar Subjects: Rethinking the Political Culture of Germany in the 1920s*, ed. Kathleen Canning, Kerstin Barndt, and Kristin McGuire (Brooklyn: Berghahn Books, 2010), 369. See also his earlier survey of this laboratory or workshop idea in other scholarship in "Did Weimar Fail?," *Journal of Modern History* 68, no. 3 (1996). For an overview of contemporary thought on the contingency of the Weimar Republic, see *Beyond Glitter and Doom: The Contingency of the Weimar Republic*, ed. Jochen Hung, Godela Weiss-Sussex, and Geoff Wilkes (Munich: Iuducium, 2012), in particular Jochen Hung, "Beyond Glitter and Doom: The New Paradigm of Contingency in Weimar Research."
17. On the generative, rather than simply appropriative function of such encounters in literature, see Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei, *Exotic Spaces in German Modernism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
18. Jill Dolan, *Utopia in Performance: Finding Hope at the Theater* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 6. On performance's temporality as that of futurity rather than presence, see also José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009).
19. Peter Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 34. The negative sides of this subjunctive mode are often exemplified by scholarship on Robert Musil's "Möglichkeitsmensch" (the possibilitarian) Ulrich.
20. This was not necessarily specific to dance, although the centrality of bodies made the medium exemplary for such projects. Kaes's study of Weimar cinema is full of similar moments—looking backward, rather than forward—in which audiences who came together around films such as *Nosferatu* "participated in the production of memory after the war: in seeing the film unfold, they were able to recapitulate and reassess their own experiences of the war and its consequences." Anton Kaes, *Shell Shock Cinema: Weimar Culture and the Wounds of War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 129.
21. Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Show and the Gaze of Theatre: A European Perspective* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997), 41–60. On the turn-of-the-century performance of the phenomenal body and its implications for spectatorship, see also Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Theatre, Sacrifice, Ritual: Exploring Forms of Political Theatre* (Oxon: Routledge, 2005), 1–14.
22. Richard Wagner, "The Art Work of the Future," 1895, reprinted in *The Art Work of the Future and Other Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 185. What Wagner called dance but which encompassed all human movement was central to his "invention of theatricality as a value"



- after which, as Puchner points out, performance-makers had to take a definitive stance toward theatre's status as something created for an audience. Martin Puchner, *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-Theatricality, and Drama* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 55.
23. Georg Kaiser, "Dramatischer Dichter und Zuschauer," 1918/1923, reprinted in *Georg Kaiser: Stücke, Erzählungen, Aufsätze, Gedichte*, ed. Walther Huder (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1966), 666–67.
  24. Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 2.
  25. See the Spring 2010 issue of *Grey Room*, in particular the essay by Wilke on Benjamin's medium as "the comprehensive force field that links the human sensorium to the world and that is constituted by doing so by the interplay between natural (physiological, physical) and historical (social, technological, and aesthetic) factors." Tobias Wilke, "Tacti(ca)lity Reclaimed: Benjamin's Medium, the Avant-Garde, and the Politics of the Senses," *Grey Room* 39 (2010): 40.
  26. On the intersections between, for example, film and dance ("modernity's other art of movement") as forms of training, see Michael Cowan and Barbara Hales, "Introduction," *Seminar: A Journal of German Studies* 46, no. 3 (2010).
  27. To establish a timeline for this turn, compare the breadth of spectatorship studies in the last ten years to the conclusion of a 1989 essay, in which Carlson argued that reception research had been primarily developed through interviews, but "Almost no organized work has been done on the other end of this process—what an audience brings to the theatre in the way of expectations, assumptions, and strategies which will creatively interact with the stimuli of the theatre event to produce whatever effect the performance has on an audience and what effect the audience has upon it." Even here, Carlson was still talking about the theatrical "rules of the game," not social ones. Marvin Carlson, "Theatre Audiences and the Reading of Performance," in *Interpreting the Theatrical Past: Essays in the Historiography of Performance*, ed. Thomas Postlewait and Bruce A. McConachie (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989), 97.
  28. See, for example, Jennifer Doyle, "Critical Tears: Melodrama and Museums," in *Getting Emotional*, ed. Nicholas Baume (Boston: ICA, 2005); Nicholas Ridout, *Stage Fright, Animals, and Other Theatrical Problems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Alan Read, *Theatre, Intimacy, & Engagement: The Last Human Venue* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
  29. For example, Carrie Lambert-Beatty, *Being Watched: Yvonne Rainer and the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008); and Robin Bernstein, "Dances With Things: Material Culture and the Performance of Race," *Social Text* 27, no. 4 (2009).
  30. Mark Franko, "Dance and the Political: States of Exception," in *Dance Discourses: Keywords in Dance Research*, ed. Susanne Franco and Marina Nordera (London: Routledge, 2007), 15.
  31. In this way, Bal calls for the qualified return to close reading through the empowerment of the object of cultural analysis as a participant in analysis' constitution of meaning. *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities*, 8–10.

32. Kurt Weill, "Zeitoper," 1928, reprinted in *Kurt Weill: Musik und Theater: Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Stephen Hinton and Jürgen Schebera (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1990), 50.
33. Rather than leaving embodiment as a fuzzy other to archival documents, I am particularly interested in how to access the embodied experiences housed within written texts that seem to be structured around narrative description. Particularly useful is Dinshaw's explanation that queer relics do not stand for the whole or promise the integrity of the body but, rather, "offer the possibility of a relation to (not a mirroring or completing of) something or someone that was, or that was thought, or that was specifically *prevented* from being or even being thought." In other words, dealing with traces from the past affectively offers a way to work outside the explanatory pitfalls of recuperation in a manner more likely to keep the experiences contained in such traces as experience by building relations across time, rather than producing a story to stand for the past in the present. Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- And Postmodern* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 142. Cf. Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 16.
34. On technique as one such mediating factor, see Judith Hamera, *Dancing Communities: Performance, Difference and Connection in the Global City* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 17–59. Rancière's argument on the distribution of the sensible returns to structure my argument for the politics of spectatorship in chapter 4. Although I am loathe to borrow from Rancière's "emancipated spectator" as a model for theatre audiences, when it ultimately uses the theatrical scene of spectatorship in order to theorize political participation, it remains productive in articulating the power of translation in blurring the boundaries between those who look and those who act, thus proposing the need to understand slippages already occurring between onstage and off. Jacques Rancière, "The Emancipated Spectator," *Art Forum*, March 2007, updated in *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2009).
35. For example, Christina Thurner attends to the medium of discourse itself through which ballet was historically articulated, in *Beredete Körper–Bewegte Seelen: Zum Diskurs der Doppelten Bewegung in Tanztexten* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2009).
36. See Amelia Jones on the intersubjectivity of the documentary exchange around body art versus the flesh-to-flesh encounter. "'Presence' in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation," *Art Journal* 56, no. 4 (1997): 12–14.
37. Although I wanted to write about Jan Weidt, for example, almost no Weimarer reviews of his work remain in the collection at Tanzarchiv Leipzig because he needed to reconstitute his image for the German Democratic Republic. This parameter of visibility also prevents me from focusing on several fascinating but lesser-known artists.
38. Because so much of my argument depends on close reading of what are sometimes quite peculiar texts, I have made the decision throughout to remain relatively literal in my translations, so as to offer the material for readers to follow. Although smoother language might at times feel easier for a contemporary reader

- to assimilate, I have also tried to preserve the idiosyncrasies of particular writers' voices.
39. Even in terms of oral histories, the person I found who had seen *The Green Table's* premiere in Paris at age 16, Bengt Häger, had subsequently worked as a dance presenter for decades, developing a close relationship to the Jooss family, and could no longer separate eras of viewing.
  40. Here I am compelled by Ganeva's argument that the choices made in practice function as a form of active critique and commentary. Her study refigures women as active agents of Weimar modernity through, rather than despite, their investment in fashion by tracing the emergence of a "fashion practitioner who is not only being observed but is an insightful observer and commentator herself, who is not only a media representation, but an influential producer of opinions and shaper of experience as well." Mila Ganeva, *Women in Weimar Fashion: Discourses and Displays in German Culture, 1918-1933* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2008), 6.
  41. The economics of this touring circuit are discussed in Hedwig Müller and Patricia Stöckemann, ". . . jeder Mensch ist ein Tänzer": *Ausdruckstanz in Deutschland zwischen 1900 und 1945* (Giessen: Anabas-Verlag, 1993), 33. For an overview of the diverse print media at the time, see *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, ed. and trans. Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimindberg (London: University of California Press, 1994), 641–43.
  42. "The unruly spectator is thus a subject position that demands a call to action. 'She' moves between different positions, discourses, and gazes to revel in, critique, historicize, deconstruct, and participate in the performance. The unruly spectator's movement is not spectacular; rather it is more minimal, sometimes unconscious, at times tactical, but it leaves her with corporeal marks on her body and transforms her." However, whereas Srinivasan places the critical power of the unruly spectator with the contemporary scholar, I am suggesting such unruliness to be visible already at work in archival accounts. Priya Srinivasan, "A 'Material'-ist Reading of the Bharta-Natyam Dancing Body: The Possibility of the 'Unruly Spectator,'" in *Worlding Dance*, ed. Susan Leigh Foster (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 54, 56.
  43. Ridout, *Stage Fright, Animals, and Other Theatrical Problems*, 14, 33–34.
  44. See particularly the excellent overviews of the term's complications in Susanne Franco, "Ausdruckstanz: Traditions, Translations, Transmission," in *Dance Discourses: Keywords in Dance Research*, ed. Susanne Franco and Marina Nordera (London: Routledge, 2007); and Susan Manning and Lucia Ruprecht, "New Dance Studies / New German Cultural Studies," in *New German Dance Studies*, ed. Susan Manning and Lucia Ruprecht (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2012). On the naming and legacy of both "expressionist film" and "Weimar cinema," see Thomas Elsaesser, *Weimar Cinema and After: Germany's Historical Imaginary* (London: Routledge, 2000), 18–60.
  45. Attempts to break down understandings of the Weimar Republic as an artistic epoch include Franck's proposition that "while novels were written, pictures were painted and films were produced *during* the Weimar Republic, there is no literature *of*, no art *of*, nor even a cinema *of* the Weimar Republic, and this invalidates the concept 'Weimar Republic' as a designation of an epoch in literary or

- artistic history.” Gustav Franck, “Beyond the Republic? Post-Expressionist Complexity in the Arts,” in *Beyond Glitter and Doom: The Contingency of the Weimar Republic*, ed. Jochen Hung, Godela Weiss-Sussex, and Geoff Wilkes (Munich: Iuducium, 2012), 48.
46. For example, Werner Suhr, “Tanz als Ausdruckskunst,” *Scherls Magazin*, November 1927, 1174; and Egbert Delpy, “Mary Wigman,” [unknown], 1926.
  47. One compelling project that works to reclaim Ausdruckstanz’s modes of physicality for political dance not traditionally associated with it is Hardt, *Politische Körper*. In English, see Yvonne Hardt, “Ausdruckstanz on the Left and the Work of Jan Weidt,” in *Dance Discourses: Keywords in Dance Research*, ed. Susanne Franco and Marina Nordera (London: Routledge, 2007).
  48. For an overview, see 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). Other influential studies include Lilian Karina and Marion Kant, *Hitler’s Dancers: German Modern Dance and the Third Reich*, trans. Jonathan Steinberg (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003); Hedwig Müller, “Ausdruckstanz und Nationalsozialismus,” in *Ausdruckstanz: eine mitteleuropäische Bewegung der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Gunhild Oberzaucher-Schüller (Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel Verlag, 1992); and Laure Guilbert, *Danser avec le IIIe Reich: les danseurs modernes sous le nazisme* (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 1999).
  49. See particularly Susan Manning, “Ausdruckstanz Across the Atlantic,” in *Dance Discourses: Keywords in Dance Research*, ed. Susanne Franco and Marina Nordera (London: Routledge, 2007); as well as overviews of exile narratives such as Christine Hoffmann, “Deutschsprachige Ausdruckstänzerinnen und ihre Emigration,” in *Jahrbuch Tanzforschung 4* (Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel Verlag, 1993); and Laure Guilbert-Deguine, “Tanz,” in *Handbuch der deutschsprachigen Emigration 1933–1945*, ed. Claus-Dieter Krohn et al. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1998). A full section of *New German Dance Studies* (2012) is devoted to this period’s dancers in the United States, including essays by Tresa Randall, Karen Mozingo, and myself.
  50. In the issue of *Seminar* devoted to dance and film, see particularly Lucia Ruprecht, “Ambivalent Agency: Gestural Performances of Hands in Weimar Dance and Film,” *Seminar: A Journal of German Studies* 46, no. 3 (2010). In the context of German dance scholarship, many of these intermedia studies are indebted to Gabriele Brandstetter, *Tanz-Lektüren: Körperbilder und Raumfiguren der Avantgarde* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1995).
  51. Gert, for example is presented as a central case study for Howe’s study on the basis of her (and Ausdruckstanz’s) presumed interest in expressing her innermost personal feelings onstage, whereas Foellmer uses the similarity of Gert’s work to avant-garde practices to set her apart. Cf. Dianne S. Howe, *Individuality and Expression: The Aesthetics of the New German Dance 1908–1936* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996, 2001); and Susanne Foellmer, *Valeska Gert: Fragmente einer Avantgardistin in Tanz und Schauspiel der 1920er Jahre* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2006).

52. Note from the previous paragraph that this baseline criterion of rejecting ballet is in fact complicated. Hedwig Müller and Patricia Stöckemann, “Zur Bestimmung des Ausdruckstanzes,” in *Jahrbuch Tanzforschung 5: Ausdruckstanz in Deutschland—Eine Inventur* (Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel Verlag, 1994). The formative 1992 collection on Ausdruckstanz that was the product of a conference manages its inclusive scope by collecting case studies without venturing a totalizing definition of the “central European movement in the first half of the twentieth century” that its subtitle suggests. *Ausdruckstanz: eine mitteleuropäische Bewegung der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Gunhild Oberzaucher-Schüller (Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel Verlag, 1992). See also the distinction between “free dance” and “Ausdruckstanz” in Brandstetter, *Tanz-Lektüren*, 33–34.
53. Jens Richard Giersdorf, *The Body of the People: East German Dance since 1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013), 6.
54. Kay Kirchmann, “Bühnenkonzepte der Moderne. Aspekte der Theater- und Tanzreformen zur Zeit Oskar Schlemmers,” in *Oskar Schlemmer Tanz Theater Bühne: Vortragsreihe zur Ausstellung*, ed. Eleonora Louis and Toni Stooss (Vienna: Ritter Verlag, 1997), 83, 94.
55. Art historian Susan Funkenstein’s characterisation of Berber as an “expressionist performance artist” is likewise a fascinating place to raise questions about the different periodization between visual art’s Expressionism and dance’s expressionistic tendencies. See “Anita Berber: Imaging a Weimar Performance Artist,” *Woman’s Art Journal* 26, no. 1 (2005): 26.
56. Franco, “Ausdruckstanz,” 92–93.
57. As a heuristic, the term is meant to draw attention to the physical meaning-making that was a part of the choreography and spectatorship of dance around the Weimar Republic. I am playing off European dance’s investment in the role of the dramaturg in the devising process, as a set of expert eyes apart from the choreographer, who asks questions that help to structure the intellectual arc of a performance. In some senses the Weimar investment in physical dramaturgy might be comparable to the redefinition of choreography proposed by Lepecki as “rethinking the subject in terms of the body,” where the notion of steps or even movement at all is subsidiary to the corporeality of the dancer as that of a sentient human being. André Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 5.
58. Discussions of bodies as the medium and subject of representation have surrounded American performance art as well as European strands of dance theatre since the 1960s and ’70s. However, scholars have also proposed such moments as a “re-emergence,” finding historical precedents to the present’s manipulable physicality in Dada and the historical avant-garde. See, for example, Amelia Jones, “Survey,” in *The Artist’s Body*, ed. Tracey Warr (London: Phaidon Press, 2000), 20.
59. While the sound-based studies of aural history reveal another set of contexts in which spectators would have perceived these works, I have focused on physicality throughout this book, because of what a large and formative issue it was in itself in this time and place, one that was not only visually perceived but also palpably felt. For a broad compilation of canonical works by historians of aurally, see *Hearing History: A Reader*, ed. Mark K. Smith (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2004).

60. "To me, then, it is as though my body consists of nought but ciphers which give me the key to everything; or as if we could enter into a new and hopeful relationship with the whole of existence if only we begin to think with the heart." Hugo von Hofmannsthal, "The Letter of Lord Chandos," 1902, reprinted in *The Whole Difference: Selected Writings of Hugo von Hofmannsthal*, ed. J. D. McClatchy, this essay trans. Tania and James Stern (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 77. Such artistic approaches found their philosophical counterparts in the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche and Henri Bergson, where bodies were capable of encompassing the human experiences that words could not, as well as in the psychoanalysis popularized by Sigmund Freud, which was crucial in connecting bodies to the unconscious.
61. For example, Gabriele Brandstetter, "'Tanzt die Orange': Literatur und Tanz der Moderne," in *Tanz in der Moderne: Von Matisse bis Schlemmer*, ed. Karin Adelsbach and Andrea Firmenich (Cologne: Wienand Verlag, 1996); and Carrie J. Preston, *Modernism's Mythic Prose: Gender, Genre, Solo Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
62. J. M. Bernstein uses this definition to suggest a much longer modernist trajectory in *Against Voluptuous Bodies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 101.
63. Bernstein, *Against Voluptuous Bodies*, 101.
64. Hans Brandenburg, *Der Moderne Tanz* (Munich: Georg Müller, 1921), 7. A comparison might be Great Britain, where Koritz argues that the reconceptualization of the dancer around the turn of the century often depended upon separating the dance's artistry from the physicality of the dance. Amy Koritz, *Gendering Bodies / Performing Art: Dance and Literature in Early Twentieth-Century British Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995).
65. Fritz Böhme, "Vom musiklosen Tanz," *Der tanzende Mensch* 1 (1921), 12. Useful overviews (and critiques) of Jaques-Dalcroze's aims and methods are provided in Brandenburg, *Der Moderne Tanz*, 81–108; and Karl Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910–1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 15–21.
66. This was explained by Fischer in 1922, who wrote that expressionist dance created its own forms of narrative, which were not pantomime because they focused perception on the body rather than costume or "objective" systems of movement. (Paraphrased in Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy*, 287.)
67. Müller, "jeder Mensch ist ein Tänzer," 36. For similar definitions see Ana Sanchez-Colberg, "Altered States and Subliminal Places: Charting the Road Towards a Physical Theatre," *Performance Research* 1, no. 2 (1996); and Kurt Peters, "Einführung," in *Ausdruckstanz: eine mitteleuropäische Bewegung der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Gunhild Oberzaucher-Schüller (Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel Verlag, 1992), 2.
68. Cowan, *Technology's Pulse*, 15–48, 87–126; Hans W. Fischer, *Körperschönheit und Körperkultur: Sport, Gymnastik, Tanz* (Berlin: Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft GmbH, 1928), 12.
69. See, for example, Sanchez-Colberg's reformulation in Ana Sanchez-Colberg, "An(n)a Annotated: A Critical Journey," in *The Same Difference? Ethical and Political Issues in Dance* ed. Leena Rouhiainen, Eeva Anttila, and Soili Hämäläinen (Helsinki: Acta Scenica 17, 2004), 198.

70. Few studies of dance in this period do not mention the German physical culture movements as context; but, at the same time, beyond the work by Toepfer and Baxmann, the impact of these movements on dancers (as well as dance spectators) is rarely considered in any depth.
71. Fischer, *Körperschönheit und Körperkultur*, 13–14.
72. This breaks down further once dance's particular brands of expression are rethought. Cf. Helmut Lethen, *Cool Conduct: The Culture of Distance in Weimar Germany*, trans. Don Renau (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002).
73. Bess Mensendieck, *It's Up to You* (New York: J.J. Little and Ives, 1931), 139.
74. Toepfer notes that, although Mensendieck began to lose followers in Germany at the end of the 1920s, her impact went far toward convincing a generation of German woman that nudity increased their control over their bodies and identities. Karl Toepfer, "One Hundred Years of Nakedness in German Performance," *The Drama Review* 47, no. 4 (2003): 151; and Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy*, 41, 135.
75. Lethen, *Cool Conduct*, 22.
76. Although Michael Cowan focuses on how physical culture served to treat the symptoms of nervousness and thus regain control over bodily excess, his phrasing offers something more to a performance studies perspective where doing is not only supplementary but constitutive. See *Cult of the Will: Nervousness and German Modernity* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 122.
77. It is particularly important to recall that, although this study focuses on stage performance, Ausdruckstanz's inclusion of both concert dance and amateur dance meant that dance was in fact not only being read in this way but was also part of teaching audiences how to watch and to prepare themselves to be seen.
78. Chapter 1 begins with the issues of death that arise with First World War, but war also returns as part of the revised notions of physical function in the stabilized Weimar Republic of chapter 2. And the war is particularly salient to chapter 4, in terms of how its memory was invoked as part of political maneuvering toward the end of the Republic. Even the fifth chapter uses changing concepts of death following the Second World War as part of its argument for a change in spectatorship.
79. By seeing the period as a laboratory it is possible to reframe the era in terms of a more "open-ended nature of mobilization" that did not end in 1933. Fritzsche, "Did Weimar Fail," 647.
80. Kaes, *Shell Shock Cinema*.
81. Here, I am drawing from Canning's proposal for the need to rethink Weimar specifically through more popular publics of the era, in the introduction to *Weimar Publics/Weimar Subjects: Rethinking the Political Culture of Germany in the 1920s*, ed. Kathleen Canning, Kerstin Barndt, and Kristin McGuire (Brooklyn: Berghahn Books, 2010), 4.
82. Felix Hollaender, "Ways to Strength and Beauty," 1924, reprinted in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, ed. Martin Jay, Anton Kaes, and Edward Dimindberg (London: University of California Press, 1994), 677.
83. The drive for a new body as a "vivid corporeal metaphor for the state of the post-war republic" is exemplified in the opening example used by Jensen. However,

Jensen's emphasis on the novelty of this situation to the Weimar era needs to be compared with Kant's demonstration of the continuity of German physical training's ties to nationalism from Friedrich Jahn's Turners of the early nineteenth century through early twentieth century dance. Erik N. Jensen, *Body By Weimar* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 3–4; and Marion Kant, "The Moving Body and the Will to Culture," *European Review* 19, no. 4 (2011).

## CHAPTER 1

1. See Sherwin Simmons, "Grimaces on the Walls: Anti-Bolshevist Posters and the Debate about Kitsch," *Design Issues* 14, no. 2 (1998), 27. Multiple accounts exist of the poster's origin, the most likely of which was an attempt to stop street fighting. As Andrew Webber has pointed out to me, the woman of the poster bears a resemblance to the bronze statue of Berolina, which stood on Alexanderplatz at that time and functioned as an emblem of the city. See his *Berlin in the Twentieth Century: A Cultural Topography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 52–53.
2. Paul Zech, "Berlin, halt ein," 1918, reprinted in *Deutschland, dein Tänzer ist der Tod* (Rudolstadt: Greifenverlag, 1980).
3. Leo Lania, *Der Tanz ins Dunkel: Anita Berber* (Berlin: Adalbert Schultz-Verlag, 1929), 190.
4. As elaborated in the introduction, "physical dramaturgy" should be understood as a kind of meaning negotiated between production and reception, inscribed not only in and through the bodies that danced onstage but also onto them in the process of their apprehension.
5. Werner Suhr, "Der Tanz auf der Bühne," *Velhagen und Klasings Monatshefte* 37 (1922/1923): 652.
6. Kate Elswit, "'Berlin . . . Your Dance Partner is Death,'" *TDR: The Drama Review* 53, no. 1 (2009).
7. Dances of death thus challenge what Marion Kant has identified as the narrative foundation for most studies of twentieth-century modern dance: that modernity is defined by the successive liberation of the body. See "The Evolution of the Modern Movement: Some Recent German Dance Scholarship," *Dance Research* 24, no. 1 (2006): 56.
8. For discussions of this in other contexts see Brian Massumi, *Semblance and Event: Activist Philosophy and the Occurrent Acts* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 39–86.
9. As opposed to later chapters where accounts of reception radically altered what was placed on stage.
10. Michael Geyer, "The Place of the Second World War in German Memory and History," *New German Critique* 61 (1997): 12–13.
11. Fritz Stern, "Death in Weimar," *The Yale Review* 87, no. 4 (1999).
12. Zech, "Berlin, halt ein," 496–97.
13. Inge Baxmann, *Mythos: Gemeinschaft: Körper- und Tanzkulturen in der Moderne* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2000), 183–85.
14. For him, concert dance was too segregated from life to succeed in this respect, although I wonder as a dance scholar to which particular practices he refers.