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It is not easy to say with certainty when and where reenactment as a distinctly new choreographic strategy and dramaturgical modality first made its appearance on the dance concert stage. It may have been Susanne Linke's reconstruction of Dore Hoyer's *Affectos Humanos*, which drew my attention in 1988 for containing a new self-critical attitude toward reconstruction. Although Linke was performing the solo cycle *Affectos Humanos* (1962) of her predecessor Dore Hoyer (1911–1967), Linke's performance stood apart from conventional reconstructions of earlier work through its unusual framing device, which forecast a fundamental shift in the way the dancer positioned herself with respect to the historical material she had reconstructed. The concern was no longer to demonstrate how the dance could be redone by simulating the original dance and the dancer's appearance; the emphasis was rather on what it was like to do it again. Linke dramatized this experience on stage by distancing herself from the illusion of the past dance in between its sections, as she changed in full view of the audience before a costume rack at the back of the stage. This seemingly simple but, in 1988, unprecedented gesture signaled a dynamic shift by virtue of the acknowledgment of distance over the desire for and pretension toward proximity that can mark impersonation and/or failed identification.

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1 The term *reenactment* itself was first used by R. G. Collingwood in 1928. See Dray 1995. See Chapter 10 by Maaike Bleeker in this volume for a discussion of Collingwood in relation to danced reenactment.

2 I first wrote about Linke's performance, which premiered on June 15, 1988, at Forum Niederberg in Velbert (then West Germany), in Franko (1989).

3 Although the theme of this Handbook is not the evolution of reenactment since the 1980s, I wish to accent this fact here, and I return to it in Chapter 24. It is nothing short of ironic that Susanne Linke's own choreography *Wandlung* was taken up for reenactment by Jérôme Bel in *Le dernier spectacle* (*The Last Performance*) to explore what had to be reenacted in 1999 because it could no longer be performed. Linke herself was, like Hoyer, a student of Wigman. See Chapter 23 by Gerald Siegmund in this volume.
Hoyer herself was formed as a dancer by the teaching of Mary Wigman (1886–1973) in Germany, but in the postwar and postmodern era Hoyer herself cut an anachronistic figure. As a belated exponent of German Ausdruckstanz (German expressionist dance), Hoyer’s work did not meet with cultural acceptance in postwar Germany given the sympathies between Nazism and Ausdruckstanz during the Hitler era and the subsequent upsurge of ballet in postwar Germany. As Jens Richard Giersdorf has described, Arila Siegert also reconstructed Affectos Humanos in East Germany in 1988, and there too, albeit for different reasons, a return to dance modernism had not previously been well received (Giersdorf 2013, 85–87). Hence, the return to Hoyer’s work in the 1980s raised complex political issues around German dance that, as Giersdorf has remarked, were not always being addressed. More recently, Martin Nachbar has also taken up Hoyer’s Affectos Humanos in his Urheben/Aufheben, which is discussed at length in this volume by a number of contributors, Nachbar and myself included. The point is not necessarily to locate the origin of danced reenactment in historical time, but to ask whether the choice of Hoyer—an artist performing in the aftermath of modernism and hence one whose very presence was already displaced in historical time during the end of her own lifetime in the late twentieth century—might not inform the entire tendency of reenactment in dance today.

This is because the case of Hoyer, in my view, reveals a double displacement, or a double quality of being out of place: first, her work was out of place in the moment of the late 1980s when it was reenacted in both East and West Germany; second, it was always already out of place at the time of its premiere in 1962. In other words, to grasp Hoyer’s historical out-of-placement, one has to grasp her historical displacement, and it is the general significance of this very fact that could be said to characterize the reenactment effect that reverberates in the present moment. The reenactment of dance is always already enmeshed in overlapping temporalities, thanks to which the notion of historical time as chronicle time becomes destabilized by an uncertain historicity hinging on gesture. One of the hallmarks of danced reenactment is that historicity is always invested in complex temporalities whose modalities are those of spatiality rather than narrative.

One commonality of all the Hoyer reenactments is that all drew on a film of the dance. The importance of media to the accessibility of earlier work, as well as media’s role in the felt necessity to return to the past, is also undeniable in reenactment (see, in this

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4 Hoyer did find a warm welcome in South America (Müller, Peter, and Schuldt 1992, 46–50).
5 It premiered in May 2008 at Kampnagel Theater in Hamburg. See Nachbar (2012) and Chapter 2 in this volume.
6 On Nachbar’s work on Hoyer, see also, in this volume, Maaide Bleekeer, Chapter 10; Susanne Foellmer, Chapter 13; Gerald Siegmund, Chapter 23; and Sabine Huschka, Chapter 30.
7 And, as Chapter 23 by Gerald Siegmund points out, Nachbar in dancing Hoyer is displaced from his own bodily form and identity as well. The transition from one being into another is also discussed in Chapter 4 by Richard Move.
8 Certain features of narrativity in literature help us to understand the complex concept of historicity as explored by the Handbook’s various notions of reenactment. See, in particular, Chapter 22 by Susan Jones in this volume.
volume, Bleeker, Chapter 10; Siegmund, Chapter 23), yet it should be added that the temporal phenomena of reenactment in dance can themselves be uncovered in early modern choreographic poetics (Changanti, Chapter 25). That dance plays with our perception of time in a variety of contexts, thanks to its unique investments in corporeality and space, may be a structural possibility always susceptible to be mined, but it is one that reenactment highlights and brings urgently to our attention in the present moment. The ontology of historical displacement is at the core of a contemporary dance that is no longer mesmerized by presence. In fact, the present itself can be decentralized as a warrant of contemporaneity. Hence, the whole subject of dance and reenactment is taken up in this handbook largely from the perspectives of historicities, temporalities, and spatialities.

The point is frequently made that reenactment is an act in the present, and this point is meant to show that the present, from the perspective of the historian, is historically defective. When it comes to dance, let us emphasize that it is also an act that reclaims space for movement. Because of the prominence of gesture in dance, space also has certain claims on historicity. The carving of space in particular choreographic actions cannot be identified uniquely with the present, no matter when the actions are performed, because formally defined uses of space do not evoke a temporal so much as a rhythmically shaped dimension. Further, the idea of remains or the remainder is based on materiality, and hence cannot do without space and spatiality. Any remainder is a proposition for space and, if it is a performative remainder, for spatial practice. The reader should be attentive throughout the following chapters to the relative weight given to space and time by the contributors in their specific analyses. Temporal displacement of choreographic thought may work with, but also against, the spatial mise en scène of the choreographic act. Reenactment uses space and time in intentional counterpoint. The subject of reenactment is an occasion to elaborate and nuance dance theory with respect to the tried and true—but until now somewhat overly abstract—categories of time and space. It is the potential of this new field of study not only for dance practice as such, but also for critical dance theory, that has been the principal impetus for bringing this volume into existence.

Examples of dance reenactments explored in the chapters to follow are Fabian Barba’s A Mary Wigman Dance Evening; Olga de Soto’s Débords: Reflections on The Green Table; Philippe Decouflé’s Panorama; Christina Ciupke and Anna Till’s undo, redo and repeat, the reconstruction of Merce Cunningham’s Crises; Richard Move’s Martha@; recreations of the dances of Rudolf Laban; Olivia Grandville’s Le Cabaret Discrépant; the Kirov Ballet’s 1999 reconstruction of The Sleeping Beauty; Trajal Harrell’s Antigone Sr./Twenty Looks or Paris Is Burning at The Judson Church (L); Wim Vandekeybus’s Booty Looting.

9 In this sense, reenactment in dance resembles Rosalind E. Krauss’s analysis of the grid in modernist art. See “Grids” (Kraus 1985, 9–22).
10 See the last section of this Introduction.
11 In addition, several chapters focus on the early modern, thus raising the question of whether thinking through reenactment does not affect how we theorize dance prior to contemporary production. See Chapter 14 by VK Preston and Chapter 25 by Seeta Chaganti.
Beyoncé’s *Countdown*; Janez Jansa’s reconstructions; *Of a Faun* (fragments) by the Knust Quartet; Rani Nair’s *Future Memory*; and the reconstruction of Yvonne Rainer’s *Continuous Project/Altered Daily*. The general traits that emerge from the iconic example of Hoyer, however, can be outlined as follows: (a) the sense of a primary displacement in the non-contemporaneity of the past with itself; (b) the evocation of complex historical temporalities and the choreographic situation whereby these temporalities enter into the present of performance (the historicity of performative temporalities), creating a complex sense of historicity interacting with the present; (c) dissatisfaction and/or call for reinterpretation and reconceptualization of past art in light of the present creative agenda, which gives the emergence of these temporalities and historicities the aspect of a contemporary intervention.

In sum, danced reenactment places the dance work in a configuration of asymmetrical historical temporalities; it is hence likely to unsettle our assumed grounding in a linearly progressive past, or to unsettle the notion of modernity and/or contemporaneity as something achieved by virtue of the overcoming of a past in a geographical location understood as occupying the global center. These are all signs that reenactment as a general phenomenon has seriously compromised the notion of periodicity, as well as that of the cultural-geographic center and periphery. Need it be stressed that the authors of this volume do not envisage preservation per se as the ultimate goal of reenactment? The fact that reenactment transcends issues of preservation alone is indicated by the evident extensions of the problematic beyond concert dance into areas such as plagiarism (see Kraut, Chapter 18), the inherent contradiction in attempts to preserve the avant-garde (see Noland 2013), the heuristic and pedagogic value of reenactment (Jakovljević, Chapter 11; Hardt, Chapter 12), choreographic interventions in literary texts that raise questions and ideas about the historicity of danced reenactments and the nature of the production of the narrative voice in literary modernism (Jones, Chapter 22), the problem of reproducing a distributed body in an altered physical environment (Banerji, Chapter 21), the entwinement of reenactment with religious belief (Banerji, Chapter 21; Katrak and Ratnam, Chapter 15), the relation of the canon to cultural geography (Barba, Chapter 20), the dialectic between reenactment and the image (Soussloff, Chapter 29; Staelpart 2011), the role of reenactment in spectatorship and research (Schantze, Chapter 16; Preston, Chapter 14), and, ultimately, the question of the relationship of reenactment to historiography itself (Pakes, Chapter 5; Siegmund, Chapter 23; Franko, Chapter 24; Thurner, Chapter 26) as well as to the politics of dance’s circulation in a globalized world (Burt, Chapter 17; Kraut, Chapter 18; Staelpart, Chapter 19; Barba, Chapter 20; Giersdorf, Chapter 27; Martin, Chapter 28). Rather, it seems to us that beyond the effects of preservation and/or reinterpretation of dances past, reenactment engages more fundamentally with a critical, polemical, and philosophical reflection on temporality and spatiality in relation to dance’s pasts.

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12 Reinhart Kosseleck has identified temporality as the specificity of historical epistemology. Time, for Kosseleck, “leads to the disclosure of history as an epistemological object” (1985, 94).
Danced reenactment leads us into the historical investigation of the relation of dance to pastness at many different levels. The year 1980 was named Heritage Year (L’Année du Patrimoine) in France, which brought about significant funding for an important historical dance company, Ris et danseries. The work of the Albrecht Knust Quartet in France experimented with danced reenactment in the early 1990s (see Launay 2012). There has since been significant financial support in Western Europe (particularly in Germany) for creative work on the dance heritage of the twentieth century, particularly through the Tanzfonds Erbe (Dance Heritage Fund) established by the Kulturstiftung des Bundes (The German Federal Cultural Foundation) after the Tanzplan ended in 2011 (Siegmund, Hushka). Chapter 23 in this volume, by Gerald Siegmund, contains a good deal of information on work and initiatives in Germany during the decade of the 1990s. A significant number of artists discussed in these pages are for this reason either German or have worked in Germany. But danced reenactment is not presented here exclusively as a response to state funding or as an exclusively European phenomenon. The UNESCO initiatives of the 1990s, which included dance as immaterial culture, identified movement and gesture as valued and endangered aspects of world heritage: dance was central to this initiative globally. The Handbook includes chapters on East and South India and South America.

The Handbook of Dance and Reenactment explores how the preoccupation of contemporary choreographers with the dances of predecessors has emerged in the new millennium at the vanguard of contemporary dance. Although this phenomenon has wide-ranging implications for dance in relation to concepts of the past, historicity, and memory, the handbook is not intended to convey a definitive viewpoint on the subject, which at the time of this writing proves to be as diverse as the protagonists—dancers, choreographers, and scholars—individually and collectively engaged with it. The term reenactment is one of many other terms used in the chapters that follow: re-performance, remake, citation, the distributed body, alternative histories, acheiropoietics, restructuring touch, re-actualization, the derivative, cover, and so on. The category of reenactment itself, while it has been explored in performance art, film, and photography (Soussloff, Chapter 29), extends in the case of dance beyond dance history per se to questions of practice as research, archival phenomenology, spectatorship, legacy, and so on.

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13 On the relevance of pastness to the notion of historical performance, see Franko and Richards (2000).
14 This last term is adopted from music and is analogous to versioning.
15 The retrospective of the performance art of Marina Abramovic at the Museum of Modern Art in New York several years ago brought to wide public attention the phenomenon of reenactment in the world of contemporary art. Abramovic's performance works of the 1970s were returned to the museum space as living artifacts, as if they now existed outside of historical time, as objects to be displayed. Her show “The Artist Is Present” raised public consciousness of a broader trend currently taking place in contemporary dance and performance; it also reopened debates about the return of past work (Jones 2011).
heritage, plagiarism, singularity, and political action, as well as to historiography, pedagogy, witness- hood, transmission, cultural geography, and the experience of inter- and hetero-temporalities. Each part of this Handbook attempts to define the major concerns that relate chapters to one another under a given rubric. Yet, despite these rubrics, which impose thematic categories on the wealth of material reflected upon in these chapters, all of the authors represented here engage in a vigorous theorization of the significance of danced reenactment for contemporary culture, a theorization that militates against self-enclosed categories. It is this theorization of a new field of contemporary creative activity and its relationship to scholarship—an unprecedented relationship bringing performance and research together—that is analyzed here.

Scholars of performance art have underlined the relation to reenactment of the document—most particularly of the photographic document—as a major axis of inquiry and theorization. As Boris Groys has noted, “Increasingly, in art space today we are confronted not just with artworks but with art documentation” (Groys 2012, 209). Groys goes on to explain that it is actually the document that is the living art or “life form,” whereas the work of art itself is a documentation of the image. That dance and dance studies have not accorded comparable attention to the photographic document is due to the particularity of dance practice or, one might say, its medium specificity, wherein (unlike performance art) research into corporeality plays a crucial role for which the still image is inadequate, and where before the question of the work can arise, the question of a technique of repetition must be examined. So, for example, Fabián Barba’s reenactment of Mary Wigman’s dance evening for her 1929–1930 tour of the United States took research into corporeality as “a crucial addition to archival and textual sources” (Barba 2011, 84). In addition, a set of modalities already exists in the dance field with a preexisting relationship to reenactment. Here, I refer to activities such as revival, reconstruction and/or reinvention, and adaptation or reworking. For example, a revival implies the return to a work that has ceased being performed but within an institutional context, such as a ballet company, that is able to provide institutional and personal memory; reconstruction implies, to the contrary, a return to work whose performative traditions have been essentially lost; whereas reinvention, reworking, and/or adaptation imply other sorts of strategies for and theories of historical evocation. Because of this already fairly complex layering of possibilities for historical reflection in danced performance, crucial issues of the artist’s identity, the work’s identity, and historical consciousness tend to take precedence over the instrumentality of the visual document per se in dance.

17 “Art documentation . . . marks the attempt to use artistic media within art spaces to refer to life itself, that is, to a pure activity, to pure practice, to an artistic life . . .” (Groys 2012, 210).

18 For further discussion of these categories, see Midgelow (2007).

19 This fact has much to do with the specificity of dance’s histories and ideologies in relation to the field of reenactment. The fact that dance in the Western canon has long been associated with a belief in the uniqueness of the present moment—the now—is what reenactment as contemporary creativity challenges. In a preface to her seminal essay on minimalist dance, Yvonne Rainer wrote: “. . . [I]t is unclear to me whether the present generation is knocking its head against the walls of their predecessors,
In many ways, reenactments tell us the past is not over: the past is unfinished business. By insisting upon the return to actions following precise aesthetic procedures, reenactment troubles our sense of what is past in the past. By bringing back movements that were thought to have expired with their inaugural contexts—movements that are both strange and familiar, forgotten and recalled—danced reenactment unsettles the closure of history, the conviction that new movements do effectively supersede earlier ones. The notion of the work is not only recalled but also destabilized; the belief in authenticity is both confirmed and turned on its head; the return to the past becomes an avant-garde gesture; the notion of tradition is invoked, but also criticized; references to time past are multiplied and only understood as a constellation (Christina Thurner, Chapter 26 in this volume, also calls it a network); the tools of time and space essential to dance composition are intellectually retooled.

Nothing militates more against the claim of dance over its own history than the notion that dance is fundamentally ephemeral. Were we to accept the ephemerality of dance, then the history of dance itself becomes unnamable. Reenactment in dance testifies to the overturning of a long-standing trope of dance history and theory: dance has been much vaunted, but also subtly maligned, as the quintessential art form of the immediate, transient, and vanishing present. Movement and vanishing are both contained in the phrase “the moment.” But many dancers are now actively engaged with reclaiming their past rather than flying from it, and in this process they challenge the irremediable nature of dance’s storied transience. What has reenactment done to ephemerality? The aura that ephemerality has cast on the dance work in modernity is perhaps finally succumbing to its own intellectual and artistic mortality because of reenactment. This death of ephemerality opens a space for recalling—in the sense both of remembering (or wishing to remember) and summoning back. For these reasons, reenactment should be understood as post-ephemeral: it may emphasize the presence of the dancing subject in dialogue with history, but the dancing subject herself is not presented in a “before”; the status of the lost past and that of the vanishing present are equally under erasure: a double disappearance is revoked (Schneider 2011). In their place, the stage is filled with inter-temporal gestures wherein the spatial positions necessary to this operation can be

or just writing on them” (Rainer 1999, 28). At this remove we can affirm that they are not just writing about predecessors: they are also reenacting them. But does such reenactment constitute writing? As Susan Foster noted in 1993 of the brawl between Clio and Terpsichore: “Clio and Terpsichore . . . roll up their sleeves and begin to write (or is it dance?)” (Foster 1995, 19). Whatever the case may be, the supersession of the predecessor in the teleology of modernism has been jettisoned. If George Balanchine reputedly stated, “There is nothing but now,” as proclaimed on the banner hanging on the wall of the State Theater announcing the current 2016 New York City Ballet season in New York, it seems that the now is being crowded out by a series of other theres or other wheres.

I am grateful to Charmian Wells for this formulation.
dramatized and hence rendered visible and understandable. This is the imaginary choreographic template that many reenactments engage us with. Intertemporal relationality of gesture is the spatial grid (Kraus 1985) that militates against progressive change, characterized by modernism; it is thus not by chance that modernists themselves are frequently the subjects of reenactment. This is why danced reenactment is not strictly a heritage activity, even if it has been funded under these auspices. And this is also why our subject does not fit neatly into François Hartog’s framework of presentism.\footnote{See the discussion of Hartog in what follows.}

\section*{Reconstruction/Reenactment}

Reenactment and cognate activities referred to and conceptualized in these pages constitute a challenge to the mode of presentation of dance as traditionally reconstructed in the twentieth century. This refers not to the method of reconstruction per se, but to the mode of theatrical presentation that the reconstructive method lends itself to.\footnote{See Chapter 20 by Fabián Barba on the structural balance between reconstruction and reenactment; see Chapter 6 by Carrie Noland in this volume for an argument in favor of reconstruction and against reenactment.} The distinction and overlap between reconstruction and reenactment reside in the difference between reconstruction as methodology of recovery and reenactment as dramaturgy of presentation. Reconstruction is the activity necessary to restore the movements of a dance in their completeness through the strict decoding of notation (if there is any) and the requisite filling in of knowledge gaps where they occur (reconstruction as methodology); reenactment encompasses the theatrical and dramaturgical devices with which the effect of the dance as a representation of itself in the past is shaped and manifested in performance. Reconstruction, despite its uncertainties of interpretation, remains a core discipline unless it is not entirely rejected as irrelevant (Siegmund, Chapter 23); reenactment has fundamentally reformulated how to stage reconstructive results.\footnote{For a more pointed critique of reconstruction in the case of Renaissance dance, see Franko (1986, 6–7).}

The goal of reconstruction was to create a “dance museum,” a way to view the past accomplishments of dance as if preserved within the medium of live performance. But the notion of movement preservation was in conflict with the phenomenology of dance that affirmed dance’s immediate appearance in the present—its phenomenality—as an unavoidable requirement of its power. Indeed, one could go so far as to say that the very medium of dance was thought of as the present body, also called the lived body. Reconstructions were always afflicted by a double vision: they were live performances reproducing a transpired past in the present. Perceived in this way, they were unable to fully realize the immediacy of dance in its phenomenal presence. Consequently, they engendered a gap between themselves and the very terms in which the original
had embodied its originality. Reconstruction, in other words, unwittingly presented dance as always already historical. Although it developed a methodology for the historical reconstitution of choreography, it faced by that very fact a contradiction inherent in its theatrical mode of reproduction, a contradiction whose focal point was the dancer’s body. In its valiant attempt to save dance from oblivion, reconstruction struck at the very corporeal heart of dance itself. The main critique was that, despite the rigor of the research undergirding it, reconstruction came across as a simulacrum rather than as a historical experience. This may be due to what Simone Willeit has called “the historical positivism” implied in reconstruction considered as a “historiography of practice” (Willeit 2010, 47; my translation). This positivism consists in the assumption that only textual evidence can suffice to fill the gaps in knowledge and that no other form of reflection might be useful. What is rarely taken into consideration is that the passage of time, in itself, has wrought changes in the dancer’s bodily morphology, technique, and aesthetics, as well as in the spectator’s expectations. Unable to account for these, the reconstructed work appeared to exist outside of time—time here understood as the medium within which dance transpires—despite claims for the value of the reconstructed work as timeless, eternal, and hence highly valuable: worthy of being remembered. Reconstructions lacked persuasive presence in the visceral terms of dance itself.

Reenactment represents a significant corrective to reconstruction’s undertheorized theatricality that was also beset with assumptions about authenticity. It is worth recalling to mind here the critique of immediacy in modern art by Georg Lukács, who wrote of the modern literary schools: “[T]hey all remain frozen in their own immediacy; they fail to pierce the surface and to discover the underlying essence, i.e. the real factors that relate their experience to the hidden social forces that produce them” (Lukács 1980, 36–37). While it is not evident that reenactment is a new form of realism enabling us to free ourselves of modernism’s frozen immediacy, it is clear that reenactment actually replaces the frozenness of reconstruction with the immediacy of the present in such a way that a critical dimension is able to arise from the ruins of impersonation and under-theorized reproduction.

Reenactments generally manage to uphold the claims to historicity that cannot be reasonably abandoned in the dance field, while at the same time relinquishing the pretense to the reproduction of the past as a copy. Reenactments do this by treating the past dance as something that exists in the present. Although not entirely divorced from reconstruction as a methodology, the current phenomenon of reenactment in the dance field intrepidly alters what we dare call the ideology of reconstruction as the possibility of witnessing the past again as past. The conceit of the museum has disappeared, inasmuch as a contemporary dancer now reconstructs earlier work as part of his or her contemporary creative activity, rather than as removed from it by historical

24 “. . . [I]dentifiziert sich doch eine Historiographie der Praxis—im landläufigen Sinn als Tanz-Rekonstruktion gefasst—über eine ‘bodily investigation.’”

25 As Gerald Siegmund remarks in Chapter 23, these differences reveal the very conditions of the possibility of reconstruction itself.
Furthermore, the distinctions between history and memory bifurcating the reconstructive field have splintered. The re-enactor of a past dance is no longer necessarily a dance scholar, first of all, and the relation of the re-enactor to personal memory is no longer that of the eyewitness/participant, as the dancer frequently works through the memory of a custodian of the work or through other types of training. Where the reconstructor assumed distance from the past through recourse to documents, the re-enactor assumes closeness to the past through the body itself as archive; where the reconstructor assumed closeness to the past through witness-hood, the re-enactor assumes distance from the past through temporal estrangement. This would particularly be the case with Martin Nachbar’s reenactment of Dore Hoyer. Yet, in Fabián Barba’s relation to Mary Wigman through his expressionist dance training in Ecuador and in Richard Move’s relation to Martha Graham by virtue of a very personal sense of channeling, there are varying scenarios of affinity and kinship also at work.

Perhaps this explains how and why the issues broached here under the aegis of reenactment extend well beyond those normally associated with reconstruction and preservation. Throughout the chapters to follow, connections are made between what is happening on the concert stage and elsewhere in the global “performative” environment: commercial performance, ritual performance, pedagogy, the financial and art markets, spectatorial reception, visual art, the phenomenology of archival research, and the field of history as an academic discipline. Despite this, some very familiar issues are still apparent: What counts as a document? What is an archive with respect to embodied memory? How do memory and memory transference operate in the absence of first-person experience? What is a score? What are the limits of interpretation, and why? What is the relationship of past dance to futurity? Just as reenactment overhauls the reconstructive project by way of asking new questions and devising new responses, so the breadth and depth of questions surrounding reconstruction and authenticity are opened up to wider inquiry regarding repeatability and reproduction.

Dance, as a time-based art, exists within a historical temporality that comprises historically determined conditions of reception, styles and modes of gesturality, tastes with their concomitant cultural contexts, and technologies of display, all of which are productive of uniquely defined aesthetic experiences. With its emphasis on the recovery of movement vocabulary, sequence, and music of the original work, reconstruction could not incorporate the conditions of production and reception within which the work made its claim to time as historically present. Yet, what reconstruction can accomplish is irreplaceable. Many reenactments subsume reconstruction within a
dramaturgical and conceptual frame that removes the implicit claim to authenticity from the reconstructed dance.

In reversing the ideological premises of reconstruction while conserving its methodology, re-enactive dancers have taken the representation of the past into their own hands, and accordingly have transformed it. This appropriation of the historical function can be interpreted in a number of ways: (1) as the “right of return” to earlier work; (2) the use of performance as a historiographical medium with a discursive dimension; and (3) self-staging as a contemporary agent in confrontation with this project, hence a willful theatricalization of the entire situation. 

**Historicity, Temporality, and Work within Work**

The questions of time and space, long the staple terms with which dance has been discussed in formal terms, are now the very terms engaging actively with what François Hartog has called “regimes of historicity.” For Hartog, a regime of historicity or temporality is “ultimately a way of expressing and organizing—that is, ways of articulating the past, the present, and the future—and investing them with sense.” (Hartog 2015, 106). The displacement of reconstruction by reenactment in dance history signals a change in regimes of historicity at the level of how the past of dance can be understood to occur as dance again. Reenactments are related not only to the rediscovery and restaging of particular past works, but also to the relationship of those works to the present in which they are reproduced. What is (re)produced by many reenactments is not only a work per se, but also the knowledge of history necessary to the work’s very reappearance. The presence of knowledge production in performance can be related to the lecture-performance format prevalent in many reenactments. As Maaike Bleeker has remarked,

[L]ecture performances emerge as a genre that gives expression to an understanding of dance as a form of knowledge production—knowledge not (or not only) about dance but also dance as a specific form of knowledge that raises questions about the nature of knowledge and about practices of doing research. (Bleeker 2012, 233)

The problematic of dance as historical research into dance, of dance production as the performance of a research product, and of the set of relationships that ensue between present and past that can also be said to constitute knowledge or conscious reflection—all this differentiates reenactment in dance from reenactment in other media.

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29 André Lepecki’s insistence on the “will to reenact” in the title of his article that introduced the notion of the body-archive is important in this respect. Lepecki (2010) also argues against the idea that reenactment has anything to do with a nostalgia for the past. He also discusses this very nostalgia with respect to the phenomenon of choreography in Lepecki (2004).
One of the particular qualities of a reenactment is that the past of dance is no longer apprehended as irrevocably past, and the present no longer apprehended as uniquely phenomenal. When Hartog speaks of the presentism of our regime of historicity since the 1980s, he defines presentism as “the present’s immediate self-historicization” (2015, 193). A close analysis of reenactment in dance nevertheless reveals spatiotemporal processes at work in dance that are more complex than self-historicization. In reenactment, dance historical material is being treated as the object of knowledge, rather than as a mechanism of self-historicization. Therefore, it is not the present that historicizes itself in danced reenactments, but the past that “presentifies” itself through particular protocols of research and the theatrical manipulation of time and space in that dramaturgical process. Indeed, reenactments engender an awareness that dance occupies a unique time and space between past and present. Just as there is variability within historical time, as Reinhart Koselleck has shown, so there is variability in the experience of historical time or the experience of time within performance as historical. To experience time as historical in performance is not equivalent to reading historical narrative: It is to be engaged with an experience in/of the present, which contains pastness in actu (Koselleck 2002, 127). Areas of inter-temporality are germane to our subject when it comes to dance. On behalf of the authors of this Handbook, I am gesturing here toward their intervention into the theory of history from the perspective of dance theory.30 This is, first of all, because the notion of history as it is performed in danced reenactment is not founded on the necessity for narrative or for a visual artifact because such dance knowledge makes the claim to embodiment. In this sense, the use of the document by dancers is closer to what Paul Ricoeur referred to with the document as trace. “[T]he notion of documentary proof, placed at the forefront of the investigation refers directly to the problem that concerns us, that of knowledge through traces” (Ricoeur 1984, 6). Ricoeur goes on to explain that documents are the trace of the “inside” of events, which when correlated to the “outside” of events leads to action:

The twofold delimitation of the concept of “historical evidence” by means of the notion of the “inside” of the event and that of the “thought” of the historical agent leads directly to that of re-enactment. (1984, 7)

Reenacted dance presents us with a history of dance in its own terms—a dimension of self-reflexivity, rather than the pretense toward reproduction of the “outside” alone, and existing in the mode of present performance as an action with this twofold dimension. With no textual or material artifact upon which to ground its relationship to history, dance requires the body itself as a mediator of knowledge: it is both historical agent and bearer of historical action. Reenactments shift the history of dance into the present as performances that appropriate the project of historiography by acting on that which seemed heretofore to belong only to the register of language (the writing of history).

30 Dialogue with the theory of history is rarely recognized as a characteristic of dance theory.
Reenactments reintroduce lived experience of the event into what would otherwise be a historical representation—a representation of the past as “history,” resulting in the status of representation as history.

This understanding of reenactment in relation to history has been, of course, controversial. When historian Vanessa Agnew makes the distinction between historical reenactment and history proper, she challenges us to understand how this distinction operates in relation to choreography. In her article “What Is Reenactment?” Agnew states, “Reenactment’s central epistemological claim that experience furthers historical understanding is clearly problematic: body-based testimony tells us more about the present than the collective past” (Agnew 2004, 335). It should be considered, however, that when dance itself is the historical “object,” body-based testimony at the level of savoir faire, to use Barba’s term, is crucial to research and complementary to textual and visual sources. Moreover, research into corporeality cannot be dismissed so easily as “body-based testimony” precisely because it is research. In dance, the presence of scores and/or documents that constitute traces, in Ricoeur’s sense, can be reanimated by “techniques of repetition,” one of Derrida’s requirements for the very existence of the archive.31 In this sense, the position of the re-enactor, like that of the historian, is in the present. As Michel Foucault has noted, “Historians take unusual pains to erase the elements in their work which reveal their grounding in a particular time and place . . . . ” (1977, 156).32 But what is significant about this present, as Ricoeur points out with respect to Collingwood, is that reenactment abolishes “the temporal distance between the past and the present by the very act of rethinking what was once thought” (Ricoeur 1984, 10).

And, one could add, by the very act of re-dancing what was once danced, with the proviso that the choreographic and performative logic of a particular dance (in Chapter 10, Maaike Bleeker, following Collingwood, speaks of “the logic of thought embodied in the dance”) has been retrieved in following the trace of documentary evidence and by further understanding that trace in the context of the corporeal logic that makes it redoable. This is precisely where the importance of dance’s medium specificity as practice becomes salient. A dance is itself a specific kind of event. Reenactment, unlike bodily testimony, is the recalling (in the active sense of summoning) of a past action as a particular event in the present. In this sense, one can say that memory remains not in the body, but in the event as it becomes accessible by doing. In dance, to reenact is to relive eventfulness in/as the work. But, by “work” is meant here two things: the work of dance itself, understood as the labor that makes up the dance; and the dance itself as a work of art, the product of that labor. In other words, danced reenactment is the reestablishment of

31 “No archive . . . without techniques of repetition” (Derrida 1995, 11).
32 Susan Leigh Foster explored the relation of the historian to the past of dance as a desire on the historian’s part to “consort with dead bodies” (Foster 1995, 6). “This affiliation, based on a kind of kinesthetic empathy between living and dead, but imagined bodies, enjoys no primal status outside the world of writing” (7). Following this logic, it would seem that reenactment brings dance closer to writing. Foster’s concern in this piece was the historian’s body, but the gap between the historian’s body and the dancer’s body has since narrowed.
the live artwork as the work within the work. As work remains visible within the work, the work of reenactment produces dance as self-reflexively performative knowledge of itself for an audience, and hence, as historically in the present moment, rather than as a reproduction of ephemerality outside of time. The way in which this conceit is conveyed to an audience as “historically in the present moment” (which I consider to be significantly different from in the present moment tout court) constitutes danced reenactment as both theatrical modality and political strategy.

Works Cited


PART I

PHENOMENOLOGY
OF THE ARCHIVE
When I found the VHS videotape of Dore Hoyer tanzt—eine Gedenksendung (Dore Hoyer Dances—A Broadcast in Commemoration) in the library of PARTS (Performing Arts Research & Training Studios) in Brussels in 1999, I didn’t know I would be working with it and thinking about it for some time, as I do in this chapter.¹ But when I started writing this chapter, focusing on questions around the archive in general and the dance archive in particular, I realized that I had to include experiences and insights from a more recent work of mine: Repeater—Dance Piece with Father (2007). Though working on Hoyer’s dances made me aware of how history can be in dialogue with contemporary bodies, it was the process of research toward Repeater that made the imprint of experience on the body actually palpable to me (spürbar). This is not merely an idle phrase, since the word for trace (spur) also includes in its meaning the fact of sensation. In this sense, the trace is an actual fact that we live with long before we become aware of it. In this chapter I want to look at and better understand the interactions between these bodily imprints and the documents in dance archives, as I have experienced them during my reconstruction of Dore Hoyer’s Affectos Humanos, which I undertook from 1999 to 2008.²

¹ Hoyer premiered Affectos Humanos in Berlin in 1962.
² This is the revised version of a text first written in German on invitation of Janine Schulze, then director of the German Dance Archive, Leipzig. The earlier version was published in Are 100 Objects Enough to Represent the Dance. Zur Archivierbarkeit von Tanz (München: epodium 2010).
It is common knowledge that our bodies store consciously learned movement sequences. As children, we learn postural, behavioral, and movement patterns from our adult models: we incorporate strata of experiences and movement knowledge in our bodies, which we can then excavate layer by layer, as would an archaeologist who searches for what occurred in earlier times; traces of events that we can uncover by chance or through research and reading, much like a forensic criminologist in search of evidence of guilt or innocence; or patterns that can be talked about and interpreted during a psychotherapeutic session.

In the context of this chapter, archaeology, forensic work, and psychotherapy share four relevant features. Each of them deals with a place, where something has been put and has been stored. Then the stored things—historical objects, traces, behavioral patterns—surface, either coincidentally or through a careful search. After this, the things found are examined and interpreted. And eventually, the findings are related to the present—in order to understand history and culture better, as in archaeology; to convict the guilty party, as in forensic work; or to come to an understanding of oneself, as in psychotherapy. These similarities may seem obvious and unimportant at first. But they are what give us the clues with which to examine the dance archive as a place where documents of past dances are stored, from the particular point of view of a dance artist, whose intention is to bring the study of documents into movement.

The archive as a place is derived from the Greek 

\[ \text{acheîon} \]

: a house, the villa of an 

\[ \text{árchont} \]

, a high-ranking civil servant of the city-state, custodian of the official documents of the state, and the one authorized to interpret these documents (Derrida 1995, 2). But to consider the archive not only as a place, where documents are stored systematically and researched and interpreted intentionally, but also as a site, where things emerge accidentally, might shed new light on what differentiates the dance archive from other archives. As I understand it, the problem of the dance archive is at the same time its scope: The documents that are collected in it always contain references to events that took place in the form of dances, performances, or workshops, or other events in the life of a choreographer. Thus, before a dance scholar studies and interprets these documents, there has already been a transfer from the medium of dance to a medium that can be archived in the usual sense. And this transfer is not only a technical, but also a conceptual one, which takes something away from the dance to be archived or adds something to it, depending on the tastes and interests of those involved.

At the same time, the dance archive competes with exactly those bodies that have experienced specific dance forms and choreographies and that have, most importantly, stored them as so-called tacit knowledge, almost as securely as an archive stores its documents. I am speaking of dancers, dance teachers, choreographers, and spectators, whose experiences themselves constitute a dance archive in which they are stored. This ambiguity makes the dance archive a “place” where no ultimate interpretation can be achieved. Instead, it asks for a continuous doubling of the approach to the dance archive: The body that enters the archive in order to find documents of dance is itself already a carrier of movement knowledge. The knowledge stored in dance archives has to be constantly aligned and realigned with this bodily knowledge. In this sense, the
dance archive that I am at pains to describe is not “placed” in space as a conventional archive would be: it is multi-sited.

And I am not speaking of documenting so-called oral history or filming moving bodies because I mean more specifically the interactions between archived and remembered movement knowledge. These interactions necessitate a constant and conscious dealing with the ambiguity of the researcher’s body entering, finding, studying, reimagining, and interpreting the documents that speak of past bodies creating, studying, imagining, and interpreting dances. And in doing so, we might be hovering over a double bottom without noticing it, until suddenly a yet unseen document or unfelt sensation flies up like a magician’s dove from a seemingly empty box.

**The Dance Archive as Work/Space**

My reconstruction of Dore Hoyer’s *Affectos Humanos* first consisted of the reconstruction of three dances, *Desire, Hate*, and *Anxiety*, for a piece called *affects* (see note 5). Shortly after the staging of *affects*, I did a lecture-performance entitled *ReConstruct*, in which I talk about the meaning of reconstruction in contemporary dance and then show the three dances. Both works toured extensively throughout Europe and South America. In 2007, I began the work on the remaining two dances, *Vanity* and *Love*, in order to stage them together with the other three dances in a piece entitled *Urheben Aufheben*, which premiered in May 2008 at Kampnagel Theater in Hamburg. At this time, I taught one of the dances for the first time to a dance student in Cologne.

After touring *Urheben Aufheben* throughout Europe, Japan, and Australia, I started working with French-Brazilian choreographer Paula Pi on her reconstruction of all five dances. Paula Pi began working with Hoyer’s dances during her master’s studies at EXERCE (Master’s degree choreographic studies “research and performance”) in Montpellier in France. At first, she asked me to be her mentor for her research project, in which she experimented with repetitions and loops of the original material and with crossdressing as a man (which I found particularly interesting, as Hoyer herself looks androgynous in the costumes she wears in the film). Now Paula Pi is producing her reconstruction in France and Germany, and we still work regularly on her reconstruction.

I am no longer performing the reconstruction, but I am still teaching workshops on reconstruction. In these, I regularly use the film I used for my reconstruction, inviting students to study a few seconds or minutes in depth, rather than teaching them the dances. Filmed in black and white in 1967 by the German broadcasting station Hessischer Rundfunk, the film of Hoyer dancing the solo cycle was first shown in 1968 after Dore Hoyer had committed suicide. First we see dance critic Klaus Geitel, reading an obituary. He is sitting in a chair, reading from a manuscript on his lap. He speaks about the earnestness and sobriety of Hoyer’s art and relates it to her tragic end. As he speaks, Geitel’s image is overlain with photographs of Dore Hoyer, a thoughtful woman,
whose gaze persistently looks beyond the camera’s lens into the distance, while she shows great energy and concentration in her dancing poses. The result is the image of an underestimated, poor, almost tragic artist, whom we can observe dancing once again in the wake of her obituary.

Then we see her dancing the five short solos, each dealing with one human affect or emotion: Vanity, Desire, Hate, Anxiety, and Love. She is accompanied by percussion and piano by Dimitry Wiatowitsch, but she seems to be all alone in space, as he remains outside the picture frame. Dressed in wide costumes that flow around her thin body, with white makeup on her face and wearing a black skullcap, Dore Hoyer looks androgynous, a black-gray-white figure that unfolds her choreographies in a gray-white space, which is lit in such a way that no edges, corners, or walls are visible. A human lost in an endless space, following the traces of her affects and emotions all alone, drawing and redrawing themes and variations, she is so deeply absorbed in her task that she no longer hears Klaus Geitel’s obituary. It is as if she withdraws from the world, a feeling for which we find visual evidence in shots of the last two dances: A camera tilt upward and away from the shivering figure, who lifts her arms in despair at the end of Anxiety, as Dore Hoyer disappears downward, as if sinking into the ground. And in the last sequence of Love, the light fades out slowly until the kneeling dancer with folded hands is swallowed in darkness. At the end we read the credits, white cursive script on black ground: “Dore Hoyer danced a cycle.”

This solemn cinematic portrait, which seeks to create a direct link between dance and death, together with Dore Hoyer’s meticulous movement research that surfaces in the film and has helped her dances to survive, forms the document that has made the choreography of the five dances of the Afectos humanos archivable. But the film is not only a document of the choreography and its interpretation by the dancer. It is also a document that shows how Klaus Geitel and the film director Rudolf Küfner saw Dore Hoyer and her work at the time of making the film. There are, for example, the choice of words in the obituary, the camera work, the space design, and the lighting. Surely, these are not considered news for the science of the archive. But considering the ambiguity of the dance archive, we have to point out that it is exactly these processes of translation that can make dealing with archived material productive. But I am getting ahead of myself.

Let us go back to finding the VHS tape in 1999 in Brussels. Present were Thomas Plischke, Alice Chauchat, Hendrik Laevens, Erna Omarsdóttir, and I. The title on the back of the VHS cassette caught my attention because a colleague at the SNDO in Amsterdam had given a talk about Dore Hoyer in 1992. As I had only seen photos of Hoyer, I was curious about what her work would look like in motion. So I suggested to the group that we watch the recording. I remember that it was Thomas Plischke and myself—the two Germans of the group—who were particularly fascinated by the

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3 Dore Hoyer made the Afectos humanos after reading Baruch de Spinoza’s Ethics in 1962.

4 School voor Nieuwe Dans Ontwikkeling, Dutch for School for New Dance Development. Founded in 1975, the school has an international reputation. Well-known graduates include, among others, Sasha Waltz, Thomas Lehmen, Nicole Beutler, and Ivana Müller.
dances. We were about to move back to Germany after several years of living abroad, and I believe we were looking for reference points that would help us not just to go back geographically but also to understand the artistic implications of our return. What was our cultural heritage beyond the training and formation we had received outside of Germany? We decided, together with dramaturge Joachim Gerstmeier, to work with Dore Hoyer’s material, and there were two reasons for this decision: the documented meticulousness of Dore Hoyer’s movement research and the pathos with which the filmmakers had endowed it.

Without being able to explain in detail how our roles evolved, Joachim Gerstmeier ended up as the dramaturge, Thomas Plischke as artistic director, and Alice Chauchat as assistant, while I took on reconstructing and dancing Hoyer’s dances. For me, this meant the significant step into the dance archive. As far as I remember, it was dance scholar and dramaturge Susanne Traub who knew that the copyright of *Affectos Humanos* was with the German Dance Archive in Cologne. Thus, the first thing to do was to call them. Frank-Manuel Peter, the archive’s director, explained to me that the archive held the copyright. But the decision about who may work with the dances had been transferred to an old friend of Dore Hoyer’s, the then eighty-four-year-old dance pedagogue Waltraud Luley, living in Frankfurt am Main. This meant that the second step was to call this woman, a total stranger, who wanted to know right away why I wanted to work with Hoyer’s dances and where I had gotten my professional training. She liked the fact that a twenty-eight-year-old man wanted to reconstruct the dances of a woman, who had made them at fifty-one years of age. The phone call ended with her giving me the task to reconstruct two or three dances by myself and then call her again.

No sooner said than done. Four weeks later, Thomas Plischke and I met with Waltraud Luley in her dance studio in Frankfurt am Main. In the office, she served us coffee and coconut macaroons while talking to us about dance history in general and our staging ideas in particular. Then we went into the dance studio and I showed the dances *Desire* and *Hate*. Afterward, Luley commented on what she had seen: “Well, Mr. Nachbar, concerning the gestures and steps, you have worked well. But concerning the intensity needed for these dances, you have achieved no more than twenty percent.” I swallowed hard. Thomas Plischke was asked to leave the studio. And Waltraud Luley began to work with me on the first movements of the dance *Hate*.

I am standing in front of her, my with legs slightly turned out, my gaze directed downward, looking at clawed hands hanging from arms stretched long in front of my body. Then I very quickly lift my long right arm until I hold it like an exclamation mark above my right shoulder. Then I tear it straight down into its beginning position. At the

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5 This collaboration ended up in the piece *affects*. It was a kind of experimentation setup, in which we juxtaposed historical and contemporary dance materials in order to explore how perception and dance aesthetics might be connected and might have changed over time. Interestingly, we changed the staging of *affects* many times, from a multimedia setup in three spaces, each containing intensively affective material, to a minimalist stage piece for three performers. We needed several tries to finally get to a meaningful version. The result was consequently called *affects/rework*. 
same time, I lift my left lower arm with the clawed hand in front of my chest. After that, I slowly bring the left lower arm back to its beginning position. Once it has arrived, my legs suddenly implode into a demi-plié, both lower arms and clawed hands fly up in front of my chest, and my head violently pulls backward as I looked upward in exasperation. I feel strange in Dore Hoyer’s movements, not just because of Luley’s comment. Trained in postmodern release techniques that favor an economic use of the body, I feel that my dancing of Dore Hoyer’s dances has very little in common with her aesthetics. Something feels wrong—too sloppy maybe, or not well placed. The intensity and modulation of bodily tension applied by Hoyer are completely foreign to me. Luley sees this, and jumps out of her chair and yells, “Mr. Nachbar! This is hate! The whole body is in a cramp!” Thomas Plischke sits outside of the studio and fears that Luley is one of these expressionist dance dragons who draw self-esteem from humiliating their students—according to our prejudiced view of that generation. But during the direct exchange with her in the studio, I notice immediately that she wants to clarify a vital aspect of the dance. And for this, she needs to jump up and yell at me. So, I put myself once again into the beginning position and try to tense my whole body, so that it is a cramp. But I forget to claw the little fingers, which instead stick out straight in front of me. She immediately comments, “The little fingers, Mr. Nachbar, the little fingers!”

In the further course of the rehearsals until the premier of affects in February 2000, I do consult other sources as well, but I concentrate on the film document and on Luley’s memories and body knowledge. She was trained in similar dance practices and techniques as Hoyer, which allows me to learn these practices, and begin to see how I can use mine in order to get into hers. This makes three main sources: the film, Waltraud Luley, and the dance knowledge stored in my body. I let them meet, push into, and mix with each other. Eventually, this results in the reconstruction of three of the five dances: Desire, Hate, and Anxiety. Doing so, I rewind the VHS tape many times; I replay scenes in slow motion; I let Waltraud Luley correct me time and again and get her to tell me stories about Dore Hoyer; I look for numerous ways to sneak my contemporary body into the dances of 1962, while letting the dances smuggle their implicit training and other habits into my own body, full of patterns and imprints. I make a conscious effort to understand and learn Dore Hoyer’s dance technique and choreographic knacks and to bring them in contact and friction with my techniques and knacks.

The dance archive proves itself here to be a workspace or workshop where bodies are constructed, taken apart, and put together anew. This always also comes with ideas about bodies, how they should move, and what they should look like. Past dances get

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6 I always find it difficult to explain the differences between Dore Hoyer’s practices and resulting aesthetics and mine without showing them with my body. A short way of describing might be that Dore Hoyer comes from and develops practices that seek to explore feelings and emotions and their physical expression, while I have studied practices that focus on the creative potential of exploring the human anatomy and motor system. My practice from the time of the reconstruction until today is based on these studies, and mixes them with specific dramaturgical practices that I do not discuss in this chapter for lack of space.
compared and calibrated with contemporary bodies. In this process of continuous construction, deconstruction, and repair, the strange aspects of the past keep pushing into the picture: Why, for example, does Dore Hoyer shape her hands like claws in *Hate*? Why doesn't she focus on the hip swings in *Love*, using swan-shaped hands at the beginning and at the end? This can be understood intellectually. Documents from the archive shed light on the decision-making criteria at the base of the dances. But when I dance them, I feel as if something is wrong. Something feels strange and stays foreign to me—not only in the dances’ shapes, but also in how the dances feel to my body. Paradoxically, it is in this feeling of estrangement that the past is able to come closest to the present. By accepting the kinesthetic differences and by putting the temporal and aesthetic distance on display, the space between then and now appears, revealing the points of contact between the two. To show this, we deliberately refrained from the original music and from reconstructing the costumes when staging *affects* in 2000. At the same time, and at first unconsciously, we traced the black-and-white film by putting on dark costumes and dancing on a white and brightly lit stage.

And this kind of tracing, which is a kind of translation process, allows for exactly the kinds of vagueness that are productive for the dance archive. Of course, meticulous study of source material is necessary, especially in dance. In my reconstruction of Dore Hoyer’s dances, I tried to physically understand her movement principles as precisely as possible. But if the dance archive is supposed to exceed the bounds of stored documents, it depends on a direct exchange with embodied movement knowledge. And this is also exactly the opportunity the dance archive presents, as opposed to other kinds of archives: documented and stored movement knowledge meets embodied movement knowledge. This is how the dance archive begins to dance itself and thus takes place beyond its bounds. It places itself in movement. However, the problem of corporeal movement knowledge is that it is not tattooed or printed on the body’s skin as the letters of this text are printed on a white sheet of paper. It is not even a bruise. Movement knowledge is rather an imprint. It is based on the conscious and unconscious imprint of postural patterns and movement sequences. The imprint, which is the (neuronal) network of singular cells to whole sequences, remains invisible and only surfaces in movement and behavior. For much of the time, it stays somewhere deep inside the body, under the skin, waiting in the dark for activation—not easy to detect, but often palpable, and in movement sometimes also visible and even legible.

**The Body as Dance/Archive**

But what does legibility mean in dance, as a definite interpretation often can be missed? How can we imagine that the impressions a spectator has when watching a dance piece become legible? Can we speak of legibility when dealing with these impressions? In short, does dance form and leave signs?
In November 2006, I started working with my father. The piece premiered on November 8, 2007, at the Sophiensäle in Berlin. In the beginning, my motivation was of a more pragmatic nature: After my father had invited me several times in vain to visit him in his birth- and now weekend-house in the countryside, I felt like spending more time with him, but without having the feeling of wasting potential freelance working time. The simplest solution seemed to be to make a piece with my father. This also had the advantage of my being able to show him what he had been trying to understand without ever really grasping: dancing. I am still astonished by how easily my father agreed to join in. Similar to the reconstruction of the Affectos humanos, the first active step was a phone call. My father at the other end of the line responded immediately: “Well, yes, sure, if you know what I have to do, I will join in.” His only constraint was that as a sixty-nine-year-old pensioner, he could no longer do all the things that a dancer might have to do. That this phone call was also a big step into the dance archive was not yet clear to me. But, again, I am getting ahead of myself.

First we got together in a dance studio to see what could be possible together. From mid-September to mid-October 2006, I worked during a four-week residency at PACT Zollverein in Essen. It was a good opportunity to try out a few things with my father, who lives not far from Essen, in Cologne. He came and stayed for three days. We worked each of these days in the studio. It felt strange to me to touch him again after an interim of twenty-five years. And it was odd to tell my father what he had to do. We did simple contact improvisation exercises, pulled faces at each other, introduced ourselves to each other by explaining each item in our wallets, improvised with each other along abstract scores, and we danced in front of each other using concrete themes such as the blossoming and withering of a flower. It was moving to see how and with what curiosity my father became involved in the tasks, and how eager he was to do them well. But, as the retired wholesaler that he was, he could not avoid asking for each exercise’s use to the piece. He wound up complaining each time I dropped choreography from the day before. One year before the planned premiere, however, I had no answers to such questions and comments. So I thought about what to do to get us into the same boat in a spirit of shared research.

The solution came in form of a dance book: Der moderne Ausdruckstanz in der Erziehung: Eine Einführung in die kreative tänzerische Bewegung als Mittel zur Entfaltung der Persönlichkeit, in which one of the godfathers of modern and contemporary dance in Europe, Rudolf von Laban, made accessible in print on paper the movement knowledge imprinted in his body and his experience as dance pedagogue, which knowledge could then enter the (dance) archive. Among other things, he describes eight efforts in the book: pressing, flicking, punching, floating, wringing, dabbing, slashing, and gliding.

In Repeater—Dance Piece with Father, my father, who has never danced on stage before, and I, the professional choreographer and son, perform on stage together. Inspired by the collaborating dramaturge Jeroen Peeters, we were concerned with physically exploring the father-son relationship in a sort of laconic dialogue without words. The piece has toured internationally, as well as to the village my father comes from.
My dance studies and work had also been involved with movement qualities, but not with these particular ones. I actually knew them as little as my father did. Therefore, they seemed to be a good base from which to fathom the “wiggle room” of our shared work and research.

I brought the book to the rehearsals of our second meeting, which took place in February 2007 in Berlin. We read the description of each movement quality and tried them out in solo and duet improvisations. Afterward, we would discuss the experiences and the outcomes. In the rehearsal phase, the crossings-over contained in the project clearly came to light. First my father agreed to reverse the usual teaching and learning process between father and son, becoming my student in the world of dance. Then I put myself in the lineage of Rudolf von Laban, not presumptuously, but rather as if compensating for the father that was now missing once he had become my student. And finally, there was a moment on the second day of this second meeting, which imprinted itself on my memory—an image or a wink that German film director Oskar Roehler describes as follows:

The great thing about images that move us is that we feel in an instant that everything is in us. They are able to activate our memory that normally moves in narrow trails. [ . . . ] Triggered by the image, they [the memories] vaguely reemerge and light an afterglow that is filled with a moment from our life. “Wink”—the ambiguity of the word is the nature of the image. (Roehler 2002; my translation)

As we were improvising together on “pressing,” my father ran out of ideas and started to imitate me. I noticed this out of the corner of my eye, and I was briefly irritated by the situation. I interpreted it as my father being unimaginative. But then I recognized within my father’s imitation of me a similarity that is much older than the one in our improvisation. I saw that a problem throughout my dance career, which I have always thought to be my individual one, is actually a shared one. Both my father and I have a line of muscular tension that runs from the thumbs along the upper side of the arms and the top of the shoulders to the throat. For years, I have tried to release this line of tension to gain more space for the movement of my arms and head. Now I see that I learned this pattern a long time ago from my father. Despite all my dance and body knowledge, I am surprised and moved by how corporeal the crossovers are when father and son learn from one another. It is a wink that literally imprints itself on my memory, and one and a half years later, when I am thinking about the text you are reading, I realize that I opened the door to another kind of archive back in February 2007. It is different from the dance archive. And at the same time, it is closely connected to it. It is an archive of imprints, of imprinted and engraved surfaces beneath the surface of the skin.8 This is somewhat

8 To understand this thought better, it might be helpful to consult an image that I adopt from Steve Paxton, who said during a workshop I took with him in winter 1998 at PARTS in Brussels: “If I start to draw a line on the skin of one of my thumbs, I can continue along my hand, arm, shoulder, throat, and chin all the way to my mouth, where I can go on along the mucous membranes and down the esophagus until the stomach and through the whole digestive track to its end, where the pen exits from the anus and
similar to André Lepecki’s notion of the “body as archive” (Lepecki 2010, 34), especially in “its precariousness” and in how it “replaces and diverts notions of archive away from a documental deposit” (34). But while Lepecki stresses its “muscular tremors, […] [and] bleedings” (2010, 34), I would like to suggest a body system other than muscles and blood circulation, one that is not to be controlled in the first place, like muscles can be, and that does not ooze out of the body once it is cut. I am speaking of fascia tissue, which runs under the skin as well as around the organs, muscles, and muscle fibers. Most of the body’s proprioceptors are situated here. Long neglected by Western medicine, fascia tissue is now found to be holding many of the tensions that cause back pain and other aches, almost like a storage of movement or traumatic memories, running through the whole body and connecting its different parts (Luczak 2015). The advantage of such a physical archive is that it is linked to sensation as much as to movement, and we do not need to cut the body open in order to access it.

At the time of rehearsing Repeater—Dance Piece with Father I was thirty-five years old. My father gave me not only his participation in this project, but also insight into an old habit that he had given me thirty to thirty-five years earlier. The gift of my father’s presence carried an imprint that came to light in a wink while improvising together. The imprint became legible to me. Maybe the therapeutic aspect that so many spectators had been assuming in many of the talk-backs on tour was to be found there: not in any change in the relationship, but in the recognition of long lost ways of passing an imprint that consisted of no more than a line of tension in the body, which now became the sign of a bond: “You descend from me, and this is what you have learned from me,” the father tells the son by dancing with him.

In Archive Fever Jacques Derrida talks about a similar present, made by Jakob Freud to his son Sigmund:

> It is an inscription in the form of a dedication. It was written by the hand of Jakob, son of R. Shelomoh Freud, the arch-patriarch, the grandfather of psychoanalysis, and addressed to his son, Shelomoh Freud, on the day of his thirty-fifth birthday, in Vienna, the sixth of May, 1891. (29 Nisan 5651). A gift carried this inscription. What the father gives to the son is at once a writing and its substrate. The substrate, in a sense, was the Bible itself, the Book of books, a Philoppsohn Bible Sigmund had studied in his youth. His father restores it to him, after having made a present of it to him; he restitutes it as a gift, with a new leather binding. To bind anew: this is an act of love. Of paternal love. (Derrida 1995, 21)

Although the incident described here by Derrida carries other implications and bears different consequences than my improvising with my father, I perceive a strange kinship: In a certain way my father also gave me an old habit studied in my body at a young age can go via buttocks, back, shoulders, arm, and hand all the way back to the thumb, where I have started the line. I have drawn on the same surface throughout the journey, even if I went from outside to inside and back out again.” But I don’t just mean the surfaces of the digestive track, but the surfaces of all the tissues inside the body.
age, in a new binding, a new skin—namely, the one of improvising with me. In a certain way, he gave me a present by dancing with me except that it was not an inscription in a book, but an imprint in a body.

The parallel drawn here is admittedly associative rather than scholarly. But at this point, it allows me to think through a connection between the dance archive and the dancing body. It was Sigmund Freud who developed an early attempt to describe the complexity of human memory with the Mystic Writing-Pad model. With it, Freud describes how memories become inscribed into a piece of wax, one layer on top of the next, overlaying, superimposing, and erasing each other, not unlike palimpsests, which are among the first paper or papyrus documents we know of (Freud 1961 [1925], 229–232). This connection between a person’s intimate imprints in her body, on the one hand, and, let us say, her archived memories written down or printed on paper, on the other, is important for the dance archive, precisely because the dance archive must grapple continuously with the paradox of archivable documents and non-archivable but repeatable body knowledge. “But where does the outside commence? This question is the question of the archive. There are undoubtably no others” (Derrida 1995, 8).

In order to answer this question from a choreographer’s perspective, I would like to return to the house of the archont, which was not only the place where official documents were kept, but also the residence of a civil servant’s family. Habits got passed along here, imprints were made and respectively suffered, and Mystic Pads were inscribed upon. Similarly, albeit with less emotional intensity, kinship gets produced during dance studies: through constant observation, emulation, and repetition of movement ideas and sequences, specific habits, skills, and biases are constructed in the body. The fact that these processes are not documented or archived doesn’t mean that they don’t take place. They literally do, outside the body, in a dance studio, on stage, and elsewhere.

The chiasmus from the rehearsal process of Repeater—Dance Piece with Father makes this clear. “The archive takes place at the place of originary and structural breakdown of the said memory.” (Derrida 1995, 11) But no archive takes place if it isn’t put to work by a memory with all its structural weakness, that is, through producing, reading, and interpreting the very documents of the archive. Derrida is right when he says, “There is no archive without a place of assignation, without a technique of repetition, and without a certain exteriority. No archive without outside” (Derrida 1995, 11; italics in original). But dance opens up a perspective from which we can understand the line of tension in my father’s body and my body as consigned and repeatable through specific techniques of observation. Movement qualities and techniques are somewhat external to bodies, different from yet similar to written or printed texts, films engraved in external hard drives or DVDs, or photographs printed on paper. At this point, legibility becomes a question of the reading or perception techniques at hand, as well as of the definition of what writing might be.

After all, the dance archive collects documents of an art form that writes body knowledge into space: choreography, the repeatable inscription of or in space by a knowledgeable moving body. Choreography is not only the object to be saved from forgetting by the dance archive (as an external place of an internal memory), but it is also the dance
archive’s counterpart written into space. And one might think that choreography as an externalized writing of imprints under the skin doesn’t need the documents of its having-taken-place stored in the archive.

**Back to the Dance Archive’s Double Bottom**

But forgetting in this way would mean to exclude the memory data carriers specific to the dance archive, with their ability to bridge distances in time and to help develop a critical distance from dance as a research object, from the practice of contemporary choreography. The latter would lose an opportunity for self-reflection. Conversely, banning choreography and dance strictly from the spaces of the dance archive (imagined, thought, or actual) would mean reducing the documents stored in the dance archive to mere objects of scientific knowledge.

Because the dance archive is a collection of documents of bodily knowledge, that is, difficult to fathom yet repeatable, the dance archive should seek the exchange between (printed) documents and (imprinted) bodies. In the end, all the forms of writing, printing, engraving, or imprinting that are involved are mutually dependent: The imprint of the body depends on choreography, because the latter makes the first visible; choreography depends on its documentation outside of bodies, because some evidence of dances becomes more readable in their documentations; and the documentation of the dances depends on its translation back into impressions and bodily imprints, because they might otherwise congeal into mere signs within the dance archive.

The dance archive is therefore perhaps more than just double: it actually has many spaces folded between the surfaces, carrying much information, and many documents to be discovered between dance knowledge that is immediately transferred across the generations, and dance knowledge that is bridged over many years through documents stored in the dance archive. In thinking this way, it is not a matter of looking at every form of knowledge and experience in the same way. On the contrary, I am interested in differentiating between the different forms of knowledge in order to make their exchange possible and productive. And I have experienced the dance archive as precisely the place where such a differentiation and exchange between print and imprint, between sensing and reading, and between choreographing and writing can take place as an example from which other archives can, in fact, learn.

**Works Cited**

**Books**


Film


Performances


Workshops

It is often assumed that reenactment is more concerned with feeling the past than with understanding history. “Reenactment,” as historian Jerome de Groot puts it, “offers a range of experience within history” (2009, 107). Whether historical events are replayed on the battlefield, on television shows, in video games, or on a theater stage, reenactment is both hailed and scorned for the corporeal, sensorial, emotional, and psychological engagement with the past it is claimed to offer as an alternative to the allegedly more distant and primarily discursive access provided by history books or archival documents. Cultural historian Vanessa Agnew voices this dual stance in a widely cited article that has set the tone for much of the current discourse on reenactment. While appreciative of the more general “affective turn in history,” of which the growing popularity of reenactment from the 1980s onward is but one important symptom, Agnew ultimately doubts whether reenactment has the “capacity to further historical understanding” (2007, 301), precisely because of its “emphasis on affect” (299) as well as its “tendency to collapse temporalities” (309).

Agnew’s critical stance toward the epistemological potential of reenactment is hardly surprising when one takes into account the manner in which affect is generally defined in so-called affect theory, which began to emerge across several branches of the humanities shortly after the turn of the millennium. Lisa Blackman, who in *Immaterial Bodies* (2012) examines the relationship between affect and subjectivity, explains that the increasing interest in affect is principally geared toward the “making explicit of those

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1 Patricia T. Clough and Jean Halley’s edited volume *The Affective Turn* (2007) is usually cited as the first to identify the intensified interest in affect across the humanities. Mitigating the novelty sometimes ascribed to this kind of turn, Anu Koivunen convincingly shows that the roots of the attention to affect reach further back, going so far as to claim, provocatively, that “an affective turn never happened” (2010, 23).
registers of experience that are at work in objects, artefacts and practices” and “which might variously be described as non-cognitive, trans-subjective, non-conscious, non-representational, incorporeal and immaterial” (4). Blackman’s description highlights the way in which affect is commonly conceptualized as a category that stands outside, if not in opposition to, discursive understanding and consciously registered experience or emotions. This distinction between affect and emotion is key to Brian Massumi’s influential theorization of affect in *Parables for the Virtual* (2002). In his view, “an emotion is a subjective content, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience” and, as such, it should be distinguished from “the irreducibly bodily and autonomic nature of affect” (28). In their editorial introduction to *The Affect Theory Reader* (2010), Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth similarly maintain that affect designates “visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally other than conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion” (2010, 1). Even though they acknowledge that “affect and cognition are never fully separable—if for no other reason than that thought is itself a body, embodied” (2–3), the primary appeal of affect does seem to be that it provides a name for those supposedly unmediated sensations that elude conscious registering.

In a sweeping critique of the affective turn, Ruth Leys contends that most affect theorists—despite their claims to the contrary—adhere to a Cartesian dualism between body and mind. She argues that “shift[ing] attention away from considerations of meaning or ‘ideology’ or indeed representation” in order to refocus on “the subject’s subpersonal material-affective responses” installs an antagonistic relationship between meaning and affect (2011, 450). Leys considers this a fundamental flaw that weakens affect theory in general, even if different intellectual traditions have led to distinct approaches among scholars dealing with affect. Leys more specifically distinguishes between the neuroscientific “Basic Emotions Paradigm” vis-à-vis others who rather align themselves with the philosophies of Baruch Spinoza, Henri Bergson, William James, or Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (439–442). According to Leys, what binds these two main strands of affect theory together is “their shared anti-intentionalism” or the “single belief . . . that affect is independent of signification and meaning” (443). Expounding on Leys’s critical standpoint, social scholar Margaret Wetherell asserts that “complex acts of meaning-making and representation are involved in the spreading of affect, no matter how random and viral it appears” (2015, 154). In her account of the role of affect in the formation of cultural memory, Sharon Macdonald also maintains that “dismissing discourse can only mean that we ignore much that matters” (2013, 81). In her

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2 In their introduction to *The Affect Theory Reader*, Gregg and Seigworth count no less than eight different perspectives from which theorists are currently exploring the notion of affect (2010, 6–8). These include, next to the Tomkins-Ekman paradigm and the philosophically inflected branch mentioned by Leys, (post-) phenomenology; cybernetics and neuroscience; political theory; cultural, social, and performance studies; critical research on emotions, also from a postcolonial perspective; science studies and new materialism. For a similar outline of different directions in affect theory—in the case amounting to twelve perspectives—see Elkins (2013, 10–13).
view, naming what one feels is equally important—and affective—as feeling what allegedly cannot be named.

In light of these critical interventions in the prevalent definitions of affect, Agnew’s characterization of reenactment as a form of affective history is at once more significant and more troubling than she herself admits. Rather than merely wanting to sense the past, reenactment can also aim to make sense out of it. As such, reenactment exposes a deeper conflict between knowing and feeling, a tension that has been haunting philosophy, historiography, and critical theory, as well as dance studies. Especially in the wake of poststructuralism and deconstruction the predominance of discourse and representationalist points of view have threatened to eclipse the role of embodiment, both in being and in thinking. With regard to reenactment, then, the main problem seems to be, as historian Mark Salber Phillips points out, that “reenactment has generally been characterized as an experiential approach to history, with little concern for the conceptual issues characteristic of more traditional historiographies” (2013a, 12). In other words, as long as reenactment is figured as a popular and bottom-up immersion in the past, it continues to stand in opposition to academic historiography as an intellectual and top-down process that keeps a reflective distance and finds its expression primarily in print.

Could it be that the common equation of reenactment with a search for affect has fostered a rather one-sided perspective that disregards how reenactments can stimulate epistemic faculties and provoke critical reflection on how it is we come to know the past? While it is certainly true that some popular forms of living history are less concerned with raising historical consciousness about how the past is continuously reconstructed every time it is brought back into the present, the ways in which contemporary choreographers have been appropriating the format go in a markedly different direction. In the hands of certain dancers, reenactment exceeds the status of a mere past-time, insofar as their work acknowledges the passing of time and yet still tries to pass on what risks getting lost as time passes. Affect, or the getting in touch with history, obviously plays an important part in this endeavor, but—as I will argue in this chapter—the affective engagements that propel choreographic reenactment are as much about feeling the past as about understanding mechanisms of historicization. Crucial in this regard is the idea of historical distance, which is generally understood as the temporal difference between the past and the present, but which, in dance reenactment, grows into something broader and more flexible than merely an indicator of time’s transience.

As Patricia T. Clough explains, “the turn to affect . . . returned critical theory and cultural criticism to bodily matter, which had been treated in terms of various constructionisms under the influence of poststructuralism and deconstruction” (2010, 206). According to feminist scholar Clare Hemmings, however, the constructionist attitude so heavily denounced by affect theorists actually also applies to their own position. She claims that scholars such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Brian Massumi create their own enemy, since they need to uphold that “poststructuralist epistemology [has] ignored embodiment, investment and emotion” in order to assert that affect offers a “way out” of the theoretical dismissal of pre-discursive life (2005, 556–557).

In taking the idea of historical distance as a central hinge of my discussion, I am in fact pursuing a cross-disciplinary dialogue between dance studies and the theory of history. While the practice of
mobilization of distance, whether by amplifying or compressing it in terms of formal aesthetics and affective response, is what the two dance reenactments that I discuss in the following put at stake.

Exploring the correlations between affect, form, and distance in dance reenactment, I will draw on Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht’s distinction between “presence” and “meaning,” as introduced in his 2004 book The Production of Presence. Ultimately, current debates on affect do seem to serve the same need as the recent revaluation of the notion of “presence” in the humanities. “Any accounting of affect theory,” James Elkins writes, “would have to include the [recent] history of the rediscovery of presence” and the fact that “after the poststructural critiques of unmediated presence, there has been an accelerating awareness of the necessity of rethinking presence” (2013, 13). Combining Gumbrecht’s conceptual pair with the function of historical distance in dance reenactment allows me to ask to what extent the concept of affect can help to make the workings of dance reenactment insightful and, vice versa, how the practice of reenactment necessitates redirecting some of the predominant aspirations of affect theory.

**Hyperbolic Imitation**

In *A Mary Wigman Dance Evening* (2009), the Ecuadorian dancer and choreographer Fabián Barba reconstructed a dance recital as the German expressionist dancer or *Ausdruckstänzerin* Mary Wigman would have performed it in the early 1930s. Adopting Wigman’s format of a dance program featuring several solos, Barba compiled what he described as “a dance evening as it could have taken place in the first half of the 20th century” (2011, 84; my emphasis). While the subjunctive mode of Barba’s statement indicates that he was well aware of the impossibility of recreating the past as it actually happened, he nevertheless went to great lengths to re-embody the choreographic movements, while also reproducing the original costumes, music, and even *mise en scène*. When the audience enters the auditorium, they see a red curtain closing off the stage, as well as two chandeliers hanging above their heads. As if to complete the illusion, spectators find on their seats a program leaflet with the titles of the successive solos in an archaic typography, similar to the one used in Wigman’s time.  

When the curtain opens, a young male dancer appears who, during the piece, performs a series of six- to seven-minute solos. While the reenactment seems to invite this quite naturally, it is surprising how both domains have been operating rather isolatedly from each other in coming to terms with the rise of reenactment, both in the arts and beyond, even though this connection might be beneficial. I therefore draw on the renewed attention historical distance has received in the theory of history. See, for instance, den Hollander et al. (2011); Lorenz and Bevernage (2013).

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5 According to the program leaflet, Fabián Barba performs the following solos: *Anruf, Seraphisches Lied, Gesicht der Nacht, Pastorale, Sturmlied and Sommerlicher* (from the cycle *Schwingende Landschaft*); *Raumgestalt and Feierliche Gestalt* (from the cycle *Visionen*); and *Drehmonotonie* (from the cycle *Feier*).
seven-minute solos, each followed by a bow and a short pause, after which he returns wearing a different costume, ranging from distinctly female dresses to more theatrically abstract layers of fabric (Figures 3.1 and 3.2). The dances in themselves strike contemporary audiences as quaintly anomalous, due to the dramatic, even histrionic, movements that spring from a remarkable bodily tension, sometimes combined with sudden outbursts of energy, at other times suffused with a refined grace.

The overt evocation of Wigman’s aesthetic universe, by means of both *mise en scène* and dancing, made some spectators wonder why a young dancer would devote his time and energy to re-embodied a dance style that is historically outmoded. This sort of reaction, however, fails to recognize the suggestive but significant cracks that puncture Barba’s mimetic approach and which undercut the supposedly complete identification with Wigman. At those moments when Barba appears dressed in a strapless evening gown—modeled after Wigman’s later costumes—his hairy male legs and his slightly too muscled arms are tellingly visible. Also, the music that accompanies the piece—some of which Barba adapted from archival videos of Wigman’s dances—sounds distant, as

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6 In a 2010 essay on *A Mary Wigman Dance Evening*, Barba explains that the different types of costumes he wears during the piece are reminiscent of a remarkable change in the aesthetics of Wigman’s solos. Whereas, in her early career, she was dressed in costumes that masked her female body, from 1929 onward (the year in which the dance cycle *Schwingende Landschaft* was created), Wigman started to appear in distinctly female dresses (see Barba 2010, 102, 104; see also Manning 2006, 41–43, 140–146).
if it were played on an old gramophone, covered by the dust of history. Barba’s skillful manipulation of these theatrical elements—and the reactions they evoke in the spectator—interfere with the enticing time machine that he also creates and signal how his aim reaches further than that of merely producing a blunt copy of Wigman’s dances and aesthetics, or what we might consider a reconstruction.

Rather than attempt a straightforward mimesis, Barba’s performance turns reenactment into what I propose to call a strategy of “hyperbolic imitation,” not unlike Judith Butler’s suggestion that “a repetition of the law into hyperbole” might be a way of subverting tacit conventions (1993, 122). Barba’s strategic use of reenactment stems most obviously from his refusal to impersonate Wigman fully: his incorporation of the dances does not intend to be seamless and instead dissociates her dances from any harsh alignment with her female persona, exposing ways of moving that we habitually regard as a feminine style of dancing. Yet the perhaps most astute effect of Barba’s approach is that, by replicating the generic conventions of traditional dance reconstructions as such, he eventually overturns them—even if this is a thin line to walk. Barba’s endeavor to achieve a formal resemblance with Wigman’s work can be easily misinterpreted as a reinforcement of what Mark Franko, already in 1989, denounced as the main flaw of dance reconstructions, the kind that delivers “staid and antiquated presentations” by “merely animating an historical artifact” (57). To find a way out of the apparent stasis of reconstruction, Franko used the term “reinvention,” which in his view “sacrifices
the reproduction of a work to the replication of its most powerful intended effects” and thus may involve a noticeably more liberated and critical attitude toward historical sources (58).

Franko’s distinction between reconstruction and reinvention anticipated the direction of dance reenactment as it has been emerging since the 1990s, insofar as most of these works that return to the past take a reinterpretive stance toward the sources they aspire to resuscitate. In this context—and nearly twenty-five years after Franko’s intervention—Fabián Barba’s *A Mary Wigman Dance Evening* takes up a more than remarkable place, as the piece demonstrates how a reflective reinvention of historical dance works can also be achieved by means of a strategic reproduction of their formal features. But precisely because Barba’s decided choice for the road of resemblance goes against the dominant current of reinterpretation, his *Dance Evening* might trouble contemporary spectators who more likely expect to see a clear signature of the artist-as-author that guides their reading of the reenactment. In Barba’s case, the clues are more difficult to discern, which explains why the piece, even though it was hugely successful and has toured worldwide, provoked mixed receptions, as for some spectators his strategy was clear, while for others it was a mere exercise in epigonic and presumably faithful imitation.  

Recognizing the strategic intentions behind Barba’s reenactment, however, does not attenuate affective involvement in the piece. To the contrary, it adds to the manner in which Barba attempts to give sense to the past, in the double meaning of attributing meaning to, as well as of adding sensoriality to, history in its traditional forms. It is by disentangling this mixture of discursive interpretation and emotive response that we might get a clearer idea of the role affect has to play in dance reenactment.

For those spectators who did not dismiss Barba’s *Dance Evening* as a mere reproduction of Wigman’s work, his reenactment produced shifting figures in which his contemporary body confusingly blends with the historical image of Mary Wigman. This dynamic becomes perhaps most clearly visible in the solo *Pastorale*, which involves a subtle, arguably feminine elegance as the choreography consists mainly of detailed movements of hands and arms while the body remains lying, sitting, or turning on the ground. Especially at the moment when Barba sits straight up, showing his back to the audience, with his long, brown, voluminous hair reaching his shoulders, he seems to conjure up the spectral presence of Mary Wigman. For a second, spectators might be puzzled by the hybrid persona they are looking at, speculating whether it is Wigman they see, or Barba, or both at once. But as soon as Barba turns around, the doubt is likely to dissipate, since the sight of his masculine face and physical constitution makes the body image shift again into the young, contemporary dancer incorporating and externalizing Wigman’s expressionist dancing style. Various reviews suggest indeed how

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7 A telling example of the mixed reception to Fabián Barba’s *A Mary Wigman Dance Evening* can be found on a blog on the website of the Turkish iDans festival, which documents various responses to the piece after it was shown in Istanbul in 2010 (see https://idansblog.org/tag/a-mary-wigman-dance-evening/ [last accessed July 29, 2016]). Also Susanne Foellmer refers to both positive and negative reviews in her discussion of the work (see Foellmer 2014, 87–88 n. 29).
Wigman's spectral presence shimmered through Barba's physical appearance, praising him for how he “didn’t just re-enact Wigman, but was Wigman” (Miller 2009, para. 8), or for the fact that it is “Mary Wigman in person [who] performs” (Witzeling 2009, para. 1; my translation). While such admittedly exalted accounts lose sight of the manner in which it is not only Wigman who reappears through Barba, but also the other way around, this dialectical back-and-forth movement is more aptly invoked by theater scholar Christel Stalpaert. Describing her viewing experience, Stalpaert recounts how several likenesses—such as “the poses, the muscular qualities of Ausdruckstanz, the similar haircut, the costumes”—make it seem “as if the icon Mary Wigman has returned to life,” but this conjuring up of her specter is ruptured by small details that come with Barba’s individual bodily constitution—including “the large feet . . . , the empty bosom, the broad-shouldered torso”—with the result that you find yourself “catapulted away from your own mental image or cliché of the way you remember Mary Wigman” (2011, 91).

Whether or not one is able to remember Wigman and to discern her spectral presence through Barba’s body depends, of course, to a large degree on the knowledge or memories one has of her work or even of her persona in general. But even without any previous awareness of who Wigman was or what she or her oeuvre looked like, one is able to grasp what Barba’s Dance Evening aims to achieve. In an essay on the early reenactments of the French collective the Albrecht Knust Quartet, dance scholar Isabelle Launay suggests how the intentionality behind dance reenactment also permeates the staging of the work and how this, by consequence, might also affect the perception of the audience:

> What appears onstage is as much the history and the memory of the work, with its many masks, as it is the history of the dancers dancing. The performers are staging, as much as dancing, the difficulties of grappling with movement that predates their own: the places and moments of confrontation, revelation and pleasure, impossibilities and resistances, even dissociations from the self. (Launay 2012, 65)

Fabián Barba’s Dance Evening similarly plays upon the frictions between different histories and memories, which are not limited to Mary Wigman’s historical legacy or to his own personal background as a dancer, but also include the memory work the audience performs during the piece. Essential in this respect are the short breaks that follow after

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8 With regard to the idea that dance reenactment brings different histories into dialogue, it is interesting to note that Fabián Barba and Mark Franko collaborated on a piece, first shown in 2014, in which they both revive Le marbre tremble (Marble Trembles), a solo that Franko created in 1988 and which he, more than 25 years later, transmitted to Barba. Their joint dancing of fragments from the solo is framed by monologues in which Barba and Franko unfold some of their personal histories as dancers and how their mutual interest in the persistence as well as the possible “reinvention” of dance history led to their encounter and the decision to collaborate on this work. As such, Le marbre tremble poignantly demonstrates how dance reenactment creates new genealogical lineages while revisiting older ones. For spectators, this might even trigger different links across several works. For instance, it is meaningful that Fabián Barba, after having danced as Mary Wigman and before working with Mark Franko, also appears as one of the performers in Olga de Soto’s Débords. What starts to emerge here is a genealogical network
each solo (with a longer one in the middle of the performance) and which insert caesuras into the flow of the work, spurring spectators to reflect on the sequence they have just seen, as well as on Barba’s intention in general. “These constitutive gaps,” as Franz Anton Cramer writes, “may simply follow from the desire for a precise and detailed reconstruction” of how Mary Wigman would structure a dance evening, but “they nonetheless demonstrate that even the highest level of empathic understanding of the historical work ultimately only conceals the gaps in knowledge” that haunt any attempt to revive the past, whether in reenactment or reconstruction (2010, para. 11; my translation). While the so-called gaps are thus a structural principle of Barba’s Dance Evening, they also install a certain distance between his attempt at reincorporating Wigman’s technique and aesthetics vis-à-vis the possibility that spectators might want to feel totally immersed in the illusionary world that is created on stage. From this perspective, Barba’s reenactment, despite its formal reproduction of Wigman’s work and the physical resemblances between Wigman and Barba, does not bridge but instead emphasizes the historical distance between expressionist Ausdruckstanz and contemporary dance. Herein resides the true dialectical nature of Barba’s Dance Evening: while approximating Wigman, it also distances us from the tradition she represents, as well as from the contemporaneity that Barba, by default, is supposed to embody by virtue of being alive.

Somewhat counterintuitively, then, “distance” emerges here as the key term to understand the affectivity at play in Barba’s reenactment. This linkage, however, becomes more plausible against the background of what Mark Salber Phillips calls “the plasticity of historical distance” (2013b, 9). According to Phillips, historical distance ought to be reconceived as a versatile concept that exceeds the function it has long fulfilled in traditional historiography. In the wake of nineteenth-century historicism, he explains, distance was narrowly defined as the temporal gap that separates the past from the present and which was consequently privileged as the indispensable condition that makes presumably objective knowledge possible. Only with the passage of time, so it was assumed, can one take a detached and affectively neutral stance toward the past. As an alternative to this influential view that, apart from being limited, also “carries a heavy weight of prescription” (2013b, 5), Phillips proposes to transform historical distance from a restrictive doctrine into what he terms a “liberal heuristic” (6). Instead of a normative prerequisite for historiography, historical distance should be used as a flexible interpretive instrument to analyze how “every representation of history, whatever its genre, incorporates elements of making, feeling, acting, and understanding” (6).

These four parameters—which Phillips also describes as the “formal, affective, summoning, and conceptual” modes of distance (2013b, 14)—invite us to consider in what manner dance reenactment deals with historical distance as a concept that is not only about differences in time, but also about construing, feeling, and understanding the past. Barba’s strenuous endeavor to mimic Wigman’s dances and aesthetics as faithfully of danced reenactments in which cross-connections can be drawn between choreographic practices that may seem to be remote in time but which become closely affiliated in the concern to work with existing dance traditions.
as possible suggests that, at least on the level of form, his performance is aimed at reducing the historical distance between himself and his precursor. But the same effect does not necessarily apply to the perception of the audience. Whenever one believes that one sees, however momentarily, the spectral presence of Mary Wigman on stage, the formal reduction of historical distance finds its correlate in the spectator’s affective response. Yet from the moment one focuses on the minor details that bespeak Barba’s male body or on his skillful manipulation of the theatrical machinery (including light, sound, costume, and dance), his literal imitation is likely to be perceived as historically distant, which diminishes the initial identification of Barba with Wigman. At some points, then, the past of Wigman may seem truly remote, whereas at others, we gladly familiarize ourselves with it and appropriate its characteristic codes. These shifting viewpoints ensue from Barba’s play with historical distance, which—following Phillips—not only is a matter of time, but also manifests itself both in form and affect, leading spectators to believe and disbelieve that Wigman’s presence might flash forth through Barba’s body. This demonstrates that Bertolt Brecht’s classical Verfremdungseffekt is not necessarily about establishing formal distance, but can also be achieved through strategic proximity.

To the extent that Barba’s Dance Evening is a balancing act between belief and disbelief, combining what art critic Michael Fried described as “absorption” and “theatricality” (1980), how do both dimensions amplify, rather than mitigate, one another? In Production of Presence (2004), Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht opens up the possibility of what he calls a “presentification of the past,” which can be obtained through “techniques that produce the impression (or, rather, the illusion) that worlds of the past can become tangible again” (94). While Gumbrecht does not specify what these “techniques” might entail, he does provide an important clue when stating that, in our current rationalized cultural climate, presence may only occur by virtue of an “oscillation between meaning effects and presence effects” (49). As Western cultures have never been able to shed the Cartesian privileging of mind over body, “presence could never become perfect if meaning was excluded,” even while meaning seems to be incompatible with presence, insofar as “meaning perhaps never does emerge without producing effects of distance” (137). What Gumbrecht distinctly calls “effects of presence” (106; my emphasis) can therefore only occur when they are in “oscillation” or a “productive tension” with effects of meaning, which requires “a specific framework” (107), most likely to be found in aesthetics and history, insofar as each of these domains implies “a marked distance from our everyday worlds” (125).

Once again, distance emerges as a prerequisite not only for the attribution of meaning, but also for the occurrence of presence effects, which suggests how both registers are always already, if not necessarily, imbricated within one another. Perhaps the distinctive feature of contemporary dance reenactment is that it acknowledges the role of meaning in producing effects of presence, whereas traditional dance reconstruction is solely concerned with reproducing presence without regard to the representational mechanisms that undergird this endeavor. The complexity of Fabián Barba’s Dance Evening derives from its confrontation of presence with meaning, with the result that both dimensions begin to oscillate with one another. This helps explain the mixed perceptions provoked
by Fabián Barba’s Dance Evening. Resolutely focusing on the outward look and choreographic techniques of the historical dances, Barba does not set out to extract a given meaning from the work or to impose a certain interpretation upon it. Instead, laboring to create a literal re-embodiment, he infuses the solos with his corporeal presence. But the resultant hyperbolic imitation also gives meaning to this apparent attempt to achieve a “presence effect,” since recognizing the strategic impetus behind the reconstruction induces an acute awareness of the time-bound character of expressionist dance and the ways this legacy is largely absent from contemporary stages in both Europe and the United States. As Barba turns reenactment into an artistic strategy by hyperbolically imitating both Wigman’s aesthetics and the conventions of reconstruction, his Dance Evening thus acquires a meta-historical dimension, revealing its own procedures to awaken and appropriate a specific part of the history of dance. This suggests how reenactment takes Hayden White’s famous Metahistory (1973), in which he excavates the underlying patterns of historiography, beyond a primarily linguistic understanding of history, to include performative and embodied practices, such as dance reenactment.9

Echoing Vanessa Agnew’s concerns about reenactment’s “tendency to collapse temporalities” (2007, 309), dance scholar Kate Elswit worries that “projects that draw upon twentieth-century German dance”—and Barba’s Dance Evening is one of the examples she mentions—“may ultimately take an ahistorical turn, flattening certain temporal economies that should remain destabilized, even as it disrupts others” (2014a, 12). To the extent that Barba’s re-embodiment of Mary Wigman’s solos does not directly challenge, for example, the general label of Ausdruckstanz—which, as Susanne Franco (2007) has argued, has been rather monolithically and retroactively applied to a variety of practices—he can indeed be suspected of subscribing to a flattened history of dance. There are, however, other temporalities at play beneath the work’s perceptible surface and which follow from the manner in which Barba confronts his own personal history as a dancer with the canonized history of dance. One of the arguably most significant “meanings” Barba came across in his allegedly “presence”-oriented engagement with Mary Wigman’s solos is the insight that the tradition of expressionist dance expanded and developed at different rhythms in other parts of the world. When Barba first saw Wigman dancing on video, he claimed to have “experienced a vague, ambivalent feeling of recognition,” which prompted him to think that the past of European dance might be the present of Ecuadorian dance (2011, 83). As he explains in Chapter 20 of this volume, however, this initial scheme of thought actually endorsed the linear narrative of dance’s canonized history, whereas, in reality, some dance traditions do continue to coexist in different places, as evidenced by the enduring influence of modernist dance on the

9 In Metahistory (1973), Hayden White writes that “the style of a given historiographer can be characterized in terms of the linguistic protocol he used to prefigure the historical field prior to bringing to bear upon it the various ‘explanatory’ strategies he used to fashion a ‘story’ out of the ‘chronicle’ of events contained in the historical record” (426). Approaching reenactment as an artistic strategy—as I have been proposing—leads to a similar kind of reading of these works, which articulates how the past is intentionally and often self-reflectively re-plotted on the stage.
contemporary dance scene in Ecuador. Ultimately, then, Barba’s Dance Evening uncovers a cartography of dance that troubles the chronological distinction between past and present as a means to historicize dance and as the foundation of historical distance.

**Unorthodox Faithfulness**

Identifying how historical distance is at work in Barba’s Dance Evening gives some idea of the interactions between presence and meaning, as well as the fluctuating temporalities that arguably undergird dance reenactment in general. In order to refine our understanding of this shifting dynamic, which Barba’s performance brings to the fore, I would like to juxtapose his work with another dance reenactment, one that enters this field from an entirely different angle.

As opposed to Barba’s formal imitation in A Mary Wigman Dance Evening, the Brussels-based Spanish choreographer Olga de Soto opts for the deviant route of reinterpretation in Débords: Reflections on The Green Table (2012). As she said in an interview, “I am not interested in producing an identical reconstruction” (Imbault 2012, 28; my translation). While de Soto was drawn to revisiting Kurt Jooss’s canonical dance work The Green Table (1932) because of the lasting impression it made on her, she considered it superfluous to create yet another facsimile, knowing that already “more than fifty companies have realized more than eighty different productions” of the piece (de Soto 2015, 25; my translation). Instead, de Soto’s approach focused on the reception, rather than the actual staging, of the original work. In Débords, the stage is populated by various projection screens that turn out to be the main protagonists, despite the physical presence of six dancers who, all dressed in black, seem to merge with the conspicuously dark scene, primarily serving as facilitators of the testimonies we see on the projected videos. The people that appear on the screens were interviewed by de Soto and recount their memories of The Green Table, a piece they either attended as a spectator or in which they performed as a dancer.10 As we hear them talking in German, English, French, or Spanish, the variety of languages evokes how Jooss’s work—after its successful 1932 premiere at an international dance competition in Paris—started to travel across

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10 For Débords, de Soto expands on the documentary method she already employed for her 2004 performance histoire(s), in which she revisited Roland Petit’s ballet Le jeune homme et la mort (1946). As with the work of Kurt Jooss, she was not interested in restaging Petit’s piece in its original form, but rather in tracing its impact by interviewing people who had attended its premiere in Paris. For an explanation of the rationale behind histoire(s), see de Soto (2011). Enlarging her scope for Débords, de Soto focused not only on the moment of the premiere of The Green Table, but also on the period before and after in order to find out how the piece affected people from different generations, also outside of Europe (see de Soto 2015). Interviewees featured in Débords are Juan Allende-Blin, Jeanne Brabants, Jacqueline Challet-Haas, Edith del Campo, Françoise Dupuy, Fernando García, Christian Holder, Ann Hutchinson Guest, Bruno Jacquin, Philip Lansdale, Michèle Nadal, Marina Grut, Toer van Schayk, Nora Salvo, Hanns Stein, Joan Turner Jara, Andras Uthoff, Jeanette Vondersaar, and Gerd Zacher.
various countries, leaving its traces in several minds and bodies at different points in time. Watching these fragments, it soon becomes clear that, as the interviewees are attempting to recollect the content of specific scenes, their memories unwittingly slip into the larger impact that Jooss’s work had on their individual lives and how The Green Table was able to measure the tensions of the inter-war period, as well as the anxiety that followed the end of World War II.\footnote{In Watching Weimar Dance, Kate Elswit points out that the common linkage of The Green Table with the specific sociopolitical context in Germany during the interwar period could not be overestimated, since it was only after World War II that the piece was performed regularly in Germany (Elswit 2014b, 128). An interesting difference between de Soto’s performance and Elswit’s study—even though they both take the reception of Kurt Jooss’s The Green Table as their primary focus—is that, according to Elswit, Jooss’s work came to be inscribed into “a narrative of cultural recovery” (137) that aimed to restore a linkage with the past. Contrastingly, the testimonies we hear in de Soto’s Débords emphasize how The Green Table was inexorably connected to the traumatic experience of war, provoking instead the impression that history is destined to repeat itself.}

Kurt Jooss’s piece indeed became renowned as a fierce anti-war ballet that used choreography to evoke and denounce the grim reality of war. The thirty-five-minute performance consists of eight tableaux in which various figures—such as diplomats, partisans, or the profiteer—run through the course of warfare, including its emergence, effects, and aftermath. The famous opening scene shows a group of politicians gathered around a diplomatic table, gesticulating frantically but not able to arrive at a consensus. The sequences that follow are the unfolding consequences of the political inability to ward off war. In a chronological succession, the scenes depict moments such as “The Farewell,” “The Battle,” and “The Refugees,” while the next two sequences zoom in on the resistance of a partisan woman and the oppression of women in a brothel. The seventh tableau, “The Aftermath,” enact a Totentanz (a dance of death) that demonstrates the fate to which the people are condemned. The last scene brings us back to the beginning, as the exact same situation of diplomats negotiating around a table is reprised. Because Jooss did not stage a specific war situation but rather a generalized and deliberately cyclical depiction of the common features of warfare, some even saw in The Green Table a universal condition of humankind. For Marcia B. Siegel, for example, the piece evoked “a sort of generic war, a set of circumstances that produce the same result no matter where or when they are played out” (1989, 17).

As de Soto’s Débords stubbornly refrains from showing a single step of Kurt Jooss’s choreography, her performance instantiates what can be called an “imaginative” type of reenactment, which brings it close to the function R. G. Collingwood foresaw for reenactment in historiography. In his posthumously published The Idea of History ([1946] 2005), Collingwood famously proposed that genuine historical understanding is only acquired when “the historian re-enacts in his own mind the thoughts and motives of the agents whose actions he is narrating” (115).\footnote{The fact that Olga de Soto’s Débords seems to put Collingwood’s early definition of reenactment into practice could raise the question of whether Collingwood is describing memory, rather than history. As the tension between history and memory has been a recurrent topic of debate in historical theory (see, for instance, Cubitt 2007), it would be interesting to explore how dance reenactment confronts both dimensions.} Due to the underlying premise that
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Historians are, at least on a rational level, able to close the gap between the past and the present through mental and reasoned reconstructions, Collingwood’s reenactment theory has been criticized for adhering to a naïve belief in the possibility of returning to the past as it actually was. A more careful reading of The Idea of History, however, shows that Collingwood is not discarding historical distance, but rather is foregrounding what Mark Salber Phillips calls its “plasticity.” “Any imaginative reconstruction of the past,” Collingwood explains, “aims at reconstructing the past of this present, the present in which the act of imagination is going on, as here and now perceived” ([1946] 2005, 247). Collingwood’s understanding of reenactment as an “act of imagination” that revisits the past from the viewpoint of the present could be used to describe the process that unfolds in de Soto’s Débords. Emphasizing the mnemonic dimension of reenactment, the piece reimagines Jooss’s work in order to trace its significance for those who were in contact with it when the memory of war was still vividly alive.

Since Olga de Soto turns reenactment into a reimagining of the work, rather than a re-embodiment as did Fabián Barba, her piece provides another angle from which to observe the interaction between presence and meaning that, following Gumbrecht, underlies any attempt at “presentifying” the past. Instead of focusing on the layers of presence, or the outward appearance of The Green Table, de Soto’s reenactment concentrates on the meaning of the work, quite literally, as the only way by which the audience comes to know Jooss’s piece is by the interpretive memories that are recounted in the interviews. Crucially, however, even this indirect approximation of The Green Table via the route of meaning does not hamper the effects of presence from coming into play. Perhaps the greatest surprise of de Soto’s Débords is that the piece does succeed in conveying some of the experiential impact Jooss’s work had on its audiences. When The Green Table was first performed in the interwar period, its outward evocation of warfare made a strong appeal to spectators who, after having lived through the atrocities of World War I, were in a state of devastation and uncertainty about what the future might bring. Moreover, in retrospect, Jooss’s piece proved to be an uncanny anticipation of World War II, which would follow after Adolf Hitler’s accession to power in 1933. With The Green Table, Jooss gave expression to a Zeitgeist, in a manner that was both specific and general enough to make this work into a long-standing exemplum of political art.

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13 Recent scholarship on Collingwood has tried to absolve him from this accusation. Guiseppina D’Oro, for example, argues that Collingwood “uses terms such as ‘reenactment,’ ‘inside/outside’ in a highly metaphorical way to explain the nature of historical explanation” (2002, 110). See also Browning (2004, 14, 75). The most extensive study on the role of reenactment in Collingwood’s thought is William Dray’s History as Reenactment (1995). Not surprisingly, the rise of reenactment in the arts has prompted performance and theater scholars to revisit Collingwood’s ideas on the function of reenactment for history. Maaike Bleeker, for instance, turns to Collingwood to argue that artistic reenactment is about reviving the logic of a work of art, more than about copying its outer appearance (see Bleeker 2012). Also theater historian Bruce McConachie attempts to restore the validity of Collingwood’s thinking by showing how recent findings in cognitive science corroborate many of his insights (see McConachie 2010). See Maaike Bleeker, Chapter 10 in this volume.

14 In contrast to the fairly explicit political content of The Green Table, Kurt Jooss seemed to be quite resistant to this kind of interpretation. As he stated in a 1982 interview, “I am firmly convinced that art