Wigman's Witches: Reformism, Orientalism, Nazism

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This article investigates *Hexentanz* (*Witch Dance*)— Mary Wigman's signature work—in the context of the radically changing political and ideological background to its creation. The piece was choreographed in three distinct versions, each during a different political system. The first was conceived in 1914 under a constitutional monarchy, the German Empire (although at the time Wigman was at the artist colony Monte Verità in Switzerland). The second was produced in 1926 against the backdrop of a liberal democracy, the Weimar Republic. And the third—a group dance—was fashioned in 1934 under the Fascist dictatorship of the Third Reich. The fact that *Hexentanz* was performed under three regimes is itself fascinating, with the third version often being unmentioned in secondary literature—as if, perhaps, to hush up its existence.

I argue that in constructing her dances Wigman partook in a widely disseminated and complex early twentieth-century German discourse on witchcraft and witch persecutions, which included interpretations ranging from anticlerical and feminist to racist and anti-Semitic. This discourse found its apex in the particular and curious interest afforded to witches by several Nazi figures, which ties in with a more general influence of occult and esoteric thought on the National Socialist weltanschauung.[1] Witch trials were heavily instrumentalized in the National Socialists' propaganda, with senior Nazis such as Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler and chief ideologue Alfred Rosenberg[2] viewing the persecution of witches as an anti-Germanic plot by Jewish and Catholic authorities. Impulses for and influences on the Nazis' view of witches can be traced to the right-wing (so-called) *völkisch*[3] movement dating back to the turn of the twentieth century, a movement that spanned both the Wilhelmine Period and the Weimar Republic.

By undertaking a rereading of the central figure of the witch, I shall examine how the cultural and political milieus of these different periods of German history have shaped, through Wigman's imagination if not necessarily consciously, the form and iconography of the three works. In the process, the paper will address some puzzling related issues. For instance, how was it that Wigman's

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Hexentanz was still performed after 1933—in a group version as part of her 1934 *Frauentänze (Women's Dances)*— despite having been seen, in many contemporary reviews and more recent literature alike (e.g., Banes 1998), as containing a strongly feminist message? Would this not have contradicted the Nazis' conception of women's role as primarily one of domesticity and childbearing[4] and made it impossible to dovetail the dance with their cause? Arguably, the Nazis must have recognized features in Wigman's work they believed could be subsumed under or tied in with their own ideology and *Kulturpolitik*. I shall therefore investigate how Wigman's witch figures—from her early experiments on Monte Verità to the version performed during the Third Reich—projected a sequence of neoromantic images and associations that garnered, at least in the first few years, the approval of the National Socialist cultural departments.

The article is structured in two main sections. In order to sketch the historical and ideological context of Wigman's choreographies, I shall first present a thumbnail overview of the importance of the witch figure in German cultural and political thought. Starting achronologically with the extraordinary interest shown in the topic by senior Nazi officials such as Himmler, my discussion then modulates to earlier (nineteenth-century romantic) interpretations, noting both the continuity and variety of German ideas about witches. I shall then turn to Wigman's three *Witch Dance* versions, offering analyses of each that emphasize their indebtedness to the cultural-political contexts within which they evolved. These three brief studies will touch on several underresearched but, in my view, important dimensions of the works: in particular life-reformist, oriental, and neopagan strands as well as links to National Socialism and its ideological antecedents. These studies will also draw out a common thread of neoromantic, *völkisch*, and antimodern thought that found different manifestations in the three political contexts.

Witch Discourses in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

In January 1945, as the Red Army advanced into German-occupied territories, a Polish librarian from Poznań University made a curious discovery. He had stumbled across an archive of over 30,000 file cards in a chateau deserted by the Germans in Schlesiersee (today's Slawa), which documented the violent deaths—often under torture—of so-called witches on German soil in and after the thirteenth century AD. Initially thought to have been used to research the Nazis' own brutal torture methods, it emerged several decades later that, far from this, the documents were part of a top-secret research project initiated by Heinrich Himmler (the head of the Waffen-SS, Gestapo, and ruthless organizer of the Holocaust) in 1935. For this project, also known as "H-Sonderauftrag" ("W[itch]-Special Mission"), SS researchers were employed to discover evidence for the murder of hundreds of thousands of innocent German women at the hands of Christian authorities. The obsessive witch hunts, Himmler reported, "claimed hundreds of thousands of mothers and women of German blood through barbarous persecution and execution methods."[5] This claim also had anti-Semitic overtones, which are partly explained by the allegedly "oriental" (a.k.a. Jewish) roots of Christianity itself (Wiedemann 2012a, 357), with Himmler notoriously claiming that "our eternal enemy, the Jew . . . also has its bloody finger in the pie" (1935, 46). Moreover, Himmler hoped to unearth the vestiges of ancient Germanic[6] pagan cultures, which had allegedly been suppressed through the eradication of witches.

While Himmler's predilection for obscurantism is fairly well known (see Wiedemann 2012a, 438), other Nazis too took a great interest in witch trials and contributed to a wide-ranging and complex witch discourse in the early 1930s. Alongside Himmler, Alfred Rosenberg recognized the propagandist value of witch persecutions: contrasting the rationalism and science, which he ascribed to true Germanic identity, with the ignorance and religious mania he associated with Christendom. In his influential 1930 book *Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts*, he wrote that "Only insofar as he is free, the Teuton can be creative, and centers of European culture could emerge only in areas devoid of the witch craze" (1930, 70). Attacking the "Judaized" form of established Christianity, he advocated a

return to Germanic culture in the form of neopaganism or a so-called positive Christianity that merged ideas of racial purity and Nazi ideology with Christian elements. Adolf Hitler himself was guarded about Himmler's and Rosenberg's openly anti-Christian tendencies and interest in mythology and labeled them "*spinnerige Jenseitsapostel*"—"bonkers apostles of the beyond" (Puschner 2001, 11). But while he found their theological positions too obscure and esoteric, he nonetheless proposed a museum in public recognition of the men who had abolished the witch superstition (Wiedemann 2012a, 445).

Notable among contributors to the witch debates of the 1930s are several women, who—contrary to the official party line that sought to conserve ultratraditional gender roles—advocated the equal treatment of males and females.[7] They invoked texts such as Tacitus's *Germania* and Jacob Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie* as evidence of the "sage" and supposedly high status of Germanic women, their admiration by men, and their special relationship to religion. Among these women was Mathilde Ludendorff, a leading figure in the *völkisch* movement and second wife of General Erich Ludendorff, who saw witch hunts as "a last act of patriarchal corruption of idealized old Germanic gender relations, which started with the Christianisation of the Germanic peoples in the early Mediaeval Ages" (Wiedemann 2012a, 455). Others, such as Friederike Müller-Reimerdes, used the persecuted witches as identificatory figures—thus anticipating, as historian Felix Wiedemann remarks (ibid, 454), certain discourses of second-wave feminism.[8] Even conservative-minded male Nazis, such as Rosenberg, propagated the notion of the witch as a "wise woman," primarily to garner support from female voters and potential party members (see Leszyczyńska 2009, 223–225).

These debates and projects had roots in earlier historical accounts of witchcraft and witch trials, which were subjected to a selective reading first by the *völkisch* movement (of which both Himmler and Rosenberg were members during the Weimar years) and later by the Nazis. Two main historical interpretive paradigms can be distinguished: the rationalist-anticlerical, which draws on late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Enlightenment literature opposed to witch prosecutions, and the romantic (see Wiedemann 2012a, 441; see also Levack 2013, 435–437). In a nutshell, the rationalist interpretation condemns the persecution of so-called witches as opposed to reason, progress, and science. The Catholic Church was blamed for allowing and furthering superstition and for what some authors describe as oriental religiosity (Schier 1999, 4–6; Wiedemann 2012a, 442–443). *Völkisch* and Nazi forces were able to capitalize on both the anticlerical and anti-oriental elements of this line of attack, which they also combined with nationalist messages by claiming that witch trials were an assault on idyllic Mediaeval Germanic society.

The second, romantic interpretive paradigm is perhaps more relevant when considering Wigman's contributions to the topic. Romantic authors were fascinated by folkloric images of witches' Sabbaths, in which magical women met in the deepest night to enjoy debauched excesses. In France, Jules Michelet's book *La sorcière* (1862) depicted witches as bearers of secret knowledge: rebels against Catholicism who had preserved something of the wild and untamed nature of pre-civilization. Michelet's German counterpart was his contemporary and friend Jacob Grimm—one of the two brothers Grimm—whose fascination for the Ancient Germanic people and their common language can partly be explained by the threat to German culture posed by Napoleonic rule in the early nineteenth century.

It was Grimm's ambition to foster German identity by recounting the beliefs and mythologies of the people prior to Christianization, traces of which he believed had survived in the folk customs of his time. Grimm conceived of the German *Volk* as bearer of ancient values and construed the "golden age" of Germanic culture as a model for a future Germany. His treatise *Deutsche Mythologie* (1835) includes a chapter on ghosts and devils that provides an account of how (during the process of Christianization) the Germanic pagan gods underwent a resignification that transformed them into devil figures. The image of the witch, for Grimm, was "the result of the conflict of the

patriarchal Christendom with the German culture and in particular the special role afforded to women therein" (Leszczyńska 2009, 148). In other words, he believed the persecution of innocent German women, who had held high positions in traditional society as sage priestesses and fortune tellers, was symptomatic of a moral degeneration resulting from the Germans' alienation from their own culture.

Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie* was read selectively by *völkisch* and esoteric groups during the late Empire and Weimar Republic periods, groups that emphasized the continuity of Germanic culture, the rejection of Christianity (which in Grimm's own works was treated ambivalently), and the critique of so-called civilization. These were linked to demands for an "*arteigene*" (native) religion as well as for racial purity. Ritual practices, such as witch dances, were seen not as a threat to the stability of the social order, but were welcomed as ecstatic experiences of transcendence. There are even indications that some members of the *völkisch* movement in the Wilhelmine Period propagated "eugenic breeding [*rassenhygienische Auslese*] through ecstatic dance" (Linse 1996, 408), which was presumably a sort of mating ritual with the function of breeding an Aryan strain of humanity (see Wiedemann 2012a, 450).

Witch Dance I: Life Reformism

Relatively little is known about the form and movement vocabulary of Wigman's first solo *Hexentanz* (1914), and very few records of it have survived. What we can see from photographs is the configuration of the witch as a natural, elementary, passionate, and organic figure: the starting point perhaps of Wigman's desire to conceptualize, in Susan Manning's words, "her body as a medium and her dancing as a channel for subconscious drives and supernatural forces, for ecstatic and demonic energies" (1993, 43). One picture shows Wigman in a simple jump, her left leg pointing downward in a straight line, her right bent, wearing a voluminous free-flowing robe and a hoodlike hat. She dances barefoot and barelegged.

Aesthetically, *Witch Dance I* reflects Wigman's quest to liberate dance from its subordination to the formal style of ballet and from association with other art forms. Her study period on the Monte Verità in Ascona in the summer and early autumn of 1913 with Rudolf von Laban, whom Wigman had sought out at the recommendation of Emil Nolde, provided vital impulses for her early work: "He moves as you do and he dances as you do—without music" (Wigman 1973, 26). *Witch Dance* premiered on February 11, 1914, at the Museum of the Palais Porzia in Munich where Wigman spent several months at Laban's school to escape the harsh Swiss winter. Its innovative feature of dance without music was highlighted in contemporary commentaries, reviews, and program notes and has been much debated in recent scholarly literature where it has served as a springboard for discussions of modernism and autonomy (see, for instance, Manning 1993, 7–8 and 24–25; and Song 2007; see also Burt 1998, 13–15). In a diary entry dated November/December 1913, Wigman commented that "nearly all of our modern dancers embody music. . . . To become free from the music! That's what they all should do! Only then movement can develop into what everybody is expecting from it! Into free dance, into pure art."[9] With her demands for a free or "absolute" dance, she distanced herself from her former teacher Dalcroze's system of musical visualization and traditional ballet accompaniment. She also emphasized, as Marion Kant argues, the removal of extraneous influences from her art (Kant 2011, 119).

Yet, in ideological terms—and taking into account the alternative lifestyle scene within which Wigman's work was created—the work might be seen to offer an antidote to the formal organization, hierarchical thinking, and authoritarian structures of the Wilhelmine monarchy and to unite notions of political and aesthetic freedom. Monte Verità was the site of a *Lebensreform* colony for people outside society's mainstream who sought to break free from bourgeois conventions. *Lebensreform* is an umbrella term for a range of social movements of the mid-to-late nineteenth

century that were formed by societies and clubs with various utopian, revolutionary, reactionary, and reformist aspirations. While its founding figures included the pacifist Gusto Gräser, an outspoken antiwar activist, Monte Verità enshrined a multitude of different conceptions of life and society in contradistinction to the monolithic empire. As an amused Wigman noted: "In each building reigned a different *Weltanschauung*. And at so-called social gatherings, discussions were very heated" (Wigman 1973, 41).

There were, however, notable commonalities among *Lebensreformers* in their rejection of modernity. They advertised their distrust of the detrimental effects of civilization, urbanization, and industrialization upon both the body and soul and advocated reforms that promoted a natural lifestyle, nudism, vegetarianism, abstention from alcohol, and body culture as correctives to the perceived social malaise, "nervousness," and "degeneration" (Puschner 2001, 397). Despite their seemingly liberal thrust (including, in some cases, support for female emancipation[10]), the reformers pursued a number of different ideological agendas, including a certain crossover with the *völkisch* movement (Puschner 2001, 167). The latter included two antisemites, Heinrich Pudor and Richard Ungewitter, who ascribed positive health benefits to nudity and combined an interest in German folklore with back-to-land populism and a critique of the alienation resulting from the industrial revolution—but with an additional element of racism and eugenics.

The ethos on Monte Verità in general, and in Laban's "School of all the Arts of Life" in particular, manifested a predilection for the experiential, vital, passionate, and organic. Laban's philosophy aimed to liberate human beings from the stigma of modern civilization with its overemphasis on rationality: The human being is physically, emotionally, and mentally stunted and degenerated as a result of the wrong exigencies of civilization" (Laban 1920, 134). Both he and, in his wake, Wigman were heirs to a Romantic tradition whose irrationalist, antimodernist, and anti-intellectual tendencies were strongly influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy of life. Nietzsche viewed dance as a ready model for a nonconventional and noncognitive "bodily" way of thinking, writing, and philosophizing and as a compensatory force against the dominance of rational and metaphysical thought.[11]

Wigman was an avid reader of Nietzsche and explicitly referred to one of his major works in her 1916 solo *Thus spoke Zarathustra*. Her writings, like Laban's, are replete with references to authenticity, the existential self, and antipathy to Enlightenment rationalism. For instance, she uses Nietzschean parlance when claiming that "dancing is an expression of higher vitality, confession of the present, experience of being, without any intellectual deviations."[12] Her characterization of the witch likewise drew heavily on the Romantic imagination, shaping her as an uncivilized figure of a simpler, earth-bound, pre-industrial lifestyle and also as capturing something paradigmatically Germanic. Rudolf Delius's review of *Witch Dance I* indicates how far the Nietzschean trend toward antimodernist Romanticism had entered into critical commentary:

> The Germanic, wild emotional entity has for the first time found its dance equivalent. . . . No conformity, no masquerades, no acting. The element speaks in an authentic way, the human being himself, as he has struggled for bodily language for thousands of years. In fact it is nothing but health and strength. (Delius 1913/14, 454)

As Jeffrey Herf remarks, romanticism also "encouraged a preoccupation with a world of hidden powerful forces beyond or beneath the world of appearances" (Herf 1984, 15). On Monte Verità, Wigman would have encountered the occult in the form of mysticism, theosophy and neo-paganism. A certain Frau Steindamm, for instance, held spiritualist séances during which she reportedly encountered ghosts, devils, and reincarnations (see Landmann 1973, 119). Such beliefs and activities were in vogue among the day's middle-class intelligentsia, and it is quite possible that they inspired Wigman's use of spiritual beings as motifs. In addition to *Witch Dance*, mystic

and pagan themes are widely evident in other works such as *Satan's Delight* (1917), which was part of *Ghost Dances,* and (from her more mature period) *Die Seherin* (*The Seer,* 1934),[13] which like *Witch Dance III*, was part of *Women's Dances*.[14]

Like other occult activities, Neopaganism was part and parcel of the era's antimodernist movement (Gründer 2014, 263).[15] Indeed, it was closely associated with romantic nationalism and as such was of interest to right-wing, reactionary, and *völkisch* thinkers in their search for "the appropriate foundations of national religion and culture in the age of the European nation state" (ibid., 265).[16] Likewise, the Nietzsche-inspired philosophy of life,[17] with its rejection of abstraction and intellectualism, "was prominent in the right-wing assault on reason" (Herf 1984, 27) and fed into conservative, antidemocratic (and indeed anti-Jewish) discourses. The romantic tradition in Germany—in particular its Nietzschean variant, which had a significant influence on Wigman and Laban—could thus be seen as a ready springboard both for a reactionary politics and an illiberal authoritarianism that opposed democratic aspirations and valued life, physicality, and experience over rational thought. As Herf observes, "if life or blood was the central force in politics, it was pointless to engage in critical analysis" (Herf 1984, 28).[18]

Witch Dance I was liberatory in aesthetic terms as it sought to free the dancing body from subordination to music and—through its costume and movement repertory reflecting the colony's "back-to-nature" ethos—from the constraints of civilization. Modern life, especially in urban environments, was dominated by synthetic, mechanical, and technological processes based on rules of logic and abstraction; as Wigman argues in *The Instrument of the Dancer* (see Kolb 2009, 75), ballet could be seen as applying such abstract and mechanistic principles to dance. Modern dance, by contrast, adopted an explicitly antirationalist stance embracing the passions, emotions, and drives—nowhere more prominently than in *Witch Dance*—and challenging bourgeois conventions. However, a similar antimodernist, antirationalist agenda was shared by the *völkisch* movement, which had infiltrated the broader campaign for life reform. Hence, communities like Monte Verità, which by design might well have been liberatory, egalitarian, and left-leaning, had features that could be reinterpreted to serve or were shared by *völkisch* and (later) Nazi ends. In particular, the radical lifestyle changes they advocated could be viewed, from a right-wing perspective, as bringing about a regeneration of the Aryan people and liberation from foreign influences.

Witch Dance II: Orientalism

The stimuli Wigman received on Monte Verità paved the way for her later incarnations of the witch figure. Her retrospective description of *Witch Dance II* explored her own self-fashioning in terms of this persona: all of a sudden she *is*, rather than *pretending to be*, a witch seized by supernatural forces:

> When, one night, I returned to my room utterly agitated, I looked into the mirror by chance. What it reflected was the image of one possessed, wild and dissolute, repelling and fascinating . . .: there she was—the witch—the earth-bound creature with her unrestrained, naked instincts, with her insatiable lust for life, beast and woman at the same time. . . . But, after all, isn't a bit of witch hidden in every hundred-percent female, no matter which form its origin may have? . . . It was wonderful to abandon oneself to the craving for evil, to imbibe the powers which usually dared to stir only weakly beneath one's civilised surface. (1966, 40–41)

The surviving film fragment of *Witch Dance II* shows Wigman sitting on the floor, wearing a mask created by Latvian-born sculptor Victor Magito. She has her knees bent and performs jerky abrupt movements with her legs, feet, and arms, while swaying from side to side and twisting her torso.

With her feet stomping on the ground and her arms lifted with aggressively extended fingers—her hands appearing like claws—the image she conveys is distinctly threatening.[19]

Witch Dance II has frequently been interpreted along feminist lines (for instance, by Banes 1998), perhaps reflecting the fact that in much feminist scholarship (especially during the movement's second wave, see note 8 above) the witch is projected as a benevolent woman and victim of patriarchy. Yet, it is the work's oriental dimension that I shall focus on in this article, as it seems particularly significant both in aesthetic and political terms. With its reference to Eastern forms and themes, the piece exemplifies a more general trend in Wigman's work that has been remarked on by researchers such as Burt (1998, 179–181) and Tsitsou and Weir (2013), and is manifest in an array of titles such as *Persian Song* (1916/17) and *Four Dances to Oriental Motifs* (1920).

If, as I shall argue, the second incarnation of *Witch Dance* bears many hallmarks of Far East Asia, that raises the question of how Wigman became influenced by this region and where she drew her inspiration from. A small group of researchers offer various leads. Ernst Scheyer, for example, documents that the Eurasian artist Fred Coolemans, who occasionally performed "in the style of Javanese dances" (1970, 20), taught at Wigman's Dresden school (although this was only the case from 1927). Matthew Isaac Cohen likewise points to the influence of Javanese performers during their tours in the early twentieth century and records that Wigman owned a collection of Javanese gongs (2010, 125). Her interest in things Asian might also have been strengthened by her contacts with the Dresden Ethnological Museum and an exhibition of Oriental art in the Gallery Arnold in 1923 (Scheyer 1970, 20).

In contrast to the original *Witch Dance*, the second version was accompanied by Will Goetze's composition using gong, cymbal, and drum and alternating between moments of silence and the accentuation of certain movements with percussive sounds. While in terms of music history the composer—whose full first name was Willibald—is rather obscure, he did produce an intriguing study, "Situation of Dance: About Ballet and New Dance" as a chapter in his 1936 book on opera; part of his study deals with dance accompaniment. Here, Goetze argued that the new form of absolute dance required a very different mode of accompaniment, which should be drawn from compositions that "stem from movement, and very often from the voice, and which can adequately be embodied through dance. I am thinking here of folk music forms, songs from *the Orient*, etc., which do not require alteration" (1936, 49, my emphasis). Referring specifically to the use of simple percussive instruments (such as the "melodic" gong or "rhythmic" drums, ibid.), he suggested that it would be inappropriate for gongs to imitate European melodic principles (ibid., 50), confirming that he was well aware of their Eastern provenance.

There are fleeting remarks in some secondary literature on Wigman's Japanese influences, particularly from the traditional performing arts of Noh and Kabuki. Sally Banes (1998, 129), for example, notes correspondences between Wigman's movements in *Witch Dance II* and the *mie* of Japanese Kabuki where the actor strikes a series of powerful poses before momentarily freezing. Noh drama clearly had a noteworthy impact on European theater throughout the 1920s and 1930s, with Arthur Waley publishing *The Noh Play of Japan* in 1921, Bertolt Brecht adapting *Der Jasager* (1930) from a Noh original, and even earlier than this, Ezra Pound and Ernest Fenollosa releasing their volume '*Noh' or Accomplishment* in 1916/17 (later reprinted as *The Classic Noh Theatre of Japan*). On viewing the surviving film of *Witch Dance II*, it does appear that the highly stylized and ritualized Asian-inspired form through which the dance is channeled contrasts starkly with the spontaneous outpouring of elemental experience in Wigman's own description of her piece. Her mask[20] is reminiscent of the conventional masks used in Noh theatre, which portray a range of characters including gods and devils, and enable the actors to convey emotions in a controlled manner through body language. Magito, the designer of Wigman's mask, had, according to Scheyer, "experimented with Japanese Noh masks" (Scheyer 1970, 20), which render the dancer's movements "impersonal and universal" (20).

Matthew Cohen (2010, 131) explains how German artists, such as Wigman's student Berthe Trümpy, prized Asian dance for its affinities with modern dance in terms of (among other things) its spiritual qualities. In Noh, the *shite*—its primary, masked character—typically bridges the gap between this world and the beyond, often by appearing as an ordinary living person in the first section of the play and a supernatural figure (such as a ghost, demon, or witch) in the second. Arguably, there is a parallel with the metamorphosis from human to witch described by Wigman when she looked in the mirror. In commenting on why dancers use masks, Wigman also deploys several allusions to the supernatural: she speaks of "a world of visions," the blurring of "the demarcation between the realistic and irrational levels," and "ghostlike features" (1973, 126).

A more direct source of inspiration for *Witch Dance II* could well have been a Japanese dancer by the name of Michio Ito. Ito came from a noble Samurai family, received early training in Kabuki (Caldwell 1977, 38), and came to Europe initially to study singing. However, he soon discovered an interest in dance and enrolled in Dalcroze's school of eurhythmics in 1912 where, we may assume, he was a fellow pupil of or at least met Wigman who studied there until the autumn of that year (Müller 1986, 32). Beginning in 1914, Ito embarked on a career in modern dance as a performer and choreographer that brought him to England—where he starred in the first of William Butler Yeats's *Four Plays for Dancers*, titled *At the Hawk's Well* (1916), which was written in the style of Noh—and later the United States. Even in his early stage creations, he "combined a traditional form of Japanese dance with the new Occidental dance" (Caldwell 1977, 37), and a 1915 advert promoting his appearance at London's Coliseum variety theater described his repertoire as consisting of "harmonized Europo-Japanese dances" (ibid). His intercultural creations might well have paved the way for Wigman's use of Japanese threads in her own work.

Another Japanese performer who was active in Europe, and specifically Germany, at the time was modern dance pioneer Baku Ishii who visited Europe between 1922 and 1925 and performed in Berlin in 1923. According to research conducted by Japanese professor of dance Yukihiko Yoshida,[21] Mary Wigman saw Baku's modern-dance inspired work and invited him to her studio, but his writings indicate that he did not follow up her invitation. There was, however, direct contact between them. Moreover, Baku Ishii appears twice in the well-known 1925 German film *Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit* (*Ways to Strength and Beauty*), which also featured students from the Mary Wigman School. The film not only includes his own solo choreography *The Prisoner* (originally from 1923), but also a duet with his partner Konami in a work entitled *Dance of the Seagulls*, which was supposedly characteristic of "ethnic" Japanese dance. Yet its authenticity is the subject of some debate: dance scholar Naomi Inata[22] claims that it was effectively a mixture of Japanese traditional dance, folk dance, and Western dance styles. It thus seems that, like Michio Ito's practice, Baku Ishii's involved fusing elements from different performance traditions. and it is very possible that such a trend also helped to inspire Wigman's own mixing of cultures in *Witch Dance II*.

Yet this intercultural fusion (to borrow a contemporary term) raises a number of questions. If it is a key to understanding Wigman's second *Witch Dance*, how would this fit with the widespread claims in both contemporaneous and more recent literature (e.g., Michel n.d., 11; Müller 1987, 66; Kant 2011; Manning 1993, 28; Kolb 2009, 158–166) that she pursued a uniquely Germanic form of expression? And moreover, how are we to evaluate the work's Eastern influences in terms of political ideology?

It is important to remember that the interwar years saw considerable cultural exchange between Eastern and Western spheres, promoted through exhibitions, for instance.[23] This reached a peak in the crisis years of the early Weimar Republic, when a wealth of information on the history, arts, and geographies of the East entered Central Europe, offering alternative models of knowledge from beyond the Western paradigm. Among the Eastern cultures, Japan had a particularly close relationship with Germany in artistic, cultural, and political respects, reaching as far as back as the Meiji era (1868–1912) when the Japanese government sent delegates to Germany, a nation the

government regarded as a model for the modernization of Japan (Tachibana 1998, 20). The Weimar Republic subsequently witnessed "a whole wave of Japanese students come to German universities to imbibe anti-modernist philosophy" (Marchand 2013, 348), suggesting the two nations shared an intellectual disdain for modernity.

A possible reason for this was their shared interest in the work of Nietzsche, which once introduced to Japan in the mid 1890s (mostly via secondary sources) had a vital influence on the ideas of the country's intelligentsia and the shaping of 1930s Japanese romanticism, known as *Nihon rōmanha* (Parkes 1996, 360). According to Tachibana (1998, 20), this school of thought "stressed not only the concept of a superior race, but also radical sentiments that led to … the acceptance or even exaltation of death and destruction as ultimate values." The Japanese may also have been attracted by Nietzsche's regard for non-Western cultures and religions as "a palatable Other to Judaeo-Christian-European modernity" (Almond 2003, 43). While Nietzsche included only two specific references to Japan in his entire oeuvre, it is interesting that they relate to the Japanese drive for cruelty, which he admired as a sign of their "higher culture" (see Parkes 1996, 378) and linked to feelings of satisfaction, greatness and power.

The apparent contradiction between Wigman's integration of Japanese forms and the (alleged) "Germanness" of her work should thus be seen in the context of contemporary German attitudes to the Orient in terms of both culture and politics. The "Orient" is itself a rather fuzzy notion, geographically referring to large areas of Africa and Asia and encompassing a number of distinct non-Western philosophical and religious traditions. But it is important to recognize that in early-twentieth-century Germany at least, the Orient was not primarily associated with imperialism. Edward Said's well-known (1978) account of the East-West relationship as a product of empire,[24] which has influenced many Western treatments of the topic, primarily focuses on the cultures of the main imperial nations Britain and France. But as a number of scholars including Marchand (2009), Polaschegg (2009), and Wiedemann (2012b) have noted, it is not so applicable to Germany whose history was significantly different, having only entered the race for the colonies at a much later stage (Marchand 2009, 432). I would therefore suggest that as a German artist Wigman was unlikely to have been influenced by colonialist perspectives, and contend (in opposition to Tsitsou and Weir 2013) that a Saidian interpretation of the piece fails to account for its specific German context.

In Germany the Orient had different connotations. It was sometimes associated in derogatory terms with Judaism, with antisemites producing negative propaganda about "orientals" and applying this label to the "Jewish" Near East. Their argument (if it can be called that) was that Christianity had been founded by oriental Jews and disseminated westward into Europe. By contrast, other (non-Jewish) "orientals" were largely excluded from such criticism, notably people from the Far East such as Japan and China as well as Arabs, Turks, and Muslims (the latter partly because of assumed ancient Aryan linkages), with the Arab Orient in general being viewed as a cradle of culture and esoteric wisdom.

Because Germany had limited occupational presence in oriental spheres prior to 1915, insights in oriental studies were rarely drawn from direct engagement with contemporaneous Eastern peoples but more often from philology and the study of the Orient's cultural histories and past achievements. These included the Eastern classics, such as Buddha's sayings and Confucius's analects which were seen as "closest to the pure expression of the spirit of the folk" and as expanding "the sphere of human consciousness" (Marchand 2013, 345). Thus, in contrast to British and French forms, German orientalism was

> a tradition which tended to be not enlightened and imperialist, but romantic and elitist; German orientalists certainly believed Europe culturally superiority [*sic*], but they also emphasized, especially in eras of western crisis, the spirituality, integrity and antiquity of eastern cultures. (Marchand 2013, 342)

In the context of what Wiedemann calls the "stylising of the Orient as fundamental counter-image to modernity" (2012b), it is unsurprising that many Weimar artists took oriental cultures as sources or models for spiritual renewal, models that were very much in line with the Romanticism and societal visions advanced by Nietzsche. This trend, however, admits of different interpretations. On the one hand, while it does not preclude an "othering" of oriental people, it differs from the more straightforwardly imperialist attitudes that are the target of Said's critique.[25] Indeed, as Marchand argues, German Oriental studies in the Weimar era could be seen to harbor the seeds of what in the 1970s was to be termed a "multicultural" worldview: "There was a powerful understanding of the Eurocentric nature of conventional history-writing and the unsuitability of Western models and norms for understanding the cultures of the East" (2009, 496). It was recognized, too, that European cultures owed many of their inventions and ideas to the Orient and that for many centuries the West had been the less advanced region.

On the other hand, reactionary forces—including the Nazis—also seized on the opening up of multiple ancient historical worlds to study during the Weimar years. These ancient worlds included not only the Germanic and Nordic past, but also ancient Greece and, as a contrasting but revered alternative, the (non-Jewish) Orient. Nazi ideology was heavily imbued with romanticized notions of ancient times, and the Nazis appropriated symbols (such as the swastika) from a variety of historical and cultural contexts. For example, Himmler was greatly inspired by the anthropology, mysticism, and pantheistic religions of East Asia while the Japanese were regarded so highly as to be made "honorary Aryans," with Hitler citing the alleged "superiority" of Japanese noble castes based on their ancient cultural heritage:

> I have never regarded the Chinese or the Japanese as being racially inferior to ourselves. Both belong to ancient cultures, and I admit freely that their tradition is superior to our own. I believe it will be all the easier to liaise with Chinese and Japanese the more they insist on their racial pride. (Hitler, February 13, 1945)

I believe that in *Witch Dance II* (and Wigman's other oriental works) we can perceive a tension, one that permeates modern dance as a whole, between particularism and universalism.[26] While Wigman unquestionably draws on indigenous German cultures and narratives and seeks to preserve a national heritage, at the same time she recognizes the universality of cultures in the purity and authenticity of their respective histories. At least, this is true of some cultures. Her work embraces, or has been associated with, the Nordic (Blass 1922, 48), the Ancient Greek, and the Oriental: all of which figure as powerful tropes in the struggle against the overly civilized and life-denying trends of the modern era, and thus reflect the neoromanticism that can be traced throughout the Weimar period.

By referencing Japanese performance styles in *Witch Dance II*, Wigman could be seen as promoting an intercultural encounter: a fusion of two distinct performance traditions into further artistic innovation as well as international understanding and exchange (in a similar vein as Ito and Baku). Yet, it is important to note that Japan's political ambitions were nourished by similar sentiments as those of the German right wing: embracing reactionary romanticism, claiming racial superiority (exemplified by the Nihon rōmanha movement), and seeking national expansion. Later during World War II, the German alliance with Japan was, of course, further cemented. It is possible, therefore, to read Wigman's reference to oriental forms as reaching out to ideological allies who were seen as holding similar antimodernist traditions and aspirations. Hence, while the aesthetic form of *Witch Dance II* may suggest a destabilizing of cultural identities and a cosmopolitan worldview normally associated with progressive ideals, its Japanese allusions could equally pertain to a shared espousal of culturally conservative values. These include a longing for lost traditions and antipathy to modernity, which were common to the two countries (or, at least, to the reactionary voices in them).

Witch Dance III: Nazi Paganism

The last version of the dance, which I shall entitle *Witch Dance III* to acknowledge the continuity of the motif throughout Wigman's career, is the least researched of the three. It was created for her new troupe of fifteen female dancers, which was sponsored by the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda in July 1934 (Müller 1986, 226–227). Premiering in the winter of that year, it toured across Germany as part of the cycle *Women's Dances*, which comprised five sections: *Bridal Dance, Maternal Dance, Lament of the Dead, Dance of the Seer*, and finally *Witch Dance*. Its exact form is difficult to reconstruct from surviving photographs (which are mostly of rehearsals) and accounts of reviewers (notably Michel 1935). But it seems to have featured a polarity between the dancers coalescing in a heap, before dispersing chaotically and even running off stage, only to clamor and huddle together again in the dance's final moments. Michel's description refers to the witches darting "to the floor in somersaults and grotesque jumps" as well as performing circle dances. Wigman herself participated in the piece, portraying a "mistress of witches" (Michel 1935, 13–14) in a counterpoint to the much younger performers who comprised the rest of the group. Michel uses words such as "bizarre," "grotesque," and "curious" (ibid.) to summarize the piece's impression on its audiences.

This version has been perceived by some scholars as evidence for the changing aesthetic of Wigman's oeuvre, reflecting the exigencies of the newly established Third Reich and more specifically the role of women and clearly demarcated conceptions of the genders. Hedwig Müller, for example, writes that this version is but a toned-down one of Wigman's 1920s creation and lacks the "visionary forcefulness" of the earlier daemonic dance: "The 'witches' are no longer the inhuman, challenging creatures of her earlier solo dances which goad to fight, but maenads from more harmless realms" (1986, 227). No filmic evidence of this version has been passed down, and the surviving photographs are ambivalent. On the one hand, the pretty and smiling dancers captured on camera fall short of conveying an image of evil or fearsome energy. But the iconography of the upper body movements is in fact strongly reminiscent of earlier works such as *Chaos* from *Scenes from a Dance Drama* (1924): the same angular arms and the same clawed hands.

Wigman's own notes and thoughts on *Witch Dance III*, written in 1934 in her hard-to-decipher handwriting, are stored in the Berlin Academy of the Arts.[27] To my knowledge, these remain unpublished, and there follows an abridged version that I have translated into English:

> Walpurgis Night—witch dance.
> Spring—breakthrough—eruption,
> The coming of spring—
> The earth becomes free, the earth is open.
> Witches = creatures of the earth
> Primordial creatures—women—all sorts
> Earthlike, earthbound, earthborn
> The elementary.—
> . . .Awakening—reawakening of nature—
> Excitement . . . close to nature—
> Destructive of form, libertine—
> passionate, exuberant
> Not a grotesque spasm,
> A demon's possession, yes, of the woman! —
> Animal, yes.—
> Wraith-like, spectral——
> lascivious, scornful, barbarous
> full of lust—lust once more—
> Sensual, erotic, also sweet

...Freedom, abandon.
...The cavalcade (maenadic)—
Passing by, flitting past,
Flying past—racing past.
Dissolved into detail, the individual figure!—
Closing again to rigid
Form and extinguishing
Life.

Written in associative poetic form, these notes indicate that in intention at least Wigman's chore-ography not only emphasized the same attributes as the previous *Witch Dances*, but exceeded them in terms of accentuating the witch's erotic and unrestrained nature. Most reviews also capture the wildness and frenzy of the dance, with a critic from *Berliner Morgenpost* underscoring the "demonic witches, which at once manically ride past, then mass together into a heap—a vision of Dantesque gloriousness."[28] Even the reviewer from the official newspaper of the NSDAP, *Völkischer Beobachter*, noted that the *Witch Dance* "which progressed from a lumped-together group of people to orgiastic dissolution, made the greatest impression."[29]

Some excellent analyses have been done of the subtle changes in Wigman's group works around 1930. According to Manning (1993, 3 and 184–185), they began to exhibit a more formulaic and fixed relationship between group and leader, with a more homogenous and less individualized dance vocabulary. Kant (2011, 129) also notes a shift in the direction of Wigman's dance philos-ophy to encompass "the acceptance of being part of a community" and even to reflect the "Führer-model of totalitarian Nazi ideology." We find in Wigman's diaries between 1933 and 1935 reflections on the position of the individual in the group and on whether group work amounts to "extinction, abolition of individuality." She used terms such as "self-abandonment" and "aban-don" (in relation to chorus movements), reflecting upon "service to the cause which has not been invented by one person, but is acknowledged and desired by all participants" and postulating that "if the once-only job demands the renunciation of the individual expression, in favour of the col-lective, then this renunciation is voluntary."[30] While this emphasis on self-denial and service to the community—written around the time of creating *Witch Dance III*—does not in itself amount to praise for autocratic leadership, Wigman articulated the latter more clearly a few years later in *Deutsche Tanzkunst* (1936, 64).[31]

Wigman's ideological leanings aside, there was a more obvious thematic rationale for her turning *Witch Dance* into a group work, a rationale that is fairly explicit in her own notes and some reviews but has not received scholarly attention. This is that the piece centers on *Walpurgisnacht* (Walpurgis Night): the witches' Sabbath of German folklore, the night from April 30 to May 1 when witches were believed to gather to celebrate the arrival of Spring on the German mountain Brocken (also called Blocksberg) in the Harz mountain range. The witches reputedly rode to the venue on magical broomsticks to celebrate a pact with the devil, conjure up demons, and sacrifice children. The fes-tival has roots in pagan rituals in fertility rites, and in celebrations of the coming of spring; it is named after an eighth-century English-born abbess, who lived in Germany, by the name of Walpurga. Detailed descriptions can be found in the literature of the early modern era, and visual representations are numerous, from seventeenth-century engravings to twentieth-century paintings such as Paul Klee's *Walpurgisnacht* (Tate Collection London), which dates from the same year as Wigman's *Witch Dance III*.

The program note for the *Women's Dances* premiere (cited in Manning 1993, 177) refers to Goethe's *Walpurgisnacht*: a scene from the great author's tragedy *Faust* (part I, 1808) in which the title character is taken by Mephistopheles to the Brocken to witness the annual witches' Sabbath. Here, Goethe describes an orgiastic, sexualized, and enchanting dream sequence of witch-ery amid the nocturnal sounds of the forest. His poem *The First Walpurgisnight* (1799), set to music

by Felix Mendelssohn in 1833, is a variation on the same theme and recounts the struggles of the druids to practice their May Day rituals in the Harz mountains in the face of Christian opposition. A narrative set on the brink of enforced Christianization, at a time when pagans and Christian believers coexisted, it portrays the educated druids (who were soon to be defamed as "witches") as standing for values of freedom and ancient wisdom, while the newly conquering Christian regime is depicted as intolerant and inhumane.

Whether Wigman's work was intended as a choreographic rendition of Goethe's *Walpurgisnacht* is difficult to ascertain given the scant textual and iconographic evidence. Yet it is possible, as the orgiastic atmosphere of the *Faust* scene seems to reverberate in Wigman's own poetic notes. Moreover, both Goethe's play and poem feature an individual witch/druid as a counterpoint to a chorus group. While the poem's druids are male, in *Faust* a character called Baubo—the name of a Greek goddess personifying female fertility—is depicted as the witches' leader and mother while the chorus is described variously as a "heap" or "swarm" (Goethe 1839, 479 and 487) that dissolves into a rabble sweeping past. This configuration of personae is echoed in Wigman's choreography, which begins and ends with a bundled mass of witches, interspersed with scenes where the group splits into smaller configurations on stage: either standing up, lying down, or kneeling. Meanwhile the forty-eight-year-old Wigman acts as the group's mother-figure, driving them to maenadic ecstasy.

Walpurgisnacht also had a special significance for the Nazis, who embraced its embeddedness in Germany's cultural history. In April 1933, Hitler, Goebbels, and Frick (the Reich's interior minister at the time) signed a document declaring May 1 a bank holiday to celebrate "national labour." In the following year, the day was renamed the "National bank holiday of the German *Volk*," thus eliminating any association with working-class identity. Taking a sideswipe at Christian churches, which had condemned ancient religious rites as "*heidnisch*" (pagan), Alfred Rosenberg wrote:

> On May 1 Ancient Germania celebrated Walpurgis Night, the beginning of the twelve consecrated nights [*Weihenächte*] of the summer solstice. It was the day of Wotan's wedding to Freya. Today Saint Walburga celebrates her name day on May 1, while all the old customs were changed by the church and branded as magic, witch-craze etc., thus transforming nature symbolism into Oriental demonic spook. (1931, 164)[32]

Wigman's surviving notes on the other *Women's Dances*[33] invoke similar themes to *Witch Dance III*. The *Maternal Dance*, for example, is not (as might be expected) about childbearing and the feminine nurturing qualities of motherhood. Rather, it tells of a harvest festival and of homage to the Great Mother—an ancient (pre-Christian) female deity and fertility symbol—who was supposedly usurped by the monotheistic notion of the single (male) God often seen as a symbol of patriarchy. Wigman's references to the power of woman might be viewed as amplifying some female *völkisch* and National Socialist voices that advocated equal treatment of the sexes but were increasingly suppressed as the Nazi regime developed.

Most important, by referring to Walpurgis Night and Great Mother, Wigman took up the thread of pagan motifs running throughout her work. Her interest in mysticism and paganism was shared by the Nazis, whose interest in the revival of ancient spiritual traditions was partly intended to advance the superiority of the Aryan race—for instance, replacing the Christian cross (and ethical values it represents) with the swastika as a symbol of Aryan identity. Moreover, the sexual overtones in Wigman's description of *Witch Dance III* could be turned to eugenic ends, with some *völkisch* groups (as mentioned earlier) suggesting that the witches' Sabbath's main function was to produce Aryan offspring.

Conclusion

There is an interesting ambivalence in how Wigman's *Witch Dance* may be read. On the one hand, the three versions might appear to be uniquely indebted to the different cultural-political circumstances in which they were created. The first had an antiestablishment and experimental thrust, reflecting the alternative and even anarchic lifestyle of the Monte Verità colony, which in turn represented a protest against (or at least escape from) the strict authoritarianism of the Wilhelmine monarchy. The second dance reflected the more liberal climate of the Weimar Republic, merging as it did influences from other performance traditions—notably Japanese ones—in a seemingly intercultural fusion. The third appears adapted to the political expectations of the Nazi regime: not by portraying women as obedient housewives but rather by recourse to pagan vocabulary and festivities that appealed to the Nazis' anti-Christian leanings. With its alluring performers and depiction of orgiastic rituals, the group dance can be seen as upholding Aryan community values while gesturing to Germanic fertility rites.

Thus, Wigman's three versions display a catalogue of differently motivated treatments of the witch motif. This reflects the elastic and controversial nature of the cultural-historical witch discourse itself and also manifests the ways in which Wigman responded to and shaped her three works in accordance with the cultural trends and influences she received from the different political contexts.

On the other hand, there is a continuity that links all three works ideologically and aesthetically. This is the strand of neoromantic, antimodernist, and *völkisch* thought running through conservative movements during the monarchy and Weimar Republic and later also underpinning Nazi ideology. With their references to pastoralism, irrationalism, and pagan traditions, the first and third works draw a clear legacy from the *völkisch* and German nationalist movements of the day. While the second dance's oriental elements might at first sight seem to gesture to a more progressive and pluralistic approach, it too can be seen to embody an antipathy to modernity that was shared by reactionary voices in Germany and Japan. This common ideological thrust underpinning all three versions may also help explain why Wigman, and *Witch Dance* in particular, were happily embraced by the Nazis.

Notes

1. In his book on *The Occult Roots of Nazism*, Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke argues that the politics of Nazi Germany—its doctrines and institutions—were underpinned by mystical and cultic ideas. He offers a detailed examination of the Ariosophists (notably Guido von List and Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels), whose abstruse combination of reactionary nationalism, racism, German paganism, and occultism "filtered through to several anti-Semitic and nationalist groups in late Wilhelmine Germany, from which the early Nazi Party emerged in Munich after the First World War" (1992, 5).

2. In one weirdly twisted argument, Rosenberg wrote that the Roman Pontiff was the successor to the "Etruscan chief priest" and that the Sacred College of Cardinals was an "amalgamation of the priests of the Etruscan-Syro-Middle-Eastern people and the Jews with the Nordic Senate of Rome"

(1931, 70–71). The Etruscan chief priest is in turn credited with being at "the origin of 'our' medieval worldview, that terrible superstition, the witch mania to which many million people of the occident fell victim" (ibid., 166–167).

3. The *völkisch* movement is a German variant of the populist movement, with origins in Romantic nationalism. It emphasized folklore and the idea of the people constituting a single body or organism sharing a language, race (blood heritage), and/or religion. While the term encompasses a range of more or less conservative viewpoints, the movement is seen as a precursor to the fascist ideology of the Third Reich (see Puschner 2001) as the term *Volk* came to refer to an ethnically defined nation.

4. For further discussion of women in Nazi Germany see, for instance, Stephenson 2001 (in particular 18).

5. Speech on May 24, 1944, quoted in Wegener (2010, 125). All translations from German are my own unless otherwise noted.

6. By Germanic peoples we understand the non-Christianized people of Central Europe.

7. While there were several ideas of womanhood upheld throughout the Third Reich—including that of a healthy, robust, and physically fit woman—this seldom extended to the notion of women being equal with men in terms of their occupational or political role in society.

8. Among 1970s feminist interpretations of witchcraft are Barbara Ehrenreich's and Deirdre English's book on *Witches, Midwives and Nurses* (1973), in which they argue that the defamed witches were traditional healers and midwives whose suppression was a ploy by the budding (male) medical profession.

9. Wigman, Der freie Tanz, AdK = Academy of the Arts, Berlin, Mary Wigman Archive, 439.

10. The liberal and emancipatory aspects of Monte Verità are also typically underscored in literature on dance (see Manning 1993, 57; Banes 1998, 135; and Kolb 2009, 93).

11. See Nietzsche (1980): NF, in: KSA VII, 7 [152]. Given Nietzsche's poor constitution, his interest in dance necessarily remained theoretical. His friend, the composer Peter Gast (alias Heinrich Köselitz) quipped in a letter dated January 9, 1889: "More often than him / no-one spoke of dance; / more rarely than him / no-one has ever danced" (Nietzsche 1975, KGB III 6, 420).

12. "The Dance and the Modern Woman," AdK, Mary Wigman Archive, 492, 2, quoted in Kolb (2009, 83).

13. This work's title is often incorrectly translated as *The Prophetess,* a term that has a closer association with organized religion, rather than with the spiritual philosophy with which Wigman engaged.

14. Barbara Hales (2013) argues that Wigman's and Talhoff's *Totenmal* (and in particular Wigman's portrayal of a mystic medium) reflected the German need for mourning following the ravages of the war, a need that people found answered in spiritualist practices.

15. Agnieszska Gajda (2013) argues that the rise of Central European paganism took place in various phases: first, a "rediscovery" of ancient histories and native faith in the nineteenth century, second, a revaluation of the ancient alongside the modern (accompanied by a search for authentic folklore), and finally a stage the author terms "re-Paganization." The latter involves a proliferation of native, indigenous faiths at the expense of "imported" Christianity in the first four decades of the twentieth century (2013, 44). Gajda also points to the importance of paganism in Romantic nationalist thought: "For many romantics, the pre-Christian religion represented the wellspring of national character before it was tainted by foreign influence" (Gajda 2013, 56).

16. For further research on the connection between esotericism and extreme right-wing ideologists in the context of the search for a national identity as well as on the contrast drawn between a religion with Germanic roots and "alien religious influences," see also Heß-Meining (2011, 390).

17. Other important representatives of the philosophy of life, which emphasized feeling, intuition, and the organic (as lived experience) as opposed to theoretical knowledge, were Ludwig Klages, Wilhelm Dilthey, and Henri Bergson. Nietzsche is sometimes seen as a forerunner, rather than representative, of this school of thought.

18. Herf notes that while the philosophy of life was not exclusively right-wing, it became, in Germany, part of right-wing ideology (1984, 27).

19. This version is by far the most widely discussed of the three, and detailed movement analyses can be found in various texts, such as Reynolds (2007, 75–82). My discussion here is confined to considering the work's Eastern influences and their ideological significance.

20. On the function of the mask see also Newhall (2009, 106–108).

21. Email communication dated April 4, 2016. Yukihiko Yoshida retrieved information about the encounter between Baku and Wigman from Baku's book *Watashi No Kao (My Face)*, Modern Nihon Press, 1940. See also Yoshida's article "Lee Tsia-oe and Baku Ishii before 1945" (2011) for further information about Baku Ishii's work and career.

22. Email communication dated February 11, 2016.

23. For instance, the Berlin Academy of the Arts hosted an East Asian Exhibition in 1912 (see Marchand 2009, 411).

24. Edward Said's main arguments have been debated widely in various subject disciplines. In a nutshell, he posits the relation between Occident and Orient as asymmetrical, with Western culture constructing its identity through its delineation from an imagined and exoticized Orient. He also argues that the discriminatory stereotypes of oriental cultures were used to justify imperial domination.

25. In fact, many Germans even expressed anticolonialist views, but this was in part geopolitically motivated as the critique of colonialism was targeted at Germany's main European competitors for global power and influence, Britain and France.

26. As Mark Franko puts it (2014, 269), "all dance is linked in some way to culture and ethnic identity, but modernism attempted to deny these links and exist in a universal 'human' sphere that would keep it aloof from any ethnic association."

27. Wigman, Notizen zu Frauentänzen, AdK, Mary Wigman Archive, 1302.

28. Berliner Morgenpost. December 13, 1934, AdK, Mary Wigman Archive, 75.

29. Völkischer Beobachter. December 13, 1934, AdK, Mary Wigman Archive, 75.

30. Wigman, Tagebücher 1933–35, AdK, Mary Wigman Archive, 442.

31. The "leadership" theme was also anticipated in earlier essays by Wigman, see Manning (1993, 147).

32. By using the word "Oriental," Rosenberg is referring to the Jewish origins of Christianity.

33. Wigman, Tagebücher 1933–35, AdK, Mary Wigman Archive, 442.

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