

creation of the real body" (30). She gracefully guides the reader to appreciate the display of different gender identities on the same dancing body. The transcendental promise of androgyny is a means of re-figuring what is real and offering a new standard for performance and spectatorship.

Claid acknowledges the standard view that dance feminizes men in the eyes of the spectator. She praises those men who have unabashedly embraced the feminine in their movements. Then, she seeks the same identity mutability for women. She yearns for women to have a wide scope of gender expression, yet her strongest examples of such range are male dancers: men who embrace beauty and fluid movement, and men who are comfortable under the gaze of an audience. Claid clearly states that it is possible for women to masculinize themselves on stage and thus attain androgyny, but her examples do not completely persuade me to agree.

Part of the problem with Claid's argument is that she is dealing with biological sex and sexual identity characteristics at the same time. A continuation of the Cartesian binary that divides experience into opposites is at work. Queer theorists like to reject the binary as too simplistic a way of living in the world, so it is a step backward to enmesh sex and identity. Masculinity and femininity act as two poles on a long spectrum of identity experience and are often considered opposites in the same way that male and female are seen as opposites. Claid specifically calls dance "a language that signifies as feminine," so it is less than convincing that it is even possible for dance to masculinize women (160). Claid demonstrates women moving along the continuum of femininity into the territory of masculinity, but it remains questionable that they will ever make it far enough to be considered androgynous.

In a challenge to other statements in

the book, Claid remarks on the problems androgyny might cause for feminists, "the high-art aesthetic of classical androgyny represent[s] a denial of the female desire, feminine sensuality and eroticism" (70). In a community that seeks to promote new ways to perform and view the feminine, a rejection of the female form and its identifying characteristics is problematic. But Claid does not reject femininity. While she rightfully wants women to have the choice to perform their femininity with individuality, she also wants spectators to seek such variety. It is difficult to resolve what seem to be contradictory voices that desire dance to exist without clear boundaries yet want feminists to hold onto an essential femininity. It may be through contradiction, however, that we can come to a clearer understanding of the queer theory appreciation of many identities playing out on one body. Awkwardly for Claid, her proof lies mostly with male examples. I am quite sympathetic to the idea of performing fluid identities, but I am not convinced it can be achieved in the manner she presents. I am left questioning the potential for *dance* to be the medium through which women might achieve androgynous performativity.

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### **FINNISH DANCE RESEARCH AT THE CROSSROADS: PRACTICAL AND THEORETICAL CHALLENGES**

*edited by P. K. Pakkanen and A. Sarje. 2006. Helsinki: The Arts Council of Finland 175 pp., photographs, notes, references. \$35 paper.*

This anthology of collected research articles is part of a series of yearbooks that started in 1997. This is the first time a volume has been published in English with the explicit purpose of providing international readers

with a survey of Finnish dance research. This is of course an excellent goal given the limited readership available for texts published in the Finnish language. The studies presented cover a wide field, an approach to dance research that is also typical of the Nordic Forum for Dance Research (NOFOD), created in order to further the interests of researchers in Finland and its neighboring countries, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. The volume, with its broad spectrum of topics, and the research organization reflect the importance of promoting a marginal academic field of inquiry through joint efforts.

Dance research in Finland has expanded during the last decades, and the volume collects the work of twenty writers, many of whom have earned their doctoral degrees in subjects such as dance pedagogy, artistic research, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, and history. Although the subject matter varies, there are some common tendencies that concern choice of methods or research interests.

First, interdisciplinary approaches as well as holistic worldviews appear in several studies, for example, in Eeva Anttila's nuanced use of Martin Buber's and Paolo Freire's dialogical philosophy for studying dance education; in Päivi K. Pakkanen's development of a holistic research model for dance pedagogy based on pragmatist-hermeneutic philosophy; in Teija Löytönen's investigation of the everyday life of dance institutions based on organization theory, qualitative interviews, theories of everyday life, and social constructionism; and in Maarit E. Ylönen's intriguing analysis of dancing as kinesthetic narrative. In this work Ylönen interweaves anthropological fieldwork in Nicaragua with psychodynamic theory, semiotics, phenomenology and hermeneutics. In most cases, these multifaceted analyses are engaging; however,

one notices that more explicit sociopolitical stances easily become overshadowed by the emphasis on holistic conceptualizations.

Second, the high number of researchers applying phenomenology is a feature that stands in contrast to dance research in other locations. One of these articles is Petri Hoppu's research of the minuet. What is exciting here is the coupling of phenomenology with historical study, typically an uncommon association. Hoppu considers his own body the ultimate source for understanding and interpreting how people danced centuries ago. Jaana Parviainen is probably among the most widely read Finnish scholars from an international perspective; her thesis on dance and phenomenology was published in English in 1998. In the current anthology she gives a short introduction to phenomenology, with the focus on presenting concepts that could be developed into movement analysis methods. Leena Rouhiainen has used the theories differently and addresses interview material through a phenomenological framework in order to understand what being a freelance dance artist means. This interest in phenomenology among Finnish dance researchers can possibly be explained by the "bodily turn" in international dance studies since the 1980s, but it could also have to do with the fact that many of the Finnish writers and scholars have been and still are actively engaged as dance artists. The latter aspect is true for Kirsi Monni, who wrote her dissertation on ontological considerations of dance, based to a large extent on Martin Heidegger's thinking. According to the editors, keeping up with current dance research is considered, among practitioners, a professional resource and an important source of know-how.

Third, this bridging of practice and theory awards several research projects an activist dimension. In recent terminology it is of-

ten called research *for the arts* (rather than research *about art* or *in art*), meaning that the research is done in order to develop new dance practices. Soili Hämäläinen's 1999 dissertation investigated two different ways of teaching and learning choreography based on an experimental study carried out with students at the Theatre Academy of Finland, and a summary of the focal themes is included in the anthology. The result of this study today feels almost like mainstream knowledge, and given the fact that the research project was initiated during the late 1980s or early 1990s, one comes to understand how fast the development and establishment of reflected pedagogical practices has happened in the Nordic countries. Paula Salosaari's exploratory study of ballet workshops is likewise pursued in order to develop new teaching methods. It is a highly intriguing practice-led research combining innovative ways of arranging ballet workshops, making dancer interviews, and analyzing the empirical material with the help of Thomas Csordas's cultural phenomenology. In discussing the results of her research, Salosaari states that *multiple embodiment* in classical ballet "suggests that one and the same movement of the ballet vocabulary can be experienced and performed in subtly or more distinctly varying ways in terms of its artistic quality" (25). This new approach to teaching ballet breaks away from the tradition of reproducing fixed movement forms, which Salosaari believes has been the most common approach in ballet.

In some studies the reader learns about particular circumstances in Finland, while other texts have more general concerns or deal with other geographies. An example of the former is Aino Sarje's impressive research about the boom in male dancers in Finland since the 1990s and the subsequent change of power structures. One of these effects

has been the increased status of dance art in Finnish society. We have seen this history played out before, in other times and in other places, but it is always interesting to encounter local variations that add the experiences of those in often neglected smaller countries to the canon of historical examples.

In general, the published research, which is mainly presented in abbreviated and summarized form, is of fairly good quality. Of course, the short formats of each article make it more difficult to properly evaluate each researcher's choice of problem statement, research questions, methodologies, and scholarly results. I think the editors are fully aware of this; thus they perceive the anthology as a survey and introduction to Finnish dance research. I have already mentioned the absence of more explicit sociopolitical approaches and could add the almost complete lack of postcolonial perspectives, albeit with one exception. Inka Välipakka approaches her studies of women's expressive dance cultures with a feminist stance and with multicultural issues at the forefront. In this manner she analyzes her own dance works, Ob-Ugrian shawl dances, as well as contemporary Indian dance. Mariana Siljamäki is a teacher of West African dances, and in her study of why Finnish nonprofessional dancers become involved in African dance, one notices how the scholar's own dance practice makes it difficult for her to engage in more in-depth analysis of the motives behind wanting to dance these particular dance forms. The research is a qualitative case study and lacks a critical reflection upon how dance styles become uprooted from their contexts and the workings of discourses based on ideas of essential features in African dance. On a positive note, one could argue that the study provides ample source material, which could be used for more analytical work.

The research, spanning from 1998 to 2005, shows differences in scholarly approach that match the ways in which dance studies has transformed as it moved between different topics, choice of empirical material, theories, and methods, both in Finland and elsewhere. However, this observation should not discourage other dance collectives from publishing similar volumes. I consider the Finn-

ish anthology a very positive example and congratulate its editors and scholars for their aspiration of wanting to invite us into their worlds of research.

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