

rects us to the liminal and multiple nature of Brassbound's racial status. Born of a White father and a West Indian mother, Brassbound is at the racial interstices of English, Black, White, and West Indian. While Shaw's dialogue onstage often centers on the decision of whether Brassbound can be considered White or Black, Brewer is attentive to how the "hybrid" nature of his racial status renders him neither fully White nor Black, but more so within a state of "variegated" Whiteness.

Dance scholars will find the text a suggestive place to think about the various ways in which race is choreographed on and off stage, as well as how race, in turn, choreographs the body. From labor practices to the enmeshment of the body in nineteenth-century discourses of racial difference, Brewer makes clear how Whiteness has continually compelled a certain contouring, if not movement, of bodies, substantiated, for example, by her contention that Western expansionism and the removal of Native Americans from southwestern states allowed for the actual space or place for more immigrant groups to become White. In fact, throughout the text emerges a way to understand race as not flattened to the level of merely epidermis but also as something having to do with bodily practices. For instance, in her discussion of initial colonial contact in the United States, Brewer contends that "the colonial view of the Native American as barbarous rested in the first instance on differences between social practices, not physical bodies" (19). While I would give pause to her pure assertion that "physical bodies" and darker skin tones did not factor into colonial views of the Native American upon contact, Brewer's contention—that the notion of the savage Indian was garnered around the social practices of the body rather than simply the static body—is an apt place to think about how the materiality of race is engendered in and

through bodily practices and movements, and, ultimately, how Whiteness, while tied to skin color, also indicates "ways of thinking and acting, and of perceiving and being perceived" (32).

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## Note

1. See Richard Dyer's *White* (1997) and E. Ann Kaplan's "The 'Look' Returned: Knowledge Productions and Constructions of 'Whiteness' in Humanities Scholarship and Independent Film" (1997).

## Works Cited

- Dyer, Richard. 1997. *White*. London: Routledge.
- Kaplan, E. Ann. 1997. "The 'Look' Returned: Knowledge Productions and Constructions of 'Whiteness' in Humanities Scholarship and Independent Film." In *Whiteness: A Critical Reader*. Edited by Mike Hill, 316–28. New York: New York University Press.

## CANADIAN DANCE: VISIONS AND STORIES

edited by Selma Landen Odom and Mary Jane Warner. 2004. Toronto: Dance Collection Danse Press/es. 455pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography. \$39.95 paper.

The publication of this anthology, a rich smorgasbord of topics and approaches, essays and interviews by thirty contributors, is cause for celebration. Discussions of Canadian dance and dancers do appear in book-length historical overviews, in international arts journals, and in cross-disciplinary contexts within Canada. Still, opportunities to publish on Canadian dance remain rare. The assembly of previously uncollected writings into *Canadian Dance: Stories and Visions* valuably recuperates and preserves many other-

wise lost histories. The chapters alternately converse with, echo, and contradict each other, ultimately creating a dynamic dialogue about dancing and about Canada.

Organized into four roughly chronological sections, the book sketches out a wide spectrum of personalities and themes in Canadian dance. Part 1, "Statements of Belief," presents two idiosyncratic texts—Francoise Sullivan's essay "La Danse et l'Espoir," part of the Automatist artists' 1948/Refus Global/ (Total refusal) manifesto, and a reflection on the development of Canadian choreography and postsecondary institutions since the late 1960s by the founder of the York dance program, Grant Strate. A cross-section of mostly biographical essays on teachers, dancers, and critics from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries comprises part 2, "Pioneers." Part 3, "Politics and Perseverance," includes geopolitical studies; for example, Iro Tembeck illuminates the rarely discussed Montreal Anglophone dance scene in the twentieth century, while Cheryl Smith explores the evolution of major ballet companies in Winnipeg, Toronto, and Montreal, including issues of patronage, government funding, and policy. Rosemary Jeanes Antze, Pat Richards, and Carol Anderson target ballet and contemporary dance in Ottawa, Nova Scotia, and Winnipeg. The final section, "Visions and Revisions," includes biographical articles on more recent dance artists as well as descriptions of preservation and reconstruction projects and explorations of aspects of multiculturalism as reflected in contemporary concert dance in Canada.

Passion permeates the contributors' storytelling. Meticulously researched historical biographies are often also lovingly written tributes: Selma Odom on Dalcroze pedagogue Madeleine Boss Laserre and her student Saida Gerard; Leland Windreich on Vancouver dancer and master teacher June

Roper; Mary Jane Warner on vaudeville/ballet dancer Evelyn Geary; Amy Bowering on teacher and civic company founder Marion Stark Errington; Pierre Lapointe on male Quebec dance pioneers Marc Beaudet, Roland Lorrain, and Fernand Nault. Sometimes the biographical lens widens beyond the individual subjects—for example, in Flynn's story of prairie women dance pioneers Alice Adams, Ruth Carse, and Dorothy Harris—to focus on how context affects the growth of dance cultures. Some are birthed in the feminized space of living-room dance studios, while others thrive in the globalized space of touring or in the often interdisciplinary space of professional and academic educational institutions. Taken together, these articles not only reveal aspects of Canadian concert dance and Canadian nationalism but also sketch out patterns of cultural production and point to the transnational forces of class, gender, and race and how these play out in the Canadian context.

Concerns about the nature of Canadian national identity are a powerful undercurrent in the book. In their opening section the editors' juxtaposition of statements by francophone Francoise Sullivan and anglophone Grant Strate seems to echo novelist Hugh MacLennan's 1945 characterization of Canada as "two solitudes" (MacLennan 1945), a nation containing French and English cultures that coexist but do not connect. This pairing of a Montrealer with a Torontonian mirrors Canada's bilingual national agenda and in addition underlines the ways in which Canada's colonial masters (American-British and French-European) and the corresponding urban cultural meccas Toronto and Montreal became enshrined in Canada's imaginary as the only cultural progenitors that really mattered.

We glimpse early twentieth-century conceptualizations of Canadian character

as essentially “Northern” in theater historian Anton Wagner’s comprehensive article on the symphonic danced dramas of Toronto’s Herman Voaden in the 1920s and 1930s. His nonrealist multimedia stage experiments sought to create a Canadian Folk Drama through an awareness of environment. For Voaden, as for the Group of Seven painters of this period, Canadian art needed to embody the cool, white purity of “The North,” a purity that stood in opposition to both the moldy corruption of the old world and the commercial degradation of our southern neighbor, the United States of America.

Artists were recruited specifically by national cultural institutions to support an identity-building agenda. In “The History of a Devolving Nationalism: Three Dance Films of the National Film Board of Canada,” Jody Bruner explores danced (and mediatized) nationalism in her examination of *Ballet Festival* from 1949, *Shadow on the Prairie* from 1953, and *Pas de Deux* from 1967. Bruner sketches out the history of the National Film Board (NFB) as a reflection of Canadian ideas about “nation” and the cultural policy initiatives that attempted to turn these ideas into actualities through performance. The NFB story is skillfully woven in with descriptions of the films’ perspectives and style and detailed commentary on the dancing itself, allowing the reader to see how this sequence of dance films displays Canada’s devolution from colonial nation state toward transnationalism. “The Ballet Problem: Kirstein-Buckle Ballet Survey for the Canada Council,” by Katherine Cornell, foregrounds the tensions around creating a national culture out of a colonial psyche. Cornell explores ways in which government arts policy strategies affected the three major ballet companies in the early 1960s. The Canada Council selected two dance experts to advise government on

funding policies for dance—the wealthy co-founder of the New York City Ballet and a British ballet critic. A formative moment in cultural self-determination occurred when the council ultimately ignored both experts’ advice opting for a more “made in Canada” solution. Cheryl Smith’s community-based perspective in “Stepping Out: A New Look at Canada’s Early Ballet Companies, 1939–1960,” reveals the hardworking, middle-class, mostly female volunteer “patrons” that provided a “soft-landing” for ballet companies in the pioneering days of cross-Canada touring. Smith points out that practical patronage (hospitality, volunteer labor, and social influence as well as money) gave each of this country’s major ballet companies a firm base on which they have thrived, quite unlike the aristocratic patronage supporting ballet in Europe. Smith tartly contradicts critic Nathan Cohen’s belittling of “the enthusiasm of a group of women” (213) as a major force in sustaining ballet companies in the early years, and she delights with her revelation of the Canadian trope of “ordinariness” as a national trait: “Rather than the prestige of royal patronage, perhaps these (Canadian) stories lack the glamour inherent in the old European companies” (222).

Iro Tembeck’s two seasoned critical studies contribute to our understanding of the impact of Canada’s official policy of bilingualism and Quebec’s embrace of separatism as played out in Montreal. Tembeck explores in considerable depth the “cultural insularities” (271) evident in the distinct Anglo and Franco dance scenes in “Politics and Dance in Montreal, 1940s to 1980s: The Imaginary Maginot Line between Anglophone and Francophone Dancers”; she brings to light the obscured Anglophone dance scene and illuminates the effect of separatist cultural policies on Anglophone dancemakers. In

"Walking the Tightrope: Acrobatics and Athleticism on the Montreal Stage," Tembeck's investigation of the particularly acrobatic physical vocabulary of Montreal choreographers in the 1980s and 1990s provides invaluable descriptions of the ways in which the distinctive dancing "made in Quebec" parallels that province's quest for cultural and political sovereignty.

Regionalism, the notion of Canada as a string of distinct (and less important) regions dangling from its central bicultural (Montreal/Toronto) core, is embodied in the selection of "regional" representation (out of thirty-three articles, six could be classified as having a specifically "regional" focus): Pat Richards on Atlantic Canada, Anne Flynn on Alberta, Anna Blewchamp on the Royal Winnipeg ballet, Leland Windreich on Vancouver, Amy Bowering on London, Ontario, and Rosemary Jeanes Antze on Ottawa.

Many additional themes can be usefully excavated from this collection. For instance, teachers and students of choreography can explore an array of perspectives on choreographic process (Francis Mason's interview with choreographer Christopher House, and Holly Small and Susan Cash's article on Terrill Maguire) and on contrasting institutional structures for encouraging choreographic work (Grant Strate on the National Choreographic Seminars, and Jennifer Fisher on Toronto's 15 Dance Lab). Those interested in reconstruction and preservation of both dances and dance archives can refer to articles by Rhonda Ryman on the ENCORE! ENCORE! Project, Anna Blewchamp on reconstruction of Gweneth Lloyd's *The Wise Virgins*, and Carol Anderson on the Dance Collection Danse founders Miriam and Laurence Adams.

This book is the fruit of a collaboration between the theater dance archive and dance

book publishing enterprise of Dance Collection Danse and the graduate program in dance at York University, both Toronto based. The volume is carefully edited and graced with several black and white illustrations and photographs. However, the lack of an index is lamentable, and it is annoying that basic information gets repeated as each author contextualizes their subjects for their originally intended audiences. Of the thirty contributors, sixteen are graduates of the York program and eleven are current or former instructors there. A handful of writers represent visions and stories from beyond that institution (four writers are not based in Ontario or Quebec). Readers looking for a comprehensive history of dance in Canada will not find it here. But any accusations of uneven or partisan representation are off the mark, given the Herculean effort of publishing dance writing in Canada in the first place and given that the book makes no claim to be any kind of overview or canonical text. And this is a good thing.

Theorists in theater and visual art have long been repudiating "the popular understanding of nationhood as an evolutionary progression made evident by the 'growth' of national culture and the structures of cultural production" (Filewood 2002, x) and increasingly question the value of "chronological/developmental narratives and limiting strategies such as the entertainment/political binary" (Filewood 2002, ix). The quantity and diversity of articles in *Canadian Dance: Stories and Visions* does give ample evidence that dance has a long, broad, and deep history in Canada, and several of the contributors seem to wish to construct a case for the "strong nation equals strong culture" equation. And yet the book's presentation of a multiplicity of competing voices indicates that instead of attempting to create a nation-building vision

of dance culture, Canadian dance, like Canadian theater or Canadian identity itself, “has always been a difficult and problematic term, less a definition of a thing than a site of debate and contestation” (Filewood 2002, x). More immediately important is that the intimacy of many of the stories and the obvious passion of their tellers means that people will read this book, and its stories and visions will connect with students and readers from the ranks of dance aficionados and beyond.

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### BELLY DANCE: ORIENTALISM, TRANSNATIONALISM, AND HAREM FANTASY

edited by Anthony Shay and Barbara Sellers-Young. 2005. *Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, Inc.* 421 pp., 54 plates. \$40.00 paper.

This anthology is a welcome challenge to the conflation of the exotic and the erotic that continues to dominate mainstream Western perceptions of belly dance. The historical contexts for and strategic manipulations of this confusion are among the topics addressed by various authors in the collection, which includes contributions from eleven scholars on subjects ranging from dance in Egyptian film to belly dance’s appropriation by new-age goddess worshipers. Anthony Shay and Barbara Sellers-Young, the book’s co-editors, write that their introduction—and by infer-

ence the volume—“engages three interrelated topics linked to the transnationalism of the dance form”:

First, western imperialist approaches to the Middle East that influenced the initial conception of solo improvisational forms and the distribution of the orientalist images. . . . Second . . . the point of intersection during the late 1960s and 1970s between the Arab American community’s development of ethnic restaurants and the burgeoning feminist movement’s desire for greater personal identity and physical expression. Finally, . . . the contemporary Middle East’s response to the phenomenon of belly dance. (3)

As the above passage indicates, this anthology attempts to include a wide range of subjects of inquiry and interpretive approaches. Various authors focus on the histories of the translations and transpositions that belly dance underwent as it traveled from the Middle East to the West and back again, and implications of 1960s- and 1970s-era feminists adopting/creating a form of belly dance as a means of female sexual empowerment, among other provocative questions. A number of chapters offer lucid descriptions of the movement vocabularies of belly dance and nuanced distinctions between various sites in which the dancing takes place. Because of the variety of topics and methodologies, the book works best when viewed as a collection of independent essays rather than as a comprehensive critical account.

As I was reading this book in the United Kingdom, cabinet minister Jack Straw incited fierce debates about the place of Muslim cultural practices—and the agency of Muslim women—in the West when he stated that he preferred not to meet with women in full, face-obscuring veils (*nigab* or *burqa*) because he believed that face-to-face communication