

de -
archiving
movement

#3

research : choreography : performance

ed. by Rose Breuss and Claudia Jeschke
in cooperation with IDA research lab

Claudia Jeschke
**DANCING WOMEN WRITING –
MARGITTA ROSÉRI:
LE TOUR DU MONDE DE LA DANSE**

Claudia Jeschke
CHOREO-GRAPHING SPECTACULARITY

© Rose Breuss, Claudia Jeschke, epodium (München)

Website: www.epodium.de

E-Mail: info@epodium.de

Alle Rechte vorbehalten/All rights reserved

Covergestaltung: Drahtzieher Design & Kommunikation, Wien

Satz: Frankowsky – Grafik & Kommunikation, Gernlinden

epodium ist eine eingetragene Marke

ISBN 978-3-940388-60-5

Germany 2017

Reihe de-archiving movement

Herausgeber: Rose Breuss, Claudia Jeschke

Bibliografische Informationen Der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek.

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über

<http://dnb.ddb.de> abrufbar.

DANCING WOMEN WRITING – MARGITTA ROSÉRI: LE TOUR DU MONDE DE LA DANSE

Autobiographische Memorabilia aus dem Bereich des Tanzes dienen gemeinhin der historiographischen und chronologischen Re-Konstruktion von Lebenswegen. Im 19. Jahrhundert, in dem die ‚großen Ballerinen‘ ebenso wie eine Reihe weniger dem Ballett zugehöriger, aber dennoch erfolgreicher Tänzerinnen einen Platz in der Tanzszene beanspruchen, beginnen diese Künstlerinnen über ihre berufliche Situation zu schreiben. Zunehmend werden Autobiographien zu einem weiblichen Aktionsfeld, das sich gegenüber der bislang männlichen Deutungshoheit über den Tanz (vor allem als Verfasser tanztheoretischer Traktate und tanzpraktischer Lehrbücher oder als Kritiker) zu behaupten sucht. Die Autobiographien professionell tanzender Frauen liefern andere, von persönlichen Erfahrungen mit dem Berufsalltag geprägte Texte, die sich – selbstverständlich – als Konstruktionen von Lebensgeschichten und – darüber hinaus – als tanz-affine ‚Akte‘ lesen lassen.¹ Unter dieser Perspektive verweisen sie auf kulturell präzise zu kontextualisierende Praktiken performativer und tänzerischer Handlungen. Tänzerinnen – das ist die These – verwenden das Medium Schreiben, um das Medium Tanzen zu präsentieren (und umgekehrt) und vermitteln damit von der Tanzgeschichtsschreibung weitgehend ignorierte Einsichten in ihre handwerklichen wie künstlerischen Verantwortlichkeiten und beruflichen Selbst-Repräsentationen.

Margitta Roséri (selten auch Margarita) ist eine dieser bislang wenig beachteten schreibenden Tänzerinnen bzw. tanzenden Autorinnen aus der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts.² Sie stammte trotz ihres romanisierten Namens aus Deutschland und blickte in ihrer Autobiographie (Roséri 1891) auf eine internationale Karriere zurück.³ Die Sammlerin Friderica Derra de Moroda kommentierte die Schrift mit den Worten: „An interesting account of her travels and engagements and the people she met, from 1860–1890 --- there is much information about the famous dancers and ballet-masters of that time.“⁴ Zudem – und interessanterweise – betritt Mlle. Roséri die zuvor ausschließlich männlich dominierte Szene der Lehrbuch-schreibenden Tänzer und Pädagogen: Sie hinterließ einen *Katechismus der Tanzkunst* (Roséri 1896).

-
- 1 „[The autobiographical] has signified the many practices of self-representation but has come to be narrowly identified by many critics in the twentieth century with a particular mode of storytelling, the retrospective narration of ‚great‘ public lives. The latter understanding of the term has often obscured the ways in which women, and other people not included in the category of ‚great men‘, have inscribed themselves textually, visually, or performatively.“ (Smith; Watson, 2005, 8f)
 - 2 Die Sekundärliteratur, in der Mlle. Roséri erwähnt wird, beschränkt sich auf zwei Aufsätze von Christina Thurner (Thurner 2010: 12–21 und Thurner 2012: 59–69).
 - 3 Alle folgenden im Haupttext in Klammern gesetzten Seitenzahlen und Kapitelangaben beziehen sich auf Roséri 1891.
 - 4 Derra de Moroda: Handschriftliche Bemerkung auf lose eingelegter Karte in Roséri 1891. Derra de Moroda Dance Archives, Universität Salzburg, Sign. DdM 2213. Ein mapping der von Roséri genannten Namen gäbe interessante Einblicke in das nomadische Leben der weiblichen wie männlichen Tanzkünstler in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts – ein mapping, das hier nur angeregt, aber nicht geleistet werden kann.

Margitta Roséri wurde Mitte der 1840er Jahre als (Margarete/Margit?) Röhser⁵ in Nürnberg geboren.⁶ In ihrer Autobiographie finden sich weder ihr Geburtsname noch genaue Zeit-Zuordnungen; das erste präzise Referenz-Datum, 1854, bezieht sich auf einen Auftritt der spanischen Tänzerin Pepita de Oliva in Mlle. Roséris Heimatstadt. Die Eindrücke dieser Aufführung waren offenbar ausschlaggebend für die Berufswahl: „Von jetzt an träumte ich nur vom Tanzen, meine Spiele waren fortwährend Theater und Pepita.“ (4) Das erste Kapitel von Mlle. Roséris Autobiographie ist mit „Meine Kinderjahre“ (I) überschrieben und thematisiert die von Pepita de Oliva ausgehende Begeisterung an der theatralen Schönheit des Tanzens und deren Wirkkraft; das zweite Kapitel markiert einen Ort: „München“ (II), wo die Tänzerin 1860 ihr erstes Engagement als Solotänzerin erhielt. Die weiteren 22 Kapitel folgen der Dramaturgie von Ortsangaben; diesen fügt Mlle. Roséri in der Überschrift hier und da kulturelle, soziale, politische Ereignisse hinzu, die in ihren Auswirkungen auf Werdegang und persönliche, d.h. berufliche Befindlichkeit der Tänzerin beschrieben werden.

Die geographische Route der Karriere von Margitta Roséri ist beeindruckend. Zu Beginn überwiegen Engagements in Provinzstädten wie „Hamburg und Brüssel“ (III), „Granada“ (VII) oder „Hannover“ (XVI); sie sind auch in der zweiten Hälfte ihrer Bühnentätigkeit noch einmal wichtig (auch wenn sie später meist in Kombination mit den Metropolen Paris und London angeführt werden): „Dublin und London“ (XIII), „Paris und Lyon“ (XV), „Breslau und London (Queen’s Theatre)“ (XVII). Stationen in europäischen Metropolen sind wohl dem künstlerischen Erfolg der Tänzerin zuzuschreiben: „Paris (Theatre [*sic*] de la Porte St. Martin)“ (IV), „London (Covent Garden-Theatre [*sic*])“ (V), „Madrid“ (V), noch einmal „London (Gaiety Theatre)“. „Cairo (Während der Eröffnung des Canals von Suez)“ (X) markiert einen halbjährigen Aufenthalt in Nordafrika. Das letzte Drittel ihrer Karriere verbringt Mlle. Roséri in den USA und Mittelamerika: „Amerika“ (XVIII), „Havanna“ (XIX), „Philadelphia und Boston“ (XXI), „Californien“ (XII [recte XXII]). In drei Kapiteln kommentiert Mlle. Roséri explizit politische Ereignisse – in Kap. VIII: „Das Königliche Theater in Madrid, während der spanischen Revolution in 1868“; in Kap. X, wie bereits erwähnt, die Eröffnung des Suez-Kanals und in Kap. XII die „Ereignisse nach der Kriegserklärung in 1870“. In zwei, die geographische ‚tour du monde‘ ästhetisch reflektierenden Kapiteln befasst sich Mlle. Roséri mit Themen, die künstlerische bzw. nationale (d. h. kultur- und mentalitätsgeschichtlich spezifische) Entwicklungen der Tanzkunst betreffen: „Ein Zurückblick auf die Tanzkunst“ (XIV) und „Das Gesellschaftstanzen in Amerika“ (XX). Der „Schluß“ (XXIV) ist ein bitteres, enttäushtes Resumee eines Tänzerinnen-Lebens:

Ich war froh, als meine Carriere beendet war. Wie manche Künstlerin ihre Memoiren geschrieben oder hat schreiben lassen, um mehr die angenehmen oder glücklichen Ereignisse nach erreichtem Ziele darin hervor zu heben, so gebe ich Einblick in mein Künstlerleben, weil es ein so ausnahmsweises in Bezug auf Erlebnisse und Mühe war. (171)

5 Die BNF nennt diesen Nachnamen auf zwei Briefen von MR an Charles Nutter: beide von Roséri, Mademoiselle (Röhser, dite) 1) [Lettre autographe signée de Mademoiselle Roséri, dite Röhser, à Charles Nutter, Nuremberg, 28 juin 1892] 2) [dito, (sans lieu) 11 juillet 1892].

6 Durch eine Bemerkung zu Beginn des zweiten Kapitels lässt sich das Geburtsjahr auf 1844 oder 1845 datieren.

Identitäten : Selbstrepräsentationen : Kulturelle Organisationen

Identities materialize within collectivities and out of culturally marked differences that constitute symbolic interactions within and between collectivities. But social organizations and symbolic interactions are always in flux. Identities, therefore, are discursive, provisional, intersectional, and unfixed. (Smith; Watson 2005, 10)

We need to consider how narrators negotiate cultural strictures about telling certain kinds of stories that have scripted them as particular kinds of subjects. Moreover, we need to consider how narrators negotiate cultural strictures about telling certain kinds of stories, visualizing kinds of embodiment. (Smith; Watson 2005, 10)

Die von Margitta Roséri memorierten Erlebnisse sind nur indirekt private oder künstlerische – indirekt insoweit als sie nicht selbstbestimmt sind, sondern von äußeren, meist als herausfordernd bis feindlich empfundenen Geschehnissen während eines von Tourneen gestalteten Nomadenlebens beherrscht werden. Wenn sogenannte feste Engagements überhaupt abgeschlossen werden, sind sie von nur kurzer Dauer und nicht immer künstlerisch befriedigend. Und vor allem von äußeren Ereignissen beeinflusst. Politische Umstände haben negative Auswirkungen auf Mlle. Roséris künstlerische Aktivitäten und die Karriere. In Kapitel VIII etwa ist es die spanische Revolution, in der die Aristokraten Madrid verlassen und so ihren und, wie die Tänzerin enttäuscht bemerkt, den Erfolg der Ballettkunst überhaupt verhindern.

Folgt man Mlle. Roséris Erzählung, so finden sich – außer eines von Berufs wegen nicht realisierten Heiratsangebots eines reichen Kaufmanns im Alter von 19 Jahren (17) – keine weiteren Hinweise auf (weibliche?) Themen wie Ehe, Kinder oder Romanzen. Von ihrer Familie schreibt die Tänzerin nur dann, wenn es um den Tod ihrer Geschwister geht. In einigen Berichten über ihre unzähligen Reisen erwähnt sie als Begleitung ihre „Lehrerin“ Madame Dominique Benettozza, eine Tanzpädagogin der großen Oper in Paris (10). Zudem war sie eingebunden in die Gruppe der mit ihr engagierten Kolleginnen und Kollegen, zu denen sie professionell faire und respektvolle, jedoch keine intensiv freundschaftlichen Beziehungen zu pflegen scheint. Mlle. Roséri erzählt also vor allem von einem von ihrer Profession geprägten Leben, mit dem sie ihren Lebensunterhalt zu verdienen versucht. Was ihr offensichtlich gelingt, wenn auch unter Mühen, muss sie sich doch in jedem neuen Engagement gegen finanzielle Übervorteilung wehren. Sie erwähnt ihre Zurückhaltung in Bezug auf Geld/Gage und umschreibt diese positiv als „Zartgefühl“: „Mit einer natürlichen Freigebigkeit begabt, wie so viele Künstler, füllte ich gewöhnlich die Taschen anderer, während ich die meinigen leerte.“ (44f)

Generell markiert und strukturiert Margitta Roséri ihre Erinnerungen als von Engagements bestimmte Reisen ins Unbekannte, Ferne, Fremde. Selbst wenn sie sich örtlich nicht weit weg von ihrem Heimatort bewegt, so begegnet ihr das – in ihrer Wahrnehmung – ‚Anderer‘ als willkommene Erfahrung, weil sie dieses, wie im Fall der Performance von Pepita de Oliva, in ihr eigenes, damals leidenschaftliches Tanzverständnis zu integrieren vermag. Ebenso ordnet sie ihre tänzerischen Aktivitäten an anderen geographisch entfernten Orten dann als positive Erfahrungen ein, wenn sie bestimmte Standards des Gewohnten, besonders eines traditionsbewussten Künstlerischen erfüllen. Tun sie das nicht, wie im Fall ihrer Amerika-Tournee, verliert das Fremde seine Faszination und wird bedrohlich.

In ihrer Autobiographie stellt Mlle. Roséri als Tänzerin (ihren) beruflichen Alltag dar – eine Darstellung, in der sich Identitäten, Selbstrepräsentationen und sozio-kulturelle, politische Organisationen multiperspektivisch vernetzen, d.h. gleichzeitig und gleichermaßen (wenn auch in unterschiedlicher Gewichtung) aktiv sind. Die folgende Isolierung der Perspektivierungen in je einem beispielhaften Szenarium (plus der Kurzanalyse des *Katechismus*) ist eine künstliche, erlaubt aber als solche die De-Konstruktion des für Mlle. Roséri typischen tänzerischen Programms.

In jungen Jahren idolisiert Margitta Roséri Pepita de Oliva, ohne deren weibliche bzw. sexualisierte Attraktivität genauer zu identifizieren oder dieses Thema in späteren Kapiteln ihrer Autobiographie wieder aufzugreifen.

Im Kairo-Kapitel schildert sie von ihrer Stimmung her relativ gelassen, gleichzeitig aber neugierig, die fremdartigen Geschehnisse während ihres monatelangen Kairo-Aufenthalts, die sie auf die durch Mentalität und theatrale Konventionen bedingten Grenzen ihrer Selbstrepräsentation insistieren lassen. Dennoch verweist dieser Teil auch auf Vertrautes: Er liest sich wie das Libretto bzw. Szenario zu einem stereotypen exotischen Ballett aus dem 19. Jahrhundert.

Die USA-Kapitel sind im Ton wesentlich erregter und vermitteln Mlle. Roséris essentielle wie existentielle Auseinandersetzungen mit ihrer Identität als Tänzerin innerhalb von Institutionen – Produktionsformen, die von der Tänzerin als ungünstig, ja schädlich empfunden werden.

Identitäten – Pepita de Oliva

Pepita de Oliva, eigentlich Josefa Dominga Duran Ortega (1830–1871), aus kleinen Verhältnissen stammend, verkörperte die allgemein faszinierende künstlerische Welt des spanischen Tanzes auf europäischen Bühnen. Vita Sackville-West, Pepita de Olivas Enkelin, hatte sich Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts auf Spurensuche nach den nationalen und ethnischen Wurzeln der berühmten Tänzerin begeben und die Ergebnisse 1938 faktisch wie literarisch-fiktiv in einer Biographie *Pepita. Die Tänzerin und die Lady* verarbeitet. Sie schreibt:

Pepita [...] war [...] vom Grand Theatre in Bordeaux zu ihrem ersten Engagement durch die ganze Welt gereist und hatte eine Kielspur des Ruhmes hinter sich zurückgelassen. In Kopenhagen hatte sie im teuersten Luxushotel gewohnt, mit einem Sekretär und einem Theatermanager. Sie hatte einen La Farsa Pepita genannten Tanz vorgeführt, der eigens ihr zu Ehren komponiert worden war [...]. Deutschland hatte ihr stürmischen Beifall gezollt, besonders in Frankfurt am Main, Stuttgart und Berlin. In London war sie an Her Majesty's Theatre verpflichtet worden. (Sackville-West 1938, 45f)

Weder aus den Erzählungen von Vita Sackville-West noch aus anderen Quellen geht hervor, auf welche Weise Pepita de Oliva getanzt hat; ihr Publikum hat sie wohl mit der immer wieder bezeugten, ‚typisch spanischen‘ Schönheit und dem damit assoziierten Temperament in den Bann gezogen – und desgleichen das Mädchen Margarete/Margit (?) Röhser, die als Margitta Roséri auf diese zeit- wie idealtypischen Eigenschaften nicht explizit eingeht und sie in ihrer Autobiographie von 1891 auch bei keiner anderen ihrer Kolleginnen erwähnt. Pepita de Oliva scheint für Mlle. Roséri eine Sehnsuchtsfigur zu verkörpern, und Sehnsucht gesteht sie sich in

ihrer Lebensbeschreibung in späteren Jahren, in denen sie sich mit dem Berufsalltag konfrontiert sieht, nicht (mehr) zu.

Selbstrepräsentationen Kairo und die Eröffnung des Suez-Kanals⁷
Ein dramatisches Ballett in drei Akten

Die Narration im Kairo-Kapitels spielt mit einer interessanten Mischung aus Alltäglichem und Exotischem. Die Erzählebenen zwischen exotischem Theater- und ebenso exotischem Lebensalltag⁸ wechseln ständig; Margitta Roséri bewegt sich geschickt in dem von ihr aufgerufenen Ereignis-Feldern, wenn sie die Geschehnisse sowohl aus der Distanz beobachtet oder auch als persönliches Erleben schildert. Sie agiert quasi als Protagonistin in einer Theateraufführung, in der sie auch Regie führt; das exotische Cairo liefert die Folie für eine dramatisch inszenierte Beschreibung in drei Akten, gerahmt von einem Vorspiel und einem Nachspiel.

Vorspiel – Ankunft in Cairo. Nach langer Suche findet Margitta Roséri in Cairo eine Wohnung, die sie gemeinsam mit einer berühmten Pariser Kollegin, Zina Mérante,⁹ bezieht. Der Aufenthalt ist auf sechs Monate anberaumt, die Eingewöhnung in die im Vergleich zu Europa weniger komfortable „Häuslichkeit“ (51) scheint schwierig.

Erster Akt – im Theater / Szene I: Aufführungen. Bei der Ankunft der Kompanie sind die Theater noch nicht fertig. Mlle. Roséri trifft viele angenehme und weniger angenehme Kolleginnen und Kollegen, die sie aus früheren Engagements kennt und ist in einigen, den Opern zugeordneten Divertissements beschäftigt. Ihr Auftritt in einem Ballett¹⁰ scheitert an mangelndem Fremdverstehen:

Ein Ballet sollte ich auch tanzen, und wohl Niemand wird voraussehen, aus welchem Grunde ich daran verhindert wurde. Ich sollte eine Schlangenbezauberin vorstellen und hätte mit einer wirklichen Schlange, welcher man wohl den giftigen Stachel genommen hatte, zu tanzen gehabt; doch wie ich dieses Thier sah, das in einen Sack gebunden in die Garderobe gebracht wurde und sich um meinen Arm und Hals winden sollte, war es mir unmöglich diese Pas zu unternehmen und wenn man mir alle Schätze des Orients geboten hätte. So übernahm es eine Italienerin [...]. In Paris wurde dieses Ballet das Jahr vorher im Théâtre du Châtelet mit einer künstlichen Schlange getanzt, doch dachte man in Cairo, daß dieses keinen Effect machen würde, da es dort etwas ganz Gewöhnliches war, die Araber mit wirklichen Schlangen in den Händen an den Straßenecken stehen zu sehen. (53)

-
- 7 Wie faktisch korrekt Margitta Roséri die Eröffnung des Suez-Kanals schildert, wäre dann zu überprüfen, wenn ihre Erzählung als journalistische Reportage und nicht, wie hier, als tanz-affiner Akt gelesen wird.
 - 8 Zum Thema Theater-/Lebensalltag gehört in diesem Kapitel die wiederholte, konkrete Darstellung der prekären finanziellen Situation der Tänzerinnen im Vergleich zu den Gagen anderer Theaterkünstler, etwa des ersten Tenors. Er bezieht laut Roséri ein Gehalt von 25 000 Frs monatlich, während sich erste Tänzerinnen mit einem Zehntel, nämlich 2 500 bis 3 000 Frs, zufrieden geben müssen.
 - 9 Eine kurze Vita von Zina Mérante und einige Fotografien finden sich unter <http://etoiledelopera.emonsite.com/pages/etoile-femme-de-1850-a-1875/z.html> (Zugriff am 27.07.2014).
 - 10 Der Titel dieses Balletts ließ sich bislang nicht recherchieren. Roséri selbst erinnert sich nicht an ihn.

Erster Akt – im Theater / Szene II: „Ereignisse“ (54). Mlle. Roséri schreibt von einem Brand im Theater, der von einer Gasexplosion verursacht worden war. Bei diesem bedrohlichen „Ereignis“ wurden der Ballettmeister Joseph Mazilier und sein Requisitendiener schwer verletzt.

Zweiter Akt – Zuhause mit Madame Mérante. Mlle. Roséri berichtet von einer unruhigen Nacht, in der Diebe wiederholt versuchen, in die Wohnung einzudringen, in der sie und Madame Mérante nächtigen:

Eines Nachts hörte ich ganz deutlich, daß man eine Thüre mit einem Instrument zu öffnen suchte, die vom Dache unseres Hauses auf eine Terrasse führte, welche sich vor der Thür unserer Wohnung befand. Nachdem ich lange genug gehorcht hatte und fest überzeugt war, daß man einzubrechen suchte, machte ich nun einen fürchterlichen Lärm, indem ich an die Wand von meinem Zimmer hämmerte, wo nebenan unsere Wirthin schlief. Nachdem diese aufgeweckt war, weckte ich Madame Mérante und nur eine Rusin, welche sie ist, konnte so viel Ruhe und Kaltblütigkeit zeigen, als sie that. Der Bruder unserer Wirthin mit einem großen Küchenmesser bewaffnet, näherte sich der Eingangsthüre und suchte indem er Lärm machte, die Diebe zu verscheuchen, sie schienen auch gehört zu haben und zogen sich zurück. (55)

Der gleiche Vorgang findet ein weiteres Mal am selben Abend statt; doch danach herrscht Ruhe, die Mlle. Roséri folgendermaßen kommentiert:

Einer Schauspielerin wurden bei hellem Tage ihre Diamanten gestohlen. Dieses zeigte, daß die Araber nicht schüchtern mit dem Stehlen umgingen, sie wären jedenfalls schlecht bei mir angekommen, wenn sie Diamanten gesucht hätten, da ich niemals welche besaß. (56)

Dritter Akt – Ägypten / Szene 1: Geographie, Kultur, Geschichte. Margitta Roséri schildert den Besuch der Pyramiden als anstrengende, für Damen ungeeignete Choreographie:

Wenn man bedenkt, daß man auf allen Vieren durch Löcher zu kriechen hat, die manchmal mehrere Minuten lang sind, oft von arabischen Führern auf Steine gehoben werden muß, welche man alleine nicht erklettern könnte, daß Alles nur mit halbverbrannten Talglichtern beleuchtet, welche die Führer halten, wobei man immer in Gefahr schwebt, daß einem die Kleider in Feuer aufgehen. Dabei keine Luft und eine Hitze, wie eben nur eine ägyptische Sonne diese Steine durchwärmen konnte. (56)

Hingegen ist die Tänzerin höchst beeindruckt von den Kulissen der Wüste (des „Sandmeers“ (57)), von der überraschenden und opulenten Fruchtbarkeit der Oasen und dem orientalischen Luxus der Paläste.

Dritter Akt – Ägypten / Szene 2: Arabische Religion und Mentalität. Margitta Roséri berichtet von den für sie fremden, aber moralisch akzeptablen arabischen Sitten und Gebräuchen wie von einer theatralen Szene:

Einige [der französischen Künstler] hatten sich eines Tages in den Kopf gesetzt, den arabischen Diener unserer Wirthin zum Weintrinken zu veranlassen, welcher in der mohamedanischen Religion bekanntlich verboten ist. Den Kampf dieses armen jungen Mannes zwischen Pflicht und Bakhschisch, (Geld), welches ihm angeboten wurde zu sehen, that einem wirklich leid, doch ging er aus dem Versuche siegreich hervor, indem er sich nicht bewegen ließ, Wein zu trinken. Seine Tugend wurde nun belohnt, indem er Bakhschisch bekam und ich bin fest überzeugt, daß wir alle nach dieser bestandenen Probe eine

viel bessere Meinung von ihm hatten. Das arabische Wort Bakhschisch ist das Einzige, welches wir dort lernten. (59)

Nachspiel – Heimkehr nach Paris. Die Rückreise nach Paris führt über Alexandria, Messina, St. Marguérite und Marseille, alle so pittoreske wie vertraute Orte, in denen „von Arabern, Kamelen und orientalischen Sitten“ (60) nichts mehr zu sehen war. Trotz der nordafrikanischen Fremdartigkeit aber erinnert sich Mlle. Roséri, wie sie schreibt, „der schönen Reise mit Vergnügen“ (61).

Kulturelle Organisationen I – Die großen Tanzspektakel in den USA

Finanzielle Verluste und schlechte Bezahlung scheint die Tänzerin hinzunehmen, nicht aber die Missachtung ihres künstlerischen Status. Der Bericht von einem juristischen Prozess, den sie 1877 in Philadelphia gegen die – einflussreichen – Kiralfy-Brüder¹¹ wegen der Gastspiel-Konditionen in Chicago führt, ist ausführlich und eindrucksvoll:

So wie ich in die Nähe des Theaters [Adelphi Theater in Chicago] kam, sollte mein Mißgeschick, welches mich in meiner Carrière so sehr verfolgte, sich von Neuem, nur in veränderter Gestalt, wieder zeigen. Zu meinem Erstaunen sah ich in großen Buchstaben auf den Theaterzetteln des Adelphi-Theaters, daß das große Ballet von Mlle. de Rosa, Mlle. Roséri, *première danseuse absolue* und Mlle. Letourneur *première danseuse* getanzt werden sollte. Da der Director mir gesagt hatte, dass die erstere nicht in Chicago wäre und mein Contract als *étoile absolue* lautete, welche Stellung mir den ersten Platz im Ballet und auf dem Theaterzettel gab, so sah ich natürlich, daß ein Irrthum hier vorherrschte, oder, dass die Chicanen, welche die Herren Directoren den Ruf hatten zu spielen, sich jetzt bei mir bewähren sollten und ich sah einem Kampf entgegen, dessen Ausgang ich für den Augenblick nicht ahnen konnte. Doch war ich fest entschlossen, die Stellung zu behaupten, welche mir meinem Contracte gemäß zukam. (129f)

Margitta Roséri entschließt sich, einen Prozess gegen die „Herren Directoren“ zu führen.

Namentlich war das Sammeln der Zeugen eine höchst unangenehme Sache, mehrere Male mußte ich zu diesem Zwecke nach New York reisen und hier und dort Besuche machen. Mehrere von den ersten Tanzkünstlerinnen dort, wie Madame Bonfanti, welche ich von Europa her kannte, sowie Mlle. Paladino gaben mit der größten Bereitwilligkeit ihr Zeugniß, welches darin bestand, daß sie zu sagen hatten, welche Stellung die erste Tänzerin, die den Titel *étoile absolue* in ihrem Contract hat, beim Ballet einnimmt und welchen Platz sie auf dem Theaterzettel beanspruchen kann. (133)

Und macht im Gerichtshof von Philadelphia folgende Aussage, die sie schließlich den Prozess gewinnen lässt:

Ich behauptete, daß mit dem Ausdrucke *étoile* die höchste Stellung im Ballet in Europa bezeichnet wird, und daß manchmal diese Stellung *première danseuse absolue* heißt, wenn die nächste Künstlerin als *première danseuse* engagirt ist. Manchmal wird der erste Platz sogar nur *première danseuse* genannt, wenn die nächste Tänzerin den Titel als *seconde danseuse* hat. Weiter sagte ich, daß der Ausdruck *éto-*

11 „The brothers [...] stage managed, produced, served as financial entrepreneurs, playwrights, publicity directors, and ballet masters. Because they began as dancers, dance always played an important role in their productions. Bolossy, in fact, took charge of his own rehearsals.“ (Barker 1984: 84) Siehe auch Barker 1988.

ile absolue, unter welchem mein amerikanischer Contract gemacht war, in Europa nicht existierte, daß die Benennung étoile genügend ist, die erste Stellung dort im Ballet zu sichern. Als sich plötzlich der Advokat von meinen Directoren erhob und mit lauter Stimme sagte, „und warum hat es dann der Agent in Paris in Ihren Contract gesetzt, wenn dieser Ausdruck dort nicht gebräuchlich ist“, antwortete ich ihm, daß er es für Amerika gethan haben müßte, im Falle es dort die Gewohnheit wäre, zwei erste Tänzerinnen gleichen Ranges an einem Abend zu haben und daß er mir mit dem Ausdrucke étoile absolue, die erste Position von den Beiden sichern wollte und so war es auch. (136)

Dieser Prozess ist nicht allein wegen Mlle. Roséris Mut und Entschlossenheit interessant, gegen die beiden zentralen und wohl erfolgreichsten Impresarios der nordamerikanischen Unterhaltungsindustrie vorzugehen, Bolossy und Imre Kiralfy, deren theatrale und ökonomische Leistungen Barbara Barker so zusammenfasst:

It is difficult for us to imagine the splendor and the scales of the great spectacles mounted by Bolossy Kiralfy and his competitors. [...] Few other works composed for the theater have had the same long runs or reached such an immense audience. Few producers have demanded and received such an immense outlay of money and labor. And yet, by the end of Bolossy's life, these massive entertainments and their creators were all but forgotten. They were neither as well documented as legitimate theater, in which scripts are often studied as literature, nor did they feature well-known actors. On the contrary, the casts consisted of anonymous thousands. Mostly, they were not produced as art, but were clearly aimed at pleasing and drawing crowds. (Barker 1988, xxi)

Darüber hinaus beleuchtet der Prozess auch die beachtlichen institutionellen und ästhetischen Diskrepanzen zwischen den Produktionsbedingungen in Europa und den USA, die im Hinblick auf die technischen und ästhetischen Erfordernisse an die von Bolossy Kiralfy engagierten Tänzerinnen als „diversifying their dancing skills by appearing as featured artists in a Kiralfy spectacle“ (Barker 1988, 179) eingeordnet wurden: Seiner Meinung nach hatten sie die Chance, sich selbst neu zu erfinden, sowohl was ihre performativen als auch ihre glamourösen Fähigkeiten betraf – eine Chance, die Margitta Roséri nicht ergreifen wollte oder konnte.

Die künstlerisch eher negativen Erlebnisse in den USA, die ihren Höhepunkt im Prozess gegen die Kiralfy-Brüder erreichen, füllen das längste Kapitel in Mlle. Roséris Autobiographie. Bolossy und Imre Kiralfy konnten vor ihren Amerika-Triumphen auf eine bedeutende Karriere als Tänzer und Choreographen in Europa zurückblicken; ihre in den USA produzierten Aufführungen aber entgrenzten die Standards europäischer Theaterkultur. Nach ihrer Ankunft sieht Margitta Roséri eines dieser Spektakel – sie nennt es „Le tour du monde“ (wahrscheinlich „Around the World in 80 Days“)¹² und stellt fest:

Von den Erfolgen, welche mich als Künstlerin in Amerika erwarten sollten, bekam ich einigen Zweifel, als ich einer Vorstellung des Stückes „Le tour du monde“ beiwohnte, das Ballet und die erste Tänzerin darin sah, welche auf das Publikum Effect machte. Ich wußte gleich, welchen Geschmack man dem Publikum beigebracht hatte. Ich sage beigebracht, dann hätte man darauf hingewirkt, das Gute zu unterstützen, so hätte man nach und nach auch dort verstanden, was gut und was schlecht in der Tanzkunst ist. Die Tänzerin, welche ich sah, hat jedenfalls 10 Jahre früher, ehe sie nach Amerika kam, ganz

12 „One of their most successful early ventures was Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*, which they staged complete with elephants and large armies of marching supernumeraries.“ (Barker 1984: 4)
Dass Mlle. Roséri den französischen Titel des Balletts nennt, verweist auf das z.T. aus Europa importierte Repertoire des Kiralfy-Unternehmens.

gut getanzt, doch hatte sie sich jetzt so dem Effecttanzen hingegeben, alle Schule und alle Grazie beiseite gesetzt, dass sie von wirklichen Künstlern nur getadelt werden konnte.¹³ (127)

Mit ihrer kritischen Haltung gegenüber der Entwicklung der Tanzkunst in den USA widmet Roséri in ihrer Autobiographie denn auch zwei Kapitel dem amerikanischen Tanzverständnis, nachdem sie sich zuvor bereits in einem „Zurückblick auf die Tanzkunst“ über deren Niedergang in Europa geäußert hatte. Die Gründe hierfür sieht sie in der ungenügenden Qualifikation und dem mangelnden Geschmack der „Lehrer der Balletkunst und namentlich denjenigen in Paris“ (79), der „Effektsucherei“ (81) der Tänzerinnen und darin, dass es kaum noch tanzende Männer auf der Bühne gab – eine Tatsache, für die sie allerdings keine Gründe anführt:

Wenn das Interesse im Allgemeinen für das Ballet seinem Ende zugeht, so war das für die Tänzer schon seit langer Zeit ganz zu Ende, man wollte im Auslande keine Männer mehr tanzen sehen. Weder in London, Madrid, Gaité in Paris, noch in Amerika später, habe ich jemals einen Tänzer gehabt, selbst in Cairo, wo drei engagiert waren, tanzten dieselben sehr wenig und waren nur in den mimischen Ballets beschäftigt und alle meine Divertissements waren immer von den anderen Solotänzerinnen oder dem Corps de Ballet begleitet und sind solche Ensembledänze viel hübscher, als diese langweiligen Pas de deux mit einem Tänzer. (81)

Während die Männer von der Bühne verschwunden waren, hatten sie – zumindest in den USA – ein gutes Auskommen als Gesellschaftstanzlehrer. Diese Beobachtung macht Margitta Roséri, als sie sich, einmal mehr und wohl verschärft durch die schlechten Erfahrungen mit der amerikanischen Auffassung von Künstlertum, mit dem Gedanken trägt, die Bühne endgültig zu verlassen und sich dem Unterrichten zu widmen. Nach ihrem Verständnis sind „die Amerikaner, Damen wie Herren, die besten Gesellschaftstänzer“ (143), weil sie die entsprechenden Schulen von Kindesbeinen an besuchen.¹⁴ Allerdings hadert sie mit der Gewohnheit, sogenannten „fancy dances“ aus dem Gesellschaftstanz-Repertoire (das sind, in europäischer Terminologie, theaternahe, technisch und ästhetisch anspruchsvolle Charaktertänze) als Schautänze für Kinder und Laien zu missbrauchen: „Bei uns würde es doch keinem Menschen einfallen, seine Kinder in solchen Tänzen für Privatkreise unterrichten zu lassen.“ (144) Trotz ihrer Vorbehalte unterrichtet Margitta Roséri privat einige Zeit in Philadelphia, muss diese Tätigkeit aber wegen äußerer Umstände (das Gebäude, in dem sie Tanzstunden gibt, wird verkauft) wieder aufgeben.¹⁵

Das letzte Kapitel „Die Kunst in Amerika“ ist – frühere kritische Bemerkungen intensivierend¹⁶ – eine harte Abrechnung mit dem amerikanischen Kunstverständnis: „steht

13 Bei dieser Tänzerin könnte es sich um Maria [Marie] Bonfanti handeln. Zu deren Erfolgsgeschichte in den USA, vgl. Barker 1984: 171–227.

14 „It is strange that, as stage dancing fell into an artistic decline, society adopted the traditional forms for itself.“ (Barker 1984: 224)

15 Eine weitaus erfolgreichere Karriere als Tanzpädagogin (!) in New York erarbeitete sich Roséris Kollegin Marie Bonfanti, die mit ähnlich strengen, der europäischen Tanztradition – etwa eines Carlo Blasis – verpflichteten Prinzipien, was Technik und Ästhetik betraf, arbeitete, aber dennoch die Bedürfnisse der amerikanischen Gesellschaft zu integrieren verstand. Vgl. hierzu Barker 1984: 220ff.

16 Ihre negative Einschätzung der amerikanischen Theaterszene unterstreichend, erzählt Mlle. Roséri in diesem Kapitel auch die Geschichte des englischen Impresarios James Henry Mapleson, der sich mit seiner italienischen Operntruppe mit ähnlichen logistischen wie finanziellen Schwierigkeiten während

dort die Tanzkunst namentlich auf einer Stufe, daß es eine wahre Künstlerin anekeln muß, dieselbe ausführen zu müssen.“ (164)

Es ist ganz begreiflich, dass die Tanzkunst in Amerika für keine Kunst gehalten werden kann, wenn noch dazu die Acrobaten ihren Platz auf der Bühne, anstatt im Circus haben. Fast für alle Ausstattungsstücke, welche der einzige Rahmen für das Ballett dort sind, engagiert man gewöhnlich berühmte Künstler dieser Art und wenn das Publikum an demselben Abend Leute gesehen hat, die sich auf den Kopf stellten, oder in der Luft die halsbrechendsten Kunststücke ausgeführt haben, so muß ihnen das Ballett natürlich darnach leicht vorkommen, wo man auf seinen zwei Füßen steht. Daß daher manche Tänzerinnen zu Mitteln greifen, um einen Erfolg zu erzielen, wo alle Kunst und Schönheit des Tanzes bei Seite gesetzt wird und dieselbe in einen Genre ausartet, welcher auf keiner Bühne in Deutschland geduldet werden würde, ist fast verzeihlich. (165)

Kulturelle Organisationen II – Katechismus der Tanzkunst

Nach Europa und offensichtlich in ihre Heimatstadt Nürnberg¹⁷ zurückgekehrt, versucht Margitta Roséri, der „grausamen“, „unwürdigen“ Behandlung der Tanzkunst in den USA,¹⁸ aber eben auch in der alten Welt, durch einen 1896 publizierten *Katechismus der Tanzkunst* gegenzusteuern. Dieser Traktat ist als grundsätzlicher, enzyklopädischer „Führer und Ratgeber für Lehrer und Schüler des theatralischen und des gesellschaftlichen Tanzes“ angelegt. Er umfasst 21 Abschnitte, in denen die Tanzkünstlerin 530 Fragen zum Tanz stellt und beantwortet – unter folgender Prämisse:

Die in dem vorliegenden Katechismus enthaltenen Erläuterungen und Ratschläge beruhen auf den Erfahrungen einer zwanzigjährigen Carrière als erste Tanzkünstlerin fast in allen Ländern der Welt,¹⁹ auf dem Unterricht ausgezeichneter namentlich französischer Meister. Derselbe soll dem Zweck einer Nachhilfe und eines Ratgebers für Lehrende und Lernende des theatralischen und hauptsächlich des Gesellschaftstanzes erfüllen. [...] Möge dieser Katechismus überzeugen, daß die Tanzkunst in Hinsicht ihrer pädagogischen Bedeutung, ihrer ästhetisch bildenden Kraft sich mit jeder anderen Kunst gleichstellen darf. (VI)²⁰

seiner Tournéen durch die USA konfrontiert sah, wie sie auch die Tänzerin affizierten (161f). Roséri zitiert hier ohne genaue Quellenangaben, jedoch relativ sinn- und wortgetreu aus Maplesons Memoiren; vgl. Mapleson 1888: z.B. 216, 223.

17 Die BNF (Musée de l'Opéra) hat, wie schon bemerkt, zwei an Charles Nutter adressierte Briefe von Roséri vom Juni und Juli 1892 im Bestand, von denen einer – gesichert – von Nürnberg aus abgeschickt wurde.

18 „Nirgends wird Terpsichore wohl grausamer, als in der neuen Welt behandelt, wo ihre Kunst auf so unwürdige Weise vertreten ist.“ (165f)

19 Eine Rezension von 1868 verdeutlicht – beispielhaft – die Wahrnehmung von Roséris Tanzkunst anlässlich eines Auftritts im Londoner Gaiety Theater: „Mademoiselle Roséri is alone sufficient to call for a visit to this most pleasant theatre. The present generation has not seen such marvellous feats so gracefully performed. She appears to swim – to pause – to fly through the air with a buoyancy devoid of all effort, and with a precision truly marvellous. She is the only dancer in our time to whom we can apply Hood's quotation àpropos of the Taglionis and Ceritos, 'They toil not, neither do they spin.'“ (FUN, June 5, 1869)

20 Alle folgenden im Haupttext in Klammern gesetzten Seitenzahlen beziehen sich auf Roséri 1896.

Der *Katechismus der Tanzkunst* ist in der Reihe „Max Hesses illustrierte Katechismen“ erschienen – einer Reihe, die sich die Demokratisierung von Bildung zum Ziel setzte.²¹ Hesses Verlagskonzept folgte einer pädagogischen Ausrichtung, die ebenso belletristischen Ansprüchen genügte. Als industrieller Massendruck stehen diese Katechismen, was ihre Inhalte wie auch die sozio-ökonomischen Bedingungen ihrer Produktion und Verbreitung betrifft, der illustrierten Presse nahe und scheinen diese wiederum beeinflusst zu haben. Ihre programmatische Präsentation in Fragen und Antworten unterstützen das Konzept der Reihe als Ratgeber für Lehrende und Lernende, die sich Einblicke in und Überblick über gesellschaftliche wie bildungsbürgerlich relevante Themen verschaffen wollen.

In diesem Kontext vermittelt Margitta Roséri ein (ihr) breites Wissen über den Tanz, dessen Funktion in der Gesellschaft, dessen Geschichte und über seine pädagogische Mission. Beginnend mit prinzipiellen wie praxisorientierten Aussagen zum theatralischen Tanz²² stellt sie – immer in gebotener Kürze – sowohl „die mechanischen Übungen der Tanzkunst“ (16–27) dar als auch deren Bühnen-ästhetische Anwendungen; zu letzteren gehören etwa traditionsbewusste Überlegungen zu „Musik beim Tanze“ (43f)²³ oder Hinweise zur damaligen choreographischen Terminologie in „Les Enchaînements de Pas“ (77–80)²⁴. Der zweite Teil des Katechismus widmet sich dem Gesellschaftstanz, in den die Autorin mit Fragen/Antworten

21 Vgl. Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Im Auftrag des Börsenvereins des deutschen Buchhandels. Hg. v. der Historischen Kommission. Bd. 1. Teil 2. Frankfurt a.M.: MVB 2003. <http://books.google.de/books?id=aV0hAAAAQBAJ&pg=PA279&lpg=PA279&dq=kaiserreich+%22max+hesse%22&source=bl&ots=IGpXe7_1wj&sig=9rpW6rd_izCfHfiIN-5z894SDLE&hl=de&sa=X&ei=123nU8n1K8Lk4QTKnYCACA&ved=0CCAQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=kaiserreich%20%22max%20hesse%22&f=false>

(Zugriff am 01.08.2014) Im Anhang des vorliegenden Katechismus finden sich folgende, offensichtlich als tanzrelevant verstandene, Buchempfehlungen: *Katechismus des guten Tones und der feinen Sitte in der 5. Auflage*, *Katechismus der Toilettenkunst und des feinen Geschmacks*, *Der gute Ton für die Kinderwelt*, *Katechismus der Zimmergärtnerei*, *Katechismus des Schachspiels*, *Katechismus der Schwimmkunst*, *Katechismus für Bienenzüchter und Bienenfreunde*, *Katechismus der menschlichen Ernährung*.

22 Etwa: „4. Wodurch wird der Tanz zur Kunst erhoben? Indem er nach vorgeschriebenen Regeln in geordneter und gesitteter Weise ausgeführt wird und man ihm eine geistige Auffassung zu teil werden läßt.“ (1)

23 Etwa: „152. Was ist Rhythmus? Das symmetrisch Wohlgeordnete in der Musik. Im Tanze, die dazu entsprechenden abgemessenen Bewegungen des Körpers durch die Füße, mithin die Zusammenstimmung beider in der Zeitfolge (Dauer). Rhythmus ist unzertrennlich von der Tonkunst und der Tanzkunst.“ (43)

24 Etwa: „244. Mit welchem Namen bezeichnet man im Kunztanz eine Verkettung oder Zusammensetzung von Schritten, die von einer Person allein ausgeführt werden? Mit Variation, auch Solo. Dieser Ausdruck darf jedoch nicht mit Pas Seul verwechselt werden. Unter Pas Seul versteht man einen ganzen Tanz, der von einer Person ausgeübt wird, während eine Variation nur ein Teil eines Tanzes ist. 245. Erfüllen die Variationen einen besonderen Zweck im Kunztanz? Ja, sie dienen dazu, dass sich die Tanzkünstlerinnen und Tanzkünstler einzeln in ihren Leistungen auszeichnen können, ferner um sich gegenseitig Zeit zur notwendigen Erholung zu geben.“ (77)

zur Anstandslehre²⁵ wie zu den gesundheitlichen Aspekten²⁶, Trainingsmethoden²⁷ und organisatorischen Bedingungen von Tanzveranstaltungen einführt, bevor sie die „Gesellschafts- oder Salontänze“ (100–159) erläutert. Die beiden letzten Kapitel des Traktats spiegeln Mlle. Roséris historisches Erfahrungsspektrum in besonderer Weise: In „Die Geschichte des Tanzes“ (160–201) vermittelt sie, vor allem was das 19. Jahrhundert betrifft, detailreiche Historiographie von Fakten und Personen, und in „Die Tänze vergangener Zeiten“ (160–201) bestätigt in der Beschreibung der alphabetisch angeordneten Tänze die in der Tanzentwicklung bekannte enge Verbindung theatraler und gesellschaftlicher Phänomene.

Der didaktische, affirmative Duktus des Katechismus stellt viele Fragen und lässt keine Antworten offen. Margitta Roséris Wirkungsort am Ende ihrer beruflichen Reise um die Welt des Tanzes findet in der Verschriftlichung als Katechismus eine tanztechnisch wie pädagogisch, also handwerklich fundierte, kenntnisreiche und sozial engagierte Bühne. Und diese Bühne ist konservativ, scheint kein Ort zu sein für künstlerische Neugier, kreative Lust am Fremden oder innovative Entdeckungen.

Resumee

Sowohl in ihrer Autobiographie als auch im Katechismus entwickelt Margitta Roséri eine Vielzahl möglicher narrativer wie performativ interpretierbarer Perspektiven auf ihr Leben als Tänzerin. Auffallend ist ihre aktive Rolle vor allem in den institutionellen wie ästhetischen Debatten, die die Kunstform Tanz und ihren Status als Künstlerin betreffen. Dass sie dabei eine eher traditionelle Position einnimmt, scheint in ihrem Fall nicht im Widerspruch zu stehen zu ihrem Bedürfnis, sich über ihren Beruf und seine handwerklichen und institutionellen Probleme zu äußern. Schreibend agiert sie in einem ästhetisch affirmativen wie sozial, wenn auch nicht kreativ, selbstbestimmten Zwischenraum – ein Zwischenraum, der deutlich mit Vorbehalten

25 Etwa: „256. Wie wird der Unterricht des Gesellschaftstanzes eingeteilt? Derselbe wird in zwei Abteilungen geordnet. In die Anstandslehre und in die Lehre der Tänze. 257. Welche Abteilung davon ist die wichtigste? Die der Anstandslehre.“ (80)

26 Etwa: „299. Was ist über das Atmen beim Tanze zu bemerken? Dasselbe ist mehr durch die Nase als den Mund zu bewerkstelligen. Dieses ist hauptsächlich beim theatralischen Tanz zu beobachten, der eine große Anstrengung erfordert. Ein richtiges Atmen wird viel weniger anstrengend für die Lungen sein und man wird dadurch viel mehr Kraft und Ausdauer beim Tanze haben. Das Atmen durch die Nase hat beim Gesellschaftstanz noch den Vorteil, daß dadurch verhindert wird, daß die Tanzenden sich den Atem gegenseitig in das Gesicht blasen, was im anderen Fall unbedingt geschehen würde.“ (94)

27 Etwa: „304. Über den Gebrauch der Expanders (Muskelstrecke auch Muskelstärker in Deutschland genannt) für die Übungen des Oberkörpers in den englischen und amerikanischen Tanzschulen. Was ist darüber zu berichten? In den englischen und amerikanischen Tanzschulen für den Gesellschaftstanz bringt man beim Unterricht eine andere Methode in Anwendung als in den deutschen und französischen Tanzschulen. In den ersteren wird weniger darauf hingewirkt, die Grazie der Bewegungen zu entwickeln, als die Muskeln zu kräftigen und den Bewegungen eine gewisse Kraft und Energie zu verleihen. [...] 306. Ist der Gebrauch des Expanders in Tanzschulen zu billigen? Nein. Dieselben gehören gar nicht dorthin. Da die Übungen für die Arme sehr forcierte sind, so wird die Grazie der Bewegungen durch sie auf das Unvorteilhafteste beeinflusst. Da die Tanzkunst zahlreiche Übungen besitzt, um den Muskeln die nötige Geschmeidigkeit und Kraft zu verleihen, ohne daß durch sie der Grazie Einhalt gethan wird, so ist der Gebrauch des Expanders nicht zu empfehlen.“ (96)

und Kritik an der Tanzkunst, d.h. „Negativdiskursen und Illusionsstörungen“²⁸, ja Tanzfeindlichkeit besetzt ist. Diese, wie Theaterfeindlichkeit allgemein, verweist, so führen Diekmann, Wild und Brandstetter überzeugend aus (Diekmann; Wild; Brandstetter 2012: 15), auf die „Komplizenschaft zwischen Theaterfreundschaft und -feindschaft“. Sie lässt sich als Perspektive identifizieren, „in der antitheatrale Impulse und Interventionen nicht als repressive, sondern als produktive Kräfte erscheinen, deren kulturgeschichtliche Bedeutung kaum zu überschätzen ist“ (Diekmann; Wild; Brandstetter 2012: 8). Als solche markieren Mlle. Roséris Schriften am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts ein aufschluss- und detailreiches Feld bislang wenig gewürdigter Wissensproduktion über die Tänzerin: Sie fügen der sog. Kulissenliteratur als „representational landscape of masculine heterosexual desire for the *danseuse*“ (Townsend 2011: 138) eine weibliche Perspektive hinzu, deren an der handwerklichen wie sozialen Praxis orientierte Tatkraft eine Vielzahl von kulturgeschichtlich relevanten Aktivitäten und Initiativen aufweist, auch wenn sie nicht, wie die zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts häufigen Autobiographien der ballett-fernen Tänzerinnen,²⁹ ästhetische Re-Visionen weiblicher Tanzkunst anregt oder gar aushandelt. Mlle. Roséri bedient so weder die Vorstellung von einer durch den männlichen Blick stereotypisierten Tänzerin des 19. Jahrhunderts, noch das historiographisch übliche Modell einer künstlerisch individuellen Tanzkünstlerin um 1900. Margitta Roséri vermittelt bislang wenig beachtete zeittypische Erfahrungen einer im Tanzberuf tätigen Frau.

28 Christina Thurner hat auf diese Störungen – u.a. mit Bezug auf Mlle. Roséris Autobiographie – hingewiesen; siehe Thurner 2010 und 2012: passim.

29 Julie Townsend sieht die Autobiographien von Tänzerinnen des beginnenden 20. Jahrhunderts (und ich frage, ob dies bereits für das 19. Jahrhundert zutrifft) als weibliche Kulissenliteratur: „Women’s coulisses literature participated in a whole variety of cultural, sociological, and aesthetic discourses, the terms of which had been established in the previous century. The conventions of coulisses literature and the performer’s autobiography offered women choreographer-dancers an opportunity not only for publicity but for contributing to the discussion of dance aesthetics. The popularity of the dancer’s autobiography comes out of the 19th-century fascination with the dancer’s life, her association with prostitution, and the extent to which access to the dancer’s body was a literary and visual trope for artistic prowess. The audience provoked by this less than artistic interest in the dancer opened up the space for the dancer’s memoir and, as such, many dancer-choreographers engaged this genre.“ (Townsend 2011: 146)

DANCING WOMEN WRITING – MARGITTA ROSÉRI: LE TOUR DU MONDE DE LA DANSE

Autobiographical memorabilia from the field of dance can contribute to the historiographic and chronological re-construction of lives. In the nineteenth century, both the ‘great ballerinas’ and female dancers successfully engaged in other forms of dance begin to write about their professional situation, thus asserting their position in the scene. During the period, autobiographies increasingly turn into a field of action for women – as a form of self-affirmation against given, primarily masculine, interpretative frameworks (established especially by authors of dance-theoretical tracts and dance-practical textbooks, as well as by critics). The autobiographies of professionally dancing women constitute a different form of text, often focussing on personal experience and everyday working life. These can – without doubt – be read as constructions of life narratives and – furthermore – as ‘acts’ proximate to dance.¹ In this sense, they refer to practices of action in performance and dance that are to be contextualised with cultural specificity. I suggest here that female dancers make use of the medium of writing so as to present the medium of dance, and vice-versa. Thus they give insight into their technical and artistic responsibilities as well as their professional self-representation hitherto largely ignored by dance historiography.

Margitta Roséri (sometimes Margarita) is one of the writing dancers or dancing writers from the second half of the nineteenth century hitherto marginalised.² In spite of her Romanised name, she was originally from Germany; in her autobiography (Roséri 1891), she looks back to an international career.³ The collector Friderica Derra de Moroda commented on Roséri’s writing by noting: “An interesting account of her travels and engagements and the people she met, from 1860–1890 --- there is much information about the famous dancers and ballet-masters from the period.”⁴ Significantly, Roséri also enters into the entirely male-dominated scene of textbook-writing dancers and pedagogues, leaving behind a *Katechismus der Tanzkunst* [*Catechism of the Art of Dance*] (Roséri 1896).

1 “[The autobiographical] has signified the many practices of self-representation but has come to be narrowly identified by many critics in the twentieth century with a particular mode of storytelling, the retrospective narration of ‘great’ public lives. The latter understanding of the term has often obscured the ways in which women, and other people not included in the category of ‘great men’, have inscribed themselves textually, visually, or performatively.” (Smith; Watson 2005, 8f)

2 A literature review suggests that critical writing on Roséri is thus far limited to two articles by Christina Thurner (Thurner 2010 and 2012).

3 In the following, all page numbers and chapter references given in the main body text will refer to Roséri 1891.

4 Derra de Moroda: Handwritten note on a loosely inserted card, in Roséri 1891, Derra de Moroda Dance Archives, Universität Salzburg, Sign. DdM 2213. Interesting insights into the nomadic lifestyles of both female and male dancers could be gained from a mapping of the names given in Roséri’s account; unfortunately, to do so would go beyond the framework given here.

Under the name of (Margarete/Margit?) Röhser,⁵ Margitta Roséri was born in Nuremberg in the mid-1840s.⁶ In her autobiography we find neither a birth name nor specific time ascriptions; the first precise date, 1854, refers to a performance of the Spanish dancer Pepita de Oliva in Roséri's hometown. This performance seems to have made a great impression upon the young Roséri and proved decisive for her choice of profession: "From now on I would dream of dancing only, all my playing was theatre and Pepita." (4) The first chapter of Roséri's autobiography carries the title of "My Childhood Years" (I) and is preoccupied with her enthusiasm for theatrical beauty and the impact of dance as sparked by Pepita de Oliva. The second chapter marks a site, "Munich" (II), where the dancer obtained her first solo engagement in 1860. The subsequent twenty-two chapters follow the dramaturgy of place names. At times, Roséri's title headers add cultural, social or political events that are described in terms of their bearing on the dancer's career and personal, that is, professional circumstances.

The geographical routes of Margitta Roséri's career are impressive. She initially finds engagements mostly in provincial cities such as "Hamburg and Brussels" (III), "Granada" (VII) or "Hanover" (XVI). These will become important once more during the second half of her stage activities (even though they are later usually mentioned in combination with the metropolises of Paris and London): "Dublin and London" (XIII), "Paris and Lyon" (XV), "Wrocław and London (Queen's Theatre)" (XVII). The following engagements in European metropolises can be ascribed to the dancer's artistic success: "Paris (Theatre [*sic*] de la Porte St. Martin)" (IV), "London (Covent Garden-Theatre [*sic*])" (V), "Madrid" (V), again "London (Gaiety Theatre)". "Cairo (During the Opening of the Suez Canal)" (X) marks half a year's stay in Northern Africa. Roséri spends the final third of her career in the US and Central America: "America" (XVIII), "Havana" (XIX), "Philadelphia and Boston" (XXI), "California" (XII [recte XXII]). In three chapters, Roséri explicitly comments on political events. In Chapter VIII, she speaks of "The Royal Theatre in Madrid during the Spanish Revolution of 1868". In Chapter X, she comments on the opening of the Suez Canal, as noted, and in Chapter XII she addresses the "events following the declaration of war in 1870". In two chapters aesthetically reflecting on the geographical 'tour du monde', Roséri engages with themes concerning the artistic or national (that is, culturally and historically specific) developments in dance: "A Review of the Art of Dance" (XIV) and "Social Dance in America" (XX). The "Conclusion" (XXIV) is a bitter and disappointed résumé of a life spent in dance:

I was glad when my career was over. Just as many an artist may have written her memoirs or have had them written with view to emphasizing the pleasant or happy events after the achievement of one's aims, so I give insight into my life as an artist because it has been such an exceptional one in experience and struggle. (171)

5 These surnames are noted on two letters by MR to Charles Nutter at the BNF: both from Roséri, Mademoiselle (Röhser, dite) 1) [Lettre autographe signée de Mademoiselle Roséri, dite Röhser, à Charles Nutter, Nuremberg, 28 juin 1892] 2) [dito, (sans lieu) 11 juillet 1892].

6 The year of birth can be dated at 1844 or 1845 due to a note at the beginning of the second chapter.

Identities : Self Representation : Cultural Organisations

Identities materialise within collectivities and out of culturally marked differences that constitute symbolic interactions within and between collectivities. But social organizations and symbolic interactions are always in flux. Identities, therefore, are discursive, provisional, intersectional, and unfixed. (Smith; Watson 2005, 10)

We need to consider how narrators negotiate cultural strictures about telling certain kinds of stories that have scripted them as particular kinds of subjects. Moreover, we need to consider how narrators negotiate cultural strictures about telling certain kinds of stories, visualizing kinds of embodiment. (Smith; Watson 2005, 10)

The memories evoked by Margitta Roséri only indirectly refer to private or artistic experiences – indirectly insofar as they are not self-determined, but rather dominated by external occurrences imposing themselves upon a nomadic life dominated by tours, occurrences frequently experienced as challenging or even hostile. When so-called fixed engagements are at all agreed upon, then these are often only of short duration and not always artistically satisfying. Not least, they are often determined by factors beyond Roséri's control. In Chapter VIII, she gives an example of political circumstances having a negative effect on her artistic activities, her career, when noting with disappointment on how the aristocrats having to leave Madrid due to the Spanish Revolution obstructs the success of the art of ballet as such.

Aside from the mention of a non-realised proposal of marriage on the part of a wealthy, 19-year-old merchant for professional reasons (17), there are no further hints as to (feminised?) themes such as marriage, children or romance. Her family is only mentioned in relation to the death of her siblings. In some reports on her innumerable travels, she mentions in terms of accompaniment her "teacher", Madame Dominique Benettozza, a dance pedagogue at the Great Opera in Paris (10). Furthermore, she was integrated into the group of colleagues engaged with her, colleagues to whom she seems to have formed professionally fair and respectful, yet not intensively amicable relations. Thus we can say that Roséri's life narrative is centred around her profession, her attempts to make a livelihood. These attempts are evidently successful, even if marked by the difficulty of having to struggle against financial exploitation with each new engagement. She mentions how she holds back in terms of money/ payment, positively paraphrasing this as "sensitivity": "Like many artists endowed with a natural generosity, I usually filled the pockets of others while emptying my own." (44f)

Generally speaking, Margitta Roséri marks and structures her memories through journeys undertaken into the unknown, into faraway, strange places, as determined by her engagements. Even when she does not move far from home, she encounters as a welcome experience that which appears to her as an 'other'. As in the case of Pepita de Oliva's performance, she is able to integrate it into her own, at the time passionate, understanding of dance. Similarly, she considers her dancing activities at geographically remote locations as positive experiences in those cases of when they meet certain standards of what is known to her, particularly in terms of artistic tradition. As and when they fail to do so, such as in the case of the America tour, the strange and foreign loses its fascination and is experienced as threatening.

Roséri's autobiography is focussed on her professional everyday life. Identities, self-representation and socio-cultural, political organisations become interlinked through multiple perspectives. These are activated simultaneously and equally, even if they are given a respectively differing weighting. The following isolation of these perspectives according to one exemplary scenario for each (plus the short analysis of the *Katechismus*) might be an artificial one, yet opens up the possibility of a de-construction of Roséri's typical programme in terms of her agency in dance.

In her early years, Margitta Roséri idolises Pepita de Oliva, yet without further identifying the latter's feminised, sexualised attractiveness or addressing it in later chapters.

In the Cairo chapter, she presents herself as relatively relaxed in mood, yet curious concerning the foreignness experienced throughout her stay of several months. This has her insist on the limits of self-representation as conditioned by mentality and theatrical conventions. Nevertheless, this part, too, seems bound to the familiar: it reads like a libretto or scenario for a stereotypical exotic ballet from the nineteenth century.

The US chapters are much more agitated in tone and communicate Roséri's essential and existential examination of her identity as a dancer in the midst of institutions, that is forms of production that are experienced by the dancer as adverse, even damaging.

Identities – Pepita de Oliva

Pepita de Oliva, who grew up in modest circumstances under the name of Josefa Dominga Duran Ortega (1830–1871), came to stand for the artistic world of Spanish dance on European stages, at the time a source of general fascination. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Vita Sackville-West, Pepita de Oliva's granddaughter, began to explore the famous dancer's national and ethnic roots, and would turn this research on factual as well as fictional levels into the biography *Pepita*. Sackville-West writes:

From the Grand Theatre at Bordeaux, her first engagement, [Pepita] had gone [...] all over the world leaving a trail of glory behind her. At Copenhagen she had lived in the most expensive hotel in the utmost luxury with a secretary and a theatrical manager; she had danced a dance called La Farsa Pepita, especially composed in her honour [...]. Germany had acclaimed her, especially at Frankfurt-am-Main, at Stuttgart, and in Berlin; in London she had been billed to appear at Her Majesty's Theatre. (Sackville-West 1937, 44)

Neither Vita Sackville-West's narrative nor other sources give an account of the forms Pepita de Oliva's dancing took. It seems as if her audiences felt enthralled by the 'typically Spanish' beauty that is repeatedly attested, and by the lively spirit associated with it. This also seems to have been the case for a young Margarete/Margit Röhser, who as Margitta Roséri does not explicitly hark back to these Spanish qualities typical of the time and its ideals, and who does not mention them in relation to any of her other colleagues in her autobiography from 1891. Pepita de Oliva seems to embody a figure of desire for Roséri, yet according to the narrative of her life, in later years – confronted by everyday working life – she no longer allows herself indulgence in feelings of desire.

In the chapter on Cairo, the narration plays with an interesting mix of the quotidian and the exotic. The narrative levels continually switch between accounts of exotic theatre routines and a similarly exotic everyday life.⁸ Margitta Roséri moves skilfully between the fields she evokes, at times observing events from a distance, at times as personal experience. Hence she might be described as the protagonist of a theatrical performance she also directs; the exotic Cairo supplies the foil for the dramatic *mise-en-scène* of her descriptions in three acts, held by the frame of a prologue and an epilogue.

Prologue – Arrival in Cairo. After a long search, Margitta Roséri finds a flat in Cairo, sharing with her famous colleague from Paris, Zina Mérante.⁹ Their residence is to last for six months; they seem to have difficulties getting used to a “domesticity” (51) less comfortable than in Europe.

First Act – In the Theatre / Scene I: Performances. Upon the company’s arrival, the theatres are not yet finished. Roséri meets many pleasant and not-so-pleasant colleagues she is acquainted with from previous engagements, and is occupied through some *divertissements* related to the operas. Her appearance in a ballet¹⁰ fails due to the lack of cultural correspondence:

I was also supposed to dance a ballet, and no one will guess why I wasn’t able to do it. I was supposed to present a snake magician and would have had to dance with a real snake, the poisonous sting probably removed; but when I saw this animal, which was brought into the dressing room in a bag and which was to wind itself round my arm and neck, these *pas* became impossible to me, and one could have offered me the treasures of the entire Orient. Hence an Italian dancer took on the task [...]. In Paris, the same ballet had been performed the year before in the Théâtre de Châtelet with an artificial snake, yet in Cairo, this was deemed not sufficiently impressive, as it was something entirely common to see Arabs stood at street corners holding real snakes. (53)

First Act – In the Theatre / Scene II: “Events” (54). Roséri writes about a theatre fire caused by a gas explosion. The ballet master Joseph Mazilier and his prop assistant were seriously injured by this threatening “event”.

Second Act – At Home with Madame Mérante. Mlle. Roséri describes a troubled night in which thieves repeatedly attempt to enter into the flat in which the two women are sleeping:

7 The question of the factual correctness of Margitta Roséri’s account of the opening of the Suez Canal would have to be examined as part of a reading of her narrative as journalistic reportage, and not, as I do here, as a dance-proximate act.

8 In this chapter, the theme of everyday life – professionally and otherwise – is addressed not least through the repeated, concrete representation of the female dancers’ precarious financial situation by comparison to the fees granted to other theatre artists, such as the first tenor. According to Roséri, he receives an income of 25 000 Frcs monthly, while top female dancers are to content themselves with a tenth of this amount, that is, 2 500 to 3 000 Frcs.

9 See <<http://etoiledelopera.e-monsite.com/pages/etoile-femme-de-1850-a-1875/z.html>> (accessed 27.07.2014), for a short vita as well as several photographs of Zina Mérante.

10 It has thus far not been possible to reconstruct the title of this ballet; Roséri herself cannot remember it.

One night I clearly heard noises of the attempt to open a door which led from the roof of our house to a terrace in front of the door to our flat. After I had listened attentively for a sufficient amount of time and was firmly convinced that this was an attempt at a break-in, I initiated terrible clamour by hammering against the wall of my room, as the landlady was sleeping next-door. Her now awake, I woke up Madame Mérante, and only the Russian that she was could exhibit as much calm and cold-bloodedness as she did. Armed with a large kitchen knife, our landlady's brother approached the entrance, looking to chase away the thieves through making much noise. They seemed to have heard this, and retreated. (55)

The same process occurs a second time the same night. Subsequently things calm down, Roséri commenting:

An actress had her diamonds stolen in bright daylight. This showed that the Arabs weren't shy in their thievery, but in any case they wouldn't have achieved much with me if they had looked for diamonds, for I never owned any. (56)

Third Act – Egypt / Scene 1: Geography, Culture, History. Margitta Roséri describes visiting the pyramids as an exhausting choreography not appropriate for ladies:

If you consider that one has to crawl through holes on all fours, sometimes for several minutes, that one often needs to be lifted onto stones one cannot climb oneself by Arabic guides, that everything is lit only by half-burnt tallow candles held by the guides, something which creates the constant danger of one's clothes catching fire. In all of this no air and the kind of heat in the way only the Egyptian sun can thoroughly heat these stones. (56)

On the other hand, the dancer is greatly impressed by the setting of the desert (the "sea of sand" (57)), by the surprising and opulent fecundity of the oases and the Oriental luxury of the palaces.

Third Act – Egypt / Scene 2: The Arabic Religion and Mentality. Margitta Roséri reports on Arabic customs and habits as if they formed a theatricalised scene:

Some [of the French artists] had one day decided to prompt the Arabic servant of our landlady to drink wine, something which is prohibited by the Mohammedan religion, as is well-known. To witness this poor young man's struggle between duty and baksheesh, (money), offered to him, was really to be pitied, yet he emerged victorious in this experiment, not letting himself be moved to drink wine. His virtue was now rewarded as he was given baksheesh, and I am fully convinced that all of us had a much higher opinion of him after this test. The Arabic word baksheesh is the only one we learnt while there. (59)

Epilogue – Return to Paris. The return to Paris leads through Alexandria, Messina, St. Marguérite and Marseille, that is, places both picturesque and familiar, away from "Arabs, camels and Oriental customs" (60). In spite of the Northern African foreignness, however, Roséri remembers, as she notes, "the nice trip with pleasure" (61).

Cultural Organisations I – The Great Dance Spectacles in the US

While the dancer seems to accept financial losses and low payment, she does not tolerate disregard of her artistic status. Her account of a legal trial which she leads in Philadelphia in 1877 against the – influential – Kiralfy brothers¹¹ due to the conditions experienced at a guest performance conditions in Chicago is detailed and impressive:

As I came into contact with the theatre [the Adelphi Theater in Chicago], the misfortune that followed my career to such an extent, became apparent again, in changed guise. To my surprise, I saw on the theatre bill of the Adelphi Theater that the great ballet was to be danced by Mlle. de Rosa, Mlle. Roséri, *première danseuse absolue* and Mlle. Letourneur *première danseuse*. As the director had told me that the former was not in Chicago and my contract stated *étoile absolue*, which position gave me the premier place in the ballet and on the bill, I saw that an error had occurred or that the chicanery the two gentlemen was known for was now to prove true in their relations to me, and I faced a fight of which I wasn't able to predict the result. But I was firmly resolved to assert the position I was entitled to by contract. (129f)

Margitta Roséri decides for a legal suit against the directors.

In particular, collecting the witnesses was highly disagreeable; several times I had to travel to New York for the purpose, and go on various visits. Several of the premier [female] dance artists staying there, among them Madame Bonfanti, whom I knew from Europe, as well as Mlle. Paladino, provided me with their testimony with the greatest willingness, their testimony consisting of stating the position inhabited by the premier female dancer, carrying the title of *étoile absolue* in her contract, and the place on the theatre bill she can claim. (133)

At court in Philadelphia, she makes the following statement, thus ultimately winning the trial:

I stated that the expression *étoile* refers to the highest position in ballet in Europe, and that this position is sometimes called *première danseuse absolue* when the artist one position lower is engaged as *première danseuse*. Sometimes the first position is in fact only called *première danseuse*, when the dancer one position lower bears the title of *seconde danseuse*. Furthermore I stated that the expression *étoile absolue*, under which my American contract was established, did not exist in Europe, where the title of *étoile* is sufficient to secure the first position in ballet. When the lawyer of my directors suddenly got up and said loudly "then why did the agent in Paris put this into your contract, if the term is not in use there", I replied that he must have done it for America, in case it was the habit there to feature two premier dancers of the same status on one evening and that he had used the expression of *étoile absolue* so as to secure the first position among them, and indeed this had been the case. (136)

This trial is interesting not only in how it exhibits Roséri's courage and determination in her decision to challenge what are likely to have been the most successful impresarios in the Northern American entertainment industry, Bolossy and Imre Kiralfy. Summarising their theatrical and economic achievements, Barbara Baker notes:

It is difficult for us to imagine the splendor and the scales of the great spectacles mounted by Bolossy Kiralfy and his competitors. [...] Few other works composed for the theater have had the same long

11 "The brothers [...] stage managed, produced, served as financial entrepreneurs, playwrights, publicity directors, and ballet masters. Because they began as dancers, dance always played an important role in their productions. Bolossy, in fact, took charge of his own rehearsals." (Barker 1984: 84; also see Barker 1988)

runs or reached such an immense audience. Few producers have demanded and received such an immense outlay of money and labor. And yet, by the end of Bolossy's life, these massive entertainments and their creators were all but forgotten. They were neither as well documented as legitimate theater, in which scripts are often studied as literature, nor did they feature well-known actors. On the contrary, the casts consisted of anonymous thousands. Mostly, they were not produced as art, but were clearly aimed at pleasing and drawing crowds. (Barker 1988, xxi)

The trial is significant also in the light it sheds on the noteworthy institutional and aesthetic discrepancies between the conditions of production in Europe on the one hand, and the US on the other. With view to the technical and aesthetic requirements demanded from the dancers engaged by Bolossy Kiralfy, they were classified as "diversifying their dancing skills by appearing as featured artists in a Kiralfy spectacle" (Barker 1988, 179). In his opinion, their engagement gave them the chance to re-invent themselves both in their performative and their glamorous abilities – an opportunity which Margitta Roséri could not or did not want to seize.

The artistically rather negative experiences in the US that find their climax in the trial against the Kiralfy brothers constitute the longest chapter of the autobiography. Bolossy and Imre Kiralfy were able to look back to a significant career as dancers and choreographers in Europe, yet their productions in the US pushed against the limits of European theatre culture. After her arrival, Margitta Roséri watches one of these spectacles – she refers to it as "Le tour du monde" (probably "Around the World in 80 Days")¹² and observes:

I became doubtful of the success that would await me as an artist in the US when I attended a performance of the piece "Le tour du monde" and saw the primary dancer, who impressed the audience. I knew immediately what taste the audience had been taught in. I say taught, for if one had worked towards supporting quality, then there, too, one would have gradually understood what is good and what is bad in dance. The dancer I saw, in any case, had danced quite well 10 years earlier, before she had come to the US, but now she had given herself to showmanship just like that, had put aside all schooling or grace, and only deserved reprimand by real artists.¹³ (127)

Her critical attitude regarding the development the art of dance has taken in the US is mirrored in the fact that two chapters of the autobiography are dedicated to the American understanding of dance. In a "Review of the Art of Dance", she has by this point already commented on its demise in Europe. The reasons for this she sees in insufficient qualification and lack of taste on the part of "teachers of the art of ballet, and in particular those in Paris" (79), in the "showmanship" (81) on the part of female dancers and in the fact that by this point you were hardly able to find dancing men on stage – a fact, however, for which she does not give any reasons:

If interest in ballet was generally coming to its end, then for the [male] dancers it had reached an end for quite some time already, as abroad one did not want to see men dancing. Neither in London,

12 "One of their most successful early ventures was Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*, which they staged complete with elephants and large armies of marching supernumeraries." (Barker 1984: 4) The fact that Roséri refers to the ballet's French title points to the fact that the repertoire of the Kiralfy enterprise was partly imported from Europe.

13 The dancer she refers to might be Maria [Marie] Bonfanti. Concerning her success in the US, see Barker 1984: 171–227.

Madrid, the Gaité in Paris nor later on in the US I have ever danced with a [male] dancer. Even in Cairo, where three were engaged, they danced only little and were occupied only in the mimic ballets, and all my divertissements were always accompanied by the other solo dancers or the corps de ballet, and such ensemble dances are much more pretty than those boring pas de deux with a [male] dancer. (81)

While the men had disappeared from the stage, at least in the US they were able to gain a good income as teachers of social dance. This is the observation made by Margitta Rosérie when, once again, she plays with the thought of leaving the stage for good and dedicating herself to teaching, a desire probably intensified by her bad experiences with the American understanding of what it means to be an artist. She considers “the Americans, both the ladies and the gentlemen” as “the best social dancers” due to the fact that they attend the relevant dance schools from an early age.¹⁴ Yet, she struggles with the habit of so-called “fancy dances” from the social dance repertory (in European theatre terminology, these are technically and aesthetically demanding character dances proximate to the theatre) being abused as exhibition dances for children and amateurs: “[a]t home, after all, no one would think of having their children instructed in this kind of dance for private circles.” (144) In spite of her reservations, Margitta Roséri gives private lessons in Philadelphia for a stretch of time, yet is required to give this occupation up when the building in which she teaches is sold.¹⁵

The final chapter, “Art in America” further intensifies earlier critical comments¹⁶ into a harsh attack on the American understanding of art: “after all, the art of dance is devalued in such a way that a true artist must be disgusted” (164).

It is understandable that in the US, the art of dance cannot be thought of as a form of art, for there even the acrobats have their place on the stage rather than in the circus. For almost all extravagant spectacles, which form the only frame for their ballets, they usually hire famous artists of this kind, and when the audience has seen during the same night people standing on their head or executing the most breakneck pieces of artistry, then afterwards the ballet, in which one is stood on one’s two feet, must appear easy to them. The fact that, consequently, in order to be successful, some [female] dancers make use of means putting aside any of the art and beauty of dance and that it deforms into a genre that would not be tolerated on any stage in Germany, is almost pardonable. (165)

14 “It is strange that, as stage dancing fell into an artistic decline, society adopted the traditional forms for itself.” (Barker 1984: 224)

15 Roséri’s colleague Marie Bonfanti was able to establish a much more successful career as dance pedagogue (!). Aesthetically and in terms of technique, she worked with strict principles indebted to the European dance tradition – such as in the vein of Carlo Blasis – yet was able to integrate into her practice the needs and desires felt by American society (see Barker 1984: 220ff).

16 Underlining her negative appreciation of the American theatre scene, in this chapter Roséri tells the story of the English impresario James Henry Mapleson who during his tours through the US with his Italian opera troupe saw himself confronted with logistic and financial difficulties resembling those that affected the female dancers (161f). Roséri cites from Mapleson’s memoirs relatively accurately, yet without providing precise references (Mapleson 1888: e.g. 216, 223).

Cultural Organisations II – *Catechism of the Art of Dance*

Having returned to Europe, apparently to her home town, Nuremberg,¹⁷ Margitta Roséri attempts to counteract the “cruel”, “undignified” treatment of the art of dance in the US,¹⁸ as well as on the European continent, through her *Catechism of the Art of Dance*. It is a treatise conceived as a foundational, encyclopaedic “guide and manual for teachers and students of theatrical and social dance”. In 21 parts, the dancer posits and answers 530 questions on dance – under the following premise:

The explanations and advice contained in the given catechism are based on the experiences of a career as a prime dance artist spanning twenty years in almost all of the countries of the world,¹⁹ on the instruction received in particular by distinguished French masters. It is to serve the function of tutoring and advising teachers and students of theatrical, and primarily of social dance. [...] May this catechism work to convince of the fact that in terms of its pedagogic significance and aesthetically formative force, the art of dance can consider itself equal to any other art. (VI)²⁰

The *Catechism of the Art of Dance* appeared as part of the series “Max Hesse’s Illustrated Catechisms”, a series aiming at the democratisation of education.²¹ Hesse’s publishing concept followed a pedagogical direction as well as belletristic aspirations. As industrial mass prints, these catechisms stand in proximity to the illustrated press both in content and socio-economic conditions, and seem themselves to have influenced the latter. The programmatic presentation of questions and answers supports the series’ concept of presenting guides for teachers and students seeking to gain insight into or an overview over themes relevant for society or bourgeois education.

It is as part of this context that Margitta Roséri communicates a – or her – wide knowledge on dance, its social function, history and pedagogic mission. Beginning with principal

17 As noted, the BNF (Musée de l’Opéra) holds two letters written by Roséri to Charles Nuitter in June and July 1892; one of these is posted from Nuremberg with certainty.

18 “Nowhere is the terpsichore treated more cruelly than in the new world, where its art is represented in such an undignified manner.” (165f)

19 By way of an example, a review from 1868 renders clear the perception of Roséri’s art at the occasion of a performance in the Gaiety Theatre, London: “Mademoiselle Roséri is alone sufficient to call for a visit to this most pleasant theatre. The present generation has not seen such marvellous feats so gracefully performed. She appears to swim – to pause – to fly through the air with a buoyancy devoid of all effort, and with a precision truly marvellous. She is the only dancer in our time to whom we can apply Hood’s quotation à propos of the Taglionis and Ceritos, ‘They toil not, neither do they spin.’” (*FUN*, June 5, 1869)

20 All page numbers that follow in brackets in the main body text refer to Roséri 1896.

21 See *Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*. Commissioned by the Börsenvereins des deutschen Buchhandels. Ed. by the Historische Kommission. Vol. 1. Part 2. Frankfurt a.M.: MVB 2003. http://books.google.de/books?id=aV0hAAAAQBAJ&pg=PA279&lpg=PA279&dq=kaiserreich+%22max+hesse%22&source=bl&ots=IGpXe7_1wj&sig=9rpW6rd_izCfHfiIN-5z894SDLE&hl=de&a=X&ei=123nU8n1K8Lk4QTKnYCACA&ved=0CCAQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=kaiserreich%20%22max%20hesse%22&f=false. (accessed 01.08.2014) The appendix to the *Catechism* presents the following book recommendations, evidently considered as relevant to dance: *Catechism of Good Manners and Fine Custom in the fifth edition*, *Catechism of the Art of Toiletry and Good Taste*, *Good Manners for the World of Children*, *Catechism of Interior Gardening*, *Catechism of Chess-Playing*, *Catechism of the Art of Swimming*, *Catechism for Keepers and Lovers of Bees*, *Catechism of Human Nutrition*.

and practice-oriented statements on theatrical dance,²² she presents – always with the brevity required – both “the mechanical exercises of dance art” (16–27) and their stage-aesthetic applications; the latter include reflections on the tradition of “music in dance” (43f)²³ or notes on then-common choreographic terminology in “Les Enchaînements de Pas” (77–80)²⁴.

The catechism’s second part is dedicated to social dance, which the author introduces with questions/answers concerning decorum²⁵, health aspects,²⁶ training methods²⁷ and the organisational conditions of dance events, before explicating “ballroom or salon dances” (100–159). The final two chapters of the treatise mirror Roséri’s historical spectrum of experience: in “The History of Dance” (160–201), she communicates a detailed historiography of facts and persons with respect to the nineteenth century in particular, and in “The Dances of Past Times” (160–201), the description of alphabetically ordered dances confirms the connection between theatrical and social phenomena well-known in the history of dance.

The *Catechism’s* didactic, affirmative style posits many questions, leaving none unanswered. At the end of her professional journey through the world of dance, Roséri establishes a technically well-founded, knowledgeable and socially engaged stage in the notational form of a catechism. This stage is a conservative one, neither a site for artistic curiosity nor creative interest in the unknown, nor innovative discoveries.

-
- 22 Such as: “4. How is dance elevated into an art form? By being executed in an orderly and mannered fashion according to the rules prescribed, and by being attended to intellectually.” (1)
- 23 Such as: “152. What is rhythm? That which is symmetrically well-ordered in music. In dance, the correspondingly measured movements of the body by means of the feet, consequently the accordance of both in the progression of time (duration). Rhythm is inseparable from the art of sound and the art of dance.” (43)
- 24 Such as: “244. In artistic dance, what do you call a sequence or combination of steps executed by one person alone? Variation, or solo. Yet this term is not to be confused with that of the pas seul. The term of pas seul refers to a complete dance being executed by one person alone, while a variation is only part of a dance. 245. Do the variations have a special function in artistic dance? Yes, they render it possible for the dancers to excel individually, furthermore they make it possible for them to give each other the breaks required for recovery.” (77)
- 25 Such as: “How is instruction in social dance ordered? It is separated into two divisions, that concerning decorum and that of the teaching of the dances. 257. Which of these divisions is the most important one? That of instruction in decorum.” (80)
- 26 Such as: “299. What is to be noted on breathing in dance? It is to be accomplished more through the nose than the mouth. This is to be observed primarily in theatrical dance, which requires great exertion. The correct way of breathing will become much less taxing for the lungs, and one will have much greater endurance in dance. In social dancing, breathing through the nose has the additional advantage of preventing the risk of the dancers breathing into each other’s faces, which would certainly happen in the other case.” (94)
- 27 Such as: “304. Concerning the use of the expander (also called Muskelstrecker or Muskelstärker in German) for the exercise of the upper body in English and American dance schools. What can we report? In English and American dance schools, a different method is applied than in the German and French ones. In the former, the aim is less to develop grace in one’s movements than to strengthen the muscles and to endow the movements with a certain force and energy. [...] 306. Is the use of expanders in dance schools something to approve of? No. They don’t belong there. As the arm movements are very much forced, grace in movement is influenced very negatively. As the art of dance has numerous exercises at its disposal that supply the muscles with the necessary suppleness and power without obstructing grace, the use of the expander is not to be recommended.” (96)

Conclusion

In both her autobiography and the catechism, Margitta Roséri develops a multiplicity of possible perspectives on her life as a female dancer, perspectives open to narrative and performative interpretation. The active role she played in institutional and aesthetic debates concerning the art of dance and her status as an artist is striking. The fact that in this respect she seems to inhabit a rather traditional position does not seem to stand in contradiction to her need of speaking out with regard to her profession and its technical and institutional problems. In writing, she acts in an aesthetically affirmative as well as socially – albeit not creatively – self-determined space; this is a space clearly occupied with resistance to and critique of the art of dance, that is, “negative discourses and disturbances of illusion”,²⁸ even the hatred of dance. Like theatre hostility more generally, the hatred of dance points to “the complicity between the love and hate of the theatre” that Diekmann, Wild and Brandstetter have convincingly elaborated (2012: 15). It can be identified as a perspective “in which antitheatrical impulses and interventions appear not as repressive, but productive forces, the significance of which in terms of cultural history can hardly be overestimated.” (Diekmann; Wild; Brandstetter 2012: 8) In this respect, Roséri’s works from the end of the nineteenth century mark an instructive and detailed field of knowledge production concerning the female dancer. They add a female perspective to so-called *coulisses* literature as the “representational landscape of masculine heterosexual desire for the *danseuse*” (Townsend 2011: 138), a perspective of which the technical and social energy displays a multitude of activities and initiatives relevant for cultural history, even where it does not initiate or negotiate re-visions of a female dance art, as will become common in early twentieth-century autobiographies of female dancers distanced from ballet.²⁹ Thus Mlle. Roséri neither accords to the imagination of the nineteenth-century female dancer rendered stereotypical by the male gaze, nor to the historiographically common model of a culturally individuated dance artist from around 1900. Margitta Roséri communicates thus far underestimated, period-typical experiences of a woman professionally engaged in dance.

28 Christina Thurner has pointed to these disturbances, not least in relation to Roséri’s autobiography: see Thurner 2010 and 2012: passim.

29 Julie Townsend considers the autobiographies by female dancers of the beginning twentieth century (and I would like to posit the question of whether this might already be the case for the nineteenth century) as a feminised form of *coulisses* literature: “Women’s *coulisses* literature participated in a whole variety of cultural, sociological, and aesthetic discourses, the terms of which had been established in the previous century. The conventions of *coulisses* literature and the performer’s autobiography offered women choreographer-dancers an opportunity not only for publicity but for contributing to the discussion of dance aesthetics. The popularity of the dancer’s autobiography comes out of the 19th-century fascination with the dancer’s life, her association with prostitution, and the extent to which access to the dancer’s body was a literary and visual trope for artistic prowess. The audience provoked by this less than artistic interest in the dancer opened up the space for the dancer’s memoir and, as such, many dancer-choreographers engaged this genre.” (Townsend, 211: 146)

Bibliography

Barker Barbara (1984): *Ballet or Ballyhoo. The American Careers of Maria Bonfanti, Rita Sangalli and Guiseppina Morlacchi*. New York: Dance Horizons.

Barker, Barbara M. (ed.) (1988): *Bolossy Kiralfy. Creator of Great Musical Spectacles*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press.

Diekmann, Stefanie; Wild, Christopher; Brandstetter, Gabriele (eds) (2012): *Theaterfeindlichkeit*. Munich: Fink.

Mapleson, James Henry (1888): *The Mapleson Memoirs, 1848–1888*. Vol. II. New York: Belford, Clarke & Co.

Roséri, M[argitta] (1891): *Erinnerungen einer Künstlerin. Ein Buch über die Tanzkunst*. Hanover: Arnold Weichelt.

Roséri, Margitta (1896): *Katechismus der Tanzkunst. Führer und Ratgeber für Lehrer und Schüler des theatralischen und gesellschaftlichen Tanzes*. Leipzig: Max Hesse's Verlag.

Sackville-West, Vita (1937): *Pepita*. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. Also see <<http://www.eyespain.com/blogs/jesuscastro/3813/the-lord-and-the-dancer--the-grandparents-of-vita-sackville-west-%28part-1%29.aspx>> (accessed 24.07.2014).

Sackville-West, Vita (1938): *Pepita. Die Tänzerin und die Lady*. Hamburg: Christian Wegner Verlag.

Smith, Sidonie; Watson, Julia (eds) (2005): *Interfaces. Women, Autobiography, Image, Performance*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Turner, Christina (2010): „Tänzerinnen – Traumgesichter. Das Archiv als historiografische Vision“, in: Haitzinger, Nicole; Jeschke, Claudia (eds.): *Tanz&Archiv: ForschungsReisen. Biografik*. Heft 2. Munich: epodium, 12–21.

Turner, Christina (2012): „Lapsus, Stürze und Brände. Negativdiskurse und Illusionsstörungen im Ballett des 19. Jahrhunderts“, in: Diekmann, Stefanie; Wild, Christopher; Brandstetter, Gabriele (eds): *Theaterfeindlichkeit*. Munich: Fink, 59–69.

Townsend, Julie (2011): „Autobiography and the *Coulisses*: Narrator, Dancer, Spectator“, in: Klein, Gabriele; Noeth, Sandra (eds): *Emerging Bodies: The Performance of Worldmaking in Dance and Choreography*. Bielefeld: Transcript, 137–147.

Townsend, Julie (2012): *The Choreography of Modernism in France. La Danseuse, 1830–1930*. London: Legenda.

CHOREO-GRAPHING SPECTACULARITY

This article will focus on phenomena of displaying spectacularity on stage as recorded in notation. The methodological frame of the analysis is ‘dance literacy’ as exhibited in the widely documented corpus of notated dance texts; the content is the (exemplary) exploration of the media and aesthetics of spectacularity as skillfully communicated in the ‘writings’ of nineteenth-century ballet masters in their respective approaches to choreo(-)graphy – among these ballet masters are Henri Justamant, Marius Petipa, and the notators of Petipa’s works. The perspective on crafting – or manufacturing – ballets intends to contribute to the discourse on the then professional concepts and routines of ‘mise en scène’ (in Justamant’s words) mainly in France and Russia and on the aesthetical programs and diversities the nineteenth-century ballet masters encountered – and created.

The nineteenth century is remarkable for the heterogeneity of approaches used in the representation of dance production (choreography) through dance notation (choreography) As dance scripts and dance scores, they supply data on dance and dancing, albeit with varied emphases. While dance scripts – which are usually considered as notation systems – are primarily concerned with the analysis of movement, dance scores approach movement from a more theatrical perspective, the visualisation of stage directions and choreographic instructions forming optional references to technical and scenic agency in nineteenth-century dance heritage.

The purpose of these reflections is not a comparison of the theatrical concepts and/or the “preservation politics” (Jordan 2001) evidenced in the application of those dance texts to bodies and movements. Rather, it is about suggesting that and exploring how the diversity and complexity of choreo-graphy in nineteenth-century European dance might refer to changes and shifts in the notion of “perception” and thus of “attention”. I shall use these two terms to frame and structure the range of recording dancing, borrowing them from Jonathan Crary, who in his book *Suspensions of Perception. Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* examined “how [in the nineteenth century] ideas about perception and attention were transformed [...] alongside the emergence of new technological forms of the spectacle, display, projection, attraction, and recording” (Crary 1999: 2).¹ Perception, so Crary, is less examining vision, for

vision is only one layer of a body that could be captured, shaped, or controlled by a range of external techniques; at the same time, vision is only one part of a body capable of evading institutional capture and of inventing new forms, affects, and intensities. (Crary 1999: 3)

Rather, vision investigates “the conditions of possibility for its historical emergence” (Crary 1999: 10) – as such it explores and experiences embodiment and temporality. And attention “implies the possibility of a fixation, of holding something in wonder or contemplation, in which the attentive subject is both immobile and ungrounded” (Crary 1999: 10). I read this as

1 Crary limits his research to “the late nineteenth century”. I would argue that in choreo(-)graphy, it is possible to observe ‘pre’-approaches to the attentive practices he identifies as part of the rather narrow time frame of his study.

a statement of how the subject is kinesthetically, i.e. physically affected,² and uses the imagination. I shall narrow down what Crary labeled as the “sweeping reorganization of visual/auditory culture” in “the field of attentive practices” to my case studies of choreo-graphy emerging in the second third of the nineteenth century and becoming prevalent later in the century. I shall argue that choreography and choreo-graphy can be considered as being a part of “the field of attentive practices” that “offers a single heterogeneous surface on which discursive objects, material practices, and representational artifacts do not occupy qualitatively different strata but are equally involved in the production of effects of power and new types of subjectivities” (Crary 1999: 7).

What the shift in the “production of effects of power and new types of subjectivities” might look like is one of the side topics of the following considerations which zoom in on my particular and main focus of identifying/highlighting some of the strata being used in fashioning nineteenth-century theatrical dancing as it has been ‘attended’ to in the transfers to a different medium, the notations, and vice versa.

Before I turn to my case studies, let me give a very brief and general overview over notational practices in nineteenth-century ballet. There are two kinds of notated dance texts, dance scripts and dance scores. Both supply data on dancing and dance, albeit with different emphases. While dance scripts – which are usually considered as systems – are primarily concerned with the (motoric) knowledge of movement, dance scores approach movement from a more theatrical perspective; their stage directions and choreographic instructions form optional references to a dancer’s or choreographer’s realisation in terms of the craft or creation of dance.

The forms emerging in the nineteenth century had to account for a dance scene in which – in both, social and theatrical dance – the technical complexity of physical and spatial movements was increasing; furthermore, the characterisation of roles and the spontaneity of performative agency became intensified. In terms of notation, we can observe eclectic and idiosyncratic responses to these challenges that yet share a sceptical attitude with regard to previously accepted notational standards. The search for new typographical signs and notational combinations is striking.³

Nineteenth-century dance and movement analysis meets the problem of documenting space and time by means of a segmenting observation and notation of complex body action. There are two relevant categories of notation: the more frequent stick figure notations, and the notation using music notes. The two categories share the procedure of isolating single movement elements based on and referring back to the aesthetically motivated appearance of dance. Likewise, isolation is the prerequisite of ‘techne’, of craftsmanship, that is, of the employment of technically determined and artistically available energy and its engagement with expression and time. The dance notations localise and document that energy at its point of emergence, namely in the individual body parts, attempting to trace (by means of description) their respective forms of expression. They no longer fixate only dance steps and/or floor paths (locomotion), but record complex body movements. Both the stick figures and

2 See Noland 2009, 9f.: “the term ‘kinesthesia’ refers to the sensations of movement transmitted to the mind from the nerves of the muscular, tendinous, and articular systems.”

3 For a detailed overview over nineteenth-century notational history, see Jeschke 2010: 487–510.

the music notes research the conditional relation between corporeality and time, founded on the experience of a spatiality that is now consciously and conceptually conceived as three-dimensional.

In the case studies of this article, I am going to present four different bodies of dance texts – mainly scores that have not found a lot of consideration in dance historiography. The figures presented in my case studies share the then usual migrational conditions of producers and productions in nineteenth-century dance. The first case study is of Austrian/German origin: the so-called Opfermann ‘pattern book’; the second one, the ‘livrets de mise en scène’ by Henri Justamant, originated in France (at the time of Marius Petipa’s coming of age). This second case study includes a look on Marius Petipa himself, choreo-graphing in Russia; and the third one is the Russian notation project under the direction of Nikolai Sergeyev, post-sketching parts of Petipa’s works and recreating them in Western Europe.

The selection of examples follows the image programs of the spectacular group arrangement, as well as additionally – in the case of Justamant and Petipa/Sergeyev – the dance-technical and mimic movement programs of scenic sequences. As I would like to indicate right away, both point towards strategies and standards of choreo(-)graphic agency. In this sense, notations are visualised operatives of embodied cultures of memory and mediation in dance – in Carrie Noland’s words:

if the writer performs the motion repeatedly, his own body will eventually be inscribed, the muscles and ligaments physiologically altered, by the gestural routine that expresses and confines his body at the very same time. (Noland 2010: 1)

Let me first refer to the three choreo(-)graphic representatives active in Western Europe: These are father and son Franz Opfermann (father b.1809, d.1874; son b.1835, d.1908) and Henri Justamant (b.1815, d.1890).

The Opfermanns’ and Justamant’s careers cover the second and third thirds of the nineteenth century. They did not shape the canon of dance historiography as did/does Petipa – they do not even appear in this canon. However, the three figures seem to have had a significant working life, an inference based on the volume of collected and/or notated material of the ballet works that they conceived and/or set.

Dance Texts I: Collecting Choreo-Graphies – Father/Son Franz Opfermann



The Opfermann 'pattern book', titled *Tanz-Gruppen*, has been located at the Derra de Moroda Dance Archives in Salzburg since 1965, when the founder, Friderica Derra de Moroda, acquired the 132 pages of partly coloured dance illustrations – at random bound into a book and with sparse supplemental commentary or explanation – attributing the collection to Austrian ballet master Franz Opfermann the younger. The page numbers of the undated script have been added by Derra in her own handwriting. The first page of the notation manuscript holds an anonymous biographical sketch (in German) of Franz Opfermann the younger: "Choreographies by the balletmaster Franz Opfermann, born 1825, died October 6, 1908, 10 years at the tsar's opera house in St. Petersburg. His father was a solo dancer and maitre de ballet in Munich at the court of King Max of Bavaria, the father of whose wife was the chamber musician Prinster at the court of Duke Esterhazy around 1725, related to Fanny Elssler through the Prinster family." ([Opfermann] n.d.: n.p.) Franz Opfermann Jr. and Fanny Elssler were cousins through their mothers (Rosalia and Therese who were both daughters of Johann Prinster). Ivor Guest describes Prinster as earning "his living making plaster figurines and played the fiddle in his spare time" (Guest 1970: 18).⁴

There is some doubt, however, concerning the notion that only this one writer participated in the project. A comparison of style and the rare signatures suggests a co-authorship of Franz the elder. And there is – at least – one single leaflet that can be attributed to choreographer Wenzel Julius Reisinger, the first creator of *Swan Lake* in Russia ([Opfermann] n.d.: n.p.).

The structure as well as the comprehensiveness of the volume may be read as an archive of dance knowledge documenting a high degree of professionalism in staging ballets. The organisation of the 'pattern book' appears accumulative and consists of configurations of changing numbers of dancers without and with props (like scarves, flower garlands, bouquets etc.), displaying sculptural-ornamental group figurations presented from the perspective of the stage.

Viewed as a whole, all of the Opfermanns' drawings deal with the ornamental decoration of the stage through the costumed bodies of (mainly) female dancers. There are no notes

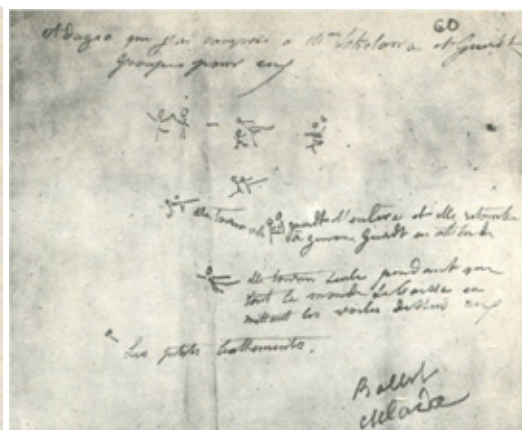
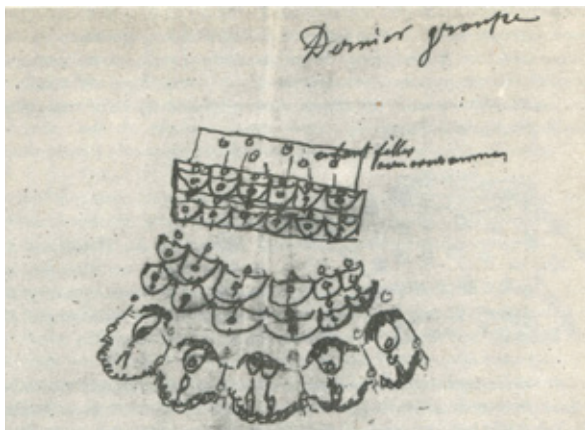
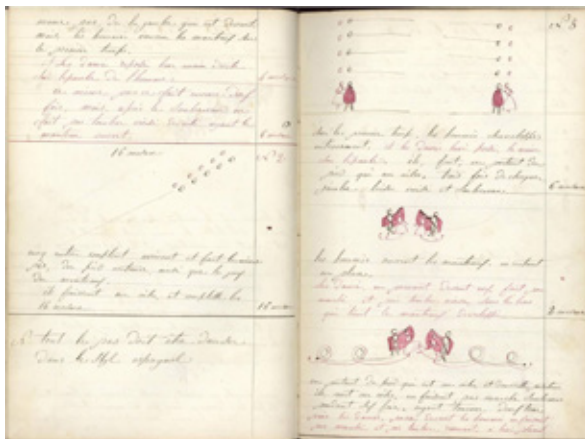
4 Concerning the biography of the Opfermanns, also see Raab 1994: 343–44.

or identifications to connect any specific illustration with any particular ballet production; character-, music-, or story-based interactions among the dancers are missing. Interaction is a motif only insofar as it is established by the posture of their bodies, their positioning in space and in the contact between individual dancers such as by touching each other's hands and grasping the waist, or by the use of props. In this context, the use of veils is of special significance for the evolution of nineteenth-century dance technique as the handling of the veils requires adaptive, i.e., swinging arm movements involving motions of the upper body as well as a new awareness of the existence and use of body weight.

Harmony, balance in the arrangement of the limbs in space, and the importance of each element as an ornament within the grouping are essential features of the aesthetics of the 'pattern book'. Props are used to provide variations on and the intensification of the sculptural, architectural aspects of the female body. For example, the arrangement of scarves or the positioning of flower garlands forms and makes visible to the audience the space surrounding the bodies, thus rendering it as significant as the bodies themselves – bodies that need to meet the motoric challenge of becoming aware of their weight and the surrounding space by handling the props. These dancing bodies produce shifts in performing “effects of power and new types of subjectivities” (Crary).

Similar strategies concerning practice, technique, kinesthetics and aesthetics can be found in the dance texts of Henri Justamant and Marius Petipa.

Dance Texts II: Scoring Choreographies – Justamant and Petipa



Henri Justamant, born in Bordeaux in 1815 into a non-artistic family, was

un maître de ballet [...], qui compte une très longue et très laborieuse carrière chorégraphique, [...] partagée entre l'Opéra, l'étranger et les différentes scènes parisiennes.

a ballet master [...], who had a very long and hard-working career between the opera, abroad, and the different Paris theatres.⁵

He received his training at the Grand Théâtre in Bordeaux and spent his early years in the major cities of the French provinces – Marseille (1833?, 1837, 1842?, 1843-45, 1846?), Bordeaux (1847), Lyon (1849–1861), and Brussels (1860–1864) with some travel to the foreign ballet centers of London (1869, 1876, 1877 – Alhambra and Victoria Theater) and Berlin (1874). After 1866, he mainly produced his ballets in Paris at the theatre of the Porte-Saint-Martin, at the Paris Opera, at the Théâtre de la Gaîté, the Château-d'Eau, the Chatelet, the Théâtre-Lyrique, and the Folies-Bergères, and he also became ballet master at the Opéra in 1868. Justamant is believed to be one of the last French choreographers with the skill to produce great 'ballets of action', and to notate them for reproduction, including the group scenes.

Our knowledge concerning Justamant's notations is fragmentary. They were sold in three packages during an auction at Drouot's in Paris, May 15, 1893. These packages have remained more or less complete to our days. The volumes No. 2 and 4, comprehending 48 books, are located in Cologne, Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung der Universität, Schloß Wahn; No. 5 and 7, comprehending nineteen books, can be found in New York, Public Library, Dance Collection (Collection Lincoln Kirstein); and No. 6, comprehending ca. nineteen books, is held in Paris, Musée de l'Opéra.

Compared to the Opfermann sketches, Justamant's 'livrets de mise en scène' record full ballets or divertissements. (Ill. 3) His notation method is multi-layered and offers verbal descriptions of the pantomimic actions as well as of movements of the legs, applying the conventional ballet terminology of his time. In addition, as choreographer, he uses stick figures to represent the whole body during poses and/or movements, in order to make clear the ports de bras and body postures. The shape of the line figures are identical for male and female dancers: a triangular pelvis/torso with lines for the upper torso, arms and legs and a circle for the head. Gender is distinguished by using different colors: red figure = woman, black figure = male. The stick figures are placed into a stage space on which the floor pattern of the movement is traced. The entire description is arranged to coincide with a numerical record of the musical bars, which is noted in the side margin of the manuscript page.

No hierarchy of information exists; any data is equally valid. The stick figures only suggest body positions, do not fix them. The musical score does not play a relevant part in the notation; time is recorded as numbers (the numbers of measures allotted to the designated movement phrase), and duration is expressed relatively by the length of movement lines. Thus, without clear rhythmical assignation, the experience of time becomes experimental, as does the encounter of space: the floor plans give spatial orientation but do not require exact placement.

5 Entry "H. Justamant", in: Dossier d'Artiste. Bibliothèque National de France, Musée de l'Opéra.

Henri Justamant presents narrative passages, the mime scenes, in which the protagonists act according to their 'silent speech'. He also designs movement sequences for which he combines drawings with step descriptions. Here is one example from the third part of the *Pas de Manteaux N 3* (drawing in the middle of the page of ill. 3):

the men open the coats remaining in place, the ladies pass in front and they do *pas marché*, et *pas tombé croiser*, under the arms holding the spread coats.

les hommes ouvrent les manteaux en restant en place; les dames, en passant devant eux, font *pas marché*, et *pas tombé croiser*, sous les bras qui tient le manteaux développés.

Justamant seems to rely on energetic references that can only be detected, dis-covered by the embodiment/action of the movement sequences. He chose to give the motoric subtext by which the dynamics (and not the appearance) of the movement material could be registered.⁶

Justamant's hybrid choreo-graphy opens up ways of focusing the various movement layers contributing to the dynamics of dance material in general. As movement archives and as archives on mobility, Justamant's 'livrets de mise en scène' provide unusual and detailed technical insights into the corporal-performative knowledge of the nineteenth century.

The manner of Justamant's notational practice can be compared to cinematic/film procedures. The choreo-grapher follows and writes the actions from the perspective of a movable/mobile camera. By doing so, he invites the recipients (dancers and audience) to execute the same mobile view and action. The stage is represented in all three dimensions; the sequence of the actions can optionally be accelerated, slowed down or arrested, thus evoking some attentive freedom for the execution by the dancers and, consequently, for the audience – which is challenged to direct their attention to the stage activities deliberately.

In terms of Crary's observations concerning the effects of power and subjectivity in nineteenth-century spectacular culture and its recording in ballet choreo-graphy, there seems to have been a great amount of awareness of the energetic and rhythmical significance of ballet steps, the use of space and group figurations on the side of the choreographer – a significance that resonated in the particular performance of the step sequences that each dancer was considered to contribute to the staging.

Like Justamant, Marius Petipa compiles transcriptions of his dance theatre; the notational image resembles that of Justamant; and like the latter, as well as like Opfermann, Petipa, too, makes use of a variety of choreo(-)graphic elements (group figurations, stick figures, floor paths, verbal descriptions) – a procedure that points to 'pre-notating', that is, to the drafting of ballets with the help of notations preceding the performance. The employment

6 Here is one example – Paquita's first entrance – demonstrating Justamant's narration and characterisation via the motoric identity of his female protagonist. The ballet has a complex story which I will not here display in extenso. What is important is that the protagonist Paquita was brought up as a gypsy by Inigo who robbed her as a child; her parents, however, were of aristocratic origin. Inigo is in love with Paquita, but she is not interested in him. "Instead of answering, she starts to dance, mostly in place." The steps that Justamant is using/creating for Paquita's first response to Inigo are based on rapid *coupés*, *fouéttés* and movements that use leg gestures pointing to the back. Considering the fact that Inigo is acting behind her, the choreo-graphy shows the following qualities on Paquita's side: determination, repulsion, self-esteem, dynamism via the sheer use of ballet steps. Paquita is in command of the space and energy of the scene and of Inigo. (Justamant 1854: n.p.)

of these elements, and the notation itself, may be read as processes of finding and rehearsing – to a special degree for Petipa, of whom there are, to my knowledge, no complete scores. The significance of his preliminary sketches for the production of ballets are underlined by Fyodor Lopukhov's practical comments, which can be found in a volume edited by Eberhard Rebling and published in 1975, *Marius Petipa. Meister des klassischen Balletts* (Rebling 1975: 141–210). Lopukhov, later a significant choreographer in the Soviet Union, was active at the Marijinsky Theater in St. Petersburg between 1905 and 1917 as a character dancer, and knew Petipa's choreographies from daily practice. In the following I will refer to the illustrations and statements in the above-named volume; this is a comment by Lopukhov on *The Bandits* (1875):

It has been said that Petipa established the composition of the scenes for the corps de ballet in advance, but set the soloists' dances directly in the rehearsal room, without any preparation, as it were. This is not correct. Petipa prepared sketches also of the dance movements and positions of the figures. (Rebling 1975: 152)

Ill. 4 (*La belle au bois dormant*): The drawing displays Petipa's work on the final group of the waltz from the second image of the first act, which was, according to Lopukhov, not realised.

Les hommes tiennent les guirlandes hautes, puis au moment ils descendent les guirlandes d'une seule fois // avant de faire de groupes tous ceux, celles et enfants // filles qui sont sur les praticables vont se placer // les autres devant – ils se [...] à la place du groupe avec guirlandes en l'air – puis fin groupe.

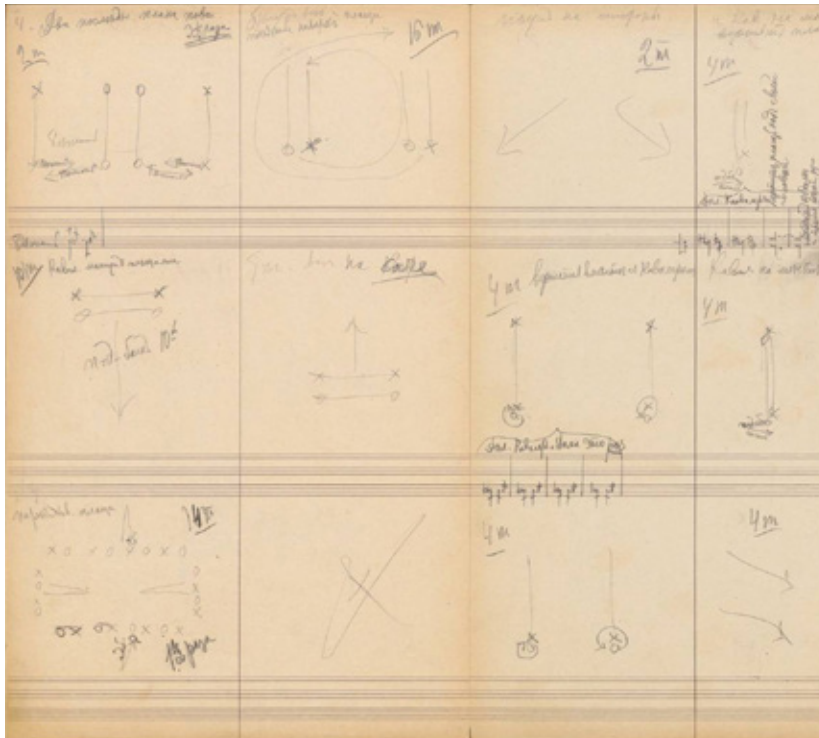
The men hold up the garlands, subsequently dropping them at once. Before the group is formed – all men, women and children. The girls, who stood on the platforms, go to their positions, the others proceed, pushing back upwards the group with the garlands – then end of group. (Rebling 1975: 189, ill. 29)

Ill. 5 (*Mlada*) And here is an example of Petipa's movement program:

Adagio que j'ai composé à Mme Sokolowa et Gerdt. Groupes pour eux. // Gerdt l'enlève et elle retombe à genou. Gerdt en attitude // elle tourne seule pendant que tout le monde se baisse en mettant les voiles dessus eux // Les petits battements.

Adagio which I have set for Mme Sokolova and Gerdt. Groups for them // Gerdt lifts her, and she drops back to the knees. Gerdt in attitude-position // she turns by herself while all lower down and hold the veils over them // petits battements. (Rebling 1975: 173, ill. 15)

Dance Texts III: Re/Creating Choreographies – Petipa/Sergeyev



The notators of the Sergeyev Collection⁷ procede differently: as archivists of Petipa's choreographies, they do not work, as he did, with the pre-production of dance scores, but with the post-documentation of 'citable gestures'. Hence they are part of a different notational tradition in nineteenth-century dance theatre, namely of the dance scripts already referred to at the outset – dance scripts to which the analysis of movement and their translation into signifiers (or citable movements/gestures) is central. This translation replaces the verbal description of steps, codifying these perhaps more precisely (and certainly differently) than the traditional ballet vocabulary. In the case of the Sergeyev Collection, this codification occurs with the help of the Stepanov Notation – which had been crafted around the beginning of the twentieth century of some Petipa ballets from the St Petersburg era – for instance of *Paquita*, performed in 1847, 1881 and 1892. Unlike in the Justamant livrets, in which the choreographer uses verbal descriptions for the movement materials, the Sergeyev texts separate the dance movements depicted in Stepanov notation and the mimic ones, described verbally, and add floor path movements. The fragmented notation of the (prevalent) leg movements, however, refers to model step sequences, i.e., routines, and hence to the formation of time as motorically known and rhythmically habitual. The continuity of the movement sequence is not depicted. The following forms a short explication of the movement- and dance-analytical qualities of the Stepanov Notation.

In his *Alphabet des Mouvements du Corps Humain* (Paris, 1892), Vladimir Stepanov represents the body by means of a 9-line system divided into three parts. The movements of

7 Sergeyev was the supervisor of a comprehensive notation project, yet due to his alleged ignorance of dance notation, he was considered a dilettante, attributing the major part of the actual notating to two assistants, Alexander Chekrygin and Victor Rakhmanov. (Wiley 1976: 97f.)

head and body are notated in the two upper lines, those of the arms in the three central lines, and those of the legs in the four lower lines. The question of whether it is a left or right body part that executes the movement is indicated through the placing of the notehead's tail (directed upwards or downwards). The *Paquita* score in the Sergeyev Collection gives mainly the leg movements. The strategy of notating body movements according to a threefold framework constitutes less a hierarchisation of movement possibilities than a functionalisation according to their positions and activities in the body. The relation between dance and music is similarly non-hierarchical: music notes as indicators of movement register simultaneously the three criteria of time, body and space in analysis and representation. Notated within a line grid as part of the music score, they take up two aspects from musical notation for the writing of movement: on the one hand, the principle of addition (movement, like sound, is made up of several elements) and, on the other, the principle of duration (the time values of movement are communicated by means of the note design known from music). As a result, motoric energy and phrasing, which had to be inferred in the stick figure notations of Justamant or Petipa, are here more concretely graspable – in a sense as an additional voice in relation to the time values of musical composition. In a kind of inversion of 'power', the different layers of fragmented documentation offer lacunas; do they inhibit or allow the emergence of new types of subjectivities?

“Models of Subjective Vision”⁸ / “Productivity of the Observer” (Crary 1990: 9)

The creative, rehearsal-based engagement with dance texts takes place on all levels of the mediation of information – on the level of period-typical ornamental image programs (in the case of the Opfermanns, Justamant and Petipa), in the use of stick figure drawings, in the strategy of verbal step and mime descriptions (in Justamant and Petipa), as well as in the employment of dance scripts as an aide-memoire (in the Sergeyev Collection). In the examples of nineteenth-century choreo(-)graphies given here (as well as in possible other examples), a striking use of the ornamental becomes visible – both as structure and as *modus operandi*, that is, as a strategy of production. The ornamental does not produce any readable signs, but is used as a materiality functioning both spatially and temporally – as a spatial and temporal fixation, and in terms of its spatial and temporal transposition into movement. A central role is played by the props, used as prostheses, extensions of corporeality requiring a new – open, mobile – vocabulary in particular of upper body movements and the shifting of weight, a vocabulary which cannot be communicated by means of traditional designations of steps or instructions.

The ornamental dimension of the group figurations aimed at the effect of 'wonder' – and this is reinforced by the great number of participants – requires contemplation and imagination, and plays with the issue of temporality. Furthermore, there are isolated traces of the ornamental in the stick figures and floor paths, as well as, in the case of Justamant, in the pictorial organisation of the step descriptions. While the 'pattern book' does not contain any verbal explanations and while Justamant uses ornamentally displayed verbalisation to

8 “I also hope to show how the most influential figurations of an observer in the early nineteenth century depended on the priority of models of subjective vision” (Crary 1990: 9).

document codified movement vocabulary, Petipa makes use of descriptions which expand the scope of the possible in terms of verbalisation, thus opening not only the ornamental, but also dance-technical codification towards the realms of imagination and projection. The Sergeev Collection translates Petipa's capacities into movement formulas, or, to be more precise: the scripts are used as if they provided formulas.

In the negotiation of spectacular materialities and material spectacularities of dance, the choreo-graphers presented here produce stereoscopic, virtual, spatial images (Crary 1990: 8);⁹ these do not so much document the occurrences as activate the performative and theatrical faculties of the imagination and of creation in all those involved in the movement event. In the notation, we see the unfolding of operative spaces and temporalities, characterised by their 'graphic suggestiveness' and 'manoeuverability'; and they display a praxeological approach to nineteenth-century dance culture, its disciplines and its historiographies. These fields of knowledge production in dance are definitely under-researched and will require further contextualisation.

9 Crary identifies the optical device that he considers characteristic for the nineteenth century: the stereoscope "as a means of detailing the observer's transformed status" (Crary 1990: 8).

Illustrations

[Opfermann, Franz, Father and Son] (no date): *Tanz-Gruppen*. Manuscript located at the Derra de Moroda Dance Archives, Paris-Lodron University, Salzburg.

Justamant, Henri (1854): "*Paquita*. Ballet en deux actes et trois tableaux par Messieurs Paul Foucher et Mazillier, musique de Mr. Delvedez, représenté pour la première fois sur le theater de l'académie royale de Musique, le 1er avril 1846. Représenté sur le grand theater de Lyon le 6 decembre 1854. Mise en Scène et dansés par Monsieur Justamant. Direction de Monsieur Lefebvre." [sic]

Petipa, Marius: *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890). In: Rebling, Eberhard (1975): *Marius Petipa. Meister des klassischen Balletts. Selbstzeugnisse Dokumente Erinnerungen*. Berlin: Henschelverlag, 176, ill. 17.

Petipa, Marius: *Mlada* (1879). In: Rebling, Eberhard (1975): *Marius Petipa. Meister des klassischen Balletts. Selbstzeugnisse Dokumente Erinnerungen*. Berlin: Henschelverlag, 173, ill. 15.

Petipa, Marius: *Paquita, Pas de Manteaux*. <<http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/~hou01987>> (accessed 15.06.2015).

Bibliography

Crary, Jonathan (1990): *Techniques of the Observer. On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge MA and London: MIT Press).

Crary, Jonathan (1999): *Suspensions of Perception. Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*. Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press.

Guest, Ivor (1970): *Fanny Elssler*. London: Adam & Charles Black.

Jeschke, Claudia; Vettermann, Gabi; Haitzinger, Nicole (2010): *Interaktion und Rhythmus. Zur Modellierung von Fremdheit im Tanztheater des 19. Jahrhunderts*. Munich: epodium.

Jordan, Stephanie (ed.) (2001): *Preservation Politics. Dance Revived, Reconstructed, Remade*. London: Dance Books.

Justamant, Henri (1854): "*Paquita*. Ballet en deux actes et trois tableaux par Messieurs Paul Foucher et Mazillier, musique de Mr. Delvedez, représenté pour la première fois sur le theater de l'académie royale de Musique, le 1er avril 1846. Represente sur le grand theater de Lyon le 6 decembre 1854. Mise en Scène det dansés par Monsieur Justamant. Direction de Monsieur Lefebvre." [sic]

Noland, Carrie (2009): *Agency and Embodiment. Performing Gestures/Producing Culture*. Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press.

[Opfermann, Franz, Father and Son] (no date): *Tanz-Gruppen*. Manuscript located at the Derra de Moroda Dance Archives, Paris-Lodron University, Salzburg.

Raab, Riki (1994): *Biographischer Index des Wiener Opernballetts von 1613 bis zur Gegenwart*. Vienna: Hollinek.

Rebling, Eberhard (1975): *Marius Petipa. Meister des klassischen Balletts. Selbstzeugnisse Dokumente Erinnerungen*. Berlin: Henschelverlag. See esp. the first chapter: Marius Petipa, Choreographische Erläuterungen, Mit Kommentaren von Fjodor Lopuchow, 141–210.

Wiley, Roland John (1976): "Dances from Russia. An Introduction to the Sergejev Collection", in: *Harvard Library Bulletin*, Vol. XXIV, No. 1, January, 1976, 94–112.