

## THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF DANCE

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### Contents

1. Introduction
  2. An Overview over the Birth of Anthropology of Dance
  3. The Anthropological Study of Dance before The 1970s
    - 3.1. American Forerunners
    - 3.2. French Forerunners
    - 3.3. British Forerunners
  4. The Established Discipline: Institutionalization and Development of Methodologies
    - 4.1. Caveat
    - 4.2. Institutionalization in the United States
    - 4.3. Institutionalization in the United Kingdom
    - 4.4. Institutionalization in France
  5. Approaches and Methodologies for Anthropology of Dance
- Glossary  
Bibliography  
Biographical Sketches

### Summary

Anthropology of dance is a sub-field of the main field of anthropology, that has developed specific tools and approaches relative to the nature of the analyzed object, but that also applies to its researches and analysis the wider theories and analytical tools used in anthropology, sociology and more generally in human sciences. This chapter focuses first on a historical overview of the birth of the discipline, then on the various approaches and scholars that have contributed to its shaping and development, to conclude outlining the approach and methodologies that studying dance from an anthropological perspective entail.

### 1. Introduction

In this chapter our aim is to give both an historical overview of the different currents that have given rise to the discipline of *anthropology of dance* and an outline of what an anthropological approach to dance entails. Marking the 1970s as the moment of birth of the discipline, we engage with pre 1970s dance forerunners working within anthropology, focusing on the United States, France and the United Kingdom as it is from these countries that the majority of the scholars emerged in the early days of this

discipline. Whilst not denying the very important input from scholars in other subjects, in this historical section the authors will present mainly those who trained in anthropology. Moreover, while we acknowledge that anthropologists were not the first to treat dance as a socio-cultural phenomenon we have chosen to exclude the many missionaries, colonial administrators, explorers, and travelers who included dancing or cognate movement practices in their writings. We direct the reader to Drid Williams' *Anthropology and the Dance: Ten Lectures* 2004 (1991) who did a thorough study of some such writings.

## 2. An Overview over the Birth of Anthropology of Dance

In 1985 the British anthropologist Paul Spencer argued in his essay introducing the collection *Society and the Dance: The Social Anthropology of Process and Performance*, which he had edited, that 'most of us [anthropologists] have encountered some form of dancing in our field studies, often as a highlight of social gathering; it is too big to miss – and yet we still somehow miss it' (1985: ix). Yet, whilst we agree with Spencer's statement, in their book, *Anthropologie de la danse: Genèse et construction d'une discipline*, Grau and Wierre-Gore (2005) contended that by the 1970s the anthropology of dance was already being established as a distinct sub-field of anthropology, with methodologies specific to its analysis, as well as borrowed from the main field and other disciplines.

The choice of this timeframe is based on three aspects:

- First, a number of individuals trained in dance had by then gained their PhDs in anthropology with theses focused on dance and its analysis: Adrienne Kaeppler from the University of Hawai'i in 1967, Anya Peterson Royce from Berkeley in 1974, Drid Williams, from Oxford in 1975. The same year Roderyk Lange received his degree in Ethnology from the Polish University Abroad, and a year after Joann Kealiinohomoku and Judith Lynn Hanna received theirs, respectively from Indiana and Columbia Universities. The African American dancer and scholar Pearl Primus (1919-1994) gained hers in anthropology in 1977 from New York University, with a thesis entitled *An Anthropological Study of Masks as Teaching Aid in the Enculturation of Mano Children*, and based on ethnographic data collected in West Africa in 1948-1949 and during three further field trips in the 1950s and 1960s.
- Second, from the 1960s and before, these individuals and others, including Gertrude Kurath (1953, 1956, 1960) and Suzanne Youngerman (1975), had started publishing in established anthropology, ethnology and ethnomusicology journals. Among them, for example: *American Anthropologist*, *Arts et Traditions Populaires*, *Current Anthropology*, *Ethnomusicology*, *Présence Africaine*, and *The Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council*. They were publishing articles based on their own ethnographic research as well as essays circumscribing the anthropology of dance.
- Third, the first textbooks in the field were published in the decade: *The Nature of Dance* (Lange 1975), *The Anthropology of Dance* (Royce 1977) and *To Dance is Human* (Hanna 1979). Anthropologist Erika Bourguignon's *Trance Dance* published in 1968, historian Terence Osborn Ranger *Dance and Society in East Africa 1890-1970: The Mbeningoma* in 1975, and the republishing of Franziska Boas' *The*

*Function of Dance in Society* by Dance Horizon in 1972, might also be mentioned here. Also worth mentioning are two articles: Maurice Bloch's 1974 'Symbols, song, dance and features of articulation: Is religion an extreme form of traditional authority?' and John Blacking's 1976 'Dance, conceptual thought and production in the archaeological record', both written by anthropologists.

By the 1970s there was a critical mass of scholars working in the field: it may suffice to add all the European scholars working within folklore and ethnochoreology – as for instance Egil Bakka, László Felföldi, Anca Giurchescu, Jean-Michel Guilcher, György Martin, Ernő Pesovár, and many others too numerous to mention here – and the American dance ethnologists, especially Elsie Dunin, Allegra Fuller Snyder and Judy van Zile. Indeed, Kealiinohomoku considered that 'by 1972 [...] the field of ethnochoreology had entered a time of florescence' (1976: 9). Scholars were publishing in a variety of journals, they were sharing their work at conferences, and distinct theoretical frameworks for the study of dance from anthropological, ethnological, and ethnochoreological perspectives were emerging. Many of these included dance-specific methodologies, dealing especially with the structure of movement and with choreomusical analyses.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), founded some months after the end of World War II in November 1945 and based on the ideology that the sharing of knowledge, scientific research, and education for all can bring greater understanding and, therefore, peace between people, also helped in developing the field through two significant series of activities. When the International Folk Music Council (IFMC), now the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM), was set up, UNESCO decided to support it by sending delegates to its initial meeting in London in 1947 and to its first international conference held in Basel, Switzerland in 1948. This led the way to establishing 'formal consultative relations' with an organization whose aims '(a) To assist in the preservation, dissemination and practice of the folk music of all countries; (b) To further the comparative study of folk music; (c) To promote understanding and friendship between nations through the common interest of folk music' (Anonymous 1949: 4) were very much at the heart of the UNESCO project. Following the conference, the IFMC started its annual publication *The Journal of the International Folk Music Council* in 1949, which to this day regularly publishes articles on dance, and dedicated two issues, in 1991 and 2001, to the subject.

According to the ICTM's website:

"In her capacity as Honourable Secretary of the International (Advisory) Folk Dance Council, Maud Karpeles (1885–1976) organized the International Conference on Folk Song and Folk Dance [...] in 1947. Delegates from twenty-eight countries participated, mostly appointed by the governments of their respective nations, as well as a UNESCO representative. [...]"

On the afternoon of Monday, 22 September 1947, the Vice Chairman of the conference, Steuart Wilson (1889–1966), proposed "that an International Folk Music Council be formed". [...] In the following days, a provisional constitution was adopted, and Officers and an Executive Board were appointed for one year. (<http://www.ictmusic.org/general-information> retrieved 5th March 2015)"

It is no surprise, therefore, that right from the beginning the IFMC included dance as a legitimate field of study since Karpeles was a collector and teacher of English folk dance from the beginning of the twentieth century after a brief training in piano at the “Hochschule für Musik” in Berlin. With her long-standing collaborator, the better-known Cecil Sharp (1859-1924), she contributed to the founding of the London based English Song and Folk Dance Society in 1932.

As the number of dance scholars grew within the IFMC, this led to the development of the Study Group on Ethnochoreology, which was first established in 1960, at the IFMC’s Vienna conference. Its first name was the Folk Dance Commission. In 1964 it became the Study Group for Folk Dance Terminology and in 1972 the Study Group on the Terminology of Choreology. It was in 1976 that the group adopted the name by which it is known today: the Study Group on Ethnochoreology. Over the years the Study Group brought together scholars coming from anthropology, ethnology, folklore, folk life studies and other cognate disciplines, creating a network of researchers sharing ideas. This gave greater visibility to the study of dance as an academic field and, as we will see later, how this transnational group allowed the development of teaching projects, which eventually became full university programs.

More recently, UNESCO has been significant for our field through the establishment of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in 2003, the culmination of many years of work and many earlier declarations and recommendations. A number of ICTM members, including Study Group members, have been solicited by both UNESCO to act as experts to evaluate proposals and by communities to help them in preparing submissions. Furthermore, ICH has become an important object of study for many ICTM members, ourselves included (cf. Gore and Grau, 2014).

### **3. The Anthropological Study of Dance before The 1970s**

It is interesting that already in 1953, on both sides of the Atlantic, there was a desire to engage formally with dance among some anthropologists. Kate Ramsey, an anthropologist who has written on the development of the anthropology of dance in the USA, reported that:

“In 1953 [Melville Herskovits] wrote to the dean at Northwestern: “[the anthropology of dance] is a much neglected [field], and one that I feel can only be [established] by someone thoroughly trained in the dance who would then get enough anthropological training to work out methods and conceptual approaches for this cross-cultural study’ (2000: 204)”

1953 also saw the establishment of the journal *Ethnomusicology* in the USA, first as a Newsletter - with funds for ‘mimeographing and postage for up to three issues’ coming from ‘the defunct American Society for Comparative Musicology’ (Merriam 1953: 1-2) - and then as a proper journal in January 1958, under the editorship of Alan Merriam.

In 1953 the Royal Anthropological Institute in London established an Ethnomusicology Committee. The Committee met until 1963. It was then succeeded by the RAI Ethnomusicology Panel, which ceased operation in 1974. It was re-established in 2013 as Ethnomusicology Committee and Grau was invited to join it to represent dance.

According to a 1958 report published in *Ethnomusicology* by the musician and composer Raymond Clausen, Honorary Secretary to the Committee:

“On the 11<sup>th</sup> June, 1953, at a Council meeting of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland it was proposed “to appoint a committee to consider what action should be taken for the encouragement of this branch of anthropology (ethnomusicology). The Council agreed to the proposal and appointed the following to form a committee to examine ways of promoting the scientific study of tribal music: Dr Baké, Mr Blacking, Mr Braunholtz, Rev. A. M. Jones, Dr Layard, Mr Clausen, Dr Samson, Professor Tucker (Clausen 1958: 22).”

That John Blacking was a member so early in his career after graduating in Anthropology from King's College, Cambridge in 1953, is interesting as he was later to be instrumental in the development of both Ethnomusicology and the Anthropology of Dance in the United Kingdom. The Ethnomusicology Committee, which in its first meeting in August 1953 included such prominent figures as William Fagg of the British Museum's Ethnography Department and Raymond Firth, Professor of Social Anthropology at the London School of Economics (LSE), was already promoting the study of dance as may be seen from its recommendations to the RAI as to its role: ‘The study of dancing should be regarded as within the Committee's scope, since it [is] indivisible from the music’ (Baily, 2014).

Indeed, this interest in dance was not new to the RAI. In 1948, the African American dancer and former student of Robert Redfield and Melville Herskovits, Katherine Dunham, in London to perform *A Caribbean Rhapsody* at the Prince of Wales Theatre, were invited to give a seminar. The annual report of the RAI records that ‘on October 5<sup>th</sup> 1948 a Special Meeting was held at University College, London and that Miss Katherine Dunham, Ph.D., gave a talk entitled: “The Occurrence of Cults among ‘Deprived’ Peoples”’. We will return later to Dunham, when examining the American history

According to Clausen, after several meetings of the Committee in the first year, nothing much happened until 1956. By that time it had expanded to some twenty-two ‘attendant’ and eighteen ‘corresponding’ members, amongst whom were now included the aforementioned Karpeles and Herskovits, as well as the dance researcher and critic Beryl de Zoete, author of a number of books on dance in South Asia (de Zoete, 1938; 1953; 1957). Beryl de Zoete (1879-1962) had been among a minority of women who attended Oxford University, completing her studies in 1901, before degrees were awarded to women. In 1913 she studied with Emile Jacques Dalcroze at the Dalcroze Institute in Hellerau, Germany, finishing her training at the London School of Dalcroze Eurythmics because of the war. Throughout her life she engaged with many dance genres and movement practices, from ballroom, to yoga and belly dancing, describing herself as ‘a student of dance in many parts of the world’ (cited in Odom 2006: 77). She traveled widely in Europe, North Africa and South Asia, making a living from her writing. She wrote for important newspapers and magazines, including *Ballet*, *The Dancing Times*, *The Monthly Musical Record*, *The Nation* and *Athenaeum*, and *The New Statesman*. She knew and wrote about all of the key dance artists of her time, from Katherine Dunham, to Kurt Jooss, to Marie Rambert and Frederick Ashton. Of her books *Dance and Drama in Bali* (1938), written in collaboration with the artist Walter Spies, is probably the best known as it has remained in print since its publication, and

from an anthropological perspective is significant as it ‘investigates dance as an integral part of Balinese life’ (Odom 2006: 80). Indeed, Clifford Geertz included De Zoete in a list of ‘unusually gifted ethnographers’ who wrote on Balinese theatrical performances (Geertz 1973: 114). See Odom (2006), and Ury (1986) for more details on De Zoete’s life and work. Blacking, meanwhile, having by then left the United Kingdom, changed roles on the Committee and was ‘able to gain [ethnomusicological] experience collecting in Venda-land in Northern Transvaal, South Africa’ (Clausen 1958: 25).

Baily reports that: ‘In 1951 Maud Karpeles and Arnold Baké published a *Manual for Folk Music Collectors*, and the Ethnomusicology Committee decided to publish a revised edition of the manual as a joint venture, to “embody the collecting experience of all its members, Corresponding as well as Attendant”’ (Baily 2014). It is important to highlight the fact that in the early 1950s, scholars in the fields of anthropology, folklore, ethnomusicology, and (folk) dance were clearly in conversation with each other, and sensitive to the fact that dance required the same attention as music and other cultural practices.

### 3.1. American Forerunners

Two American anthropologists stand out as forerunners to the development of the anthropology of dance: Franz Boas (1858-1942), often considered the father of American cultural anthropology, and his student Melville Herskovits (1895-1963). Boas, whilst focusing on material culture, nevertheless mentioned dance throughout his 1927 book *Primitive Art* and he included a section dedicated to ‘Literature, Music, and Dance’ (1955 [1927]: 299-348). In 1944 he published an essay entitled ‘Dance and music in the life of the Northwest Coast Indians of North America’ in the collection, edited by his daughter, *The Function of Dance in Human Society*. Herskovits’ interest in dance was not so much in dance *per se* but in dance as bearer of “cultural traits”, which may be carried over in diasporic contexts. He challenged the generally held views at the time that African Americans had lost all links to their African past, arguing, for instance, that music, dance, and other aspects of creative culture could be seen as a kind of persistent cultural memory that could be observed (Merriam 1964; Gersham 2004).

What is of interest for our discussion here are the people Boas and Herskovits mentored (such as Margaret Mead (1901-1978) for the former and Alan Merriam (1923-1980) for the latter), and more so the dancers they trained in anthropology: Katherine Dunham (1909-2006), Zora Neal Hurston (1891-1960), and Franziska Boas (1902-1988), Franz’s daughter, a pioneer in dance therapy.

For some years now, anthropologists, especially African American anthropologists, have been reclaiming Katherine Dunham’s contribution to American anthropology generally and to the anthropology of dance in particular as she is absent from the texts that established the field in the 1970s, as was her counterpart, Zora Neal Hurston, also linked to Herskovits. Royce, in the second edition of *Anthropology of Dance* (2002), added a new introductory chapter, ‘From Body as Artifact to Embodied Knowledge,’ in which she made reference to the lack of attention given to Dunham’s work. Kaeppler, however, in an article discussing the field in 2000, remarked that: ‘The intellectual descendants of [the] Boasian tradition can be followed from Boas, through Herskovits

and Merriam to Joann Kealiinohomoku and Anya Royce' (Kaeppler 2000: 119), but mentioned neither Hurston nor Dunham even though the former had been Boas' student, the latter both Herskovits' and Boas', and there is no doubt that Herskovits', Dunham's, and Hurston's intellectual biographies intersect.

Whilst Hurston was a student of Boas at Columbia University, Dunham studied anthropology at the University of Chicago with Robert Redfield, but also went to Northwestern University for courses in methodology with Herskovits, who was her adviser for her Caribbean fieldwork. British anthropology also enters the picture: Radcliffe-Brown worked at the University of Chicago between 1931 and 1937 and Malinowski was a regular visiting professor at Chicago from 1933 to 1939 and Dunham attended lectures of both. We saw earlier that when Dunham and her company later performed in London in 1948, she engaged with the local anthropologists. Her work was reviewed by De Zoete (1948), who compared the technique that she saw in *Caribbean Rhapsody* to the martial art form which she had observed in South India. Moreover, Herskovits did some teaching stints at Columbia and Howard Universities between 1925 and 1927 and there engaged with Hurston. The two women did their fieldwork in the Caribbean roughly during the same period, 1935-36 for Dunham, 1936-37 for Hurston and both received scholarships from the Julius Rosenwald Foundation, a foundation established in 1917 for 'the well-being of mankind', and which had a special interest in the education of African Americans. Chicago at the time was a hub for black artists that rivaled the Harlem Renaissance movement of the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the Rosenwald Foundation supported key African American artists in both places.

Zora Neale Hurston is primarily known as an African American writer who had been part of the Harlem Renaissance. Indeed when her autobiography *Dust Tracks on a Road*, first published in 1942, was republished in 1985, the introduction stated that 'Hurston was to get sidetracked into anthropological research in the 1930s' (1985: xi), as if anthropology had been irrelevant for her development.

Hurston was famous during her lifetime, but she died poor and forgotten in 1960. In the early 1970s the African American author, Alice Walker, led a revival, getting Hurston's work reprinted, and today she is part of the canon of 20<sup>th</sup> century American writing. African American and feminist anthropologists have been reclaiming her since the 1990s arguing that her work should be seen 'unequivocally within a tradition that has been effaced by masculinist bias in both the theory and the practice of anthropology' (Hernández 1995: 148). Scholars have described her as a postmodern anthropologist *avant la lettre* because of the types of fieldwork she undertook, both urban, in Harlem, and "classical", in Haiti, for instance, and especially for her experimentations in ethnographic presentation (see Robbins 1991). These were, for the most part, performances, anticipating in many ways anthropologist Victor Turner's 'ethnodramatics' (Turner 1982: 98-101), in which enactment in and of fieldwork situations becomes a mode of learning and intelligibility. For instance, in 1925 Hurston created *Meet the Mamma* described in the Library of Congress website as a high-spirited early experimental play. Act 1 takes place in a Harlem club, act 2 aboard an ocean liner, and act 3 in the jungles of Africa. The play spoofs the "Back to Africa" movement of Marcus Garvey.

Following her studies at Howard College, Hurston had gone to Barnard College, then Columbia where she studied anthropology under Franz Boas, doing fieldwork in Harlem, and later in Florida as well as in the Caribbean. Hurston, however, never finished her PhD. The two years' fellowship awarded her by the Rosenwald Foundation was suddenly reduced to six months, after the officials of the foundation queried her commitment to scholarship (Hernandez 1995: 153) possibly because of her artistic engagements. As anthropologist Deborah Gordon put it: Hurston 'practiced fieldwork without one of the most significant symbols of professionalization, the PhD' (Gordon 1990: 148). She, therefore, never had an academic career. Yet throughout her life Hurston collaborated with and was employed by anthropologists. For instance, when Jane Belo and Margaret Mead started a cross cultural study of religious trances, they were keen, for comparative purpose, to document religious ecstasy in a sanctified church (Boyd 2003: 342) and Belo employed Hurston to carry out two months fieldwork in 1940 'to collect material on unusual religious practices in South Carolina that they hoped would match those in Bali and Haiti' (Kaplan 2007: 434). Belo spent almost a decade in Bali, moving there in 1930, with her second husband the composer and musicologist Colin McPhee, who would later teach ethnomusicology at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). She was part of group of scholars and artists working on the island, including Gregory Bateson, Bery De Zoete, Claire Holt, Margaret Mead, as well as Katharine Mershon, a dancer and ethnologist, who had been an instructor at the famous Denishawn School of Dancing and Related Arts in Los Angeles and who, returning to the USA in the early 1940s would invite Hurston to be 'her houseguest for as many months as it might take to finish her [autobiography]' (Boyd 2003: 347).

Anthropologist Gwendolyne Mikkell has commented that: 'In reading [Hurston's] ethnographies, one must remember that she was the contradictory product of the class and race-conscious America of the 1930s' (1983: 33). As we saw earlier, Hurston lampooned the 'return to Africa movement' and whilst she is seen today as 'a very important figure in the Harlem Renaissance' (Martin in Hurston 1985 [1942]: xii), she herself referred to it as a 'so called Negro renaissance' and only mentions it in passing in her autobiography. She placed herself resolutely in the present, arguing: 'While I have a handkerchief over my eyes crying over the landing of the first slaves in 1619, I might miss something swell that is going on in 1942' (Hurston, 1985 [1942]: 284).

Many of Hurston's plays remained unpublished, unperformed, or when performed they received little financial support. In 1932, however, *The Great Day: A Program of Original Negro Folklore* was performed at the John Golden Theatre on Broadway to great acclaim. The play drew directly from her fieldwork and dramatized a work day at a Florida road camp. According to Hurston's biographer Deborah Plant, it included 'work songs, a sermon delivered by an itinerant preacher, spirituals, and children's game, and ended with the Fire dance' (Plant 2007: 48). Jean Lee Cole and Charles Mitchell who edited and published Hurston's plays in 2008 considered that 'The Great Day was not strictly a theatrical work, but a performance—a "concert"—dominated by song and dance, interspersed with dramatic monologues and skits, and loosely threaded together with commentary by a sort of master of ceremonies' (Cole and Mitchell 2008: xxiii).

In the program one may read:

“Great Day” is a stage arrangement of part of a cycle of Negro folk-song, dance and pantomime collected and recorded by Miss Zora Hurston over three years of intimate living among the common folk [...]. It is thus a rare sample of the pure and unvarnished materials from which the stage and concert tradition has been derived; and ought to show how much more unique and powerful and spirit-compelling the genuine Negro folk-things really are. That this legacy has not been irrevocably lost or completely overlaid is good news of the highest spiritual and practical importance for all who wish to know and understand the true elements of the Negro heart and soul. (Cole and Mitchell 2008: 365)

The show had good reviews and was very influential in the development of the burgeoning modern dance scene and African American derived music. As Hurston stated in her autobiography:

[I]n 1932 after trying vainly to interest others, I introduced Bahaman songs and dances to a New York audience [...], and both the songs and the dances took on. [...]

Since then, there has been a sharp trend towards genuine Negro material. The dances aroused a tremendous interest in [...] Negro dancing. [...] The dramatized presentation of Negro work songs, in the same concert aroused interest in them and they have been exploited by singers ever since.

I had no intention of making concerts my field. I wanted to show the wealth and beauty of the material to those who were in the field and therefore I felt that my job was well done when it took on. (Hurston 1985 [1942]: 195)

Despite the interest shown in her representations of Caribbean dance and song, the show was a financial flop (Cole 2008: xxiv; Plant 2007:48), contributing no doubt to the lack of interest her work provoked until its revival in African American and literature studies some forty years ago.

In contrast to Hurston, Katherine Dunham did not fall into obscurity, but instead became a famous dancer, established a technique named after her, has a dedicated museum and received some eighteen honorary doctorates during her career. Yet, despite the fact that in 1970 the American Anthropological Association awarded her a Distinguished Service Award (Aschenbrenner 2002: 92-93), as with Hurston, it is her artistic legacy that is widely known and celebrated, rather than her scholarly anthropological work.

She first learned classical ballet from Ludmilla Speranzeva, a dancer who had trained in ballet in Russia as well as modern dance with Mary Wigman in Germany and had come to the United States as part of a Russian musical revue *La Chauve-Souris* (Perpener 2001: 134). She was one of the rare ballet teachers to accept black students. Dunham later started a short-lived company, Ballet Nègre, and was interested in researching the origins of popular dances such as the cakewalk, the lindy hop, and the black bottom. After attending a public lecture given by Redfield she felt that she had discovered the roots of African American culture and she decided to study anthropology at the University of Chicago whilst continuing with her dancing, performing in Chicago Opera productions as well as with her own group at the Chicago World Fair of 1934.

Like Hurston, Dunham never completed her postgraduate studies. In 1939, she decided not to finish her Master's degree but to go to New York instead and focus on her dance career. This did not mean, however, that she was abandoning anthropology and she continued to do fieldwork in the Caribbean in order to feed her artistic work. One of her trips included a stay in a village of Maroon in Jamaica. She later wrote *Journey to Accompong* in 1946, based on that experience. Hurston reviewed the book beginning as follows: 'Katherine Dunham's *Journey to Accompong* is a lively and word-deft account of a thirty days visit to Accompong, the maroon settlement high in the mountains of Jamaica, British West Indies'. She noted too that: 'Katherine Dunham is a famous dancer and choreographer. Most of her dance compositions are founded on the folk dances of the Antilles. The material for them she gathered on two Rosenwald fellowships under Dr Melville Herskovits, of Northwestern University.' Overall she considered the work 'thin' (2006 [1947]: 272).

Hurston's somewhat cool and curt description of *Journey to Accompong* leads one to assume that she did not see Dunham as a scholar on equal footing. Hurston had done long-term fieldwork and was perhaps jealous of the two Rosenwald foundation scholarships awarded to Dunham, as her own had been reduced. Indeed anthropologist Joyce Aschenbrenner claims that there was a rivalry between the two as each wanted to establish herself as an authority on Caribbean society (Aschenbrenner 2002: 53-55).

In 1941 Dunham was invited to lecture to the Anthropology Club at the Yale University's Anthropology Graduate School. Her topic was the practical application of primitive material to the theatre, demonstrating her discourse with the aid of ten dancers. The following year, during a lecture-demonstration at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), Dunham described her early training. It is worth noting here that the lecture-demonstration as a way of presenting material was not common at the time. Indeed in the edited collection *Katherine Dunham and the Anthropology of Dance: Theory, Experiment, and Social Engagement* (Chin 2014), it is said that Dunham invented the format and that in her early experiments Melville Herskovits used to play drums for her.

In her UCLA lecture she commented:

"Social anthropology offered the best solution for joining my wish to be an anthropologist, and the great physical urge to be a dancer.

I must say that through this rather hectic experimental period, I found only the greatest sympathy in the attitude of my professors towards what I was trying to do. Now and then I was forced to become a little bit suspicious at some of them assuring me, after some concert or other, that I should concentrate primarily on the dance. But on the whole it was through such general interpretations as these of Redfield, Radcliffe Brown, Malinowski, Herskovits, and others, that I was able to arrive at a sane translation of classroom and field material in terms of the theatre.

During one of my more serious periods at the University of Chicago, it occurred to me that the dance, as a specific and extremely important social trait, had received relatively small consideration from anthropologists. It occurred to me, also, that someone who could actively participate in this activity would be able to arrive much more clearly at the function of the dance in a specific community than the fieldworker who depended primarily on observation.

Dr Redfield stressed the essential unity of activity – the cohesiveness of all elements in a simple society; this would mean that the dance would be related to other traits in that society. Dr Herskovits gave me more than adequate background for my West Indian research, both through

African material and through his own West Indian material. Radcliffe-Brown lectured in terms of function, so that I was always reminded to look for the purpose and the use of whatever I saw, as well as the form. **As for Dr Malinowski, I shall always be grateful to him for giving me my first lesson in the beguine just a few days before I left for my field trip** (Dunham 2005 [1942]: 509)" (emphasis ours)

The beguine, a rumba like dance from the folklore of Martinique, had found its way to the ballroom. It had been made especially famous by "*Begin the Beguine*" a song written by Cole Porter (1891–1964) in 1935 and introduced in a Broadway musical the same year. Malinowski, we must assume, knew the very latest dance craze, whether it was the ballroom version that most people of his class would have performed or a more "authentic" version learnt from the clubs in Harlem, Dunham does not say, but what is important to note, is that social dancing in the 1930s was an activity in which men of the middle classes engaged. Our colleague Theresa Jill Buckland, author of *Society Dancing: Fashionable Bodies in England, 1870-1920* (2011), has corroborated this (discussion following Grau's seminar at the Royal Anthropological Institute, 29<sup>th</sup> October 2014). According to Sophie Jacotot (2013), the same was true of the French middle classes. Indeed, as we shall see later, both Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown and Marcel Mauss, for instance, referred to ballroom dancing in their writings.

Unlike Dunham and Hurston, Franziska Boas did not study anthropology – she gained her Bachelors degree in Zoology and Chemistry from Barnard College in 1923 - but as dance and cultural historian Allana Lindgren suggests: she received 'informal anthropological tutelage at the knee of her father' (2013: 33). Boas became a dancer training with Mary Wigman in Breslau in 1927 and with Hanya Holmes in New York where 'she served as Holm's assistant and percussionist until 1933' (Library of Congress 2010: 4). Her legacy remains largely in the field of dance therapy and of dance education. Unable financially to remain in New York she took a position at Shorter College in Rome, Georgia, as Head of the Dance and Physical Education Department. She taught 'the concept of culture in her dance history classes, clearly going beyond the contemporaneously accepted historical perspectives on dance' (Library of Congress 2010: 4)

Recent scholarship, however, has recognized her as a dancer who used her artistic practice as social activism (Lindgren 2013; Richter 2010; Scolieri 2008). Dance historian Paul Scolieri commented, for instance, that she 'addressed her concern with her perceived sense of elitism in American modern dance by calling for inclusive American dance culture that reflected the nations multiculturalism' (Scolieri 2008: X). Whilst dancer/choreographer, writer and anthropology lecturer Katrina Richter wrote: 'Throughout her life, Boas remained a staunch advocate of racial equality and founded the Boas School of Dance as an interracial institution in 1933. She utilized anthropology as a tool for challenging discrimination and advocacy for scholarships and education for African American dancers' (Richter 2010: 229).

Boas' importance for our discussion here, however, is the series of seminars that took place at her studio between 1941 and 1942. The famous dance critic John Martin referred to it as 'the most impressive educational event of the season' (Martin 1941). According to Deena Burton, the dancer and ethnographer Claire Holt's biographer: 'The inaugural lecture on November 10 1941, was "Form and Function of the Dance in Bali,"

co presented by Gregory Bateson and Holt. The roster of speakers also included Franz Boas on “Dance and Music in the Life of the Northwest Coast Indians”; the anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer on “The Functions of Different Dance Forms in Primitive African Communities”; the ethnomusicologist George Herzog on “Dance and Music among North American Indians”; Cora du Bois on “Personality Implications in the Dance of Alor, Netherland Indies”; and the folklorist and novelist Harold Courlander on “Dance and Drama in Haiti” (Burton 2009: 87-88). In 1944 four of the seminars (Boas’, Courlander’s, Gorer’s, and Holt and Bateson’s) were published in *The Function of Dance in Human Society: A Seminar Directed by Franziska Boas* mentioned earlier. Williams described this book as ‘one of the most influential books by later [post Franz Boas] dance ethnologists’ (William 2004: 105).

In the light of our three protagonists careers it is worth bearing in mind Richter’s remark that:

“At the times, black institutions were not granting PhDs in anthropology and African-Americans were denied teaching positions at white schools (Drake 1978, 86). Whereas many scholars viewed anthropology as a way to ‘contribute to black liberation’, only three of the nine African-Americans anthropologists working before the second world war gain[ed] teaching in the field (Drake 1978, 102-03) (Richter 2010: 225).”

This certainly may explain why neither Hurston nor Dunham attempted to pursue academic careers, more so since both were successful artists in their own rights and, therefore, had other choices. Boas’ situation, however, is different. Her intention was not to become an anthropologist since she did not choose to study it as an academic subject, but wanted to use anthropological insights in her daily life. One may, however, wonder why Boas “disappeared” from dance history and dance therapy for many years. Whilst she married in 1928, had a child in 1929, and divorced in 1942 (Library of Congress 2010: 3), Lindgren notes that in the 1940s Boas ‘became involved in a long term relationship with a woman’ and that after moving to Georgia ‘her relationship ended’, but that she became involved with another woman professor, ‘their relationship last[ing] for more than twenty years’ (2013: 30). In both instances, it seems that Boas was open about her relationships. Considering the homophobia that exists to this day in the USA (Gay activists only made significance inroads in changing attitudes in the 1980s), one may wonder to what extent her sexual preferences hindered her career and marginalized her achievement, especially during the McCarthy era.

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MacCarthy, Michelle (2012) "More than Grass Skirts and Feathers: Negotiating culture in the Trobriand Islands". *International Journal of Heritage Studies* DOI:10.1080/13527258.2011.637946 [A research on the commoditization of culture for tourism in the Trobriand Islands]

Malinowski, Bronislaw (1916). "Baloma; The spirits of the dead in the Trobriand Islands". *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 46(Jul. – Dec.): 353-430 [A classic read from one of the fathers of British anthropology]

Malinowski, Bronislaw (1922). *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul [A classic read from one of the fathers of British anthropology]

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Mauss, Marcel (1950 [1936]). "Les techniques du corps". Mauss, Marcel *Sociologie et Anthropologie*. Paris: Presse Universitaire de France, 363-386 [A must read, with many analyses that are still valid, on anthropology of the body]

Mauss, Marcel (1967 [1947]). *Manuel d'Ethnographie*. Paris: Payot. [This is one of the most influential books in the history of French anthropology]

Merriam, Alan (1953). "Introduction". *Ethnomusicology* 1(1): 1-2

Merriam, Alan (1964). "Melville Jean Herskovits 1895-1963". *American Anthropologist* 66(1): 83-109 [A short but complete biography of Melville Jean Herskovits]

Miller, Jonathan (1978). *The Body in Question*. London: Jonathan Cape [In this book Miller considers the functioning of the body as a subject of private experience, and explores our attitudes towards our bodies, our ignorance of them, and our inability to read our body's signals. Related to this book there is also a British-based, internationally co-produced medical television series first aired in the UK in November 1978, written and presented by Miller]

Murdock, George Peter (1943). "Bronislaw Malinowski". *American Anthropologist* 45: 441-451 [One of the earliest analysis focused on this very influential and innovative anthropologist]

Mitchell, J. Clyde (1956). *The Kalela Dance, Aspects of Social Relationships among Urban Africans in Northern Rhodesia. 1956*. Manchester: Manchester University Press [An extensive socio-anthropological study on Kalela dance, a form of dance performed during leisure time by African town dwellers of mining cities in South Africa]

Ness, Sally Ann (1996). "Observing the evidence fail: Difference Arising from objectification in cross-cultural studies of dance". Morris, Gay (ed.), *Moving Words: Re-writing Dance*. London: Routledge, 245-269 [An academic analysis of objectification with regard to dance, in a multi-cultural context]

Neveu Kringelbach, Hélène and Skinner, Jonathan eds (2012). *Dancing Cultures: Globalization, Tourism and Identity in the Anthropology of Dance*. London and New York: Berghahn Books [This is a collection of essays and papers from leading scholars that focuses on various aspects of dance performances and on the value of dance in tourist scenarios as well as in a globalized world]

Neveu Kringelbach, Hélène (2013). *Dance Circles: Movement, Morality and Self-Fashioning in Urban Senegal*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn [This is an ethnography that studies, also in a historical context: the creativity and the *fashioning* of selves through the different life stages in urban Senegal]

Odom, Selma Landen (2006). "Travel and Translation in the Dance Writings of Beryl De Zoete". *Dance Research Journal* 38 (1/2): 76-86 [As the title states, this paper studies the themes of traveling and of translating in the life of Beryl De Zoete]

Perpener, John O. (2001). *African-American Concert Dance: The Harlem Renaissance and Beyond*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press [This is a study of pioneering black dancers through biographical and historical information on a group of artists who worked during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s to legitimize black dance as a serious art form]

Plant, Deborah G. 2007. *Hurston: A Biography of the Spirit*. London: Greenwood Publishing Group [This is one among other biographies of Zora Neale Hurston, but the only one that focuses on the role that spirituality played in her life and letters]

Polhemus, Ted ed. (1978) *Social Aspects of the Human Body: A Reader of Key Texts* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books [This is an edited anthology which includes texts such as excerpts from Charles Darwin's *Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, Margaret Mead's and Frances Cook Macgregor's *Growth and Culture: A Photographic Study of Balinese Childhood* (1951), with its many dance photographs, and David Effron's 1941 study *Gesture, Race and Culture: A tentative study of some of the spatio-temporal and "linguistic" aspects of the gestural behaviour of Eastern Jews and Southern Italians in New York City, living under similar as well as different environmental conditions*]

Radcliffe-Brown, Alfred Reginald (1922). *The Andaman Islanders: A Study in Social Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [This is a pioneering ethnology on Andaman Islanders: dated in most of its analysis yet it provides valuable ethnological descriptions]

Ranger, Terence Osborn (1975). *Dance and Society in East Africa 1890-1970: The Beni Ngoma*. London: Heineman [This is a historical anthropology of a form of music and dance, the Beni Ngoma, originally from East Africa]

Richards, Audrey (2013 [1956]). *Chisungu: A Girl's Initiation Ceremony Among the Bemba of Northern Rhodesia*. London: Routledge. [This is a detailed description, analysis and interpretation of a traditional set of rites of initiation, witnessed by the author, in relation to their cultural setting yet too often in the conceptual terms of theories and theoretical schema of the early 1900s]

Richards, Audrey (1999). "Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942)". *Journal for the Anthropological Study of Human Movement* 10(4): 187-193 [This paper is a good introduction to the work of the important British anthropologist]

Richter, Katrina (2010). "Anthropology with an agenda: Four forgotten dance anthropologists". *Research in Dance Education* 11(3): 223-237 [In the context of postcolonial, feminist and subaltern critiques of anthropology, this article seeks to answer the question, 'For whom should research be conducted, and by whom should it be used?' by examining the lives and works of four female dance anthropologists: Franziska Boas, Zora Neale Hurston, Katherine Dunham and Pearl Primus]

Robbins, Helen A. (1991). "The ethnography of Zora Neale Hurston: A postmodern writer before her time". *Arizona Anthropologist* 7: 1-10. [In the words of the author of this paper "The recent trend in Anthropology has been to focus on new ways of representing ethnographic experience through the use of interpretive techniques in writing. Although these postmodern approaches are innovative, there are superlative examples of multi-vocality and the mixing of genres in early ethnographic writing. Zora Neale Hurston was one such writer."]

Royce, Anya Peterson (1977). *The Anthropology of Dance*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press [A pioneering and influential book on Anthropology of dance. This is fundamental textbook for any student of Anthropology of Dance]

Royce, Anya Peterson (2002). *The Anthropology of Dance 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. Binsted, Hampshire: Dance Books [A revisited edition of (Royce 1977)]

Sachs, Curt (1933). *Eine Weltgeschichte des Tanzes*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer/Ernst Vohsen [A world history of dance, originally in German but translated in many languages including French and English, that is interesting from the perspective of the history of thought but is very outdated in anthropological terms]

Scolieri, Paul (2008). "Introduction: Global/mobile: Re-orienting dance and migration studies". *Dance Research Journal*. 40(2): v-xx [In the words of the author of the introduction "Like dance studies, the interdisciplinary field of migration studies is interested in theories and methods for understanding patterns of individual and mass human movements across the world's stage, the policies governing human im/mobility, and the social experiences that such movements engender."]

Segalen, Victor (1978 [1902-1918]). *Essai sur l'exotisme, une esthétique du divers*. Paris: Fata Morgana [This is a publication on the idea of *exotism* of the work of a poet, traveler, anthropologist, linguist of the early 1900s]

Shay, Anthony (2008). *Dancing Across Borders: The American Fascination with Exotic Dance Forms*. London: McFarland and Co Included Publishers [This study describes and analyzes the popularity of exotic dance forms – such as Balkan dances, tango, Latin American dances, classical dances of India, Japan, and Indonesia... – in the USA throughout the twentieth century and especially since the 1950s]

Skinner, Jonathan (2010). "Leading questions and body memories: A case of phenomenology and physical ethnography in the dance interview". Collins, Peter; Gallinat, Anselma (eds). *The Ethnographic Self as Resource: Writing Memory and Experience into Ethnography*. Oxford: Berghan Books, 111-128 [An interesting anthropology of the senses]

Spencer, Paul (1985). *Society and the Dance: The Social Anthropology of Process and Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [This is fundamental reading for any anthropologist of dance]

Thomas, Helen (2003). *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan [Addressed through a series of case studies, and based on theories of the body and performativity in sociology and cultural studies, the book explores a variety of ways of looking at dance as a social and artistic (bodily) practice as a means of generating insights into the politics of identity and difference as they are situated and traced through representations of the body and bodily practices]

Torp, Lisbet; Anca Giurchescu (1991). "Theory and Methods in Dance Research: A European Approach to the Holistic Study of Dance". *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 23: 1-10 [An interesting reading treating the theoretical and methodological approach in dance studies]

Turner, Victor (1982). *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. New York City: Performing Arts Journal Publications [Although the work of Turner has been criticized by many scholars, and often rightly, this book remains a classic reading treating the relationship between ritual and theatre, persona and individual, role-playing and performing, involving examples from American, European, and African societies]

Turner, Victor and Turner, Edith (1982). "Performing ethnography". *The Drama Review (Intercultural Performance)* 26(2): 33-50. [This is a forerunner or a much shorter version of (Turner 1982)]

UNESCO (1953). *L'Originalité des Cultures: Son rôle dans la Compréhension des Nations*. Paris: Organization des Nations Unies pour l'Education, la Science et la Culture

Ury, Marian (1986). "Some Notes toward a Life of Beryl de Zoete". *Journal of the Rutgers University Libraries* 48 (1): 1-54 [A short yet interesting biography of Beryl de Zoete]

Veroli, Patrizia (2006) 'Les Archives internationales de la danse: Une histoire dans l'Histoire'. Baxmann, Inge; Rousier, Claire; Veroli, Patrizia (eds) *Les Archives internationales de la danse 1931-1952*. Pantin: Centre National de la Danse, 12-43 [A history of the International Archives of Dance]

Williams, Drid (1980). "The human action sign and semasiology". A. Rowe, Patricia (ed.) *Dance Research Annual* 10: 39-64 [a short essay that has been very influential on how to interpret human body, body language from the perspective of symbolism and of meaning]

Williams, Drid (1982). "Semasiology: A semantic view of human movements and actions". Parkin, David (ed.) *Semantic Anthropology*. London: Academic Press, Association of Social Anthropologists Series, 161-182 [One of few studies by Drid Williams on how to interpret human body, body language, body signs and movement from the perspective of symbolism and of meaning]

Williams, Drid (1999). "The roots of semasiology". *Journal for the Anthropological Study of Human Movement* 10 (3): 109-111 [One of few studies by Drid Williams on how to interpret human body, body language, body signs and movement from the perspective of symbolism and of meaning]

Williams, Drid (2004 [1991]). *Anthropology and the Dance: Ten Lectures (revised second edition)*. Urbana and Chicago: Illinois University Press [An interesting reading introducing the state-of-the-art of Anthropology of Dance at the beginning of the second millennium]

Wulff, Helena (2015). "Dance, Anthropology of". Wright, James D. (editor-in-chief). *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Vol 5. Oxford: Elsevier, 666–670. [A concise definition of, with a useful schema based on three approaches in, anthropology of dance]

Young, Michael W. (1998). *Malinowski's Kiriwina: Fieldwork photography 1915-1918*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press [This essay treats one of anthropology's most used tools, photography, as used by Malinowski in Kiriwina, that is the largest of the Trobriand Islands in eastern Papua New Guinea, where the influential British anthropologist Malinowski conducted important fieldwork at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century]

Young, Michael W. (2004). *Malinowski: Odyssey of an Anthropologist 1884–1920* New Haven and London: Yale University Press [A biography of Malinowski's early life, from his birth in Krakow to his departure in 1920 from the Trobriand Islands of the South Pacific]

Youngerman, Suzanne (1975). "Methods and theory in dance research: An anthropological approach". *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council* 7: 116-133 [A pioneering paper discussing methods and theory in dance academic researches]

Zarrilli, Philip (1984). *The Kathakali complex: Performance and Structure*. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications [This is an anthropological description and analysis of Kathakali dance-drama, one of the most widely known forms of Indian performance, as seen in India's southwest coastal state of Kerala]

Zarrilli, Philip (1998). *When the Body Becomes All Eyes: Paradigms, Discourses, and Practices of Power in Kalarippayattu, a South Indian Martial Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press [This is the first in-depth study of *kalarippayattu* - one of India's traditional martial and medical arts dating from at least the 12th century AD. Based on twenty years of research and practice in Kerala, this study claim that *kalarippayattu* is a mode of cultural practice through which bodies, knowledges, powers, agency, selves, and identities are constantly repositioned]

Zile, Judy van (1999) "Capturing the dancing: How and why?". Buckland, Theresa (ed.). *Dance in the Field: Theory, Methods and Issues in Dance Ethnography*. London: Macmillan Press, 85-99 [Some reflections on methodology and theory of dance anthropology]

### Biographical Sketches

**Georgiana Gore** is Professor of Anthropology at Blaise Pascal University, Clermont-Ferrand, France. She heads the LAPRACOR, a research centre on the Anthropology of Corporeal Practices, and the Masters program in Dance Anthropology. She gained a lectureship at Blaise Pascal University in 1996, after spending several years in the early 1990s in Dance Studies at the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom. Before this she had worked for a decade at the University of Benin in Nigeria, where she established a Dance section in its then Department of Creative Arts as well as researching into dance and ritual amongst the Edo-speaking peoples. She has written and edited extensively on Anthropology of dance. In the francophone world, she also uses the name Wierre-Gore.

**Andrée Grau** was professor of the anthropology of dance at Roehampton University when she died unexpectedly, aged 63 in 2017. She is widely considered a driving force behind the growth of Roehampton University into a leading research centre and one of the founders of Anthropology of Dance, on which she published and edited extensively. Associate of the Institute of Choreology (AiChor), graduate in 1976, she gained her PhD in Social-Anthropology from The Queen's University of Belfast in 1983 and she got a Fellowship of the Institute of Choreology (FiChor) in 1985. Whilst undertaking fieldwork for her PhD among the Tiwi people of Melville and Bathurst Islands, she used Benesh movement notation to document the dances of the communities she was studying. She was the first anthropologist to utilize BMN in this way.