

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-19622-3 — Dancing in the Blood
Edward Ross Dickinson
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

DANCING IN THE BLOOD

This is a remarkable account of the revolutionary impact of modern dance on European cultural life in the early twentieth century. Edward Ross Dickinson uncovers modern dance's place in the emerging "mass" culture of the modern metropolis, sufficiently ubiquitous and high profile to spark media storms, parliamentary debates, and exasperated denunciations even from progressive art critics. He shows how modern dance spoke in multiple registers – as religious and as scientific; as redemptively chaste and scandalously sensual; as elitist and popular. He reveals the connections between modern dance and changing gender relations and family dynamics, imperialism, racism, and cultural exchanges with the wider non-European world, and new conceptions of selfhood. Ultimately the book finds in these complex and often contradictory connections a new way of understanding the power of modernism and modernity and their capacity to revolutionize and transform the modern world in the momentous, creative, violent middle decades of the twentieth century.

EDWARD ROSS DICKINSON is Professor and Chair of the History Department at the University of California, Davis. His areas of research and expertise include the history of imperialism, terrorism, sexuality and gender, crime, social policy, social reform, women's movements, modern dance, and racial theory. He is the author of several books including *Sex, Freedom, and Power in Imperial Germany, 1880–1914* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-19622-3 — Dancing in the Blood
Edward Ross Dickinson
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

DANCING IN THE BLOOD

*Modern Dance and European Culture on the Eve
of the First World War*

EDWARD ROSS DICKINSON

University of California at Davis



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-107-19622-3 — Dancing in the Blood
 Edward Ross Dickinson
 Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi – 110002, India
 79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.
 It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of
 education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781316647219
 DOI: 10.1017/9781108164573

© Edward Ross Dickinson 2017

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
 and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
 no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
 permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2017

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Dickinson, Edward Ross, author.

Title: Dancing in the blood: modern dance and European culture on the eve of
 the first World War / Edward Ross Dickinson, University of California at Davis.

Description: New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017. |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017003645 | ISBN 9781107196223 (hardback) |

ISBN 9781316647219 (paperback)

Subjects: LCSH: Modern dance – Social aspects – Europe. | Europe – Civilization –
 20th century. | Europe – Social life and customs – 20th century. | Modern dance – History –
 20th century. | Modern dance – Social aspects. | BISAC: HISTORY / Europe / General.

Classification: LCC GV1643.D53 2017 | DDC 792.8094/0904–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017003645>

ISBN 978-1-107-19622-3 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-316-64721-9 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs
 for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not
 guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ix
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xi
Introduction: Modern Dance and the Birth of the Twentieth Century	I
1.1 Modern Dance: Questions and Answers	I
1.2 Cast of Characters	9
1.3 Dance History, Dance Biography, Cultural History	16
1 Modern Dance and the Business of Popular Culture	19
1.1 Dance as “Revolution”	19
1.2 Modern Dance, Modern Mass Culture, and Modern Marketing	21
1.3 Familiar Exotics	26
1.4 Beyond Dance	48
1.5 Modernity, America, Business	61
2 Art, Women, Liberation	65
2.1 Soul Movement: Dance and Self-Expression	65
2.2 The Modernist Arts Community as Marketing Channel	76
2.3 Dance by, of, and for Women?	82
2.4 Beauty Lite: A New Ideal Body	86
2.5 Wild Movements: Dance and Codes of Comportment	90
2.6 Good Dance, Bad Dance I: Gender	95
2.7 “Brothel Art” versus Moral Citizenship	100
2.8 Dancers and Their Mothers (and Fathers)	108
3 Blood and Make-Believe: Race, Identity, and Performance	117
3.1 Dancing in the Blood: Race and Aesthetics	117
3.2 Fraud, Pretense, or Make-Believe?	125
3.3 Acting – Really	136
3.4 Fake or Borrowed?	146
3.5 We Have Met the Other and He Is Us: The Ballets Russes	151
3.6 Good Dance, Bad Dance II: Race	154

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
4	Embodied Revelation: Dance, Religion, and Knowledge	160
4.1	Dance as Spiritual Experience	160
4.2	Dance and the Religion of Life, Love, Joy, and Sex	166
4.3	Beyond Human Understanding: Words, Rhythms, Mountains	184
5	Legacies: Dance as Profession, Spectacle, Therapy, and Politics	194
5.1	Modern Dance in Interwar Context	194
5.2	Professionalizing Inspiration	197
5.3	Sex, Drugs, Death, and Dance: Celebrity and Self-Destruction	211
5.4	Totalitarian Temptations	215
5.5	European Dance and Colonial Nationalism	224
5.6	Dance and Therapy: Psychoanalysis, Occupational Therapy, PTSD	236
5.7	Dancing Democracy	240
	Conclusion: Coherent Contradictions in Modernism and Modernity	251
	<i>Bibliography</i>	267
	<i>Index</i>	293

Illustrations

I.1	The Spanish dancer La Argentina/Antonia Mercé; Getty Images	<i>page</i> 14
I.1	Isadora Duncan Dover Street Studios; Getty Images	28
I.2	Isadora Duncan's chaste nudity, 1900; Getty Images	35
I.3	Adorée Villany portrays grief, 1913; Library of Congress, George Grantham Bain Collection	38
I.4	Ruth St. Denis, Indian dancer, 1908; Getty Images	39
I.5	Sent M'ahesa, ancient Egyptian, ca. 1910; Getty Images	40
I.6	The slender young Grete Wiesenthal, 1908; Getty Images	51
I.7	Olga Desmond's "Beauty Evening," 1909; Library of Congress, George Grantham Bain Collection	54
I.8	Tórtola Valencia in an advertisement for fashionable hats, ca. 1910; MAE, Fonds Tórtola Valencia, L-2	55
2.1	Grete Wiesenthal's joyful "Beautiful Blue Danube"; Getty Images	75
2.2	Maud Allan as Salomé with the head of John the Baptist, 1908; Getty Images	101
3.1	Tórtola Valencia, "Oriental" dancer, 1911; MAE, Fonds Tórtola Valencia, L-3	121
3.2	Tórtola Valencia, "Spanish" dancer, 1908; MAE, Fonds Tórtola Valencia, L-3	129
4.1	Ruth St. Denis's religious dance "Radha," 1906; Getty Images	162
4.2	Sent M'ahesa performs ancient Egyptian ritual dances, ca. 1913; Getty Images	164
4.3	Tórtola Valencia, Buddhist dancer, at home, ca. 1911; MAE, Fonds Tórtola Valencia, L-15	167
4.4	Olga Desmond with her hand among the stars	175
5.1	Mary Wigman, athletic saint, 1936; Getty Images	201

viii	<i>Illustrations</i>	
5.2	Mary Wigman dances struggle and power, ca. 1930; Getty Images	203
5.3	Anita Berber, 1918; Getty Images	213
5.4	Tórtola Valencia, ancient Inca princess, 1925; MAE, Fonds Tórtola Valencia, L-15	228
5.5	The many ethnic identities of Tórtola Valencia, 1911; MAE, Fonds Tórtola Valencia, L-3	234
5.6	Martha Graham in “Strike,” 1927; Getty Images.	243
5.7	Modern dance athleticism: Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman, 1938; Getty Images	245
5.8	Martha Graham dances American freedom, 1944; Getty Images	247

Acknowledgments

This study was made possible by grants from the Charles Phelps Taft Memorial Fund at the University of Cincinnati, the German Academic Exchange Service, and the Committee on Research of the Academic Senate at the University of California at Davis.

I am grateful for the assistance of numerous archivists and librarians, including particularly Christel Dreiling and the staff at the Deutsches Tanz-Archiv Köln/SK Stiftung Kultur in Cologne; Hans van Keulen and the staff at the Theatercollectie, Bijzondere Collecties, Universiteit Amsterdam; Ana Triviño-Lopez and the staff at the Museo de les Arts Escèniques (MAE), Institut del Teatre in Barcelona; Kirsten Tanaka at the Museum of Performance and Design in San Francisco; and the staff at the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center.

Parts of this book appeared first in “Modern Dance before 1914: Commerce or Religion?,” *Dance Chronicle* 36 (2013): 297–325 and “‘Must We Dance Naked?’ Art, Beauty, and Politics in Munich and Paris, 1911 and 1913,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 20 (2011): 95–131. I thank the Taylor and Francis Group and the University of Texas Press for their kind permission to use material from those articles here.

I shared the adventure of writing this book with Shelley Alden Brooks; she has an extraordinary talent for adventure, and made this one – and so many others – fun, rich, and delightful. Her son Alden has been a role model: a kind spirit and a good keen man. My daughter Elizabeth has made the whole world light up for me for the past thirteen years. I can’t imagine having gotten this book or anything else done without her.

Abbreviations

<i>DC</i>	<i>Dance Chronicle</i>
<i>DRJ</i>	<i>Dance Research Journal</i>
DTAK	Deutsches Tanz-Archiv Köln/SK Stiftung Kultur, Cologne
GSAPKB	Geheimes Staatsarchiv preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin
JRDD	Jerome Robbins Dance Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, New York City
JRDD-IDC	JRDD, Irma Duncan Collection of Isadora Duncan Materials
LAB	Landesarchiv Berlin
MAE	Museo de les Arts Escèniques, Institut del Teatre, Barcelona
MPDSF	Museum of Performance and Design, San Francisco
STAM	Staatsarchiv München, Munich
TBCUA	Theatercollectie, Bijzondere Collecties, Universiteit Amsterdam