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Dancing Cross-cultural Misunderstandings: The American Dance Festival in China's New Era

Author
Miao, Fangfei

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A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Culture and Performance

by

Fangfei Miao

2019

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Dancing Cross-cultural Misunderstandings:

The American Dance Festival in China's New Era

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Fangfei Miao

Doctor of Philosophy in Culture and Performance

University of California, Los Angeles, 2019

Professor Susan Leigh Foster, Chair

This dissertation explores the embodiment of cross-cultural misunderstandings in a key transitional period in modern China—the late 1980s, during the country's economic reformation and cultural opening to the West after the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). From 1987 to 1991, teachers from the American Dance Festival (ADF), at the invitation of the Guangdong (Canton) Dance School, trained the first group of professional modern dancers in China, known as the "Guangdong Modern Dance Experimental Program," profoundly altering the history of Chinese modern dance in the New Era (1978–). Based on this program, China established its first modern dance company in 1992—the Guangdong Modern Dance Company. Under the guidance of ADF teachers, Chinese students created two new genres of Chinese modern dance that differed from the previous realism style. Some of

the students later became internationally acclaimed artists—Shen Wei, Jin Xing, and Wang Mei.

Contesting existing accounts of the Guangdong program as a complete success in America's and China's dance histories, this dissertation instead argues that misunderstandings and miscommunications repeatedly occurred in both directions throughout this corporeal exchange. These misunderstandings and miscommunications revealed different conceptualizations of aesthetics, kinesthesia, pedagogy, individuality, freedom, tradition, and the modern. This research takes a microcosmic perspective to examine the program's establishment, curriculum, and the reception of the dance it created as a case study to explore the macrocosmic transnational US–China relationship under globalization. Different political agendas nurtured the contradictory expectations of the ADF and the Guangdong Dance School. When the young Chinese traditional dancers changed their expertise and accepted a new dance system, differences in aesthetics, kinesthesia, pedagogy, and concepts of individuality and freedom created confusion among ADF teachers and Chinese students. Different understandings of Chineseness, the traditional, and the modern in the US and China shaped American and Chinese critics' contrasting receptions of the pieces produced in the Guangdong program.

This dissertation is the first to take a cultural misinterpretation perspective to study dance in China, and the first to apply a critical dance studies lens to scrutinize cultural production in the context of US–China relations. By decoding these embodied misunderstandings, this dissertation aims to allow perspectives from the US and China to be heard in both countries and contribute to cross-cultural understandings on a global scale.

The dissertation of Fangfei Miao is approved.

Anurima Banerji

Janet M. O'Shea

Victoria E Marks

Susan Leigh Foster, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2019

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Vita

EDUCATION

Beijing Dance Academy, Beijing, China

M.F.A., Choreography

B.A. with Honors, Dance History and Theory

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Publications

Book Review of *Revolutionary Bodies: Chinese Dance and the Socialist Legacy*, by Emily Wilcox, *Dance Research Journal*, Vol.51, No.1. Spring 2019. pp. 103-105.

Book Review of *Chinese Dance—In the Vast Land and Beyond*, by Shih-Ming Li Chang and Lynn E. Frederiksen, *Asian Theater Journal*, Vol. 35, No 1. 2018. pp. 227-229.

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Miao, Fangfei. "Modern Dance: Beauty in Ugliness." *Journal of the Beijing Dance Academy*, Vol.2 (2013): 99-102.

Conference Presentations

Liberating the Chinese Students? Or…—The American Dance Festival at Guangzhou during China's Reformation Period in the Dance Studies Association annual conference at Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, October 2017

From Tradition to Modernism—the Guangdong Modern Dance Experimental Program in the national SDHS/CORD annual conference at Pomona College, Pomona, California, November 2016

Modernism and Tradition—the Chinese Dancing Bodies in Luoshenfu, "Dance Under Construction XV" conference at UC Riverside, Riverside, California, April 2015

Here and Now—Chinese People's Self-representation in a Transnational Context, SDHS/CORD annual conference at Iowa University, Iowa City, Iowa, November 2014

SELECTED HONORS AND AWARDS

Dean's General Scholarship, UCLA, 2017-2018

Dean's General Scholarship, UCLA, 2016-2017

Phi Tau Phi West America Chapter Scholarship, 2015

Dean's Department Scholarship of World Arts and Cultures / Dance, UCLA, 2014-2015

Allocation from Block Grant (Grad Division), UCLA, 2014-15

Graduate Division Award, UCLA, 2013-2014

Edna and Yu-Shan Han Award, UCLA, 2013-2014

International Studies Fellowship, UCLA, 2012-2014

Allocation from Block Grant (Grad Division), UCLA, 2012-2013

Edna and Yu-Shan Han Award, UCLA, 2012-2013

Excellent Graduate Student Awards in Beijing Dance Academy, China, 2011

Excellent Student Awards of Beijing, China, 2008

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Studio Courses

D10	Chinese Conventional Dance	independent instructor	Spring 2017	UCLA
D10	Chinese Conventional Dance	independent instructor	Winter 2016	UCLA
Advanced Modern Dance Technique (Tai Chi fusion)		teaching associate	Spring 2010	BDA
Advanced Modern Dance Technique (Tai Chi fusion)		teaching associate	Fall 2010	BDA
Advanced Modern Dance Technique (Tai Chi fusion)		teaching associate	Spring 2009	BDA
Dance Pedagogy		teaching associate	Fall 2009	BDA

Lecture Courses

D66	World Dance Histories	teaching assistant: teach sections, grade papers	Winter 2018	UCLA
AA10	Arts Encounters	teaching assistant: teach sections, grade papers	Fall 2017	UCLA
AA10	Arts Encounters	teaching assistant: teach sections, grade papers	Winter 2017	UCLA
W100B	Art as Moral Action	instructor of interdisciplinary choreography sections	Fall 2016	UCLA
W100A	Art as Social Action	teaching assistant: teach sections, grade papers	Spring 2016	UCLA
AA10	Arts Encounters	teaching assistant: teach sections, grade papers	Fall 2015	UCLA
W100B	Art as Moral Action	instructor of interdisciplinary choreography sections	Spring 2015	UCLA
AA10	Arts Encounters	teaching assistant: teach sections, grade papers	Winter 2015	UCLA

Related Teaching Experience

Dance instructor: Chinese folk Dance workshops, UCLA, April-June 2014

Dance instructor: Master Class of Chinese Classical Dance, UCLA, November 2013

SELECTED DANCING AND CHOREOGRAPHING EXPERIENCE

Choreographer *Awakening*, group dance, for students in Marymount High School, March 2017

Dancer *Spring Eternal*, group dance, dancer, Pieter Theater, Los Angeles, December 2016

Guest artist, dancer/choreographer *Here and Now,* solo, Royce Hall, UCLA, March 2015

Guest artist, *No Need to Critique*, solo, North Campus Auditorium, UCLA, November 2014

Guest artist, *Dressed in Capitalism,* solo, North Campus Auditorium, UCLA, October 2014

Guest artist, dancer/choreographer *Woman in Red*, solo, United-Santa Clara International Dance Festival, Santa Clara State University, August 2014

Production assistant *Hidden Choreographies,* Lea Anderson, UCLA, Fall 2014

Dancer/choreographer *Chinese Yangge*, solo, Fowler Out Lord, Fowler Museum, UCLA, April 2014

Dancer/choreographer *Untitled Past,* solo, SDHS/CORD annual conference, Riverside, California, November 2013

Guest artist, *From the New World,* Harbin International Art Festival, Harbin, China, May 2011

Dancer and co-choreographer *Tian Wu,* group dance, Bruce Mason Centre, Auckland, New Zealand, June 2011

Dancer and co-choreographer *Fading Red Memory,* group dance, the Second Beijing International Modern Dance Festival, Beijing, China, April 2009

Dancer and co-choreographer *New Female,* group dance, the Second Beijing International Modern Dance Festival, Beijing, China, April 2009

Dancer *Dance of life,* group dance, the Second Beijing International Modern Dance Festival, Beijing, China, April 2009

Introduction

I still remember the first modern dance movement I ever learned. It was a warmup movement in which we were asked to lie on the floor and stretch out, horizontally, in three different directions. At that moment, I had just become a junior year college student at the Beijing Dance Academy, China's best professional dance conservatoire. Lying on the floor, I curled my right arm across my chest, overlapping it with the left and stretching both arms to the left side. I kept my pelvis stable from rolling side-to-side and, at the same time, arched my feet to extend both legs in separate directions. I had never felt this simultaneous, three-directional stretch on a horizontal plain before. This kinesthetic sensation contrasted greatly with my previous professional training in Chinese classical and folk dance. Previously, I always danced in an upright (standing or sitting) position; however, in that modern dance movement, I danced horizontally and, at the same time, kept my muscles as sensitive and alert as if they were in a standing position. Previously, I experienced the circulations and spiral movements of Chinese classical and folk dance; however, in that modern dance movement, I stretched and extended my body in three different directions simultaneously. Previously, I maintained a frontal projection and always checked myself in the mirror; however, in that modern dance movement, I closed my eyes and focused on my inner feelings and bodily experience. This new conceptualization of dancing aroused a deep curiosity. In the years that followed, I delved into this new world called modern dance and became a "bilingual" dancer, fluent in both Chinese traditional dance (Chinese classical dance and folk dance) and Western modern dance.

My experience of the corporeal and conceptual contrast between Chinese traditional dance and American modern dance was a significant factor in my decision to write this dissertation. To be precise, my research has focused on a landmark US–China collaborative dance program in which young professional Chinese traditional dancers experienced, in even stronger terms, the very same kind of contrasts I did. From 1987 to 1991, teachers from the American Dance Festival (ADF), at the invitation of the Guangdong (Canton) Dance School, taught modern dance techniques and composition in Guangdong and trained the first group of professional modern dancers in China, known as the "Guangdong Modern Dance Experimental Program."[1] Examining the program's establishment, curriculum, and the reception of the dance it created, I argue that the reciprocal misunderstandings which repeatedly occurred throughout the entire program reveal different conceptualizations of aesthetics, kinesthesia, pedagogy, individuality, freedom, tradition, and the modern. I explore how the American and Chinese organizers established the program and its curriculum, what transpired between American teachers and Chinese students in the teaching and learning process, and how audiences in both countries responded to the dances created in this program. These three aspects best reveal contrasts and misinterpretations in this cross-cultural corporeal exchange.

The Guangdong Modern Dance Experimental Program profoundly changed Chinese and American dance histories. In China, it trained the first group of professional modern dancers and, in 1992, created the first modern dance company—the Guangdong Modern Dance Experimental Company. In addition, the Guangdong program created two new genres of Chinese modern dance through its collaborations between ADF teachers and

Chinese students. These new genres focused on self-expression and reference to Chinese traditional cultural symbols. By contrast, previous experimentations in creating local Chinese modern dance adopted realism approaches to foregrounding individuals' lives and experiences living in the contemporary world, above all in urban areas. The Guangdong program, and the company that developed out of it, engendered a reversal of this realism approach. In the US, the ADF's linkage with the Guangdong Dance School helped to create a new series of international programs for the ADF and, for the first time, introduced modern dance from China to American audiences. Before the Guangdong program, the ADF established transnational connections primarily with individual artists and dance companies. The Guangdong program opened a new pathway toward long-term and stable international communications with dance institutions abroad, which enhanced the ADF's global influence as a US-based modern dance summer school. In addition, through the ADF's linkage with China, American audiences saw modern dance works from the PRC for the first time. Previously, they had encountered modern dance experimentations that conversed with Chinese traditional cultures, such as works from Chinese American artists and performances from modern dance companies in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Yet, before 1991, American audiences had never seen modern dance works created and developed in China, a socialist country. In 1991, by presenting their ADF debut, the Guangdong program brought modern dance works from China into view for American audiences. With curiosity and excitement, American critics published several articles addressing these performances, which are significant textual resources for this dissertation.

Although the Guangdong program is a significant milestone in the dance histories

of the US and China, it has been neglected in both countries' academic dance research. Publications in American and Chinese dance fields have mentioned the program as an important step in dance modernization in China and as a significant international program for the ADF.[2] Yet, all previous studies position the Guangdong program as a minor element in their chronological, or more general, research into the broader history of Chinese dance or the ADF, without offering in-depth analysis of the collaboration. This dissertation constitutes the first academic research that specifically investigates this institutional encounter.

This dissertation makes four significant academic contributions. First, unlike most Chinese dance scholars, who take an aesthetic approach to the study of dance history, I adopt a socio-historical approach to investigate the cultural, historical, and political constructions of dance in China. My approach is inspired by American dance scholars, such as Susan Foster, Rebekah Kowal, and Cynthia Novack, who illustrate that dance is highly connected to the world which gives birth to it and itself participated in creating this world.[3] I place dance in conversation with the social and political shifts in China in the 1980s as well as other art forms—such as fine arts, film, literature, and theater—from this time. In doing so, I explore how dance not only reflected but also participated in building different trends in modern pursuits in China in the 1980s.

Second, I demonstrate that misunderstandings are productive: misunderstandings between American teachers and Chinese students engendered new approaches to dance modernization in China. American teachers misunderstood Chinese modernism when they demonstrated, in composition classes, possible approaches for the creation of Chinese modern dance. They offered demonstrations with the sole purpose of giving inspiration to

Chinese students, not intending to lead them to imitate their performances. However, Chinese students misunderstood the American teachers' intentions and treated the demonstrations as the only correct approach to creating Chinese modern dance. As a result, these reciprocal misunderstandings between American teachers and Chinese students created new approaches to dance modernization and new genres of Chinese modern dance based on their improvised choices along the teaching and learning process.

Transnational scholarship by Paul Cohen, Ray Chow, and Mary Louise Pratt has inspired me to theorize these misunderstandings. Cohen approaches US–China transnational studies with the view that American historians misunderstood China, interpreting it through the lens of Western history.[4] His research supports my analysis into the ADF teachers' misunderstandings of Chinese students in the Guangdong program, which were based on their impressions of China. Chow approaches US–China transnationalism through the concept of entanglement and argues that transnationalism under globalization is not about juxtaposition, but inclusion.[5] This theory supports my analysis of how American and Chinese definitions of dance modernization were entangled together in the productions of the Guangdong program. Pratt proposes the concept of a "contact zone" in which geographically and historically separated individuals connect with one another and establish improvised communications that encompass reciprocity, uncertainty, and unevenness.[6] Pratt's work inspires me to conceptualize how American teachers and Chinese students created improvised communications through their constant reciprocal misunderstandings, and how these communications resulted in American teachers taking most of the choreographic decisions.

Third, inspired by Susan Foster's comparative study in *Reading Dancing*,[7] I

compare and theorize American and Chinese concepts of aesthetics, kinesthesia, pedagogy, individuality, freedom, tradition, and the modern. The new theories that I propose trough this comparison represent a breakthrough in both the US' and China's dance academia. I argue that, unlike the aesthetics of American modern dance, which accentuates gravity, Chinese traditional dance displays the aesthetics of balancing opposing elements and maintaining spiral traces. Contrary to American modern dance, that often requires drop of weight and complete relaxation of muscles, Chinese traditional dance remains in a liminal state of relaxed control, or controlled relaxation. Furthermore, American pedagogy focuses on the method that I call "variety teaching," in which the teacher introduces a variety of materials with the purpose of allowing students to grasp their shared, hidden concepts. Comparatively, Chinese traditional pedagogy emphasizes the method that I call "sample teaching." The Chinese teacher only introduces the most representative and significant example; by repeatedly revisiting the same central example, students develop a deeper understanding each time and gradually comprehend the hidden concepts. Chinese students incorporate also self-comprehension (traditionally addressed as *wu* (悟)) in their learning, such that they each develop an individualized learning process in accord with their different potential and talents. In this way, Chinese traditional education requires students to pursue artistic free expression, especially at the end of the learning process, creating their own styles that differ from the teacher's. This learning process differed from the approach that the ADF teachers took to teach modern dance in the Guangdong program: they taught techniques and encouraged students' free artistic expression together in the very beginning. In addition—and by contrast to American dance critics, who understood Chinese traditions as objectified cultural

symbols—in China tradition existed in conceptualizations. Unlike American dance critics who interpreted "the modern" in Chinese modern dance as mobilizing the fixed tradition, Chinese dance artists comprehended "the modern" as composed of dual meanings: "the contemporary" and "the West." The dominant approach to "the modern" in China, especially in the 1980s, was to adapt selectively from the West in order to reconstruct the Chinese people's own contemporary world.

Fourth, in this dissertation, I propose two theories regarding Chinese dance traditions that represent new contributions to scholarships in both the US and China. For one, I propose that Chinese traditional dance is equally as conceptual as American modern dance. This theory extends Emily Wilcox's idea of "kinesthetic nationalism" in *Revolutionary Bodies*, wherein "what distinguishes Chinese dance as a genre is its aesthetic forms, not its thematic content or where or by whom it is performed" (6). Unlike Wilcox, who describes both Chinese classical dance and folk dance with the term "Chinese dance," I prefer addressing these two dance genres together as Chinese traditional dance.[8] I argue in this regard that what distinguishes Chinese traditional dance as a genre is not its aesthetic form, but its embodiment of concepts, such as aesthetics, philosophies, and cultural meanings. In Chinese traditional dance, as in American modern dance, body and culture are one. Defining Chinese traditional dance by its aesthetic forms risks objectifying it, and suggests that American modern dance is more conceptual while Chinese traditional dance is form-driven. Therefore, I argue that, like American modern dance—that accentuates values of self-expression, abstraction, minimalism, and rebellion against the past—Chinese traditional dance is rooted in values of *yin and yang* (阴阳: complementary opposites)*, qi* (气: intrinsic

energy), and *shen* (神: spirit). Both American modern dance and Chinese traditional dance are embodiments of their cultural concepts, which manifest in their dance vocabulary, choreography, education, and reception by their audiences.

My second theory regarding Chinese traditional dances is that Chinese traditional dance today has continuity with traditional cultural concepts from long before the socialist era; it evolves by using core cultural concepts to situate new, incoming ideas, rather than completely constructed. I extend Wilcox's and Shih-Ming Li Chang and Lynn E. Frederiksen's research on how Chinese dance inherits characteristics of the past in modernity. Wilcox employs the term "dynamic inheritance" to summarize the "theory of cultural transformation that compels Chinese dance artists to research existing performance forms while also generating original interpretations of these forms" (7). She believes that Chinese dance artists, under the influence of socialist ideologies, adapted forms of Chinese traditional dance to create new concert dance works and, in this way, kept dances in China constantly transforming. Similarly, Chang and Frederiksen argue that Chinese traditional dance in the contemporary has maintained the feature of virtuosity that emerged from its unique performance context in ancient times. They conceive that Chinese classical dance was performed in the palace to entertain the royalty, a context in which virtuosity presented a necessary and effective approach to performance. This context influenced the development of Chinese classical dance and manifests in today's performances, too.[9]

Even as their research inspires me to conceptualize Chinese traditional dance as a historical continuity, I propose a development format different from Wilcox's "adaptation of forms" and Chang and Frederiksen's "remaining characteristics." I argue that dance has its

own logic of development that does not succumb entirely to the interventions of politics. Chinese traditional dance has constantly evolved by using its core cultural concepts to digest new incoming ideas. As certain dance forms disappeared, new forms emerged, while the concepts, philosophies, and principles persisted. In this way, Chinese traditional dance has survived shifts of dynasties spanning thousands of years. The socialist China of today is just one dynasty in China's history of over twenty dynasties. Socialism did not sever the development of Chinese traditional dance, which evolved under its own logic in spite of political upheavals. Although the Chinese traditional dance that I present in this dissertation existed in the 1980s, in a socialist China, it demonstrates aesthetic, kinesthetic, and pedagogical continuity with the China's ancient period.

By making a comparison between American modern dance and Chinese traditional dance, I want to emphasize that both dances are significant and reasonable expressions of their own histories, cultures, and societies. I do not use American modern dance as a standard to demonstrate that something is "wrong" with Chinese tradition, nor do I seek to use Chinese traditional dance to stereotype American modern dance. Rather, I seek to demonstrate that both dance forms are valuable, meaningful, and beneficial as they travel internationally. I argue that their fundamental differences, as two distinct systems of cultural concepts, have created misunderstandings in cross-cultural communications. In addition, I do not view the occurrence of misunderstandings as a sign of failed transnational exchange. Misunderstandings are productive; the establishment of the new genres of Chinese modern dance was based on reciprocal misunderstandings between ADF teachers and Chinese students. As such, I seek to demonstrate that misunderstandings represent an important

component in cross-cultural communications. By acknowledging, revealing, and contextualizing misunderstandings, I hope to enable people from different cultural backgrounds to better understand each other.

Methodology

In this dissertation, I apply methodologies in choreographic analysis, oral history, and archival research to investigate conceptualizations of aesthetics, kinesthesia, pedagogy, individuality, freedom, tradition, and the modern. First, inspired by Novack's and Foster's different approaches, I employ choreographic analysis to examine the dances created before and during the Guangdong program, to explore the influence of American modern dance on the development of Chinese modern dance. In her book *Sharing the Dance,* Novack—through analyses of movement styles, experiences of sensuousness and sexuality, costumes, and performing environments, demonstrates how contact improvisation participated in, and reflected, shifts in American society in the 1970s.[10] Similarly, I examine the vocabulary, choreographic approaches, character, costume, props, music, and gender roles of the dances created before the Guangdong program, finding evidence of conceptualizations of Chineseness, tradition, and the modern. In doing so, I demonstrate how dance constantly redefined and reflected "the modern" in China in the 1980s. I am also inspired by Foster's semiotic approach to choreographic analysis. In *Reading Dancing*, Foster uncovers the meanings codified in the signs of choreography and analyzes how the world that audiences inhabit impacts their readings of these signs.[11] Similarly, I see the vocabulary, costume, and props of dance as signs that have different meanings in different cultural and social contexts.

In my analysis of the dance works created in the Guangdong program, I examine the choreographic decisions made regarding vocabulary, choreographic approaches, costume, and props in order to explore how a dance work generated meaning for its audiences. I further decode how identical choreographic decisions result in contrasting readings by audiences from different historical and cultural backgrounds.

Second, I undertook several oral history projects in order to reveal contrasting conceptualizations of aesthetics, kinesthesia, pedagogy, individuality, freedom, and the modern. Inspired by Novack's and Marta Savigliano's research, my oral history projects focus on historical and cultural constructions of individual's dancing experiences. In *Sharing the Dance*, Novack interviews many American dancers about their experiences with contact improvisation, demonstrating that the practice challenged their previous training experiences and constituted a new physical culture in the US at that time. In *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*, Savigliano interviews many Japanese practitioners and critics in order to explore the popularity of tango in Japan, centering her questions on how Japanese dancers experienced passion in tango, and how that passion connected to Japanese modern cultural history.[12] Similarly, my interviews explore how Yang Meiqi and the Chinese students in the Guangdong program experience modern dance techniques and compositional exercises. My questions focus on which elements of modern dance interviewees find particularly interesting, charming, or difficult; what contrasts do they experience compared to their previous training in Chinese traditional dance? In doing so, I analyze the different dance cultures in the US and China with respect to training, pedagogy, choreographer–performer relationships, and aesthetic principles of dance creation, revealing the misinterpretations that American teachers

and Chinese dancers made about each other's dance cultures.

Third, inspired by the work of Susan Manning and Susan Foster, I conducted archival research to reconstruct the history of the Guangdong program.[13] During my visit to the ADF archive at Duke University, I discovered large numbers of faxes, letters, performance programs, photographs, and newspaper articles. I found faxes between the ADF and the Guangdong Dance School concerning the management of the program, including accommodating the ADF teachers, postponing the program after Tiananmen Square protest, and touring students' performances. Every ADF faculty member wrote between one and three letters to Charles Reinhart, the director of the ADF, during their residency in Guangzhou. In these letters, I discovered information about the classes they taught, assignments that they gave, their impressions working with Chinese students, their comments about the Chinese organizers, and their lives in China. In the ADF archive, I found the programs of Chinese students' performances in Guangzhou, in November 1988, and at the ADF, in 1991. I discovered photos of American teachers working with Chinese students in the studio, including technique classes, composition classes, and rehearsals, and photos that documented the ADF teachers' everyday lives and the Guangdong program's stage performances. I also found newspaper articles containing reviews of the Guangdong program's performances in 1990 and 1991. In addition, I received from Dean Jeffrey, Director of Archives and Preservation at the ADF, a copy of a memoir, *ADF and I*, written by Yang to recount the history, curriculum, and impacts of the Guangdong program. In China, during my visit to Yang's home, I collected copies of photographs of students' rehearsals and performances, as well as newspaper articles on the Guangdong program performance from Yang's private

collections. The Chinese students who I interviewed gave me photographs of themselves at modern dance technique classes, during stage performances, and in group photographs after these performances. These archival resources—from the ADF archive, Yang, and Chinese students—played a significant role in my investigations into the different historical dimensions of the Guangdong program.

Dissertation Outline

The dissertation is composed of four chapters, each of which explores one aspect of the miscommunications and misunderstandings mentioned above. In order to elaborate on the misunderstandings that repeatedly occurred throughout the entire program, I organize my chapters primarily in chronological order. Chapter One examines the phenomenon of "modern dance fever" in China in the early and mid-1980s and considers the impact of Western, especially American, modern dance on the development of Chinese traditional and modern dance. I explore how dance participated in different trends in artistic modernization in China at that time and uncover different choreographic commitments that arose in response to the influx of Western arts. In doing so, I examine how modern dance fever in China laid the foundations for the Guangdong program.

Chapter Two scrutinizes the misunderstandings between the organizers—the ADF and the Guangdong Dance School—by analyzing the establishment of the Guangdong program in 1986 and 1987. I investigate the role of both institutions in establishing this program and consider how they shaped the curriculum. I argue that the ADF held a strong political intention to liberate the Chinese people and promote American values of

individualism on a global scale, while the Guangdong Dance School sought an apolitical collaboration and aimed to improve dance education in China. The Chinese government gave its broad support to this cultural exchange but demonstrated a hesitant attitude toward establishing a modern dance major in China.

Chapter Three explores miscommunications and misunderstandings between ADF teachers and Chinese students by analyzing the teaching and learning process in the years 1987–1991. I argue that American modern dance and Chinese traditional dance displayed fundamental differences in their aesthetics, kinesthetic constructions, pedagogical approaches, and concepts of individuality and freedom, which generated incomplete and misleading conversations between American teachers and Chinese students. They were always talking past each other, rather than forming an effective exchange of information. Despite issues relating to translation between English and Chinese, their problematic communication mostly originated from the differences between American modern dance and Chinese traditional dance as two distinct dance systems.

Chapter Four explores contrasting conceptualizations of the traditional, the modern, and Chineseness among American and Chinese dance critics, analyzing their contrasting responses to, and reviews of, three dance works produced at the Guangdong program in 1990 and 1991. I argued that Chinese students applied two choreographic tools given by their American teachers—self-expression and reference to cultural symbols—to create their own modern dance works. Their applications received contrasting receptions in the US and China. *Situation* applied the tool of self-expression and received positive reviews from both American and Chinese dance critics, but for highly divergent reasons. These reviews revealed

different interpretive lenses that American and Chinese critics took to read Chinese modern dance. Another work, *Square Bottom Basket and Bamboo*, applied the tool of referring to cultural symbols and received positive reviews from American critics but negative yet criticism from their Chinese counterparts. These reviews illustrated contrasting understandings of the nature of tradition in the US and China. A third work, *Tide*, only adapting modern dance technique movements taught by ADF teachers, received negative reviews from American critics but was praised highly by Chinese critics. The reviews specifically addressed different understandings of the play between similarity and uniqueness in establishing modern Chinese cultural identity.

I defined the scope of this research, into China's communications with the ADF from 1987 to 1991, based on my research interest in reciprocal misunderstandings between people from the US and China.[14] By focusing on teachers from the ADF, I do not intend to marginalize dance artists from other countries who participated in this US–China collaboration. As well as the ADF teachers, the Chinese organizers also invited modern dance teachers from the US, UK, France, Australia, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. I fully acknowledge the contributions of these non-ADF teachers, especially during the ADF teachers' ten-month absence following the Tiananmen Square protest in the spring and fall of 1989. However, I conceive of the Guangdong program primarily as a cross-cultural communication between institutions, namely the ADF and the Guangdong Dance School, not as exchanges with individual artists. Compared to non-ADF teachers, those from the ADF filled Chinese students' most study time and played a vital role in training them to become professional modern dancers. Furthermore, although the ADF continued to send faculty members until

1995, I focus on teachers from 1987 to 1991 because their visits held a different purpose to those made after 1992. From 1987 to 1991, ADF teachers focused on teaching technique and composition, remaining for months to achieve this goal. Conversely, ADF teachers after 1992 focused on setting repertories and choreographing works for Chinese dancers, staying only for a few weeks. Since my research interest lies in how Chinese traditional dancers became professional modern dancers, I focus my research on the four-year program from 1987 to 1991 and explore the corporeal and conceptual contrasts in the teaching and learning process.

Chapter One: Modern Dance Fever and China's New Era

This chapter explores the phenomenon of "modern dance fever," a nationwide movement of dance artists in China to learn Western modern dance, and its influence on dance creation in China between 1978 and 1988, the period just before the Guangdong Modern Dance Experimental Program (1987–1991) was founded. I argue that contextualized by the thawing US–China political relationship and China's "reform and opening-up" policy, modern dance fever swept across China and significantly impacted the development of Chinese modern and traditional dances. Modern dance in China has developed across three periods that I call the New Dance Period (1900s–1940s), the Forbidden Period (1950s–1970s), and the Rebirth Period (late 1970s–the present). The phenomenon of modern dance fever that I will analyze in this chapter existed in the beginning years of the Rebirth Period. Modern dance concepts first entered China in the early 1900s when Yu Rongling, daughter of a Chinese ambassador in France, learned modern dance from Isadora Duncan and applied her artistic concepts back in China to create new Chinese dances in the court.[15] In the late 1920s, Wu Xiaobang, later nominated as "The Father of Chinese Modern Dance," learned modern dance in Japan from artists who were students of Mary Wigman. Returning to China, Wu created a series of experimental and unconventional dances in the 1930s and 1940s known as "New Dance."[16] Western modern dance performances occurred in different places in China during this period, too. For example, Ruth Denis and Ted Shawn, together with their dance students in the Denishawn Company, visited China twice, first in 1925 and again in 1926. They staged performances twice in Shanghai, and also performed in Beijing, Dalian, and

Tianjin.[17] In late 1926 and early 1927, Emma Duncan, a student of Isadora Duncan, led Moscow-based Duncan Dance Company to China, performing in Harbin, Tianjin, Beijing, Shanghai, and Hankou.[18] Western modern dance performances continued to appear in theaters in China until 1949.[19] However, following the establishment of the PRC in 1949, modern dance, understood to be a capitalist art form, received resistance and was soon forbidden within the socialist country. Wu opened his Sky Horse Studio in 1957, in order to continue teaching modern dance and creating neo-classical dances in the PRC, but soon the studio was shut down due to political censorship.[20] After learning modern dance in the US for seven years, Guo Mingda returned to China in 1955 in the hope of teaching and developing modern dance there. However, contrary to his aspirations, Guo was condemned for spreading American imperialism and sent to the rural area.[21] During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), revolutionary ballet dominated concert performances and left no space for modern dance to reemerge. From the 1950s to 1970s, China invited dance companies from socialist or third world countries, rather than modern dance companies from leading capitalist nations.[22] It was not until the late 1970s, when China ended the Cultural Revolution and reopened its door to the West, that modern dance experienced its rebirth in China. This time the rebirth swept across the country, resulting in the phenomenon of "modern dance fever."

I will present my analysis in three steps. First, I introduce the historical and political background that nurtured the rise and flourish of modern dance in China from 1978 to 1988. Second, I lay out the activities associated with modern dance fever, with a focus on the travels of study teams, performances, and workshops. Third, I analyze the influence of

modern dance fever on dance creation in China. I argue that the increased interest in modern dance aroused three interrelated choreographic commitments: "updating," "root-seeking," and "westernizing." Updating refers to the practice of combining Western modern dance choreographic concepts with Chinese traditional movement vocabularies, to extend Chinese traditional dance. I define root-seeking as resistance to the influence of Western art and development of traditional dance solely through the resources offered by cultural relics. Westernizing refers to the attempt to create a new genre of Chinese modern dance, based on adaptation of Western modern dance vocabularies and choreographic ideas, to address a Chinese social issue in the present.

Global and Domestic Political Changes

The PRC and the US opened political communications in the early 1970s. Until this time, the US had been maintaining a diplomatic relationship with the Republic of China (ROC, or Taiwan), since its foundation in 1912, despite the fact that the Chinese Communist Party won the Civil War over the ROC and gained governance of Mainland China in 1949. The frozen US–PRC relationship thawed in the early 1970s through "ping-pong diplomacy" and President Richard Nixon's visit to China. In spring 1971, the US Table Tennis team, as well as officials and journalists, at the invitation of the PRC, visited Beijing for a friendly match after an American player, Glenn Cowan, exchanged gifts with Chinese player Zhuang Zedong at the 31st World Table Tennis Championships in Japan. In early 1972, Nixon arrived at Beijing as the first American president who had visited the PRC and normalized the Sino–American relationship. At the end of his trip, the American and Chinese governments

signed “The Joint Communiqué of the United States of America and the People's Republic of China” in Shanghai, known as the Shanghai Communiqué, and reached the basic agreements between the two countries that still exist today.

Several years after Nixon’s visit, the US and PRC established their official relationship on January 1st 1979, signing “The Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations.” This agreement facilitated a period of honeymoon exchanges between the two countries in various fields, including economy, military, and cultural production. The Joint Communiqué reconfirmed the Shanghai Communiqué about the “One China” agreement that the PRC represented the only official nation of China and brought Deng Xiaoping, the PRC’s Vice Premier, to Washington D.C. in January 1979. On March 1st, 1979, the US and China formally established embassies in each other's capitals. In August 1979, the American Vice President Walter Mondale visited China and signed several agreements on cultural exchanges with Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping, including the “Implementing Accord of the US–PRC Cultural Agreement” that sent the first US dance study team to China in 1980.[23] In 1984, President Ronald Reagan and Premier Zhao Ziyang paid reciprocal visits. In July 1985, President Li Xiannian traveled to the US. In October 1985, Vice President Bush visited the PRC and opened the US Consulate General in Chengdu, the fourth US consular post in China. The last high-level visit in the 1980s occurred in February 1989, when President Bush visited Beijing several months before the Tiananmen Square protest. These reciprocal visits between US and Chinese politicians fostered many opportunities for the two countries’ cultural exchanges.

At the same time as the PRC actively engaged in political communications with the

US, it was undergoing dramatic political changes domestically. In 1976, the death of Chairman Mao and the breakdown of the "Gang of Four," a political faction composed of four Communist Party officials who guided the Cultural Revolution toward a disastrous direction, facilitated a social transition to end the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). 1978 saw the national debate on the meaning of truth and socialism in May, the publication of the novel *Wound* that criticized the Cultural Revolution in August, the political rehabilitation of the rightists in November, and the initiation of the reform and opening-up policy in December. With these events, China entered the New Era (1978–), which focused on economic development and participation in globalization rather than continuation of class conflict and capitalism's defeat. As the first decade of the New Era, the 1980s represented a very significant and special period in modern Chinese history. The decade symbolized a transition from Mao's China to Deng's China, and from a revolutionary state to a commercial state. For some Chinese scholars, this period was China's second artistic Renaissance in the 20th century.[24] Vibrant artistic activities emerged at this time to redefine the meaning of Chineseness and shape the development of the Chinese arts in the following years.

The policy of reform and opening-up played a decisive role in the emergence of the New Era. In December 1978, Deng Xiaoping and other reformists in the Communist Party of China proposed the policy of reform and opening-up in "The 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China." The policy contained two basic parts: 1) "reform", the launch of economic reform within the nation, and 2) "opening-up", the opening of the country's borders to the outside world. Specifically, the reform and opening-up policy implemented a change in agriculture and industry by applying

individualization and free market principles. For example, in the first five years from 1979 to 1984, household responsibility took over collective responsibility to de-collectivize agriculture. The urban area welcomed entrepreneurs to start businesses and the opening of coastal cities as "special economic zones" invited foreign investments. With the increasing adoption of capitalism, China saw the decentralization of state control over provincial economies, the privatization of state enterprises, and the growth of the private economy. These changes stimulated economic development and modernization in China, fostering a large and steady increase in GDP.[25]

The ideologies of "socialism with Chinese characteristics" and "four modernizations" characterized the policy of reform and opening-up. Socialism with Chinese characteristics meant that China developed a socialist system based on its own economic model and that a market-oriented economy, rather than a planned economy, characterized the socialism specific to China. By "introducing capitalist values and practices into the existing socialist structure" China found its own way to protect the socialist system while simultaneously refraining from being wholly absorbed into global capitalism.[26] The four modernizations referred to achieving modernization in the fields of agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology in the PRC. This approach was proposed in 1963 by Zhou Enlai, the first Premier of the PRC, and re-enhanced and enacted by Deng Xiaoping from 1978 onward. As a significant official ideology of the Chinese government, the four modernizations shaped the life of the general public that centered on a collective endeavor to modernize the country. The slogan appeared on newspapers and journals, as well as the walls of parks in my hometown. Initially referring to the field of science, the four

modernizations spread the concept of modernization to all fields, including art and literature. The ideals of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the four modernizations prepared the general public in China to willingly accept drastic changes. Deng highlighted the importance of emancipating the mind to embrace this social and historical transformation in the New Era. As a historical and political strategy, socialism with Chinese characteristics and the four modernizations announced Deng's vision for a modern China.[27]

The process of reform in the 1980s is perhaps best characterized as a case of "two steps forward, one step back." Despite its achievements discussed above, the reform and opening-up policy created financial inequality and ideological disorientation. Inflation and income imbalance emerged, especially in the second half of the 1980s. As new, Western culture flooded in, a collision between old and new, the traditional and the modern, the West and China, fostered ideological chaos for the Chinese people. Political campaigns and democratic protests occurred almost every three years during this period. In December 1978, Wei Jingsheng, a Chinese human rights activist, openly wrote against Deng and argued for the establishment of democracy as a fifth modernization, in addition to the existing four modernizations.[28] From October to December 1983, the Communist Party of China launched a nationwide "Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign" that aimed to repress the popularization of Western ideas such as liberation, individualism, decadence, erotica, and existentialism. The campaign not only covered every form of art and literature, including dance, but also encompassed many aspects of everyday life, such as hairstyles and clothes.[29] In December 1986, three years after the "Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign" ended, students from the University of Science and Technology, in Hefei, started a demonstration that soon spread over

China's major cities, including Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Nanjing, and Hangzhou. Lasting less than a month, the event faded in mid-January when students from Beijing University were arrested and released several days later.[30] Three years after, the Tiananmen Square protest took place, in late spring 1989. It began as a collective memorial activity by college students at Tiananmen Square, in Beijing, on April 15th, for the death of the ex-General Secretary Hu Yaobang.[31] As the Chinese government—itself negotiating a deep division between "soft" or "hard" treatment of the protests—tried to negotiate with student representatives, students on Tiananmen Square began hunger strikes. Students, workers, intellectuals, and other members of the public began to gather at Tiananmen Square; the protest soon spread to cities across China.[32] The Tiananmen Square protest ended with military repression in Beijing on June 4th, 1989. All these campaigns in the 1980s strongly impacted the development of art in China at that time. In particular, the Tiananmen Square protest directly influenced the Guangdong program as the Sino–American relationship broke down shortly afterwards.

Modern Dance Fever: Exchanges, Workshops, and Performances

Having provided an overview of Chinese policy and the consequent social upheavals experienced within the country, I now focus on the changes within dance during this period. Fostered by the US and China's political alliance, as well as China's own domestic reformation, in the late 1970s dancers from the US and China began traveling to each other's countries, arousing modern dance fever in China. The fever started in the late 1970s, when the two countries sent their first dance study teams to each other. It gradually

vanished in the late 1980s, however, as the Guangdong Modern Dance Experimental Program began to create Chinese modern dance works and tour across the country. The phrase modern dance fever first appeared in *Dance,* a national central dance journal at that time, in early 1981:

"Modern dance demonstrated numerous expressive approaches and introduced new perspectives about the meaning of dance. Maybe because of this, in our dance world, 'modern dance fever' emerged and some dancers had a very enjoyable learning experience with it… Modern dance is spreading and growing fast in our society, which arouses both professional and amateur dancers' strong interests. Although people possess different opinions about it, they have created a vibrant atmosphere for learning and doing research on modern dance. This is a good phenomenon" (Cheng 53).

Modern dance fever exhibited three characteristics: enthusiasm, transnational and cross-genre engagement, and contributions from overseas Chinese. First, the Chinese people showed a strong zeal for modern dance. Their thirst originated from the fact that the genre had been prohibited in China since the establishment of the PRC; generations of Chinese dancers had not seen modern dance for almost thirty years, prior to the New Era. Their curiosity about this new foreign art form drove them to the theater, studio, classroom, and library. Chinese choreographers, dancers, students, critics, and scholars were very eager to learn about and practice modern dance, especially American modern dance. They attended live performances, watched all the videos and read all the texts they were able to access, took workshops, and employed multifarious means to experiment with creating their own modern dance works. These activities became a nationwide movement in China and every person in the dance world tried to learn about modern dance.

Second, modern dance fever was a transnational and cross-genre phenomenon. Modern dance artists from the West traveled to China to stage performances and offer

workshops; Chinese dance artists traveled to the US and Europe to learn modern dance techniques and choreography. Excepting a few senior artists such as Wu Xiaobang and Guo Mingda, who resumed their careers as modern dance masters in the late 1970s and 1980s, almost all Chinese practitioners involved in the modern dance fever majored in other dance genres: Chinese traditional dance or ballet. Before the Guangdong program, no dance institutions in China provided a modern dance major. Chinese dancers' engagement with modern dance symbolized a democratic practice where people with different training backgrounds came together to try a Western dance genre that was new to them all. Thus, modern dance fever not only encouraged people who previously engaged with modern dance to continue their work in the New Era, but also and more importantly, it meant that Chinese classical, folk, and ballet dancers explored a new genre different from those in which they had been trained and tried to create works different from their field of expertise.

Third, overseas Chinese artists played an important role in facilitating modern dance fever and improving cross-cultural understanding. They created opportunities for performances, workshops, and programs, and translated historical and cultural concepts from modern dance for Chinese dancers. The Chinese Americans involved in the modern dance fever were not born and raised in the US; rather, they came from Mainland China or Taiwan, where they lived until at least their teens before immigrating to the US. Living in China or Taiwan before pursuing a dance career in the US, they spoke both Mandarin and English fluently and knew people from the dance world in China, the US, or both. Compared to the Chinese Americans, artists from Hong Kong gained easier access to Western culture, while at the same time living geographically close to Mainland China. These advantages allowed

Hong Kong artists to become another significant force among overseas Chinese. In all, through workshops, choreographing for dancers, and publications in the 1980s, overseas Chinese made vital contributions by mediating Western culture to artists in Mainland China.

The late 1970s and early 1980s also saw three significant visits by American and Chinese dance artists, which opened the door for dance exchanges in the 1980s and paved the way for modern dance fever. In June 1978, several months before President Jimmy Carter's announcement to officially recognize the PRC, an art troupe of more than 140 of the best performing arts practitioners in China at that time toured five cities in the US: New York City, Washington, D.C., Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. The troupe served as "the art ambassador," introducing performing arts in China to American audiences.[33] During this trip, Chinese dancers from the troupe visited New York City and watched performances by the New York City Ballet, Martha Graham Dance Company, Merce Cunningham Dance Company, Dance Theater of Harlem, works by Eric Hawkins, and dance collections in the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. The troupe members met with President Jimmy Carter in Washington, D.C. and with Martha Graham, Eric Hawkins, and Arthur Mitchell in New York City.[34]

Several months later in June 1979, under the help of Chinese American dance artist Chiang Ching, eight dancers, choreographers, and teachers from the Beijing Dance Academy, the top dance conservatoire in China, visited the US for a month.[35] The team visited the first International Ballet Competition held in Jackson, Mississippi, and lectured and demonstrated Chinese traditional dance. Subsequently, they traveled to Durham and attended the 42nd American Dance Festival (ADF). In their last stop, at New York City, the team visited Martha

Graham Dance School and the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts and watched performances from New York City Ballet. Although some members mentioned that the performances they saw were abstract and difficult to understand,[36] the US visit created new knowledge of dance among Chinese dancers and opened their eyes about the dance world outside China.

As a response to the Chinese study team, the US government sent its dance study team to China in November and December 1980. Funded by the United States International Communication Agency, the American study team emerged from the "Implementing Accord of the US–PRC Cultural Agreement" signed by the American Vice President Walter Mondale and Chinese Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping in August 1979. The group included eight members in total, with Charles Reinhart, director of the ADF, leading the team.[37] Under its central mission of learning about dance in China, the study team saw a wide variety of Chinese dance styles and interacted with many Chinese dancers in Beijing, Shanghai, Sichuan, and Yunnan.[38] First, the whole team visited major dance schools and dance companies in China and observed their performances and classes, including the Beijing Dance Academy, the Beijing Opera Institute, the Beijing Film Institute, the Shanghai Dance School, the National Ballet of China (Central Ballet Company), the Sichuan Song and Dance Ensemble, the Yunnan Song and Dance Ensemble, Tibetan Song and Dance Ensemble, and the Shanghai Ballet Company. Second, organized by the Ministry of Culture in China, the American study team watched *The Silk Road* (1979) and *Flying to the Moon* (1980), two of the most well-known dance dramas at that time, and viewed classical episodes from Beijing Opera, Chuan Opera, and Kunqu Opera. They also watched videotapes of the first National

Dance Competitions in China, hosted in May that year, and other local performances in Yunnan and Sichuan provinces.[39] Third, the group members provided lectures, technique classes, and workshops on American modern dance and ballet for local students and teachers. For Michael Smuin, one member of the group, teaching masterclasses in China signified one of his most joyful memories because of the curiosity and focus of Chinese students.[40] Just as their lectures and workshops opened the eyes of Chinese dancers, the study team brought back significant information about Chinese dance education and performance to the US. Overall, the three visits by Chinese and American dancers from 1978 to 1980 introduced dances in China and the US to each other and prepared for further communications in the 1980s.

After the US and China normalized their political relationship, China invited many Western modern dance companies and demonstrated to the world its determination to enter a process of globalization. In the early 1980s, major cities and provinces in China established "sister cities" aligned with major American cities and states, to which each nation agreed to send performance groups on a regular basis. Beijing and New York City became "sister cities" on February 25th, 1980; Beijing and Washington, D.C. on May 15th, 1984; Shanghai and San Francisco on January 28th, 1980; Shanghai and Chicago on September 5th, 1985; Guangzhou and Los Angeles on December 8th, 1981; and Guangdong Province with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on November 2nd, 1983. Meanwhile, further to the existing consulate in Washington, D.C., China opened new consulates, which openly issued Chinese visas for American citizens, in San Francisco (August 1979), New York City (December 1981), and Chicago (July 1985).[41] The Chinese government's efforts to create opportunities for

international travel invited many Western, especially American, modern dance companies to China. Before the 1980s, the last time that Chinese audiences had seen American, or even Western, modern dance performed was January 1949, when American dancer Sophia Delza performed in Shanghai.[42] Thirty years later, Western and American modern dance entered the world of Chinese audiences again in the 1980s. Among all the visits of dance companies from Europe, North and South America, South Asia, and East Asia at that time, modern dance companies signified a very special group, because very few audiences had seen the genre before. Each modern dance performance in the 1980s widened Chinese dancers' knowledge about dance and ignited their curiosity about the outside world. Wherever these performances took place, the Chinese audiences filled the theaters. While the 1980s also witnessed the visits of American ballet companies—such as Boston Ballet (1980), Jerome Robbins Dance Company (1981), Washington Ballet (1985), and American World Star Ballet (1985)[43]—I focus here on modern dance performances during this period.

The first documented modern dance performance in China in the New Era happened in 1979, when Canadian solo modern dancer Margret Gillies performed her six solo works in Shenyang.[44] In the spring of 1980, Chiang Ching, a Chinese American artist based in New York City and artistic director of the Chiang Ching Dance Company, hosted a night-long "Modern Dance Demonstration" for dancers in Beijing together with Dong Yalin, the vice director of the company. They performed ten pieces, including works from the company repertoire and duets and solos choreographed by other American choreographers specifically for Chiang Ching's China tour.[45] In the late fall of 1980, City Contemporary Dance Company (CCDC) from Hong Kong presented its Mainland China debut in

Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong Province, only several hours by train from Hong Kong.[46] In December 1980, Anna Whiteman Dance Company from Canada brought pieces of solo, duet, and group dance to Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Suzhou.[47] In 1985, CCDC made its Beijing debut.[48] In October 1985, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater visited Beijing and two other cities, bringing the works *Revelations, Night Creature*, *Cry*, and *Memoria.*[49] Later the same year, 1985, Trisha Brown Dance Company gave a one night performance for professional-dancer-only audiences in Beijing.[50] The same year, Ohad Naharin led his company, based in New York City, to Beijing, Shanghai, and Hangzhou.[51] In 1987, invited by the Dance Association of China, Chiang Ching brought to China a night-long performance of her solo works and performed in Guangzhou, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Shenyang, Tianjin, Lanzhou, Lhasa, and Beijing.[52] Modern dance performances from abroad not only opened up the diverse genres, styles, and artistic philosophies of modern dance to Chinese audiences, but also inspired young dancers in China to devote their careers to modern dance. In these audiences were young Chinese dance students Su Ka, Wang Mei, Ma Shouze, and Zhang Li, who discovered a passion for modern dance at these performances and later joined the Guangdong program in 1987.[53]

Besides these performances, many foreign and domestic artists offered modern dance workshops for Chinese dancers which contributed to the flourishing of modern dance fever. Eager to understand this new corporeal knowledge and culture, Chinese dancers rushed to these workshops and experienced a new kinesthetic and aesthetic physicality. In 1978, King Lan-lan (Chinese name Wang Xiaolan), a Chinese American dancer and faculty member of the Department of Dance at Iowa University, visited Beijing and Wuhan and offered

modern dance technique workshops at the National Ballet of China (Central Ballet Company) and the Beijing Dance Academy.[54] In April 1980, Ruby Shang, a Japanese-Chinese American artist, visited Beijing and offered modern dance technique workshops.[55] Originally intending to sweep the tomb of her father in China, a Chinese traditional activity to worship their ancestors, Shang was touched by Chinese dancers' curiosity, focus, and passion to learn modern dance. She canceled her plan to tour China in order to teach as many classes as possible. On April 10th, the workshops ended with a demonstration class, including modern dance techniques with Shang's own style, and two of her solo works. More than 120 dancers watched the demonstration, including Wu Xiaobang, the chair of the Dance Association of China, and vice-chairs Hu Guogang, Sheng Jie, and Jia Zuoguang.[56] In May and June 1980, King Lan-lan traveled to Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Nanjing to teach modern dance workshops as part of her United States–China dance exchange program, established in 1979.[57] At the same time, Chiang Ching hosted several workshops for Chinese dancers in Beijing after her performance.[58] In December 1980, Anna Whiteman Dance Company hosted four open technique classes and three masterclasses for Chinese dancers during their eighteen-day stay in China.[59] In April 1981, Alwin Nikolais visited China for two weeks and toured Bejing, Xi'an, Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Suzhou.[60] Under the invitation of the Chinese Dance Association, Nikolais provided three days of lectures and workshops for dancers in Beijing focusing on improvisations. Guo Mingda, a member of the Chinese Dance Association and Nikolais' student in the 1950s, served as his translator.[61] In July 1983, King Lan-lan, Ross Parkes (vice-artistic director of Martha Graham Dance Company), and Genevieve Oswald (director of the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library) visited China for three

weeks.[62] King Lan-lan and Ross Parkes hosted a two-week intensive Graham technique workshop in Beijing and ended it with a performance demonstration.[63] Meanwhile, Genevieve Oswald lectured on American modern dance and showed videos of Martha Graham's masterpieces. As they finished teaching in Beijing, King, Parkes, and Oswald traveled to Shanghai, Kunming, Yunnan, and Guangzhou to introduce modern dance to Chinese dancers. In 1983, Billie Mahoney, a dance faculty member from the Julliard School for Labanotation, jazz and tap dance visited China, as a member of the fifth delegation to China of the Edgar Snow Foundation. During her three-day stay in Beijing, Mahoney lectured Laban theory to Chinese students who had recently graduated from an intermediate Labanotation program hosted by Dai in China and demonstrated different genres of Jazz and tap dance.[64] In 1985, New York City dance artist Maryan Thalac visited Beijing and Shanghai to teach Graham technique; Thalac staged two works of Isadora Duncan—*Pieces of Johannes Brahms* and *Pieces of Chopin*—in both cities.[65] In 1986, Patricia Lent and Ellen Cornfield (from Merce Cunningham Dance Company) visited Beijing for two weeks and introduced Cunningham technique to Chinese dancers at the theater of China Song and Dance Troupe.[66] In 1987, Elisa Monte and David Brown, former dancers at the Martha Graham Dance Company, provided an informal performance and several workshops of Graham technique for dancers in Beijing.[67]

In addition to these workshops from American artists, artists from Europe and East Asia also traveled to China and hosted modern dance workshops. In 1984, Simone Michelle, a teacher from the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance in England, lectured on Labanotation and improvisation at the Beijing Dance Academy. In November 1986,

renowned Swedish choreographer Birgit Åkesson, a former student of Mary Wigman, visited Beijing for a week under the invitation of Chiang Ching and Dance Association of China.[68] In 1988, Willy Tsao, artistic director of CCDC in Hong Kong, choreographed a modern dance piece for the ballet students in the Beijing Dance Academy.[69] In 1989, Korean American artist Sin Cha Hong visited Beijing and hosted workshops that combined choreography and meditation.[70] Artists from France, Australia, Mexico, and New Zealand provided workshops in China during the 1980s, too. These workshops from foreign artists made up half of the modern dance workshops that took place in China in the 1980s. The other half belonged to domestic Chinese artists, who regained the right to broadcast modern dance in China in the New Era.

In the 1980s, the Chinese government not only welcomed modern dance artists from abroad, but also resumed positions of domestic modern dance artists who were repressed during the 1950s and the Cultural Revolution from farmers back to dance teachers. As such, domestic Chinese modern dance artists, silenced for almost thirty years since the 1950s, spread their knowledge about modern dance in China again in the 1980s. There was strong contrast between domestic and foreign artists in terms of their ages and the format of their workshops. In contrast to foreign artists, who were in their twenties to forties, domestic Chinese artists were in their late fifties to seventies. They learned modern dance abroad and returned to China but were forbidden to perform or teach modern dance in China from the mid-1950s to the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). While most foreign artists offered workshops focused on modern dance technique, domestic Chinese modern dance artists delivered lectures on modern dance history and workshops on compositional exercises.

In the 1980s, four domestic Chinese artists played an important role in promoting modern dance in China: Wu Xiaobang, Dai Ailian, Guo Mingda, and Wang Liancheng.

Wu Xiaobang, the president of the Dance Association of China at that time, offered lectures and workshops primarily for professional dancers in Beijing.[71] Wu learned modern dance in 1936, when he took a three-week summer program led by Japanese artists Takaya Eguchi and Misako Miya, who learned modern dance from Mary Wigman in Germany. After returning to China, Wu created a significant number of modern dance works in the 1930s and 1940s, adopting a principle of realism to address the Sino–Japanese and civil wars taking place at the time. These works composed an emerging genre known as New Dance. After the establishment of the PRC, Wu opened his own modern dance studio, Sky Horse Studio, in the 1950s. However, due to political censorship prohibiting the broadcast of capitalist art, the government shut down his studio several years after its establishment. Wu did not have the opportunity to teach modern dance until the New Era.[72] The 1980s saw him reclaim the title of "the father of modern dance in China" through his lectures, workshops, and articles.

Dai Ailian, an overseas Chinese artist who returned to China in 1940, made a major contribution to the broadcast of Labanotation in China in the 1980s. Born in Trinidad to a third generation Chinese family, Dai began ballet training in Trinidad before moving to London to study at the Jooss School of Ballet aged fourteen. She continued her study at the Jooss Modern Dance School, where she learned theories of expressionism and Labanotation. In 1940, during the Sino–Japanese war, Dai returned to China and began to engage with staging Chinese folk dance. In July 1979, on the invitation of the Laban Dance Center, Dai went to London to participate in the international conference of Labanotation honoring

Laban's 100th birthday. Following this, she brought the latest developments in Labanotation back to China.[73] Dai offered two Labanotation workshops in 1980 and 1982, at beginner and intermediate level, which focused on providing Laban theories to Chinese dancers.[74]

Guo Mingda, a student of Alwin Nikolais, was another important domestic force in modern dance fever. Guo traveled to the US in 1947 to study modern dance at the University of Iowa. After moving to New York City to study with Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Hanya Holm, and many other American modern dancers, Guo chose to stay at Alwin Nikolais Dance School and graduated in 1955. When he returned to China the same year, Guo proposed the use of concepts from modern dance to improve dance education in China but faced fierce criticism for spreading ideas of capitalist arts and supporting American imperialism. As a result, he was sent to the rural area and did not return to Beijing until 1977.[75] In the late 1970s and early 1980s, however, Guo traveled across China offering modern dance workshops that he called "artistic movement classes" (*dongzuo yishu ban*). The first of his several-week workshops was delivered for the Nanjing Front Force Military Song and Dance Troup in 1979; here, Guo offered a systematic introduction to American modern dance history and theory and taught various styles of modern dance techniques.[76] Under his instruction, the Nanjing Front Force Military Song and Dance Troup soon became the leading force in modern dance creation in China in the early 1980s. Dancers from the troupe created *Hope* (1980), *Fanyi* (1982), and *The Spirit of Yellow River* (1984), which together represented a significant component of the Chinese modern dance genre before the Guangdong program. As well as delivering lectures and workshops, Guo also translated and introduced theories of Labanotation to Chinese dancers, supplementing Dai Ailian's

introduction.[77]

Wang Liancheng was another domestic figure significant in the spread of modern dance during the modern dance fever. An award-winning choreographer in China in the 1950s and 1960s, Wang traveled to New York City and studied at Alwin Nikolais' school for two years, from 1982 to 1984. Upon returning to China, Wang taught short-term modern dance workshops in Chengdu, Hangzhou, and Lanzhou.[78] In 1988, Wang opened a one-month modern dance workshop, during the summer break, for students at the Beijing Dance Academy. At the end of his classes, Wang and his students offered a demonstration class focused on structured improvisation on stage at the second "Taoli" cup national dance competition, the same event where the Guangdong Modern Dance Experimental Program offered its end of year performance. However, Chinese audiences did not appreciate Wang's class, and spoke highly only of the Guangdong program's performance.[79] The audience at this time appeared to expect an established on-stage performance, rather than a view of processes such as improvisation.

Wu, Guo, and Wang all tried to create a modern dance major in China after they returned from abroad, but all eventually failed due to political censorship. Wu could not sustain his Sky Horse Studio in the 1950s; Guo wanted to establish a major, but did not receive permission to begin teaching and performing modern dance;[80] Wang, after returning from the US, sought to establish a modern dance major at the Beijing Dance Academy in the mid-1980s, but received disagreement from the principal for the reason that "it was too early".[81] China in the early- and mid-1980s had allowed modern dance to exist in the country, but the political environment was not open to the extent that it could permit modern dance to

become a major for professional dancers in China. Thus, all three artists (Wu, Guo, and Wang) had to teach modern dance in the form of short-term workshops and lectures across the country. This situation reflected the significance of the Guangdong program as a groundbreaking moment in Chinese modern dance history, because it represented the first modern dance major ever in China.

The performances and workshops during the modern dance fever planted seeds in young Chinese dancers' minds, some of whom joined in the Guangdong program later in 1987. Among the Chinese students that I have interviewed, almost every one of them had encountered modern dance, through performances and workshops, before the Guangdong program. Those encounters aroused their curiosity and interest in modern dance and were significant reason for their joining the program. For example, when Wang Mei was a student of Chinese folk dance in the Beijing Dance Academy in the early 1980s, she took a semester-long composition class with Wu Xiaobang. Later, in 1984, Wang participated in the two-week workshop by King Lan-lan and Ross Parkes in Beijing. All these experiences aroused her eagerness to discover her identity through more engagement with modern dance.[82] Ma Shouze watched Chiang Ching's full-length modern dance solo concert in Shenyang in 1987, which impressed on him the possibility of dancing a new genre he had never encountered before.[83] Zhao Long watched the performance of the Guangdong program in July 1988 in Beijing, and subsequently decided to audition for the program in September that year.[84] Qin Liming was a dancer in the Nanjing Front Force Military Song and Dance Troupe, specifically in the "modern dance experimental team," a dance group that Hua Chao established following the departure of Guo Mingda. This experience aroused his curiosity in

the modern dance taught by American teachers.[85] Zhang Yinzhong, a dancer in the China National Ethnic Song and Dance Ensemble in Beijing at that time, watched the performance of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1985 and subsequently fell in love with modern dance.[86] These encounters opened a window for the Chinese students and strengthened their will to become professional modern dancers.

Modern dance fever also aroused Chinese individuals' curiosity about the outside world. As well as incoming foreign modern dance artists, the 1980s witnessed Chinese dancers traveling abroad, too. As discussed above, Wang Liancheng studied in the US from 1982 to 1984, learning modern dance techniques and choreography. From 1984 to 1986, the ADF accepted at least one Chinese artist each year to join in its International Choreographer Workshop: Jiang Huaxuan in 1984; Xue Weixin in 1985; and Yang Meiqi, Zhao Ming, and Men Wenyuan in 1986.[87] Many Chinese dancers from the younger generation moved to the US for a brighter career during the 1980s. For example, Li Cunxin, a graduate ballet student from the Beijing Dance Academy, joined the Houston Ballet under the invitation of its artistic director Ben Stevenson in 1979.[88] Jiang Qi, the silver medal winner of the first national dance competition in 1980, received a scholarship from the Joffrey School in 1985 and joined the Western ballet in 1986.[89] Traveling out of China opened the eyes of Chinese dancers; they brought back information about the outside world and, in this way, participated in the modern dance fever of the 1980s.

Dance Creation

The visits, performances, and workshops during the modern dance fever challenged

Chinese dance artists' understanding of the nature of dance and inspired them to begin their own experimentations. In the 1980s, Chinese dance artists began to use modern dance vocabularies and choreographic concepts to create both unconventional and conventional dance works. This phenomenon was rooted in the general historical and social shifts that the Chinese people were facing at that time. The incoming Western modern dance culture forced Chinese dance artists to reassess subject positions, facing both their revolutionary past and approaching globalization; how to move forward became a central question that dance artists in China tried to answer in the 1980s. On the one hand, they did not want to continue a revolutionary trajectory in art. The 1980s, or the New Era, represented a period when China rejected certain ideologies and art-making philosophies from the Cultural Revolution period. On the other, Chinese dance artists did not want to completely assimilate themselves into the globalizing modern dance culture. They worried that Western, especially American, dance culture would jeopardize their Chinese traditional and socialist dance culture. As a result, dance creation, under the impact of modern dance fever, demonstrated Chinese dance artists' decisions to choreograph dancing bodies that solely belonged to the 1980s. These bodies were neither revolutionary nor Westernized, but Chinese and modern, representing the beginning years of the New Era.

As a result, choreographers and dancers began to devote themselves to three interrelated forces guiding the creation of new work: updating, root-seeking, and westernizing. Updating refers to an approach which combined some modern dance choreographic ideas with Chinese classical and folk dance vocabularies to renew traditional dance genres. Root-seeking refers to a commitment to reject everything from modern dance

and seek inspiration for Chinese traditional dances only in ancient cultural heritages. Westernizing refers to an approach where Chinese dance artists tried to create a completely new genre of Chinese modern dance by using only Western modern dance vocabularies and choreographic concepts to tell Chinese stories. These three choreographic commitments split from the dominant art-making philosophy in the Cultural Revolution of "using the ancient to serve the present, using the foreign to serve China" (*guweijinyong yangweizhongyong*).[90] This philosophy meant that the adaptation of traditional and foreign cultures must work to establish modern socialist Chinese culture. In dance choreography, this philosophy implied combination and juxtaposition. In making revolutionary ballet, Chinese choreographers allowed Chinese traditional movements and ballet movements to dissolve each other and produce a hybrid dance form that represented both China's cultural uniqueness and its connection to the outside world.[91] In the 1980s, the process of updating inherited this revolutionary art-making philosophy of advocating integration. Westernizing and root-seeking, by contrast, betrayed it by only using modern dance or traditional dance vocabularies. However, each choreographic approach inherited and betrayed the revolutionary philosophy at the same time in distinctive ways, constituting the unique Chinese dancing bodies in the 1980s.

The three choreographic commitments of updating, root-seeking, and westernizing also represented Chinese dance artists' contrasting responses to the influx of modern dance. Visits by foreign artists and modern dance performances and workshops signaled the approaching era of globalization, of which China was a part. As most other participants were capitalist countries, increasing international communications while simultaneously avoiding

cultural imperialism became an acute survival issue for Chinese dance artists. What kind of dances could represent their country's unique contemporary culture on the global stage? To confront this question, supporters of updating aimed to use modern dance choreographic ideas to "translate" Chinese traditional dance and make Chinese dance traditions understandable and modern for foreign audiences. Root-seeking choreographers, by contrast, sought to present a unique Chinese dance culture that did not contain any influence from modern dance, to demonstrate "authentic" Chinese culture to the world. To participate in the international conversations about art, Chinese choreographers supporting westernizing cultivated a version of Chinese modern dance as a diaspora of Western modern dance. In what follows, I will analyze these three choreographic commitments in the 1980s through case studies of dance works and debates at conferences.

Updating and root-seeking suggested two opposing attitudes about how Chinese traditional dance artists should engage with modern dance fever. Updating referred to incorporating modern dance vocabularies and choreographic concepts to create Chinese traditional works while root-seeking, by contrast, referred to rejecting the influence of Western modern dance and creating Chinese traditional dance based on its own vocabularies and cultural logics. Updating, inheriting the revolutionary art-making philosophy of integration and juxtaposition, dominated the creation of Chinese classical and folk dance in the 1980s. Chinese choreographers drew inspiration from Western modern dance to update Chinese traditional dance. In contrast, root-seeking existed as a counterpart of the updating approach, rejecting revolutionary philosophy and arguing for the exclusion of any Western dance forms, such as ballet and modern dance. Advocates of root-seeking believed that

Chinese traditional culture could renew itself without incorporating foreign culture into its choreography.

Despite their differences, both updating and root-seeking shared a realism approach, choreographing archetypal characters in representative circumstances while also maintaining relevance to the contemporary world. Chinese choreographers of both approaches designed recognizable characters and historical figures—such as ancient heroes, dancers, and princesses—and shaped these characters through a narration of representative circumstances. To connect to the contemporary world, updating and root-seeking emphasized the choreographer's modern perspective as a person living in the late twentieth century. They argued that the choreography of traditional dance works connected with the contemporary world by representing how people living in the present viewed the past.

Next, I will discuss these two choreographic commitments respectively by analyzing dance drama works produced in the 1980s which crystallized the modernization endeavors of Chinese traditional dance choreographers. In China, dance drama, or *wuju* (舞剧), was a hybrid art form that used the narrative structure of ballet to frame Chinese traditional dance vocabularies. It emerged from the period when the PRC and the Soviet Union maintained a close friendship in the 1950s and demonstrated how China localized Russian ballet influence. During the Cultural Revolution, the red ballet, such as *The Red Detachment of Women* and *The White Haired Girl*, exemplified continuity in indigenizing ballet and creating Chinese dance drama. In the 1980s, Chinese dance dramas proliferated in different genres of classical dance, folk dance, ballet, and modern dance. From 1977 to 1990, China produced 125 dance dramas.[92] Among these, *Princess Wencheng* (1979) exemplified

the approach of updating, whereas *The Silk Road* (1979) and *Tongqueji* (1985) exemplified the approach of root-seeking.

Princess Wencheng, a Li-Tang style Chinese classical dance drama, demonstrated the updating approach by combining dance movements from *xiqu* (Chinese local theater), ballet, and folk dance to tell the story of an ancient princess. Created by professors of Chinese dance from the Beijing Dance Academy, this dance drama depicted the history of a significant marriage alliance between the Han Chinese and the Tibetan Chinese in the year 640, during the Tang Dynasty (618–907). The dance drama portrayed Princess Wencheng, a member of the royal clan of the Tang Dynasty, and Songtsan Gampo, the King of Tibet, and their willingness to marry each other and endeavor to improve the friendship between the Tang Dynasty and Tibet.[93] Li-Tang style dominated the diverse genres of Chinese classical dance in the 1980s, as it does today. Emerging in the 1950s, Li-Tang style based itself on the attempt to use ballet's technique curriculum and narrative structure to frame *xiqu* vocabularies for training dancers and creating Chinese dance drama. The style welcomed the hybrid of aesthetics and vocabularies in modernizing dance tradition,[94] an attitude that continued to manifest itself in *Princess Wencheng*. For example, the princess performed an adagio with extended legs and pointed foot and, at the same time, performed orchid hand and cloud hand—vocabularies from *xiqu*. Furthermore, the performers applied the ballet duet techniques of lifting and turning while at the same time inserting *xiqu* postures. The whole drama used duet as a narrative force and group dances of Tibetan folk dance as decorative dance to contextualize the circumstances and background. Combining ballet, *xiqu*, and folk dance, *Princess Wencheng* told a Chinese story and maintained the integrationist philosophy

of Li-Tang style.

Similarly, in the 1980s, folk dance dramas in China adopted this approach of updating to incorporate ballet movements with folk dance vocabularies. For example, *Zhuowasangmu* (1980), a Tibetan folk dance drama created by the Sichuan Provincial Chengdu City Song and Dance Troupe, blended balletic movements—extended legs, turn-out passé, and pointed feet—with Tibetan local theater and folk dance vocabularies. In 1982, *Pearl Lake*, a dance drama by the Shenyang Song and Dance Troupe, based on local Manchu Chinese legend, staged a love story using Manchu dance vocabularies and balletic duets. In 1985, the Ulanqab City Song and Dance Troupe, from Inner Mongolia, performed the dance drama *Geese Returning to the East*. Using the vocabularies of Mongolian classical and folk dance and a ballet narrative structure, this work told a story about the heroic Mongolian people fighting against the Russian Empire to protect their homeland.[95]

Demonstrating a welcoming attitude to foreign culture, and contextualized by modern dance fever, updating started to incorporate modern dance as the new element to update tradition in the 1980s. When Li-Tang style Chinese classical dance developed its new curriculum and training system, Tang Mancheng, the founder of this style and a professor of the Beijing Dance Academy, incorporated floorwork from Graham technique to start the technique classes of Li-Tang style classical dance. Dancers sat on the floor crossing their legs in the front and practiced breath and spine exercises, basic torso positions, eye combinations, and finger and hand gestures as a warm-up practice and training of basic vocabularies. After this, students moved to the barre for foot and leg combinations and then to the center for whole-body movements.[96] Dance works in the Li-Tang style adapted modern dance

vocabularies and choreographic concepts, too. For example, dance drama *The Yellow River* (1988) not only abstracted narration and character, but also focused on expressive movements and the design of asymmetrical groupings. First incorporating ballet and then incorporating modern dance in the 1980s, the updating approach always used foreign arts to innovate Chinese dance traditions. It received fierce criticism in the mid-1980s from dance artists who began a different approach, known as the root-seeking commitment.

The Silk Road (1979) illustrated the approach of root-seeking by employing wall paintings from ancient Buddhist dance and adopting a new perspective on the creation of Chinese classical dance. Inventing a new set of vocabularies, *The Silk Road* challenged the dominant Li-Tang style and created a new genre, Dunhuang style Chinese classical dance.[97] The Gansu Province Song and Dance Troup created *The Silk Road* in 1979, based on research on local ancient cultural relics. Located in Gansu Province, the city of Dunhuang was a node in the ancient Silk Road, famous for having hundreds of surrounding grottos of Buddhist art accumulated over a thousand years, from the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC–9 AD) to the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368). Inspired by this local cultural heritage, choreographers and dancers of the Gansu Province Song and Dance Troupe invented unique movement vocabularies that were simultaneously local, ancient, and modern. All the gestures, such as the positions of head, hands, legs, hips, feet, derived from copying the images of a dancing Buddha and a flying goddess on the wall paintings in the caves. Making constant visits to the caves throughout one year to learn and imitate ancient dancing images, choreographers and dancers of *The Silk Road* transmitted the ancient wall-painting gestures onto real human bodies. They further summarized the features of Dunhuang dancing images as an “S” shape

curve—with a leaning neck, twisting waist, extending hips, and arched-back feet—and applied these principles when creating the vocabulary of the dance drama.[98] In doing so, Gansu choreographers and dancers created a dance style, on the one hand, based on the documentation of ancient Chinese dances; on the other, they offered an interpretation of these ancient dances through the eyes of the modern people. The movement vocabulary of *The Silk Road* combined ancient gestures and modern interpretation at the same time, which built the foundation for Dunhuang style Chinese classical dance.

The Silk Road stimulated a nationwide blossoming of root-seeking dance drama in the early- and mid-1980s. For example, the Shaanxi Song and Dance Troupe staged *Reinventing Music and Dance in the Tang Dynasty* (1982) and reconstructed music and dances from the Tang Dynasty (618–907), inspired by the fact that the capital of the Tang Dynasty was in Shaanxi province. The Hubei Song and Dance Troupe staged *Chime Music and Dance* (1983), a work which drew inspiration from the ancient royal tomb in Hubei Province, dating back to the Chu Kingdom (1030–223 BC).[99] 1985's *Tongque ji* (Dancer of the Tongque Stage) similarly created new dance vocabularies based on research into cultural relics, ink paintings and ancient literature in the Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 AD) and Wei-Jin period (220–420 AD). All these dance dramas participated in the root-seeking art of the mid-1980s in China, seeking the cultural remains of a glorious ancient China and the wisdom of their ancestors. Revisiting and reconstructing the ancient Chinese dancing bodies, root-seeking dance drama established an approach of dance modernization distinct from the updating commitment.

Updating and root-seeking, as two sides of a coin, together developed Chinese

traditional dance by critiquing each other contemporaneously. Their debate centered on two issues regarding "tradition" and "the modern."[100] First, updating and root-seeking disagreed on where their cultural roots existed. Updating approach located their "roots" in recent times, whereas root-seeking traced the "roots" of culture to the ancient. Li-Tang style classical dance found its "roots" in the relatively recent *xiqu* performing arts that emerged after the Song dynasty (960–1279). The majority of folk dance choreographers believed that the "roots" existed in the local and present dance forms. Root-seeking dance, comparatively, sought the "roots" in the ancient cultural relics from before the Song dynasty period. Second, updating and root-seeking disagreed on how to modernize the "roots" (tradition) in the contemporary. Supporters of updating saw integration and juxtaposition as the appropriate approach. They welcomed ballet and modern dance and adopted an open attitude to foreign culture. They believed that Chinese traditional dance should demonstrate a modern spirit, and that incorporating ballet and modern dance could help to achieve this goal. In contrast, supporters of root-seeking believed that choreographers should only search for vocabularies and aesthetic principles in ancient Chinese culture and reconstruct ancient dances based on contemporary people's imagination of the past. They rejected cultural influence from ballet and modern dance and demonstrated a hostile attitude toward foreign culture. From the perspective of the root-seeking approach, Chinese choreographers should delve into the ancient literature, ink paintings, sculptures, calligraphy, and relics that had existed long before the birth of the Chinese *xiqu.* For root-seekers, ancient China before the Song dynasty represented an aesthetic based around majesty, whereas *xiqu* after the Song dynasty demonstrated an aesthetic based on sick beauty and softness resulting from a declining nation.

Disagreements on the origin of the "roots", and ways of art modernization, resulted in reciprocal criticism. Supporters of updating criticized root-seeking for imitating the ancient and producing shameful retreatment. Supporters of root-seeking criticized updating for sacrificing authentic cultural identity and generating a cultural hybrid that could not represent true Chineseness in dance.[101]

Despite their robust debates, I argue that both the updating and root-seeking approaches modernized Chinese traditional dance in the 1980s by sharing two common strategies. First, they both critically inherited and betrayed certain art-making philosophies of the Cultural Revolution. Updating inherited the revolutionary philosophy of integration and juxtaposition. The root-seeking approach inherited from the revolutionary period the attitude of attacking Western modern dance. At the same time, both updating and root-seeking reversed the philosophies of the Cultural Revolution by revisiting arts created during China's feudalist history to depoliticize the revolutionary philosophies in dance. Adopting the belief that art only served as political propaganda in the Cultural Revolution, Chinese dance artists in the 1980s tried to depoliticize dance creation by diversifying choreographic approaches, and revisiting China's feudalist history constituted a significant part of this because the revolutionary period only focused on staging characters based around people living in the present. Chinese dance scholars and artists argued that the Cultural Revolution had cut off their traditions, with the dominant red ballet for over ten years. At the beginning of the New Era, they attempted to reconnect their cultural history to the past and traced tradition in the local, the ancient, and the existing classical performing arts to rehabilitate Chinese classical and folk dance. In doing so, Chinese dance artists rediscovered the national aesthetics,

moralities, beliefs and artistic philosophies that were lost in the Cultural Revolution. By inheriting and rebelling against art philosophies of the Cultural Revolution, updating and root-seeking choreographers modernized Chinese traditional dance in the 1980s.

Second, both updating and root-seeking aimed to create a national Chinese dance that could represent the country on a global stage. Supporters of updating chose the strategy of translation, incorporating Western dance vocabularies and choreographic concepts with classical and folk dance movements in order to make Chinese traditional dance understandable for foreign audiences. By adding something that was familiar to Western audiences, the updating approach translated Chinese traditional dance to the world. Comparatively, supporters of root-seeking chose the strategy of differentiation. They wanted to display authentic Chinese culture to the world and thus resisted the influence of Western modern culture. They differentiated Chinese traditional dance from any other foreign dance culture and strongly maintained and emphasized its uniqueness in a globalizing world.

Compared to updating and root-seeking choreographers, who engaged with developing Chinese traditional dance in the contemporary moment, westernizing choreographers aimed to create a version of Chinese modern dance based on realism and adaptation of Western modern dance vocabularies and choreographic concepts. This approach produced a series of Chinese modern dance works before the Guangdong program. Westernizing choreographers purposefully differentiated their works from Chinese traditional dance forms in their vocabulary, costume, music, and content and focused on addressing urban lives in China. This pursuit differed from how the Americans imagined Chinese modern dance that should address traditional cultural symbols and represented Chinese

people's experimentations in creating their own modern dance works. Next, I will analyze the Chinese modern dance works created before the Guangdong program as well as the seminars and publications addressing these works during the modern dance fever.

Chinese dance scholars believed that *Hope* (1980) marked the rebirth of Chinese modern dance in the New Era.[102] In 1980, a solo performance of *Hope* premiering at the first National Dance Competition in China aroused robust debates—it did not look like classical dance, folk dance, or ballet. A male dancer, wearing only a tight underwear, danced to Beethoven's music. He did not portray a character or a narrative but seemed to express an emotion that originated from the dark side of the human soul. With an almost nude body he twisted his torso, repetitively fell and stood up, shook on the floor, flipped his upper body, and shrunk his spine. To Chinese dance scholars, the piece represented a Chinese modern dance work because it used Western modern dance vocabularies, such as "fall and rebound" and "contraction and release," to create an abstract version of a Chinese story. This choreographic decision differentiated it from other dance genres at that time. The choreographers Wang Tianbao and Hua Chao came from the Nanjing Frontier Military Song and Dance Troupe, where Guo Mingda gave his weeks-long modern dance workshops in 1979. Hua Chao, the dancer of *Hope*, also participated in Guo's workshops and, in *Hope*, adapted modern dance movements and choreographic ideas that he learned. Chinese audiences interpreted *Hope* as unveiling the miserable experience that many intellectuals experienced during the Cultural Revolution. Audiences saw their own pain and desperation during the Cultural Revolution embodied in the seemingly abstract flips, turns, shaking, and rolling.[103] As such, on the one hand, the choreographic idea of abstraction and the adaptation

of Western modern dance movements convinced Chinese dance scholars that *Hope* was a modern dance work. On the other, the emotion that *Hope* conveyed coincided with a general trend in art creation at that time, known as "wound art," which rendered the piece distinctly Chinese in its characteristics.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, arts in different fields, including dance, started a movement that exposed the Chinese people's, especially intellectuals', melancholic memory about the Cultural Revolution, known as wound art (*shanghen yishu*). In this way, Chinese artists criticized the Cultural Revolution and healed their wounded hearts through artistic expression. A novel *Wound*, published in *Wenhui Daily* in August 1978, signified the beginning of the movement. *Wound* told a story about a young woman's painful love-hate struggle with her mother, who was an intellectual falsely marked as a renegade during the Cultural Revolution and forced to disconnect from her family. After her mother regained her innocence the young woman decided to visit her, only to discover that her mother had passed away several hours before she arrived, due to the unbearable physical torture she experienced during the Cultural Revolution. The heroine's experience resonated with the general public who suffered from similar desperation and sorrow during the revolutionary period. As a self-healing process, the act of revealing wounds soon spread over various fields of art, including fine arts and dance.[104]

Like *Hope*, two other dances in the same period, *The Unbroken String* (1979) and *Soundless Song* (1980), created "wound dance" by using unconventional vocabularies and choreographic approaches. These two pieces shared a theme with wound painting and literature in their portrayal of a specific character, Zhang Zhixin, who was imprisoned for

sixteen years from 1959 to 1975 for criticizing Mao's policies during the Cultural Revolution. In 1978, the Chinese government rehabilitated Zhang as a martyr for pursuing the truth and published her story in *People's Daily*.[105] Arts in different fields started to cite Zhang as a theme, to reveal the torture that the intellectuals suffered during the Cultural Revolution. *The Unbroken String* told Zhang's story through the memories of her daughter; as her daughter was playing the violin on stage, Zhang entered and danced together with her. *Soundless Song* portrayed Zhang's final moments, when her throat was cut before she died. The dancer performed in silence, with occasional sounds of people laughing, birds singing, and water floating.[106] In both dances, the choreographer applied modern dance movements of contractions, rolling on the floor, and shaking the body to visualize Zhang's struggles. Chinese audiences interpreted the work as an adaptation of the unconventional choreography through its modern dance vocabularies and direct projection of sorrowful emotions. They also found unique Chinese features in these works, because the two pieces criticized the Cultural Revolution through a Chinese character and resonated with the general political climate at that historical moment.

Hope, *The Unbroken String*, and *Soundless Song* presented a new dance genre that neither belonged to Chinese traditional dance nor ballet at that time, later known as Chinese modern dance before the Guangdong program. Together with the visits of Ruby Shang (1980), Chiang Ching (1978, 1980), King Lan-lan (1980), and modern dance companies from Canada and Hong Kong, the three works stimulated debate in the dance world about transplanting modern dance into China. In 1980, a modern dance seminar took place in Beijing to specifically address this question and set the basic standard for borrowing American modern

dance during the next forty years in China. Panelists' concerns focused on what they should do when faced with the influx of modern dance into their country, as well as Chinese dancers' own local productions of unconventional dances. Discussions arrived at the conclusion that they would borrow those parts of modern dance considered beneficial, while resisting those deemed harmful. Specifically, Chinese dance artists and scholars split American modern dance history into two parts: modern dance from Isadora Duncan to Martha Graham, and postmodern dance from Merce Cunningham to the present. They argued that modern dance could benefit the development of Chinese traditional dance while postmodern dance crystallized the fundamental defects of capitalism. They argued that modern dance could serve Chinese uses because works of Duncan demonstrated the revolutionary value of enlightening the masses in Russian socialist movements, while Graham spoke to the people directly by sharing her emotions with the audiences. In contrast, postmodern dance, for Chinese dance artists, inhabited a passive world view which was decadent, erotic, self-centered, and ignorant of its audiences, all of which opposed a socialist ideology of positivity and care for the masses.[107] Proposed at this roundtable, the attitude to "sort out good from the bad" and "welcome modern dance but resist postmodern dance" established the basic standard for borrowing modern dance in China in the New Era. This explains why we can find modern dance philosophies such as universality in Chinese modern dance works in the twenty-first century, but no postmodern ideas such as movement signifying multiple different meanings and self-reflection.[108]

Rope Wave (1984), addressing the crisis in urban lives, was another significant work that Chinese dance scholars later defined as Chinese modern dance before the

Guangdong program.[109] In this work a female dancer, wearing a red unitard and on stage right, and a male dancer, wearing a blue unitard and on stage left, each held one end of a long rope. The man shook the rope and created a wave that traveled across the stage to the woman, as if conveying his love for her. The woman shook her end of the rope and created another wave back to the man, as if responding to his love. The two dancers increased their frequency and effort to shake the rope and gradually came together in the stage's center. Together, they created different symmetrical shapes with the rope, as if falling in love with each other. Then a small child appeared on stage, evoking the arrival of a new member of their family. The male and female dancers then began to create asymmetrical shapes and throw the rope very hard on the stage, as if fighting each other. They then attempted to unhook the rope that bundled them. At the end of the performance, the two dancers left the stage, with only the child reaching their hands toward the audience.

Like *Hope*, *Rope Wave* used unconventional vocabularies to address a phenomenon in Chinese society at that time. The choreographer Hu Jialu used a rope as a prop to symbolize changes in the modern Chinese family. At first, the rope served as a medium of communication between the two in love, but it later became a constraint for those who wanted to escape from the marriage. Dancers performed unconventional vocabularies by manipulating the rope throughout the whole piece. The breakup of the relationship at the end demonstrated a realistic concern for Chinese families in the New Era: as moral crises and an increasing divorce rate emerged from national urbanization, the traditional lifelong marriage structure collapsed. *Rope Wave*, through a symbolic approach, revealed the double-side effects of urbanization and pinpointed the problems that occurred in modern Chinese families

in the 1980s.

The Death of Mingfeng (1985) and its award-winning moment generated an epistemological pivot in the history of Chinese modern dance that is unfortunately overlooked by Chinese dance scholars. Titled as a "folk dance" drama in dance exhibitions in China in the summer of 1985,[110] *The Death of Mingfeng* won the golden award at an international modern dance competition in Japan in January 1986.[111] This award aroused debates among the Chinese people as to whether they had already created their own modern dance works through experimentations, even while they still saw these works as classical or folk dance. In general, *The Death of Mingfeng* applied Western modern dance vocabularies and choreographic concepts to narrate the story of a Chinese female character. Choreographers Liu Shiying, Yue Shiguo, and Liu Wanlin of the Song and Dance Troupe of Sichuan Province produced *The Death of Mingfeng* based on a very famous novel *The Family*, written by renowned Chinese novelist Ba Jin in the early 1930s. The whole piece, divided into seven episodes, portrayed the night before the heroine Mingfeng committed suicide. A servant of an elite family, Mingfeng fell in love with the third son of the master, Gao Juehui, but was forced to marry an old man as his mistress. The episodes described how Mingfeng, recalling her love with Gao, felt anger and desperation and made the decision to end her own life. The piece applied vocabularies of floorwork, contractions, and partnering to visualize psychological struggles. After *The Death of Mingfeng* won a modern dance prize in Japan, Chinese dancers realized that their experimental works, which they carefully titled as Chinese folk dance or classical dance, were actually modern dance works from the perspective of foreign artists.

Increasing numbers of domestic experimental works such as *Rope Wave* and *The Death of Mingfeng* expanded modern dance fever in the mid-1980s, shifting Chinese dance scholars' and artists' concern in the mid-1980s from the question of "how to transplant modern dance?" to another question, "do the Chinese have their own modern dance?". In October 1985, all the dance scholars, renowned choreographers, and well-established dancers in China gathered together in Nanjing and hosted their first and only National Dance Creation Conference of the 1980s. By this time, modern dance fever had swept the nation with increasing numbers of cross-cultural exchanges and local experimental works. Visits by American modern dance artists such as American Dance Study team (1980), Alwin Nikolais (1981), King Lan-lan's Dance Exchange Program (1981-1984), teachers from the Julliard School (1983), American delegation of dance (1984), and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (1985) exposed Chinese people to diverse Western modern dance forms. Domestic experimental works such as *Fan Yi* (1982), *Spirit of the Yellow River* (1984), *Friendship* (1984), *Rope Wave* (1984), and *The Death of Mingfeng* (1985) attracted dance scholars' attention as a non-folk, non-classical, non-ballet Chinese dance style. All these issues invited Chinese dance scholars to ask, do the Chinese people produce their own modern dance styles in the 1980s that differ from the Western genres? While participants of the 1985 conference did not openly admit to this, they conveyed their ideas in a humble way: "Chinese modern dance is rising. It integrates national modern emotions and foreign modern dance artistic approaches."[112] It was not until 1986, when *The Death of Mingfeng* won an international modern dance golden award, that Chinese dance scholars finally acknowledged the existence of Chinese modern dance as a separate genre from Chinese classical and folk dance.

The year of 1986 signified the pivoting epistemological moment for Chinese dancers who realized that Chinese modern dance had already existed. Analyzing publications during this time, I argue that Chinese dance scholars proposed two theories with regard to the nature of Chinese modern dance.[113] First, the genre had started its history in the 1930s, and Chinese modern dance works in the 1980s continued that modernist pursuit. Chinese dance scholars and artists argued that the genre of "New Dance", choreographed by Wu Xiaobang in the 1930s and 1940s, represented the beginning and development of Chinese modern dance before the establishment of the PRC. In the 1980s, dances such as *The Unbroken String, Soundless Song, Hope, Fan Yi, Spirit of the Yellow River, Rope Wave, Friendship* and *The Death of Mingfeng* represented a continuity of Wu's works by taking a realism approach and adapting Western modern dance vocabularies and choreographic concepts.[114] Choreographers of these works used Western movement resources to shape a Chinese character, tell a Chinese story, and address a social issue of contemporary China. "A new structure of dance development in China had been established: Chinese classical dance, Chinese folk dance, Chinese modern dance, and ballet."[115] These four separate genres contained their own unique vocabularies and addressed the contemporary world in different ways. By creating a connection with dances from before the Cultural Revolution, Chinese dance scholars and artists legitimized Chinese modern dance works from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s as a part of an already existed independent genre and formulated a cultural identity that signified historical continuity rather than all-out rebellion.

Second, Chinese dance scholars and artists argued that realism, as the distinct art-making principle of Chinese modern dance, differentiated it from Western, especially

American, modern dance. “Chinese modern dance is not the imitation or replication of Western modern dance…but a deviation from our own classical and folk dance. Tight connections to real life characterize Chinese modern dance.”[116] In general, Chinese artists in all fields based their perception of realism on Friedrich Engels’ definition, in Russian Marxism, that realism meant to “truly represent an archetypical character in a representative circumstance.”[117] In dance, specifically,

“The principle of realism should base dance creation on content, character, and life. The Movement itself is not our purpose. We aim to perform life events and human characters through a series of dances. If we choreograph a solo about a female character Fan Yi in the play Thunderstorm, we certainly should start from the theme, the historical background, and the personality and emotional changes of Fan Yi, and then design movement vocabularies based on these issues. We find the most suitable expressive vocabulary, rather than picking up any random movement that seems equally OK compared to other random ones” (C. Li 94).

In the realism principle of dancemaking the character, story, or emotion came from life, crystallizing life, sublimating life, and then influencing the lives of the audiences. The typical character and circumstance, emerging through artistic summary and refinement, represented a wide range of people in the contemporary world and generated a conversation with audiences about their lives. This close connection with the people and the contemporary world defined realism in China for Chinese dance scholars and artists. Wu in the 1930s and 1940s and Chinese choreographers in the 1980s shared this realism approach. Wu’s works criticized the soft government at that time, revealed the bitter lives of the people, and praised the Chinese soldiers who risked their lives to protect the country.[118] Similarly, *Hope*, *The Unbroken String,* and *Soundless Song* uncovered the miserable experience of intellectuals during the Cultural Revolution. *Rope Wave* critiqued problems in modern Chinese families during the process of urbanization. *Death of Mingfeng* constituted a feminist call for women’s rights and

the freedom to make their own decisions. These works served the cultural and spiritual needs of the Chinese people in the 1980s. By choreographing certain characters in certain circumstances, Chinese modern dance in the period 1978–1986 generated dialog with Chinese society and humanity.

Unlike American modern dance, which centered on self-expression, Chinese modern dance choreographers before the Guangdong program took a realism approach that found the self in characters and expressed the self through these characters. "The Western concept that 'a thing is just that thing, a dance is just that dance', as well as the idea of complete abstraction, is not beneficial. Chinese dance artists believe that, without a character's internal emotion, any expressive, external form is false; also, that any character's internal emotion should have a form to visualize it. The task of a choreographer is to achieve the unison of content and form" (C. Li 94). In the realism principle, Chinese modern dance choreographers used a conceptual structure of "form and content" to analyze choreography and believed that form served for the content. In creating Chinese modern dance works, Western movement vocabularies and choreographic ideas symbolized the form; a Chinese character, story, and emotion that resonated with the people at that time constituted to the content. By adapting modern dance movements and choreographic ideas to choreograph content that belonged distinctly to contemporary Chinese society, Chinese artists believed that they created their own modern dance works. In this way, the Chinese people filtered and adapted Western modern dance based on the standard of realism.

This confidence and trust in the power of Chinese culture to digest Western modern dance participated in, and reflected, the large artistic root-seeking movement of the

mid-1980s. In 1985 and 1986, Chinese intellectuals and artists initiated a debate on the relationship between learning from Western arts and revisiting Chinese tradition. In academia, this debate turned into the phenomenon of "Cultural Fever," or the "Great Cultural Discussion," a national enthusiasm for literature studies and cultural discussions in the 1980s.[119] Those who argued for revisiting Chinese tradition won this debate, influencing the popularity of root-seeking literature in the mid-1980s. Root-seeking literature "draws from rediscovered national and folk culture, confronts the increasingly 'inhuman' conditions of urban life, and addresses the boom of Latin American magical realism" (Zhang 139). These writers created an artistic environment in which people trusted the capability of Chinese tradition to innovate in modern times, without drawing help from Western arts. This subject position, opposed foreign culture, prompted the Chinese dance scholars and artists to argue that they had developed their own modern dance style that differed from the Western modern dance genres. However, this belief did not last long and was reversed when the Guangdong program performed in Beijing in 1988.

Above I have analyzed the art-making approach of westernizing, with a focus on Chinese modern dance works from the period 1978–1986 and the social and historical transitions that formed the context of those works. I argue that two features defined the commitment of westernizing in dance making. First, westernizing developed a new meaning of realism that differed from that of the Cultural Revolution. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao's combination of socialist realism with revolutionary romanticism produced a fantasy of the socialist utopia as a real life that the general public would soon achieve. The government intended to convince the mass that the ideals depicted in artworks represented their real

lives.[120] In the late 1970s and 1980s, Chinese dance artists woke up from this previous fantasy and unveiled people's actual experiences during the Cultural Revolution. Reality, therefore, became the real experience of each individual. Consequently, the meaning of realism in Chinese modern dance in the period 1978–1986 changed, from "what's on stage is real" to "what's in life is real." Revealing and crystallizing people's actual lives became the major concern in these works.

More importantly, the real life that these Chinese modern dance works addressed referred to the urban lives of intellectuals or social elites, rather than the lives of farmers or workers. Chinese dance scholars and artists, who repeatedly asked in publications that dance works represent their own lives, belonged to the social elite. They worked in state-owned dance institutions or troupes and held a job that they would never lose, known as the "iron rice bowl."[121] They did not live in rural areas to plant or harvest crops, nor did they work in a factory to produce machines. Although they might have been exiled during the Cultural Revolution and lived as farmers, they had been rehabilitated around the period 1976–1978 and regained their urban lives. In addition, the 1980s witnessed rapid urbanization in China resulting from the policy of reform and opening-up. Incorporating capitalism and inviting foreign investments generated rapid growth in the scale, number of people, and modern architecture of cities of China. These transformations conditioned the intellectuals, as the elite class in urban areas, to demand that modern dance adopt a realism approach and represent their lives.

Second, the commitment of westernizing purposefully distinguished itself from all Chinese traditional dance forms. In this way, westernizing choreographers developed a

diaspora of Western modern dance in China, joined in globalization and engaged in international cultural communication through a process of assimilation—Chinese modern dance became a branch of the worldwide spread of Western modern dance. Westernizing repelled the philosophies of the Cultural Revolution that choreographers combined and juxtaposed dance vocabularies from different genres. Instead, Chinese modern dance choreographers before the Guangdong program only adapted Western modern dance movements and excluded traditional dance movements. They localized Western modern dance through a realism approach and used typical modern dance vocabularies to choreograph works that appeared, in some ways, like Western, especially American, modern dance. In doing so, Chinese dance artists assimilated themselves into the global modern dance world and helped China join in globalization through dance.

What is Chinese Modern Dance?

After the Guangdong program delivered their end-of-first-year performance in Beijing, in July 1988, dance scholars and artists in China altered their previous perspectives and argued that dance experimentations in the period 1978–1988 were not, in fact, Chinese modern dance works, but at best "tentative" Chinese modern dance; instead, the experimentations done in the Guangdong program represented the future of Chinese modern dance. From October 10th–14th, almost all Chinese dance scholars and choreographers engaged with modern dance gathered together in Shanghai and hosted the "'88 Shanghai Modern Dance Seminar," centering their discussions on the issue of what constituted "real" Chinese modern dance.[122] Together with the conference there was a night-long performance

by Hu Jialu, titled the "Hu Jialu Modern Dance Night," in which Hu, a native Shanghai dance artist, staged all his experimental works from 1981 to 1988.[123] While Hu continued to stage archetypical characters, choreograph with symbolic props, and use unconventional movement vocabularies, the Guangdong program created a new version of Chinese modern dance different from Hu and previous Chinese modern dance choreographers by choreographing abstract movements and referring to Chinese traditional symbols. The two different approaches raised questions for the Chinese audiences: which one was the real Chinese modern dance? Were the previous works created from 1978 to 1988 Chinese modern dance, or did the Guangdong program represent real Chinese modern dance? Or both? Interestingly, almost all panelists in the Shanghai seminar stood on the side of the Guangdong program, arguing that the program, and the Chinese students, represented a promising future of Chinese modern dance. They argued that "China had never had its own modern dance" before the Guangdong program.[124] The works from 1978 to 1988, for them, were "tentative Chinese modern dance works" that demonstrated a positive, but unsuccessful, attempt.[125] The Guangdong program, or the arrival of American teachers, changed Chinese dance scholars' and artists' minds about the definition of Chinese modern dance. They voted for the version inspired by American teachers and denied the success of their own experimentations in the previous ten years.[126]

I argue that this decision participated in a national trend of degrading Chinese tradition and uplifting Western culture in the late 1980s. Chinese intellectuals and artists changed to believe that the West was the "answer" to help China enter the modern. This idea resulted in the high praise that circulated in Chinese debate of the Guangdong program's

performance. I analyze this social phenomenon through discussion of a specific example, *Heshang* (River Elegy), a television series by China Central Television in 1988 that played a significant role in generating and spreading the degradation of Chinese tradition. *Heshang* was a celebrated six-episode documentary film broadcasted twice in the PRC, in June and August 1988. Portraying the decline of ancient Chinese culture, the film praised modern Western culture over traditional Chinese culture and argued for China's modernization through complete Westernization. "*He-"* in *Heshang* referred to the Yellow River, a poetic symbol of China that nurtured the birth and prosperity of ancient Chinese civilization. In an analogy between the "yellow civilization" (China) and the "azure civilization" (the West), *Heshang* saw traditional Chinese culture as the reason for modern China's backwardness and attacked symbols of Chinese tradition such as the Yellow River, the Great Wall, Confucianism, the feudal system, and the agricultural society. It argued that the revival of China depended on absorbing the more advanced, open and democratic modern Western culture, just as the Yellow River flowed into the Pacific Ocean.[127] In the late 1980s, families in major cities of China had just bought their first televisions and had access to only two channels, both of which came from China Central Television.[128] Broadcasted through this widely-viewed media, television programs from China Central Television, such as *Heshang*, reached a wider range of viewers than could ever be achieved today. Through television, *Heshang* shaped how the general public understood its own tradition at the end of the 1980s. One month after the film's first broadcast, the Guangdong program performed in Beijing. The film contributed to the production of a common understanding, at that time, that learning from the West represented the only approach to modernization. As a result, for Chinese dance

scholars and artists, the Guangdong program, representing the first step in an intensive and systematic education in American modern dance, marked the correct and necessary approach to dance modernization in China. In this historical and social context in the late 1980s, these dance scholars and artists shadowed all the other domestic modern dance experiments in 1978 and 1988. Interestingly, in the context of the changing political climate in China in 1989, Chinese dance scholars and artists shifted their perspectives and critically analyzed the Guangdong program's 1990 performance in Beijing. I will specifically address this performance and their reviews in Chapter Four.

While the Chinese dance scholars and artists were discussing what characterized Chinese modern dance, Yang Meiqi, the principal of the Guangdong Dance School, stepped onto an airplane to the US to find her own answer to this question. At that moment, she did not know that she was going to experience extraordinary moments in New York City and at the ADF. Nor did she expect that she would persuade the director of the ADF to initiate a cross-cultural dance program with her institution, or anticipate that the Guangdong program would fundamentally change the history of Chinese modern dance.

Chapter Two: Contradictory Expectations and the Establishment of the Guangdong Modern Dance Experimental Program

This chapter explores how the ADF and the Guangdong Dance School established the Guangdong program, in part, through misunderstandings and contradictory expectations. The mutual goals of the ADF and the Guangdong Dance School were to bring modern dance to China and to let China develop its own modern dance style. However, their different desires in terms of cultural development led to different expectations. The ADF hoped to strengthen its global impact and promote American values; the Guangdong Dance School wanted to improve dance education and expand modernization in China. Therefore, for the ADF the Guangdong program was a political endeavor, whereas for the Guangdong Dance School, and especially its principal Yang Meiqi, the collaboration represented an apolitical act. While the Americans understood China from a political perspective, the Chinese people wanted to release themselves from politics on any level. The Americans used a Cold War relationship to interpret their cultural connections to China, while the Chinese people tried to step out of the legacy of the Cold War and search for a new cultural identity in the New Era.

The chapter is comprised of three sections. First, I examine the history of the ADF's global expansion in the 1980s and its director Charles Reinhart's expectations in establishing the Guangdong program. Second, I scrutinize the transformation of the Guangdong Dance School in the 1980s and Yang Meiqi's extraordinary experience at the ADF, which shaped her expectations in creating the Guangdong program in China. Third, I discuss the responses from the Chinese government regarding Yang's proposal and analyze the complex

relationship between Yang and the provincial government.

The American Dance Festival and Charles Reinhart's Expectations

The ADF's institutional linkage with China demonstrated its growing global influence and involvement in the promotion of American values abroad. The ADF experienced a global expansion in the 1980s when it established international programs and invited foreign modern dance companies to the US. From 1984 to 1987, the ADF established its four international exchange programs: the International Choreographers Workshop (ICW) (1984–), the mini-ADF (1984–), the Institutional Linkage Program (1987–), and the International Choreographer Commission Workshop (1987–).[129] Almost every year, the ADF invited foreign dance companies under a specific theme: Japan (1982), France and "Africa Festival" (1983), International Festival (1984), Canada (1985), and Latin America (1988). These programs served to position the ADF as the center of modern dance's global exchanges, promoting American values of individuality and free expression. As such, political agendas constructed dance programming. In the US, the state often used dance as a form of cultural diplomacy and a way to export American values, as evidenced by the US State Department tours of the 1960s.[130] In the 1980s, dance kept serving this political role in the ADF. While providing a platform for dancers all around the world to gather together and share their works, the ADF also controlled these exchanges by manipulating the travel of artists and performances. In doing so, the ADF seized the power to globalize American beliefs and export its culture to foreign dancers. The history of the ADF's international expansion symbolized the history of American cultural propaganda.

The ADF existed as a dance organization for modern dance education and a performance center in the US since the 1940s. Its primary focus was a six-week summer program that incorporated a wide range of modern dance technique classes, choreographic workshops, jazz classes, hip-hop classes, dance therapy classes, music classes, seminars, performances of world-leading dance companies, auditions, and other related events, all of which offered participants a comprehensive experience of modern dance. The origin of the ADF can be traced back to the Bennington School of Dance at Bennington College, Bennington, Vermont where, in 1934, "The Big Four" of American modern dance—Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, and Hanya Holm—served as faculty members. To satisfy their needs to train students, to gather funding, and to stage performances, "The Big Four" developed this format of summer programs that benefited both the students and the teachers. Tuition-paying students gained opportunities to learn about and perform modern dance. The faculty members, with financial support from the students, received enough dancers to train and choreograph with. In 1948, the program moved to Connecticut College, New London, and became the New York University–Connecticut School of Dance/American Dance Festival. By offering a platform for new American dance artists, the festival witnessed the growth and transformation of American modern dance in the mid-twentieth century. In 1969, the new director Charles Reinhart shortened the program's name to the American Dance Festival and, in 1977, moved it to the campus of Duke University.[131]

Since its settlement in Durham, the ADF has developed into an international, rather than US-based, dance event, reaching out to Asia, Europe, Africa, and South America. This expansion began in 1979, when Charles Reinhart, Stephanie Reinhart (later the co-director of

the ADF), and Lisa Booth (at that time the administrative director of the ADF) traveled to Japan with funding from the Japanese government. With the guidance of Japanese dance critic and historian Miyabi Ichikawa, the three of them viewed a wide range of Japanese modern dance, which had been developed there since the 1930s. Butoh, a slow, dark, and expressive Japanese modern dance, stood out among those performances. Convinced by Butoh dancer Dai Rakuda Kan, the Reinharts and Booth selected four Japanese modern dance companies to perform at the ADF in 1982 to demonstrate the diverse development of Japanese modern dance: Dai Rakuda Kan, Bonjin Atsugi Dance Company, Miyako Kato and Dancers, and Waka Dance Company. Butoh received great acclaim among American audiences. The Japanese companies became current interest and the center of focus that year.[132] This successful experience allowed Reinhart to bring five French modern dance companies and three African companies to the ADF the next year in 1983 and host "Festival Africa." Similar to the Japanese companies, the debut of the French and African companies opened the eyes of American audiences with their extraordinary performances.[133] In the fall of 1983, the Reinharts traveled to eight countries around the world—England, France, Israel, Egypt, India, Indonesia, The Philippines, and Japan—to search for modern dance companies for the next year. Finally, they selected eight companies.[134]

In 1984, as part of its 50th anniversary celebration, the ADF hosted its first International Modern Dance Festival, which was an important event for its global expansion.[135] Through this celebration, the ADF established its approach to global growth that focused on travel in both directions: foreign artists traveled to the US to attend workshops or stage performances; American artists traveled overseas to teach classes or stage

performances. Three significant transnational events characterized the reciprocal travels in 1984: the first ICW, performances by eight international dance companies, and the mini-ADF project in Japan. The first ICW selected twelve well-established foreign choreographers—from China, France, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Hong Kong, and Senegal—who traveled from their home countries to the US to study modern dance at the ADF for three weeks.[136] Jiang Huaxuan, the Chinese ICW participant that year and choreographer of *The Unbroken String*, was a renowned choreographer at the Song and Dance Ensemble of the General Political Department of the Chinese People's Liberation Army.[137] In addition, eight modern dance companies from five countries in Europe and Asia traveled to the US to perform at the ADF: Uday Shankar India Culture Centre Dance Company, Bharat Sharma (soloist) and Astad Deboo (soloist), from India; Susan Buirge Project and Troupe Emile Dubois, from France; Ballet Philippines, from the Philippines; London Contemporary Dance Theatre, from Great Britain; and Dance Indonesia, from the Jakarta Institute of the Arts in Indonesia.[138]

Following the ADF event in Durham, the ADF/Tokyo project, later known as the mini-ADF, took place in Japan from August 6th to 31st, representing the first time that the ADF sent its faculty group overseas.[139] The Tokyo project established the format of the mini-ADF program: they lasted several weeks; were dominated by faculty members from the ADF, with few from the local area; had performances by leading dance companies from both the US and the host country; and seminars and lectures about dance exchanges. In 1984, the three-week ADF residency in Japan was comprised of one week in Shikoku, one week in Osaka, and less than two weeks in Tokyo. Six ADF faculty members and two Japanese

faculty members made up the group of instructors.[140] Students took classes from 10:00am to 5:30pm, including three levels of modern dance technique and jazz, improvisation, composition, repertory, injury prevention, functional anatomy, Japanese dance, and video photography. Two American companies performed in Tokyo and offered workshops. Thirteen individual concerts from Japan performed during the festival. The event also included ten lectures by both Japanese and American dance critics on topics including Japanese–American dance exchanges, and the history and contemporary state of modern dance in both countries.[141]

Following the exchange model of 1984, the ADF continued its global expansion in 1985. The second ICW that year invited twelve choreographers from Argentina, China, Czechoslovakia, Korea, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Tanzania, Uruguay, South Africa, and Venezuela.[142] The festival presented two international companies: Desrosiers Dance Theatre (from Canada), and Le Groupe de Recherche Chorégraphique de l'Opéra de Paris (from France).[143] Seventeen countries were represented and twenty-two participants from abroad attended the ADF.[144]

In 1986, two international programs expanded the ADF's global influence: the third ICW and the second ADF/Tokyo project in Japan. The ADF extended the third ICW to a full-length six weeks in 1986[145] and included fifteen choreographers—from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Egypt, Greece, Republic of Guinea, India, Malaysia, Spain, Taiwan, and Zaire—among whom were Yang Meiqi, Men Wenyuan, and Zhao Ming.[146] Two international companies performed at the ADF: Han Young Suk and Dancers (from Korea) and Dance Indonesia (from Indonesia).[147] After the festival in Durham, the second ADF/Tokyo project

took place in Japan, for three weeks, from August 10th–31st.[148] Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane & Co. and Pooh Kaye/Eccentric Motions, representing companies from the US, performed in Japan. This second ADF/Tokyo project enhanced the connection between the ADF and Japan and opened their long-term exchanges. Since 1986, Japan has sent around twenty students almost every year to attend the ADF, and ADF/Tokyo has become an annual summer school in Japan.[149]

In 1987, with the help of its former ICW participant Yang Meiqi, the ADF established its first Institutional Linkage Program (ILP) with the Guangdong Dance School. Since its establishment in 1984, the ICW had been the core source for the ADF's global networks. Most participants worked at notable dance institutions or companies in their home countries. Upon returning to their homelands, they assisted the ADF to create stable and ongoing exchanges with foreign institutions and companies. Former ICW participants invited ADF teachers, and American dance companies, to their home countries and brought domestic dancers abroad to the ADF. Through the bridge created by these foreign artists, the ADF expanded its global alliance. Among these, Yang Meiqi created the linkage between the ADF and her institution in 1987. She and the Chinese government titled the program the "Guangdong Modern Dance Experimental Program." This four-year, long-term collaboration greatly changed the history of modern dance in China.

As the ADF's first ILP, the Guangdong program became the model for later ILP programs. Unlike at the mini-ADF, for the ILP the ADF sent only one, solitary faculty member each time, whose stay lasted a relatively longer period of weeks or months. This longer stay by one American teacher, and constant visits by different faculty members,

generated a stable and ongoing exchange. In the first two years of the China ILP, each ADF teacher stayed for three months in Guangzhou. From 1989, after the establishment of the ADF's second ILP in Argentina, every American teacher stayed for two months in China and one month in Argentina. In the early 1990s, the ADF teachers stayed for three to five weeks in China and three to four weeks in other countries such as Venezuela, Zaire, Russia, Chile, Ecuador, Indonesia, and France. In addition to visits by the ADF faculty, local institutions also sent their teachers, students, and dancers to the ADF to attend its six-week school and work with its dancers.[150]

The ADF situated itself at the center of these global modern dance exchanges and promoted US values. First, the ADF decided who should attend, where foreign artists should gather and meet each other, and how modern dance should travel globally. For example, the ADF, rather than the foreign countries, chose the modern dance performances that represented that country. The ADF also facilitated transnational communication between non-western countries. Yang Meiqi, a 1986 ICW participant, first saw Korean modern dance not in Korea, but at the ADF during her stay. While it provided a platform for the global sharing of modern dance, the ADF also put itself at the center of these activities. Second, the ADF presented itself to foreign artists as the place to experience the American spirit of individuality, creativity, and freedom. Its international dance programs immersed foreign artists in various modern dance techniques and composition classes, performances of high-ranking dance companies, and seminars to educate them about American culture. Much of the programming focused on dance as an individual, rather than social, expression and, in so doing, it conveyed an image of the US as a nation composed of individuals who were each

free to express themselves. At the International Choreographers Commissioning Program in particular, the ADF brought back foreign choreographers to demonstrate how it had helped them modernize their choreography toward free expression.[151] In this program, the ADF provided money (commission free), space, and dancers for foreign artists to create new pieces and freely express their own ideas.[152] The ADF, by welcoming and celebrating difference, demonstrated artistic democracy in the US. In doing so, the ADF "deepened their (foreign artists') understanding of modern dance as a reflection of the elements of the American character, such as individuality and creativity, that had enabled modern dance to flourish in this country."[153]

In addition, the financial supporters demonstrate the ADF's political intentions in generating global exchanges. The Rockefeller Foundation and the United States Information Agency (USIA) provided major financial support for the ADF's international programs, and both favored exporting American nationalism. The Rockefeller Foundation emphasized the American value of equality by financing education in the US "without distinction of race, sex or creed."[154] The ADF's ICW program demonstrated this idea by showing that dancers from all the world—regardless of their race, sex, or ethnicity—could equally learn modern dance and express their unique artistic perspectives. The USIA was "an independent executive agency responsible for American public diplomacy, most centrally during the Cold War period."[155] Founded in 1953 and disbanded in 1999, the USIA maintained a mission "to explain and advocate US policies in terms that are credible and meaningful in foreign cultures."[156] The mini-ADF program and the ILP highlighted this mission as ADF faculty members brought ideas of self-expression and individual creativity, through improvisational

and compositional classes, to dance students in foreign countries. Those students, through adopting the ideas into their own choreography, made American values meaningful abroad.

In addition, Reinhart personally wished to create exchanges with China. Long before meeting Yang Meiqi in his office, Reinhart had been trying to reach out for opportunities with China. In 1979, when the dance study team from China visited the ADF, Reinhart met Chen Jinqing, principal of the Beijing Dance Academy (BDA) at that time.[157] In 1980, Reinhart sent a letter to Chen and invited teachers and students of the BDA to attend the ADF that summer.[158] Unfortunately, Chen replied to Reinhart at the end of August after the festival had ended, saying that his invitation left them a too little time to make preparations.[159] In late 1980, as the leader of the American dance study team in China, Reinhart met the leaders, choreographers, and dancers of dance organizations, institutions, and companies in China, expanding Chinese knowledge about the existence of the ADF. In 1984, Jiang Huangxuan became the first ICW participant from China at the ADF.

In the fall of 1984, Reinhart visited China again with a specific purpose: to discover the contemporary dances of China and display them to American audiences at the ADF the next year. After the Japanese year in 1982, the French year in 1984, and the international year in 1984, Reinhart planned to have a Chinese year in 1985. In a letter to Wang Zicheng at the PRC's embassy, on January 12th, 1984, the Reinharts wrote:

"[W]e are interested in seeing the work of contemporary and neo-classical choreographers in your country. We would like to show to American audiences what is happening in dance in China. We have been quite successful in doing this with Japan in 1982 and France in 1983. We would be most interested in featuring China in 1985."[160]

The Chinese Ministry of Culture arranged his visit to China, together with Ruby Shang and

her mother, from September 6th to 28th. Reinhart watched root-seeking dance dramas *Reinventing Music and Dance in Tang* and *Chime Music and Dance*, updating dance dramas *Pearl Lake* and *The Legend of Hua Mulan,* and collections of short pieces of Chinese folk and classical dance.[161] Unfortunately, Reinhart did not find the dances that he wanted; Chinese officials appeared to interpret "neo-classical and contemporary choreographers" differently from Reinhart's interpretation, introducing performances that were not of real interest to him.

Before his visit to China, Reinhart had successfully found local modern dance choreographers in Japan and Korea, and this may have influenced his expectations for the dances that he sought in China. In 1979, he found Butoh in Japan and introduced it to American audiences in 1982. In 1981, he traveled to Korea and found Kim Mae-Ja, a renowned choreographer famous for adopting an experimental attitude that modernized Korean traditional dance.[162] Butoh and Kim's dances shared similar approaches, deconstructing traditional dance forms through their experimental approaches; questioning established traditional aesthetics, philosophies, and sexual roles; and uncovering the living conditions of the contemporary people. However, they differed from the dances that Reinhart saw in China in their social functions. Updating and root-seeking choreography produced the mainstream dance genres in China, Chinese classical and folk dance, whereas Butoh and Kim Mae-Ja's dances represented experimental forces that deviated from the mainstream choreography of their societies. These different functions resulted in contrasting choreographic decisions. Butoh and Kim Mae-Ja addressed the modern transformation of tradition in a symbolic, abstracted way. They displayed the persona and the idea, rather than a

character, and sought to choreograph the quality and the motif, rather than a story. In contrast, updating and root-seeking dances adopted a realism approach. The choreographers created dances by portraying characters, telling stories, and even using mime. Arguably, therefore, Reinhart should have viewed dances that shared the same social functions as those he viewed in Japan and Korea—the "westernizing" dances which he did not receive the opportunity to view in China in 1984. Reinhart used the word "neo-classic and contemporary" to summarize dance phenomena that he saw in Japan and Korea and conveyed these concepts to Chinese officials, who generated different interpretations. As a result, Reinhart did not introduce any dances that he saw in China to American audiences. In 1985, the ADF invited international companies from Canada and France.[163]

Surprisingly, Reinhart finally established a linkage with China through Yang Meiqi. In the summer of 1986, Yang visited Reinhart's office with a three-page proposal and a translator, informing him that she proposed to establish an institutional linkage between the ADF and her institution in China. Specifically, Yang wrote:

"I plan to establish China's first modern dance major in the Guangdong Dance School in August 1987. The program will have a four-year curriculum including three-year courses and one-year internship, starting from August 1987. I plan to recruit twenty professional dance students aged between 16 and 18. They will take classes in modern dance history, techniques, choreography, music design, etc. Therefore, I sincerely ask for help from the ADF. First, in 1987 and 1988, the Guangdong Dance School will send two young teachers each year to study modern dance in NYC and California. The ADF will offer scholarships to cover all their expenses. Second, from Fall 1987 to Spring 1990, in these three years, the ADF will send faculty members to my institution to teach modern dance techniques, choreography, and improvisation. One faculty member for one semester, two semesters a year, six ADF teachers in total, the Guangdong Dance School will cover their costs of food, apartment, travel, health insurance, and 600 RMB[164] salary each moth, while the ADF will cover their round-trip flight tickets. I sincerely hope that in 1991, under the help of the ADF and its American faculty members, the Chinese students can form the first modern dance company in China and perform their works at the ADF." (*ADF and I* 14)

Yang further explained that, "in the past, the Chinese government did not allow the existence of modern dance, only Chinese classical dance and Western classical ballet. I hope that from now on, modern dance can live in the land of China."[165] This appeared to resonate with Reinhart, because he had not found a version of Chinese modern dance that he could bring to the ADF in 1985. Reinhart agreed to Yang's proposal with pleasure. He scheduled an appointment with Ralf Samuelson, the director of the Asian Cultural Council (ACC), for Yang to ask for financial support. Samuelson questioned Yang about the likelihood that the Chinese government would approve her proposal. Yang replied the likelihood was eighty percent, arguing, first, that the Chinese government was interested in international artistic exchanges as a process of modernization under the reform and opening-up policy. The Guangdong Province, as the forefront of the country's economic reformation, especially welcomed and encouraged such programs. Second, Yang argued that, as the principal of the Guangdong Dance School, she could take full responsibility for this program in her institution. Third, she argued that her direct superior, Mr. Tang Yu, the director of the Guangdong Provincial Department of Culture, was a very open-minded man, under the influence of his father who studied in the US. Convinced by Yang, Samuelson agreed to discuss this project with the Board, who gave their final approval in February the next year.[166]

In this linkage with the Guangdong Dance School, forged around the aim of bringing modern dance to China and stimulating a unique local style, the ADF and Reinhart expected to offer the idea of individual expression central to American nationalism to Chinese dancers. The ADF not only needed to justify its position as the world center of modern dance but, more importantly, also needed to propagandize American values through

dance. Specifically, it hoped to show that the United States represented a free nation based on democratic ideals and personal liberty. Similarly, Reinhart believed that individuality represented a significant virtue to export from the US to China. As he commented in an interview, "Individuals can be exposed to American modern dance, but then bring their own identity to it. It comes out in a new path."[167] By taking a "new path" of creating Chinese modern dance, dancers in China escaped from the rigid ideological control of the government which, for Reinhart, was "an environment impossible to let new things happen."[168] For the ADF and Reinhart, the Chinese dancers, by learning American values through dance, gained freedom of expression. In this view, the US, through transplanting American culture with modern dance to China, liberated the Chinese people.

The Guangdong Dance School and Yang Meiqi's Expectations

Unlike the ADF, which promoted American values through its international program, Yang and her institution expected the exchange to be a form of apolitical artistic communication that would improve dance education and modernization in China. This expectation originated from both the developing needs of the Guangdong Dance School and from Yang's personal experience dancing, and watching dances, in the US. The Guangdong Dance School was in Guangzhou, the capital of the Guangdong (Canton) Province. In 1979, as part of the reform and opening-up policy, the Chinese government opened its first four special economic zones in Guangdong, making the province the forerunner of China's economic reformation. Geographically, Guangdong Province was in the Southern coastal area of China and directly connected to the Pacific Ocean. The city of Guangzhou, established as

one of the second economic zones in 1984, was only two hours by train from Hong Kong.[169] When China increased its communications with the West, Guangzhou grew into a fast-developing commercial city. In the 1980s, the city symbolized the center of popular culture in China, including discos, pop songs, night clubs, and fashion, but was less central in high art and concert performances.[170]

Amidst this changing environment, the Guangdong Dance School experienced drastic transformations. Founded in 1959, it was among the three earliest professional dance schools in the PRC, alongside the Beijing Dance School (1954) and the Shanghai Dance School (1960). Liang Lun, a local Chinese modern dancer in the 1940s who was based in the Southern Chinese area and was a student of Wu Xiaobang, established the Guangdong Dance School in his hometown Guangdong Province in 1959 and served as its principal until the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966.[171] In 1977, the school reopened as a professional dance institution and provided a six-year program for students to major in Chinese dance. By 1984, its 25th anniversary, the school had built eleven studios, one classroom building, one administration building, two teachers' apartment buildings, and one student dormitory building. One hundred and thirty students were enrolled in total.[172] Their classes included classical technique, "body rhyme", Chinese folk dance, rehearsal, music, and Chinese literature and history.[173] Classical technique classes focused on the Li-Tang style Chinese classical dance technique that combined training in ballet, *xiqu*, and martial arts. "Body rhyme" classes introduced the bodily rhythmic movements and gestures from *xiqu*. Chinese folk dance classes taught students local Han and minority folk dance from the Guangdong area. In 1985, the Guangdong Dance School began free-market experimentation,

where students themselves sought their own jobs through auditions into dance companies or government agencies rather than allowing the school to offer them jobs. This new approach to job-seeking broke the format of the planned economy in which the government assigned graduating students a lifetime job, from the period of the 1950s to the 1990s.[174] It was during this historic moment, in 1985, that Yang was promoted from a folk dance teacher to the principal of the school.

The same year that Yang became principal, she received an opportunity to visit dance schools in the Soviet Union, during which time she hoped to find inspiration for improving dance education in her school and more broadly across China. Unfortunately, Yang discovered that the dance curriculum in China differed from that in the Soviet Union, and that seeking answers there would be fruitless. Dance institutions in the Soviet Union offered nine-year professional training programs that were closely connected to dance companies. Senior students worked directly with the companies as interns before graduating. In China, by contrast, dance schools offered six years of professional training for Chinese dance majors, and seven years for ballet majors. Students did not receive the opportunity to work in a company until they had graduated. Although China borrowed the professional dance curriculum from the Soviet Union in the 1950s, the Chinese government also localized it by shortening the nine-year program to six years. This adjustment originated from the urgent need in China, a new nation, for professional dancers.[175] The whole Chinese dance system had been built on this six-year structure since the 1950s and it was extremely difficult, in the 1980s, to extend programs to last nine years.[176] After her visit to the Soviet Union, Yang realized that she could not disrupt the basic structure of dance education in China.[177] Most

importantly, the trip did not inform her how to improve pedagogy within the six-year Chinese curriculum.

Yang found that her visit to New York City, and especially the ADF, inspired her about how to improve dance education in China. In the summer of 1986, with financial support from the ACC, Yang spent three weeks in New York City and six weeks in Durham. Chiang Ching, Yang's classmate at the Beijing Dance School and a Chinese–American modern dance artist based in New York City, invited Yang and the other two Chinese dance artists, Men Wenyuan and Zhao Ming, to the US.[178] In the very beginning, Chiang Ching only intended to select two promising Chinese dancers based on the results of the first Taoli Cup National Dance Competition in Beijing in 1985.[179] However, after observing the competition, Chiang realized that China needed to develop its dance education and creation and decided to add two more nominations, with a focus on education and choreography.[180] Finally, she selected four people: Men Wenyuan, in his fifties, a renowned choreographer in China at Shenyang Forward Military Song and Dance Troupe; Zhao Ming, in his twenties, a professional dancer in the Beijing Comrade Military Song and Dance Troupe who impressed Chiang in the competition with his choreography for *Song of a Prisoner* (*qiu ge*);[181] Hua Chao, in his twenties, a choreographer and dancer in the Nanjing Front-force Military Song and Dance Troup and a leading figure in producing Chinese modern dance works in the early and mid-1980s; and Yang Meiqi, in her forties, the new principal of the Guangdong Dance School. Unfortunately, Hua did not finally manage to visit the US because of political censorship and disapproval of his company.[182]

In the US, Yang watched performances, took classes, attended seminars, and

performed folk dances. In New York City, she stayed at Chiang's apartment for three weeks and spent most of her time watching modern dance performances.[183] Starting from late June 1986, Yang, Men, and Zhao participated in the third ICW of the ADF. Every day from 8:00am to 5:30pm, they took four classes including techniques, choreographic workshops, contact improvisation, dance therapy, and music. They observed rehearsals and watched performances by well-established dance companies from around the world. All three of them attended seminars and discussions together with other participants.[184] Apart from taking classes, Yang, Men, and Zhao staged their performances of Chinese folk and modern dance on July 2nd, in a performance night for international choreographers. Yang performed a Chinese folk dance, *The Flower Drum*, and, together with Men, *Dance of the Lantern Festival*. Zhao performed his experimental solo *Song of a Prisoner*. Artists from Malaysia, Egypt, Greece, Spain, Taiwan, Brazil, and Guinea presented their works, too.[185]

Yang gradually cultivated three understandings of modern dance during her stay in the US, each of which fostered her determination to establish the Guangdong program. First, she understood that modern dance was not a corrupting, capitalist art form, but rather was a universal art without national affiliations.[186] For Yang, American modern dance did not demonstrate the anti-communist, or corrupting, features she had learned it did in a revolutionary context. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Chinese government labeled Western modern dance as "flood and beasts" that harmed the Chinese people's mental health. Within China's socialist Cold War ideology, American modern dance, uncovering the darkness of human beings' souls, exemplified a decadent art and verified the corrupting influence of capitalism.[187] Yang internalized this ideology when she was a professional dance student at

the Beijing Dance School from 1956 to 1962, in the Department of Chinese National Dance Drama, and then a folk dance teacher in the Guangdong Dance School, from 1962 to 1985. Even though China began to welcome Western modern dance in the 1980s, Yang, having never seen American modern dance herself, still believed that American modern dance symbolized a special art of capitalism and might offer little of value to benefit Chinese dance.[188] However, the American modern dance that Yang saw with her own eyes reversed her previous impressions: "I learned that modern dance was a world art about all human beings. It treats every dancer equally. It was not political and contained advanced perspectives of benefit to dance development in China" (Miao, personal communication.). This positive impression, and the enlightening acknowledgment that American modern dance was not malevolent, played a crucial role in Yang conceiving a plan to bring it to China.

By contrast, Men and Zhao did not experience the same enlightenment that Yang did. For example, Men took a realistic perspective toward American modern dance and argued that American modern dance, with its diverse styles, contained abstract forms hard to understand.[189] The American visit did not appear to edify Men and Zhao's artistic understandings or change their choreographic pursuits. After returning from the US, neither Men nor Zhao disrupted the Chinese dance world as they had done before; the peak of their careers laid in the period before their visits to the US, not after.

Why did Yang gain this understanding of modern dance while other Chinese dance artists did not? I argue that Chiang explained much of American modern dance to Yang when they lived together in New York City, which significantly shaped Yang's understanding upon her first encounter with American modern dance itself. Chiang, as a Chinese–American dance

artist, filled the cultural gap between the US and China and used language Yang could understand to explain the hidden cultural meanings, and histories, of American modern dance. When Yang first watched American modern dance works in New York City, she asked questions like, “Modern dance had many bizarre and ugly movements, can the general audiences accept that?” and, “Why do you feel that the movements are beautiful?” Chiang Ching addressed many of Yang’s questions and helped her to understand this foreign art form.[190] With Chiang’s help, several weeks later, before leaving New York, Yang discovered the value of modern dance: “I find that modern dance values creativity. It can embrace many kinds of content and can connect to people’s social lives. Modern dance demonstrates the vitality that traditional dance does not have. Why does China only have classical dance, folk dance, and ballet?” (Chiang 286) Through informal conversations at her home, Chiang arguably prevented Yang from holding onto the artistic principles of China as she interpreted American modern dance, helping her to gradually comprehend modern dance based on US cultural and historical contexts.

Second, Yang realized that modern dance could cultivate individual creativity dramatically and thus benefit dance education in China. Yang believed that the education of Chinese traditional dance only focused on imitation, which resulted in two problems. For one, students were trained into “dancing machines” and rarely given opportunities to ask why they moved in certain ways. Second, their teachers represented the sole, correct way to dance in the studio and students seldom had any opportunity to make their own decisions about how to dance. Therefore, Yang argued, Chinese students received few opportunities to explore and experience the real space around them; they always faced the mirror to correct their

movements, according to the demonstration of their teacher. Chinese students rarely expressed their genuine feelings; the Chinese dance styles required them to always perform happiness. Chinese students did not have the chance to train their minds and think hard in dancing; they needed only to imitate their teachers and pursue physical perfection.[191] In this way, Yang believed that the dance schools in China could only cultivate dancing machines, rather than intellectual dancers, because they failed to provide a space for the individual to grow his or her critical capacities. She argued that dance education, especially folk dance education, "was in danger of finding itself at a dead end if it were not quickly reformed" (Yang, "Bringing Modern Dance to China" 37).

The visit to the ADF allowed Yang to realize that modern dance could help to solve the problem of dance education in China because, first, it focused on both physical and mental development and, second, it encouraged students to make their own artistic decisions. Yang experienced holistic dancing moments when she was taking modern dance technique classes at the ADF. She recalled that her brain worked harder than her body, which had never happened to her before in a studio class. In the modern dance classes at the ADF, she might have needed to think of how the body moved in relation to the space—how her arm carved through the space, how the top of her head guided her spine to spiral up, how the momentum of a jump led her to relax on the floor; or navigate among different qualities of movements—soft, hard, smooth, flowing, light, or heavy—and use her imagination to act those qualities out; or deal with uneven counts and listen to her own rhythmic bodily reactions; or throw away the pedagogical pattern that she was familiar with, including even counts, settled postures and movement phrases, a smile, similar movement qualities, and

unchanging spatial focus.[192] In addition, Yang experienced the liberation of making her own decisions in choreographic workshops at the ADF. She vividly recalled attending the workshop by Eiko and Koma, who brought all their students to a nearby wooded area. Through guided improvisation, Eiko and Koma inspired students to dance with their surroundings—such as trees, grass, rock, river, and earth—and then asked them to create their own works. Yang remembered a female student dancing naked behind a waterfall and then in the river. The performer slowly stepped out from the waterfall and melted into the river; her long hair flowed with the water. This workshop, and the naked performance, enabled Yang to view nudity as beautiful and as distinct from eroticism.[193] Yang realized that the teachers were not regulating the students based on a single correct idea, but rather encouraging them to explore their own answers and expressions. This experience taught Yang that, quite apart from political propaganda and demonstration of cultural authenticity, dance could convey genuine self-expression in multifarious ways.[194]

Therefore, Yang found several values in American modern dance that could benefit dance education in China. Modern dance classes presented Yang with a holistic experience and a world of possibilities. Yang gained access to a dancing mind and a conceptual body. She also saw many other ways of creating dances that departed from dominant perspectives in China on the nature of dance. This experience with modern dance at the ADF reminded her that dance education in China followed mechanical approaches. She believed that, unlike Chinese dance teachers who deprived students of decision-making opportunities, American modern dance teachers encouraged individuals to make their own decisions with respect for, and trust in, their creativity. Students of modern dance, Yang believed, learned to exercise

their creativity, explore their individuality, and build their own artistry. She realized that the Chinese dancers "were never the masters of our own bodies" (Miao, personal communication.). For her, the dancing Chinese body became the site of political propaganda, the advertisement of nationalism, the proof of a happy life, but never belonged to the person who owned it. Classes of American modern dance combined technique with art, knowledge with creativity, class practice with stage performance and, therefore, could help to cultivate better dance artists in China.[195]

To a certain extent, Yang's enlightenment at the ADF originated from her misunderstandings of Chinese traditional pedagogy. In fact, imitation was not the end in Chinese traditional dance education, but a necessary process on the road to individuality and original ideas. American modern dance and Chinese traditional dance were equally conceptual, and both demonstrated the integration of the physical and the mental. The reason that Yang felt the strong engagement of her mind partially resulted from her unfamiliarity with modern dance. Trained in Chinese classical and folk dance since the age of twelve, Yang had built muscle memories in Chinese traditional dance. The genre might have seemed less conceptual for her, therefore, because she could perform traditional dance movements even without thinking how to do it. However, modern dance, a foreign dance that contained a different conceptual system of movement, required Yang to actively and intensively engage her mind in order to articulate her body. This issue occurred to American modern dancers who learned Chinese traditional dance for the first time, too. When I taught Chinese traditional dance to my American dance students, who only previously trained in modern dance and ballet, they too found the learning process mentally exhausting, as they had to

maintain peak concentration to embody unfamiliar movements throughout the class.

Third, Yang realized that China could create its own versions of modern dance by drawing inspiration from US and other countries' modern dance cultures. Watching performances from Europe and Asia at the ADF, Yang discovered that modern dance had become a global dance language with different local interpretations. Artists from different countries had created their own modern dance styles based on local cultural traditions. Specifically, a modern dance performance by Korean artists that Yang saw at the ADF, which created a modern aesthetic deeply rooted in East Asian traditions, affected her deeply. In a white-walled theater, hung with white draperies, "a man, standing on his head for a long time, suddenly rose up and drew three beautiful Chinese brush paintings. Two women used knives to cut the paper into shreds. The women, bare-chested with long skirts that covered the whole floor, walked slowly toward the man. They danced around the man, who was writing calligraphy on the women's bodies and skirts. Finally, he painted a circle on his own body, as if reminding the audiences of a Taoist philosophy of oneness" (Yang, "Bringing Modern Dance to China" 39-40). In the brush paintings, calligraphies, and circles Yang saw a shared, traditional Taoist or Buddhist worldview of the East Asian area: nothingness, emptiness, and oneness.[196] Realizing that this worldview also constituted Chinese tradition, Yang believed that Chinese dance artists could create unique styles of Chinese modern dance, just as the Korean artists did.

Yang, on the one hand, shared the perspective of Chinese dance artists in the 1980s that Chinese modern dance should represent the people's contemporary lives; on the other, she believed in the choreographic approach of the Korean artists that differed from the

westernizing approach in China at that time. For Yang, China never had its own modern dance. As she stated, "I saw that in China at that time there were only two ways of conceptualizing dances. The first was to serve a political purpose: to propagandize; to educate people. The other was to bring out the folk elements: to evoke the ethnic characteristics of the Chinese people. Because there were only those two ways of doing things on stage, dance had little to do with human thoughts and emotions" (Yang, "Bringing Modern Dance to China" 40). For her, Chinese modern dance works in the early 1980s, such as *The Unbroken String,* represented the government's attitudes toward history: that the 1980s signified a new period different from the revolutionary past. Works to legitimize Chinese tradition, such as updating and root-seeking dances, displayed traditional aesthetics, moralities, and the ancient people's lives, far removed from the Chinese people's lives in the present.[197] Only modern dance, for Yang, laid an emphasis on modern times, the present moment, and could best represent contemporary life in China. However, disagreeing with the westernizing approach, Yang believed that Chinese choreographers should refer to and abstract traditional culture to create Chinese modern dance, as exemplified by the Korean artists. Unlike most Chinese dance artists at that time, Yang believed that Chinese modern dance should not only address issues occurring in the present, but also reference the ancient in a creative and experimental way. In this view, choreographers should pass beyond self-expression and reach the higher, spiritual level of ancient Chinese philosophies; Chinese modern dance should explore the essence of Chineseness and demonstrate its core cultural characteristics. Realizing that other East Asian countries had already developed their own forms of modern dance rooted in their respective traditions, Yang firmly believed that China must do the same. Yang argued that, in this way,

Chinese modern dance could represent China on the global stage.[198]

Interestingly, Yang's (and the Guangdong Dance School's) relative lack of engagement with modern dance fever contributed to her vision of Chinese modern dance. Although Guangdong Province was the forerunner in China's economic reformation, it fell behind other cities with regards to developing concert performances. Living in Guangzhou, the city of commercialization and materialism, Yang may not have had immediate access to the latest news about dance development and changing perceptions in China. In the early- and mid-1980s, Shanghai and Nanjing represented the centers of modern dance in China. Hu Jialu, a choreographer in the Shanghai Song and Dance Troupe and a native Shanghai artist, created works—such as *Country Road* (1982), *Friendship* (1985)*, Rope Wave* (1985)*,* and *Monologue* (1988)—that later constituted his genre of experimental "urban dance." The "Modern Dance Experimental Team," led by Hua Chao, constantly produced works, such as *Fan Yi* (1982) and *Spirit of the Yellow River* (1984), that represented a genre different from classical dance, folk dance, and ballet. Beijing symbolized the center of Chinese classical dance because of the inventions of the "body rhyme" curriculum at the BDA. Both the Shanghai Ballet Company and the National Ballet of China in Beijing staged original ballet works at that time. Many other provinces (such as Liaoning, Sichuan, Hunan, Heilongjiang, and Anhui) presented local folk dance concerts that won great acclaim in national dance competitions. Comparatively, Guangzhou and the Guangdong Province seemed less active in producing concert performances and geared their interest toward popular culture, such as discos, and social dances in clubs. Prior to her visit to the US in 1986, Yang still saw modern dance as "flood and beasts." Yet this understanding had been seriously challenged in 1980, in various

discussions in Beijing and publications in *Dance*. As she was not selected as a prominent and promising Chinese dance scholar and artist, Yang did not attend the "Nanjing Dance Creation Conference" in 1985 and thus may have been unaware of the idea that Chinese modern dance was emerging at that time. However, this reduced level of involvement also offered Yang the opportunity to reformulate her understanding of modern dance without constraints imposed by ideas and perspectives from the Chinese dance world.

In sum, at the core of Yang's three understandings of modern dance lay a system of modern concepts that Yang wanted to bring to China, concepts which she believed transcended politics and could be transplanted into any cultural environment: "I knew that modern dance is not pro- or anti- any political dogma—that in fact, it takes no political stance. It is just a means of self-expression" ("Bringing Modern Dance to China" 40-41). She also believed that "modern dance represented a universal art of all human beings. It contained a spirit of innovation and a respect for individuality" (Miao, personal communication.). Yang argued that modern dance represented a system of concepts that offered dancers their right and freedom to make decisions. In this view, modern dance tolerated differences, welcomed and pursued any possibilities, and deconstructed traditions. In this view, China should use these concepts to improve dance education and cultivate creative thinkers and independent individuals, rather than imitators. China should apply these concepts to create dances; to produce works that, through self-expression, truly revealed people's living experience in the present; to develop arts that escaped from the confinement of politics and traditionalism, in the search of a universal Chineseness; and to allow choreographers to achieve artistic freedom. Yang defined modern dance as an art that existed beyond the confines of style, a

universal body language that had its core value in "offering every artist the right to create with freedom" (*ADF and I* 12). American modern dance taught Yang that dance education and creation should focus on respecting the individuality of each person and on exhibiting their unique wisdom. For Yang, these concepts did not belong to a nationality or political stance; rather, they stood to benefit all human beings in developing their own modern arts.

However, modern dance was not as free from politics as Yang believed. The ADF designed her visit with the political purpose of promoting American values that appeared, to her, to be apolitical. The ADF fashioned the US as a space for international choreographers to experience expression of individuality, creativity, and freedom. Not knowing the connection between these concepts and American nationalism, Yang trusted in the faithfulness of her experience of the US and found in it evidence for modern dance's apolitical stance. Yang firmly believed that she received an experience free from politics. Cultivating most of her understanding through her own experiences of dancing and observing in the US, Yang trusted her knowledge of modern dance with certainty. Thirty years later, when I interviewed her in the summer of 2016, she still spoke of her visit with the ADF as if it was yesterday. Perhaps she became a believer in the philosophies of American modern dance, and in so doing converted to American nationalism. Did she, on the one hand, escape from Chinese socialist ideology while, on the other, falling into the trap of American nationalist ideology?

Yang's attempt to depoliticize dance participated in the national trend of artistic development in China during the 1980s. At that time, Chinese artists, as well as politicians, were eager to disconnect art from the revolutionary past. They released art from its attachment to political propaganda by emphasizing its connection to humanity. In doing so,

they argued that art stopped serving politics and only served human beings. Similarly, Yang wanted to rescue Chinese dance from confinement to Chinese art-making principles that she regarded political. However, her approach focused on using American ideologies of individuality and free expression to replace the Chinese artistic ideology of realism that was prevalent in the 1980s. This approach did not fundamentally free dance from politics. Dance, whether created under Chinese or American artistic principles, still illustrated certain national values. Yang only shifted the politics that dance in China adhered to from Chinese ideologies to American ideologies. In addition, when Yang and other artists tried to liberate art from politics, they adopted a set of new national policies known as the four modernizations. As a significant ideology of the Chinese government, the four modernizations created a nationwide move toward modernizing artistically by learning from the West. Yang's attempt to modernize Chinese dance supported this national policy by incorporating American artistic concepts into dance creation in China and, again, re-politicized dance.

Responses from the Chinese Government

Yang's argument that modern dance was free from politics was the reason she dared to bring it to China. After reaching agreements with the ADF and the ACC, Yang returned to China and reported her plan to the Chinese government. Departing from the established narrative in which Yang, operating as an individual, constituted the entire force that brought American modern dance to China, I argued that a more complex relationship existed between Yang and the Chinese government. I analyze this relationship through a detailed description of the process in which the Chinese government approved the establishment of the

Guangdong program. According to Reinhart, Yang's "genius and determination forced some of the government people to go along with her."[199] According to Michelle Vosper, the secretary of ACC in Hong Kong, "Yang Meiqi succeeded in bringing a 'suspect' form of art into acceptance, despite an environment that was barren and even hostile" (268). Although these statements to some extent illustrate the fact that Yang persuaded the Chinese government to agree with her, they overlook the endeavors of some Chinese officials who devoted a great deal to supporting Yang and oversimplify the political situation in the Guangdong Province at that time.

The Chinese government did not consist of one agency, but instead comprised many different agencies, and the head of each agency received Yang's proposal with different attitudes. In order to establish the Guangdong program, Yang needed to communicate with five different agencies: the chairman of Guangdong Province, the provincial Department of Culture, the provincial Department of Publicity, the provincial Department of Finance, and the provincial Department of Education. The standard procedure was that Yang should first report to the direct supervisor of the Guangdong Dance School—the director of the provincial Department of Culture—who, after giving their permission, should send a report to the director of the provincial Department of Publicity for a security check, and the chairman of Guangdong Province, Xie Fei, for the final decision. Xie, after receiving a report from the Department of Publicity, should make the final decision. If Xie permitted the proposal, he should inform the provincial Department of Finance to approve the budget and the provincial Department of Education to approve the number of students to be recruited. Completing all the procedures above, the principal of the Guangdong Dance School could begin to establish

the Guangdong program.

Generally, Chinese government officials at that time were simultaneously both interested in, and hesitant about, Yang's proposal. Their interest arose from the fact that the Guangdong Province had been importing Western commercial and popular culture since the late 1970s. Bringing in American modern dance by establishing a cross-cultural program seemed to remain on the correct path of modernization and to be in accord with the general trend of modernization in China. Simultaneously, they displayed hesitation in approving the Guangdong program, for fear of being falsely accused of propagandizing for US imperialism. Modern dance had been described under the title of "flood and beasts" in China from the 1950s until the New Era (1978–). The Chinese officials, growing up in the revolutionary period, had already been informed of this before they had ever seen modern dance. With the advent of the New Era, although the central government never addressed modern dance as "flood and beasts" again, it initiated movements such as the "Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign" in 1983 to prevent Chinese citizens from engaging too deeply with Western modern arts and concepts. Therefore, the government officials of Guangdong Province hesitated to approve the Guangdong program. If they supported the Guangdong Dance School, a state-sponsored and government-owned school, this would mean that the Guangdong government held a welcoming attitude toward Western modern dance, an art previously considered as harmful to people's mental health and social security. In addition, their hesitation stemmed from the fact that none of the government officials had seen modern dance before and did not really know what it was. Even after offering their permissions, some officials still did not know what modern dance was and asked Yang if she could allow them

see a modern dance performance.[200] Knowing that the political climate had changed in China in the New Era, and that the central government had altered its oppositional attitude to modern and capitalist art, the Guangdong officials were confused that the central government did not provide a new definition of Western modern dance and needed to find their own answers. If modern dance was not "flood and beasts" anymore, what was it? Was modern dance safe enough to become a major program in a state-owned dance school?

To deal with such hesitations, Yang spent two months explaining the nature of modern dance to the Guangdong government officials in the five agencies, from August to October 1986. Instead of directly sending a report, Yang spoke to them in person first to receive their unofficial permission. The phenomenon of gaining governmental permission through private talks and subsequently following the official procedure was a common method of communication in the political world at that time. On August 7th, 1986, Yang first spoke with Tang Yu, the director of the Guangdong Provincial Department of Culture, about her plan. Tang agreed with Yang and later became her stable support throughout the four-year program. The second day, on August 8th, 1986, Yang wrote a ten-page report on the necessity of bringing modern dance to China, based around three major arguments: 1) politically, modern dance was not opposed to the Chinese Communist Party; 2) modern dance encouraged modern concepts such as creativity and greatly promoted artistic productivity; 3) as a component of the modern arts, modern dance could contribute to the process of four modernizations in China. On October 31st, having received Yang's report and signed it with their permission, Tang and the committee of the Department of Culture sent an official report, "On the Introduction of Modern Dance", to Xie Fei, the chairman of Guangdong Province,

and Huang Hao, the director of the provincial Department of Publicity.[201] Through personal connections, Tang and Yang met and talked with them, as well as other related Chinese government officials such as the director and vice-directors of the provincial Department of Publicity, the vice-president of the Guangdong Province (who was in charge of art and education), and the director of the provincial Department of Finance.[202]

Yang argued that her talk with these officials stopped being apolitical and adopted a political tone. Initially, she explained that modern dance, as a non-political Western art form currently absent from China, would benefit dance education and creation in China by improving students' and choreographers' creativity.[203] Soon, Yang discovered that the three arguments she made in her report to de-politicize modern dance did not win the officials' hearts. Eventually, she adopted political language, using Mao's "class analysis" to identify the political nature of modern dance. "Modern dance is not a bourgeois art (that belongs to the upper-middle class). It takes the opposite stance of classical ballet—the art of royalty and the elite—and belongs to the people: the working class. Modern dance represents the workers' voices, wishes, and aspirations. For example, Isadora Duncan, the founder of modern dance, once hoisted a red flag and sang *La Marseillaise* during her performance in France to celebrate the success of the French Revolution. This act displayed her support for the proletarian revolution" (Yang, *ADF and I* 15). Yang believed that this talk, from a political perspective, earned the Chinese government officials' permission for the Guangdong program.[204]

However, although Yang heard from Huang and the secretary of the vice-governor of Guangdong Province that they all agreed on her project, the "anti-bourgeois liberalism"

movement in late 1986 and early 1987 postponed the official permission of the Guangdong program.[205] As mentioned in Chapter One, this movement originated from college students' demonstrations in December 1986 and January 1987 that called for political democracy.[206] The Chinese Communist Party defined this demonstration as "bourgeois liberalism," which referred to "a denial of a socialist system in support of a capitalist system." The anti-bourgeois liberalism movement accordingly meant to reject westernization entirely and persist with "socialism with Chinese characters".[207] In January 1987, numerous publications appeared across China, criticizing the inclination toward complete westernization in Chinese society. *People's Daily* published articles on "anti-bourgeois liberalism" almost every day. Within such a political climate, Tang believed that bringing modern dance to China equated with a suicidal act. He suggested Yang give up her project immediately because of political censorship. Yang cried and said: "Listen, I don't even care if my career is jeopardized by doing this. Just let me do it." Tang responded: "*Your* career is one thing. We also have to be concerned about the careers of other officials who give you their support and approval" (Yang, "Bringing Modern Dance to China" 42). In January 1987, Ralf Samuelson visited Beijing. Yang went to Beijing to meet him, and he confirmed with her that everything had progressed smoothly on the part of the ACC.[208] However, seeing the increasing political storm against complete westernization, Yang suspended the Guangdong program. The thawing moment occurred on January 2nd, when *People's Daily* published an editorial on carefully implementing "anti-bourgeois liberalism": "the current anti-bourgeois liberalism movement is only within the Party, especially for political thoughts. It does not include economic reformation...and the explorations in literature and art, as well as people's everyday lives"

("Continuing the Anti-bourgeois Liberalism Movement in a Healthy Way"). Reading this editorial, Yang realized that the "anti-bourgeois liberalism" had begun to decline. She soon continued her negotiations with the Guangdong government officials, in February 1987.[209]

Experiencing both vicissitudes and progress, Yang finally received financial support from the Chinese government. The rapid commercialization underway in Guangdong Province at that time allowed growing local audiences to visit bars, dance at discos, and listen to pop music rather than going to theaters to see performances by state-owned companies. When Yang handed in her report, Guangdong Province was planning to reduce the number of local state-owned performing arts companies and cut budgets for high art.[210] After the provincial Department of Culture submitted the official document, "On the Introduction of Modern Dance", on October 31st, Yang sought help through private connections and met the vice-governor of the Guangdong Province, Yang Deyuan, to ask for his approval in issuing governmental financial support.[211] When she finally received the unofficial permission, with the help of Tang, on December 18th, the provincial Department of Culture submitted an official document, "On Bringing Modern Dance to China and the Need for Financial Investment", to Yang Deyuan at the provincial government. Vice-governor Yang commented on the document that the provincial Department of Finance should make available a certain amount of money specifically for the Guangdong program.[212] However, at the beginning of 1987, the official governmental budget sent to the Department of Culture did not contain any funds for the Guangdong program. On February 19th, through private connections, Yang and Tang discovered that vice-governor Yang's document was stonewalled within the Department of Finance. Again, through private connections, Yang met the director of the Department of

Finance, Jiang Yueming, who agreed to make available one hundred thousand *yuan* to support the Guangdong program. Based on my archival and oral history research, there are three versions of what occurred following this. In the first, Yang was notified one month later, in mid-March, that although Jiang agreed to offer money to the program, other lower-level officials in the Department of Finance rejected Jiang's decision when implementing the budget. On March 20th, the Guangdong Dance School submitted a report to the provincial Department of Education asking for financial support. The same day, the Department of Education agreed to Yang's proposal with twenty spots, a way how schools decided the number of students under a planned economy, suggesting that the Guangdong Dance School could begin to recruit students in April.[213] With this approval, vice-governor Yang sent another notification to the Department of Finance but did not receive a response. Finally, Tang squeezed one hundred thousand *yuan* from his "special director budget" to launch the Guangdong program.[214] The second version suggests that the Department of Publicity and the Department of Culture approved Yang's report in March and offered her five hundred thousand *yuan* with which to launch the program.[215] The third version states that Yang found an official in the Department of Finance who spared money from his emergency fund, in early May, to support the Guangdong program.[216] In the end, despite facing silent rejection and with the assistance of Tang and some other government officials, Yang successfully raised enough money to establish the Guangdong program.

The real disagreement and hostility existed within the dance world in China, not from the Guangdong provincial government. Wu Xiaobang, the director of the Dance Association of China, visited Guangzhou during the "anti-bourgeois liberalism" movement

and expressed his disagreement with Yang's plan. Trained in German–Japanese expressionist modern dance, Wu resisted the introduction of American modern dance to China, believing that it could not be accommodated into the Chinese people's contemporary lives. He warned Tang that the Guangdong program represented a very dangerous political act. However, Tang, representing the Guangdong government, assured Wu that he would steadily support Yang to fulfill her plan.[217] As well as resistance from Wu in Beijing, Yang also faced disagreement from local senior dance officials. Liang Lun, a Chinese modern dancer before the establishment of the PRC, the founder and first principal of the Guangdong Dance School, and the first director of the Dance Association of China in Guangdong Province, openly published articles to announce his disagreement with the Guangdong program's importing of American modern dance.[218] Liang argued that socialist realism and ethnic spirit characterized Chinese modern dance, which the Guangdong program failed to embody. In 1988, when most Chinese dance scholars applauded for the Guangdong program's performance in Beijing, Liang disagreed that "now some people only recognized those dances imitating American modern dance as real modern dance works…this is wrong" ("Exploring the Characteristics of Chinese Modern Dance" 77).

Facing such resistance and doubt, Tang decided to title the Guangdong project an "experimental" program. In my interview with him, Tang argued that an experiment embraced uncertainty and mistakes: "It meant that we were trying with no answers. Many people in China did not know about modern dance and they might ask why we establish such a program. Yang and I were making experiments. If the results were good, we would continue. If the results were not good, we would fix it and move forward. That is what I mean by

'experiment'" (Miao, personal communication.). In other words, an experimental program implied a process of improvisation that contained numerous possibilities and uncontrollable aspects. The word "experimental" signified a strategy for protecting the Guangdong program if problems arose.[219]

Although some Chinese government officials hesitated, and even rejected Yang by giving an unreceptive response, Tang, Yang's direct supervisor and most significant supporter, represented a supporting force in the Chinese government. Tang offered Yang suggestions about how to negotiate with higher-level government officials, which procedures to take, and who to meet in person. Tang squeezed money from his "director's funding" for the Guangdong program when Yang could not find other funding sources.[220] Tang backed Yang's program in front of Wu's threat. Tang named the Guangdong program "experimental" to protect it from possible judgments and misgivings in the present and future. Yang's negotiations with different agencies and different officials demonstrated the complicated roles that the Chinese government played in establishing the Guangdong program.

Having received all the permissions and financial support from the Chinese government, Yang began to recruit students. She first published a notice in dance magazines and newspapers:

"The Guangdong Dance School is opening a modern dance experimental class (a four-year program, recruiting twenty students, who will establish a modern dance company in Guangzhou after graduation). Application dates: March 25th–April 25th, in four cities: Guangzhou, Beijing, Shanghai, Shenyang. Applicants should be 17–21 years old, with an introduction letter from the working agency and a secondary-school certificate, or certificate of the same education level. The Asian Cultural Council and the American Dance Festival (a modern dance organization) will send teachers to this class. The first round of auditions will begin on May 10th and the second round in early June. The city of Guangzhou will recruit students at the Guangdong Dance School at Shaheding."[221]

In April, Yang, together with five other colleagues—Ma You, Sun Guizhen, Gao Yue, Wei Nai and Ling Jinsheng—toured over Guangzhou, Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenyang to audition students. Their tests included techniques, improvisation, composition, and an interview.[222] Finally, Yang and her colleagues selected twenty students, who were professional dancers of local dance companies with at least six years of professional training in Chinese traditional dance. They demonstrated great curiosity in modern dance and desired a change from the past.[223] In addition, during Yang's negotiation with the Chinese government, Charles Reinhart scheduled the first two American teachers to visit Guangzhou. The "Guangdong Modern Dance Experimental Program" was ready to begin.

From the very beginning, then, the Guangdong Modern Dance Experimental Program involved a partially successful partnership with a mutual goal. The two sides, the ADF and the Guangdong Dance School, each knew only what it wanted to achieve and not what the other side wanted. They accomplished their collaboration through guesswork and improvisation, unaware of what the other was, in reality, thinking. Thus, both sides demonstrated different expectations regarding the program, based on their own needs, values, and imagination. The Guangdong program symbolized a successful handshake between the ADF and the Guangdong Dance School, and between the US and China, without either side knowing the intention behind the smile accompanying that handshake.

Chapter Three: Miscommunications and Misunderstandings: Teaching and Learning Modern Dance

This chapter explores the curriculum offered by the American teachers and evaluates the exchanges that took place between those teachers and the Chinese students. In general, I argue that the American teachers and the Chinese students misunderstood each other in modern dance classes in the Guangdong Modern Dance Experimental Program. Contesting a common thought that the American teachers illuminated the Chinese students' individual creativity and liberated them with the tool of self-expression,[224] I discover that the process of teaching and learning was not always smooth but rather filled with confusion. Apart from the language issue and the fact that the two groups needed to communicate through a translator, the bodies of American teachers and Chinese students also spoke the different "languages" of American modern dance and Chinese traditional dance. Without a translator, the different body languages allowed the teachers and students to miscommunicate with and misunderstand each other. I argue that these misinterpretations demonstrate the fundamental differences between American modern dance and Chinese traditional dance, two distinct corporeal systems composed of contrasting aesthetic principles, kinesthetic constructions, pedagogy, and concepts of individuality and freedom. Inspired by Mary Louise Pratt's theory of the "contact zone," which she has defined as "the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict" (Pratt 8), I see the dance studio as a contact zone where contrasting ideas of training,

learning, and creating from different systems collide.[225] In this contact zone, both the teachers and the students improvised in the teaching and learning processes and based their next improvisation on the reaction of the other to their previous improvisational decisions. Therefore, the whole process demonstrated uncertainty and randomness. The contrasting concepts from the two different dance systems—American modern dance and Chinese traditional dance—manifested in their improvisational activities, which led to miscommunications and misunderstandings.

The Tiananmen Square protest and the subsequent changing US–China relationship separated the ADF teachers into two groups. The first group consisted of four teachers who taught in the program before the protest from 1987 to 1989: Sarah Stackhouse in the fall of 1987, Ruby Shang in the spring of 1988, Douglas Nielsen in the fall of 1988, and Lucas Hoving in the spring of 1989. Each of them stayed in China for three months. The second group was the ADF teachers who visited the program after the protest from 1990 to 1991: Lynda Davis in the spring of 1990, David Hochoy in the fall of 1990, Chiang Ching in the spring of 1991, and Claudia Gitelman in the fall of 1991. Each of them stayed between six weeks to two months.[226] After Hoving left Guangzhou on May 31st, 1989,[227] the Tiananmen Square protest and the changing US–China political relationship prohibited the ADF from sending a faculty member in the fall of 1989. After the endeavors of Yang Meiqi, Tang Yu, and other Chinese officials, as well as Charles Reinhart, the Guangdong Dance School and the ADF resumed the program in 1990, when the next ADF faculty member, Davis, arrived at Guangzhou 10 months after Hoving had left.[228]

All the Chinese students in the Guangdong program were professional dancers who

had graduated from secondary vocational dance programs in a dance institution or company-affiliated school. In these programs, students usually started their training around 10 to 12 years of age and received five to six years of training for a Chinese dance major or seven years for a ballet major. Chinese dance major classes included classical dance technique, martial arts practice, and different genres of folk dance that varied according to the institutes' different geographic locations. Ballet major classes included technique, pointe, duet, and rehearsal. Among the 13 students that I have interviewed, only two students majored in ballet before joining the program, and one of these two majored in Chinese dance before becoming a ballet dancer.[229] Therefore, the majority of Chinese students received training in Chinese classical and folk dance before joining the Guangdong program. Wang Mei, after graduating from the BDA, became a teacher of folk dance there. After graduating from the People's Liberation Army Art Academy, Jin Xing joined the Shenyang Advance Military Song and Dance Troupe as a professional dancer; Qin Liming joined the Nanjing Front Force Song and Dance Troupe as a professional dancer; and Hu Qiong became a teacher of traditional dance in the academy. Zhang Yinzhong, after graduation from the Central Nationalities Institute, joined the China National Ethnic Song and Dance Ensemble as a professional dancer and specialized in minority folk dance. Yin Xiaorong graduated from the Anhui Provincial Art Academy and entered the Anhui Provincial Song and Dance Troupe as a professional dancer after graduation. Ma Shouze graduated from the Liaoning Provincial Art Academy and joined a city-level Song and Dance Troupe in Liaoning Province as a professional dancer. Su Ka graduated from Guangxi Provincial Art Academy and joined the Guangxi Provincial Song and Dance Troupe as a professional dancer. Zhang Yi and Zhang Li

studied at the affiliated class of a renowned song and dance troupe in Beijing and joined the company after graduation.[230] Qu Xiao received dance training from the Dalian City Song and Dance Troupe-affiliated class and joined the company as a professional dancer after graduation. Working in the context of Chinese traditional dance, the Chinese students knew very little about American modern dance. They did not know its history, major figures, masterpieces, various techniques or styles, nor the fundamental concepts, theories, principles, and frameworks. The Guangdong program was the first time that these Chinese students intensively engaged with modern dance for the purpose of becoming professional modern dancers.

In what follows, I elaborate on how the American teachers and the Chinese students misunderstood each other in three different areas. First, I analyze the aesthetic, kinesthetic, and pedagogical differences between American modern dance and Chinese traditional dance and explore how these differences contributed to miscommunications. Second, I compare the meanings of individuality and freedom that the American teachers wanted to illuminate with the meaning that the Chinese students experienced in the Guangdong program. In doing so, I argue that misunderstandings of each other's dance cultures engendered contrasting concepts and experiences of individuality and freedom. Third, I examine one consequence of the miscommunications and misunderstandings in the Guangdong program: cultural imperialism under good will. I uncover the controdiction between what the ADF wanted to do and what it actually did and argue that misunderstandings between American teachers and Chinese students about how to learn choreography resulted in the American teachers making most compositional decisions for the Chinese students. The other consequence of the

miscommunications and misunderstandings was the birth of two new genres of Chinese modern dance, which I discuss in Chapter Four.

Aesthetics, Kinesthesia, and Pedagogy

Both the American teachers and the Chinese students were bewildered about how to better understand each other. American teachers, especially the first group of teachers, realized that the traditional dance training that Chinese students had received inhibited them from embodying new movement concepts. Yet American teachers were not sure how to bridge the gap between the two different dance systems, which contained contradictory concepts. They attempted to help the Chinese students step out of their familiarity with traditional dance. Similarly, when I interviewed the Chinese students to recall their studies in the Guangdong program, most of them believed that they underwent a painful experience filled with confusion. They realized that they were experiencing constraints from their previous traditional training to correctly embody the instructions from American modern dance. However, they were confused about how to fix the situation and change themselves. Obstacles in communications often occurred between American teachers and Chinese students. I argue that the differences between American modern dance and Chinese traditional dance in aesthetics, kinesthesia, and pedagogy generated their confusion. Both the materials that American teachers taught and their pedagogy of those materials contradicted those of traditional Chinese culture and the training that the Chinese students had received.

First, Chinese traditional dance and American modern dance demonstrate contrasting aesthetics. Before joining in the Guangdong program, almost all the Chinese

students had received training in traditional dance for concert performance, in which the aesthetics of complementary opposites and twisting physicality played a dominant role. For Chinese dance artists, these two aesthetic principles could generate beauty, the vital characteristic of Chinese traditional concert performance: “dancers and their dances needed to be beautiful to attract the audiences.”[231] Complementary opposites means that the dancer performed coexisting, opposing corporeal ideas or constant transitions between drastically different shapes, rhythms, or qualities of *qi* (intrinsic energy). This aesthetic principle illustrated the traditional philosophy of the Yin and Yang balance because the dancer embodied extending curves, grounded lightness, and changes between fluency and jerkiness. Twisting physicality refers to the aesthetic principle that the body performs curving, spiral spatial lines in postures as well as transitions between postures. For example, in different genres of Chinese folk dance and classical dance, female dancers often embody three-curve zigzag positions. One can find evidence for this curving spatial orientation in the Oracle bone script, the earliest known form of Chinese writing dating to the late second millennium BCE. In this script, the Chinese character “female”(女) was written in this way:

The shape of the character resembles a woman sitting on the ground, leaning her chest slightly forward, crossing her hands in the front, pulling her pelvis back, bending her knees and arching her feet. The whole character demonstrates zigzags and three curves. From the earliest documentation of Chinese characters, we can see that the beauty of the female body had been featured as curving lines. Similarly, to transition from one movement to the next,

Chinese classical dancers always begin from the opposite direction of the next movement. This moving logic creates spiral lines in space as the dancer finishes the previous movement and begins the next one.[232] Of course, not all traditional Chinese dance focuses on beauty; many folk dances in the rural area function as part of ritual ceremonies to bring fortune or pray for rain. The performers of these dances regarded fulfilling the ritual goal, not embodying beauty, as the primary purpose. Beauty served as the key training purpose when traditional dance entered the theater. Therefore, when the Chinese students in the Guangdong program learned traditional dance, the two aesthetic principles of complementary opposites and twisting physicality guided them to rationalize why the body moved in certain ways instead of others. Embodying and internalizing these two aesthetic principles had functioned as the major goal in their previous training experiences.

In contrast, modern dance techniques accentuate gravity. As Susan L. Foster has argued,

"The technique classes that the new modern dance choreographers began to develop cultivated the musculature in distinctive ways, but each focused on the body as a volume subject to the laws of gravity and momentum, and each developed a relationship to the ground that contrasted radically with earlier forms of concert" (*Choreographing Empathy: Kinesthesia in Performance* 113).

As the new modern dance choreographers Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey based their technique philosophies on gravity, the ADF teachers, whose training background focused on Graham technique, Humphrey-Limon technique, or other related ones, foregrounded the effect of gravity in their technique classes in China. Stackhouse, teaching the Humphrey-Limon technique, required students to embody losing and gaining a center of gravity when they fell and rebounded. She repetitively emphasized that to fall meant to

follow the pull of gravity and to recovery meant to rebound from it.[233] Shang, drawing from her dancing experience in the Paul Taylor Dance Company, taught technique classes that accentuated the release of weight through explosive forces.[234] Nielsen developed his technique classes from previous training in Cunningham technique and taught Chinese students complicated footwork with changes of direction.[235] When students embodied complex steps and directional shifts, they had to constantly switch their center of gravity from one leg to another, pushing their weight from side to side in order to change directions. David Hochoy introduced Graham technique and asked students to embody a strengthened, forceful physicality that repelled weightless movements. Although each American teacher introduced different styles and movement vocabularies, they all regarded gravity as a significant component in modern dance technique. Consequently, the Chinese students felt disoriented because they failed to find the familiar aesthetic principles of Chinese traditional dance in American modern dance techniques. Chinese traditional performing arts had developed their own aesthetics before gravity, a Western, modern concept, arrived in China. Unable to seek references in their current knowledge about dance, the Chinese students needed to comprehend and embody the new and foreign concept of gravity and approached the movements from alien aesthetic principles.

Second, Chinese traditional dance and American modern dance demonstrated contrasting kinesthetic constructions of how to control the muscles. In practicing Chinese traditional dance, a performer maintains a liminal state between completely relaxing and forcefully controlling the body; a controlled relaxation, a relaxed control: “Looseness and tightness condition each other to initiate force and rhythm… They are as a whole. There is no

complete relax, nor complete control" (Tian 89).[236] The performer must relax the muscles to keep the body flexible and simultaneously hold the muscles to generate movements. Therefore, the Chinese students had previously experienced this liminal kinesthetic construction, which rejected fully released weight. In contrast, modern dance techniques required dancers to embody the extremes. A modern dancer needed to completely release the energy into the surrounding space or to tightly control the muscles for a burst of energy. In the process of teaching Humphry-Limon technique, Stackhouse encouraged students to completely drop their weight as they fell.[237] Shang, similarly, required the students to truly release the weight by relaxing their muscles.[238] David Hochoy, teaching Graham technique, asked students to tighten their muscular force through contraction and then gradually release it before contracting again.[239] The American teachers trained Chinese students' physical capability through the embodiment of extremeness.

This unfamiliar kinesthetic construction to embody the extreme rather than the liminal confused the Chinese students because it contradicted their previous dancing habits of relaxed control and controlled relaxation. The Chinese students could not release their weight as required by their American teachers, even though they tried quite hard. As Ma Shouze argued:

"*Stackhouse always told us to feel the space and create connections with the ground. Years later, after I received an MFA degree in the U.S., I think I finally understood that she actually meant to create connections with gravity and release the weight. But when I was a student in the Guangdong program, I really could not understand what she meant by saying that"* (Miao, personal communication.).

The Chinese students' difficulty in releasing weight also confused the American teachers because they had identified the problem but were not sure how to solve it. Stackhouse and

Shang argued that, although previous training equipped Chinese students well with outstanding physical strength, it did not help them understand and embody weight releasing, a central idea in both teachers' technique classes:

"*I was amazed at how well this training (Chinese traditional dance) had prepared the students for modern dance… The area that was least developed was weighted sense to give contrast to the lightness in their dancing*" (Stackhouse, "Faces in the Moon" 91).[240]

"They understand it if you showed it to them in a particular movement, but not the concept of weight shift.. .They, too, had the problem with weight, not really being able to release because of their classical training. They are so held, but they are so advanced technically that they could really learn to fall" (Solomon, "Chinese/Japanese Roots and Branches: An Interview with Ruby Shang" 76).[241]

However, neither Stackhouse nor Shang offered an effective way to solve this problem during their residency at the Guangdong program. In the studio, both Chinese students and American teachers could have repeated their "mistakes" and continued with unsuccessful communication. Chinese students may have faked their release of weight by holding their muscles. American teachers, discovering this problem, kept conveying the idea of "dropping your weight," which was foreign and incomprehensible to the Chinese students. The students, then, may have repeated their previous mistakes again due to not understanding their American teachers.

In addition, contrasting learning approaches in Chinese traditional dance and American modern dance further generated confusion about kinesthetic constructions. In their previous learning experience, Chinese students approached a dance genre first through shapes. Traditionally titled "enduring" (*hao*: 耗),[242] holding shapes represented the core approach to learning Chinese traditional dance. In pedagogy textbooks of Chinese folk dance and classical dance, the first lesson to teach students is "basic postures" (*jibentitai*: 基本体态),

which crystallize the body's unique spatial orientation of a genre. "Basic postures" include positions of each body part, such as the head, shoulders, arms, torso, hips, knees, and feet, as well as every part's relationships to each other. When students begin learning a new dance genre, the first thing to do is to familiarize their bodies with the genre by holding basic shapes. For example, in learning Northeast Yangge, a Han Chinese folk dance located in Northeast China, students need to lean the upper body forward, lower the head, close the chest, straighten the spine, hold both arms akimbo, slightly bend the knees, and keep both feet together with toes facing the front. They correct themselves according to the teacher's instructions and stay in this position for a while to experience the basic corporeal style of Northeast Yangge as *gen, lang, qiao*, loosely translated as tough, open, and saucy. After the basic postures, students also use the approach of holding shapes to learn movement phrases. They deconstruct the phrase into single, unrelated movements and embody each movement by freezing, as in a "picture." After memorizing the shapes, students mobilize the "pictures" into movements and then learn the transition and sequence of the phrase. This learning approach centered on holding shapes exists in other Chinese traditional performing arts, such as Tai Chi and *xiqu*, too. They share the training purpose with Chinese traditional dance that holding basic shapes in the beginning plants key corporeal "genes" into the dancers' bodies. This learning approach helps strengthen muscle memories so that the key physicality of a genre grows into the dancer's bones and muscles. By memorizing basic positions, dancers build a foundation for their bodies that prepares them for advanced techniques. When a dancer moves to an advanced level to perform more complicated movements, he or she can show the complexity without losing the unique taste of the genre. Therefore, holding shapes

serves as a crucial component of learning Chinese traditional dance.

Comparatively, in the Guangdong program, Chinese students were expected to approach technique movements through quality rather than shapes. They needed to pay attention to how the body, through initiating particular forces to create a dialogue with the surrounding space, generated various movement textures. Rudolf Laban's theories on movement analysis impacted subsequent generations of modern dance artists' understanding of human movements and creating dance techniques. Trained in these techniques, the ADF teachers in Guangzhou applied concepts of space, weight, time, and flow from Laban's theories to explain the quality of movements to the Chinese students.[243] In Humphrey-Limon technique classes, Stackhouse might introduce floating in the air during suspension and slashing the space with diving bodies. Shang might teach a flicking force to relax the body and a punching force for explosive effects. Nielsen might require gliding and pressing steps in directional shifts. In Graham technique classes, Hochoy might hope that the students would feel the spine wring in contraction and release and use bare feet to dab the floor.[244] Float, punch, glide, slash, dab, wring, flick, and press all suggested the space, weight, time, and flow of movements and required students to comprehend modern dance through these lenses. However, these features presented a new moving orientation in comparison to Chinese traditional dance. When the American teachers demonstrated a movement phrase with instructions that focused on the quality of movements, the Chinese students might approach this phrase through shapes and embody the external changing shape of each movement in order to learn and understand it. American teachers discovered this problem and demonstrated again to explain the quality of the movement. However, the Chinese students

may still have seen changing shapes rather than moving qualities on American teachers' dancing bodies. Learning by quality thus confused the Chinese students because they struggled with mastering the movements through holding shapes.

In addition to aesthetics and kinesthetic constructions, Chinese traditional dance and American modern dance demonstrate contrasting pedagogies in transmitting corporeal knowledge of dance. This contrast engendered miscommunications between American teachers and Chinese students in the Guangdong program. I argue that Chinese traditional education focuses on the pedagogy that I call "sample teaching," in which students, through repetitively visiting the same representative example, comprehend the hidden concepts of the given materials. Comparatively, American modern dance accentuates the pedagogy that I call "variety teaching," in which teachers, by introducing various materials that share the same concept, help students comprehend the hidden concepts. Although they demonstrate different learning processes, both sample teaching and variety teaching lead to independent thinking and free expression.

When the Chinese students learned traditional dance before joining in the Guangdong program, their teachers taught them through the pedagogy of sample teaching. Accordingly, Chinese dance teachers only offered the most representative example, which crystallized essential concepts and principles. Through mastering this example, students comprehended the hidden principles and concepts and applied their understandings to many other, similar cases. Ancient Chinese texts, such as *I-Ching* and the *Analects,* have addressed the significance of sample teaching. *I-Ching* refers to it as "comprehend by analogy" (*chuleipangtong*: 触类旁通), which means to understand the unknown from the features it

shares with the known. The *Analects*, a collection of Confucius's (551–479 BC) sayings and ideas, documents an anecdote that proposes a concept "to draw inferences about other cases from one instance" (*juyifansan*: 举一反三). Confucius said that students should be able to discover other, similar cases from one given example, and if they could not, the teacher should stop providing more examples. Sample teaching, as a significant concept in Chinese traditional education, still dominated dance education in modern China. Teachers offered the essence of a certain genre through representative combinations to let students comprehend the whole category. The combinations contained movements, sequences, rhythms, music, and even facial expressions that were classics of a genre. Through mastering the typical vocabularies, characteristics, and aesthetics, students gained an overview of the whole.

Therefore, in sample teaching, physical imitation and repetition were not the goal of learning, but rather a process for the mind to unravel the concepts and logic in the given material in order to eventually achieve free thinking. The student was not automatically copying the teacher but simultaneously thinking to initiate physical movements; the body and the mind were one. When the body moved, the mind analyzed the principles and aesthetics it performed. The educational philosophies of Tai Chi, *xiqu*, and Chinese classical dance all foreground the idea that students first need to correctly embody the external shape of the teacher's demonstration and then fathom the hidden concepts based on their own embodiment. Confucius highlightes the significance of repetition in his important theory *wenguzhixin* (温故知新), which means that one can gain new insights through repetitively visiting the old materials. Every instance of repetition provides an opportunity to rethink the material and fosters the development of new thoughts.

My learning practice of the straight punch in Tai Chi exemplifies how imitation and repetition helped me understand the holistic concept and the function of *qi.* Understanding the concepts through physical imitation and repetition represents the typical way that Chinese students are expected to learn. In the very beginning, I embodied the external shape of the preparation position and the punching action, as instructed by the teacher. I positioned my feet, knees, pelvis, arms, and hands well, and then initiated a straight punch—the right elbow straightening forward, right forearm rotating until the fist was down, left arm rotating until the fist was up and returning to the side of the waist, the core rotating to the front, and the right foot pivoting on the toe. In the first several days, coordinating the arms, waist, legs, and feet occupied my mind. I had to pay equal attention to all the parts and figure out by myself how to let them coordinate harmoniously. By trying to improve with every instance of repetition, after several weeks, I felt that different body parts started to become one—they started all together, at the same speed, on their own pathways, with their own angle of rotation, and ended together in their own finishing positions. This experience led me to the philosophy of holism that a straight punch was never about the arm, but the whole body. With this embodiment and comprehension, I kept repeating straight punch every class and began to feel the travel of *qi* in my body. I realized that punching was not about the arm muscle but the burst of *qi*. When I initiated the movement, *qi* gathered together from underneath the ground to enter my body from the feet, then flowed up through the rotation of joints, and finally released from the fist. I felt an obvious increase of power through the articulation of *qi*. Soon, I realized that in Tai Chi, *qi* not only guided and empowered movements, but also connected one to the surroundings. Through the circulation of *qi* inside and outside the body, one

became a larger self by integration into the environment. These understandings helped me in learning other practices in Tai Chi, such as kicking, hand pushing, and routines. I always paid attention to all the body parts to pursue a holistic movement and sought the circulation of *qi*. Briefly, I never mechanically copied the teacher; instead, I was always thinking when I was moving. I acquired those understandings through practices on my own rather than reciting dogmas from the teacher.

Traditionally addressed as *wu* (悟), this comprehension process highlights the student's own talent and capability of understanding the spirit of the given materials. *Wu* depends on students' self-learning ability to think beyond the tangible. The depth of understanding varies according to different people's interests and potentials. Even though they conduct the same practice, the results can differ drastically.

Traditional Chinese education pursued the goal that students would eventually be able to establish their own style of art. Xun Kuang (c. 310 – c. 235 BC, alt. c. 314 – c. 217 BC), a renowned Chinese Confucian philosopher, proposed the idea that "green is made out of blue but is more vivid than blue," (*qingchuyulanshengyulan*: 青出于蓝胜于蓝), which symbolizes that students eventually surpass the teacher with their own accomplishments. This idea was based an underlying assumption that no one can create from nothing; students need to spend extensive time building the ground for creativity. Through a solid mastery and understanding of significant techniques, aesthetics, and philosophies, students should then separate from the teacher and discover their own approaches and expressions. When they are sophisticated and mature enough to gain independence, students enter a world of free-thinking and creation, where they invent new techniques, theories, and laws. The reason

that the names of various great painters, calligraphers, and poets are remembered throughout the history of China results from the fact that they established arts and theories of their own, rather than merely inheriting skills and concepts from their teachers.

Contrary to the sample teaching that the Chinese students adopted, the American teachers in the Guangdong program applied variety teaching, which introduced tools and concepts through various examples rather than one representative example. Nielsen addressed this pedagogy as "conversational dancing" that "say[s] the same thing from one day to the next, but not in the identical sequence" ("Lasting Memories" 89). The materials that the ADF teachers introduced were alternatives of the same features and concepts. For example, Stackhouse designed "slower, faster, and contrasting speeds within the phrase" and tried the same sequence with different beats of 2/4, 3/4, and 5/8.[245] Nielsen changed movements and sequences of combinations every day, letting the new one "relate to the previous one but with its own identity" ("Lasting Memories" 70). In doing so, Stackhouse, through varying rhythmic patterns and spatial features of the phrases, conveyed the key concepts of the Limon technique: the fall and rebound in response to gravity. By altering movements and sequences every day, Nielsen emphasized the concept of weight shifting.[246]

The American teachers trusted this pedagogy of variation to effectively offer tools and concepts to the Chinese students, especially in comparison to their misunderstandings of Chinese traditional education. Discovering that the Chinese students tended to imitate their demonstrations in technique classes, the ADF teachers argued that Chinese traditional teaching demonstrated a mechanical process of imitation and repetition, in which students copied exactly what the teacher did without independent thinking. For example,

"*The Chinese love to imitate; they have super respect for the 'master teacher,' and typically learn through apprenticeship. I have been told that in visual arts, the students reproduce the same painting of the master over and over, not daring for years to create a self-generated image*" (Nielsen, "Lasting Memories" 70).

"*That culture says there is only one way to do anything*" (Solomon, "Chinese/Japanese Roots and Branches: An Interview with Ruby Shang" 76).

"Asian students learn through copying. The subtle little things—the use of hands and such—they learn by imitation, by repetition. It is hard to get at their individuality" (Hoving, "A Lifetime in Dance, a Moment in Guangzhou" 63).

Therefore, the American teachers replaced Chinese traditional learning habits with the pedagogy of variation in the belief that variety teaching could fulfill their goal of teaching concepts and tools. They believed that repetition engendered fixation and allowed students to focus on polishing the already-learned movements in detail without fathoming the hidden concepts. By avoiding repetition of the same material, the American teachers could "avoid a buildup of movement or style habit" (Stackhouse, "Faces in the Moon" 89) and "make sure they [the Chinese students] really understood the principles behind a phrase" (Nielsen, "Lasting Memories" 70). In technique classes, the American teachers constantly changed the types of movements. Variation, for them, represented a valid pedagogy to transmit the spirit of modern dance to their Chinese students.

The American teachers mistakenly criticized the approaches of imitation and repetition, which I argue represented valid and effective methods in learning Chinese traditional dance. Unlike American modern dance, in which generations of artists based their philosophies on rebellion against the past, Chinese dance artists based the development of traditional dance on inheritance. They needed to preserve what already existed and then move on to create the new. To develop traditional cultures in contemporary times, imitation and

repetition were significant and necessary. In a Chinese classical dance class, students imitated their teacher to inherit the corporeal knowledge and culture for their current generation. A failure to copy their teacher by only improvising freely in class would actually jeopardize the tie between Chinese students and their own culture and encourage them lose the sense of who they were.

Interestingly, Chinese students could not adjust to variety teaching and thus approached every variation as a sample. For example, Nielsen attempted to break the students' previous learning habits by changing movement phrases every day but only saw the following:

"[The Chinese students] spent many afternoons videotaping phrases we did in class; thinking they were documenting a precise sequence of steps. I found out toward the end of my residency that the dancers had committed most of my classroom choreography to memory… I told them I didn't want them to learn my class by rote, and that's why I never repeated a phrase exactly the same way twice. I think they understood this, but they still treated the movement I made for them as a 'law' of some kind" (An Interview Report).

In other words, the Chinese students used "sample teaching" to resolve their confusion about "variety teaching." In my interview, many Chinese students recalled that the American teachers processed very quickly in every class and always changed movement phrases.[247] It seemed that the Chinese students needed to repeat the same movement phrases from time to time in order to truly understand them, especially when the phrase represented a foreign dance culture that was new to them. However, in the eyes of the American teachers, traditional Chinese culture forged a special dancing and learning habit that not only shaped a problematic approach for Chinese students to learn modern dance but also inhibited them from understanding the concepts.

Therefore, the differences between Chinese traditional dance and American modern dance in aesthetics, kinesthetic constructions, and pedagogy meant that the Chinese students experienced a painful transformation from being a Chinese traditional dancer to a modern dancer. Yan Ying and Qin Liming mentioned that their dancing bodies were accustomed to established ways of dancing, and it was quite difficult to change to other ways. Yan found that American teachers put their bodies in the movements differently from the Chinese students; however, she did not know how to dance like the American teachers. Yin Xiaorong argued that her previous folk dance training required many performative movements, such as facial expressions. In modern dance, she did not need to smile or directly address the audience as she used to, and she felt lost. Wang Mei argued that this painful experience in fact verified her transformation in the program; her previous training had grown into her body. With American teachers, she needed to peel that Chinese dance skin off and let the body grow a new, modern dance skin. One must experience such pain to achieve a transformation because the collision of corporeal concepts was intense.

Individuality and Freedom

The American teachers believed that they provided artistic tools for the Chinese students to think independently and achieve freedom. The Chinese students also believed that they experienced individual freedom by taking classes with American teachers. However, I argue that the two "freedoms" were not identical. The "freedom" that the ADF teachers believed they had introduced was self-expression; whereas the "freedom" that the Chinese students believed they had experienced was a role transition from dancer to choreographer.

The ADF teachers intended to offer a tool of self-expression to liberate the Chinese students from the constraint of traditional education and governmental control. These teachers misinterpreted Chinese traditional dance pedagogy as mere imitation and repetition, which, for them, left little room for an individual to develop his or her own critical thinking capabilities. They also interpreted the living situation of the Chinese dancers as under the political repression of the Chinese government, which prohibited free artistic expression. In contrast, the Chinese students experienced the freedom of role transition from a dancer to a choreographer because they interpreted American modern dance as a comprehensive art that combined dancing, improvisation, and composition together and allowed them to make their own artistic decisions, in comparison with their understandings of Chinese traditional dance, which exhibited dancing but no improvisation or composition. The dancer-choreographer role transition existed in both the dance systems of American modern dance and Chinese traditional dance. In the Guangdong program, the American teachers began technique training simultaneously with improvisational and compositional classes; whereas in the system of Chinese traditional dance, especially in the 1980s, the Chinese dancers began to take the role of a choreographer after ending their careers as dancers. Before joining in the Guangdong program, most Chinese students simply began the careers as dancers and, therefore, had received little compositional experience.

In the eyes of the American teachers, both the Chinese traditional pedagogy and the Chinese government repelled individual expression. Their observations in China confirmed their assumptions that Chinese traditional education neglected individual development and the cultivation of creativity. For example, Stackhouse, after observing folk dance classes at

the Guangdong Dance School, argued, "the [Chinese] teaching is to accomplish prescribed material. Individuality and creativity are not considered nor are detail and subtlety" (Report of the Guangdong program). Nielsen, after discovering the Chinese students videotaping his technique class movements, argued that "the Chinese have a very strong sense of history and 'laws' with respect to handing down ideas from generation to generation. The concept of free thinking or individual creativity is not the 'trained' way they operate" (An Interview Report). Similarly, Shang believed that expressing oneself was a cultural concept that was absent from traditional Chinese culture.[248] Hoving argued that, in China, people tended to disguise the inner self in public because they had not adjusted "to show[ing] their doubts, their fears" to others ("A Lifetime in Dance, a Moment in Guangzhou" 61). Both Stackhouse and Nielsen overlooked the fact that, in sample teaching, materials given in classes had high significance, and students' digestion of these materials represented a crucial part of the learning processes. Shang and Hoving did not know that individual expression occurred at the very end of Chinese traditional education because students needed to master a sufficient amount of knowledge to create their own. Unfamiliar with Chinese traditional dance pedagogy, the ADF teachers misread it as lacking the cultivation of independent thinking abilities.

In addition, the American teachers' experiences living in China seemed to verify the common thought that the Chinese government repressed the free expression of individual perspectives. Nielsen recalled that his open class was rescheduled to fit the leader's changing schedule.[249] Davis and Gitelman discovered that the performances in China needed to pass censorship before opening to the public.[250] Stackhouse and Shang realized that the Chinese students experienced poor living conditions; six to seven people lived in a small room. With

no hot water or washing machines, students needed to shower in cold water, and they washed clothes by hand, even in winter. Students received insufficient subsidies every month from the Guangdong Dance School and needed to dance in nightclubs to feed themselves. To ameliorate the difficulties and support the students, Stackhouse kept her refrigerator full to feed them and created a push-mop to protect the studio floor.[251] Shang bought each dormitory an electronic heater.[252] These experiences affirmed the American teachers' assumptions that "the people in China aren't free" (Nielsen, An Interview Report). In fact, unlike the ADF teachers' assumptions, the Chinese government demonstrated a changing political attitude toward the Guangdong program from supporting to supervising and again to supporting. From 1987 to 1989, the Chinese government supported the Chinese students presenting their own ideas in the Guangdong program. Tang, representing the provincial Department of Culture, wrote an article on *Guangzhou Daily* that specifically praised the Chinese students for "showing precious creative thoughts."[253] The shift occurred in June of 1989, when the Tiananmen Square protest took place. From the late spring of 1989 through early 1992, the provincial government tightened its control over the Guangdong program by sending officials who occasionally supervised students' classes and rehearsals.[254] In early 1992, Deng Xiaoping, by touring Southern China, accentuated the significance of continuing reformation and opening up, which relieved the Guangdong government's suspiciousness about the program and resulted in the establishment of the Guangdong Modern Dance Experimental Company in the spring of 1992.

In their improvisational and compositional classes, the ADF teachers attempted to introduce self-expression as an artistic tool to liberate the Chinese students. They designed

in-class exercises and after-class assignments that aimed to help the Chinese students speak for themselves, which the American teachers believed was not allowed in either Chinese traditional education or the political environment created by the Chinese government. First, in the improvisational and compositional class, American teachers avoided single answers and offered various open-ended choreographic exercises. For example, Shang introduced cumulative class exercises that focused on spontaneity and equality. With the students stand in a circle, she asked one to create a movement spontaneously, and the student next to him or her added a different improvised movement, and then the third student, until everyone in the circle added their movements to the phrase. Then, the students reversed the whole phrase.[255] This exercise rejected single, correct answers and implied that there was no right or wrong in composing a dance. Every student created a valid answer based on his or her spontaneous choice at the moment. The students' spontaneity highlighted the uncertainty of the answer because no one knew how each student would react to the invitation until he or she performed it. Shang's exercise forged the studio into a free place because, on that occasion, no student could be "wrong." In addition, the exercise proposed an open-ended practice because the number and variety of movements that students could add were infinite. The only limit was their imaginations of the possibilities. Furthermore, Shang presented the idea of equality, that each person offered an equal contribution to the creation of a phrase. The collective creation opposed hierarchy in a community and challenged the idea that dance works emerged from individual talent. Similarly, Stackhouse conveyed the idea that students needed to find their own answers as they created dances. When she introduced a study "to make a dance about an ancient poem," a student asked, "does poetry have something to do with contemporary

dance?" Stackhouse, rather than replying with "yes" or "no," let the students tell her the answer after finishing the composition. Later, the student's "answer was that the dance seemed like a silent movement poem and that the poem had become more beautiful for her" (Stackhouse, "Faces in the Moon" 89). Using a question to reply to the student's question, Stackhouse opened up possibilities for students to find their own answers and broke the format that she believed was used in Chinese traditional education, that of the instructor having the single, correct answer.

Second, the ADF teachers designed compositional exercises to help the Chinese students express themselves. They not only frequently asked the students to answer, "Who am I?" and, "What am I?",[256] but also invited them to tell the stories deeply embedded in their own hearts. For example, Nielsen asked the Chinese students to write a short memory from their childhood and, the next day, invited them to tell the stories out loud when performing their solo studies. Through pairing their personal memories with the solo studies, Nielsen believed that the qualities of the students' movements changed drastically, and "it was remarkable how their movements look[ed]" (Letter to Reinhart). The expression of the "self" empowered the Chinese students and shaped the unique qualities of their studies. Similarly, other ADF teachers assigned studies that asked students to draw inspiration from their everyday lives, such as "depict your wildest dream in a dance"[257] and a "dance of the daily routine."[258] These exercises required the students to express themselves to the audience by exposing their own experiences. By offering such studies, the ADF teachers implied that students' own lives represented the base for creating dances and, in this way, illuminated their self-expressive skills.

Third, the ADF teachers offered various choreographic approaches through composition exercises in the hope of helping the Chinese students find their own approach of expression: "I wanted the students to develop the material on their own, find their own expression" (Stackhouse, Report of the Guangdong program). They offered studies that established rules through limitation, such as "to create a solo in one place"[259] and "to create a dance with one movement."[260] They introduced exercises that drew inspirations from scores, such as "paintings study"[261] and "find movement that comes to you from anything in the room—e.g., geometrical patterns of the windows, shadows, floorboards, some clothing—whatever interests you and suggests energy, shape, or time pattern."[262] They taught the Chinese students to deconstruct movements through "space study"[263] and "theme and variation."[264] By exposing students to a variety of choreographic approaches, the ADF teachers hoped that each student could select and identify the approach that worked best for them.

However, these improvisational and compositional exercises did not always guide the Chinese students toward self-expression; often, they instead aroused a painful and confusing experience. As Shang discovered, "you can't learn from somebody else how to look inside yourself. They [the Chinese students] started to understand that this was what they needed to do, but they didn't know how to do it" (Solomon, "Chinese/Japanese Roots and Branches: An Interview with Ruby Shang" 82). On the one hand, the Chinese students believed that the American teachers subverted what that they had learned in the past; they shifted from a singular perspective to multiple lenses, from a "right or wrong" format to creating their own laws.[265] On the other hand, the Chinese students felt lost because, first,

they had to immediately find an answer to "Who am I?", a question that they had not heard or thought of before,[266] and second, they were faced with too many options and could not choose the "best" one. The Chinese students argued that discovering and expressing the "self" required a process of training rather than a moment of enlightenment. Most of the time, when taking class exercises and composing their own studies, the students still struggled to find the right answer. If the classroom did not support the existence of single right answers, the students felt lost. They asked themselves "What is my opinion?" or "What do I want?" many times, as instructed by their American teachers, but they did not always find an answer.[267] Similar to many American college students, at around 20 years old, the Chinese students were still in the process of searching for who they were. In addition, having too many options of choreographic ideas baffled them. Although American teachers opened up numerous possibilities in the hope that Chinese students could find their own voices, the Chinese students failed to choose among these options because all the ideas were equally new to them. They could not identify which approach led to expressing and inventing their own vocabularies. As a result, the Chinese students may have taken the teacher's demonstration in compositional class as the right choice and imitated that in their own choreography. Clearly, this way to learn composition betrayed the American teachers' goals, and they would then emphasize that the students needed to seek their own ideas rather than imitating the teacher. However, this requirement did not solve the students' problems because finding the answer to "Who am I?" was their own burden. The inability to offer a satisfactory answer and the urge to find one bewildered the Chinese students in improvisational and compositional classes.

In contrast to the freedom of self-expression that the ADF teachers hoped to bring,

the Chinese students experienced freedom as they transformed their roles from dancers who followed others' directions to choreographers who made their own decisions. They mistakenly compared their dancing experience in a dance institution or company with the dancing, improvising, and composing experience in the Guangdong program. Using their own experiences as the lens, they misunderstood Chinese traditional dance as singular and American modern dance as comprehensive. The fact that the Chinese students felt little freedom in their previous dancing experience did not mean that Chinese traditional pedagogy ignored individual development or the cultivation of creativity. Rather, I argue that the Chinese students were in the middle of the traditional learning process when they shifted their interest to modern dance. They had not achieved maturity in the traditional dance system to create their own dances. Accordingly, the freedom that the Chinese students experienced stemmed from the problematic comparison of misunderstood dance cultures.

All of the Chinese students had extensive dancing experience but little or no improvising and choreographing experience before moving to Guangzhou. Previously, following the directions of others occupied Chinese students' dancing lives.[268] When studying in dance institutions, they took instruction from their teachers. The institutionalization of dance created criteria and standards for each movement, in details such as the direction of the gaze, the angle of the twisting torso, and the distance between the feet. These standards, which represented the aesthetics and meaning of tradition, were transmitted from the teacher to the students through imitation and repetition. The Chinese students recalled that they needed to manipulate their bodies in the exact same position, pathway, speed, rhythm, and quality as the teacher demonstrated, and they felt they had no room to

present their own ideas. Similarly, when the Chinese students later became professional dancers in companies, they continued to follow directions from the choreographers. In China, choreographers designed all the movements first and then taught the settled sequence to the dancers. This working format differed from that of many Euro-American dance companies, where dancers suggested movement vocabularies according to the choreographer's proposed ideas. Therefore, in the eyes of the Chinese students, they had always been dancing according to other people's decisions without expressing themselves. According to Zhang Li, when she was a dance student and then a professional dancer in her company, "I only knew what the others wanted, but with no idea what I myself wanted" (Miao, personal communication.). In addition, in the 1980s, China had begun to train professional choreographers by offering BA degrees at the Beijing Dance Academy.[269] However, none of the Chinese students in the Guangdong program entered such programs. The exceptions were Wang Mei, Qin Liming, and Zhao Long, who had taken compositional classes and created one or two of their own works; other Chinese students only worked as dancers before joining in the Guangdong program.[270]

In contrast, in the Guangdong program, the Chinese students argued that they experienced freedom when dancing their own choreography.[271] Yan Ying believed, "The most inspirational part of the Guangdong program was not technical training, but improvisational and compositional classes in which the American teachers trained us to think independently" (Miao, personal communication.). Zhang Yinzhong recalled, "more than half a year later, I gradually realized that I needed to move following my heart. I gradually changed from a state of a dancer to a state of a choreographer" (Miao, personal

communication.). They attributed this freedom to modern dance, which allowed them to make their own decisions and embody their own ideas. Suggesting an open-ended answer, improvisational and compositional classes empowered the Chinese students by letting them decide what and how to dance. Each student could discover that everyone responded to the same question differently. They might find that one person defined "one place" as a spot in the center, whereas the other person viewed "one place" as sitting on the balcony throughout the entire dance. One might be interested in the teacher's sweater as a score; whereas the other preferred the keyboard on the piano. Their choreographic decisions differentiated every student from the rest and marked who they were. They tested these choreographic ideas with their own bodies to create an effective expression. The ability to decide for themselves liberated the Chinese students from their previous roles as followers.

As a result, this unequal comparison generated misinterpretations that Chinese traditional dance was physical, mechanical, and fixed, while American modern dance was spiritual, spontaneous, and changing; that Chinese dance pedagogy killed creativity, while American dance pedagogy cultivated it. As Zhang Li argued, "previously, the major task of all the students was to learn the traditional vocabulary together in the same way. However, modern dance was very free because the teachers never asked you to lift your legs higher, but to search for something inside yourself" (Miao, personal communication.). In the context of Chinese traditional dance, since they had had few chances to create dance but always learned movement vocabularies that were already made, the Chinese students assumed that traditional dance excluded individual creativity. Since they took choreographic classes through modern dance rather than through Chinese traditional dance, Chinese students believed that American

teachers cultivated their independent thinking. The Chinese students used parameters in compositional classes to measure requirements in technical training. Classes to train choreographers contained different purposes in comparison to classes to train dancers. Improvisational and compositional classes aimed to encourage students to make their own decisions; whereas technique class cultivated a capable body through clear and rigid regulations, in which students received few free choices and needed to embody the movement and aesthetic demonstrated by the teacher.[272] If they were to take on the role of choreographer for Chinese traditional dance, the Chinese students might have realized that they also needed to make their own decisions about what and how to dance. They needed to think independently with regard to selecting vocabularies, shaping characters, and structuring the plot. In this creative process of innovating traditional dance, the Chinese students might have discovered that the role of choreographer also offered the opportunity to think for themselves and discover their uniqueness.

Cultural Imperialism

The issue of cultural imperialism was the ADF's central concern, and it tried all means to avoid it from the beginning. Reinhart affirmed to Yang in his letter that the ADF aimed to "use modern dance techniques, improvisation, and composition to create modern dances that could only come out of China. That is to say, the methods of modern dance will be employed to develop dances truly Chinese in style and character" (Letter to Yang). Reinhart requested that all the visiting ADF teachers only teach composition classes rather than choreographing the Chinese students.[273] He wanted the US to only export tools, and in

doing so, the ADF avoided colonizing the Chinese people via American modern dance. The ADF teachers, following Reinhart's advice, focused on teaching compositional classes to the Chinese students. Although each teacher did choreograph at least one piece for the Chinese students at Yang's request, they devoted the majority of the time to teaching classes and guiding students' studies. A study referred to an in-process short dance that resulted directly from a compositional assignment. Carefully communicating with the Chinese students as mentors rather than people imposing American modern dance on the students, the ADF teachers believed that they avoided cultural imperialism. Stackhouse believed that she refrained from cultural imperialism because it was the Chinese people, not the Americans, who initiated this exchange. "Would I be involved in 'cultural imperialism?' Probably not, as the invitation actually originated with Yang Meiqi, director of the Guangdong Dance Academy" (Stackhouse, "Faces in the Moon" 85). Stackhouse also wanted to change the name from "Chinese modern dance" to "Chinese contemporary dance" to avoid the implication of an "American import."[274] Gitelman did not believe in cultural imperialism because she saw the Chinese students drawing references from their own cultures: "When the dancers invent they do not borrow idiosyncratic gesture from any American techniques I could recognize… the dancers were adapting movement from their training in what has come to be called traditional Chinese Dance" ("Some Reflections on Modern Dance in Guangzhou" 57). She discovered that, based on their own decisions and creativity, the Chinese students used modern dance choreographic concepts to reshape the vocabularies of Chinese traditional dance. This choreographic approach, for Gitelman, produced modern dance that belonged to China and therefore disproved cultural imperialism. In 1991, when the Chinese students made

their American debut at the ADF and introduced their modern dance works created under the inspiration of the ADF teachers, the program said, "the goal was not to impose American dance upon Chinese bodies but to give the young dancers the tools with which to create a Chinese modern dance language based on their own traditions and culture." Identifying the works to be presented as based on Chinese traditions and cultures, the ADF announced to the American audiences that the Guangdong program signified a non-imperialist cultural production between the US and China.

However, although the Chinese students drew references from their traditional dance to create modern dance works, this approach emerged from the ADF teachers' suggestions instead of the students' own self-aware choice. Despite their good will, American teachers made most decisions for the Chinese students about how to create Chinese modern dance. From the beginning of the program, in their compositional exercises, American teachers provided an Orientalist example of Chinese modern dance based on their limited knowledge of Chinese culture. In the fall of 1987, Stackhouse gave assignments to develop choreography based on ancient poems about the moon.[275] Similarly, Davis demonstrated how to make a dance by analyzing the lines, colors, and texture of a porcelain vase, as well as Chinese characters on a wall.[276] In these exercises, American teachers objectified Chinese traditions such as the moon, a porcelain vase, and the shapes of Chinese characters, without rendering these items their original cultural meaning in the context of the Chinese society.

Although it is questionable whether the American teachers knew that they offered Orientalist exercises, they did recognize their ignorance of Chinese culture. Stackhouse, Nielsen, Gitelman, and Hodes all acknowledged their limited knowledge about Chinese

culture in their letters to Reinhart. The assignments represented the best that they could do to exemplify how to create Chinese modern dance. American teachers hoped that Chinese students, who possessed a deeper understanding of Chinese culture, could gain inspiration from the assignments and explore their own versions of Chinese modern dance in different and profound ways. However, Chinese students, unable to step out of their American teachers' conceptual frame, revisited tradition through objects as well. Chinese students followed their traditional pedagogy of "sample teaching" in modern dance composition class. They approached learning modern dance composition in the same way as learning traditional dance. They saw the approaches offered by American teachers as the most important and "correct" way. Most of the time, Chinese students imitated American teachers' Orientalist perspectives, and few challenged those methods. They did not know that the American teachers expected them to explore their individual expressions beyond what the teacher could provide. They rarely thought creatively or independently to go beyond the guidance and ideas given by their American teachers. Therefore, when American teachers, using a good will approach, provided a problematic example, such as approaching Chinese tradition through geometric forms rather than seeking cultural meanings, Chinese students regarded that example as the law and objectified Chinese traditional culture.

In addition, the ADF's endeavor to avoid cultural imperialism generated a problem for the Chinese students to overly repeat practicing dance studies without transforming them into real pieces. The Chinese students discovered that, in the second half of the Guangdong program, the ADF teachers began to repeat similar choreographic concepts and the level of difficulty as the first group teachers.[277] They felt that they spent the majority time

repetitively learning concepts that they already knew but had little time to explore the new field of developing their own pieces from dance studies. Qu Xiao argued that she had always been creating dance studies with different American teachers until a year after the establishment of the Guangdong Modern Dance Company in 1993, when she finally developed one of her studies into a real piece.[278] Qin Liming believed that, although the Chinese students did begin to develop their own works in the second half of the program, their pieces still looked like studies because the Chinese students spent most of their time taking compositional classes with the ADF teachers.[279]

Reinhart especially insisted to the second group teachers that they should only teach compositional classes, overlooking that neither he nor Yang actually created a curriculum for the Guangdong program in the first place. When establishing the program, the ADF and the Guangdong Dance School only designed a calendar about when American teachers would come, how long they would stay, and when the students should graduate, without designing specific courses for each year or assigning levels of difficulty. Both Reinhart and Yang based their plan of the Guangdong program on the curricular structure of the ADF's summer program, which focused on showing the variety of modern dance within a short period of time of six weeks and not letting students deeply engage with the materials. Therefore, the Guangdong program used a four-year degree program schedule to frame the courses of a summer camp. Reinhart and Yang lacked support to help them develop a systematic process that could build up the body and mind of a professional modern dancer. They created a degree project as a lengthened summer camp and then improvised throughout the process to cultivate progressive changes and meet professional requirements. Although

the Guangdong program enlightened the Chinese students by providing variety, it failed to sequence the teachers and courses to guarantee students' continuous progress. Therefore, throughout the program, each American teacher had to improvise teaching the Chinese students because he or she could not know what exactly the others had taught. Every teacher needed to test the students with a beginning-level compositional class and then designed the next day's exercises based on the students' reactions. Therefore, when the second group of teachers discovered that the Chinese students had already mastered creating studies and needed to develop pieces, they were in the middle or even two-thirds of the way through their residency.[280] These American teachers identified the problem that the Chinese students produced many interesting ideas without rendering a good sequence and structure. Starting in the fourth year, the American teachers argued that Chinese students should stop producing dance studies and invite an artistic director to help to transform their studies into pieces.[281] Students should spend most of their time in rehearsals rather than taking composition classes, they argued: "The students are now at a stage of development where they need individual and specific criticism in their daily class if they are to improve and evolve—and this is a problem if they have a new teacher every so often" (Hochoy, Report to the ADF on the Guangdong program).[282] However, the ADF and the Guangdong Dance School did not solve this problem due to a lack of experience in creating a degree program.

By attempting to avoid cultural imperialism, the ADF teachers may still have generated it under good wills. Exemplified by Reinhart and Gitelman, the ADF and faculty members understood cultural imperialism as Chinese dancers imitating American modern dance vocabularies, such as movements from American teachers' choreography or Graham

technique. Therefore, they intended to introduce only concepts and principles that served as "tools" to help the Chinese students create their own modern dance vocabularies. However, cultural imperialism not only meant the imitation of movement vocabularies but also the forced acceptance of American values. In other words, was imposing American values of individuality and freedom on the Chinese students a form of cultural imperialism? Wang Mei, the oldest Chinese student, mentioned in our interview, "American teachers always told us what to do. I told Yang many times that we should not always follow their ideas" (Miao, personal communication.). American teachers may have repetitively told the Chinese students to express their own ideas in dance in the belief that Chinese traditional education, by focusing on imitation and repetition, failed to cultivate independent thinking. Their guidance towards American values might help and liberate the Chinese students, as the ADF teachers hoped; yet it could also weigh American pedagogy and values over the misunderstood Chinese pedagogy and philosophies. It seemed that the students should enter and accept the evaluation standard of independent thinking of the American modern dance system to receive acknowledgement from the American teachers. If some Chinese students demonstrated a group decision or a value of collectivism, could the American teachers respect them as much as they did those who pursued individuality? By establishing "finding yourself" as the criterion in the studio, the ADF teachers may have imposed an American value of individualism on the Chinese students. In this transnational communication, the participating countries had unequal power, and the ADF teachers may have esteemed their value system over the Chinese one in order to create changes. The nature of both American teachers and Chinese students' confusion was not only rooted in the difference between American modern

dance and Chinese traditional dance as two distinct dance systems, but also in their unfamiliarity about each other's dance system. Both teachers and students did not know that the two dance systems differed in aesthetic principles, kinesthetic constructions, pedagogical approaches, and concepts of individuality and freedom. They exchanged information in the studio from the standpoint of their own dance systems, and, therefore, generated miscommunications and misunderstandings.

Chapter Four: Chineseness, the Traditional, and the Modern: Contrasting Receptions of *Situation*, *Square Bottom Basket and Bamboo*, and *Tide*

In the previous chapter, I specifically examined the curriculum of the ADF/Guangdong Dance School collaboration in order to demonstrate the miscommunications and misunderstandings regarding aesthetics, kinesthesia, pedagogy, concepts of individuality and freedom. This chapter analyzes the reception of the same Chinese modern dance works that resulted from the curriculum, a reception which I argue demonstrates misunderstandings of Chineseness, the traditional, and the modern. I use the contrasting reviews from American and Chinese critics of three group dances— *Situation* (*chujing*: 处境, 1988)*, Square Bottom Basket and Bamboo* (*kuangyuzhu:* 筐与竹, 1990), and *Tide* (潮汐, *chaoxi*, 1988)—as examples to discuss the contrasting positions of the US and Chinese with regards to individual expression versus psychological abstraction, the traditional versus the modern, and similarity versus uniqueness. The reflections of the critics exemplify that misunderstandings were perpetuated not only in the educational process but also in the reception of Chinese modern dance works.

I argue that the ADF teachers introduced two broad choreographic tools to help the Chinese students create their own modern dance works: self-expression and reference to cultural symbols. Self-expression entailed the Chinese students directly presenting themselves—who they were, their feelings, and their personal experience—on stage. Shang, Nielsen, Hoving, Hochoy, and Gitelman all offered compositional exercises and assignments that guided the Chinese students to discover who they were and encouraged them to project

themselves directly to audiences. To refer to cultural symbols meant to take a scientific perspective to study the external geometric components of an item belonging to Chinese culture, such as a porcelain vase, and then to embody or create choreography based on the discoveries. Stackhouse, Nielsen, Davis, and Hodes all gave compositional exercises and assignments that inspired Chinese students to apply an unconventional, deconstructive approach to Chinese traditional items by analyzing the external geometric components rather than reading the cultural meanings. By teaching the tools of self-expression and reference to cultural symbols, the American teachers believed that they avoided cultural imperialism while helping Chinese students create modern dance based on their own traditions and cultures.

Using the tools from their ADF teachers, the Chinese students created many Chinese modern dance works and staged them across different events and locations. Among the performances that the Guangdong program staged from 1987 to 1991, three nightlong performances established its fame by reaching a wide range of audiences. The first was in Beijing, in the summer of 1988, when the Chinese students, at the end of their first year, presented a demonstration at the second Taoli Cup National Dance Competition—the Oscars of dance in China. The audience included Chinese dance scholars, critics, choreographers, dancers, and students from leading dance institutions. In this performance, the Guangdong program staged a thirty-minute demonstration of modern dance technique class, a twenty-minute demonstration of solo and duet studies created by the Chinese students, a duet, *Brother*, choreographed by Shang, and a group dance, *Tide*, choreographed by Wang Mei. The Guangdong program's second influential performance came in the summer of 1990, when the Chinese students at the end of their third year staged a performance in Beijing. As

the program's first performance in Beijing since the Tiananmen Square protest, it attracted many of Chinese dance scholars, critics, choreographers, and dancers.[283] The Chinese students staged two nightlong performances—*Urban Romance*, choreographed by Willy Tsao, the artistic director of CCDC, and "The Night of Chinese Modern Dance Works," a nightlong performance composed of six original works created by the Chinese students: *Square Bottom Basket and Bamboo*, *Shadow (duet), Situation, Old Night, The Sun Always Rise,* and *Tide*. The third significant nightlong performance took place in 1991 at the ADF. On July 18th, 19th, and 20th 1991, the Guangdong program staged their ADF debut at the Page Auditorium at Duke University, as a concluding performance to celebrate the four-year collaboration between the ADF and the Guangdong Dance School. Many American critics watched this performance and wrote articles about it.[284] At the ADF in 1991, the Chinese students staged seven pieces (listed here in the sequence of their performance): *Square Bottom Baskets and Bamboo*, *Impressions of Taiji*, *Shadow (trio), Situation, Mountains, Talking to Herself (Old Night),* and *Tide*.[285] Four of these works were shown in 1990 in Beijing: *Situation, Square Bottom Baskets and Bamboo*, *Talking to Herself (Last Night),* and *Tide*.[286] I have chosen the three group dances—*Situation, Square Bottom Baskets and Bamboo*, and *Tide*—as examples to analyze their contrasting receptions in the US and China.

Situation, Square Bottom Baskets and Bamboo, and *Tide* demonstrated Chinese students' application of the tools and materials given by their American teachers for the creation of Chinese modern dance works, something which received contrasting receptions from American and Chinese critics. *Situation* illustrated students' application of the tool of self-expression. American critics applauded the piece because they adopted a lens based on

individual expression when reading the choreography, and interpreted *Situation* as expressing the Chinese students' longing for freedom. By contrast, although Chinese critics praised *Situation*, too, they adopted a lens based on psychological abstraction and read *Situation* as demonstrating clear choreographic logic in its abstraction of psychological changes in human beings. *Square Bottom Basket and Bamboo* illustrated Chinese students' use of the tool of referring to cultural symbols. American critics spoke highly of the piece because they themselves accessed Chinese tradition through objectified cultural symbols and regarded tradition as fixed. They saw *Square Bottom Basket and Bamboo* as a successful experimentation in mobilizing and modernizing Chinese tradition. By contrast, Chinese critics criticized the piece because, in China, tradition existed in concepts, and was constantly evolving. In the eyes of the Chinese critics, *Square Bottom Basket and Bamboo* exhibited an Orientalist perspective on Chinese tradition and failed to address the contemporary people's urban lives—something that the Chinese critics had hoped to see. *Tide* did not use the tools of self-expression or reference to cultural symbols, but instead adapted Humphrey-Limon modern dance technique vocabularies, that the choreographer learned from the ADF teachers, to address socialist aesthetics, the traditional theme of nature, and the principle of symmetry. American critics neglected *Tide* in their reviews, which seemed to imply their dissatisfaction that the piece had imitated American modern dance without choreographing unique Chinese characteristics. They defined the similarities a Chinese modern dance should share with American modern dance as resting in concepts of free expression and located the uniqueness of Chinese modern dance in traditional cultural symbols and the subversion of socialist ideologies. By contrast, Chinese critics read *Tide* as successfully using modern dance

elements to choreograph the cultural uniqueness of China. They defined the similarities that Chinese modern dance should share with American modern dance through its adaptation of American modern dance movements and choreography, while locating its uniqueness in Chinese socialist culture and traditional concepts. In what follows, I respectively analyze reviews of *Tide, Square Bottom Basket and Bamboo*, and *Situation* in two stages. First, I demonstrate how the dance appeared differently in the eyes of American and Chinese critics, such that they offered contrasting receptions. Second, I analyze the socio-historical factors in each country that informed their contrasting reviews.

***Situation*: Individual Expression Versus Psychological Abstraction**

In this section, I analyze American and Chinese critics' contrasting receptions of *Situation* (*chujing*: 处境, 1988) and discuss their different interpretive lenses for reading dance, in particular regarding the use of the tool of self-expression to create Chinese modern dance. *Situation*, a group dance choreographed by twin sisters Zhang Yi and Zhang Li, premiered in Guangzhou on November 18th 1988. In the early fall of 1988, Yang received an opportunity to stage a nightlong performance at the Huanghua theater in Guangzhou. For this opportunity, she asked the ADF teacher in residency at that time, Douglas Nielsen, to choreograph works for the Chinese students and requested that the Chinese students create and perform their own works, too. Zhang Yi and Zhang Li chose their female classmates as the cast and created *Situation.* On November 18th, the Guangdong program staged Nielsen's seven new works: five group dances performed by the Chinese students and two solo pieces performed by Nielsen himself. Eight students—Wang Mei, Yin Xiaorong, Qu Xiao, Jiao Jun,

Lin Li, Ma Shouze, Li Peng, Zhang Yi, and Zhang Li—presented their duets, trios, and group dances, including Zhang Yi and Zhang Li's *Situation*.[287] Receiving acclaim in 1988, *Situation* was restaged in Beijing in 1990, and at the ADF in 1991. The 1990 version seen by the Chinese critics and the 1991 version seen by the American critics shared the same vocabulary, structure, and music; the only difference was the cast number: eight in the 1990 version, and six in 1991.

Situation illustrated how the Chinese students applied the tool of self-expression to create Chinese modern dance works. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the ADF teachers used various improvisational exercises and compositional assignments to help the Chinese students to reveal themselves to their audiences. In my interview, Zhang Li argued that Shang strongly inspired her to understand the meaning of self-expression in an assignment, "dance your wildest dream," through which Zhang realized she could create a dance by drawing ideas directly from her own daily experience.[288] Previously, when the Zhang sisters were professional dancers in a well-established dance troupe in Beijing, they had to express their own feelings and emotions through the lens of a character, because dances created at that time adopted a realism approach. They needed to imagine the emotion of a character in a particular situation in a story and locate a similar emotion that they had experienced themselves. Then, they transmitted their own feelings into the character in the performance. On stage, the performers needed to hide the self behind the character; they were not themselves, but the characters in those stories. By contrast, in the Guangdong program, Zhang Yi and Zhang Li learned to directly present their own personal feelings and experiences in dance. They did not perform anyone else but were only themselves on stage;

they did not tell other people's stories, but only their own to the audiences. Without character and narration, Zhang Yi and Zhang Li revealed themselves in *Situation*. In my interviews, they argued that *Situation* expressed their situation: "we fight for a way to escape from the various constraint and pressures of the world" (Zhang Yi);[289]"Chinese artists lacked the right of expression" (Zhang Li).[290]

Situation received positive reviews from both American and Chinese critics, for strongly contrasting reasons, which I argue stemmed from American and Chinese critics' different lenses for the interpretation of self-expression in this work. American critics interpreted their self-expression through the frame of individual expression and observed that Zhang Yi and Zhang Li longed for a freedom that they did not enjoy in a socialist China. This perspective stemmed from two understandings held by American critics': one was the impression of China as a socialist country with a controlling nature over its people; the other was their understanding of modern dance as an art rooted in free expression. This interpretation of individual expression wrongly interpreted foreign modern dance based on the country that the dance originated from, offering an oversimplified reading. By contrast, Chinese critics interpreted the twin sisters' self-expression through a lens of psychological abstraction, believing that Zhang Yi and Zhang Li abstracted human psychological changes using modern dance's choreographic approaches. This interpretative framework originated from the fact that choreographic approaches were the most urgently required element of American modern dance in China, which, for the Chinese critics, could help to legitimize dance as an independent discipline and explore the human being's psychological world. This perspective, based on psychological abstraction, demonstrated the problem to lose the

potential contributions that modern dance concepts could make to dance development in China. In this section, I conduct my respective analysis of American and Chinese critics in three stages. First, I analyze what they saw on stage in order to give positive reviews. Second, I analyze the interpretative frameworks they adopted to evaluate *Situation.* Third, I discuss the potential problems in these frameworks.

American critics believed that *Situation* conveyed a clear message about freedom. In their eyes, the movement vocabularies in *Situation* seemed to indicate the Chinese students' longing for free expression. For example,

"[Situation is] the program's most eloquent piece. The sister team Zhang Yi and Zhang Li choreographed with simplicity and power. Six women (Gu Wenhao, YanYing, Ms. Huang, Ying Xiaorong, Qu Xiaohong, Zhang Yang) in skirts backed in within chain formation, each holding the loose hair of the woman before her. The idea of pain or pulling was subsumed into the beauty of the design. …Each covered the mouth of her neighbor, a motif exampled upon when the women then seemed to silence themselves with quivering chops of the hand, covering their own mouths. The formal patterns became more complex, the message about freedom to speak all the more profound" (Kisselgoff C13).

"*The political message seemed very significant in another dance entitled situation…At the end, a simple but powerful message about freedom to speak was conveyed*" (Won, "China's Guangdong Dance Troupe Performs").

Specifically, American critics interpreted the movements—of the hand covering the mouth, pulling the hair, and its falling and rebounding—as signifying speaking, restraint, and struggle.[291] First, for American critics, a hand covering the mouth signified the inability to speak. In this view, a female dancer standing downstage right shook her hand in front of her widely opened mouth, as if trying to take words out from her throat. Another two dancers, and then the whole group, repeated this movement, seemingly to convey their will to communicate. All of a sudden, the dancers pressed their shaking hands onto their mouths, as

if stifling their own voices. Their hands then gradually slid down and slightly patted their chests, as if their heartbeat demonstrated their longing to speak. Then, forming a row, each dancer reached their right arm to cover the next person's mouth, as if an outside force was silencing their individual voices. The dancers stepped back to escape from the hand covering their mouth and returned, in unison, to cover their own mouths, as if to show that they failed to break away from repression. In the end, gathering the upstage center, the dancers overlapped two hands on their mouths and shifted their gaze from side to side, seemingly to indicate searching for rescue, or, in the eyes of American critics, the opportunity to speak. Second, American critics interpreted hair pulling, a significant vocabulary in *Situation*, as denoting restraint. In this view, dancers walked backward to enter the stage in a row, each pulling the hair of the person in front, as if forced to move against their own will. They clenched their fists tightly and dragged the person in front along. Then, dancers gathered in the center and pulled their own hair up, as if to announce the failure of their escape. In the eyes of American critics, these hair-pulling phrases might symbolize control through the infliction of pain and the incapability of the individual to escape from that control. Third, in *Situation*, American critics might discover the Humphrey-Limon technique of fall and rebound that, for them, implied the experience of a struggle. In this view, the side fall, dropped chest, and suspension seemed to indicate a failure or submission. The raised spine, rebound, and jump seemed to suggest resistance and rebellion. The repetition of fall and rebound, as a result, seemed to portray a struggle to fight against repression in the eyes of American critics.

American critics read all three elements—a hand covering the mouth, the pulling of

hair, and fall and rebound—as expressions of a longing for freedom because they interpreted these movements through the lens of individual expression. American critics' impression of modern China as a country with no individual freedom, and their knowledge of modern dance as representing individual free expression, formed an interpretative framework for reading dance that allowed them read Chinese modern dance through the lens of free expression. In the US, socialist China was defined as valuing the group over the individual and repressing freedom of expression. The American critics might have believed that the Chinese people lived a life under control, deprived of opportunities to speak their personal thoughts in public. In comparison, as evidenced in Roger Copeland's review, "[m]odern dance would seem to celebrate everything that China…discourages" through highlighting "deeply personal ways", "inner psychological concerns", "abstraction", and "formalism" ("China Steps into Modern Dance, Warily"). To liberate the Chinese people through the concepts of modern dance seemed reasonable and effective for American critics. In fact, this belief in liberating the Chinese people functioned as a significant motivation for American participants throughout the Guangdong program. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the ADF expected to export American values of individuality and free expression to China. As mentioned in Chapter Three, American teachers attempted to liberate the Chinese students and encouraged self-expression through improvisational and compositional exercises. Likewise, American critics also wanted to see how modern dance inspired individuals in China to express their own thoughts. They regarded free expression as the most valuable contribution of modern dance in China.

Within this interpretive lens of individual expression, those Chinese modern dance

works that seemingly exhibited the theme of freedom received the greatest acclaim in the US. As one such dance, *Situation* was discussed at length in every American review of the Guangdong program's performance. Seeing movement vocabularies that hinted at speaking, restraint, and struggle, almost every American critic focused on the political significance of *Situation* as a work spreading democracy in China.[292] James Sterngold read *Situation* as the Chinese people's resistance against political control by their government.[293] Anna Kisselgoff defined *Situation* as the most "eloquent" and "powerful" piece of the night due to of its "message about freedom" (Kisselgoff C13). In the eyes of the American critics, the theme of freedom demonstrated that political restraint truly existed in China and that learning American modern dance offered the Chinese students an opportunity to express their own voices.[294] The piece seemed to resolve the Chinese–American ideological conflict in a way that American critics expected—Chinese students adopted free expression to subvert Chinese governmental restraint.

Even though it made perfect sense to American critics, I argue that their lens of individual expression oversimplified their reading of Chinese modern dance. This framework focused on reading a given dance based on the presumed political identity of the performer/choreographer, rather than focusing at the choreography itself. In this view, where individuals originated played a decisive role in all their choreographic decisions. Knowing that *Situation* was choreographed and performed by dancers from China, the American critics assumed that Chinese people longed for the freedom they did not have, and that the choreography of *Situation* expressed this longing. Chinese modern dance with a focus on individual expression limited a dance's value solely to its subversion of the government and

overlooked its other cultural and historical contributions. If the cast was instead made up of white bodies and the choreographer was a white artist, and the same movement vocabularies and choreography were retained, would American critics interpret *Situation* in this way?

This interpretative framework which reads Chinese modern dance in terms of individual expression still plays a dominant role in the West today. I offer two examples to analyze how this perspective and standard has influenced Western critics' reviews of Chinese modern dance. When Sang Ji Jia (*Sangjijia:* 桑吉加), a Tibetan Chinese modern dancer, performed his solo *Searching* (*mi:* 觅) in the US in the late 1990s, American critics regarded the piece as an attempt to express the liberation of the Tibetan people against the communist party in China. Their reasons stemmed from the identity of the dancer/choreographer, who came from Tibet, as well as the use of a solo dance form that American critics believed suggested the theme of individuality.[295] This way of reading the dance overlooked Sang's artistic effort and the piece's complex cultural contributions in China. Sang might have wanted to pursue artistic innovations in *Searching* by choreographing on-floor movements that other Chinese modern dance choreographers neglected at that time. He might have designed the movement path and rhythmic pattern to explore a Buddhist idea of spiritual enlightenment. *Searching* might have offered a new choreographic approach to the production of Chinese modern dance by drawing inspirations from traditional religions. However, with their interpretative framework focused on individual expression, American critics reduced *Searching* solely to a political meaning. It appeared that, whatever Sang performed on stage, his ethnic identity and the solo format may have determined the meaning of the dance for American critics.

Another example occurred, in 2016, at a roundtable that I curated in the SDHS/CORD annual conference. A scholar from Europe argued that Tao Ye, the artistic director of an outstanding modern dance company Tao Theater in China, choreographed many of his group dances in unison because Tao and his company came from China. The scholar explained that China was a country that favored the group, as socialism accentuated group decisions. According to her, this orientation toward social groups influenced Tao's choreographic choice for dancing in unison. When another American scholar asked about dancers performing in unison in Merce Cunningham's or Paul Taylor's group works, the European scholar did not have an answer. Group dance, a common form that any modern dance company would use, and dancing in unison, a choreographic choice that many choreographers around the world have employed, were labeled with specific political meaning only because Tao Ye came from China. Again, the European scholar neglected the individual artistic effort that Tao devoted to choreographing his works and his contributions to cultural development in China. Tao may have wished to explore possibilities within limitations, and a group of dancers, rather than a single dancer, could help him to better conduct this experiment. He may have set out to escape from telling stories, a rising trend of Chinese modern dance in the twenty-first century, and to pursue abstracted shapes of the body. However, the European critic's identity-oriented perspective destroyed the cultural complexity of Tao's works and simplified the interpretation of Chinese modern dance works.

The lens of individual expression limited the ways that American or European critics could interpret dance. It seems that a Cold War ideology still exists in the West and influences how American critics view Chinese modern dance. By contrast, in China, the

policy of reform and opening up has reshaped the Chinese people's hostile attitude toward capitalist countries by welcoming capitalism, and Western modern arts, into the country. China has reoriented itself toward capitalism and thus diminished the influence of Cold War ideologies.

In contrast to American critics, who saw in the expressive movements of *Situation* a longing for freedom, Chinese critics observed a logical choreography and the abstraction of psychological states.[296] For Chinese critics, *Situation* successfully exemplified how to use modern dance's choreographic approaches to explore the nature of dance and to reveal the psychological states of human beings.

"*Although Situation does not have a specific character or plot, it presents a clear logic of changing the spatial features of the movements in many layers. This variation of space is unique for modern dance and stems from the abstraction, and symbolic expression, of psychological thoughts and internal logic*" (D. Zhao, A5).

Exemplified by Zhao, *Situation* displayed to Chinese critics a clear choreographic logic with movement themes and their variations. In this view, the piece presented three movement themes—the hand covering the mouth, the pulling of hair, and fall and rebound. Each theme contained its own varied forms that unfolded in the movement vocabularies of *Situation*. The theme of the hand covering the mouth exhibited its variations of space, rhythm, and driving force. For example, dancers extended the space by raising an arm to reach up high or altered the pathways of movement by circling their arms in front of their mouths. They varied the speed by shaking their hands fast or raising them slowly. Dancers changed the driving force by forcefully pressing two hands on their mouths and repeating the same movement again. The variations in hair pulling included dancers twisting their bodies while others continued

pulling another person's hair, walking in a different direction diagonally, and stretching their own hair up. The theme of fall and rebound demonstrated variations in scale. Dancers dropped their heads, their upper bodies, or their whole weight on the floor. They rebounded to raise their torsos, to sit on the floor, to stand up, or to jump. Accordingly, in the eyes of Chinese critics, the choreography of *Situation* demonstrated clear logic and trajectory of development from movements themes to their variations.

In addition, in *Situation*, Chinese critics observed the abstraction of psychological states and inner feelings embodied in contrasts of space, rhythm, and movement quality. In the eyes of the Chinese critics, the piece presented no stories or characters but instead particular sequencing of movements that, for them, suggested emotional changes. For instance, dancers, scattered around, suddenly gathered to a small spot, seemingly to portray a sense of tension. Dancers performed sharp turns to face in different directions, as if displaying uncertainty and confusion. From a static posture, they burst into fast running which, for Chinese critics, might symbolize entering a chaotic state. The Chinese critics might interpret the phrase of a gentle pat on the chest, followed by a forceful falling on the floor, as implying an emotional change. Accordingly, Chinese critics saw arrangements of movements and moving pathways that hinted at certain psychological states. *Situation*, in their eyes, abstracted specific emotions through choreographing contrasts.

Chinese critics read *Situation* as demonstrating logical choreography and the abstraction of psychological states—rather than conveying a message about freedom—because they adopted an interpretive lens of psychological abstraction to read the movements and the choreography. In this view, choreographic approaches represented the

most urgently sought after foreign import for dance development in China at that time. Modern dance choreography, for Chinese critics and scholars, could satisfy two requirements for their cultural development in the 1980s. First, they believed that modern dance choreography focused on the human body itself, something which could assist Chinese choreographers to explore the nature of dance and develop dance as a discipline independent from literature and music. In China, the 1980s witnessed a growing desire to legitimize dance as a self-sufficient discipline. Chinese choreographers and critics argued for the unique value of dance when separated from politics and literature.[297] Awakening from the Cultural Revolution, they realized that dance had served as a tool for political propaganda and had lost its independence. For Chinese scholars and critics, Chinese choreographers during the Cultural Revolution had followed governmental revolutionary ideologies to convey political meanings by choreographing narrations and archetypes. On many occasions, choreographers needed to use pantomime to decode the story. Dance thus only functioned as a medium for making political content understandable for the masses.[298] In this historical context, dance necessarily relied on politics and literature to fulfill its existence. Therefore, in the 1980s, Chinese scholars and critics argued for disconnecting dance from politics and other art forms and proposed exploring the nature of dance and its own logic as a unique art form. Modern dance offered significant theoretical and practical support to their inquiries during this period. Entering China through various workshops, performances, and seminars in the early 1980s, modern dance demonstrated to Chinese critics that dance could convey meaning without reference to literature or music; and that the human body itself, the persistence of its physical articulations through space and time, embodied the nature of dance. This scientific study of

dance brought insights to Chinese scholars, critics, and choreographers' own explorations, as they legitimized dance as an independent discipline. Interestingly, rather than abandoning their approach of realism by creating new traditional and unconventional dances in the 1980s, Chinese choreographers absorbed modern dance choreography into this approach. In the 1980s, when creating classical dance, folk dance, and experimental dances, choreographers retained the archetypical characters and narration while simultaneously expanding variations in movement vocabularies and highlighting the physicality of the human body. Supporting these changes, Chinese critics helped shape the general belief at that time that modern dance choreography supported Chinese dance artists in establishing dance as an independent discipline. As such, when they viewed the Guangdong program's performance, Chinese critics reviewed *Situation* in a positive light; the piece illustrated dance's own logic by applying modern dance's choreographic focus on theme and variation.

Second, Chinese scholars and critics believed that modern dance choreography focused on abstraction, which could help them to choreograph human beings' inner feelings of emerging interest at that time. In the 1980s, after the Cultural Revolution, China witnessed shifting interest such that the human, instead of politics, is the major subject of literature and art. This phenomenon stemmed from an awareness among Chinese intellectuals and artists that they were living humans who experienced complicated psychological shifts, something that differed from the image of people portrayed in revolutionary arts. Chinese intellectuals and artists explored their inner world because "psychological states demonstrate a closer relationship to who we are." "Therefore," it was recognized, as a method for exploring a more truthful and meaningful representation of humanity, "showing the psychological

working process has gained increasing attention and significance in art and literature" (Eryan Hu, "Portraying the Character's Internal Psychological Changes—Discussing Psychological Activity" 32). In the 1980s, modern dance provided a useful method of abstraction to help Chinese choreographers explore human interiority. They learned from modern dance that sequencing abstract movements could effectively visualize a thought process. Using realism to reframe the choreographic approach to abstraction, Chinese choreographers revealed the psychological struggles of a character by isolating their emotions from the plot and displaying that struggle as the sole content of the dance. They designed contrasts in space, rhythm, and movement qualities that signified the internal emotional turmoil of the character. In doing so, Chinese choreographers opened a new field in dance creation and localized modern dance in China. Chinese critics actively participated in this transformation in choreography by acknowledging that the method of abstraction could effectively portray characters' psychological states. As a result, Chinese critics gave positive reviews because the piece exhibited abstracted movements that, for them, symbolized psychological and emotional changes in human beings.

Can the Chinese people separate modern dance choreography from American values and only borrow choreographic approaches, not ideas around individual free expression? Based on their own needs for cultural development, Chinese artists and critics attempted to only learn choreographic approaches without the idea of individual expression, which was China's way to localize Western modern dance, adopting the mainstream ideology of "using the foreign for Chinese purposes" in the 1980s. However, the nature of modern dance was a set of concepts. Modern dance's choreographic approaches emerged from

American artists' creative impulses, that themselves served self-expression and rebellion against the past. Even though Chinese artists wanted to inherit only the approaches useful to them, modern dance choreography was tightly connected to concepts of individuality and free expression.

In a word, American and Chinese critics offered positive reviews of *Situation* for different reasons because they approached this piece through different interpretative lenses. The American critics' lens revealed individual expression, whereas the Chinese critics' lens revealed psychological abstraction. Therefore, American critics applauded *Situation* for its message of freedom embodied in symbolic, expressive movements, whereas Chinese critics praised *Situation* for its logical choreography and abstraction of psychological states. On the one hand, individual expression lens oversimplifies Chinese modern dance and neglects the individual artist's contributions to cultural development in China; on the other, the psychological abstraction lens only focuses on the "material level" of American modern dance and overlooks the potential contributions of American values to dance development in China. Despite these contrasting receptions from critics in the US and China, the tool of self-expression generated a new trend of modern dance in China, in which Chinese choreographers used their personal experiences and feelings to create dance. This approach opened new possibilities for Chinese artists to talk about their experiences of abortion, confusion over sexual orientation, insomnia, and homesickness, which together constituted an important part of the diverse Chinese modern dance works in China in the 1990s and twenty-first century.

Square Bottom Basket and Bamboo: The Traditional Versus The Modern

In this section, I analyze the contrasting receptions of *Square Bottom Basket and Bamboo* (*kuangyuzhu:* 筐与竹, 1990), which demonstrate American and Chinese critics' different understandings of the traditional and the modern. *Square Bottom* gained acclaim in the US but was criticized in China. It was a group dance co-created, in 1990, by ADF teacher Lynda Davis and the Chinese students in the Guangdong program. One day, during her residency, Davis asked the Chinese students to search for some items that they could use later in the composition class. Several Chinese students found some bamboo sticks and baskets in the backyard of the Guangdong Dance School and brought them to the class. Davis agreed to use these items and asked the students to improvise with the bamboo poles and baskets, as she had previously demonstrated in the compositional class. Then, Davis organized the vocabularies (that the Chinese students created) and composed the piece in their rehearsal classes.[299] After Davis departed, the Chinese students themselves continued to polish the piece, displaying it in the summer of 1990 in Beijing.[300] In the spring of 1991, the ADF teacher Chiang Ching and the Chinese students collaborated to develop *Square Bottom* further, staging it at the ADF in 1991.[301] While demonstrating slight differences in length, cast, and music,[302] the 1990 and 1991 versions shared the same vocabulary and structure.

Square Bottom illustrated Chinese students' application of the tool of reference to cultural symbols under the instruction of Davis. In her compositional classes, Davis inspired the Chinese students by using Chinese traditional items as scores. She drew references from the external geometric components of the scores, rather than their cultural meanings. For example, in one class, Davis demonstrated an improvised solo by using a porcelain vase as a

score. She analyzed the features of the vase—the color blue, the shapes of the circle flowers, the hard texture of the porcelain, and the vase's curved lines. Then, Davis used her imagination and embodied these features to resemble such color, shape, texture, and line in her improvisation.[303] Similarly, the Chinese students, under the inspiration of Davis, analyzed and embodied the external geometric components of the bamboo sticks and baskets, and, in this way, created the vocabularies of *Square Bottom.* Therefore, itself among the most influential early pieces of the new Chinese modern dance genre, *Square Bottom* introduced an original choreographic concept and began a trend of drawing reference from Chinese traditional cultural symbols, blurring the conspicuous boundary that previous Chinese modern dancers had set which distinguished modern dance from any traditional forms.

This new choreographic concept that *Square Bottom* illustrated received applause in the US but criticism in China, which I argue reveals American and Chinese critics' different conceptualizations of the traditional and the modern. American critics argued that *Square Bottom* successfully exemplified a version of Chinese modern dance. To them, baskets and bamboo poles, used as props in the concert performance, rooted the piece in Asian agricultural tradition; and by exploring different ways to dance with these items, Chinese dancers subverted the fixed traditional dance vocabularies and rendered the piece a modern look. For example,

"Its pictures of rural scenes were exceedingly well rendered within the first-rate theatrical framework of the entire program" (Kisselgoff C13).

"It touches on China's agrarian tradition…Chinese classical dance found expression through the stillness of tableaux formed as the dancers manipulated baskets and bamboo poles as reedy flute played" (Berman, "Chinese Flair in a Modern Art").

In contrast, Chinese critics argued that *Square Bottom* failed to modernize Chinese dance acceptably. To them, the piece demonstrated an Orientalist understanding of Chinese modernism with no reference to their real lives. For example,

"The piece could not escape from a potential problem of imitation, which could hinder the development of Chinese modern dance" (Mao 16).

"The creation of Chinese modern dance must consider the Chinese audiences, who had their own thousands of years of cultural tradition . . . . [The piece] was hard to understand." (T. Wang 26).

I argue that these contrasting receptions originated from American and Chinese critics' different understandings of the nature of tradition. American critics perceived tradition through objects, which resulted in their assumption that tradition was fixed and static. In this view, applying modern dance choreography to alter the fixed movement vocabulary seemed a proper modernization approach. In contrast, in China, tradition existed through concepts that constantly evolved by digesting and localizing new ideas. For Chinese critics, reframing incoming foreign materials and ideas with traditional concepts seemed an appropriate modernization approach. In this section, I present my analysis in three steps. First, I excavate what both countries' critics saw in *Square Bottom*. Second, I elaborate on how different understandings of tradition and the modern shaped their contrasting reviews. Third, by looking at the influence of *Square Bottom*, I analyze how the American definition of Chinese cultural tradition affected dance modernization in China.

In *Square Bottom Basket and Bamboo*, American critics recognized Chinese tradition through props and music and found modernism through choreography. In their eyes, baskets and bamboo sticks, two very representative tools of agricultural life that were used as

props in this concert dance, structured a traditional rural scene and guaranteed characteristics distinctly Chinese for American critics. In Asia, a bamboo stick often functioned as a boat paddle, a carrying pole, or a weapon for martial arts practice; a woven basket—translated as "square bottom" but actually a flat circle with the edge curling up—functioned to dry or carry grains, fruits, vegetables, tea leaves, and herbs. *Square Bottom* began with different groups of dancers scattered on stage, each group seemingly to pantomime working in the countryside. Two dancers upstage left carried the stick horizontally on the shoulder and walked slowly, as if farmers carrying items on a pole. Another two dancers, one sitting with a basket on the head and the other pushing a stick, conjured up workers grinding grain from a mill. A male dancer repetitively pushed a stick low behind him and then pulled it up, as if rowing a boat. A female dancer downstage right shook a basket to "flip the grain." The involvement of bamboo sticks and baskets in the vocabulary established an ancient and Oriental atmosphere. In addition, classical music formed a uniquely Chinese mood. The sound of *xun*, a traditional Chinese instrument, broke the silence of the theater when it was still black on stage, and Chinese traditional music in bamboo flute and *guzheng*, known as the Chinese zither, accompanied the dance to the end. *Square Bottom* ended with a long and slow melody that portrayed the tranquil rural field. Using traditional music, the dance immersed American critics in an Orientalist imagination.

Although the props and music rooted the performance in Chinese tradition, the choreography of *Square Bottom* demonstrated a modern perspective for American critics—Chinese dancers explored the baskets and sticks purely for their physical properties rather than their functional uses. For American critics, this experimentation in using the items

in ways they were not part of traditional agricultural life characterized Chinese modernism. American modern dance choreography provided a compositional method to scrutinize geometrical or textural components of the props, such as shape, length, weight, and texture. Explorations of these features, instead of a focus on the items' uses in agricultural production, seemed to distinguish the piece from traditional Chinese dance and create a modern look. In this view, *Square Bottom* used traditional Chinese objects in modern ways.

Chinese dancers experimented with the items in three ways: with respect to the number of people, through the creation of shapes, and through the use of different bodily parts. First, unlike in an agricultural setting, where usually one person held one stick or basket, dancers explored unequal matching up of people with props. American critics saw two dancers with one stick, one dancer with three sticks, and so forth. Second, whereas bamboo sticks and baskets served practical functions in an agricultural tradition, they gained performative functions on stage, partly through forming different shapes. Dancers lifted the sticks horizontally in parallel at different heights to suggest layers of a terraced field. A dancer carrying one stick on her shoulders behind her neck held another in each hand and formed a giant triangle with the three sticks. Centering herself in this triangle, she turned and stretched her legs, as if moving with an aura from sunshine. Three dancers standing in a row interspersed two baskets between them. They ran forward together and raised the baskets high, as if they were crops waving in the wind. One dancer, with three overlapping baskets alongside her calf, pulled them up one by one to cover her whole body. The three baskets lined up as though they were a string of beads or grains on wheat. In addition, although Chinese agricultural workers usually touched bamboo sticks and baskets with their hands and

shoulders, dancers in the Guangdong program used different body parts to manipulate those items, such as elbows, buttocks, feet, backs, and heads. A dancer caught a stick with her bent elbow. Three female dancers, each with two baskets, laid one on their feet and kicked it away. Moving to downstage left, they laid the other basket on the floor and sat on them, face to face. Then, three pairs of dancers, each composed of a male and female, performed a repetitive falling back and rebounding phrase with one stick. As a woman fell back on the upright stick, a man pushed it back to let the woman rebound. A female dancer slowly walked in from the upstage right, holding a basket on the top of her head, as if wearing a hat. In a word, dancers experimented with the physical, geometrical features of the items and deleted the functions in agricultural life. This perspective, for American critics, indicated an appropriate approach to explore Chinese modernism in composing a dance.

American critics' accolades originated from their two understandings of the nature of tradition. First, they believed that bamboo sticks and baskets could represent Chinese tradition because they accessed Chinese tradition through objects. American critics believed that the performance "set the Asian mood of the evening with the bamboo pole and basket props."[304] As Susan Broili argued, Chinese students "have incorporated these [modern dance] principles into dances which remain distinctly Chinese through the use of traditional materials, such as bamboo sticks and baskets, sounds of bells and bamboo flutes."[305] American critics recognized Chineseness through the appearance of certain items. The bamboo sticks, baskets, and bamboo flute, as culturally distinctive symbols, defined Chinese tradition in their eyes.

Second, American critics saw the effectiveness of the modern dance choreographic

approach because they believed that tradition was fixed and static, with the notion that the body always maintained the same movement vocabularies. In learning Chinese traditional dance, students seemed to only imitate their teachers for physical resemblance and then stage the imitation with little individual innovation. The dancing body seemed to be frozen in Chinese classical dance and folk dance by always performing the same gestures, sequences, and phrases. In *Square Bottom*, the fixation for American critics lay in the same physical movements to manipulate the basket and bamboo pole in the agricultural tradition. For example, when using the bamboo pole as a boat paddle, the body always bent over to push the pole, and then gradually rose; the arms shifted positions up and down to lift the pole. The whole set of movements created a repetitive rhythm of smoothly and slowly swaying back and forth. When using the basket to clean rice, the body always stayed in a leaning forward position; the arms stretched to the front with flicks of the wrists. The physical movements generated an ongoing rhythm with even and sharp beats. In the eyes of American critics, such movement vocabularies had never been changed. They believed that "Chinese dancers used bamboo sticks and woven baskets in ways their ancestors never dreamt of, it was clear history was being made."[306] This comment implied that the body with regard to bamboo sticks and baskets had performed the same vocabularies for thousands of years. Modern dance choreography seemed to mobilize the frozen body and liberate it from repetitively bending, rising, and leaning. According to Broili, "the People's Republic of China's first modern dance company, the Guangdong Modern Dance Company, turned centuries of tradition upside down."[307] It seemed that up until 1990, when the piece premiered in China, Chinese tradition, represented by vocabularies of the body in an agricultural context, had never changed and

had always stayed the same.

Based on these two understandings of tradition, American critics believed that modern dance choreographic ideas could inspire Chinese dancers to expand possibilities of developing tradition, and, that "stretch[ed] the limits of tradition" (Sterngold, C11). At the same time, by keeping those agricultural tools in their experimentations, Chinese people were seen as preserving their tradition. To American critics, *Square Bottom* seemed to show that modern dance concepts were translatable and could benefit the development of a foreign culture in ways that its tradition could not.

In contrast to American critics who saw the coexistence of tradition and modernism in *Square Bottom Basket and Bamboo*, Chinese critics discovered only experimentations. In their eyes, dancers treated baskets and bamboo sticks as objects devoid of their traditional purposes and experimented with the props' physical characteristics. The performers dragged the basket and rolled it on the floor on its round edge, and they used the length of a stick to gain greater reach when pointing to the sky. Chinese audiences saw that dancers covered their bodies with the basket and pressed the stick on the floor to support jumping and turning. With no traditional music in the 1990 version, Chinese critics heard piano, violin, and electronic sound.

In contrast to American critics, Chinese critics criticized *Square Bottom* for contributing to an Orientalist perspective of Chinese modernism and not considering the viewing habits, aesthetic preferences, and current lives of Chinese people.[308] Meng Zhaoxiang argued that the piece was "abstract and dull" because Chinese students were "satisfied with only looking the same [with Western modern dance]" (Wang 25). Mao Hui

believed that "the piece could not escape from a potential problem of imitation, which could hinder the development of Chinese modern dance" (Mao 15). In addition, Hu Eryan argued that "the creation of Chinese modern dance must consider the Chinese audiences, who had their own thousands of years of cultural tradition . . . . [The piece] was hard to understand. . . . Could the choreographer consider whether he or she had a clear meaning in mind and whether that meaning was successfully conveyed to the audiences through proper form?" (T. Wang 25). Shu Junjun stressed that "Chinese modern dance, as a newborn art, must demonstrate form and content that fit the viewing habits of Chinese audiences" (T. Wang 26). Mao Hui hoped that "if [the Chinese students] did not neglect who they were and the world that they lived in, Chinese modern dance would have a productive future" (Mao 17).

These negative reactions stemmed from Chinese critics' understandings of tradition, which differed from that of American critics. First, in China, tradition existed through conceptualizations, rather than objectified cultural symbols. In *Square Bottom*, the cultural concept regarding baskets and bamboo sticks was that they functioned as tools in agricultural traditions. A basket *was* a dryer or container, and a bamboo stick *was* a boat paddle, a carrying pole, or a weapon. Chinese critics could not easily accept changes in the functions because they and their ancestors were familiar with—had lived with—those concepts. Baskets and bamboo sticks had been agricultural tools in China for thousands of years; such use was a living tradition, common knowledge, and an accepted fact for generations. This unification of the symbols and meanings—baskets, bamboo sticks, and their identities in agricultural life—represented Chinese tradition and constituted a semiotic system rooted in Chinese critics' minds.

However, in *Square Bottom*, Chinese students equated tradition with objects. In other words, when switching the context of baskets and bamboo sticks from the countryside to the theater, Chinese students need to keep these items' cultural meanings. They deleted the functions of these items as agricultural tools and manipulated them as "pure" objects. The value of baskets and bamboo sticks shifted from assisting agricultural work to presenting different relationships between the body and props. Baskets and bamboo sticks, in *Square Bottom*, lost their traditional meaning through modern dance choreography.

Second, in China, tradition was constantly evolving. Chinese classical and folk dance forms were developing in their own logic through reframing, digesting, and localizing incoming ideas. For example, Chinese classical dance in the 1980s integrated ballet aesthetics embodied as extended legs and pointed feet into its choreography. Although this might change the previous vocabularies of Chinese classical dance, the genre still rooted in Chinese tradition by keeping moving philosophies of *yin and yang* (complementary opposites) and *qi* (intrinsic energy). Therefore, in the eyes of Chinese critics, China did not need a new style of dance, such as Chinese modern dance, to innovate tradition. Instead, critics believed that Chinese people needed modern dance to represent their contemporary urban lives, a role that even the self-renewable traditional dance was unable to take.

In the 1980s, "to express the lives of the Chinese people in the contemporary world" was the most significant request for modern dance in China.[309] Chinese concert dance critics consisted of people living in urban areas. They experienced an urban life different from the agricultural life of the peasants. At that time, the political system in China underwent a transformation toward "socialism with Chinese characteristics" (*zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi:*

中国特色社会主义) that combined socialism and capitalism for the developing needs of the nation. The adoption of capitalism created drastic changes in urbanization. Experiencing this social transformation, Chinese critics needed modern dance to address their everyday lives as part of China's modernization. They wanted to see works that could portray people's disorientation during the process of urbanization, critique the ideologies of the Cultural Revolution, and criticize the feudal structure of the patriarchal system. They believed that Chinese traditional dance could not accomplish this because classical dance crystalized the life of ancient China and folk dance related to the lives of peasants. Modern dance, as an emerging art form in China, served as a suitable choice to represent their urban lives.

However, *Square Bottom* presented a rural life that Chinese critics believed was far away from their everyday urban life. They saw a theme that they believed should belong to folk dance featuring a modern dance work. Chinese critics might have felt disoriented, especially when they expected modern dance to address a different issue in China. They might have felt that the piece used agriculture to represent all people living in contemporary China and showed an image of the Chinese people that did not match who they actually were.

How to localize American choreographic approaches in China? If the choreographer had maintained off-stage cultural meanings on stage, the Chinese audiences might have offered a different reception. When using American choreographic concepts to dissolve Chinese tradition, the possible approach is not to destroy the traditional cultural concept—in this case, deleting the function of the agricultural tools through objectification. But rather, a choreographer might need to involve that traditional concept in his or her artistic experimentation. In addition, if the Chinese students had integrated American modern and

Chinese traditional concepts, they might have opened up new possibilities of modernization. Both American modern dance and Chinese traditional dance are embodied concepts. Combining concepts, instead of combining vocabularies, implies a significant way of development.

If in China tradition was composed of concepts rather than objects, why did the Chinese students in the Guangdong program choose to take an Orientalist perspective on Chinese tradition to choreograph a piece like this? I argue that in the Guangdong program, American teachers, under good wills, might have influenced Chinese students in their compositional exercises by emphasizing the significance of objectification in producing Chinese modern dance works. American teachers taught Chinese students to seek inspiration from an item's external visual components. This object-oriented approach trained Chinese students to conduct an analysis of the chosen item's visual components, such as geometric patterns, color, texture, material, size, weight, etc. Then, students translated their discoveries into corporeal interpretations—to resemble the geometric shape with their body, to suggest the weight through certain movement quality or, to embody the item's texture with a particular rhythm. These exercises excluded meaning and evaluation of the item and might represent a common pedagogy in teaching modern dance compositional classes in the US. Yet when the object-oriented approach traveled to China, it deleted the cultural meaning of the traditional item and caused an Orientalist perspective.

Square Bottom Basket and Bamboo introduced a new choreographic concept for dance modernization in China and led a key transition in the history of Chinese modern dance. Before the Guangdong program, Chinese dancers built up their own modern dance style by

adapting Western modern dance vocabularies and choreography to express themes of their own urban lives, known as the approach of "Westernizing." This approach demonstrated a strong awareness to differentiate itself from all traditional dance forms in vocabulary, choreography, costume, props, and music. In the Guangdong program, however, Chinese dancers began to draw references from traditional cultural symbols under the direction of American teachers and blurred the boundary between modern dance and Chinese traditional dance. In the 1990s, modern dance in China split into two basic developing approaches: one was continuing Westernizing, and the other was deconstructing Chinese tradition under the influence of the Guangdong program.

As the Guangdong program added a new approach of citing traditional cultural symbols to create Chinese modern dance in the 1990s, whether Chinese critics could accept this new branch depended on whether the choreographer sustained a certain cultural concept in experimentation.[310] Not all pieces created with Chinese cultural symbols received positive reviews, even if they used the same choreographic idea. Several years after graduating from the Guangdong program, Wang Mei choreographed a duet called *Red Fan* (1994) in which a man and a woman danced with one red fan on stage. They each held a side of the fan, opening, closing, pushing, flipping, throwing, and catching it. Through an unconventional exploration between the fan and body, *Red Fan* choreographed a sexual relationship between a man and a woman who seduced and rejected each other. This piece received applause from Chinese critics because it invented new vocabularies to dance with the fan while at the same time kept the traditional meaning of the item. A silk red fan had been only a prop in Chinese folk dance for hundreds of years. *Red Fan* maintained this cultural concept that a silk red fan

still functioned as a prop on stage. In contrast, the Beijing Modern Dance Company presented the nightlong piece *One Table Two Chairs* (2000) and received criticism in China.[311] Its choreographers claimed that the piece was deeply rooted in Chinese tradition through experimenting with *yizhuoeryi* (一桌二椅: one table and two chairs), a core setting in Chinese opera. However, the dancers treated the table and chair as mere objects and deleted their traditional functions. Dancers performed under, around, and behind the table and chairs. They lengthened the table, scattered the chairs, and even created a tall chair tower. The piece thus exemplified a questionable experimentation in which choreographers equated Chinese tradition with objects. In fact, tradition did not exist through the physical properties of a table and two chairs, but in their cultural function in Chinese opera. Usually, "one table and two chairs" served as a stage setting to tell the audiences that the scene happened inside the house. The table was always located in the center of the stage, with two chairs on each side of it. This identity as stage setting to symbolize an in-door location represented the cultural meaning of "one table and two chairs" and should be the core base for creating new Chinese modern dance works.

Stepping into the twenty-first century, Chinese modern dance choreographers started to approach tradition through conceptualizations. After *One Table Two Chairs*, the choreographic idea to experiment with cultural symbols stripped of their traditional functions—reduced to mere objects—gradually disappeared in China because it could not fit into the cultural logic there. Chinese choreographers started in a new direction to explore cultural concepts in their works. Many of Shen Wei's works, such as *Rite of Spring* (2003) and *Connect Transfer* (2004), demonstrated a Taoist philosophical concept of continuity

through the fluent bodily movement and the endless smooth transitions between these movements. Wang Mei's *Legend of Goddess Luo* (*Luoshenfu* 洛神赋: 2011) used the act of bowing to deliver a cultural concept of degradation, which revealed many Chinese people's lives under repression in a patriarchal system today. These explorations have contributed to a diverse development of Chinese modern dance.

Tide: Similarity Versus Uniqueness

This section examines American and Chinese critics' contrasting readings of *Tide* (潮汐, *chaoxi*, 1988), particularly regarding the concepts of similarity and uniqueness. Lasting for ten minutes, *Tide* was a group dance choreographed by Wang Mei and performed by all the Chinese students (13-14 dancers in different performances) in the Guangdong program. The piece premiered in Beijing in 1988 as part of the Guangdong program's demonstration, at the second Taoli Cup National Dance Competition, for students at the end of their first year. In the spring of 1988, when Yang decided to let the Guangdong program present a nightlong performance in Beijing, she realized that the whole night lacked a group dance as an ending. Yang then asked Wang to choreograph a group dance using all the Chinese students in the program. Under Yang's request, Wang created *Tide* in the late spring of 1988. Receiving praise from the Chinese audiences, *Tide* became a significant piece in the program's repertoire and was restaged again in 1990 in Beijing and in 1991 at the ADF. The vocabulary, choreography, music, and costume of *Tide* stayed the same in 1988, 1990, and 1991. The only difference was the number of dancers, with thirteen in 1988 and fourteen in 1990 and 1991.

Wang employed a choreographic approach that adapted modern dance technique movements taught by the ADF teachers to highlight socialist aesthetics and embody the traditional concepts of nature and symmetry. Wang claimed in my interview that *Tide* demonstrated her own artistic expression, with little choreographic inspiration from the ADF teachers. She argued that, while creating *Tide* in the spring of 1988, she had taken classes with only Stackhouse and Shang, who focused on teaching the composition of solos and duets, rather than group dances. Wang believed that she conducted her own experimentation in *Tide* by choreographing a group dance that strictly followed the structure of the music.[312] Wang designed the movement vocabularies of *Tide* based on her modern dance training with the ADF teachers, predominantly Humphrey-Limon technique as taught by Stackhouse. The semester before Wang created *Tide*, Stackhouse, former principal dancer of Limon Dance Company, taught Humphrey-Limon technique for three months at the Guangdong program. Because Wang was still taking classes with Shang when she choreographed *Tide*, Humphrey-Limon technique became the major American modern dance movements that Wang adapted to portray socialist aesthetics, the traditional theme of water, and the concept of symmetry.

However, American and Chinese critics viewed this choreographic approach differently, which I argue stemmed from their different definitions of what constituted similarity with American modern dance and what constituted the uniqueness of Chinese modern dance. For the American critics, Wang's choreographic approach might allow *Tide* to become a replica of American modern dance and a work that lacked unique Chinese characteristics. By contrast, for the Chinese critics, *Tide* did not replicate American modern

dance but rather successfully adopted its elements to create a piece that was distinctly Chinese. In *Tide,* both American and Chinese critics expected to witness the co-existence of elements from American modern dance with elements from Chinese culture. However, they differed in their view on the similarities to American modern dance that the piece should demonstrate and the uniqueness of Chinese culture it should display. American critics felt that Chinese modern dance works produced in the Guangdong program should share the concept of individual expression with American modern dance, and be uniquely Chinese through the use of traditional cultural symbols and political expression against the modern socialist culture. By contrast, Chinese critics felt that the Chinese choreographers should share in, and adapt, American modern dance movements and choreography, but form a unique modern dance in socialist China by expressing Chinese characteristics based in traditional concepts, aesthetics and principles, as well as through affirmation, rather than subversion, of the modern socialist culture. As a result, in the eyes of the American critics, *Tide* might fail to present the similarities with American modern dance and the uniqueness of Chinese characteristics they looked for. Instead, it exhibited similarities in vocabulary and choreography with American modern dance that were, for them, an imitation. For Chinese critics, conversely, *Tide* successfully demonstrated the similarities and the uniqueness that they looked for and, therefore, represented a landmark work in the history of Chinese modern dance. In what follows, I first present American and Chinese critics' contrasting receptions. Then, I analyze the similarity and uniqueness that they failed or succeeded to find according to their own definitions.

Based on my archival research, almost all the American critics neglected *Tide* in

their reviews of the Guangdong program's nightlong performance.[313] At the ADF in 1991, the Chinese students staged seven pieces that they created, most of which were inspired by the ADF teachers (by sequence of performance): *Square Bottom Baskets and Bamboo*, *Impressions of Taiji*, *Shadow, Situation, Mountains, Talking to Herself (Last Night),* and *Tide*.[314] Many American newspapers, such as *The New York Times* and *Carolina Asian News*, reported on the performance. Critics specifically introduced and analyzed each piece but only excluded *Tide*. For example, Anna Kisselgoff, dance critic for *The New York Times*, commented on the previous six pieces, writing at least two long sentences on each dance, and a six-sentence paragraph on *Situation*; *Tide*, conversely, received only one short sentence mentioning the music composer. *New York Newsday*, Carolina *Asian News*, and *The Herald* published articles on the performance that focused on discussion of the six pieces, in paragraphs of detailed description and analysis, without mentioning *Tide*. Among all the American reviews, the only comments that *Tide* received were:

"*[The performance] ended with Ms. Wang's rousing 'Tide,' set to a Western composer, Jean-Michel Jarre*" (Kisselgoff C13).

"*The cross-currents of Tides*" (Broili, "Chinese Dancers Make History at the ADF").

American critics left *Tide* unmentioned in most reviews. It appears that *Tide* failed to gain their interest and consideration and that the other six pieces were of greater value. Their neglect of this piece perhaps originated from the fact that, in their eyes, *Tide* show obvious similarities with American modern and postmodern dance and lack features that were fundamentally "Chinese."

American critics might have considered *Tide* as copying American modern and

postmodern dance because the piece demonstrated vocabularies of Humphrey-Limon technique, pedestrian movement, and the choreographic approach of canon, which contradicted the similarities they felt a Chinese modern dance work should share with American modern dance. First, the movement vocabulary of Humphrey-Limon technique and the pedestrian movements respectively signaled American modern and postmodern dance. Wang adopted the principle of fall and rebound from Humphrey-Limon technique exercises and choreographed movement vocabularies of bending over, rising, falling, and suspending. Both male and female dancers wore tight silver unitards with bare feet. In the beginning, dancers, one by one, dropped their weight, moving from standing positions to sitting on the floor, and then pushed their bodies up to repeat falling and rising. Then, four dancers formed a smaller circle in the center, waving their torsos vigorously back and forth. Soon dancers gathered in four rows on stage center and performed a phrase of throwing the arms up, suspending them in the mid-air, shifting their weight between wide-open legs, and leaning forward from the upper body. Toward the end of the piece, to different beats, dancers jumped and side-fell on the floor and then rebounded back to repeat these movements. The drop of bodily weight, waving of torsos, suspension, and side-falls reminded American critics of Humphrey-Limon technique, where these movements and the principle of fall and rebound dominated. Watching this performance at the ADF, American critics might have discovered the similarities in vocabulary and felt unsatisfactory and disappointed. Clearly, they wished not to see the Chinese bodies copying American modern dance technique but, instead, Chinese dancers experimenting with their own corporeal traditions.

Apart from fall and rebound, Wang choreographed pedestrian movements of

walking and running, which, for the American critics, might again demonstrate an imitation of American postmodern dance. In the beginning, dancers ran onto the stage and slowed down to walk in a circle. Then, four dancers, each in a corner of the stage, strode anticlockwise in accordance with the music. As they swirled away, different groups of dancers ran to form different pathways of straight or meandering lines, to gather or disperse, to enter or leave the stage. In the end, dancers, in scattered groupings downstage, performed a constant flow of walking forward and running back. Pedestrian movements in *Tide* might remind American critics of many postmodern dance concert performances in the 1970s. In some of those performances, dancers walked casually on stage the whole night; in some other pieces such as Paul Taylor's *Esplanade*, dancers displayed a formal "stage walk" with an upright torso and extending legs. In both occasions, the choreographic idea of bringing everyday movements on stage served as a significant aesthetic in American postmodern dance. This idea legitimized walking and running as independent movements that carried a significance equal to other technical movements. To walk and run escaped from serving for transitions or preparations on stage and functioned as a major vocabulary with its own value. In *Tide*, walking and running shared this role, with Chinese dancers creating a circulating pathway and a continuous flow solely by walking and running. However, when such vocabularies and function appeared in *Tide*, in 1991, American critics might not have shown as much interest as they did in the 1970s. After all, to construct a dance through pedestrian movements was an artistic experiment taking in the US almost twenty years previous.

In addition, the choreography of *Tide* might have reminded the American critics of Doris Humphrey's *Water Study* (1929, 1973), since both works shared a similar canon when

portraying water waves. Originally derived from music, where it denoted repetitions of the same melody after a duration of time, canon in dance referred to repeating the same movement phrase after a duration of time. This choreographic approach featured a transmission of physical motion from one body to the next. Wang applied canon as the major choreographic approach in *Tide*. In the beginning, dancers formed canon through a phrase of pulling, extending, falling, and rolling. Each dancer kept two counts later than the person before so that, when one dancer rolled away, the next was extending and ready to fall. The next canon emerged with the first verse of the music. In three lines, dancers repeated the same phrase, with each line performing two counts later than the line in front of them. The third canon appeared during the second chorus when three dancers passed across the stage with jumps, runs, and kicks, each repeating the movements two counts later than the previous dancer. At the end of the piece, the dancers gathered on stage center, repeatedly fell on the floor and jumped up to rise in layers of the canon. Similarly, *Water Study* (1928), restaged in 1973 by the National Ballet of Washington,[315] exhibited canon of rising, falling, and spines waving to portray water waves. In this piece, dancers "crouched low on the floor…slowly rose and sank in canon, as though a wave passed over them and back again."[316] Canon represented an effective method for both Wang and Humphrey because the repetitions of bodies rising and falling vividly resembled waves moving back and forth, up and down. Therefore, both choreographers adopted a symbolic approach in which they used the human body to portray nature. In the eyes of American critics, Wang might have shared the same idea with Humphrey in his use of a canon to structure fall and rebound and visualize waves on stage. *Tide*'s choreography, to American critics, might have resembled the works that they

had seen. In addition, the choreographic idea of canon existed in other postmodern dance works as well, such as Paul Taylor's *Esplanade* (1975). For example, in the first section of that work, dancers gathered downstage left and, in canon, performed a phrase of reaching forward, turning back to touch the next dancer, and lying down. Then, in a circle, one by one, they stood up, turning their heads, placing their right hands on the next dancer's shoulder, and sinking. Long before *Tide*'s premiere in the US, American artists had used canon in a symbolic way, in *Water Study*, or an abstract way, in *Esplanade*. Therefore, American critics might have found *Tide* uninteresting for repeating a choreography that already existed in the US.

In the eyes of the American critics, *Tide* might have failed to demonstrate the similarities with American modern dance and the unique Chinese culture they expected. It seemed that, for the American critics, the Chinese dancers did not apply American values of free expression to state their political claims, but only imitated American modern and postmodern dance movement vocabularies; did not seek their own cultural uniqueness by exhibiting traditional cultural symbols, but only used canon to portray the "universal" natural phenomenon of water waves. Accordingly, in the eyes of the American critics, *Tide* might only have demonstrated a problematic imitation of American modern and postmodern dance that they did not want to see—adapting its vocabularies and themes. Therefore, American critics might have chosen to neglect *Tide* in their reviews in order to avoid negative comments on the ADF–China exchange. They focused on the pieces demonstrating obvious and exotic Chinese characteristics—such as *Tai Chi Impression, Mountain,* and *Square Bottom Basket and Bamboo*—to offer a positive review of the Guangdong program's ADF

debut. By praising the performance, American critics not only celebrated China for having its own modern dance but, more importantly, they celebrated the US for successfully transplanting its cultural values abroad.

In contrast to American critics, Chinese critics regarded *Tide* as a landmark piece in the history of Chinese modern dance, something I argue stemmed from the fact that *Tide* demonstrated both the similarities with American modern dance and the uniqueness of Chinese culture that the Chinese critics expected. *Tide* shared the broad pursuits of Chinese modern dance in the 1980s that adapted Western modern dance movements and choreographic concepts to address the contemporary Chinese people's lives. Wang adapted Humphrey-Limon technique and pedestrian movements to affirm the socialist aesthetics, which for the Chinese critics truly represented their confidence and excitement about entering the twenty-first century. In addition, *Tide* presented new choreographic ideas that drew references from Chinese traditional concepts, such as conventional themes of nature and principles of symmetry. The adaptation of American modern dance movements and choreography fitted into Chinese critics' expectations about the similarities a Chinese modern dance piece should share with American modern dance; the affirmation of socialist aesthetics and the embodiment of traditional themes and principles fitted into Chinese critics' definition of unique Chinese culture. In the eyes of the Chinese critics, *Tide* was rooted in Chinese society and also offered great contributions to developing and modernizing dance in China. Since its premiere in 1988, *Tide* has always been regarded as a must-see dance by generations of Chinese dance scholars.

"Tide impressed me the most. Without any question, it won the prize of Outstanding

Choreography in the second Taoli Cup National Dance Competition" (G. Zhao, A8).

"*The most successful piece was Tide. Through one-by-one transmission and transition, Tide demonstrated an image of strong spiritual force and reflected the reformation of the society, letting the audiences have their own free interpretations*" (T. Wang, 24).

Tide adapted Western modern dance movement vocabularies and choreographic concepts, fitting into Chinese critics' expectations about how Chinese modern dance should be like American modern dance. Compared to classical dance and folk dance, which dominated the stage, *Tide* displayed vocabularies from Western modern and postmodern dance movements—Humphrey-Limon technique and pedestrian movements. In the eyes of Chinese critics, Humphrey-Limon technique might demonstrate complexity through repeatedly rising, falling, jumping, and suspending; whereas pedestrian movements of walking and running might illustrate simplicity and unfamiliarity. The pedestrian vocabulary might seem particularly interesting to Chinese critics because it contrasted strongly with Chinese traditional dance concepts and characterized *Tide* as a modern dance piece. In the context of Chinese traditional dance, stage performance carried with it a distance from real life. When dancers performed walking and running on stage, they modified and polished these movements. For example, in Chinese classical dance, dancers used a "stage walk" known as "round-stage step" (*yuanchangbu*: 圆场步) to replace the actual walking people did in their everyday lives. As male and female dancers performed this round-stage step differently, female performers needed to conduct very subtle movements by controlling every step forward at only half the length of the performer's foot, always arching the feet back to prepare for the next step, switching legs quickly to perform a smooth movement, and keeping their knees together. As no Chinese woman would walk in that way in their everyday lives,

but must do so on stage, this modification of the body created a performative corporeality that distanced the body from its everyday behaviors. For Chinese critics who took this distance for granted, that dancers could walk on stage in the same way as the critics did in their everyday lives subverted their established understanding of dance. As a result, the adaptation of modern and postmodern dance vocabularies demonstrated features from a foreign culture, confirming that *Tide* displayed the similarities with American modern and postmodern dance expected by Chinese critics.

In addition to movement vocabularies, Wang applied Western modern dance's choreographic ideas of abstraction and gender equality in *Tide*, which likewise addressed Chinese critics' expectations regarding similarity. *Tide* presented an abstracted image of flowing tides and avoided the characters, stories, and emotions that Chinese choreographers adhered to in a realist approach. Wang illustrated the rise and fall and the peaceful and turbulent appearance of tides by highlighting the qualities of certain movements. Dancers performed heavy leaps, forceful running, long suspensions with extended limps, softly melted onto the floor, and suddenly dropped their weight. Dancers' subjectivities became manipulations and adjustments of the body in conversation with space, weight, time, and flow. Through a direct presentation of movement qualities, *Tide* displayed an abstraction of character and plot. In addition, like American postmodern dance (such as contact improvisations), *Tide* diminished gender differences. Wang equalized gender roles through vocabularies, costumes, and positions. Male and female dancers wore the same costume; they shared the same vocabularies of postures, movements, and phrases almost the entire dance. In *Tide*, male and female dancers jumped, turned, and rolled in synchronization or canon. Wang

refused to position dancers according to gender difference; say, in a row of women and a row of men. Instead, men and women were scattered across rows and interspersed between each other. Each position suggested no gender preference and could be taken by male or female dancers. For instance, in the second half of the piece, three dancers, in canon, performed a long phrase of energetic jumping, rolling, falling, and rebounding that traveled across the entire floor. Because of changes in the cast, three women (in 1988), three men (in 1990), and two women and one man (in 1991) performed this same phrase. Wang created a dance in which male and female dancers were interchangeable for vocabularies and positions. This design demonstrated the choreographic idea of gender equality, suggesting a direct adaptation of choreographic ideas from Western postmodern dance.

I argue that, by adapting Humphrey-Limon technique and pedestrian movements and using abstraction and gender equality, Wang addressed the mainstream socialist aesthetics of positivity. These aesthetics represented, for the Chinese critics, their unique feelings at that moment and the distinctiveness of Chinese socialist culture. Positivity defined the basic tone of socialist art in the 1980s, to "encourage the people to strive for historical progress, to highlight light and happiness, and to criticize ignorance and backwardness" (Wu, "A Talk in the Closing Ceremony of the National Dance Creation Conference" 32). Accordingly, socialist dance required staging a positive and encouraging scene to cheer up the masses. The abstract falling, rising, leaping, and suspending in *Tide* created an energetic body while the constant walking and running let the body maintain an upright, vertical position. The energetic and upright body in *Tide* adopted mainstream aesthetics because it symbolized a group of Chinese people who were strong and powerful, rather than weak and soft. Dancers

exhibited confidence through their front-facing eyes, open chests, and upright spines, as if to show that they never "bent over" but always conquered difficulties. They performed an energetic body capable of technical and athletic movements—such as speedy turns, forceful jumps, high-kicking legs, and swift rolls—to illustrate their successful mastery of any difficult technique. This powerful image on stage resonated with the psychological state of Chinese intellectuals, particularly at the end of the 1980s, as they "could not wait to step into the 21st century" due to their desire for advancement and power.[317] *Tide* satisfied this desire by displaying a capable and tough body that seemed to demonstrate the right path toward a promising socialist future. As Chinese critics saw the upright and energetic body, they might have felt that *Tide* was a work created for them, and *about* them, which truly represented their concerns and hopes at that moment. By embodying the socialist aesthetics of positivity, *Tide* exemplified a modern dance work that belonged specifically to socialist China and differentiated itself from modern dance in the US, which was rooted in a capitalist culture.

With *Tide*, Wang expanded Chinese critics' expectation that unique Chinese characteristics laid in representing contemporary people's lives. She presented a conventional theme of nature and the principle of symmetry that, for Chinese critics, were unique to Chinese culture, too. In *Tide*, Wang integrated the body with nature. The dancing body became the tide as it fell, rebounded, rolled, and walked. Wang visualized a specific natural image for the critics to access; they, by drawing from their own impressions of tides, could recognize that image on stage. Displaying a specific natural image, *Tide* distinguished itself from previous Chinese modern dance works—such as *Hope* (1980), *Rope Wave* (1985), and *The Death of Mingfeng* (1986)—that focused on addressing the social elites' urban lives.

Wang choreographed a new form of modern dance in China by letting dancers embody water waves. A close relationship between human beings and nature features in Chinese traditional art. In *Tao Te Ching* (*daodejing:* 道德经), a Chinese classic text fundamental for philosophical and religious Taoism, the author Laozi (unknown, around 6th or 4th century BC) had laid the ground for this relationship by arguing that human beings realize their potential wisdom by intuitively following the order of nature.[318] In many significant works of Chinese ink paintings, artists positioned human bodies organically interspersed among mountains, rivers, and trees, so that human beings became part of the natural scene. In ancient Chinese poems, through speaking of the moon, flowers, birds, tree leaves, and snow, poets projected their thoughts and feelings on these natural phenomena and used nature as the medium for their artistic expressions. In Tai Chi practice, many movements in routines contain names that reference nature, such as crane exhibiting the swings (*baiheliangchi:* 白鹤亮翅), horse separating the hair (*yemafenzong:* 野马分鬃,) monkey reaching for the fruit (*yuanhoutanguo:* 猿猴探果), turning double lotus (*zhuanshenshuangbailian*: 转身双摆莲), and cloud hand (*yunshou:* 云手).[319] As I learned these Tai Chi movements, the names served as cues to help me orient my body in space. These names demonstrate that ancient Chinese practitioners incorporated nature into the body and imagined the body as part of nature. In the 1980s, Chinese dance artists inherited this tradition by referring to nature, especially water, as a theme when creating traditional works. Folk dance works *Water* (1980) and *Peacock Spirit* (1986); and Chinese classical dances *Stream, River, and Occasion* (1986) and *Yellow River* (1988) won nationwide acclaim. In the emerging genre of Chinese modern dance, *Tide* presented a new kind of natural image both familiar and original to Chinese critics. In their

eyes, the theme of nature, a common choice in Chinese traditional arts, might legitimize *Tide* as a modern dance work that belonged distinctly to China.

In addition to the theme of nature, *Tide* demonstrated a symmetrical spatial design that was rooted in Chinese traditional aesthetic principles, demonstrating a new idea for choreographing Chinese cultural uniqueness. Wang demonstrated Chinese identity in *Tide* by designing static and moving symmetrical groupings. Dancers gathered only in the center stage; they formed lines, circles, squares, and rectangles and the geometrical center of these shapes was always located in the central axis of the stage. Five dancers formed a symmetrical image in which one stayed downstage in the center, while the other four, in two groups, posed in the right and left corners upstage with the same posture. Toward the end, two dancers from both sides jumped in simultaneously and ran toward each other at the same speed. They passed over each other in the center and left the stage at the same time. Throughout the piece, Wang continually addressed symmetry by referring to the stage center and the central axis.

This choreographic idea, which draws references from Chinese traditional concepts, represented a new approach to creating Chinese modern dance at the end of the 1980s. Different from American modern dance, that favored asymmetry,[320] Chinese traditional visual arts highlighted symmetry. For example, in *xiqu*, one table and two chairs (*yizhuoeryi:* 一桌二椅), the most commonly used stage setting, exhibited a symmetrical design, such that the table was always in stage center with one chair on each side. Chinese traditional architecture, such as the Imperial City—the residence of emperors in ancient Beijing in the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1636–1912) dynasties—vividly exemplified symmetrical design, too. Walls in the shape of a square surrounded the Imperial City, itself located in the

very center. Nine gates were situated symmetrically on each side of the wall. The Temple of Heaven was located on the southern side of the Forbidden City and the Temple of Earth in the northern side. The Temple of Sun was on the eastern side and Temple of Moon on the western side.

By referring to symmetry, a significant tradition in Chinese traditional visual arts, Wang connected *Tide* to conventions that Chinese modern dance choreographers had sought to avoid in the late 1970s and early and middle 1980s. This reference to traditional aesthetics exemplified a new way to create modern dance works that were rooted in Chinese society and culture. *Tide* participated in the development of Chinese modern dance at that time by offering new choreographic ideas which simultaneously addressed and expanded Chinese critics' understandings of unique Chinese culture.

In a word, American and Chinese critics' different expectations about the similarities Chinese modern dance should display with American modern dance, and about the cultural uniqueness of a Chinese modern dance work, resulted in their contrasting receptions of *Tide*. American critics felt that Chinese modern dance should share the concept of free expression with American modern dance and demonstrate a unique cultural image by using recognizable Chinese symbols. Comparatively, Chinese critics felt that Chinese modern dance should share similar vocabularies and choreography with American modern dance and demonstrate cultural uniqueness in the socialist aesthetics of positivity, the traditional theme of water, and the principle of symmetry. Therefore, American critics overlooked *Tide* in their reviews perhaps because they saw only a problematic imitation of American modern dance without unique Chinese characteristics. The Chinese critics spoke highly of *Tide* because, in

their eyes, the piece successfully used American modern dance elements to develop a modern dance culture unique to China.

To sum up, the nature of the Chinese modern dance works produced in the Guangdong program was hybrid. The ADF teachers taught the Chinese students the American modern dance choreographic approaches of self-expression and reference to cultural symbols as tools to help them reaccess Chinese culture and tradition. Using these tools, the Chinese students of the Guangdong program created two new genres of Chinese modern dance, respectively exemplified by *Situation* and *Square Bottom Basket and Bamboo*, that profoundly changed the history of Chinese modern dance in the 1990s and the twenty-first century. Critics in the US and China demonstrated different expectations about how the American teachers and Chinese students would mix American modern dance with Chinese modern and traditional culture. American critics expected them to mix freedom of expression with Chinese modern socialist culture to create a politically subversive expression, evidenced by their reading of *Situation*. They also expected the mixing of modern dance choreographic ideas with Chinese traditional cultural symbols to extend the development of Chinese tradition, evidenced by their readings of *Square Bottom Basket and Bamboo*. By contrast, Chinese critics expected the mixing of American modern dance movement vocabularies with Chinese socialist aesthetics to create a uniquely socialist dancing body, as demonstrated in their readings of *Tide*. They expected, too, that mixing modern dance movements and choreography with Chinese traditional concepts would create dances rooted in Chinese tradition.

American and Chinese critics' different expectations regarding the combination of

American modern dance with Chinese culture stemmed from the different positions the US and China adopted regarding the questions of individual expression versus psychological abstraction, the traditional versus the modern, and similarity versus uniqueness. The two countries' different positions resulted in cross-cultural misunderstandings between the American and Chinese critics in their contrasting receptions of *Situation, Square Bottom Basket and Bamboo*, and *Tide*. These misunderstandings, on the one hand, inhibited further communications between individuals from the two different cultural backgrounds. The different socio-historical contexts that American and Chinese critics lived in affected their receptions of the works. Both countries' critics evaluated the pieces that they saw based on the different cultural needs of their own nations. Accordingly, American critics might not understand why the Chinese critics spoke highly of *Tide*, while Chinese critics might not understand why the American critics prized *Square Bottom Basket and Bamboo*. On the other, misunderstandings are productive. Misunderstandings between American teachers and Chinese students in the Guangdong program created new genres of Chinese modern dance and inspired Chinese choreographers, in the years that followed, to take new approaches to modernizing dance in China. More importantly, to uncover and analyze cross-cultural misunderstandings can produce new understandings of transnationalism. Through analyzing the misunderstandings between American and Chinese critics, I present different conceptualizations of Chineseness, the traditional, and the modern in both the US and China and, in doing so, improve cross-cultural understandings.

Conclusion: Beyond Cross-cultural Misunderstandings

In this dissertation, I have theorized several cross-cultural misunderstandings in the Guangdong program that demonstrated differences between the US and China with respect to their dance cultures, pedagogy, and national ideologies. The Guangdong Modern Dance Experimental Program was a significant collaboration between the ADF and the Guangdong Dance School that established a stage for enriching and cultivating Chinese modern dance. However, unlike existing interpretations of this program as an entirely successful international exchange, I have instead argued that misunderstandings repeatedly occurred throughout the Guangdong program. As such, this dissertation has aimed to rethink history's complexity through theorizing successful miscommunications.

First, I have argued that the ADF and the Guangdong Dance School entered this cultural exchange with different needs for their institutional development. The ADF aimed to expand its international influence by transplanting modern dance abroad, whereas the Guangdong Dance School wanted to improve dance education. For the ADF, the 1980s saw it grow into an international summer school and world center for modern dance education. The alliance with the Guangdong Dance School represented a significant milestone in this growth. The Guangdong program expanded the ADF's global influence because it promised a long, in-depth, stable, and sustained exchange, as well as enhancing the ADF's dominant position in the global broadcasting of modern dance. By contrast, for the Guangdong Dance School, the same decade saw its institutional transformation from a state-owned school into a market-oriented school. As the principal, Yang searched for ways to improve curricular

development, discovering the valuable contribution made by modern dance during her visit to the ADF and New York City. However, the linkage with the ADF did not satisfy all of Yang's expectations. The ADF helped China to train its first group of professional modern dancers, rather than using modern dance to intervene in the instruction of folk dance in the Guangdong Dance School. The ADF teachers did not assist the folk dance students in the Guangdong Dance School, nor other traditional dancers in China on a broader scale. Rather, the program impacted on twenty Chinese students who it transformed from Chinese traditional dancers into modern dancers. By creating the first modern dance company in China, the Guangdong program changed Chinese dance history with an approach that focused on the birth of a new dance genre, rather than disrupting China's dance educational philosophies.

Second, I have argued that American modern dance and Chinese traditional dance are two distinct dance cultures, with different aesthetics and constructions of kinesthetic experience. The aesthetics of American modern dance focus on the body's dialog with gravity, where the concept of weight plays a significant role in fostering different modern dance training systems. By contrast, the aesthetics of Chinese traditional dance center on complementary oppositions and twisting physicality. Beauty, in the context of Chinese traditional concert performance, lies in the harmonious coexistence of opposites—such as extending spirals, free bound, and grounded leaning body—and the curvy lines of posture and movements. This fundamental aesthetic difference between American modern dance and Chinese traditional dance engendered misunderstandings between American teachers and Chinese students in technique classes. Chinese students failed to find familiar aesthetic principles in American modern dance and felt disoriented upon learning the new genre.

American teachers interpreted Chinese students' disorientation as the inability to reveal and express their thoughts and attributed this inability to the limits of Chinese tradition.

Besides aesthetics, American modern dance and Chinese traditional dance differ in the construction of kinesthetic experience. Modern dance training often requires a complete release of one's weight. The body follows the pull of gravity and releases any muscles that resist. By contrast, dancers of Chinese traditional dance often maintain a liminal state of relaxed control, or controlled relaxation. One never completely gives away one's weight, nor does one contract the muscles extremely tightly and vigorously. Because of these differences in the kinesthetic experience, American teachers found it a major problem that Chinese students always held their weight and could not let it go. Chinese students, conversely, found that even though they embodied the very movement their American teachers demonstrated, they still seemed to embody it in the "wrong" way.

Third, I have argued that American teachers in the Guangdong program applied different pedagogies that contrast with the ways in which Chinese students had learned traditional dance. American and Chinese dance pedagogies differed in their approach to vocabularies, concepts, and a sense of freedom. In technique classes, American teachers introduced modern dance vocabularies as qualities. They wanted Chinese students to feel float, punch, slide, and flick through continually moving phrases. By contrast, Chinese students learned traditional dance by approaching vocabularies first through their shapes. Their training began with freezing the body, in order to remember key shapes and gestures, before engaging with rhythmic patterns and movement phrases. As a result, this difference in approach to the genre created difficulties for the teaching and learning of modern dance in the

Guangdong program. When American teachers were teaching the qualities of movements, Chinese students were learning the external changing shapes of those movements. Even though both teachers and students strived to do so, they could not fully understand each other in conversations in the studio.

To help students approach concepts, American teachers applied "variety teaching," in which they introduced a variety of materials with the purpose of allowing students to grasp hidden concepts. Materials introduced in the studio thus played the role of conveying concepts. American teachers believed that, through constantly visiting different materials that shared the same concepts, Chinese students would eventually comprehend the concepts behind those materials. By contrast, Chinese traditional dance focused on the pedagogy of "sample teaching," in which a teacher only introduced students to the most representative materials for accessing concepts. In this traditional "sample teaching," students, by repeatedly visiting the same vital example, developed a deeper understanding each time and gradually internalized the concepts. This pedagogical difference generated misunderstandings insofar as American teachers did not understand why Chinese students always adopted a mechanical approach to learning, trying to remember all the class combinations. Chinese students, on the other hand, did not understand why American teachers changed the combinations each day, without ever giving them sufficient time to truly digest the knowledge.

American modern dance and Chinese traditional dance demonstrated contrasting pedagogies for helping students approach dance with a sense of freedom, too. In the Guangdong program, American teachers taught freedom as the self-expression of individual ideas. They began to cultivate this ability from the very beginning alongside technical

training. By contrast, in Chinese traditional dance education, students achieved the ability of free artistic expression at the end of their learning process, after gaining enough knowledge for original creation. These different paths to dissimilar meanings of freedom in American and Chinese dance systems generated misunderstandings. American teachers believed that Chinese traditional pedagogy neglected individual development and the cultivation of creativity, because they only saw imitation and repetition in the educational process. Having received little experience creating their own dances before joining in the Guangdong program, Chinese students themselves developed a problematic comparison: that American modern dance was a comprehensive form of knowledge combining dancing, improvising, and choreographing, while Chinese traditional dance represented a singular art form that included only dancing, but no improvisation or composition. Chinese students experienced freedom as they made their own artistic decisions in improvisational and compositional classes. Therefore, the sense of freedom that the American teachers wanted to introduce—freedom as self-expression—differed from the sense of freedom that the Chinese students experienced in the transition across roles from dancer to choreographer.

Fourth, I have argued that, throughout the entire program, American and Chinese participants differed in their evaluations of modern dance's contribution in China. With the presumption that people in China lived under political repression, American organizers, teachers, and critics believed that a significant goal of the Guangdong program was to liberate the Chinese people through modern dance. In this cultural exchange, American participants wanted to export the American values of individuality and free expression. Reinhart received financial support from American organizations that aimed to make

American values meaningful abroad. American teachers tried to "liberate" Chinese students by offering improvisational and compositional practices of expressing the individual's personal experiences and feelings. American critics took a lens of individual expression to read works produced in the Guangdong program as expressing the Chinese people's longing for freedom of expression in a socialist country. The American participants believed that American modern dance had brought freedom to China, and Chinese dancers had used these concepts to speak with their own voices.

By contrast, compared to individuality and free expression, Chinese participants saw the training system and choreographic methods as the more valuable part of American modern dance. In this cultural exchange, Chinese participants wanted to import techniques and choreographic approaches without American ideals. Yang, in the hope of improving dance education and modernization in China, sought to bring modern dance pedagogy and choreography to China, interpreting the collaboration with the ADF as an apolitical act. Chinese students, in the hope of becoming professional modern dancers, focused on technical training and compositional studies. Chinese dance critics took a lens of psychological abstraction to view the works produced in the Guangdong program. They paid attention to the logical choreography and abstraction of human beings' internal feelings.

Fifth, I have argued that, throughout the entire Guangdong program, American and Chinese participants, including organizers, teachers, students, and critics, disagreed about the limits of tradition and possible approaches to modernization. For American participants, the inability for self-renewal limited Chinese traditional dance. The Americans believed that modern dance could help to change the fixed vocabularies and bring innovation to Chinese

traditional dance. However, for Chinese participants, the inability to portray urban lives limited traditional dance. Chinese organizers, choreographers, and critics, themselves the rising social elites in modern China, wanted modern dance to represent their lives in urban areas. As a result, while American participants tried to forge strong connections with what they perceived to be Chinese tradition, Chinese participants sought to develop a new dance genre free from Chinese cultural symbols and distinctly belonging to contemporary China.

I argue that American participants considered Chinese tradition as fixed throughout history, and unable to renew itself, because they accessed Chinese tradition through objects. American teachers used tangible objects such as porcelain vases, Chinese characters, and the moon to represent Chinese tradition in their compositional exercises. They analyzed the geometrical composition of each object and, in this way neglected, the cultural meanings of the objects. Similarly, American critics recognized Chinese tradition through objectified cultural symbols. They wrote that the items used in *Squared Bottom Baskets and Bamboo*—agricultural tools made of bamboo sticks, and baskets—rooted the piece in "Chineseness." Therefore, American teachers and critics fixed Chinese tradition in certain aesthetic forms and vocabularies. In this view, generations of Chinese dancers simply passed down their traditional dance in the same form they had copied from their teachers.

As a result, the American participants believed that one of their primary tasks in the Guangdong program was to help China mobilize and innovate its tradition. Reinhart believed that the program had helped the Chinese people to create a new and modern version of Chinese dance based on their tradition and culture. American teachers believed that the choreographic ideas and approaches of modern dance, by generating new ways of dancing,

had benefited Chinese students and helped them to transform their tradition. American critics saw in *Square Bottom Basket and Bamboo* the value of American modern dance: for them, experimentations with bamboo sticks and baskets broke the fixed Chinese traditional vocabularies and demonstrated a new approach to artistic modernization.

By contrast, Chinese participants wanted modern dance to represent their urban lives and disagreed with American participants' suggestion that they use modern dance to mobilize Chinese tradition. I attribute this rejection to my theory that Chinese tradition existed as conceptualizations of aesthetics, philosophies, and cultural meanings and was constantly evolving. Composed of particular conceptualizations, Chinese traditional dance continued evolving by digesting and localizing incoming and new aesthetics and ideas. Therefore, in the eyes of Chinese participants, China did not need modern dance in order to innovate its self-renewing traditional dance. Rather, Chinese dancers in the 1980s needed modern dance to represent the emerging urban social elite. Yang brought modern dance to China in the belief that traditional dance could not represent the contemporary Chinese people. She wanted to create a modern dance style that truly portrayed the Chinese people's lives in modern society. Similarly, Chinese students in the Guangdong program created works concerned with problems emerging from urbanization and modernization, such as abortion, discrimination based on sexual orientation, and political democracy. Many of them avoided using Chinese traditional symbols in their works and applied abstract Western modern dance vocabularies to create distinct corporeal images of Chinese modernity. In addition, Chinese critics criticized *Square Bottom Basket and Bamboo* for distancing itself from the real lives of the Chinese people, because the piece portrayed a rural scene and failed to address their urban

lives.

Sixth, I have uncovered different understandings between American and Chinese critics in how to mix American modern dance with Chinese culture to produce Chinese modern dance in the Guangdong program. American critics expected to mix individual expression with Chinese socialist culture and to create Chinese modern dance works that subverted socialist ideologies. They expected to mix modern dance choreographic concepts with Chinese traditional cultural symbols and extend the fixed Chinese tradition in their eyes. By contrast, Chinese critics hoped to mix modern dance movements and choreographic approaches with Chinese socialist aesthetics to highlight, rather than subvert, the socialist ideologies. They also hoped to mix modern dance choreography with Chinese conventional concepts to create modern dance that distinctly belonged to China. These different understandings and expectations generated contrasting receptions between American and Chinese critics of the same dances created in the Guangdong program. Critics in the two countries seemed to never agree with each other. While American critics praised *Square Bottom,* Chinese critics criticized it. While American critics ignored *Tide*, Chinese critics emphasized it as a landmark. While both American and Chinese critics applauded *Situation*, their reasons differed.

Even with these miscommunications and misunderstandings, the Guangdong Modern Dance Experimental Program was, and remains, a very influential milestone in the history of Chinese dance. It profoundly changed the development of Chinese modern dance for three major reasons. First, the Guangdong program created the first modern dance company in China—the Guangdong Experimental Modern Dance Company. Established in

1992, the company has been a leading force in the production of Chinese modern dance works and has played a significant role in diversifying concert dances in China. Second, the Guangdong program created a new genre of Chinese modern dance that focused on self-expression and the channeling of cultural symbols for inspiration. This genre replaced the previous Westernizing genre of Chinese modern that took a realism approach to adapt Western modern dance vocabularies. Chinese modern dancers began to create works, based on the new genres invented in the Guangdong program, under the guidance of American teachers, which developed into the various forms Chinese modern dance that exist today. Third, the Guangdong program established a family tree of significant figures in Chinese modern dance history. It cultivated three very influential modern dance artists—Wang Mei, Jin Xing, and Shen Wei—and each inspired later generations of modern dance choreographers in China. Wang Mei studied in the Guangdong program from 1987 to 1990 and later became a renowned modern dance artist in Mainland China. She has, in turn, cultivated generations of professional modern dance choreographers by serving as a professor on the only modern dance degree program in China, at the Beijing Dance Academy. Jin Xing, an artist controversial due to her transgendered identity, and currently a famous talk show host in China, established the first private modern dance company—Jinxing Modern Dance Company—in Shanghai in 2000, after serving as the first artistic director of the Beijing Modern Dance Company. Studying in the Guangdong program from 1987 to 1988, Jin was the only Chinese nominee that year to study modern dance in the US. Shen Wei, the well-known Chinese American artist, and artistic director of Shen Wei Arts based in New York City, began learning modern dance in the Guangdong program in 1989 before becoming

a founding member of the Guangdong Experimental Modern Dance Company and moving to the US. Jin and Shen influenced the generations that followed them by hiring them as dancers in their companies. For example, Tao Ye, a former dancer from the Jin Xing Modern Dance Company, established his own company, Tao Theater, in 2008. Duan Ni, a former dancer from Shen Wei Arts, joined Tao's company shortly after its establishment, playing a significant role in performing Tao's choreography. Nowadays, Tao Theater has become China's most recognized modern dance company internationally. That we can trace the aesthetic development of these three artists—Wang Mei, Shen Wei, and Jin Xing—alongside their study in the Guangdong program is significant, as are their important contributions to the development of Chinese dance, further evidence of the long-term impact of the Guangdong program in China. However, these are issues for further research and are beyond the scope of this dissertation.

The Guangdong program was a significant milestone for the ADF, too, because it created a new format of international linkage through which the ADF could continually expand its global influence. The Guangdong program was the ADF's first linkage with an institution, and this format of connection helped to create a long-term, on-going, dynamic, and stable cross-cultural exchange; its previous international communications, by contrast, were mainly based on alliances with dance companies and individual artists. When the Guangdong program began, the ADF initiated a new international series of programs, called the Institutional Linkage Programs, based on the format established with the Guangdong program. The ADF began to build connections with overseas dance institutions in different continents around the world. In so doing, the ADF introduced American modern dance and

national values to dance students across the world.

Misunderstandings characterize cross-cultural communications, and this is exemplified in the Guangdong program. Although collaborators in many cultural exchanges reach their goals successfully, individuals still do not truly know one another. This dissertation has sought to bridge the American and Chinese dance worlds and help people from different cultural backgrounds better understand each other. Many times, criticism and false judgments begin to emerge before we really hear each other. By decoding embodied misunderstandings, this dissertation has aimed to make perspectives from the US and China heard in both countries and contribute to cross-cultural understandings on a global scale.

Endnotes

[1] The ADF was a US-based intensive modern dance summer school in Durham, North Carolina, and the Guangdong Dance School was a state-owned professional dance school in the Guangdong Province that cultivated Chinese traditional dancers. These two institutions' collaboration took place in a key transitional period in modern China—the 1980s, and a special place—the city of Guangzhou. The 1980s was the first decade of the country's economic reformation and cultural opening to the West after the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). The city of Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province in the southern coastal area, was one of China's forerunner cities for economic and cultural communications with the West in the New Era (1978–). The Guangdong program recruited twenty promising young professional dancers (average age 19) across China, most of whom were trained in Chinese classical dance and folk dance. The ADF sent two teachers every year in residence in the Guangdong Dance School (except for fall 1989) for three months during the first two years and two months during the last two years. After 1991, the ADF kept sending artists who stayed for several weeks until 1995.

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[3] Foster, Susan Leigh. *Choreographing Empathy: Kinesthesia in Performance*. Routledge, 2011.

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Novack, Cynthia. *Sharing the Dance: Contact Improvisation and American Culture.* University of Wisconsin Press, 1990.

[4] Cohen, Paul. *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past.* Columbia University Press, 2010.

[5] Chow, Rey. *Entanglements, or Transmedial Thinking about Capture.* Duke University Press, 2012.

[6] Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. Routledge, 2007, p.6.

[7] In her book *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance,* Foster compares four American choreographers' different conceptualizations in the meaning of art, the choreographer's mission, the purpose of dance technique, the concept of expression, the dancer's body, the dancers' subject, and the viewer's response.

[8] The term and category of "Chinese Dance" emerged from an institutional context in Chinese dance schools in the 1950s. Since the 1980s, dance scholarships in China have started to use other terms with more specific meanings, such as Chinese classical dance, Chinese folk dance, and Chinese modern dance, to replace the ambiguous term "Chinese dance." The 1990s saw dance scholars in China gradually abandon the term because it confused the readers without exhibiting the real dance genre that the author wanted to talk about.

[9] Chang, Shih-Ming Li and Frederiksen, Lynn E. *Chinese dance: In the Vast Land and Beyond*. Wesleyan University Press, 2016.

[10] Novack, Cynthia. *Sharing the Dance: Contact Improvisation and American Culture.* University of Wisconsin Press, 1990.

[11] Foster, Susan Leigh. *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance.* University of California Press, 1986.

[12] Savigliano, Marta E. *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion.*Westview Press, 1995.

[13] Scholarships of Susan Manning in *Modern Dance, Negro Dance: Race in Motion* and Susan Foster in *Choreographing Empathy* have inspired me to use archival research to reconstruct dance history.

[14] It is questionable when the program actually ended. The year of 1991 was Yang's original plan. Yet the modern dance company was established in 1992, and the American teachers visited the program until 1995. The documentations at the ADF archive indicate that the ADF's Institutional Linkage Program with China ended in 1997 with the Guangdong Modern Dance Company's American tour.

[15]Yu, Rongling 裕容龄. *Qinggong Suoji* 清宫锁记 [Miscellaneous records of the Qing Palace]. Beijing:

Beijing chubanche, 1957.

[16] Wu, Xiaobang 吴晓邦. "Xuexi Xiandaiwu de kaiduan—canjia Riben Jiangkoulongzai he Gongcaozi wudao Jiangxihui qianhou" 学习现代舞蹈的开端—参加日本江口隆哉和宫操子舞蹈讲习会前后 [The Beginning of Learning Modern Dance—Attending the Modern Dance Workshops of Takaya Eguchi and Misako Miya in Japan]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 4, 1979, pp. 39-43.

Wu, Xiaobang 吴晓邦. "Tajin le shenghuo de damen" 踏进了生活的大门 [Stepping into the Gate of Life]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 5, 1979, pp. 35-42, 49.

Ou, Jianping. "From 'Beasts' to 'Flowers': Modern Dance in China." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solomon, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 29-35.

[17] Wang, Kefen 王克芬 and Long, Yinpei 隆荫培, editors. *Zhongguo jinxiandai dangdai wudao fazhanshi (1840–1996)* 中国近现代当代舞蹈发展史(1840–1996) [Chinese Modern and Contemporary Dance History (1840–1996)]. Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1999, p. 44.

[18] Wang, Kefen王克芬 and Long, Yinpei隆荫培, editors. *Zhongguo jinxiandai dangdai wudao fazhanshi (1840–1996)* 中国近现代当代舞蹈发展史(1840–1996) [Chinese Modern and Contemporary Dance History (1840–1996)]. Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1999, p. 45.

[19] Jiang, Yun 洚云. "Meiguo xiandai wuyongjia: Sufeiyadaier nvshi" 美国现代舞踊家:苏菲亚黛尔莎女士 [American Modern Dance Artist Sophia Delza]. *Funv* 妇女, vol.3, no. 11, 1949, p. 4.

[20] Pu, Yimian 蒲以勉. "Wuxiaobang laoshi de jiaoxue sixiang jiqi shijian: 'tianma wudao yishu gongzuoshi' xuexi sheghuo huiyi diandi" 吴晓邦老师的教学思想及其实践: "天马舞蹈艺术工作室"学习生活回忆点滴 [Wu Xiaobang's Pedagogy and Its Practice: "Sky Horse Art Studio" and Memories of the Study Life there]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 5, 1982, pp. 43-46.

[21] Tsao, Willy 曹诚渊. "Zhongguo Xiandaiwu gouchen (san)" 中国现代舞钩沉(三) [Examining Chinese Modern Dance (part 3)]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 10, 2014, pp. 10-13.

[22] Wang, Kefen王克芬and Long, Yinpei隆荫培, editors. *Zhongguo jinxiandai dangdai wudao fazhanshi (1840–1996)* 中国近现代当代舞蹈发展史(1840–1996) [Chinese Modern and Contemporary Dance History (1840–1996)]. Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1999, pp. 808-820.

[23] Report from the team. ADF archive, Box 69, American Dance Festival Records, 1978–. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.

[24] Gao, Minglu 高名潞. *Zhongguo qianwei yishu* 中国前卫艺术 [Avant-garde in China]. Nanjing: Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, 1997, p. 34.

Gao argues that the first artistic Renaissance was between 1910s and 1930s that symbolized a transition from a feudalist China to a republic China.

[25] Lin, Yifu 林毅夫, et al. *Zhongguo de Qiji: Fanzhan zhannluo yu jingji gaige* 中国的奇迹：发展战略与经济改革 增订版 [The Miracle in China: Developing Strategies and Economic Reformation]. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2013.

[26] Dirlik, Arif. "Postsocialism? Reflections on 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics'." *Marxism and the Chinese Experience: Issues in Contemporary Chinese Socialism*, edited by Arif Dirlik and Maurice J. Meisner, Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1989. pp.362-385.

[27] *Zhongguo Gongchandan lici quanguo daibiao dahui shujuku* 中国共产党历次全国代表大会数据库 [Database of the Conferences of The Communist Party of China], http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64168/64563/65371/4441902.html.

[28] Wei, Jingsheng 魏京生. "Diwuge xiandaihua: minzhu ji qita" 第五个现代化：民主及其他 [The Fifth Modernization: Democracy and Else]. *Tansuo*探索, 8 Jan. 1979.

[29] "Xuexi Maozedong wenyi sixiang jianchi Shehuizhuiyi wenyi fangxiang: Zhongguo wenlian zhaokai Maozedong wenyi sixiang xueshu taolunhui" 学习毛泽东文艺思想 坚持社会主义文艺方向：中国文联召开毛泽东文艺思想学术讨论会 [Studying Chairman Mao's Thoughts about Art and Insisting the Direction of Socialist Art: The Art Association of China Opened a Seminar to Discuss Mao Zedong's Theories of Art]. *Renmin Ribao* 人民日报, 25 Oct. 1983: A3. Print.

"Gaoju Makesizhuiyi Shehuizhuyi qi fangzhi he qingchu sixiang zhanxian jingshen wuran" 高举马克思主义社会主义旗 防止和清除思想战线精神污染 [Lifting the Marxist Socialist Flag, and Preventing and Elimaniting Spiritual Pollution]. *Renmin Ribao* 人民日报, 25 Oct. 1983: A1. Print.

[30] Fang, Lizhi. *The Most Wanted Man in China: My Journey from Scientist to Enemy of the State*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2016, pp. 252-264.

[31] Although resigning from his position, Hu still held a positive impression among intellectuals and college students in China for his openness to democratic ideas. Hu's death thus represented losing hope for democratizing China, and the memorial activity expressed Chinese people's longing for political democracy.

[32] Yang, Wendao 杨文道. "Shoudu yibufen gaoxiao xuesheng jixu jueshi zhishijie renshi dao Tiananmen guangchang shengyuan" 首都一部分高校学生继续绝食 知识界人士到天安门广场声援 [Some Students Continue Hunger Strike in the Capital, Intellectuals Arrived at the Tiananmen Square to Support]. *Renmin Ribao* 人民日报, 16 May 1989: A1. Print.

[33] Xia, Zhaolong 夏兆龙. "Huanying nimen zai lai—ji Zhongguo yishutuan fangwen Meiguo" 欢迎你们再来—记中国艺术团访问美国 [Please Come back again: Chinese Art Troupe Visiting the US]. *Renmin Ribao* 人民日报, 25 Aug. 1978: A6. Print.

[34] Li, Chengxiang 李承祥. "Dui Meiguo wudao de chubu yinxiang" 对美国舞蹈的初步印象 [The First Impression of American Dance]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 1, 1979, pp. 24-30.

[35] Chiang, Ching 江青. *Jiangqing de Wangshi Wangshi Wangsi* 江青的往时、往事、往思 [Chiang Ching's Time, Stories, and Thoughts in the Past]. Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2013, pp. 17, 304-305.

[36] Chen, Jinqing 陈锦清. "Fangmei guilai—ji Meiguo diyijie guoji balei wujie he Meiguo wudaojie" 访美归来—记美国第一届国际芭蕾舞节和美国舞蹈节 [Returning from the US: the First International Ballet Competition and the American Dance Festival]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 5, 1979, pp. 4-8.

[37] Report on the Visit of the Dance Study Team to the People's Republic of China, November 16–December 10, 1980. ADF archive, Box 69, American Dance Festival Records, 1978–. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.

Other members were Laura Dean, artistic director of Laura Dean Dancers and Musicians from New York City; Stuart Hodes, Chairman of the New York University School for the Performing Arts; Bella Lewitzky, artistic director of Bella Lewitzky Dance Company in New York City; Arthur Mitchell, artistic director of Dance Theater of Harlem in New York City; Suzanne Shelton, a renowned American dance critic; Michael Smuin, artistic director of San Francisco Ballet; and Julie Reinganum, the program associate of National Committee on US–China relations and the secretary of the Dance Cultural Study Team.

[38] Report on the Visit of the Dance Study Team to the People's Republic of China, November 16–December 10, 1980. ADF archive, Box 69, American Dance Festival Records, 1978–. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.

[39] In addition, in each city, the local officials toured the team members for sightseeing. They visited places such as the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, the Temple of Heaven, the Rock Forest, and other temples in Yunnan Province and Sichuan Province.

[40] Report on the Visit of the Dance Study Team to the People's Republic of China, November 16–December 10, 1980. ADF archive, Box 69, American Dance Festival Records, 1978–. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.

[41] Miao, Di. Personal interview. 12 November 2017 and 1 May 2019. Di was a government official of the Foreign Affair Office in the provincial Department of Culture between 1985 and 1995. Much of the information here comes from his personal collections.

[42] Jiang, Yun 洚云. "Meiguo xiandai wuyongjia: Sufeiyadaier nvshi" 美国现代舞踊家:苏菲亚黛尔莎女士 [American Modern Dance Artist Sophia Delza]. *Funv* 妇女, vol.3, no. 11, 1949, p. 4.

[43] Wang, Kefen 王克芬 and Long, Yinpei 隆荫培, editors. *Zhongguo jinxiandai dangdai wudao fazhanshi (1840–1996)* 中国近现代当代舞蹈发展史(1840–1996) [Chinese Modern and Contemporary Dance History (1840–1996)]. Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1999, pp. 820-829.

[44] "Memories: Canadian Companies Visiting China." *Sina Internet Company*, 6 Mar. 2013, http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_744698a5010109n4.html. Accessed 1 Jun. 2017.

Ou, Jianping 欧建平. "Zhongwai wudao jiaoliu sanshi nian" 中外舞蹈交流三十年 [Thirty Years of Dance Communication between China and the Abroad]. *Yishu Pinglun*艺术评论, no. 12, 2008, pp. 26-32.

[45] Chiang, Ching 江青. *Jiangqing de Wangshi Wangshi Wangsi* 江青的往时、往事、往思 [Chiang

Ching's Time, Stories, and Thoughts in the Past]. Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2013, pp. 245-253.

[46] Liang, Lun 梁伦. "Xiandaiwu guanhougan" 现代舞观后感 [Review: after Seeing Modern Dance Works]. *Wudao yanjiu* 舞蹈研究, no. 1-2, 1981, pp. 1-12.

[47] Liang, Lun 梁伦. "Xiandaiwu guanhougan" 现代舞观后感 [Review: after Seeing Modern Dance Works]. *Wudao yanjiu* 舞蹈研究, no. 1-2, 1981, pp. 1-12.

[48] Tsao, Willy 曹诚渊. "Shenme shi dangdai wudao" 什么是当代舞蹈 [What is Contemporary Dance]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 3, 1985, p. 40.

[49] Tian, Runmin 田润民. "Huo yiyang de wudao—ping Aerwen Aili wutuan fanghua" 火一样的舞蹈—评阿尔文艾利舞团访华 [Dance Like the Fire—Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Visiting China]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 1, 1986, pp. 36-38.

[50] Ou, Jianping 欧建平. "Zhongwai wudao jiaoliu sanshi nian" 中外舞蹈交流三十年 [Thirty Years of Dance Communication between China and the Abroad]. *Yishu Pinglun* 艺术评论, no. 12, 2008, pp. 26-32.

[51] Ou, Jianping欧建平. "Zhongwai wudao jiaoliu sanshi nian" 中外舞蹈交流三十年 [Thirty Years of Dance Communication between China and the Abroad]. *Yishu Pinglun* 艺术评论, no. 12, 2008, pp. 26-32. Wang, Kefen 王克芬and Long, Yinpei 隆荫培, editors. *Zhongguo jinxiandai dangdai wudao fazhanshi (1840–1996)* 中国近现代当代舞蹈发展史(1840–1996) [Chinese Modern and Contemporary Dance History (1840–1996)]. Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1999, p. 30.

[52] Chiang, Ching 江青. *Jiangqing de Wangshi Wangshi Wangsi* 江青的往时、往事、往思 [Chiang Ching's Time, Stories, and Thoughts in the Past]. Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 201, pp. 25-27.

[53] Su, Ka. Personal interview. 19 November 2017.
Zhang, Li. Personal interview. 6 November 2017.
Wang, Mei. Personal interview. 20 July 2016.
Ma, Shouze. Personal interview. 16 June 2017.

[54] Chen, Qianying 陈倩莹. *Zhongwai wudao jiaoliushi shang de qianxian daqiao zhe—Wang Xiaolan de gean yajiu* 中外舞蹈交流史上的牵线搭桥者—王晓蓝的个案研究 [The Figure Who Bridges the Connection between China and the abroad—Research on Wang Xiaolan]. 2018. Chinese National Academy of Arts, Master thesis, p. 55.

[55] Born and growing up in Tokyo, Japan, Shang was the daughter of Shang Zhen, the principle of Kuomintang government Representative Office of the Republic of China in Japan, and Yasuda Sakuko, a Japanese woman. Raised in an elite family, Ruby Shang started to learn ballet since five and went to the US at her eighteenth. She received a BA in art history at Brown University and joined the Paul Taylor Dance Company as a dancer from 1971 to 1975. Then, after serving as the co-director of the Dance Hawaii Company for two years, Shang returned to New York to present her own works. In 1978, Shang founded her own company Ruby Shang and Company, Dancers, based in New York City. Meanwhile, She worked as a dance faculty in the Julliard School and the American Dance Festival. See

Wang, Kefen王克芬and Long, Yinpei隆荫培, editors. *Zhongguo jinxiandai dangdai wudao fazhanshi (1840–1996)* 中国近现代当代舞蹈发展史(1840–1996) [Chinese Modern and Contemporary Dance History (1840–1996)]. Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1999, pp. 736-737.

Solomon, Ruth and Solomon, John. "Chinese/Japanese Roots and Branches: An Interview with *Ruby Shang*." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solomon, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 73-84.

[56] Xiao, Zhao 晓照. "Shang Biru zai Beijing" 商璧如在北京 [Ruby Shang in Beijing]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 3, 1980, p. 26.

[57] Chen, Qianying 陈倩莹. *Zhongwai wudao jiaoliushi shang de qianxian daqiao zhe—Wang Xiaolan de gean yajiu* 中外舞蹈交流史上的牵线搭桥者—王晓蓝的个案研究 [The Figure Who Bridges the Connection between China and the abroad—Research on Wang Xiaolan]. 2018. Chinese National Academy of Arts, Master thesis, p. 55.

[58] Chiang, Ching 江青. *Jiangqing de Wangshi Wangshi Wangsi* 江青的往时、往事、往思 [Chiang Ching's Time, Stories, and Thoughts in the Past]. Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2013, pp. 245-253.

[59] Liang, Lun 梁伦. "Xiandaiwu guanhougan" 现代舞观后感 [Review: after Seeing Modern Dance

Works]. *Wudao yanjiu* 舞蹈研究, no. 1-2, 1981, pp. 1-12.

[60] He was a member of an American artist delegation that included eleven American artists in diverse fields of music, sculpture, photography, directing and dance.

[61] "Meiguo yishujie zhiming renshi zai Zhongguo" 美国艺术界知名人士在中国 [American Artists in China]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 3, 1981, p. 53.

[62] Hu, Ersu 胡尔肃. "Meiguo wudaojia xiaozu zai Jing jiaoliu jiangxi sanji" 美国舞蹈家小组在京交流讲习散记 [American Dance Artists' Teaching and Communication in Beijing]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 5, 1983, pp. 24-25.

[63] Students in the program included the most talented young professional dancers in China, such as Liu Min, the top dancer from the Central Military Song and Dance Troupe; Hua Chao, a renowned dancer and choreographer from the Nanjing Front-force Song and Dance Troupe; Jiang Qi, a silver medal winner of the first national dance competition in the Central Song and Dance Troupe; Wang Mei and Gao Du, honor graduates from the first bachelor degree class in the Beijing Dance Academy.

[64] "Meiguo Bilimahuoni nvshi zai Jing xueshu jiaoliu" 美国比莉马霍尼女士在京学术交流 [Billie Mahoney Visiting Beijing]. *Wudao*舞蹈, no. 6, 1983, p. 45.

[65] Ou, Jianping 欧建平. "Zhongwai wudao jiaoliu sanshi nian" 中外舞蹈交流三十年 [Thirty Years of Dance Communication between China and the Abroad]. *Yishu Pinglun* 艺术评论, no. 12, 2008, pp. 26-32.

[66] Ou, Jianping 欧建平. "Mosikanninghan de zuotian, jintian he mingtian—xiezhu qi dizi zai Jing jiaoxue" 默斯堪宁汉的昨天,今天和明天—协助其弟子在京教学 [The Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow of Merce Cunningham—Assisting the Introduction of Cunningham Technique]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 9, 1986, pp. 41-43.

[67] Ou, Jianping 欧建平. "Zhongwai wudao jiaoliu sanshi nian" 中外舞蹈交流三十年 [Thirty Years of Dance Communication between China and the Abroad]. *Yishu Pinglun*艺术评论, no. 12, 2008, pp. 26-32.

[68] Ou, Jianping 欧建平. "Biejiteaokesang lun wudao biandao" 别基特奥克桑论舞蹈编导 [The Discussion of Choreography by Birgit Achesson]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 11, 1986, pp. 33-35.

[69] Solomon, Ruth and Solomon, John. "The Emerging Contemporary Dance Companies of Hong Kong and China—An Interview with Willy Tsao." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solomon, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 125-140.

Willy Tsao (Cao Chengyuan) was a native Hong Konger, who, after learning modern dance in the US, returned to his homeland. Born in 1955 and finished his high school in Hong Kong, Tsao earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in the Pacific Lutheran University in the US During his stay in the West coast from 1973 to 1977, Tsao immersed himself to numerous modern dance techniques and choreographic workshops. As he returned, Tsao received his MBA from the University of Hong Kong and after graduation established the first modern dance company in Hong Kong—City Contemporary Dance Company (CCDC) in 1979. He has been the company's artistic director since then.

[70] Ou, Jianping 欧建平. "Zhongwai wudao jiaoliu sanshi nian" 中外舞蹈交流三十年 [Thirty Years of Dance Communication between China and the Abroad]. *Yishu Pinglun*艺术评论, no. 12, 2008, pp. 26-32.

[71] Ou, Jianping. "From 'Beasts' to 'Flowers': Modern Dance in China." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solomon, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 29-35.

[72] Ou, Jianping. "From 'Beasts' to 'Flowers': Modern Dance in China." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solomon, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 29-35.

[73] Dai, Ailian 戴爱莲. "Jinian Laban yibai zhounian" 纪念拉班一百周年 [In Memory of Laban's Centennial]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 3, 1979, pp. 45-47.

"Dai Ailian fang Oumei guilai da benkan jizhen wen" 戴爱莲访欧美归来答本刊记者问 [Dai Ailian's Interview after Returning from Europe and the US]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 2, 1980, pp. 8-11.

[74] Ou, Jianping 欧建平. "Zhongwai wudao jiaoliu sanshi nian" 中外舞蹈交流三十年 [Thirty Years of Dance Communication between China and the Abroad]. *Yishu pinglun* 艺术评论, no. 12, 2008, pp, 26-32.

Wudao 舞蹈, 1982, no. 3, p. 3.

[75] Tsao, Willy 曹诚渊. "Zhongguo Xiandaiwu gouchen (san)" 中国现代舞钩沉(三) [Examining Chinese Modern Dance (part 3)]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 10, 2014, pp.10-13.

[76] Hu, Xiawen 胡霞雯. "Shiyan xiaodui yinian tansuo zhi wojian" 实验小队一年探索之我见 [My Ideas on the Experimental Team]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 3, 1986, pp. 16-18.
[77] Guo, Mingda 郭明达. "Ludaoerfu Lanban de shengping jiqi youguan 'dongzuo kexue fenxi he yishu yanjiu' de xue shuo" 鲁道尔夫拉班的生平及其有关"动作科学分析和艺术研究"的学说 [Rudolf Laban and His Theories on "Movement Analysis and Artistic Research"]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 3, 1979, pp. 48-51.
[78] Tsao, Willy 曹诚渊. "Zhongguo Xiandaiwu gouchen (san)" 中国现代舞钩沉(三) [Examining Chinese Modern Dance (part 3)]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 10, 2014, pp. 10-13.
[79] Ma, Shouze. Personal interview. 16 June 2017.
[80] Tsao, Willy 曹诚渊. "Zhongguo Xiandaiwu gouchen (san)" 中国现代舞钩沉(三) [Examining Chinese Modern Dance (part 3)]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 10, 2014, pp. 10-13.
[81] Lv, Yisheng. Personal interview. 2 August 2017. Lv was the principal of the BDA at that time.
[82] Wang, Mei. Personal interview. 20 July 2016.
[83] Ma, Shouze. Personal interview. 8 November 2017.
[84] Zhao, Long. Personal interview. 9 November 2017.
[85] Qin, Liming. Personal interview. 10 November 2017.
[86] Zhang, Yinzhong. Personal interview. 11 November 2017.
[87] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982-1994.* The American Dance Festival, p. 55.
[88] Wang, Kefen 王克芬and Long, Yinpei 隆荫培, editors. *Zhongguo jinxiandai dangdai wudao fazhanshi (1840–1996)* 中国近现代当代舞蹈发展史(1840–1996) [Chinese Modern and Contemporary Dance History (1840–1996)]. Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1999, pp. 714-716.
[89] Wang, Kefen 王克芬and Long, Yinpei 隆荫培, editors. *Zhongguo jinxiandai dangdai wudao fazhanshi (1840–1996)* 中国近现代当代舞蹈发展史(1840–1996) [Chinese Modern and Contemporary Dance History (1840–1996)]. Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1999, pp. 729-731.
[90] The phrase was proposed by Mao in 1964 but had its conceptual origins dating back to 1942.
[91] For example, Chinese choreographers combined upper body gestures and movements from Chinese classical dance and folk dance with ballet pointe technique and footsteps.
[92] Fu, Zhaoxian 傅兆先, et al. *Zhongguo wujv shigang* 中国舞剧史纲 [History of Chinese Dance Drama]. Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1990, p. 238.
[93] Feng, Shuangbai 冯双白. *Bainian Zhonguo wudaoshi (1900–2000)* 百年中国舞蹈史(1900–2000) [Chinese Dance History (1900–2000)]. Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 2014, p. 315.
[94] Lv, Yisheng 吕艺生. "Gudianwu xueke jianshe zhi wojian— yantaohui fayan sanze" 古典舞学科建设之我见—研讨会发言三则 [My Opinions on the Discipline Construction of Chinese Classical Dance]. *Zhongguo Gudianwu xueke jianshe liushinian luntan wenji* 中国古典舞学科建设六十年论坛文集 [Conference Proceeding of the Sixty-year Discipline Construction of Chinese Classical Dance Forum], edited by Yunxi Man 满运喜, et al, Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2016, pp. 17-24.
[95] Wang, Kefen 王克芬and Long, Yinpei 隆荫培, editors. *Zhongguo jinxiandai dangdai wudao fazhanshi (1840–1996)* 中国近现代当代舞蹈发展史(1840–1996) [Chinese Modern and Contemporary Dance History (1840–1996)]. Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1999, pp. 401-402.
In Ballet, *Blessing* (1981), a ballet dance drama, represented updating by using ballet movement vocabularies to tell a Chinese story in the 1920s. Lin Daiyu (1982) used ballet movements to shape the life of the heroin in a classical novel written in the late Qing period. *The Family*, used ballet movements to tell the Chinese story of a famous novel *The Family* written in the 1920s. All ballet dancers wore traditional clothes with pointed feet and demonstrated juxtapositions of aesthetics.
[96] Xin, Ying 辛颖. "Masha Gelaimu jishu jiqiao: zui shihe Zhonguo Xiandaiwuzhe xunlian de neigong"玛莎葛兰姆技术技巧：最适合中国现代舞者训练的内功 [Martha Graham Technique: The Most Suitable Training for Chinese Modern Dancers]. *Buwen yishu* 卜问艺术, 7 June 2018.
[97] The dance drama told a story about several times of life-saving friendship between a Persian merchant and a grotto wall painting master and his daughter—a well-established dancer along the Silk Road. Settling the story in the Tang Dynasty (618–907), the golden age of ancient Chinese civilization, *The Silk Road* portrayed an open, prosperous and powerful empire in the abundant transnational economic and cultural communications.
[98] He, Yanyun 贺燕云. "Cong Dunhuang bihua fuhuo de shenqi wudao—*si lu hua yu* zhuyan tan

Dunhuangwu de bianchuang, biaoyan, ji jiaoxue" 从敦煌壁画复活的神奇舞蹈—《丝路花雨》主演谈敦煌舞的编创、表演及教学 [Reviving the Magical Dance from *Dunhuang* Wall Paintings: Principal Dancer of *The Silk Road* Talking about the Creation, Performance, and Education of *Dunhuang* Dance]. *Yishu Piping*艺术批评, no. 5, 2008, p. 57.

[99] Feng, Shuangbai 冯双白. *Bainian Zhonguo wudaoshi (1900–2000)* 百年中国舞蹈史(1900–2000) [Chinese Dance History (1900–2000)]. Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe. 2014, pp. 243-244.

[100] Sun, Ying 孙颖. "Zailun Zhonguo gudian wudao" 再论中国古典舞蹈 [A second discussion of Chinese Classical Dance]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 3, 1986, pp. 4-6.

Gao, Dakun 郜大坤. "Cong jichengxing yu liudongxing tan gudianwu de fazhan: yu Sun Ying tongzhi shangque" 从继承性与流动性谈古典舞的发展—与孙颖同志商榷 [The Development of Chinese Classical Dance based on Inheritance and Flexibility: Discussing with Sun Ying]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 8, 1986, pp. 14-18.

Sun, Ying 孙颖. "Tianzu yu xiaojiao zhi zheng" 天足与小脚之争 [The Contest between Sky Foot and Small Foot]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 1, 1987, pp. 28-29.

Sun, Ying 孙颖. "Zhenglun de shi shenme? Fenqi zai nali?" 争论的是什么？分歧在哪里? [What are We Debating? Where is the Divergence?]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 3, 1987, pp. 28-29, 33.

[101] Sun, Ying 孙颖. "Zhenglun de shi shenme? Fenqi zai nali?" 争论的是什么？分歧在哪里? [What are We Debating? Where is the Divergence?]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 3, 1987, pp. 28-29, 33.

[102] Liu, Qingyi 刘青弋. "Xiwang" 希望 [Hope]. *Zhongxi Xiandaiwu zuopin shangxi* 中西现代舞作品赏析 [Reviewing Chinese and Western Modern Dance Pieces]. Shanghai: Shanghai yinyue chubanshe, 2004, pp. 232-233.

[103] Liu, Qingyi 刘青弋. "Xiwang" 希望 [Hope]. *Zhongxi Xiandaiwu zuopin shangxi* 中西现代舞作品赏析 [Reviewing Chinese and Western Modern Dance Pieces]. Shanghai: Shanghai yinyue chubanshe, 2004, pp. 232-233.

[104] In Fine Arts, Chinese artists created paintings that also focused on uncovering painful experiences during the Cultural Revolution.

Lv, Peng 吕澎 and Yi, Dan 易丹. *Zhongguo xiandai yishushi (1979–1989)* 中国现代艺术史: 1979–1989 [A History of China Modern Art (1979–1989)]. Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 1992, pp. 22-27.

[105] Hao, Yunfu 郝云孚. "Jianyi yi yishuxingxiang zaixian Zhang Zhixin lieshi" 建议以艺术形象再现张志新烈士 [A Suggestion on Using Art to Represent Zhang Zhixin]. *Renmin Ribao* 人民日报, 20 June 1979: A3. Print.

[106] Liu, Qingyi 刘青弋. "Wusheng de ge" 无声的歌 [Soundless Song]. *Zhongxi Xiandaiwu zuopin shangxi* 中西现代舞作品赏析 [Reviewing Chinese and Western Modern Dance Pieces]. Shanghai: Shanghai yinyue chubanshe, 2004, pp. 228-230.

[107] Geren 戈人. "Zhide renzhen tantao de xin keti: ji yici Xiandaiwu zuotanhui" 值得认真探讨的新课题—记一次现代舞座谈会 [A New Topic Worthy of Serious Discussion: Documenting a Modern Dance Seminar]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 4, 1980, p. 55.

[108] I summarize these characteristics from texts about American postmodern dance:

Banes, Sally. *Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance.* Middletown: Wesleyan Press, 1987.

"Torse: There are No Fixed Points in Space." *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, edited by Alexandra Carter and Janet O'Shea, 2nd edition, Abingdon: Routledge, 2010, pp. 29-34.

[109] Liu, Qingyi 刘青弋. "Sheng bo" 绳波 [Rope Wave]. *Zhongxi Xiandaiwu zuopin shangxi* 中西现代舞作品赏析 [Reviewing Chinese and Western Modern Dance Pieces]. Shanghai: Shanghai yinyue chubanshe, 2004, pp. 256-257.

[110] Long, Yinpei 隆荫培. "Sichuan wudao chuangzuo zai tengfei" 四川舞蹈创作在腾飞 [Dance Creation in Sichuan is Rising]. *Wudao yishu* 舞蹈艺术, *no.* 4, 1985, pp. 47-51.

[111] Pu, Yimian 蒲以勉. "Ji Wu Xiaobang, Sheng Jie, Dong Xijiu fangri guilai" 记吴晓邦、盛婕、董锡玖访日归来 [Wu Xiaobang, Sheng Jie, and Dong Xiqiu Returning from Visiting Japan]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 3, 1986, pp. 35-36.

[112] "Wudao de jingling zai Jinling huhuan: quanguo wudao chuangzuo huiyi taolun shuyao" 舞蹈的精灵在金陵呼唤—全国舞蹈创作会议讨论述要 [Dance in Jinling: An Overview of the National Dance

Creation Conference]. *Quanguo wudao chuangzuo huiyi wenji* 全国舞蹈创作会议文集 [Conference Proceedings of the National Dance Creation Conference], edited by Wenhuabu Yishujv 文化部艺术局 , *Wudao zazhishe* 舞蹈杂志社, June 1986, pp. 36-49.

[113] Fu, Zhaoxian 傅兆先. "Zhongguo Xiandaiwu gaishuo" 中国现代舞概说 [An Overview of Chinese Modern Dnace]. *Wudao yanjiu* 舞蹈研究, no. 1-2, 1986, pp. 31-42.

Fu Zhaoxian argued that Chinese modern dance had become a unique dance genre in China, and should have the same importance as Chinese classical dance and Chinese folk dance.

Ye, Ji 叶进. "Zai chuantong yu xiandai zhijian" 在传统与现代之间 [Between the Traditional and the Modern]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 6, 1985, pp. 36-37.

Fan, Heping 范和平. "Xiandaiwu yu chuangzuo guannian" 现代舞与创作观念 [Modern Dance and Its Creation Concepts]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 5, 1986, pp. 16-17.

Pu, Yimian蒲以勉. "Cong Zhongguo Xiandaiwu de faduan tanqi" 从中国现代舞的发端谈起 [Talking about Modern Dance from Its Beginning]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 6, 1986, pp. 20-21.

Hua, Chao 华超. "Wo dui Xiandaiwu de sikai" 我对现代舞的思考 [My Thoughts on Modern Dance]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 6, 1986, pp. 22-23, 15.

Ruan, Shaoming 阮少铭. "Zai kunjing zhong jueqi: tan Zhongguo Xiandaiwu" 在困境中崛起—谈中国现代舞 [Rising from Obstacles: Talking about Chinese Modern Dance]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 11, 1986, pp. 17-18.

Wu, Xiaobang 吴晓邦. "Zhongguo Xiandaiwu de lilun yu shijian" 中国现代舞的理论与实践 [The Theories and Practices of Chinese Modern Dance]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 4, 1987, pp. 2-4.

Peng, Song 彭松. "Ransi shuo" 染丝说 [Coloring the Silk]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 6, 1987, p. 25.

[114] Wu, Xiaobang 吴晓邦. "Wudao fenleixue chuyi" 舞蹈分类学初议 [Discussing Dance Classification]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 5, 1986, pp. 2-7.

[115] Fu, Zhaoxian 傅兆先. "Zhongguo Xiandaiwu gaishuo" 中国现代舞概说 [An Overview of Chinese Modern Dnace]. *Wudao yanjiu* 舞蹈研究, no. 1-2, 1986, pp. 31-42.

[116] Hua, Chao 华超. "Wo dui Xiandaiwu de sikai" 我对现代舞的思考 [My Thoughts on Modern Dance]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 6, 1986, pp. 22-23, 15.

[117] Lv, Peng 吕澎 and Yi, Dan 易丹. *Zhongguo xiandai yishushi (1979–1989)* 中国现代艺术史: 1979–1989 [A History of China Modern Art (1979–1989)]. Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 1992, p. 105.

Lv, Yisheng 吕艺生. *Jianshou yu kuayue: wudao biandao lilun yu shijian yanjiu* 坚守与跨越—舞蹈编导理论与实践研究 [Insisting and Surpassing: Theories and Practices of Dance Choreography]. Shanghai: Shanghai yinyue chubanshe, 2013, p. 66.

Wu, Xiaobang 吴晓邦. "Xianshi zhuyi yu xinwudao daolu" 现实主义与新舞蹈道路 [New Realism and the Road of New Dance]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 4, 1988, pp. 10-13.

[118] Wu, Xiaobang 吴晓邦. "Xianshi zhuyi yu xinwudao daolu" 现实主义与新舞蹈道路 [New Realism and the Road of New Dance]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 4, 1988, pp. 10-13.

[119] Zhang, Xudong. *Chinese Modernism in the Era of Reforms—Cultural Fever, Avant-garde Fiction, and the New Chinese Cinema*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997, pp. 35-37.

[120] Gao, Minglu 高名潞. *Zhongguo qianwei yishu* 中国前卫艺术 [Avant-garde in China]. Nanjing: Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, 1997, pp. 51-54.

[121] In the 1980s, all art institutions and companies in China belonged to the state and were managed under the socialist system that had been established since the 1950s. All employees, from the principals to the staff, worked in a government-sponsored system so that he or she always had a guaranteed job, state-paid salary, and lifetime unemployment.

[122] Wan, Zhou 万宙. "Xiwang, jiang cong zheli kaishi" 希望，将从这里开始 [Hope, Starting from here]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 12, 1988, pp. 12-13.

Lan, Fan 蓝凡. "Zhongguo Xiandaiwu de xiandai kunjing" 中国现代舞的现代困境 [The Modern Trap of Chinese Modern Dance]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 12, 1988, pp. 14-17.

Yang, Xiaomin 杨晓敏. "Xiandaiwu de gexing yu pinglun" 现代舞的个性与评论 [The Individuality and Criticism of Modern Dance]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 12, 1988, pp. 18-19.

Huang, Lin黄麟. “Xiandaiwu: dui shengming yishi de zhexue fusu—Hu Jialu ‘Xiandaiwu zuopin wanhui’ guanhougan” 现代舞：对生命意识的哲学复苏—胡嘉禄“现代舞作品晚会”观后感 [Modern Dance: The Philosophical Rebirth of Life Awareness—Hu Jialu’s “Modern Dance Night”]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 2, 1989, pp. 7-9.

Hu, Eryan 胡尔岩. “Cong ‘zhun Xiandaiwu’ dao Xiandaiwu” 从“准现代舞”到现代舞 [From “Tentative Modern Dance” to Modern Dance]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 2, 1989, pp. 10-11.

[123] Huang, Lin 黄麟. “Xiandaiwu: Dui shengming yishi de zhexue fusu—Hu Jialu ‘Xiandaiwu zuopin wanhui’ guanhougan’” 现代舞：对生命意识的哲学复苏—胡嘉禄“现代舞作品晚会”观后感 [Modern Dance: The Philosophical Rebirth of Life Awareness—Hu Jialu’s “Modern Dance Night”]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 2, 1989, pp. 7-9.

[124] Lan, Fan 蓝凡. “Zhongguo Xiandaiwu de xiandai kunjing” 中国现代舞的现代困境 [The Modern Trap of Chinese Modern Dance]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 12, 1988, pp. 14-17.

[125] Hu, Eryan 胡尔岩. “Cong ‘zhun Xiandaiwu’ dao Xiandaiwu” 从“准现代舞”到现代舞 [From “Tentative Modern Dance” to Modern Dance]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 2, 1989, pp. 10-11.

[126] There are some voices supporting the tentative versions, but they occupied a relatively small group of people. Some few supporting Hu Jialu’s work were his close friends; some others, such as Liang Lun, and Wu Xiaobang who was trained in German expressionism and took a realism approach, supported the tentative versions for their realism approaches. However, they represented a small group and the majority Chinese dancers, choreographers, and critics had accepted the Guangdong program as the future of Chinese modern dance.

[127] Su, Xiaokang 苏晓康, et al. “*Heshang* jieshuoci” 河殇解说词 [Subtitle Text of *Heshang*]. *Heshang Debate* 河殇论, edited by Wenhua Cui, Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1988, pp. 1-80.

[128] For example, my family, as a middle-class family in the city of Harbin, capital of Heilongjiang Province, bought the first black and while television in 1983 and a colorful one in 1988. At the end of the 1980s, there were only two channels, China Central TV 1 and 2.

[129] Reinhart, Stephanie. “The American Dance Festival’s International Projects: Invention and Implementation, I.” *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solomon, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 7-15.

[130] Croft, Clare. *Dancers as Diplomats: American Choreography in Cultural Exchange*. Oxford University Press, 2015.

[131] Anderson, Jack. *The American Dance Festival*. Duke University Press, 1987.

[132] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994*. The American Dance Festival, pp. 3, 43.

Anderson, Jack: *The American Dance Festival*. Duke University Press, 1987, p. 205.

[133] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994.* The American Dance Festival, p. 5.

Anderson, Jack. *The American Dance Festival*. Duke University Press, 1987, pp. 205-206.

The Frech companies were Ballet Theatre de l'Arche, Compagnie Karine Saporta, Compagnie de Danse L'Esquisse, Compagnie Dominique Bagouet, and Caroline Marcadé et Compagnie. The African companies were Calabash Dance Company, Kombo Omolara and Olukose Wiles (Stilt Dancers), Dinizulu and His African Dancers (Drummers and Singers).

[134] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994.* The American Dance Festival, p. 6.

[135] In 1989, ADF hosted the second International Modern Dance Festival, with a special focus on dance companies from Venezuela and Argentina.

[136] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994.* The American Dance Festival, pp. 6, 12.

[137] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994.* The American Dance Festival, p. 55.

[138] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994.* The American Dance Festival, pp. 6, 51.

[139] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994.* The American Dance Festival, p. 30.

[140] ADF faculty members were Ralf Haze, Betty Jones, Martha Myers, Bella Lewitzky, Ruby Shang, and

Kei Takei. Japanese faculty members were Sakumi Hagiwara and Yoko Kondo.
[141] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994.* The American Dance Festival, pp. 30-32.
[142] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994.* The American Dance Festival, p. 43.
[143] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994.* The American Dance Festival, p. 51.
[144] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994.* The American Dance Festival, p. 43.
[145] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994.* The American Dance Festival, pp. 6-7.
[146] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994.* The American Dance Festival, pp. 43, 55.
[147] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994.* The American Dance Festival, pp. 51-52.
[148] Faculty members included Betty Jones, Pooh Kaye, Yuriko Kimura, Martha Myers, Ruby Shang, and Clarence Teeters. Classes included modern dance techniques, jazz techniques, body therapy, composition, and improvisation.
[149] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994.* The American Dance Festival, pp. 32-33.
[150] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994.* The American Dance Festival, pp. 19-29
[151] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994.* The American Dance Festival, p. 7.
[152] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994.* The American Dance Festival, p. 16.
[153] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994.* The American Dance Festival, p. 7.
[154]. "The Rockefeller Legacy: Philanthropy and Conservation." The Rockefeller Legacy—National Park Service, revised August 2017. https://www.nps.gov/grte/planyourvisit/upload/Rockefeller_17-access.pdf.
[155] Chodkowski, William M. "Fact Sheet - The United States Information Agency." https://www.americansecurityproject.org/ASP%20Reports/Ref%200097%20-%20The%20United%20States%20Information%20Agency.pdf. Accessed 6 May 2019.
[156] Chodkowski, William M. "Fact Sheet - The United States Information Agency." https://www.americansecurityproject.org/ASP%20Reports/Ref%200097%20-%20The%20United%20States%20Information%20Agency.pdf. Accessed 6 May 2019.
[157] Chen graduated from the Yan'an Lu Xun Art Institute in the late 1930s and joined the Chinese Communist Party in October 1938. Her educational background focused on artistic theories of Marxism and Chinese socialism.

Li, Xu 李续, et al, editors. *Wudao Jiaoyujia Chenjinqing Jinian Wenji* 舞蹈教育家陈锦清纪念文集 [Article Collections in Memory of Dance Educator Chen Jinqing]. Beijing: Zhongguo minzu daxue chubanshe, 2011, p. 119.

Chiang, Ching 江青. *Jiangqing de wangshi wangshi wangsi* 江青的往时、往事、往思 [Chiang Ching's Time, Stories, and Thoughts in the Past]. Guilin: Guangxi Shifan daxue chubanshe, 2013, pp. 17, 304-305.
[158] In 1980 April, Chiang Ching went back to China and presented a night-long "Modern Dance Demonstration" performance in Beijing. Chiang Ching also brought an invitation from Reinhart to Chen Jinqing for the BDA teachers and students to attend the ADF that summer.

Chiang, Ching 江青. *Jiangqing de Wangshi Wangshi Wangsi* 江青的往时、往事、往思 [Chiang Ching's Time, Stories, and Thoughts in the Past]. Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2013, p. 19.
[159] Chen's hand-written letter to Reinhart. ADF archive, Box 49, Director's Office, ADF China Trip 1982. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.
[160] Charles Reinhart and Stephanie Reinhart's letter to Wang Zicheng, The Embassy of the People's Republic of China, on January 12, 1984. ADF archive, Box 69, Director's Files, Trip-China 1984. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.
[161] ADF archive, Box 69, Director's Files, Trip-China 1984. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.

[162] Kim's bio. ADF archive, Box 49, Director's Office, ADF China Trip 1982. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.
[163] Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994.* The American Dance Festival, p. 51.
[164] At that time, Yang's monthly salary was 200 RMB.
[165] Yang, Meiqi. *ADF and I.* Private Publisher by Luo Lan and Luo Feng, 2010, p. 14.
[166] Yang, Meiqi. *ADF and I.* Private Publisher by Luo Lan and Luo Feng, 2010, p. 14.
Chen, Danmiao 陈丹苗. *Feiwu dadi* 飞舞大地 [Flying Dancing on the Earth]. Guangzhou: Guangdongsheng chuban jituan huacheng chubanshe, 2007, p. 8.
Yang, Meiqi. Personal interview. 16 August 2016.
[167] Vosper, Michelle, editor. "Yang Meiqi: Sowing the Seeds of Modern Dance in China." *Creating Across Cultures—Women in the Arts from China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan*. Hong Kong: East Slope Publishing Limited, 2017, pp. 247-270.
[168] Reinhart, Charles. "Teaching Tribute to Yang Meiqi." *Youtube*, uploaded by AmerDanceFest, 15 July 2010, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKe_Xv9UtSc.
[169] In the 1980s, it only took two hours by train to travel from Guangzhou to Hong Kong.
[170] Chen, Danmiao 陈丹苗. *Feiwu dadi* 飞舞大地 [Flying Dancing on the Earth]. Guangzhou: Guangdongsheng chuban jituan huacheng chubanshe, 2007, p. 6.
[171] Liu, Fengzhen 刘凤珍. "Xinwudao yundong de dianjizhe zhiyi de lianglun tongzhi (shang)" 新舞蹈运动的奠基者之一的梁伦同志（上） [Liang Lun: One of the Founders of the New Dance Movement (Part One)]. *Wudao Yanjiu* 舞蹈研究, no. 1, 1987, pp. 46-56.
Liu, Fengzhen刘凤珍. "Xinwudao yundong de dianjizhe zhiyi de lianglun tongzhi (xia)" 新舞蹈运动的奠基者之一的梁伦同志（下） [Liang Lun: One of the Founders of the New Dance Movement (Part Two)]. *Wudao Yanjiu* 舞蹈研究, no. 2, 1987, pp. 63-69.
Liang started his artistic life through participating in local theater performances in 1937, which focused on encouraging the general public in fighting against Japanese imperialism. In 1940, Liang became an undergraduate student of Guangdong Art Institution, majoring in theater director. In his selective dance classes, Liang met Wu Xiaobang and fell in love with dance. He then created a series of dances and theaters that disclosed the darkness of society. In 1945, Liang, together with local dance scholars, created the "Chinese Dance Research Association" in Kunming to excavate folk dance tradition in far southern China. As a member of the Chinese Communist Party, Liang traveled to South Asia before 1949 to broadcast socialist belief to overseas Chinese. After the establishment of the PRC, Liang went back to Guangdong province and switched his choreographic interest to staging folk dances.
[172] *Guangdong wudao xuexiao jianxiao 25 zhounian jiniance* 广东舞蹈学校建校25周年纪念册 [Booklet of 25-Year Anniversary of the Guangdong Dance School], p. 4.
[173] *Guangdong wudao xuexiao jianxiao 25 zhounian jiniance* 广东舞蹈学校建校25周年纪念册 [Booklet of 25-Year Anniversary of the Guangdong Dance School], pp. 10-11.
[174] Yang, Meiqi. Personal interview. 15 August 2016.
[175] Lv, Yisheng 吕艺生. "Wo xinzhong de chenyuanzhang" 我心中的陈院长 [Principal Chen in My Heart]. *Wudao jiaoyujia chenjinqing jinian wenji* 舞蹈教育家陈锦清纪念文集 [Article Collections in Memory of Dance Educator Chen Jinqing], edited by Xu Li 李续, et al, Beijing: Zhongyang minzu daxue chubanshe, 2011, pp. 124-129.
[176] Even today, China still offers a six-year program for Chinese folk and classical dance major and seven-year program for ballet.
[177] Yang, Meiqi. Personal interview. 15 August 2016.
[178] The Asian Cultural Council funded American teachers' daily expenses in the US, and they or their working organizations in China paid their round-trip fights. Chiang, Ching 江青. *Jiangqing de wangshi wangshi wangsi* 江青的往时、往事、往思 [Chiang Ching's Time, Stories, and Thoughts in the Past]. Guilin: Guangxi Shifan daxue chubanshe, 2013, pp. 284-285.
[179] This was a favor asked by Chiang's classmate at the Beijing Dance School, Pan Zhitao, who was one of the organizers of the first Taoli Cup National Dance Competition.
[180] China suggested that the four nominees could share the funding from the ACC in the US, and the agency that they belonged to in China should pay their round-trip tickets. The Department of Art Education, the ADF and the ACC all agreed on Chiang Ching's idea.

Chiang, Ching 江青. *Jiangqing de wangshi wangshi wangsi* 江青的往时、往事、往思 [Chiang Ching's Time, Stories, and Thoughts in the Past]. Guilin: Guangxi Shifan daxue chubanshe, 2013, pp. 282-284.

[181] Zhao choreographed and performed solo *Song of a Prisoner* in the first Taoli Cup National Dance Competition, which won the third place of performance. *Song of a Prisoner* demonstrated a man dancing between many black nylon straps attached from the ceiling to the stage floor. Its vocabularies combined movements from modern dance, ballet, and Chinese classical dance. The piece was a very innovative work at that time. Zhao Ming's talent as both a choreographer and a performer attracted Chiang Ching's attention.

[182] Chiang, Ching 江青. *Jiangqing de wangshi wangshi wangsi* 江青的往时、往事、往思 [Chiang Ching's Time, Stories, and Thoughts in the Past]. Guilin: Guangxi Shifan daxue chubanshe, 2013, pp. 284-285.

[183] Chiang, Ching 江青. *Jiangqing de wangshi wangshi wangsi* 江青的往时、往事、往思 [Chiang Ching's Time, Stories, and Thoughts in the Past]. Guilin: Guangxi Shifan daxue chubanshe, 2013, p. 285.

[184] 1986 ICW class schedules. ADF archive, Box 42, International Projects, China 1987–1988. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.

Yang, Meiqi. *ADF and I*. Private Publisher by Luo Lan and Luo Feng, 2010, p. 10.

Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994.* The American Dance Festival, p. 6.

[185] 1986 ICW, program of International Choreographers In-Residence performance. ADF archive, Box 42, International Projects, China 1987-1988. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.

[186] Her epistemological shock resembled an audience comment on the 1979 Beijing Impressionism Painting Exhibition. In a comment book, an audience wrote down his/her feelings when seeing Impressionist paintings for the very first time: "my holy mother! The terrible Impressionism, in fact, looks like this…so cute."

Lv, Peng 吕澎 and Yi, Dan 易丹. *Zhongguo xiandai yishushi (1979–1989)* 中国现代艺术史: 1979–1989 [A History of China Modern Art (1979–1989)]. Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 1992, p. 102.

[187] Ou, Jianping. "From 'Beasts' to 'Flowers': Modern Dance in China." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solomon, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 29-35.

[188] Yang, Meiqi. Personal interview. 16 August 2016.

[189] Men, Wenyuan 门文元. "ADF meiguo di 52 jie wudaojie sanji" 美国第52届舞蹈节散记 [ADF—Documenting the 52nd American Dance Festival]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 4, 1987, pp.42-43.

[190] Chiang, Ching. Personal interview. 2 December 2017.

[191] Yang, Meiqi. Personal interview. 15 August 2016.

Yang, Meiqi. "Bringing Modern Dance to China." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solo, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 37-50.

[192] Based on what Yang told me in our interview about her dancing experience at the ADF, I summarized all the possible challenges that she might have had.

[193] Yang, Meiqi. Personal interview. 15 August 2016.

[194] Yang, Meiqi. "Bringing Modern Dance to China." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solo, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 37-50.

[195] Yang, Meiqi. Personal interview. 15 August 2016.

Yang, Meiqi. *ADF and I.* Private Publisher by Luo Lan and Luo Feng, 2010, p. 12.

[196] Yang, Meiqi. "Bringing Modern Dance to China." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solo, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 37-50.

[197] Yang, Meiqi. Personal interview. 15 August 2016.

[198] Yang, Meiqi. Personal interview. 15 August 2016.

[199] Reinhart, Charles. "Teaching Tribute to Yang Meiqi." *Youtube*, uploaded by AmerDanceFest, 15 July 2010, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKe_Xv9UtSc.

[200] Chen, Danmiao 陈丹苗. *Feiwu dadi* 飞舞大地 [Flying Dancing on the Earth]. Guangzhou:

Guangdongsheng chuban jituan huacheng chubanshe, 2007, p. 9.

[201] Chen, Danmiao 陈丹苗. *Feiwu dadi* 飞舞大地 [Flying Dancing on the Earth]. Guangzhou: Guangdongsheng chuban jituan huacheng chubanshe, 2007, p. 9.
Yang, Meiqi. *ADF and I.* Private Publisher by Luo Lan and Luo Feng, 2010, p. 12.

[202] Chen, Danmiao 陈丹苗. *Feiwu dadi* 飞舞大地 [Flying Dancing on the Earth]. Guangzhou: Guangdongsheng chuban jituan huacheng chubanshe, 2007, p. 9.
Yang, Meiqi. *ADF and I*. Private Publisher by Luo Lan and Luo Feng, 2010, p. 12.

[203] Chen, Danmiao 陈丹苗. *Feiwu dadi* 飞舞大地 [Flying Dancing on the Earth]. Guangzhou: Guangdongsheng chuban jituan huacheng chubanshe, 2007, pp. 7, 9.

[204] Yang, Meiqi. *ADF and I*. Private Publisher by Luo Lan and Luo Feng, 2010, p. 15.

[205] Chen, Danmiao 陈丹苗. *Feiwu dadi* 飞舞大地 [Flying Dancing on the Earth]. Guangzhou: Guangdongsheng chuban jituan huacheng chubanshe, 2007, p. 9.
Yang, Meiqi. *ADF and I.* Private Publisher by Luo Lan and Luo Feng. 2010. p. 18.

[206] Fang, Lizhi. *The Most Wanted Man in China: My Journey from Scientist to Enemy of the State*. Henry Holt and Co., 2016, pp. 252-264.

[207] "Qizhi xianming de fandui Zichanjieji ziyouhua" 旗帜鲜明地反对资产阶级自由化 [Strongly Against Bourgeois Liberalism]. *Renmin Ribao* 人明日报, 6 January 1987: A1. Print.

[208] Chiang, Ching 江青. *Jiangqing de wangshi wangshi wangsi* 江青的往时、往事、往思 [Chiang Ching's Time, Stories, and Thoughts in the Past]. Guilin: Guangxi Shifan daxue chubanshe, 2013, pp. 286-288.

[209] Yang, Meiqi. *ADF and I*. Private Publisher by Luo Lan and Luo Feng, 2010, p. 18.

[210] Chen, Danmiao 陈丹苗. *Feiwu dadi* 飞舞大地 [Flying Dancing on the Earth]. Guangzhou: Guangdongsheng chuban jituan huacheng chubanshe, 2007, p. 6.

[211] Chen, Danmiao 陈丹苗. *Feiwu dadi* 飞舞大地 [Flying Dancing on the Earth]. Guangzhou: Guangdongsheng chuban jituan huacheng chubanshe, 2007, p. 10.

[212] Chen, Danmiao 陈丹苗. *Feiwu dadi* 飞舞大地 [Flying Dancing on the Earth]. Guangzhou: Guangdongsheng chuban jituan huacheng chubanshe, 2007, p. 10.
"Guangdong Xiandaiwu zhuanye shiyanban ji jiantuanshi jilu" 广东现代舞专业实验班暨建团史事记录 [Guangdong Modern Dance Experimental Program and the History of Guangdong Modern Dance Company]. *Guangdong xiandaiwutuan jiantuan wuzhounian* 广东现代舞团建团五周年 [Booklet of the Five-Year Anniversary of the Guangdong Modern Dance Company] , p. 65.

[213] "Guangdong Xiandaiwu zhuanye shiyanban ji jiantuanshi jilu" 广东现代舞专业实验班暨建团史事记录 [Guangdong Modern Dance Experimental Program and the History of Guangdong Modern Dance Company]. *Guangdong xiandaiwutuan jiantuan wuzhounian* 广东现代舞团建团五周年 [Booklet of the Five-Year Anniversary of the Guangdong Modern Dance Company], p. 65.

[214] Chen, Danmiao 陈丹苗. *Feiwu dadi* 飞舞大地 [Flying Dancing on the Earth]. Guangzhou: Guangdongsheng chuban jituan huacheng chubanshe, 2007, p. 14.
Tsao, Willy. Personal interview. 27 July 2017.

[215] Yang, Meiqi. *ADF and I*. Private Publisher by Luo Lan and Luo Feng, 2010, p. 18.

[216] Yang, Meiqi. "Bringing Modern Dance to China." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solo, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 37-50.

[217] Yang, Meiqi. Personal interview. 15 August 2016.
Chen, Danmiao 陈丹苗. *Feiwu dadi* 飞舞大地 [Flying Dancing on the Earth]. Guangzhou: Guangdongsheng chuban jituan huacheng chubanshe, 2007, p. 15.

[218] Liang, Lun 梁伦. "Ji Zhongyi wudao fazhanshi" 记"中艺"舞蹈发展史 [Documenting the History of "China Art" Dance Development]. *Wudao Yanjiu* 舞蹈研究, no. 3, 1987, pp. 39-45.

[219] Tsao, Willy 曹诚渊. "Zhongguo Xiandaiwu gouchen (ba)" 中国现代舞钩沉 (八) [Examining Chinese Modern Dance(part 8)]. *Wudao* 舞蹈, no. 5, 2015, pp. 15-18.

[220] Chen, Danmiao 陈丹苗. *Feiwu dadi* 飞舞大地 [Flying Dancing on the Earth]. Guangzhou: Guangdongsheng chuban jituan huacheng chubanshe, 2007, p. 14.
Tsao, Willy. Personal interview. 27 July 2017.

[221] ADF archive, Box 42, International Projects. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library,

Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.

[222] Yang, Meiqi. *ADF and I*. Private Publisher by Luo Lan and Luo Feng, 2010, p. 22.

[223] Yang, Meiqi. *ADF and I*. Private Publisher by Luo Lan and Luo Feng, 2010, p. 22.

[224] Sterngold, James. "A Modern Dance Troup in China Stretches the Limits of Tradition." *The New York Times,* 30 Jul. 1990: C11. Print.

Kisselgoff, Anna. "Chinese Troupe Masters the New." *The New York Times,* 22 Jul.1991: C13. Print.

Won, Sandra. "China's Guangdong Dance Troupe Performs." *Carolina Asian News*, August 1991.

Townes, Alta. *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982—1994*. The American Dance Festival, 1995.

[225] Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2008.

[226] After Gitelman, Stuart Hodes visited the Guangdong program for six weeks in the spring of 1992. A month after he had left, in June 1992, the Chinese government officially authorized the Guangdong Modern Dance Experimental Company. After this, three groups of six ADF faculties visited Guangdong, one group each year, for a three-week residence: Elisabeth Horton in May 1993, Betty Jones and Fritz Ludin in December 1994, and Jack Arnold, Carol Parker and Parker Arnold in 1995 October–November.

ADF archive, Box 57, Director's Office, China ILP 1991–1995. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.

[227] Hoving's flight schedule. ADF archive, Box 42, International Projects, China 1988–1989. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.

[228] Contesting the idea that "it is the ADF teachers who provide a continuity" in Townes' *Dancing Across Cultures: The American Dance Festival: A Decade Plus of International Development in Modern Dance 1982-1994*, p.19*,* I argue that Yang Meiqi, Tang Yu, some Chinese government officials and Charles Reinhart contributed to maintaining the program when the political relationship between the US and China broke down. The Chinese side tried its best to ask for continuing visits of American teachers. Starting June 1989, the Chinese people kept sending letters to Reinhart, in which they guaranteed the safety in Guangzhou and invited more exchanges with the ADF. Reinhart did not reply until three months later, after receiving five letters from the Chinese people. Tang Yu wrote the first letter to Reinhart on June 14th, 1989, a week after the Tiananmen Square protest. Yang soon wrote the second letter to Reinhart in July and the third letter on August 19th. A week later, on August 24th, Reinhart received the fourth letter from King Lanlan, asking him to help Yang. The fifth letter was on September 11th, 1989, written by Shi Guangsheng, an officer from the Guangdong Arts Exchange Center, Guangdong Provincial Department of Culture. Reinhart replied to Shi on the very same day and confirmed that he would visit Guangzhou in late October. Finally, Reinhart visited China in early November 1989, in which he and Yang resumed the linkage between the ADF and the Guangdong Dance School. All archives come from ADF archive, Box 42 International Projects, China, 1988–1989. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.

[229] The thirteen students that I have interviewed are Hu Qiong, Ma Shouze, Qiao Yang, Qing Liming, Su Ka, Wang Mei, Yang Ying, Yin Xiaorong, Zhang Li, Zhang Yi, Zhang Yinzhong, Zhao Long. Yan Ying just graduated from Shanghai Dance School majoring in ballet. Zhao Long was a student at the Beijing Dance Academy pursuing his vocational degree in ballet education, after serving as a professional dancer of Chinese dance in Chengdu.

[230] Based on the request of the interviewee, I delete the name of the company in this dissertation.

[231] Notes of a folk dance class with teacher Han Ping at the Beijing Dance Academy, written by author on Nov. 12, 2004.

[232] Tian Tian 田湉. *Zhonguo gudianwu de xingshi yanjiu* 中国古典舞的形式研究 [The Study of the Form of Chinese Classical Dance]. Beijing: Gaodeng jiaoyv chubanshe, 2016, pp. 87-88.

[233] Yan, Ying. Personal interview. 13 November 2017.

[234] Su, Ka. Personal interview. 19 November 2017.

[235] Zhang, Li. Personal interview. 7 November 2017.

[236] Tian Tian 田湉. *Zhonguo gudianwu de xingshi yanjiu* 中国古典舞的形式研究 [The Study of the Form of Chinese Classical Dance]. Beijing: Gaodeng jiaoyv chubanshe, 2016, p. 89.

[237] Stackhouse, Sarah. Letter to Reinhart, November 1987. ADF archive, Box 42, International Projects, China 1987-1988. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.

[238] Su, Ka. Personal interview. 19 November 2017.

[239] Zhang, Yinzhong. Personal interview. 11 November 2017.

Zhang, Li. Personal interview. 7 November 2017.

[240] Stackhouse, Sarah. "Faces in the Moon." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solomon, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 85-95.

[241] Solomon, Ruth and Solomon, John. "Chinese/Japanese Roots and Branches: An Interview with *Ruby Shang*." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solomon, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 73-84.

[242] Here I translate *hao* into the word "enduring," which differed from Emily Wilcox's translation of "exhausting" in her PhD dissertation "The Dialectics of Virtuosity: Dance in the People's Republic of China, 1949–2009" (PhD, UC Berkeley. 2011) The concept and approach of *hao* in the context of Chinese traditional performing arts refers to baring the sores and pain patiently while maintaining a posture in order to improve physical strength. After overcoming the physical discomfort, one gains mastery of the movement style. *Hao* does not mean to use up or drain one's physical resources, as "exhausting" implies. Rather, *hao* highlights patience and maintenance. Therefore, I translate *hao* into "enduring" because this word can convey the meanings of maintaining a painful state with patience.

[243] In Laban Movement Analysis, space, weight, time and flow are the four subcategories "effort", a system for understanding the more subtle characteristics about movement with respect to inner intention.

[244] Laban named the combination of the first three categories (Space, Weight, and Time) the Effort Actions, or Action Drive. The eight combinations are descriptively named Float, Punch (Thrust), Glide, Slash, Dab, Wring, Flick, and Press.

[245] Stackhouse, Sarah. "Faces in the Moon." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solomon, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 85-95.

[246] "To make sure they really understood the principles behind a phrase, I changed the sequence every day—even though they had worked very hard at perfecting it exactly the way it was done the day before." Nielsen, Douglas. "Lasting Memories." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solomon, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 65-72.

[247] Yan, Ying. Personal interview. 13 November 2017.
Zhang, Li. Personal interview. 7 November 2017.
Ma, Shouze. Personal interview. 16 June 2017.
Yin, Xiaorong. Personal interview. 14 November 2017.

[248] Solomon, Ruth and Solomon, John. "Chinese/Japanese Roots and Branches: An Interview with *Ruby Shang*." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solomon, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 73-84.

[249] Nielsen, Douglas. An Interview Report. ADF archive, Box 42, International Projects, China 1987–1988. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.

[250] Davis, Lynda. Letter to Reinhart, July 1990. ADF archive, Box 42, International Projects, China 1990. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.
Gitelman, Claudia. "Some Reflections on Modern Dance in Guangzhou." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solomon, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 51-58.

[251] Stackhouse, Sarah. Letter to Reinhart, November 1987. ADF archive, Box 42 International Projects, China 1987-1988. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.

[252] Solomon, Ruth and Solomon, John. "Chinese/Japanese Roots and Branches: An Interview with *Ruby Shang*." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solomon, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 73-84.

[253] Tang, Yu 唐瑜. "Xijian Xiandaiwu zhuanyeban de chuangban" 喜见现代舞专业班的创办 [Happy to See the Establishment of the Gaungdong Program]. *Guangzhou Ribao* 广州日报, 27 Nov. 1987: A5. Print.

[254] Davis, Lynda. Letter to Reinhart, July 1990. ADF archive, Box 42, International Projects, China 1990. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.
Gitelman, Claudia. Letter to Reinhart, November 1991. Box 57, Director's Office, China ILP 1991. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.

[255] Zhang, Li. Personal interview. 7 November 2017.

[256] Hoving, Lucas. "A Lifetime in Dance, a Moment in Guangzhou." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solomon, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp.59-64.
[257] Yan, Ying. Personal interview. 13 November 2017.
[258] Hodes, Stuart. Journal of the Guangdong program. ADF archive, Box 57, Director's Office, China ILP 1992. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.
[259] Nielsen, Douglas. Letter to Reinhart, December 1, 1988. ADF archive, Box 42, International Projects, China 1988–1989. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.
[260] Yan, Ying. Personal interview. 13 November 2017.
[261] Su, Ka. Personal interview. 19 November 2017.
[262] Stackhouse, Sarah. "Faces in the Moon." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solomon, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 85-95.
[263] Stackhouse, Sarah. "Faces in the Moon." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solomon, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 85-95.
[264] Hoving, Lucas. Letter to Reinhart, April 1989. ADF archive, Box 42, International Projects, China 1988–1989. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.
[265] Qin, Liming. Personal interview. 10 November 2017.
Qu, Xiao. Personal interview. 9 November 2017.
Zhao, Long. Personal interview. 9 November 2017.
Zhang, Li. Personal interview. 7 November 2017.
Yin, Xiaorong. Personal interview. 14 November 2017.
[266] Ma, Shouze. Personal interview. 8 November 2017.
Zhang, Yinzhong. Personal interview. 11 November 2017.
Yin, Xiaorong. Personal interview. 14 November 2017.
Qu, Xiao. Personal interview. 9 November 2017.
[267] Ma, Shouze. Personal interview. 8 November 2017.
Su, Ka. Personal interview. 19 November 2017.
Qin, Liming. Personal interview. 10 November 2017.
Zhang, Yinzhong. Personal interview. 11 November 2017.
[268] Zhang, Li. Personal interview. 7 November 2017.
Yin, Xiaorong. Personal interview. 14 November 2017.
Qiao, Yang. Personal interview. 26 July 2017.
Qu, Xiao. Personal interview. 9 November 2017.
Ma, Shouze. Personal interview. 8 November 2017.
[269] The Beijing Dance Academy established a BA program in choreography in 1980.
[270] Wang Mei took choreographic workshops with Wu Xiaobang in the early 1980s when she was a student of the Beijing Dance Academy. She choreographed national award-wining pieces such as *Spring* after becoming a teacher in the academy. Qin Liming and Zhao Long both started making pieces when they were dancers in their troupes. However, they did not take any compositional workshops but developed their choreographic skill by watching how the choreographers in their troupes made dances. Their works, more like works in progress, were not openly performed but served as experiments within the troupe.
[271] Qin, Liming. Personal interview. 10 November 2017.
Ma, Shouze. Personal interview. 8 November 2017.
Qu, Xiao. Personal interview. 9 November 2017.
Zhao, Long. Personal interview. 9 November 2017.
Zhang, Li. Personal interview. 7 November 2017.
Yin, Xiaorong. Personal interview. 14 November 2017.
Yan, Ying. Personal interview. 13 November 2017.
Qiao, Yang. Personal interview. 26 July 2017.
Wang, Mei. Personal interview. 20 July 2016.
[272] Chinese classical dance technique and Graham technique that the Chinese students learned before or in

the Guangdong program contained similarities in structure and pedagogy. Both started with small, one-place exercises and gradually transited into big, jumping, moving exercises; each combination in both techniques contained specific training purposes.

[273] Stackhouse, Sarah. Report of the Guangdong Program, January 1988. ADF archive, Box 42, International Projects, China 1987–1988. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.

Hodes, Stuart. Journal of the Guangdong program. ADF archive, Box 57, Director's Office, China ILP 1992. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.

[274] Stackhouse, Sarah. Report of the Guangdong Program, January 1988. ADF archive, Box 42, International Projects, China 1987–1988. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.

[275] Stackhouse, Sarah. "Faces in the Moon." *East Meets West in Dance: Voices in the Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, edited by Ruth Solomon and John Solomon, Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995, pp. 85-95.

[276] Jiang, Dong. Personal interview. 5 April 2017. Jiang was the translator of Lynda Davis.

Jiang, Dong, 江东et al. "Xiandaiwu de shizhe Linda Daiweisi." 现代舞的使者琳达戴维丝 [The Modern Dance Angel: Lynda Davis]. *Guangzhou Ribao* 广州日报 8 Jun. 1990: A5. Print.

[277] Ma, Shouze. Personal interview. 8 November 2017.

Yan, Ying. Personal interview. 13 November 2017.

[278] Qu, Xiao. Personal interview. 9 November 2017.

[279] Qin, Liming. Personal interview. 10 November 2017.

[280] Hochoy, David. Report to the ADF on the Guangdong program, January 1991. ADF archive, Box 57, Director's Office, ILP China. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.

Gitelman, Claudia. "People of the Pear Garden Greet Soho: Chinese Dancers Meet US Modern Dance through Institutional Linkages Program of the American Dance Festival." February 1992, ADF Archive, Box 57, Director's Office, China ILP. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. 3 October 2016.

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[286] Although both performances contained a piece called *Shadow*, the two pieces were distinctly different ones choreographed and performed by different people. *Shadow* (duet) was choreographed by Zhao Long and performed by Zhao Long and Zhang Yinzhong in 1990. *Shadow* (trio) was choreographed and performed by Su Ka, Huang Wenge, and Huang Wencai in 1991.

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