

Chapter 1

Existing Histories of Finnish Dance Art

History is not only constructed through writings and research on the past, it is also represented through paintings, photographs, oral memories, monuments, music (Kalela 2000) and even through dancing. Although the past of Finnish dance is not academically widely explored, there are already a number of narratives and representations of the past of Finnish dance, even in English. These narratives and representations have a double role in my research. On the one hand, they are possible sources for my research. On the other hand, they have already shaped my understanding and interpretation of the past, as far as I have read, seen or heard them.

Although the past has existed as it was, our understanding of it is constantly changing and ambiguous. It is helpful to use the terms 'the past' and 'history' as Keith Jenkins underlines in his book *Re-thinking History*. He suggests using

the term 'the past' for all that has gone on before everywhere, whilst using the word 'historiography' for history, historiography referring here to the writings of history.

Jenkins 1991, p 6.

I share his view of the meaning of the past, but I would not replace history with 'historiography' as Jenkins suggests. Instead, I choose to use the term 'history' or 'histories' to refer to our understanding and interpretations of the past, which can be written, visual, oral or even danced representations of the past. Writings of history as well as academic writings are just part of history. However, written documents have had, and still have, a dominant position as sources in history research, and writing remains a dominant mode of representing the past in academic research. For dance, which is mainly articulated by a human dancing body, visual, oral and danced representations of the past assume particular importance besides written ones, given the absence of records of the dancing.

Written and published histories of Finnish dance are found in books, memoirs, reviews and articles by Finnish dance critics, dancers and researchers. In addition, some unpublished MA dissertations can be considered as academic writings on history. Appendix 1 (pp 213-215) presents a chronological list of existing written histories of Finnish dance. This list is meticulous, but not complete. It tries to cover all books and memoirs concerning the history of Finnish dance, but not all reviews, articles, dissertations and theses. Only those that have some relevance for my research topic are mentioned. Appendix 1 contains the title and focus of each written history and the type of publication, showing also if the text references its sources.

From this material, it is apparent that the first histories were written during the 1930s and 1940s by dance critics, mainly by Raoul af Hällström, and some by Ukko Havukka. Maggie Gripenberg was the first Finnish dancer to write and publish her memoirs, in Finnish in 1950 and in Swedish in 1952. Then, there seems to be a gap, from 1950 until 1980. During that period, only some general reviews about the past of the Finnish National Ballet were published in newspapers. In the 1980s there was a huge increase of writings on dance history. Several ballet dancers published their memoirs, and Finnish free dance and its representatives started to awaken some academic interest. In addition, four new dance books were published: a history of the Finnish National Ballet (Vienola-Lindfors & af Hällström 1981); a detailed survey of dance teachers in Finland before 1914 (Hirn 1982); a history of The Union of Finnish Dance Artists (Arvelo & Räsänen 1987); and a sociological study of Finnish dance art (Repo 1989). After the 1970s general overviews of Finnish dance history in newspapers or magazines more or less repeated and reinforced previous histories and they are not mentioned in the list.

The scholarly interest in dance strengthened at the turn of the millennium. The first PhD theses concerning dance were published in Finland during the 1990s, and many are in progress, mainly at the Theatre Academy. None of the completed PhD theses focuses on dance history.¹ However, there are some scholarly articles, which relate to particular moments or issues in the past of Finnish dance, for instance in the research appendices of *Tanssi* (Dance)

magazine (Tawast 1998, Jyrkkä 1999) and in *Tanssin tutkimuksen vuosikirja* (The Dance Research Annual, Pakkanen & others 1999). In addition, *Valokuvan tanssi* (Dance in Photographs, Helavuori & others 1997) presents Finnish dance in 1890-1997 through photographs and scholarly articles.

Beside written interpretations and narratives, there are some filmed documentaries about the past of dance in Finland. Private and public archives also contain various literary, aural and visual traces and remnants, such as dance programs, scores and music records, photographs, taped interviews, dance films and videos. In the case of dance, one should not forget that historical knowledge and experiences are also transmitted through dance performances and dance exercises. However, the content of that knowledge and experience needs to be verbalised and analysed in order to be available to scholars. All this forms a net of traces, knowledge, interpretations, assumptions, visions and sensual and bodily experiences of the past of Finnish dance art. All Finns, from a little girl in a ballet class to the academic dance scholar at the University of Surrey, are intertwined into that web, although differently.

As an academic historian, who plans to give her own contribution to histories of dance in Finland, I should be aware of what has already been told about the past of Finnish dance. In this chapter, I examine and analyse how and by whom Finnish dance history has been represented in written and visual accounts, especially during the 1920s and 1930s. The chapter starts as an evaluation of some compact and brief stories presented in English in international dance dictionaries and books, and it is followed by more extensive Finnish narratives and issues they raise. Then some visual histories and other traces of Finnish dance, which also become sources for my research, are discussed briefly. This presentation of existing histories simultaneously serves as an introduction to dance art in Finland. At the end of this chapter, there is a critical discussion of the implications of the existing and non-existing histories of the 1920s and 1930s and traces of the past for my own research.

DANCE BOOKS IN ENGLISH

Existing books on dance and dance history preserve and present some stable interpretations of dance in Finland, which can be used as starting points for further discussions and additions. Even some international dance dictionaries and books published in English include short histories on Finnish dance, mainly on ballet, for example *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Ballet* (Koegler 1989, first edition in German 1972 and in English 1977), *Oxford Dictionary of Dance* (Craine & Mackrell 2000) and *Ballet in Western Culture* (Lee 2002). Appendix 2 (p 216) includes copies of these outlines of ballet/dance in Finland. It is fascinating to see how these international books, which are commonly considered reliable, recount the story of dance in Finland. The lack of information and the mixture of accurate and inaccurate data in these brief texts construct some strange interpretations and misunderstandings.

Koegler and Lee pay attention mainly to ballet in their books, and this is the bias of Craine & Mackrell, too, although the title is *The Oxford Dictionary of Dance*. So, it is ballet and mainly the Finnish National Ballet to represent Finland internationally. The emergence of modern dance in Finland is not mentioned at all. Craine & Mackrell only state several modern companies existing besides the Finnish National Ballet. Even the story of the Finnish National Ballet has some startling features.

It seems to be difficult for the writers to distinguish between Finns and Russians and sometimes even between the Russian Theatre in Helsinki and the Finnish National Opera. This has led into some confusing misinterpretations in the early history of Finnish ballet. The comparison between the texts shows that this started with Koegler who obviously served as a source for Craine & Mackrell and Lee. His sources are unknown. Koegler's text gives an impression that the ballet in Finland dates back to the opening of the Alexander Theatre in 1879 by writing:

When the house opened in 1879 a group of dancers was established to serve in op. and operetta - with very occasional b. perfs., for which the soloists were mostly imported from St. Petersburg. The first real b. co. was formed under George Gé, from St. Petersburg, who was

b. master 1921-35. He was succeeded by the Russ. Alexander Saxelin.

Koegler 1989, p 156.

What Koegler and others do not know or mention is that the Alexander Theatre served the Russian garrison as a venue for guest performances of opera, theatre, music and ballet in 1879-1917. Governor General Nikolai Adlerberg, the highest Russian official in Finland, established the Russian Theatre in 1869. It obtained a permanent venue when the Alexander Theatre was opened in 1879. Besides the Russian theatre, there were two other theatres in Helsinki. The Swedish Theatre opened as a venue for Swedish theatre groups in 1827, and the Finnish National Theatre founded in 1872. It had a permanent artistic staff, and from 1873 to 1879 the opera department was also included as part of the National Theatre. The Finnish National Opera was established in 1911, and it moved into the Alexander Theatre in 1918, after Finland's independence.² Finnish theatre researcher Liisa Byckling (2000) does not mention any dance groups when she discusses ballet performances at the Alexander Theatre in 1879-1917.³ Some dancers might have assisted in the guest performances, but there certainly is no evidence of established dance groups.

The discrepancies in Koegler's text then led Lee to state straightforwardly:

The National Ballet of Finland has its roots in the origins of the Finnish State Opera. When the theater opened its doors in 1879, a *corps de ballet* was formed to serve opera and operetta productions. When occasionally ballet evenings were offered, the soloists were imported from nearby St. Petersburg.

Lee 2002, p 290.

Similarly, the knowledge of George Gé's (1893-1962) and Alexander Saxelin's (1899-1959) origins and citizenship is vague. Gé is recognised as a Finn by Koegler (1989) in a short biographical text on Gé at *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Ballet*, and this notion was copied by Craine & Mackrell (2000). Their text states Gé being from St. Petersburg. Lee (2002) for her part simply calls him Russian. As for Saxelin, all writers consider him Russian.

In Finland Gé's and Saxelin's close ties to Russia are acknowledged, but they are considered Finns in Finnish dance writing (e.g. af Hällström 1945a, Vienola-Lindfors & af Hällström 1981). Gé was born in St. Petersburg, but his parents had moved there from Turku, and they were members of the Finnish colony in St. Petersburg. The years after the revolutions were turbulent in St. Petersburg, and Gé moved to Finland. He received permission to travel to Helsinki in 1920, stamped in Terijoki on 3 September (TeaMA 1003). In Helsinki he performed as a piano accompanist for ballet lessons and as a theatre dancer at the Apollo Theatre together with Mary Paischeff, a dancer from Viipuri, who had arrived in Helsinki in the spring of 1920 as a member of Lyubov Egorova's ballet group. Alexander Saxelin was born in Viipuri, and his mother was a Finn and father unknown. He started his studies at the Imperial Ballet School in St. Petersburg in 1910 and graduated in 1919. Saxelin moved to Viipuri in 1921, and later, in 1922, to Helsinki. He worked as a ballet teacher and assisted e.g. Mary Paischeff and Irja Hagfors in their dance performances. In the 1920s Saxelin also made dance tours in Europe together with dancers Klawdija Gorewa and Ivan Kirejeff.⁴

The role of Russian ballet for the ballet in Finland is many-sided and complex. However, it is questionable to assert that the Finnish National Opera is simply contiguous with the Russian Theatre in Helsinki, although they both used the same building, and similarly it is questionable to name Irja Koskinen (1912-1978) as the first Finnish choreographer at the Finnish National Opera. The various inaccuracies and strange interpretations in international ballet and dance dictionaries suggest a need for more detailed analysis of ballet in Finland and its connections to the Russian ballet. This uncertainty and contradictory opinions about the nationality of forerunners of ballet in Finland also informs the discussion on Finnish/Russian identity. Suspicion toward Russians was strong in Finland after independence. The citizens of Russia as well as members of the Finnish colony in St. Petersburg were under suspicion at the Finnish Opera.⁵

The absence of modern dance in English narratives of dance in Finland invites the question to what extent modern dance existed in Finland. It seems that the only dance book in English giving a wider view on Finnish dance art is

International Encyclopedia of Dance (Suhonen 1998a). It is significant that its article, 'Finland: Theatrical dance', is written by a Finnish dance historian, Tiina Suhonen.⁶

DANCE BOOKS IN FINNISH AND SWEDISH

The first book on dance in Finland *Den klassiska konstdansen* (The Classical Dance Art, Björkenheim 1938) did not pay any attention to dance in Finland. Its writer, Magnus Björkenheim, later a professor in Swedish literature and aesthetics at the University of Helsinki, presented and promoted aesthetic principles and qualities of classical dance inspired by writings of Andre Levinson, Cyril Beaumont and Arnold Haskell. The book was published in Swedish, and it was written in an academic manner with proper references. Although Björkenheim did not discuss dance in Finland directly, his implicit idea might have been to offer classical dance and its aesthetics as an example and a model for the young Finnish dance art. The general outlines of young Finnish dance art are introduced for the first time seven years later in *Siivekkäät jalat* (Feet with Wings, 1945a, 1945b) by Raoul af Hällström. Further outlines are included in *Suomen Kansallisbaletti 1922-72* (The Finnish National Ballet, 1981) by Irma Vienola-Lindfors and Raoul af Hällström, in *Tanssitaiteen vuosikymmenet* (The Decades of Dance Art, 1987) by Ritva Arvelo and Auli Räsänen and in *Valokuvan tanssi* (1997) by Tiina Suhonen.

Siivekkäät jalat is a collection of dance articles by af Hällström. Many of the articles had already been written during the 1930s or even earlier, but the wars in Finland postponed the publication until 1945.⁷ As a dance writer and educator, Raoul af Hällström is quite comparable to Arnold Haskell, Cyril Beaumont and Richard Buckle in Britain. The collection includes 25 articles, and its issues give an idea of which performances its author Raoul af Hällström had seen, and how he perceived the recent history of dance in Europe and in Finland. His focus was on ballet, mainly on Russian ballet, and particularly on the Ballets Russes de Serge Diaghilev and its dancers and choreographers. In addition, the book also includes articles relating to the Paris Opera; the young English ballet; La Argentina; the Danish ballet; the Catherine Littlefield Ballet Company; Isadora Duncan - a barefoot dancer; the dance theatre of Kurt Jooss, Jean Börlin - a

gigolo of modernism, Josephine Baker - Black Venus, Yeichi Nimura and to Uday Shan-Kar. The characterisation of dancers, which I have used here, is that originally made by af Hällström.

Only the last three articles in his book deal with Finnish dance. The first of these, 'Suomen tanssi' (Dance of Finland), introduces with some exceptions dancers outside the ballet tradition. The other two articles, 'Kansakunnan oma baletti' (The Ballet of Nation) and 'Minut on kasvatettu tanssijattareksi rakkaudella' (I Have Been Educated as a Dancer with Love), are concerned with ballet. The second revised edition (1945b) of *Siivekkäät jalat* was published already in 1945 including three more articles. The new articles reflected on the change of the situation in Finland. The lost war against the Soviet Union in 1944 brought Soviet influences to many sectors of life in Finland. So, one of af Hällström's new articles was concerned with the visits of Soviet-Russian ballet dancers, Natalia Dudinskaya, Konstantin Sergejev and Feya Balabina, and folk dance group Moisejev in Finland in 1945. The second article was about foreign influences in Swedish ballet, and the third article predicted a beautiful future for the Finnish National ballet after the difficult war years.

The articles in *Siivekkäät jalat* are simply lists and descriptions of dancers and dances with a strong aim to promote Finnish dance art and especially national ballet. Af Hällström's articles give a lot of factual information about Finnish dance and dancers. Although he even quotes some Finnish dancers, it is difficult to know how reliable his documentation is. Af Hällström seldom gives any hints of his sources, and this problem is evident in all his writings.

Ideas of the emergence of a nation and nationalism as a movement have been the major reasons to write history (Appleby, Hunt & Jacob 1994). This has been very true also in Finland. In history studies Finnish nationalism, so-called "Fennomania", has been the core of the interpretations of Finland's past from the 19th century until nowadays (Virtanen 2001), and Raoul af Hällström was no exception. He started his article 'Suomen tanssi' in *Siivekkäät jalat* by quoting Aleksis Kivi (1834-1872), the national author of Finland. Af Hällström ties together Aleksis Kivi and the birth of dance art in Finland. In the 1850s as a

young student, Aleksis Kivi saw performances of a young German born dancer Alina Frasa (1834-1899) in a restaurant in Helsinki, and was attracted to her. Af Hällström, based on the biography of Kivi written by the literature researcher Viljo Tarkiainen, made Alina Frasa's waving scarf appearing in Kivi's poems, "white as snow", a symbol of Finnish dance art. He had already promoted this idea earlier in his article 'Alina Frasan valkea liina' (Alina Frasa's White Scarf) in *Suomen Kuvalehti* (af Hällström 1929b). Later, in *Suomen Kansallisbaletti 1922-72*, af Hällström defines and legitimates her again "perhaps the first professional dancer in our country" (1981, p 14).

Young Alina Frasa stayed in Finland and became a Finnish citizen in 1852. She taught social dances and ballet, danced during the intervals of the theatre performances and married a Finnish shopkeeper Johan Ahrenius. The successor of Alina Frasa as "the most popular dance teacher", according to af Hällström (1945a, p 174), was also a German, Elisabeth Littson (1847-1919). Two of her Finnish students, Bertha Corander (1864-1955) and Hilma Liiman (1872-1937), became dancers and dance teachers. Bertha Corander was described as "the first Finnish classical dancer" by af Hällström (1945a, p 174). She studied and performed mainly in Germany. Hilma Liiman was characterised as "the first in Finland who danced classical scarf dances à la Isadora" (af Hällström 1945a, p 174).

Historian Sven Hirn gives wider and more detailed knowledge about the first dance teachers in Finland. In his book *Våra danspedagoger och dansnöjen* (Our Dance Pedagogues and the Joy of Dance, 1982) Hirn lists 118 dance teachers in Finland at the turn of the 20th century. Most of them were Swedish or German theatre dancers who toured for a while in Finland, but some of them stayed. Only twelve of the listed teachers were born in Finland.

Af Hällström (1945a) tells that Finnish dance was amateurish at the turn of the 20th century, practiced by the young girls of the upper class at charity parties or by dancers from St. Petersburg and Stockholm in variety shows in Finnish restaurants. His emphasis on connecting dance art to national culture continues in his article 'Tanssi Suomessa' when he discusses the role of the Finnish

National Theatre as a place where civilised women and men could perform dance. Af Hällström states that when the actor and dancer Hilma Liiman of the Finnish National Theatre expressed her desire to become dancer, Kaarlo Bergbom, the founder and director of National Theatre, encouraged her to give a dance performance of her own. This happened in 1906, but not in the capital Helsinki, but in Tampere. However, this 'fact' was not mentioned precisely by af Hällström (1945a) although it was perhaps suggested by his definition of Liiman as the first dancer à la Isadora Duncan. In his writing, as well as in later history writing, the birth of Finnish dance art is most often placed in the year 1911 and the performances of Maggie Gripenberg and Toivo Niskanen in the capital of Finland, Helsinki.

Toivo Niskanen (1887-1961) was categorised as "the first male dancer in Finland", on the list of 'first ones' by af Hällström's (1945a, p 174). Niskanen was Hilma Liiman's student, but he had also studied ballet and character dance in St. Petersburg. His character dance teacher there was Alexander Shirayev and, according to af Hällström, Niskanen apparently was at his best in character dances. Af Hällström also names Toivo Niskanen and his partner Margit Lilius as "the first Finnish artists performing classical ballet". They performed two pas de deux numbers, *Waltz* by Frederic Chopin and *Papillion Waltz* by the Finnish composer Erkki Melartin, in a dance concert in Helsinki in 1917.

According to af Hällström it was more the performance of Maggie Gripenberg (1881-1976), "the priestess of the Jaques-Dalcroze school" in 1911 that raised the appreciation of dance art in Finland. Gripenberg was an aristocrat, whose example encouraged many young women to start dance studies. Her school educated most of the Finnish modern dancers in the 1910s and 1920s. Musical rhythm, creative imagination and improvisation were important features in her teaching. "Their musical and plastic education makes them ready to perform fairy dances with bare feet and all sort humours and grotesque dances", af Hällström writes (1945a, p 178). Some of Gripenberg's students continued their studies at various dance schools in Central Europe, performed and worked there. Af Hällström categorises various dance trends and their representatives in Finland. The spectrum of terms is wide in his article 'Suomen tanssi' in

Siivekkäät jalat. He uses ten different terms to describe dance trends in Finland. **Chart 2** below presents his terms in Finnish, explains their meaning in English and lists the representatives that he mentions. The diversity of terms has continued ever since in Finland.⁸

Chart 2 *Dance trends and their representatives (af Hällström 1945a)*

Term in Finnish	Meaning in English	Finnish representatives
klassinen tanssi	classical dance, refers to ballet but this term was not used in the article	Bertta Corander, Toivo Niskanen, Margit Lilius
salonkitanssi	means social dance, literally 'salon dance'	
luonnetanssi, karaktääritanssi	character dance	Hilma Liiman, Toivo Niskanen, Anitra Karto, Lisi Carén
plastillinen tanssi	plastic dance, refers to Isadora Duncan	Hilma Liiman
teatteritanssi	theatre dance, mostly dances choreographed for plays and musicals	Toivo Niskanen, Edith von Bonsdorf
rytmillis-plastinen tanssi	rhythmic-plastic dance refers to rhythmic gymnastic by Émile Jaques-Dalcroze	Maggie Gripenberg
lasten leikinomainen tanssikasvatus	dance education for children in the form of playing	Toini Karto, Maggie Gripenberg
liikuntakoulut	movement schools after German models and methods, free dance and gymnastics influences	Taina Helve, Mary Hougberg, Irja Hagfors, Sari Jankelow, Helvi Salminen, Esteri Suontaa...
itämainen tanssi	oriental dance	Sage Gundborg, Leena Rintala
akrobaattinen tanssi	acrobatic dance	Orvokki Siponen, Klaus Salin

Although diversity was seen as a merit for Finnish dance in 1945, it was still the National Ballet and its dancers who received most of af Hällström's attention in *Siivekkäät jalat*. The article 'Kansakunnan oma baletti' tells the evolutionary story of the Finnish National Ballet, and the article 'Minut on kasvatettu tanssijattareksi rakkaudella' introduces the career of the first Finnish international ballerina Lucia Nifontova, who danced in the Rene Blum's Ballets de Russe de Monte Carlo in 1938-1940. The narrative of the article 'Kansakunnan oma baletti' continues af Hällström's search for the origins and progress of dance in Finland. The father of the Finnish National Ballet was the opera director Edvard Fazer (1861-1943). His parents were Swiss, but he was born in Finland. Fazer had a concert agency in Helsinki and he organised the tours of the Imperial Russian Ballet in Europe in 1908-1910. The Imperial Russian Ballet also performed in Helsinki in 1908, but not in 1909 as af Hällström states in *Siivekkäät jalat* (Laakkonen 2003).

Af Hällström underlines the central role of Russian ballet for the birth of Finnish ballet. Finland was an autonomous Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire from 1809 to 1917. On the one hand, some Finns studied ballet and character dance in St. Petersburg and, on the other hand, after the revolution some Russian ballet dancers stayed and taught in Helsinki. So, most dancers in the first ballet performance of the *Swan Lake* at the Finnish Opera in 1922 were taught by Russian ballet teachers and some of the dancers at Opera were actually Russians or partly Russians. Af Hällström reluctantly admits that the first dance stars of the Opera in the 1910s were not ballet dancers but "the girls of the Gripenberg school" and he continues - "when it was time to establish the ballet of Finnish Opera dancers with classical education were naturally preferred" (1945a, p 183).

The first soloists of the *Swan Lake*, George Gé and Mary Paischeff, had studied ballet in St. Petersburg. According to af Hällström, the corps de ballet, which danced with soft shoes, mainly came from the Helsinki Dance Institute. However, the dancer Iris Salin disagrees with this statement. She was among the dancers in the first *Swan Lake*, and she states (Kuosmanen 1999) that there were some dancers on points in addition to soloist Mary Paischeff. The *Swan Lake* in 1922 was a success, although the technical level of the dancers was not high, but on the other hand, as af Hällström writes, "the public was not yet demanding" (1945a, p 186).

The success of the *Swan Lake* encouraged ballet to progress. The first ballet master, a quite inexperienced choreographer George Gé, improved together with the ballet group. Af Hällström lists and describes the repertoire of the Finnish National Ballet as well as its dancers. He reveals the Finnish public loving romantic fairytale ballets, such as *Swan Lake* (1922 and 1932), *The Sleeping Beauty* (1928), *The Nutcracker* (1928) and *Giselle* (1929). On the other hand, the ballet group also danced modern ballets, such as *Petrushka* (1929) and *Le Bal* (1933), which were choreographed by George Gé after the models of choreographers of the Ballets Russes de Serge Diaghilev. In 1935 George Gé and the most famous Finnish dancers of the time, Lucia Nifontova and Arvo Martikainen, left the Finnish National Ballet and started their international

careers. Alexander Saxelin, who had graduated from the Imperial Ballet School, became the second ballet master at the Finnish National Opera, and so the progress of ballet continued.

The picture of the development of Finnish dance and ballet is apparently optimistic in *Siivekkäät jalat*. It can be seen as a promotional and marketing book for dance and ballet especially; that is why almost all critical comments have been left out. Still, there are articles in which af Hällström presents more contradictory views on Finnish dance, e.g. in *Suomen Kuvalehti* he (1929b) criticises the limited technical skills of Gripenberg's students and in *Tulenkantajat* (Fire-bearers, af Hällström 1929a) he simply calls George Gé a dilettante ballet master and suggests Alexander Saxelin to replace him.

A history of the Finnish National Ballet, *Suomen Kansallisbaletti 1922-1972*, was published in 1981. The authors were Raoul af Hällström and Irma Vienola-Lindfors, who followed af Hällström as a dance critic in *Helsingin Sanomat*, the biggest newspaper in Finland at the time. Irma Vienola-Lindfors writes in the introduction that the book is based on the manuscript of Raoul af Hällström, but it has been rewritten and re-edited, and the documentation has been checked. The history of the early years of the Finnish National Ballet until the end of 1940s was built on af Hällström's material, but Vienola-Lindfors added her own observations, and wrote the last part of the book by herself.

It is fascinating to see to if af Hällström's interpretation of the past of dance in Finland in *Suomen Kansallisbaletti 1922-1972* is the same as in *Siivekkäät jalat*, and if not, how it had changed. In the first chapter of *Suomen Kansallisbaletti*, 'Aika ennen balettia' (Time Before Ballet), af Hällström discusses briefly, on eight pages, the years before the birth of the National Ballet. It mainly follows the outlines of the article 'Suomen tanssi' in *Siivekkäät jalat*. However, there are some additions, removals and changes. Finnish folk dances, the Finnish colony in St. Petersburg and some Finnish ballet dancers at the Maryinsky Theatre are introduced. Af Hällstrom describes more in detail the output of Toivo Niskanen and gives more attention to Edvard Fazer. Perhaps the most outstanding shift is that early modern dance in Finland is restricted to name only Maggie Gripenberg,

and no mention is made of her students. Of course, it is quite natural to ignore modern dance when you are writing history of the National Ballet, but still this can also indicate that af Hällström's attitude toward modern dance and its performances had changed.

After a short introduction the book describes ballet performances at the Finnish National Opera in chronological order. The discussion is mainly based on the reviews of performances. The chapters are entitled according to ballet masters as follows:

The first era of George Gé 1921-35 (32 pages)

The era of Alexander Saxelin 1935-54 (47 pages)

The second era of George Gé 1955-62 (37 pages)

The era of changing choreographers 1963-68 (39 pages)

The era of Elsa Sylvestersson 1969-72 (32 pages)

Very few comments on the cultural or political contexts of the time are made in *Suomen Kansallisbaletti 1922-1972*. For example, the appearance of American modern dance in Finland during the 1960s is ignored totally. In addition, conflicts in the National Ballet are left out. "Only results matter and they are best observed from a distance", Vienola-Lindfors (1981, p 9) writes. In *Suomen Kansallisbaletti 1922-1972* this distance and the lack of contextual knowledge create the impression that the Finnish National Ballet was living life of its own in a vacuum without any contact with events and values beyond its own discourses and practices.

The book does not include any references: while the names of critics and newspapers are mentioned, there are no exact dates. As in *Siivekkäät jalat*, interesting quotations are without references, obviously based on af Hällström's memory. However, *Suomen Kansallisbaletti 1922-1972* includes valuable appendices. It lists the title and dates of premieres, the numbers of performances by seasons, the visits of the Finnish National Ballet, the visits of foreign ballet groups and soloists at the Finnish National Opera, the employed dancers at the Opera and some of their personal details.

Raoul af Hällström (1899-1975) was a prominent and powerful figure in Finnish dance art from the late 1920s until his death. He was a skilful and respected culture, theatre and dance writer and critic as well as a founding member and the first chair of the Union of Finnish Dance Artists, who knew personally most of the dancers, choreographers and dance teachers in Finland.⁹ His articles and books created the first narrow, but still dominant, narrative and interpretation of Finnish dance art and its early history, which has not yet been much examined and reconsidered. For example, the book by Ritva Arvelo and Auli Räsänen (1987) as well as my own lecturing on Finnish dance history repeat his tones.¹⁰

Arvelo and Räsänen's book *Tanssitaiteen vuosikymmenet* was published to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Union of Finnish Dance Artists in 1987. Most of the history presented in this book goes beyond my primary research era. However, the establishment of the union of dance artist in 1937 indicates that the previous years and decades in dance in Finland had produced a mixed group of people, who identified themselves as professional dancers. Therefore, the discussion and events in the Union during its first years reflect the way, in which dancers identified and presented themselves in Finnish society, and part of this was how they understood and experienced the past of dance in Finland.

Ritva Arvelo, the multifaceted dance and theatre artist and the former student of Maggie Gripenberg, wrote the introduction and the two first chapters of *Tanssitaiteen vuosikymmenet*. They cover the first decades of the Union up to the 1960s. The dance critic Auli Räsänen presented the last few decades until the late 1980s. The book has also a short introduction to dance in Finland by Arvelo that repeats af Hällström's narrative of Finnish dance (1945a). The rest of the book concentrates on the past of the Union and is based on the archives of the Union, but again without proper references. However, Arvelo is aware of the insufficiency of the material, especially concerning the first decades of the Union. Neither does she hide her own position and emphasis as historian.

When you are writing the history of the trade union of dance art it is difficult to avoid a polemical tone, because the whole past of the union, especially the beginning, was a constant struggle to reach the same status as the other art forms had.

Tanssitaiteen ammattijärjestön historiikkiä kirjoittaessa on vaikea välttää poleemista sävyä, koska liiton koko historia, varsinkin alkuaikoina, on yhtä kamppailua edes muiden taidelajien kanssa samoille lähtöviivoille pääsemiseksi.

Arvelo 1987, p 8.

Arvelo raises dance performances to a central position during the first decades of the Union. Performances gathered a diverse group of dancers in Finland, from young students of movement schools to the internationally known Finnish prima ballerina Lucia Nifontova. Dancers wanted to support their existence as artists by performing dance. Still, the number of dance performances did not increase by the end of the 1930s, but declined, as my data reveals (**Chart 3**, p 48). Neither the team spirit nor collaboration between representatives of ballet and free dance lasted long in the Union. The organisation was divided into a ballet division and a free dance division in 1945.

The dance historian Tiina Suhonen introduces the latest outlines of dance in Finland in her article 'Kaunoliiketaiteesta tanssirealismiin' (From Aesthetic Movement Art into Dance Realism) in *Valokuvan tanssi* (1997). The book presents Finnish dance in photography from the 1890s to the 1990s. Besides a huge collection of over two hundred dance photographs, it includes articles by various writers and scholars in dance, cultural studies and photography. The style of writing in *Valokuvan tanssi* is different from the books mentioned so far. The writers use an academic style of writing with proper references and discuss their topics in a wider cultural context. These articles offer a lot of contextual knowledge for my research, e.g. Jukka Kukkonen introduces the work of dance photographers in Finland, Hannu Salmi discusses the use of dance photographs as an image of culture and Virve Sutinen examines representations of modern time in Finnish dance photographs.

Suhonen discusses Finnish dance history from the late 19th century to the 1970s. She is aware of af Hällström's strong impact on the history of Finnish dance. According to Suhonen the development of Finnish dance has often been seen as a Cinderella story. The proceeding years before the change are always considered weaker and less interesting, and depending on the time of writing the progress or the turn to the better in dance has happened in the 1920s, 1940s or

1980s. Suhonen acknowledges that the status of Finnish dance has been strengthened on the one hand by underlining its national features and on the other hand by presenting the great international influences in Finnish dances. However, she also continues, at least partly, the Cinderella story when she writes:

This article sorts out the developments of Finnish dance art from the late 19th century to the 1970s, that is before the boom of dance art in the 1980s and 1990s. The past is approached through dance repertoire and through discussions on dance.

Tässä artikkelissa selvitetään suomalaisen taidetanssin vaiheita 1800-luvun loppupuolelta 1970-luvulle, siis ajanjaksoa ennen tanssitaiteen 1980-90-lukujen nousukautta. Mennyttä lähestytään tanssiohjelmistojen ja tanssista käytyjen keskustelujen kautta.

Suhonen 1997, p 11.

Here, she is referring to the increase in dance education and dance professionals in the 1980s and 1990s. And the reason behind that was "the quantitative and qualitative leap of dance in the 1970s", as Suhonen (1997, p 34) writes at the end of her article.

Finnish dance is placed in the context of general outlines of Western dance and theatre history by Suhonen. She emphasises that contemporary dance research has begun to consider dance peripheries, such as Helsinki, Oslo, Rome, as equally interesting as dance centres, e.g. Paris, London, New York and St. Petersburg. In the case of Finland, this has not yet reached the writers of dance dictionaries and books in English who still repeat the old and inaccurate information of Finnish dance, as shown earlier in this chapter.

Suhonen follows a chronological scheme. She begins her narrative with social and folk dances, which actually had foreign roots, although they have served national interests. Compared to af Hällström, Suhonen discusses Finnish dance in a wider context. She introduces her readers to primary sources concerning the early years of Finnish dance as well as some interesting discourses in Finnish dance, for example how the new dance trends in Central Europe were discussed in Finnish culture and art magazines. The different roles of Russian ballet in

Finland are also taken into consideration. In addition, Suhonen examines the repertoire of ballet and modern dance by using her own collection of programmes and reviews, and some examples of already forgotten performance forms, e.g. pantomimes *Scharamousche* (1935) and *Okon Fuoko* (1930) are introduced. Suhonen's nicely meandering outlines of Finnish dance history hint and imply to many interesting topics, such as the early foreign dance visits in Finland at the turn of the 20th century and the artistic and political complexity of the Russian label in Finnish ballet. These issues call for deeper and more detailed research and discussion.

MEMOIRS

Autobiographies and biographies of dancers or choreographers are the representations of history that are most widely read in Finland. Memoirs are fascinating but problematic for historians. They present the past of the writers as they remembered it or wanted to remember it, and usually in chronological order. The past, present and even future are connected and blurred in memories. Writings on history, such as memoirs, construct a particular view through conscious and unconscious choices. The documentation is not always reliable and has to be checked, and often the context of events has been presented in a very narrow and subjective scope. Dance, and especially the ways in which it was presented, has a minor role in memoirs. Dancers usually talk about what, when and with whom they danced, but usually they pay little attention to the description or analysis of dancing and dance performances. However, people who are remembering their past have been part of that past, which the researcher seeks to understand and interpret. When people are remembering the same events, it is possible to start to sketch various discourses around those events.

There are seven published memoirs of dancers in Finland. Maggie Gripenberg's memoirs of (1950) deal with her career and the early decades of modern dance in Finland. The rest of the published memoirs were written much later by ballet dancers or choreographers. The first one of them was Kari Karnakoski's (1908-1985) autobiography in 1983. He revealed his colourful and international life in dance and love under the title *Tanssin ja rakastin* (I Danced and Loved, 1983).

He was followed by Airi Säilä (1907-1991) in 1986, Eva Hemming (1923-2007) in 1991, Taina Elg (b. 1930) in 1991, Elsa Sylvestersson (1924-1996) in 1995 and Irina Hudova (b. 1926) in 2003. Eva Hemming (1996) also wrote a biography of her Russian ballet teacher Elisabet Apostoli, who had a ballet school in Finland in the 1930s.

Until the 1960s, the work of Finnish ballet dancers consisted of much more than just performing at the Opera. Temporary works were undertaken, since dancers' salaries were low and there were few permanent vacancies for talented dancers. Ballet teaching, performing in restaurants and films, touring around Finland and contracts with foreign ballet companies were part of the life of ballet dancers. Without their personal stories, the history of ballet would be much more about a history of an institution, the Finnish National Ballet. If the 'official' history of the institute does not include conflicts at the Opera, these memoirs compensate this lack, sometimes overwhelmingly.

The unpublished biography, *Elon mainingit taiteen virrassa* (A life in the Flow of Art, 2000), of dancer, choreographer, ballet teacher and designer Elo Kuosmanen (1893-1980) offers some alternative views and interpretations of the first decades of Finnish dance and the formation of the Finnish National Ballet. Leo Kuosmanen (2000) tells his father's life story, and partly also the story of his mother, the dancer and ballet teacher Iris Salin (1906-1991), by using many original documents and his parents' detailed and colourful memories. They were both students at the Helsinki Dance Institute and among the first dancers in the *Swan Lake* in 1922. Elo Kuosmanen opened his dance school in 1920 while also following his own studies at the Helsinki Dance Institute. He taught step dancing and ballet and had his first dance performance in 1921. Both Elo Kuosmanen and Iris Salin wanted to underline the importance of the Helsinki Dance Institute for the birth of the Finnish ballet. The Institute was not just a school that educated the first dancers for the National Ballet, but it also produced ballet performances, perhaps even of better artistic and technical quality than the first ballet performances of the Finnish National Opera. According to Iris Salin (Kuosmanen 2000) the best ballet students in Class A at the Helsinki Dance Institute did not want to participate in the *Swan Lake*

because they did not rely on inexperienced George Gé. They preferred to dance in performances arranged by teachers of the Institute and did not dance at the Opera until the spring of 1923, after the Institute's performances of the first Finnish ballet *Onnen salaisuudet* (Secrets of Happiness).

SCHOLARLY DISSERTATIONS AND ARTICLES

The scholarly interest in the past of Finnish dance started during the 1980s. It focused mainly on the early modern dance and its pioneers. New traces of Finnish free dance were introduced, and history of Finnish free dance was taken into consideration. In 1980 Soili Hämäläinen presented as part of her dissertation outlines of Finnish free and modern dance. Her research was followed by two unpublished MA dissertations focused on Maggie Gripenberg (Rauhamaa 1983, Ambegaokar 1985), one on Ester Naparstok (Niiranen 1985) and a survey on the Finnish free dance after the Second World War (Makkonen 1990). All these dissertations emphasise the basic documentation of Finnish free dance and the work of some dance artists. Their writers use primary sources, mainly articles in newspapers and magazines, alongside the writings by af Hällström.

Soili Hämäläinen (1980) argues for the first time academically that there were connections between Finnish free dance and so-called Finnish women's gymnastics. She articulates two distinctive traditions of modern dance in Finland, so-called free dance and so-called modern dance. Free dance is used by Hämäläinen as an umbrella term for various new dance trends in Finland starting from Maggie Gripenberg and finishing with the Praesens Group, while modern dance refers to American modern dance arrived in Finland in the 1960s. With the change from free dance to modern dance (Hämäläinen 1980) or the transition from free dance to American modern dance, as I argue in my MA dissertation (Makkonen 1990), the term free dance was replaced by modern dance in Finland.

Raisa Rauhamaa (1983) and Saga Ambegaokar (1985) examine the life and career of Maggie Gripenberg from different standpoints. Rauhamaa's MA dissertation in cultural history introduces and analyses the significance of Maggie Gripenberg's work in the early years of free dance 1900-1918. She deals with

Gripenberg and her work, not only in the context of dance influences, but also in the context of modernism and nationalism. Saga Ambegaokar, a Finn living in the USA, explores Maggie Gripenberg and her choreographies mainly in the context of western dance history. She starts her research by stating:

Maggie Gripenberg was a Finnish pioneer in modern dance whose works compare favourably with Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, Doris Humphrey, and Kurt Jooss among others. She was to Finland what Martha Graham was to the United States and Mary Wigman to Germany.

Ambegaogar 1985, p 1.

However, Ambegaogar does not compare Gripenberg to her contemporaries in Europe or in the United States. Instead, she just concentrates on describing the career and works of Gripenberg based on materials available in the archives.

Hannele Niiranen (1985) tells the story of Ester Naparstok (1898-1986), one of the students of Maggie Gripenberg, during the years 1920-60. Niiranen approaches Naparstok and her work from various angles. She sketches the outlines of free dance in Europe and in Finland; presents some numbers of performances in free dance based on the press cutting collection at the Theatre Museum; discusses the relationship between free dance and gymnastics and free dance and ballet; and documents the life of Naparstok and describes her choreographies.

My own MA dissertation contains a survey of free dance in Finland after the Second World War. It introduces some less-known representatives of free dance who are seldom mentioned in Finnish dance writings. For this research I interviewed Elsa Puolanne (1906-1996) and Mirri Karpio (b. 1917) in 1990.¹¹ They were not famous names of Finnish dance, but soon I realised that their lives and opinions could open new viewpoints into the past of dance in Finland. Through Elsa Puolanne and Mirri Karpio I perceived a personal and direct link to the past of dance in Finland. They challenged me to consider what I evaluate as important and essential in dance history. It became evident that the past of dance in Finland has alternative narratives and marginal people besides the mainstream and a couple of remarkable dance artists usually presented in the

brief outlines of Finnish dance history. And in the New History (Burke 2001) the past of marginal people and groups is also worth researching.

Piia Ahonen's MA dissertation (2000) is the only one to discuss the Finnish ballet. It differs from the previous ones. Ahonen does not directly write about dance, dancers or choreographies, but rather about discourses of the body and gender in ballet reviews and articles, and how they have influenced in the legitimisation of ballet in the Finnish Opera in 1922-35.

Phenomenology has been the dominant research trend in PhD theses in Finland (Parviainen 1998, Rouhiainen 2003; Välipakka 2003; Ylönen 2004; Monni 2005), and not one doctoral research has yet been finished in dance history. However, there are some scholarly articles concerning the history of Finnish dance. The first research appendix in *Tanssi* magazine (1998) is significant for my own research. It republished, analysed and discussed the articles of Irja Hagfors and Antti Halonen in *Tulenkantajat* in 1929. The debate, or polemic, in *Tulenkantajat* clearly explicates how differences between modern dance art and classical dance were seen at the end of the 1920s by the Hellerau-Laxenburg graduated dancer Irja Hagfors and by the dance writer Antti Halonen. In addition, two articles in the Dance Research Annual (Pakkanen & others 1999) offer detailed documentation and interpretation of the two prominent events in Finnish dance before my research era. Tiina Suhonen examines how Isadora Duncan's performances were received in Finland in 1908, and what influences they had on dance art in Finland. Johanna Laakkonen for her part discusses the tours of the Imperial Ballet arranged by Edvard Fazer in 1908-1910. She is not actually concerned with their role in Finnish dance history, but rather with the challenge they make to the Western canon of ballet history. This idea has been discussed in more detail in her licentiate's thesis *Unravelling the Canon* (2003).

VISUAL HISTORIES AND TRACES OF THE PAST IN ARCHIVES

Some filmed documentaries produced for TV can also be considered as histories of the past of Finnish dance. They, with a large number of spectators, have a big role in shaping the public knowledge about the past of dance in Finland. On the one hand, these documentaries present unique possibilities to see a number of

original visual sources, dance photographs and short film glimpses, but on the other hand, they often support already existing and dominating views and interpretations and seldom suggest alternative readings on the past.

The dance document *Maggie Gripenberg - tanssin lumoojatar* (Maggie Gripenberg - A enchantress of Dance, 1969) is a portrait of Gripenberg made by her former student Ritva Arvelo. It tells the story of Gripenberg with the words mainly borrowed from her autobiography (1950). In addition, Gripenberg herself, at the age of 88, and some of her former students, Maija Varmaala and Kaarina Mansikkala, were interviewed. The documentary also includes three restaged choreographies of Gripenberg, performed by the Praesens Group and rehearsed by Ritva Arvelo. They were *Lyömäsoitinetydi* (The Étude for Percussion) and *Juoru* (The Gossip), which were part of a set of choreographies that won the first prize in the Concours International de la Danse in Brussels in 1937, and *Elämä jatkuu* (The Life Continues), which was Gripenberg's choreography for the Concours International de la Danse in Stockholm in 1945.

The documentary *Vanha Ooppera* (The Old Opera, 1972) by Kristiina Schulgin was made to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Finnish National Ballet. The early years of Finnish ballet are briefly described by the dance critic Raoul af Hällström and some of the first dancers in the *Swan Lake* in 1922, Mary Paischeff, Iris Salin and Elo Kuosmanen. These short clips are the only filmed documents where I have managed to see these people 'live'. The first two decades of Finnish ballet are illustrated through old dance photos. For the later development of ballet, the documentary uses filmed dance and ballet scenes of Finnish movies and the short film on ballet *Ennen ensi-iltaa* (Before the First Night, 1949).

Auli Räsänen's documentary *Suomalaisen baletin vaiheita: Pietarista Bulevardille* (A history of Finnish Ballet: From St. Petersburg to Boulevard, 1990) underlines the role of Russian ballet for ballet in Finland as its subtitle suggests. Boulevard was the address of Finnish Opera and Ballet until 1993. Räsänen's narration and even photo choices for the early decades of the Finnish National Ballet mainly repeated af Hällström's views (1945a, 1981), but the programme includes also

some new interviews of old dancers, such as Airi Säilä and Margit Lilius (1899-1991).

Raisa Rauhamaa and Marketta Mattila examine the roles of women and men in Finnish modern and contemporary dance in their documentary *Kantapään kautta* (By the Heel, 1994). Although Rauhamaa wrote her MA dissertation on Maggie Gripenberg, she starts her story from the 1960s when American modern dance arrived to Finland. Surely, there were editorial reasons why she has left free dance out, but by doing so she also strengthened the view that it was in the 1960s when modern dance really started to exist in Finland.

Free dance was again included as part of modern dance in Finland in the TV program *Old is Gold* (1996) by Arja Nurmi. It presented reconstructions and restagings of modern dance works in Finland filmed in performance at the Kuopio Dance Festival in the summer of 1996.¹² The performance was organised by the Dance department of the Theatre Academy and danced by its students. The leader of the project was the dance historian Tiina Suhonen. The *Old Is Gold* evening and TV programme clearly articulated the canon of Finnish modern dance.¹³

Besides existing histories, there are many remnants or traces of dance of the past, such as programme leaflets, photographs, newspaper and magazine reviews. After my MA graduation in 1990 I started my private documentation project of Finnish dance. I sought traces and remnants of Finnish dance in public and private archives in order to find material and documentation for my lectures on Finnish dance history and for my future research. The largest collections of material traces are at the Theatre Museum, in the Archives of the Finnish National Opera and in the National Library of Finland.¹⁴ A few filmed dances from the 1920s and 1930s are stored in the Finnish Film Archive.

During my research work in the archives I collected a list of dance performances in Finland starting from the 1910s until the 1960s. The archive project has shaped my understanding of dance in Finland. If I choose to use some of these traces for my PhD research, they will become my primary sources. Primary

sources are understood as remnants or traces "that came into existence during the period being studied" (Layson 1994, p 18). Sometimes, or perhaps always, especially concerning visual traces like photographs and films, it might be useful to consider if even primary sources carry some interpretative elements of the past. For instance, it is worth thinking to what extent a photograph of a dance piece is a real moment of the dance, to what extent it carries conventions of photography of its time and how dance photography reveals or represents dance and its time and culture (Salmi 1997, Kukkonen 1997, Reason 2004).

FUTURE HISTORIES

The past has always been examined from the present. Histories are guided by present interests as well as by real and factual events of the past. This can be clearly identified in existing histories of dance in Finland. Dance, like other arts, was related to the discourses of nationalism during the early decades of the young independent nation of Finland. Finnish dance was legitimated in the dance writings of af Hällström by combining dance with existing cultural symbols and institutions and by searching for the various 'first Finns' in different fields of dance art. This was enough for many decades. New readings of the past of Finnish dance did not appear between 1950 and 1980. Af Hällström's and others' historical interests were limited to celebrating the anniversaries of the Finnish National Ballet and presenting the progress of ballet in Finland. Perhaps there was no need to look in the past after the first decades and the legitimation of the Finnish National Ballet. After the Second World War free dance was struggling for its existence, and dancers trained in the techniques of American modern dance during the 1960s and 1970s were not interested in free dance since they considered it amateurish. On the contrary, they wanted to distance themselves from free dance. The return to the past of free dance was attempting again during the 1980s when modern dance started to achieve its legitimation and needed the support of history.

Therefore, the outlines of Finnish dance during the 1920s and 1930s were mainly articulated by Raoul af Hällström and adopted by others until the 1980s, when more research on free dance appeared. Af Hällström did not certainly consider himself a historian but a journalist. The lack of other writings and

research on the past of Finnish dance made his views and interpretations dominant, however. As discussed earlier, his emphasis was usually on ballet, although during the early decades of his writing he seems to pay more attention to modern dance and modernism than in his later writings. During the 1920s and the early 1930s af Hällström was very inspired by modernism in arts and international city culture, and the subjects of his articles varied from new cars, movies, theatre and images of women to the dance performances. His early views on the modern in dance were contradictory. In 1929, he expressed some suspicion as well as curiosity toward modern dance (1929a, 1929b), but he preferred the old tradition of classical ballet and its new modern forms. However, some years later af Hällström's tune is slightly different in his article concerning on the heritage of Isadora Duncan. He expressed his faith in true modern dance art as follows.

I believe that there will soon be a time, when two competing dance trends will not exist. Then "free", "new", "plastique" dance and traditional academic dance will appear parallel and they will be melting into one. The result will be a truly modern, virtuoso, expressive and internally intensive dance art of modern times.

Vakaumukseni on, että pian koittaa aika, jolloin ei enää ole kahta keskenään vihamielistä tanssisuuntaa. Silloin "vapaa", "uusi", "plastillinen" tanssi ja perinteinen akateeminen koulutanssi esiintyvät oppiaineina rinnakkain, sulautuvat yhteen. Tuloksena on oleva tosimoderni, taiturillinen, ilmeikäs ja sisäisesti intensiivinen uuden ajan tanssitaide.

af Hällström 1945a, p 139.¹⁵

During the recent decades the nature of written narrative, a final literary product of history research and its relationship to the past, has received a lot of attention (White 1973 and the vivid discussion following his book *Metahistory*).¹⁶ Historians have become aware of the linguistic and rhetorical problems or possibilities included in their narratives of the past. This is an important issue, not just for analysing the existing histories, but also for my own writing and for other media of constructing the past of dance art in Finland. However, concerning my own PhD research I also share Carlo Ginzburg's view:

Our attention should shift instead from the end result to the preparatory stages, in order to explore the mutual interaction between empirical data and narrative constraints within the process of research itself.

Ginzburg 1999, p 101.

The existing histories of dance in Finland and the huge collections of traces of Finnish dance familiar to me offer exciting possibilities for creating new histories; for commenting old interpretations and asking new questions; as well as for examining the tensions between documentation and narration. In the next chapter my 'empirical' data is taken into consideration.

NOTES

- ¹ Completed PhD theses dealing with dance: Sarje (1994 and 1999), Parviainen (1998), Nieminen (1998), Hoppu (1999), Hämäläinen (1999), Pasanen-Willberg (2000), Salosaari (2001), Rouhiainen (2003), Järvinen (2003), Välipakka (2003) Anttila (2004), Löytönen (2004), Ylönen (2004), Monni (2005) and Lehikoinen (2005).
- ² Edvard Fazer and Aino Ackte founded the Finnish National Opera in 1911. It was named the Domestic Opera. In 1914 the name changed into The Finnish Opera and in 1956 into the Finnish National Opera. The ballet group of the Finnish Opera was first called the Ballet of the Finnish Opera, from 1956 the Ballet of Finnish National Opera and finally from the 1970s the Finnish National Ballet. Official English names of today, the Finnish National Opera and the Finnish National Ballet, are used throughout this thesis for the sake of clarity.
- ³ The new theatre building increased the interest of Russian theatre and opera and ballet groups to perform in Helsinki. According to Byckling (2000) the first Russian ballet visit is supposed to have happened as early as 1867 when G. Legat and his group performed at the Arkadia Theatre. The visits of the Maryinsky Ballet started in 1906 when Nikolai Legat and Vera Trefilova performed at the Alexander Theatre. Visits continued during the following spring, and for instance, Olga Preobrazhenskaya danced several times at Alexander Theatre 1908-1917.
- ⁴ The biographical information on Gé and Saxelin was collected from many sources, e.g. af Hällström 1945a, Vienola-Lindfors & af Hällström 1981, Dunajeva 1999, TeaMA 1003 & 1025.
- ⁵ Finnish newspapers and the board of The Finnish National Opera paid a lot of attention to the Russian and half-Russian staff at the Opera. This issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.
- ⁶ The content of Suhonen's article in the *International Encyclopaedia of Dance* follows and summarises her article in *Valokuvan tanssi* (1997).
- ⁷ The Union of Finnish Dance Artists supported its economy by publishing a collection of dance articles by Raoul af Hällström (minutes of the board 16.9. 1940). In 1945 the *Siivekkäät jalat* was published by the publishing house Kivi, but the role of the Union was not mentioned at all in it.
- ⁸ During the 1910s and the 1920s, the most often used term for new dance trends in reviews and articles was plastic dance. The term free dance was introduced gradually during the 1930s. In 1945 when the Union of Finnish Dance Artists was divided, the representatives of

various new dance trends gathered under the Free Dance Division, and free dance became a dominant term. The use of modern dance started more widely in the 1960s when American modern dance arrived in Finland. Nowadays free dance refers to all new trends in Finland influenced by Jaques-Dalcroze, Duncan and Ausdruckstanz. The terms new dance and contemporary dance started to emerge during the early 1980s. Postmodern dance has been seldom-used term in Finland.

- ⁹ After his graduation at the University of Helsinki af Hällström, Swedish-speaking Finn, worked as a dance and theatre critic in *Svenska Pressen* in 1923-1965 and a dance critic in *Helsingin Sanomat* 1965-75. He also wrote for various culture magazines, such as *Filmiaitta*, *Film-nytt*, *Suomen Kuvalehti*, *Tulenkantajat* and *Naamio*, and translated and directed plays for various Finnish theatres.
- ¹⁰ Arvelo almost quotes af Hällström (1945a, p 174) in *Tanssitaiteen vuosikymmenet* (1987, p 6) without mentioning it.
- ¹¹ Choreographer Marjo Kuusela had informed me in the summer of 1989 that there were old dance teachers whom I should interview if I wanted to do some research on free dance in Finland.
- ¹² The use and meaning of the word 'reconstruction' have been very confusing. Usually the reconstruction refers to some kind of search for the 'original' work of art. I will return to this subject of reconstruction and originality and authenticity in more detail in Chapter 5.
- ¹³ *Lyömäsoitinydi* (1936) by Maggie Gripenberg, *Yks toiseen potenssiin* (1964) by Riitta Vainio, *Moods of Expression* (1962) by Tamara Rasmussen, scenes from *Väki ilman valtaa* (1974), *Salka Valka* (1976) and *Turun palo* (1980) by Marjo Kuusela and *Jojo* (1978) by Jorma Uotinen.
- ¹⁴ The most important collections for my research are:
1. **The Theatre Museum:** Theatre and dance press cutting, programme and photograph collections and private collections of Martha Bröyer (TeaMA 1152), George Gé (TeaMA 1003), Maggie Gripenberg (TeaMA 1058), Ukko Havukka (TeaMA 1100), Raoul af Hällström (TeaMA 1176), Elo Kuosmanen & Iris Salin (TeaMA 1117), Hagar Lehtikanto (TeaMA 1070), Margit Lilius (TeaMA 1043), Toivo Niskanen (TeaMA 1160), Mary Paischeff (TeaMA 1304) and The Finnish Union of Dance Artists (TeaMA 1025)
 2. **The Archives of the Finnish Opera:** Minutes of the Board, Annual Reports and press cutting, programme, poster and photograph collections
 3. **The National Library of Finland:** A comprehensive collection of printed material in Finland, including books, newspapers, magazines, periodicals and dance programmes.
- ¹⁵ The article was published in 1945, but written earlier as discussed on page 19 and note 7 on 39 .
- ¹⁶ For instance, *Encounters*, a book of interviews by Ewa Domanska (1993), presents exhaustively the main ideas of this discussion.