

# The Dance Spectrum: Unraveling The Nuances of Modern, Postmodern, and Contemporary Forms

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Dharakorn Chandnasaro

Assistant Professor

Department of Dance

Faculty of Fine Arts

Srinakharinwirot University

## Abstract

This scholarly treatise conducts an in-depth analysis of the evolution and salient features of modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance, articulating their seminal role in the advancement of dance as a diverse artistic expression. Beginning with modern dance, the study traces its roots as an avant-garde counterpoint to classical ballet, illuminating its dedication to emotional depth and individualism, championed by visionaries such as Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham. The focus then shifts to postmodern dance, capturing its break with narrative form and its embrace of abstraction and chance, which recalibrated dance's aesthetic landscape. The narrative culminates with contemporary dance, an integrative genre that interweaves the emotive potency of modern dance and the innovative spirit of postmodernism, while also assimilating a broad spectrum of global influences.

The critical assessment within this research considers the interactivity between these dance forms and their respective cultural milieus, examining the influence of divergent Western and Eastern perspectives on their artistic execution. The aim is to enhance understanding of each style's unique contribution to dance's overarching narrative, highlighting its ability to bridge cultural divides and reflect the universal aspects of the human saga. This investigation enriches scholarly dialogues on dance, providing new perspectives on its dynamic nature as a transformative artistic medium that both mirrors and molds the human condition through a tapestry of cultures and eras.

**Keywords:** Dance Evolution, Choreographic Innovation, Cross-Cultural Discourse, Expressive Modalities, Contemporary Dance Synthesis

## Introduction

This scholarly examination ventures into the dynamic realm of dance, an art form delineated by its intricate mosaic of movement, pioneering aesthetic innovations, and nuanced execution. It critically assesses the essential skills required by dancers within the broad spectrum of contemporary dance, a necessity that broadens their artistic scope and sharpens interpretative prowess, as substantiated by recent academic discourse (Gilbert, 2018; McCarthy-Brown, 2017; Schupp, 2014). Furthermore, the analysis thoughtfully considers the persistent influence of ballet on contemporary dance, reflecting upon the transition from classical ballet's rigorous conventions to the emergence of pioneering approaches (Fisher, 2018; Harris, 2017).

The document traces the developmental arc of dance, dissecting modern, postmodern, and contemporary styles to illuminate their nuanced complexities and inherent dualities (Burgess, 2022; Burt, 2005). Understanding the fusion of these dance forms is crucial within the larger framework of artistic expression. Dance, transcending cultural and linguistic barriers, emerges as an impetus for innovation across a multitude of creative domains (Koff, 2021). Engagement with diverse dance styles, from the disciplined elegance of ballet to the vibrant impulses of contemporary dance, endows artists with a repertoire of innovative concepts and emotional profundity (George-Graves, 2015; Evans & Evans, 2003).

In the realm of contemporary dance, foundational ballet training is identified as a significant asset. The exacting discipline and precision central to ballet provide dancers with a fundamental framework, invaluable for navigating the eclectic expressions of contemporary dance (Nadel & Strauss, 2012). Ballet-trained dancers possess an in-depth understanding of body mechanics and balance, elements crucial for the interpretation and execution of contemporary choreographies (Clarke, 2020; Butterworth, 2011). This grounding augments both the precision and the emotive quality of their movements, enhancing adaptability in a dynamic and evolving artistic landscape.

Contemporary dance embodies a shift away from the traditional doctrines of ballet, indicating a trend towards artistic emancipation and conceptual renewal. This shift reflects a collective desire to challenge the limitations of classical ballet, aspiring to a repertoire that boldly reimagines and extends the traditional boundaries of dance (Anderson, 2018; Van Dyke, 1992).

The transition from classical ballet to modern, and then to postmodern and contemporary dance, illustrates the historical evolution of the form. Modern dance emerged as a rebellion against the constraints of ballet, privileging personal expression and emotional depth. Postmodern dance built upon this, incorporating experimental and chance-based elements that expanded the expressive potential of dance (Banes, 1980; Klein, 2011; Rossen, 2014).

Contemporary dance, as the latest iteration, synthesizes elements from its predecessors while integrating a variety of influences, such as ballet, jazz, and hip-hop. Noted for its collaborative nature and propensity for innovation, contemporary dance is an embodiment of adaptability and artistic fluidity (Butterworth & Sanders, 2020; Nadel & Strauss, 2012).

Despite their distinct historical and stylistic roots, modern, postmodern, and contemporary dances often intersect, creating multifaceted interactions that resist simplistic classification. This necessitates detailed examination of the unique characteristics and historical importance of each style, equipping dancers with the knowledge to innovate within the contemporary dance landscape with informed creativity (Banes, 1980; Mazo, 2000; Van Dyke, 1992).

In summation, the richly diverse world of dance presents artists with a spectrum of challenges and opportunities for growth. A comprehensive understanding of the various dance forms, an acknowledgment of ballet's foundational influence, and an appreciation for the evolution from classical to contemporary dance are essential for a complete grasp of this vibrant art form. This article aims to demystify the complexities of modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance, equipping artists with the insights necessary to participate actively in and shape the continuously changing tapestry of dance.

### **Articulating the dance continuum: Modern, postmodern, and contemporary syntheses**

Dance personifies the essence of perpetual transformation, reflecting the cultural and artistic ethos that define each era. The rise and maturation of modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance genres signify pivotal shifts in the annals of dance history. These movements have imparted unique narratives and conceptual edifices to the discourse of kinesthetic studies, each grounded in its distinctive aesthetic and philosophical tenets (Halprin & Kaplan, 2019; Van Dyke, 1992). This academic exposition articulates the subtle differentiations among these forms, dissecting their historical emergence, principal advocates, and the discourses they provoke within the modern artistic tapestry.

## 1. Evolutionary Origins and Developments

This segment delivers an in-depth analysis of the origins and progression of dance, charting its journey from conventional to groundbreaking modes of expression. It probes the historical and societal undercurrents that have spurred the diversification of dance genres, particularly through the transformative dynamism of the 20th century. The goal is to illuminate the interplay of technical, stylistic, and cultural forces that have shaped dance's evolution, syncing its metamorphosis with the larger saga of human ingenuity and articulation.

### 1.1 Modern Dance

In the early 20th century, modern dance burgeoned as a vanguard of emotive innovation, transcending the prescriptive formalities of classical ballet. Visionaries such as Isadora Duncan, Loie Fuller, and Ruth St. Denis repudiated the conventional balletic lexicon, advocating for a form of dance suffused with emotional depth and individualistic articulation. This revolutionary shift birthed a genre that foregrounded the dancer's emotive journey, paving the path for later exploratory liberty in dance artistry (Brown, Mindlin, & Woodford, 1998; Mazo, 2000; Penrod & Plastino, 2004).

### 1.2 Postmodern Dance

The mid-20th century heralded the inception of postmodern dance, marked by its departure from modernist narratives and an embrace of conceptual and corporeal abstraction. Innovators such as Merce Cunningham, Yvonne Rainer, and Trisha Brown steered this genre to prominence, promoting a reimagining of dance as an independent performative medium, liberated from narrative constraints and traditional theatrical contexts (Franklin & Graham, 2015; Lihs, 2018; Rossen, 2014).

### 1.3 Contemporary Dance

As the progeny of its modern and postmodern antecedents, contemporary dance is characterized by its versatility and eclectic synthesis. It integrates a diverse array of movement philosophies, mirroring the multifaceted and intricate fabric of present-day society. Contemporary dance perpetually reconfigures the frontiers of choreographic art, epitomizing a dynamic and inclusive form that is attuned to the fluid narrative of social and cultural evolution (Butterworth & Wildschut, 2017; Ehrenberg, 2021; Lepecki, 2012).

## 2. Luminaries and Vanguard Artists

This segment meticulously dissects the seminal contributions of pivotal figures in dance, whose innovative endeavors have profoundly influenced the trajectory of dance history. It scrutinizes a spectrum of choreographers and dancers whose foundational work across the realms of modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance has etched a permanent mark. The objective is to elucidate the philosophical and creative currents underpinning their enduring legacies, highlighting the transformative impact these trailblazers have had on the evolution of dance as a dynamic art form. These pioneers have introduced groundbreaking techniques, conceptual frameworks, and philosophical tenets that have redefined performance paradigms and enriched the dance discourse, ensuring their contributions resonate with ongoing relevance and continue to energize successive generations within the dance community.

Martha Graham, often heralded as the progenitor of modern dance, unveiled the concept of contraction and release, a paradigm-shifting technique that accentuated the emotional capacity of the human form (Brown, Mindlin, & Woodford, 1998; Penrod & Plastino, 2004). Her innovative approach illustrated the potential of dance to articulate deep-seated psychological and emotional narratives, thereby recalibrating the modern dance landscape and establishing a new benchmark for choreographic articulation.

In the domain of postmodern dance, Merce Cunningham introduced chance operations into the choreographic process, challenging traditional perceptions of dance as a medium for narrative or expressive content and redefining it as an abstract art form (Franklin & Graham, 2015; Rossen, 2014). His methodology diminished the primacy of music in dictating movement, fundamentally transforming the dance-music relationship within the choreographic context.

Within the contemporary dance arena, Pina Bausch's integration of theatrical elements, spoken word, and movement obliterated traditional boundaries between disparate art forms, broadening the performative spectrum of dance (Butterworth & Wildschut, 2017; Lepecki, 2012). Her pioneering work in Tanztheater has indelibly influenced contemporary dance (Ehrenberg, 2021), catalyzing a shift towards more narrative and theatrical explorations in the medium.

By profiling these icons, the discussion promotes a thorough comprehension of the transformative energies that have propelled dance into the forefront of artistic expression. These pioneers, with their relentless creativity and avant-garde approach, have not only reshaped the landscape of dance but also instigated a significant shift in the perception and execution of performance art.

Their stories and lasting influences chart the progressive narrative of dance, offering insight into the creativity and pioneering determination that have pushed the art form's boundaries. Therefore, this section stands as a tribute to the indelible impact of these artists, whose innovative works have redefined the narrative of dance and continue to inspire forthcoming generations of performers.

### 2.1 Modern Dance Pioneers

Icons like Isadora Duncan and Martha Graham are venerated for epitomizing the foundational principles of modern dance. They advocated for a form of dance that encapsulated the visceral expressiveness of the human spirit, with Graham's dramatic and codified technique leaving a lasting imprint on the modern dance canon. Their philosophies and techniques persist in contemporary dance education and performance, influencing ongoing artistic practices. (Anderson, 2018; Penrod & Plastino, 2004; Van Dyke, 1992)

### 2.2 Postmodern Dance Innovators

The architects of postmodern dance, including Merce Cunningham, Yvonne Rainer, and Trisha Brown, ushered in groundbreaking choreographic and performance concepts. Cunningham's incorporation of aleatory methods and Rainer's minimalism represented a stark divergence from established dance constructs, while Brown's inclusion of everyday movements broadened the expressive capacity of the genre, challenging audience expectations and conceptions of dance (Burt, 2005; Nadel & Strauss, 2012; Vangelina, 2020).

### 2.3 Contemporary Dance Visionaries

The heterogeneity of contemporary dance is reflected in the divergent methodologies of its advocates. Choreographers such as Pina Bausch, William Forsythe, and Ohad Naharin have reimaged the confines of dance, fusing movement with story-telling and visual artistry, thereby augmenting the contemporary dance fabric with their diverse and groundbreaking contributions (Chatterjea, 2021; Dils & Albright, 2001; Weir, 2019).

### 3. Defining Attributes and Core Principles

This segment undertakes a discerning exploration of the distinctive characteristics and foundational precepts that constitute the essence of modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance. It endeavors to distill the quintessential elements and philosophical doctrines that animate the practice and appreciation of these disparate dance forms. Through this analytical lens, the text seeks to decipher the singular components that define each style, offering a granular understanding of their artistic, technical, and conceptual infrastructures.

The analysis within this section reveals not only the unique essence of each modality but also the broad thematic and emotive spectrum they collectively embrace. By examining the inherent attributes that demarcate these genres, the narrative enriches the scholarly grasp of their artistic nuances and the breadth of expression they encapsulate.

#### 3.1 Modern Dance Characteristics

Modern dance is hallmarked by its commitment to the expression of sentiment through the medium of the body. It emphasizes the significance of breath, the dynamics of tension and release, and the undulating movements of the spine as central to its practice, reflecting the performer's internal emotive state (Butterworth, 2011; Cheney, 1989).

#### 3.2 Postmodern Dance Features

Postmodern dance is renowned for its deviation from narrative-driven and representational choreography, celebrating the aesthetics of the everyday and advocating for movement as an independent art form. It valorizes unpredictability and non-linear structures, embracing improvisation and task-based choreography as vehicles for challenging established dance paradigms (Rossen, 2014; Strauss & Nadel, 2012).

#### 3.3 Contemporary Dance Synthesis

Contemporary dance represents a rich tapestry woven from varied dance heritages, marrying the precision of ballet, the improvisational spirit of jazz, and the visceral energy of hip-hop. This synthesis highlights contemporary dance's devotion to cross-disciplinary exploration, perpetual innovation, and the crafting of emergent kinetic languages (Chatterjea, 2021; Ehrenberg, 2021; Lihs, 2018).



#### 4. Interpretive and Perceptual Paradigms in Contemporary Artistic Practice

This section ventures into an incisive inquiry into the interpretative and perceptual frameworks that form the foundation of contemporary artistic praxis in dance. Its objective is to unravel the intricate processes through which dancers and choreographers ideate and articulate thematic content, and how such creations reciprocally shape audience interpretation and broader artistic discourse.

Here, the analysis sheds light on the mutual interplay among the creator, the creation, and the observer within the domains of modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance. It advocates for contemporary dance as a potent medium for expression and interaction, extending beyond the corporeal to incite and partake in deep-seated experiential dialogue with audiences. This examination enriches the academic understanding of contemporary dance's ability to manifest and relay multifaceted ideas, emotions, and narratives, thereby reinforcing its stature within the gamut of contemporary arts.

##### 4.1 Modern Dance Interpretations: Societal Reflections through Movement

Modern dance emerges as a profound reflective medium, enabling choreographers and performers to engage deeply with the societal zeitgeist through the expressive power of movement. This genre allows artists to explore and articulate themes of identity, inclusivity, and the complexities of social relationships, thereby transforming the stage into a dynamic platform for societal commentary. The choreographic endeavors of Alvin Ailey and Martha Graham stand out for their ability to intertwine technical mastery with critical issues such as racial discrimination, gender dynamics, and human rights, leveraging the medium of dance to provoke contemplation and dialogue among a diverse audience base (Mazo, 2000; Rossen, 2014). These works exemplify how modern dance transcends aesthetic boundaries, serving as a catalyst for critical thought and societal engagement.

##### 4.2 Postmodern Dance Perspectives: Reconceiving Movement and Space

Postmodern dance, characterized by its critical examination and deconstruction of established norms, ushers audiences into a realm of introspection and critique. This genre's distinct focus on movement for its own sake, along with the incorporation of mundane gestures and the innovative use of non-traditional performance spaces, compels viewers to challenge

their preconceptions of dance. The choreographic innovations of Trisha Brown and Yvonne Rainer, among others, not only subvert traditional aesthetic norms but also foster intellectual exploration, reinforcing postmodern dance's role in stimulating a reevaluation of societal and cultural norms (Banes, 1980; Franklin & Graham, 2015; Rossen, 2014).

#### 4.3 Contemporary Dance Dynamics: Fostering Global Connectivity

Contemporary dance, renowned for its dynamic adaptability and openness to global influences, stands as a testament to the genre's ongoing evolution and its capacity to mirror the complexities of a globally interconnected society. This field is marked by choreographers and performers who adeptly weave socio-cultural narratives, technological advancements, and cross-cultural exchanges into their work, thus creating performances that resonate on a global scale. The oeuvre of Akram Khan serves as a quintessential example of contemporary dance's prowess in amalgamating diverse artistic traditions, thereby engendering a profound dialogue that surpasses geographical and cultural boundaries (Burgess, 2022; Clarke, 2020; Lepecki, 2012). Moreover, this exploration elucidates the connection to the dynamics of contemporary dance and its significant influence on the discipline, encompassing socio-cultural, technological, and international vectors, delineated into two principal categories:

##### 1) Global Influences and Technological Integration in Contemporary Dance

Contemporary dance's global tapestry is vividly illustrated in the work of Akram Khan, who blends classical Indian Kathak with contemporary dance to address themes of migration, identity, and cultural fusion. His piece "Desh" intricately navigates personal narratives of heritage and belonging while engaging with universal themes of displacement and identity. (Burgess, 2022; Clarke, 2020; Lepecki, 2012) Moreover, the integration of technological advancements, as seen in Wayne McGregor's "Atomos," employs 3D imaging and digital scenography to redefine the audience's engagement with dance, expanding choreographic expression into multidimensional experiences (Jennings, 2013; Morgan, 2017).

##### 2) Cross-Cultural Collaborations: Expanding Expressive Boundaries

The genre's embrace of cross-cultural collaborations is highlighted in works such as Crystal Pite and Jonathon Young's "Betroffenheit," which merges dance, theater, and spoken word to explore profound themes of trauma, loss, and existential search (Lederman, 2019; Mackrell,

2016). This interdisciplinary approach not only widens the expressive scope of contemporary dance but also exemplifies how artistic collaborations can bridge linguistic and cultural divides, opening new avenues for emotional and intellectual resonance.

Through these nuanced examples, the adaptability of contemporary dance to socio-cultural shifts, technological progress, and global artistic exchanges is compellingly showcased. The genre's openness to diverse traditions and its innovative engagement with technology not only enrich its choreographic landscape but also affirm contemporary dance's significance as a medium for reflection and connection in our multifaceted global society.

In conclusion, the confluence of modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance forms an intricate mosaic within the historical and cultural narrative of dance. Each genre, with its distinct origins, pioneering figures, and characteristic features, contributes to the broad comprehension of dance's function as both an artistic medium and a societal interlocutor. Collectively, they continue to sculpt the continuum of dance, mirroring and engaging with the evolving canvas of contemporary artistic and cultural discourse.

### **Characteristics of body movement in dance process design, including specific techniques indispensable to modern dance, postmodern dance, and contemporary dance**

The examination of dance as a kinetic art form requires an astute understanding of the unique characteristics that distinguish and define the various styles within this domain. An in-depth comprehension of these qualities is fundamental to designing dance processes and is particularly critical when integrating techniques integral to modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance. This section delineates these distinct attributes, thereby contributing to a nuanced taxonomy of the dance medium.

#### 1. Distinctive Characteristics of Each Dance Movement

This segment commences a rigorous scholarly inquiry into the unique characteristics that define each dance movement within the realms of modern, postmodern, and contemporary genres. It aims to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the salient features and movements that set these styles apart. The intent is to methodically reveal and articulate the specific technical, expressive, and thematic components intrinsic to each genre, providing a lucid and thorough understanding of their respective movement vocabularies and artistic intricacies.

This discussion offers a critical perspective on the distinctive qualities of these dance forms, highlighting the idiosyncratic features that not only characterize but also distinctly differentiate these genres. It is poised to shed light on the individual contributions of each dance form to the broader field, enhancing academic discourse with detailed insights into their movement languages and the creative ethos they uphold. Hence, this exploration is crucial in advancing our understanding of these dance forms and their unique trajectories within the dynamic landscape of dance.

### 1.1 Modern Dance

1) Natural and Fluid Gestures: Modern dance is characterized by its emphasis on naturalistic and fluid movements, with inspiration often drawn from everyday life to create a medium of expressive authenticity. Martha Graham's assertion that "The body says what words cannot" encapsulates this philosophy, where the dancer's body becomes a vehicle for authentic self-expression, and each movement tells a distinctive story (Graham, 1991).

2) Emotional Expression: The ability of modern dance to communicate profound emotional narratives through physical motion is one of its defining features. Alvin Ailey's "Revelations" leverages the body's movement to evoke spiritual and human resilience, establishing a deep connection with the audience that lingers beyond the performance (Ailey & Bailey, 1995).

3) Individualism and Creativity: The essence of modern dance lies in the celebration of individualism and creativity, with dancers encouraged to diverge from set norms in favor of personal choreographic innovation. This principle has cultivated a diverse choreographic range within modern dance, as exemplified by Merce Cunningham's works that integrate elements of chance, thus redefining traditional dance narratives (Cunningham, 1985).

### 1.2 Postmodern Dance

1) Rejection of Traditional Narratives: Postmodern dance is known for eschewing the narrative-centric choreography of classical ballet and some modern dance forms. Choreographers like Pina Bausch utilized repetitive movements and interactions to create performances imbued with ambiguity and abstract narratives, prompting the audience to extract personal meaning (Bausch, 1992; Meyer & Black, 2018).

2) Pedestrian Movements: A distinctive hallmark of postmodern dance is its blending of dance with daily life routines, often using pedestrian movements to challenge and redefine the traditional boundaries of dance. Yvonne Rainer's "Trio A" serves as a key example, incorporating mundane motions to encourage audiences to reconsider the essence of dance (Rainer, 2013).

3) Minimalism and Simplicity: Minimalism is a significant theme in postmodern dance, with performances frequently set against stark backdrops that highlight the movement's purity. This simplicity emphasizes the choreography's complexity, demonstrated in Trisha Brown's "Water Motor," which features a solo performance characterized by meticulous precision and repetition (Brown, 1998).

### 1.3 Contemporary Dance

1) Eclecticism and Fusion: Contemporary dance is noted for its eclectic fusion of various dance styles, from ballet to hip-hop. Crystal Pite's "Emergence" exemplifies this blend, merging contemporary ballet with intricate ensemble formations to create a deeply resonant experience (Pite, 2013).

2) Innovation and Experimentation: Contemporary dance is synonymous with continuous innovation and experimental choreography. Wayne McGregor is celebrated for his intricate and physically challenging choreography that extends dancers' capabilities, often integrating advanced technologies to craft immersive performances (McGregor, 2014; Sulcas, 2018).

3) Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Contemporary dance is distinguished by its inclination towards interdisciplinary collaboration, merging dance with other artistic forms. Hofesh Shechter's "Political Mother" is indicative of this trend, combining live music and vocals with dance to create a comprehensive performance that transcends traditional boundaries (Shechter, 2010).

In summary, modern, postmodern, and contemporary dances each possess distinctive characteristics that not only define their essence but also contribute to the evolving landscape of dance. Modern dance is marked by its focus on genuine emotional expression and narrative, postmodern dance by its innovative use of everyday movements and deconstruction of narratives, and contemporary dance by its embrace of eclectic influences and interdisciplinary collaborations. Together, they encapsulate the spirit of dance as an ever-evolving medium of movement-based expression and storytelling.

## 2. Designing Dance Postures: A Comparative Study across Modern, Postmodern, and Contemporary Dance

This section presents a comparative academic investigation into the design and conceptualization of dance postures within modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance. This inquiry critically dissects the unique methodologies employed by each genre in creating and performing dance postures, aiming to delineate the artistic intentions and movement designs that underpin these styles. Through comparative analysis, this study uncovers the choreographic nuances and complexities, elucidating how each dance genre distinctively conveys its aesthetic language through bodily expression.

The purpose of this analysis is to deepen scholarly comprehension of the intricate artistry involved in developing dance postures, offering insights into the diverse choreographic landscapes that define these influential dance styles. It endeavors to contribute a refined perspective to the academic dialogue on dance, accentuating the interplay between technical proficiency, creative expression, and conceptual depth in the creation of dance postures across these genres.

### 2.1 Modern Dance: A Canvas for Emotional Landscapes

Rooted in the fertile ground of emotive exploration, modern dance leverages posture design as a medium to navigate thematic realms, translating abstract emotional narratives into palpable physical embodiments. Martha Graham's choreographic oeuvre, notably in "Errand into the Maze," epitomizes the genre's capacity to embody emotional narratives, utilizing the dancer's physique as a medium to externalize internal conflicts and psychological profundity (Anderson, 2018; Brown, Mindlin, & Woodford, 1998; Dils & Albright, 2001; Harris, 2017). Characterized by its rich emphasis on expressivity, spatial dynamism, and the strategic use of costume to enhance emotional resonance, modern dance's approach to posture is further enriched by improvisational methodologies and collaborative ventures, fostering a narrative expression that is both authentic and evocative.

## 2.2 Postmodern Dance: Redefining Conceptual Frontiers

As the choreographic lens pivots to postmodern dance, there emerges a critical examination of dance's foundational constructs and its capacity for communication. This genre's engagement with posture design is reflective of its broader conceptual explorations, as exemplified by Trisha Brown's innovative works. Brown's choreography, which elevates quotidian movements to the realm of artistry, contests conventional notions of dance, expanding the parameters of performance aesthetics (Banes, 1980; Burgess, 2022; Franklin & Graham, 2015). Postmodern dance's posture design, rooted in deconstructive processes, seeks to distill movement to its expressive essence, redefining dance's communicative potential and inviting audiences to a more profound engagement with the performance, thus blurring the boundaries between dance and other artistic modalities.

## 2.3 Contemporary Dance: A Fusion of Diverse Inspirations

Within contemporary dance, a genre marked by its eclectic synthesis of influences and dedication to innovative exploration, the design of postures reflects its overarching creative ethos. This genre melds varied dance traditions and movement practices to create dynamic and expressive physical configurations, as seen in Pina Bausch's "Café Müller" — a piece that challenges aesthetic conventions and elicits contemplation on intricate societal issues (Bolwell, 2016; Halprin & Kaplan, 2019). The focus on collaborative creativity and the amalgamation of stylistic elements culminates in postures that encapsulate both a shared artistic vision and the distinct voices of individual contributors.

Through this analytical comparison, it is evident that the choreographic design of dance postures in modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance transcends mere technicality, embodying a rich confluence of creative expression, conceptual depth, and artistic ingenuity. Each genre's unique approach to choreography and posture design distinctly enriches the tapestry of dance, underscoring its perpetual evolution and its profound ability to articulate deep-seated narratives and emotions.

The comparative analysis reveals that each dance style is shaped by its distinct philosophical and creative mandates. Modern dance emphasizes the physical portrayal of emotions, postmodern dance focuses on the intellectual exploration of movement, and contemporary dance values the creative fusion of diverse styles. The resulting postures are thus reflective of the rich significances inherent in each dance tradition, contributing to the continuous development of dance as a medium of reflective and evocative artistic expression.

### 3. Indispensable Movement Techniques in Dance Genres

This segment conducts an in-depth scholarly analysis of the essential movement techniques that are fundamental to the disciplines of modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance. It aims to dissect and critically assess the specific methods that are emblematic and intrinsic to each genre's artistic expression and performance. This detailed study illuminates the distinct movement qualities and technical skills that distinguish these dance forms, enriching our understanding of their choreographic identities.

Through this examination, we aim to elevate the academic appreciation of the subtle complexities and technical mastery embedded in each dance genre, emphasizing their contribution to the rich tapestry of choreographic artistry. This dissection of techniques serves to deepen the discourse on dance, highlighting the intricate fusion of skill, innovation, and expressive depth that characterizes the movement design in each style.

#### 3.1 Modern Dance Techniques: A Narrative of Emotional Resonance

Modern dance, distinguished by its emphasis on emotional articulation, utilizes the dynamic interplay of contractions and releases to vividly depict internal tensions and emotional landscapes. This genre's innovative engagement with floor work, where dancers interact intimately with gravity, serves not only as a physical manifestation of struggle and emancipation but also as a metaphorical landscape for delving into profound spiritual and existential themes. Alvin Ailey's seminal work, "Revelations," exemplifies this approach, where the dancers' ground interactions transcend mere movement to embody deeper spiritual narratives (Cheney, 1989; Graham, 1991; Lihs, 2018). Furthermore, the integral role of improvisation in modern dance facilitates a nuanced exploration of emotion, allowing dancers to dynamically express personal sentiments within the confines of collective choreography—a technique Martha Graham pioneered, thus enriching the choreographic fabric with layers of individual emotional depth.



### 3.2 Postmodern Dance Techniques: Deconstruction and Perception

Postmodern dance, with its radical choreographic strategies, redefines the essence of movement and perception through the incorporation of everyday gestures and the application of chance operations. This genre's approach fundamentally subverts traditional dance narratives, valorizing the mundane and quotidian as subjects worthy of artistic inquiry. Trisha Brown's choreography stands as a testament to this philosophy, transforming simple daily movements into compelling performative acts, compelling audiences to reconceptualize their understanding of dance (Brown, 1998; Burgess, 2022; Rossen, 2014). Through such innovative manipulation of common movements, postmodern dance imbues them with renewed performative value, challenging entrenched notions of what constitutes dance as a form of art.

### 3.3 Contemporary Dance Techniques: Eclecticism and Emotional Connectivity

Contemporary dance emerges as a melting pot of varied dance techniques, synthesizing elements from ballet, jazz, and hip-hop to forge a multifaceted and innovative choreographic language. This genre adeptly blends balletic finesse, as seen in turnout and arabesque, with the rhythmic isolations characteristic of jazz, and the vigorous energy intrinsic to hip-hop's popping and locking, showcasing its inherently eclectic nature. Additionally, the practice of contact improvisation within contemporary dance underscores its emphasis on emotional resonance and collective creativity, as demonstrated in Crystal Pite and Jonathon Young's "Betroffenheit" (Burgess, 2022; Strauss & Nadle, 2012). This technique fosters a tangible and emotional interplay among dancers, delving into the intricacies of human interaction and connectivity through the medium of movement.

Each dance genre's unique movement techniques contribute to their distinctive choreographic narratives, reflecting the evolution of dance as a performative art form. Modern dance harnesses emotive expression through movement, postmodern dance reinterprets the ordinary into art, and contemporary dance fuses diverse styles to push choreographic boundaries. Collectively, these techniques form the choreographic syntax that allows dancers to articulate profound narratives, resonating with the human experience.

In summary, the exploration of movement techniques across modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance reveals the distinctive choreographic language of each form. The emotive contractions of modern dance, the conceptual abstraction of postmodern techniques,

and the stylistic hybridity of contemporary movements all contribute to the multifaceted nature of dance choreography. This rich diversity allows for a continuum of innovation and expression within the performing arts, reflecting the ever-evolving human experience through the medium of dance.

### **The significance and artistic perspectives of modern dance, postmodern dance, and contemporary dance**

This section presents a scholarly examination of the critical significance and the multiplicity of artistic perspectives that underpin modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance. It aims to dissect the core ideologies, cultural influences, and aesthetic principles that uniquely distinguish these pivotal dance genres. The analysis endeavors to unveil the distinct artistic narratives and varied cultural contexts that have been central to the development and societal reception of these dance forms.

Through rigorous exploration, this inquiry develops an in-depth understanding of the interplay between artistic innovation, historical evolution, and cultural perception as they relate to these genres. The investigation seeks to broaden scholarly appreciation of how these dance forms have contributed to and shaped the expansive field of performing arts. Emphasizing their nuanced complexities and transformative influence, the analysis provides critical insights into their enduring impact and legacy within the realm of artistic expression and cultural dialogue. This section aspires to enrich academic discourse, offering a comprehensive view of the significance and artistic progression of modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance.

#### 1. Perspectives of Western and Eastern Artists on Dance Forms

Dance, as a vibrant form of human expression, transcends cultural and geographical divisions, evolving distinct styles with unique artistic and cultural imprints (Butterworth & Wildschut, 2017; Schupp, 2014). The evolution of modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance has seen varying receptions and interpretations between Western and Eastern artists, illustrating the diverse interplay of culture, tradition, and innovation (Franklin & Graham, 2015; Van Dyke, 1992). This section critically explores the artistic significance and varying viewpoints of these dance forms through the perspectives of artists from both hemispheres, offering a rich exploration of their multifaceted natures.

### 1.1 Modern Dance: A Western Inception, An Eastern Interpretation

The genesis of modern dance signified a departure from the codified realm of classical ballet, emphasizing a novel emphasis on individual expression and emotive depth (Burgess, 2022; Clarke, 2020). In the West, modern dance became synonymous with artistic freedom, shaped by pioneers like Isadora Duncan and Martha Graham, who sought to explore the human experience through movement (George-Graves, 2015; Lihs, 2018). Meanwhile, Eastern artists grappled with integrating the modernist movement within long-standing dance traditions. Artists like Uday Shankar creatively bridged this gap, blending classical Indian dance with modern dance principles, thus pioneering a genre that honored tradition while innovating expressive possibilities (Banerjee, 2010; Katrak, 2011).

### 1.2 Postmodern Dance: Western Disruption, Eastern Assimilation

Postmodern dance emerged as a challenge to modern dance's emergent formalism, introducing abstraction and questioning the essence of dance itself (Dils & Albright, 2001; Franklin & Graham, 2015). Western artists like Merce Cunningham and Yvonne Rainer were at the forefront of this exploration, reshaping the choreographic narrative (Banes, 1980; Rossen, 2014). In contrast, Eastern artists approached postmodern dance with caution, interpreting it through a cultural lens that balanced reverence for narrative dance traditions with a curiosity for contemporary expression (Klein, 2011; Halprin & Kaplan, 2019).

### 1.3 Contemporary Dance: A Convergence of Traditions

Contemporary dance in Western contexts is celebrated for its versatility and adaptive nature, with choreographers such as Pina Bausch and William Forsythe pioneering novel integration of multimedia and interdisciplinary techniques (Gilbert, 2018). Eastern perspectives, however, approach contemporary dance as an extension of their cultural heritage, infusing traditional narratives with contemporary flair (Burridge, 2020; Dils & Albright, 2001). This genre has flourished in regions like South Korea and Taiwan, where dance practitioners blend indigenous stories with modern aesthetics, creating performances that resonate on a global scale (Jun, 2015; Wong, 2016).

In synthesis, contemporary dance stands as a testament to the dialogue between Western innovation and Eastern traditionalism. The perspectives of artists from both spectrums, despite their divergent origins, underscore the transformative power of dance, capable of transcending cultural boundaries and fostering a collective embrace of diverse narratives and techniques.

## 2. Perceptions and Understanding of Dance by Generations Y and Z

The engagement of Generations Y and Z with the art of dance marks a paradigm shift in cultural interaction, underscored by their distinct social frameworks and digital literacy. This examination delves into the intricate perspectives and comprehensions these younger generations hold towards modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance, revealing how these styles resonate with their experiences and aspirations. It unpacks the ways in which these cohorts navigate the complex terrains of these dance forms, shedding light on the present-day relevance and the progressive artistic visions that continue to redefine the genres. Through this lens, we gain insight into how generational identity molds the interpretation of artistic expression, reflecting broader societal trends and the transformative power of dance as an evolving medium of storytelling and cultural reflection.

### 2.1 Modern Dance Through the Lens of Generations Y and Z

Modern dance's focus on emotional expression and movement freedom garners mixed reactions from Generations Y and Z. Some regard modern dance as an emblem of individualism and artistic innovation, resonating with its emotive richness and authenticity (Butterworth, 2011; Emery, 2011; Franklin & Graham, 2015). This aligns with their preference for personal storytelling and expressive authenticity in artistic representations. However, for others, modern dance's divergence from conventional narratives may seem obscure, reflecting a broader trend among these generations towards more accessible and structured forms of art and media.

### 2.2 Postmodern Dance and Its Reception by Younger Generations

Postmodern dance, characterized by its experimental nature and challenge to traditional dance forms, elicits varied interpretations from younger audiences. Some within these generations admire the genre's non-conformity and randomness, viewing it as a mirror to the contemporary world's unpredictability (Franklin & Graham, 2015; Klein, 2011). In contrast, others may find the non-narrative approach and abstraction of postmodern dance less engaging, given their upbringing in a digital era marked by immediate clarity and rapid content delivery (Manning & Schneider, 2020; Rossen, 2014; Van Dyke, 1992).

### 2.3 Contemporary Dance's Appeal to Generations Y and Z

Contemporary dance's eclectic fusion and innovative spirit often strike a chord with Generations Y and Z. Its diversity and collaborative nature align with these generations' values of inclusivity and their penchant for interdisciplinary and multimedia experiences. The incorporation of various dance styles and the use of technology in contemporary dance performances are particularly appealing, reflecting the digital and global context of their lives (Butterworth, 2011; Manning & Schneider, 2020; Strauss & Nadle, 2012).

In conclusion, Generations Y and Z bring diverse perspectives to the appreciation and interpretation of modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance. Their responses to these genres—from appreciation for the emotive depth of modern dance to mixed receptions of postmodern dance's abstraction, and enthusiasm for contemporary dance's innovation—underscore the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity in the arts. These generational insights contribute to the rich tapestry of dance, highlighting its evolving relevance and potential for continual reinvention in the cultural narrative.

## 3. Anticipated Future Trends and Artistic Directions for Each Dance Genre

The evolution of modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance is intrinsically linked not only to their historic roots but also to their potential trajectories, which may significantly shape their future development. This section explores the projected artistic directions and trends that could define the landscape of these dynamic dance genres.

### 3.1 Modern Dance: Technological Integration and Cross-Disciplinary Synergies

Modern dance, with its foundational emphasis on emotional resonance and creative autonomy, is likely to increasingly incorporate technological innovations. The advent of augmented and virtual reality presents novel avenues for expanding narrative depth and audience immersion (Anderson, 2018; Brown, Mindlin & Woodford, 1998; Butterworth, 2011). Furthermore, modern dance is anticipated to forge more profound cross-disciplinary collaborations, drawing upon the visual arts, music, and theater to craft performances that transcend traditional artistic boundaries, offering audiences a multifaceted aesthetic experience.

### 3.2 Postmodern Dance: Radical Experimentation and Inclusive Practices

Postmodern dance's trajectory is expected to veer towards an even more pronounced experimentation with the deconstruction of dance norms. Upcoming trends may witness a surge in choreographic randomness and a break from established movement patterns, challenging audiences to rethink their conceptualization of dance (Lihs, 2018; Rossen, 2014). Additionally, there is a potential rise in community-centric performances, democratizing the creative process by involving non-traditional dancers and emphasizing inclusivity (Koff, 2021; Schupp, 2014).

### 3.3 Contemporary Dance: Cultural Hybridization and Technological Frontiers

Contemporary dance, known for its hybridity and adaptability, will likely continue to innovate by embracing an even broader spectrum of cultural influences. This genre is poised to expand its movement lexicon, incorporating global dance forms and narratives to enrich its expressive capacity (Chatterjea, 2021; McCarthy-Brown, 2017; Tan & Rajendran, 2020). The intersection of dance and cutting-edge technology, including augmented reality and artificial intelligence, is also projected to become more pronounced, reshaping the choreographic process and audience interaction (Ehrenberg, 2021; Franklin & Graham, 2015; Wong, 2016).

## 4. The Transformative Impact of Ballet on Contemporary Dance

The amalgamation of ballet and contemporary dance signifies a critical juncture in the evolutionary trajectory of dance, marrying the meticulous precision of classical ballet with the expressive fluidity characteristic of contemporary styles. This confluence has indelibly shaped contemporary dance, endowing it with a refined elegance and control inherited from ballet's disciplined regimen, while concurrently embracing the innovative and expansive qualities emblematic of contemporary modes of expression. Ballet's foundational techniques—such as turnout, pointe work, and an extensive lexicon of movement—have been seamlessly integrated into the training of contemporary dancers, thereby augmenting their capacity for executing choreographies with unparalleled grace and agility.

The pioneering compositions of choreographers like William Forsythe (Butterworth & Sanders, 2020; Clarke, 2020) illustrate the transformative influence of ballet on contemporary dance. Forsythe's work, in particular, reimagines balletic conventions within contemporary narratives

and spatial configurations, engendering a fertile dialogue between traditional and avant-garde dance forms. Furthermore, the aesthetic and technical elements distinctive of ballet—ranging from the elegance of arm movements and line extensions to the meticulousness of leaps and turns—are intricately interwoven into contemporary dance performances, thereby enriching their visual allure and kinetic complexity.

Choreographers transitioning from a balletic background, such as Crystal Pite, employ ballet's exacting techniques to heighten the emotional resonance and narrative depth of their contemporary creations (Burgess, 2022; Pite, 2013). The discipline and resilience fostered by balletic training imbue dancers with the robustness necessary for the dynamic and emotionally intensive domain of contemporary dance. Ballet-trained artists like Misty Copeland exemplify this versatility and strength, adeptly bridging the gamut of contemporary choreographic landscapes and affirming the integral contribution of classical training to the evolution of contemporary dance.

In essence, the synthesis of ballet within the contemporary dance paradigm not only endows the genre with a refined technical and aesthetic sophistication but also opens avenues for inventive choreographic inquiries and the profound conveyance of human narratives and sentiments. This fusion extends the expressive potential of dancers and broadens the horizons of dance as an art form, heralding its ongoing evolution and its profound capacity to engage deeply with audiences across the full spectrum of human experiences. The lasting legacy of ballet on contemporary dance highlights the art form's remarkable adaptability and its pivotal role as a dynamic conduit for artistic expression and cultural discourse.

The prospective trends for modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance genres suggest an ongoing evolution, driven by cultural, technological, and social dynamics. Modern dance is set to enrich its expressive capabilities with digital technologies, while postmodern dance may foster greater inclusivity through community engagement and experimental forms. Contemporary dance is expected to continue its trajectory of innovation, exploring new cultural dialogues and technological possibilities.

These projections not only affirm the enduring relevance of these dance genres but also highlight their capacity for adaptation and reinvention. As they navigate the changing currents of the performing arts, they offer new creative horizons, ensuring their pivotal role in inspiring future generations of dancers and choreographers.

In conclusion, the discourse presented herein has intricately examined the complex tapestry of modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance, shedding light on their distinct historical evolutions, artistic nuances, and projected trajectories. Each genre, with its unique set of practices and philosophical underpinnings, makes a vital contribution to the dynamic continuum of dance. As these forms engage with the rapid advancements in culture, technology, and society, they not only resonate with a diverse audience but also act as a catalyst for creative evolution within the dance community. This ensures their perpetual relevance and cements their role as cornerstones in the ever-expansive domain of the performing arts. The ongoing dialogue between these dance genres and the broader cultural landscape continues to inspire both practitioners and aficionados, promising a future rich with artistic innovation and interpretative breadth.

## Conclusion

This scholarly exploration into the realms of modern, postmodern, and contemporary dance has uncovered a vibrant panorama of artistic progression. Each form contributes distinctly to the grand narrative of dance as a potent medium of human expression. Modern dance, with its rich emotional expressiveness, has been masterfully employed by pioneers like Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham, who utilized the language of the body to narrate the profound emotional landscapes innate to human experience, facilitating a universal resonance through its embodiment of deep-seated narratives (Butterworth, 2011; Nadel & Strauss, 2012).

In the domain of postmodern dance, we witness an intentional shift away from the emotive clarity that defines modern dance, venturing instead into a realm of philosophical inquiry that challenges the very definition of dance. The deliberate use of pedestrian movements and the randomness of chance disrupt traditional choreographic expectations, inviting audiences to engage actively with the performance, thus democratizing the artistic encounter.

Contemporary dance emerges as a convergence of its historical antecedents, exemplifying the adaptability and vibrancy of the art form. It harmonizes the emotional depth of modern dance with the conceptual boldness of postmodern dance, all while embracing a diverse array of global influences. Today's choreographers and dancers, informed by this eclectic heritage, craft a dance language that reflects and molds the contemporary social and cultural zeitgeist.



The interplay among these dance forms catalyzes a fusion of historical tradition and contemporary innovation, narrowing the gap between the artist's vision and the audience's perception. By transcending linguistic confines, dance offers an engrossing and cathartic experience, adept at articulating the ineffable and provoking deep reflection. As a dynamic and evolving canvas of the arts, dance persistently seeks new avenues for expression and emotional exploration, affirming its place as a multifaceted prism through which the rich tapestry of human experience is both observed and profoundly interpreted.

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