

**“Been Here and Gone”:
Re-Narrating US-Aid Culture Through
the American Modern Dance Debut in Taiwan**

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Abstract

Drawing on a peripheral history perspective inspired by Sinophone queer studies, this essay examines the impact of the United States Cold War policy of cultural diplomacy, specifically the Cultural Presentations Program, in postwar Taiwan. I argue that the indifference to the state-sponsored touring concert of American modern dance company's in Taiwan in 1962 demonstrates the complexity of the role of US foreign policy, often referred to as cultural imperialism. I analyze the official documents, news reports, dance reviews, and the toured dance works to unpack the negotiations between the agencies and the dance artists, as well as the receptions of the Taiwanese. I use the idea of “Cold War humanism” to explain that the Taiwanese intellectuals and artists' quest for humanist values, which led to a “cold/cheerless” aftermath, represents their struggles against the ruling party's control over artistic freedom.

Key Words: US-aid culture, Alvin Ailey, Carmen de Lavallade, dance diplomacy, American modern dance