Pantomime: The History and Metamorphosis of a Theatrical Ideology

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Cover: Stucco frieze from the underground vault of Porta Maggiore in Rome depicting a pantomimic performance of Agave displaying the head of Pentheus, with musician accompanying the scene. Photo from Weege (1926).

Frontispiece: Image of Walter Slezak and Nora Gregor as Michael and Princess Zamikoff from the film Michael *(1924), directed by Carl Dreyer.*

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Dedicated to the Memory of Claudia Gitelman and Barbara Palfy

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Figures 119 and 120: Scenes from *Lähtö* (2013), directed by Kalle Nio, performed by him and Vera Selene Tegelman, Helsinki, Finland. Photos: Tom Hakala. *1226-1227*

Figure 121: Scenes from *Iha*, directed by Keithy Kuuspu, Tallinn, Estonia, April 24-25, 2019. *1237-1239*

Acknowledgments

I began work on this book when in 1996 I participated in a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar on "The Art of Ancient Roman Spectacle." The Seminar enabled me to spend nine weeks in Italy researching the ancient Roman pantomime. It was one of the happiest times in my academic career. The Seminar was the project of Bettina Bergmann, Mount Holyoke College, and Christine Kondoleon, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, whose joint leadership was the most imaginative, satisfying, and inspiring of any academic enterprise in which I have been fortunate to participate. I am profoundly grateful to both of them for revealing to all of us in that splendid Seminar the wonder, scope, and complexity of ancient Roman spectacle. And I am equally grateful to the NEH for making such opportunities as this Seminar available to me and to thousands of other scholars. It is impossible to overestimate the extent to which these Seminars have transformed for better the thinking and study of the humanities in higher education.

The College of Humanities and the Arts, San Jose State University, guided by dean Carmen Sigler, supported this book with a sabbatical in Spring 1999 that enabled me to do further research in Italy. Students from the Department of TV, Radio, Film, and Theater assisted me in performing experiments in ancient Roman pantomime performance, including Erika Yanin Perez, Donna Vonjo-Tournay, Kathy White, Laura Long, Tim Garcia, and several others who joined the team without ever identifying themselves. Technical Director and scene designer Jim Culley helped me to test and photograph indoor Roman pantomime performance using oil lamps in an indoor stage. The enthusiasm of students for knowledge of ancient Roman pantomime surprised me, but they clearly wanted to understand how bodies could communicate in ways that our society seemed to have forgotten.

I first became aware of ancient Roman pantomime through a Seminar on Tragedy that I took as a graduate student at San Jose State University. Professor Lou Waters invited me to give a presentation on the dramas of Seneca, and in researching this theme, I learned of a strange form of performance, the pantomime, which the Romans preferred to all other

forms of theater. But at that time (1978), it was very difficult to access information about the ancient pantomime, and very little scholarship existed on the subject, in spite of the huge proliferation of books on mime back then. Through Dr. Waters, I realized that this marginalization of Roman pantomime was a defect of scholarship, not of the Romans. However, the task of investigating the pantomime was a long, slow process requiring more time and patience than I was able to afford for many years, distracted as I was by other scholarly projects, heavy teaching loads, and then extensive administrative responsibilities. For years, the Inter-Library Loan office of the Martin Luther King University Library provided invaluable access to many publications related to my project. The libraries of Stanford University and the University of California Berkeley also provided me with important texts, as did the New York Public Library.

But the nature of the project changed. Originally I planned only to write a monograph on the ancient Roman pantomime. Yet I felt I could not complete that goal without addressing the question: What was the "aftermath" of the Roman pantomime? How has the idea of pantomime evolved since Roman times? But answering these questions entailed writing a work of far greater scale than I ever thought possible. Indeed, a purpose in writing this huge book is to show that the history of Roman pantomime and its "aftermath" requires a book that is far larger than most readers can consume—that is, a book that makes it difficult to treat pantomime as it has been for so long, as an incidental, obscure category of the performing arts with a history that can be summarized in slender monographs, if not in a few paragraphs. But the scale of pantomime history has become so large because of the advent of digital technologies in the twenty-first century. These digital technologies have made it possible to access materials related to pantomime history that in the pre-digital era would have taken many years to read or see in libraries and archives scattered across many countries and cities. Lack of time and resources most likely would have made this book unimaginable less than a decade ago. I therefore must express my gratitude to manifold digital resources that provided access to a history of pantomime that otherwise would have remained buried in local archives. The Google search engine is of course an inescapable resource in locating documents. But the search engine connects one to other digital resources, especially the digitizing projects of many libraries and museums, such as: Gallica, the Internet Archive, the Gutenberg Project, the digital

archives for innumerable newspapers and magazines, Google Books, the Estonian Broadcasting Archives, Perseus, YouTube, Vimeo, the universities digitally distributing dissertations produced within the European Union, and the universities in the United States, Canada, Australia, Russia, and South Africa digitally distributing research produced by their students or faculty. Google Translate gave me access to many documents in otherwise unintelligible foreign languages. While Google Translate still betrays frustrating limitations, it nevertheless proves increasingly effective in opening up texts rather than obfuscating them. The benefits of Google Translate far outweigh its limitations. But my larger acknowledgment is that these digital technologies transform the scope and scale of historical writing.

I am also extremely grateful to Hartmut Vollmer for his detailed excavations of Germanic pantomime in the early modernist era and for retrieving these works from undeserved obscurity.

Over the years, several people have provided important support or encouragement for this book: Jo Todd, Susan Manning, Claire Wu, Laurence Senelick, Joshua Dorchak (who was also a participant in the NEH Seminar), Janet Van Swoll, Barbara Sparti, Nancy Ruyter, Sandra Rudman, and Heide Lazarus. David Wilson, of the Early Dance Circle in England, also provided valuable assistance.

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I have dedicated this book to the memory of Claudia Gitelman and Barbara Palfy because they believed in this book from its earliest days, believed that a new history of pantomime might do much to bring about an

important new understanding of the body in performance. Their deaths cast a shadow of sorrow over this history.

Prelude

Pantomime is a deeply misunderstood and marginalized art, largely because for so long people have had such limited experience of it. Yet when they encounter it, pantomime can exert a fascination on spectators by allowing them to see the narrative power of the body more vividly than any other form of performance. But the marginal cultural status of pantomime is not due to any inherent cognitive or semiotic deficiency within the art that justifies a society deeming as "unnatural" the construction of performances in which characters act without speaking. In other words, the politics governing cultural institutions are responsible for a society's marginalization of pantomime. A marginalization of pantomime arises from ideologically formed attitudes toward relations between speech and bodily signification. The ideological shaping of these attitudes becomes apparent by examining the long history of pantomime within Western civilization. When and why do societies encourage pantomime? How do societies define pantomime? Why or under what circumstances do audiences favor pantomime over spoken performance or dance?

The chief purpose of this book is therefore to create a new understanding of pantomime and to establish an importance for the art that previous writings on it have severely underestimated. Achieving this goal entails writing a larger history of pantomime than has yet existed to show 1) the varieties of pantomimic performance that have appeared across different eras of Western civilization and across different media; 2) the peculiar socio-political circumstances that have allowed Western societies to encourage pantomimic performance; 3) the qualities that separate pantomime from dance and other forms of speechless performance; and 4) the ideological pressures within a society that encourage an inclination to favor dance over pantomime to "regulate" speechless performance. But these motives are subsidiary to the larger aim of showing how bodies construct narratives or "tell" something otherwise hidden when the performers have no need for speech or the movement devices of dance. In its clearest manifestation, pantomime builds narratives entirely and exclusively out of "unregulated" physical actions. Actions are verbs, a

narrative is the sequencing of verbs to reveal an otherwise "invisible" relation between them. The performance of the actions is unique to the performer, unlike in dance, where the movements of the performer are unique to an external system of kinetic signs imposed upon the performer and derive from steps, positions, and movement tropes that have aesthetic value in themselves and do not depend on a larger narrative logic to justify their use. The pantomime performer moves from one action to the next according to a unique narrative logic. Pantomime does not "translate" words into gestures. In its clearest manifestation, pantomime is not the glorification of a semiotic system or gestural technique; it is the bodily performance of "other" identities that tell a story without speaking. Pantomimic action is "unregulated" in the sense that the performer determines how to perform it in relation to the unique goal of the narrative. Both dance and speech "regulate" bodily signification insofar as they compel the perception that the body needs the voice or a movement "vocabulary" to "make sense" of the actions it performs. Speech filters and even stunts perception of what the body "tells," because the minds of both spectator and performer require so much space to process linguistic signifiers, as opposed to musical or sound effect signifiers. On the other hand, dance subordinates action to movement derived from a system of steps, positions, or kinetic tropes that define performance as "dance." For dance, especially ballet, narrative exists to provide opportunities for dances, but the dances are always "free" of the narratives that contain them. Dance tends to integrate the spectator into the ideology of bodily "discipline" that forms the steps, positions, and kinetic tropes; pantomime tends to estrange the spectator from the ideology of semantic logic or "sense" that justifies the need to consume performed narratives.

In recent years, pantomime has been the subject of several excellent scholarly books. However, all of these books focus on a narrow segment of pantomime history and avoid looking at its larger historical scope as a Western cultural phenomenon. In the imperial era, the Romans adopted the Greek term "pantomime," used as early as 80 BCE, to designate a form of performance they considered an invention of imperial taste (Webb 2012: 222). Although prototypes of pantomime performance originated in Greece, the Romans regarded pantomime as something uniquely fashioned according to their wishes, according to an ideology of "metamorphosis" that was fundamental to the imperial consciousness. Recent books on Roman

pantomime have thoroughly compiled the literary-historical textual references to the art, and this book, too, makes use of these references. Important recent books dealing with Roman pantomime have come from Hartmut Leppin (1992), Charlotte Roueche (1993), Margaret Malloy (1996), Ismene Lada-Richards (2007), Marie-Hélène Garelli (2007), Edith Hall and Rosie Wyles (2008), Ruth Webb (2009: 58-94), and Katherine Dunbabin (2016: 85-113). These works interpret and evaluate the ancient sources from different perspectives. But they tend to see pantomime as a largely static art that remained unchanged in the early sixth century from what it was in the first century CE. They underestimate the extent to which competition, political pressures, and economic circumstances encouraged dynamism and innovation in pantomime. This book integrates the evidence of pantomime from ancient textual sources with the evidence from archeological, iconographic, musical, and political sources to produce an understanding of Roman pantomime more from a theatrical than a classical studies perspective. Perhaps this approach can provide a more persuasive answer to a question that the classical studies approach has so far not addressed with much clarity: why did pantomime dominate imperial Roman theater culture for half a dozen centuries? A more dynamic conception of Roman pantomime performance, its narrative structure, and its production process is necessary to answer this question. The idea here is to complement the mythic-philological preoccupations of classical studies with attention to political-ideological ambitions that shaped the course of pantomime history in the Roman Empire and in the Western civilization that emerged after the Empire. The implication of this approach is that the *ramifications* of Roman pantomime extend far beyond the Empire *because* the Romans saw pantomime as their invention, as a socially destabilizing phenomenon, as a thing that superseded Greek-originated performance "traditions" and physicalized most economically and persuasively a pervasive, imperial anticipation of change, of transformation, or, as they themselves might have called it, of *metamorphosis*. Roman imperial society encouraged a more volatile and unruly pantomime culture than is often implied in histories that stress the continuity of the art with Greco-ritual origins, with other sectors of Roman culture, or even with supposedly analogous Asian forms of theater.

Pantomime in the modern era has inspired admirable monographs by Ariane Martinez (2008), Gilles Bonnet (2014), Arnaud Rykner (2014), and

Pinok et Matho (2016). However, these authors focus almost entirely on pantomime as it developed in France, especially in the period 1880 to 1930. France has made huge contributions to pantomime history, but, especially since World War II, the whiteface, romantic, melancholy, nineteenth century figure of Pierrot has dominated perception of these contributions to such an extent that many people equate pantomime with Pierrot and Pierrot-like variants such as Marcel Marceau's Bip and with French control or ownership of pantomime. But the fixation on Pierrot as the basis for defining the French contribution to pantomime history has seemed dependent on not only ignoring pantomime outside of France but even large sectors of French pantomime history without Pierrot. Pantomime has enjoyed a much busier existence in the West, including France, than the Pierrot cult implies. Hartmut Vollmer (2011; 2012a) has produced a detailed, revelatory reclamation of the ambitious experiments of the Austro-German literary pantomime between 1895 and 1920. Although he acknowledges briefly the Roman concept of pantomime, Vollmer confines his project to the Austro-German scene of a particularly auspicious era for pantomimic imagination cultivated by suave literary personalities. A much larger history is necessary to comprehend the scale of the pantomimic imagination released by modernist ideology and the diversity of pantomimic performance strategies arising from different cultural milieu, from elsewhere in Western and Eastern Europe, from the United States, from motion pictures, and from early modern dance. Germanic pantomime, Eastern European pantomime, silent film pantomime, and pantomime experiments from the pioneer modern dancers brought an emotional intensity, complexity or darkness to pantomime that the art had avoided since the early nineteenth century. Pantomime has always reserved a large space for comedy, but the perception persists among many contemporary practitioners of pantomime and among dramatic writers that pantomime is *only* about comic effects, that acting without speaking is inherently ridiculous. The perception persists probably because comic effects do not create nearly as much ambiguity or uncertainty of signification as "serious" voiceless performance and therefore produce a much more stable (and usually affectionate) relation between performer and spectator. But a widespread distrust and even hostility to pantomime results from the perception that pantomime is not "serious," that it is a childish entertainment, that it relies on "charming" evocations of a human

sweetness otherwise obscured by talk (the Pierrot archetype), that it is an art of caricature and stereotyped identities, that it is too limited in its capacity to *destabilize* relations between performance and audience. This book thus focuses largely, though by no means exclusively, on "serious" or emotionally and intellectually intense forms of pantomime from the Roman Empire until the present. It is not a history of clowns, the circus, or the traditional English Christmas pantomime, for other books have already covered these subjects effectively, especially by Janina Hera (1981), John O'Brien (2004), and Jeffrey Richards (2015). But the main point here is that ideological, rather than economic, pressures shaping performance institutions rather than audiences or societies are what create such large presumption that pantomime should be comic rather than "serious."

Étienne Decroux was a major architect of the French "mime culture" that flourished internationally from the 1950s to the 1980s. His ideas concerning mime were quite serious, and this book devotes much attention to them. But his seriousness did not produce much in the way of serious performance, in part because of his aversion to any sort of public performance. His disciples have nevertheless published many books on mime. However, these books focus obsessively on the theme of how to be a mime. They identify attitudes, techniques, exercises, rules, and schools that prepare readers to live as mimes, which, as will be evident, is not the same thing as preparing readers to construct pantomimic performances for audiences who are not also mimes. Such books play little attention to the history of pantomime outside of its descent from Pierrot, and they place almost no weight at all on the study of actual pantomimic performances. I will, of course, examine the reasons for these biases of the mime culture. At the moment, though, I will simply assert that mime culture is school culture; it equates mime above all with the teaching of techniques, exercises, the execution of small-scale "episodes" or sketches. None of the Decroux-influenced books on mimes provides any guidance about how one constructs narratives out of physical actions. They teach the reader how to live as a mime, not how to think pantomimically. Since the eighteenth century, French culture for various reasons has struggled to impose a system of signification on pantomime, to regulate it, to put it in a school, to contain it within some kind of gestural or bodily "language." The implications of this philosophy inspire some scrutiny in this book. The mime culture emerged from ideological pressures issuing from an

existential anxiety about what the body "tells." A large-scale history of pantomime reveals that pantomime achieves its most powerful manifestations when it is "unregulated," when it is not the product of a technique or school, when it builds narratives and "other" identities out of physical actions rather than affirms the authority of a technique for shaping the narrative of one's life. Pantomime itself reveals the limit of the mind to allow the body to act without speaking, to tell a story without the "help" of spoken words. This limit of the mind, of the pantomimic imagination, is the work of ideology.

The Imperial Aesthetic of the Ancient Roman Pantomime



The Shift from Dance to Pantomime

The pantomime, as it evolved during the Roman Empire, was a mysterious form of theatrical performance whose aesthetic qualities now seem far stranger and thus perhaps much more "modern" than other forms of ancient performance. The Latin *pantomimus* derives from the Greek *pantomimos*, "imitator of all." The pantomime has assumed a "mysterious" identity because of the density of ambiguity associated with its performance practices. These practices blurred distinctions between genres, between sexualities, between audiences, between performance contexts, between dance and drama, between text and enactment, between actor and character, between singing and speaking, between the mythic and the pseudo-mythic, and between cultures of the Mediterranean. The ambiguities of signification created by the pantomime indicate fascinating problems of perception. For audiences in imperial antiquity, the pantomime embodied a highly complex and sophisticated way of looking at the world and especially at the body's freedom to act within the world. For these spectators, this pantomimic power of the body to convolute perception of itself was the source of an intense, enduring, and unstable emotional attachment. Pantomime transmitted an imperial ideology that helped to sustain public confidence in the Empire.

But both ancient and modern commentators on the pantomime have faced an even deeper problem of perception: what exactly did the pantomimes do to produce such an enigmatic representation of the body's relation to space, time, and language? In 1930, the philologist Louis Robert argued persuasively that pantomime performance, on a professional level, existed throughout much of the eastern Mediterranean at least as early as 80 BCE, the date of the earliest epigraphic evidence referring to a pantomime performer, and probably emerged as a distinct category of performance during the early Hellenistic period of the previous century (Robert 1930). In 1944, Otto Weinreich, another philologist, proposed that fragmentary evidence from Varro (116 BCE-27 BCE) indicated that

pantomime as the Greeks produced it was a pervasive mode of performance in the eastern Mediterranean by 280 BCE and in Rome by about 60 BCE (cf. Zanobi 2008: 6). Moreover, as Weinreich further observed, if the pantomime had its origins in the pyrrhic dance described by Xenophon in the *Anabasis*, which dates from around 370 BCE, then pantomime probably originated in Greece, not Egypt, during the earlier half of the Fourth Century BCE (Weinrich 1948). Evidence of the pantomime and its immense popularity persists until the advent of the sixth century CE. Knowledge of pantomime as the Greeks fashioned it scarcely exists beyond obscure epigraphic references, and whatever the Greeks called pantomime the Romans redefined in accordance with ideological objectives that Hellenistic theater was unable to imagine let alone accommodate.

But although the pantomime was the dominant form of theater entertainment in the ancient Mediterranean world for at least six hundred years, the accumulated discourse on it has succeeded in adding to rather than diminishing the uncertainty regarding the nature of this performance mode. Since Renaissance times, the Greek model of theater performance developed in Athens during a fifty-year span of the fifth century BCE has dominated perception of "classical" theater in antiquity, primarily because this model evolved in very close relation to the production of literary dramas that projected an existence, as literature, independently of its performance in the theater. One supposedly "sees" theater more effectively by reading dramas, and this assumption, sanctified entirely by the controlling authority bestowed on literary texts to determine the value or significance of theater, has long urged people toward a serious misperception and devaluation of the cultural and historical significance of the pantomime. Compared with the achievements of the great Greek theater of the fifth century BCE, the pantomime always appears in cultural histories as marginal, corrupt, a debasement of a once great theatrical aesthetic, evidence of an almost interminable decay in literary, philosophical, and aesthetic values in relation to public pleasures. But from the perspective of the audience for the pantomime, quite the opposite was more likely the case: the pantomime was the monumental summation or distillation of an already venerable theatrical consciousness, for which the fifth century Greek theater was simply an innovative interlude or prototypical, tentative phase of development.

The pantomime that flourished between 280 BCE and 600 CE was a theatrical performance in a tragic key in which narrative elements in a mythic vein manifested themselves through the movements of an actor or actors accompanied by a singer/narrator (interpellator), chorus, and musicians. This is the definition that Ernst Wüst offered in his excellent 1932 *Real Encyclopedie* article on the pantomime, and no one has seriously questioned it, even if it has not produced any accurate or even particularly vivid image of pantomime performance. But while the definition seems bland, it nevertheless subtly indicates by its deceptive precision and congenial opacity not only the extraordinary power of the pantomime as performance but the basis for the difficulties of perception provoked by the performance. For one thing, the definition describes a mode of performance that other performance contexts besides the conventionally designated theaters accommodated: the circus stadiums, the banquet-symposium milieu of the great villas, the ritual processions to the temples, and, eventually, the ancient forms of nightclub entertainment. Moreover, the definition describes performances given by star pantomimes. The star pantomimes, however, tended to appear as the outstanding attractions within a program of spectacles provided by a company of entertainers. While the conventions of pantomimic performance remained quite stable over the centuries, the conventions defining the program of spectacles in which it appeared were not only less stable, they were and remain much more difficult to define than even the pantomime itself. The physical, material ambiguity of the pantomime performance world invested it with considerable, and often volatile, political, moral, and cultural ambiguity. Furthermore, its ambiguous, uncertain relation between the performing body and the space of performance allowed the pantomime aesthetic to construct a complex, innovative, richly enigmatic, and hitherto completely underestimated relation to narrative, language, speech, sound, and visual sensation. The power of the pantomime aesthetic to elude vivid definition or provide a stable image of itself was what made it such an enduring and seductive embodiment of an imperial consciousness or attitude toward the freedom of bodies in a reality defined as much by the cosmic concept of fate and the pressure of mythic imagery as by the evidence of sensory perception.

The ancient literary evidence for the pantomime is largely Greek rather than Latin, which has the effect of amplifying the perception of the

pantomime as a fundamentally Greek art form imported by the Romans rather than adapted and integrated by them into a complex cultural program with a distinctly Roman agenda. In the Latin sources, *pantomimus* is virtually interchangeable with *saltatio* (dancer) and *histrio* (actor); *histrio* may derive from the Etruscan *hister* (dancer). In the nineteenth century, some historians proposed that the dance theater was of Etruscan invention. The Romans adopted it in 364 BCE, when a plague afflicted the city and nothing the citizens did could please the angry gods. The skill of the Etruscans at performing dramatic dances to the accompaniment of a flute urged the Romans to call upon them for help. Etruscan dancers then appeared regularly in Rome. Roman youth "not only imitated these dancers, but also recited crude and jocose verses, adapted to the movements of the dance and the melody of the flute" (Schmitz 1875: 612). Leonhard Schmitz further contended that the freedman Livius Andronicus (285-204 BCE), author of numerous dramas of which only a few fragments remain, introduced the idea of the singing interpellator, a slave, who "carried on a dialogue" with the dancer accompanied by the flute. More likely, however, is that the Roman pantomime was the result of manifold influences from Greece, Egypt, and Etruria. Latin authors tend to be perfunctory and often highly ambivalent in their comments on pantomime, especially in regard to performance itself. But the incidental character of the Latin commentary seems absurdly inadequate to the task of accounting for the pervasive authority of pantomime as a preferred mode of performance throughout Roman imperial civilization. In any case, both Greek and Latin authors assume their readers already know what pantomime is, and the task of the commentary is to clarify an effect of performance without explaining the circumstances of the performance itself.

The most famous of the ancient commentaries, Lucian's "On the Dance" (ca. 165 CE), is so informal and chatty and permeated with displays of ironic rhetoric that it almost seems like an elaborate effort to disguise a serious inability to articulate in words the material manifestation of pantomime performance. His discussion of the pantomime remains almost entirely on a generic level, punctuated only occasionally by anecdotes that merely stress the quaintness of his subject. Although he claims that pantomime "rouses the mind to respond to every detail of its performance," he himself provides hardly any evidence of such detail (Lucian 1936 V: 289). Lucian (ca. 125-ca. 180 CE) prefers instead to wander genially through the

history of dance, with inventories of subject matter and reasons for appreciating the dance, in the manner of a connoisseur affably conducting an excursion through the various pleasures associated with an underestimated and unfairly maligned entertainment (cf., Anderson 1977). "In general, the dancer undertakes to present and enact characters and emotions, introducing now a lover and now an angry person, one man afflicted with madness, another with grief, and all this within fixed bounds. Indeed, the most surprising part of it is that within the selfsame day at one moment we are shown Athamas in a frenzy, at another Ino in terror; presently the same person is Atreus, and after a little, Thyestes; then Aegisthus, or Aerope; yet they are all but a single man" (271). While this language does give a sharper image of the pantomime than the definition examined above, Lucian's defense of the dance theater never achieves any greater precision about what he actually saw in the theaters (even his anecdotes are second-hand stories) and certainly no deeper insight into its significance. His text is important because of its articulation of an urbane attitude toward the pantomime. But this urbanity, with its dinner-table affability and lavish display of "curious" erudition, is primarily a pose designed to obscure and neutralize the justification for the defense in the first place. The pantomime emerges here as a pretext for showing the capacity of rhetoric to construct an image of a sophisticated spectator rather than a sophisticated image of the performance that attracts this spectator. Nevertheless, a major consequence of Lucian's text is that from the Renaissance on, readers of it have treated Roman pantomime as a form of dance as people since that time have understood the word, even though the Roman idea of dance was broader insofar as pantomime referred to a speechless performance that was sometimes dancelike, but not a dance, because the body did not move according to prescribed or even codified steps or movements.

Around 361 CE, Libanius (ca. 314-ca. 393 CE), a rhetorician, also composed a relatively lengthy defense of the pantomime (LXIV), ostensibly a response to a now lost attack on the pantomimes by Aristides nearly two hundred years earlier. In his 1908 edition of Libanius, Richard Foerster noted so many similarities to Lucian's dialogue that both he and Josef Mesk considered the possibility that Libanius used Lucian's text to formulate his own argument (Mesk 1909: 65-69). Scholars of the pantomime tend to make little use of Libanius's text, partly because the difficult text remained

untranslated into any language until Margaret Molloy translated it into English in 2014. For Libanius, the pantomime was primarily an opportunity to display the authority of rhetoric to transform perceptions and attitudes. The pantomimes have a widely assumed reputation for bad morals. The task of rhetoric, then, is to show how skillful deployments of words can get the listener to believe that bad people can produce beautiful actions and that some actions are expressions of goodness even if only corrupt people can perform them. With this objective, it is not necessary to focus much on the details of pantomime performance; rather, the focus is consistently on the details of argumentation logic: "For who is unaware that we spend entire days in the theaters because of the number and variety of spectacles, where it is possible to see boxers, others fighting in single combat or matched against wild beasts, and still others doing acrobatics? So then do we go straight from the viewing into a state of being just like what we see? Do the boxers make us stronger? Do we love killing through [seeing] men dressed in armor? Do the beast-baiters inspire us to take on a lion? Do we become more nimble at leaping thanks to the acrobats?" (Libanius 1908: Paragraph 60, 458-459; Dorchak 2000, n.p.; Malloy 2014: 158). Libanius here suggests that people do not imitate actions just because they enjoy watching them. But this point muddles his other point, that the beauty of pantomimic actions is independent of the moral character of those who perform them. Indeed, the implication of the passage is that the pantomimes perform actions which the spectator should not desire to imitate for apparently moral (rather than technical) reasons, such as men impersonating women, in which case it is necessary to discuss performance values in greater detail. Yet Libanius's defense remains an important document of pantomime scholarship insofar as it dramatizes so suavely the central problem haunting practically all thinking about the pantomime in a literary mode: to what extent, if any, did the moral consternation associated with the pantomimes explain the nature and significance of pantomime performance and its audience? This question looms over the assumption of modern sensibilities that the pantomime culture signifies a protracted period of "decay" in the public theater of the ancient world. But from Libanius's perspective, it was difficult and perhaps absurd to equate pantomime performance with a "decay" of dramatic imagination, so it was not necessary to discuss performance values to construct a defense of them.

However, in his Table-Talk (*Quaestiones convivales*), IX, 15, composed around 100 CE, Plutarch (46 CE-120 CE), a scholar and aesthete, purports to describe to the Roman consul, Sossius Senecio, a banquet lecture by Ammonius, Plutarch's teacher, on the subject of narrative dancing, in which Ammonius claims that "today nothing enjoys the benefits of bad taste so much as dancing," for dancing, "having tyrannously brought almost all music under her sway [...] is mistress of caprice and folly of the theaters, but has lost her honour among men who have intelligence and may properly be called divine" (Plutarch 1961: 297-299). In other words, Plutarch does associate the pantomime with a "decayed" art form, but he implies that this decay results from the corrupt taste of audiences rather than from the bad morals of dancers. Aesthetic decadence is for Plutarch primarily a problem of inferior "intelligence," which marked the pantomime culture when the poetic voice became detached from the dancing body. Yet this supposed detachment may have occurred as much as three hundred years before Plutarch commented on it, and it may well be the case that the voice of the interpellator became a supplement to pyrrhic dancing without pantomime ever experiencing a phase in which the voice issued from the dancer.

The complex relation between bodily movement, language, and voice in the pantomime, which Plutarch only very lightly touches upon, is the fundamental source of controversy regarding the ancient literary evidence for this entertainment. The Latin commentary on the pantomime, while scattered over a wide assortment of incidental fragments, is perhaps even more mysterious than the Greek in its comprehension of the pantomime. Indeed, the most complete ancient description of any pantomime performance appears in Book X of Apuleius's *The Golden Ass*, written around 150 CE, wherein appears an elaborate account of an enactment of The Judgment of Paris at a theater in Corinth. But since this is a work of fiction, an underlying message of the account is that pantomime performance possesses a peculiar power to transform itself into something more imagined than actually seen: pantomime performance, like the transformation of the narrator into a donkey, is about metamorphosis, about the mutability and relativity of any activity designated as "real." Moreover, Apuleius's description of the pantomime is in tension with Wüst's definition of it as the work of a soloist. The donkey narrator, having been condemned to copulate with a murderous woman as part of her public

humiliation, must participate in a "triumph" celebrating the punishment. He is brought to a theater to attend festivities preceding the triumph. These include a pyrrhic dance performed by "gorgeously attired" boys and girls, who move in a "comely order," and these performers, as William Adlington's 1566 translation puts it, "would trip round together, sometime in length obliquely, sometime divide themselves in four parts, and sometime loose hands and group them on every side." When the curtain rises on the stage, a young man appears, "a shepherd representing Paris, richly arrayed." A second young man soon appears, "all naked," and gives Paris a golden apple as commanded by Jupiter. Then three women enter, representing Juno, Minerva, and Venus, all attended by waiting servants, including Castor and Pollux. Juno plays the flute; Minerva is accompanied by Terror and Fear, followed by another flute player; Venus, the favorite of the audience, appears attended by a "great number of little boys" representing Cupids. After them arrives "a great multitude of fair maidens" impersonating the "comely Graces" and the "beautiful Seasons." It is difficult to see how this elaborate passage, involving nine separately performed characters and "a great number" of others, describes a pantomime, when virtually all other ancient texts treat the genre as the work of a solo performer. But of course, the point of pantomime for the Romans was to produce a performance that escaped the control or even definition by words.

Because the ancient literary evidence is so vague on details of pantomime performance, the bulk of modern scholarship has dealt mostly with the status or social significance of pantomime performers. The aim of scholarship has been to show how the dubious moral reputation of the pantomimes discloses insight into the social, political, or moral fabric of the imperial Roman civilization, and most of the epigraphic evidence which has surfaced in this century generally serves to support an argument about the ambiguous social status assigned to the pantomimes and how this status clarifies relations or tensions between social classes. Latte (1913), Bier (1920), Robert (1930), Weinreich (1941, 1948), Rotolo (1957), and Bonaria (1959) initiated a trend, supported entirely by epigraphic and philological evidence, of focusing on the pantomimes rather than on pantomimic performance, of dwelling on the problematic social-political identity of the pantomime performer rather than on the historical-aesthetic significance of the pantomime performance. Jory (1970, 1984, 1996), Leppin (1992), and

Slater (1994) have pursued this literary perspective to produce a highly complex and enigmatic perception of the ambiguous, shadowy social identity ascribed to the pantomimes. But to build upon this impressive chain of scholarship, one must acknowledge that the extraordinary power the pantomimes exerted on public imagination, especially in the realm of political feeling, depended on their art. It depended on their mastery of a performance aesthetic whose function, for centuries, was to articulate the "mystery" or strangeness of human identity in a world that was much less certain of its relation to the gods, nature, and fate than one might suppose by focusing on the pantomimes as "disruptive" emblems of a precarious social hierarchy. How was it possible for pantomimes to acquire "influence" over audiences and publics if not through the seductive power of their performances? Regardless of their particular moral reputations, pantomime performers complicated perception of social identity in Roman culture by their association with a way of acting and moving, with a specific way of dramatizing and theatricalizing bodily expressivity that was distinct from other entertainers, such as mimes, gladiators, charioteers, and reciters. Kokolakis (1959, 1960) attempted to correlate a huge assortment of references and allusions (in Lucian) to pantomime and to theater in the ancient literature (especially Aristotle) in an effort to construct a detailed picture of pantomime culture as a profession, a vocation, a way of life. But the performance dimension still remained occluded or obscured by debate over the authenticity or credibility of statements. The significance of the pantomime as a cultural phenomenon, as a disclosure of complex attitudes toward identity, the body, action, power, freedom, space has never seemed to preoccupy the discourse. In any case, Kokolakis's discussion of performance values, which relies too much on the authority of Lucian, projects an excessively static view of the pantomime as a form of entertainment that changed little over the course of centuries. The history of an art, in this case, becomes synonymous with its definition.

It seems obvious that pantomime scholarship could supplement the many limitations of the ancient literary sources with iconographical and archeological evidence. But this approach entails peculiar difficulties that remain unresolved. Because the pantomime was a mode of dance theater, it makes sense to examine the imagery of ancient dance to get a serious understanding of how the pantomime exploited bodily movement to dramatize mythic scenes, especially when ancient writers themselves

sometimes tangle up their discussion of the pantomime with references to other forms of dance. However, the relation between dance imagery and dance performance is by no means clear, even in modern times, and it is easy to underestimate the degree to which the pantomime complicated the dance culture of the ancient world if one overvalues the evidence of artworks to explain theatrical performance. The composer-scholar Maurice Emmanuel (1862-1938) produced a perhaps unsurpassed treatise on ancient Greek dancing (1896) that has served as a model for subsequent, excellent French scholarship on the subject by Prudhommeau (1965) and Delavaud-Roux (1993, 1994). Emmanuel systematically catalogued nearly six hundred ancient images of dance and categorized them according to numerous signifying practices: movements of particular body parts, steps, positions, rhythms, group movements, and combinations of movements. He further supplemented the ancient iconography with his own sequential photographs of a woman (sometimes in ancient costume) performing some of the movements to give an idea of the kinetic dimension to the ancient dance vocabulary. The overwhelming majority of images came from a time (before the Third Century BCE) that preceded the advent of pantomime culture and the professionalization of dance art. But Emmanuel contended that the movement vocabulary available in the pre-Hellenistic era differed little from that deployed in the ensuing centuries of Roman civilization; indeed, it was pretty much the same as the movement vocabulary available to Western civilization in the twentieth century. But a vocabulary of movement tropes is not the same thing as a performance culture. We have a dictionary of admissible movements, but no clear idea of how the ancient cultures constructed "sentences," ideas, which we can call performances out of the vocabulary.

Germaine Prudhommeau (1965) built upon Emmanuel's work to produce a huge, encyclopedic description of the ancient Greek dance vocabulary using over 800 photographic reproductions of ancient Greek and Roman artworks; and she correlated the imagery with literary sources to a greater degree than Emmanuel. Like Emmanuel, she concluded that the movement vocabulary of the ancient world was quite similar to that of Europe in the twentieth century, except that ballet possessed several positions that the Greeks never seemed to have discovered. Moreover, the visual evidence urged her to contend that ancient dance did not add anything significant to its vocabulary after the third century BCE, which

implies that the pantomime, if considered a type of dance, relied entirely on a movement rhetoric that not only preceded it but remained unchanged during the centuries of its cultural prominence. While Prudhommeau made abundant reference to pantomime evidence in constructing the ancient movement vocabulary, she did not clarify how the pantomime mobilized the vocabulary on behalf of an objective that differed from those of other forms of dance, such as folk dancing, ritual dancing, and ceremonial dancing. Indeed, following Emmanuel, she acknowledged that the ancient peoples did not make a clear distinction between dance, gymnastics, and acrobatics. In an article on ceramic representations of the pyrrhic dance, which was the foundation of pantomimic movement, Poursat (1968: 560) asserts that art historians are reluctant to describe actions in an image as a "dance" unless the image contains the presence of a flute player, so easy is it to confuse representations of dance with representations of athletic prowess or merely decorative posing. Furthermore, Emmanuel (1896: 283) contended that "always, always the Greek dancer acted," an observation that helps link the Greek movement vocabulary to the histrionic impulse dominating the pantomime. Acting involves the concept of an impersonated "character," and a body becomes a character because it appears within specific narrative contexts that allow audiences to read signifying practices as constructs of characters. But neither Emmanuel nor Prudhommeau theorized relations between bodily movement and narrative, so it's difficult to see which movement tropes, beyond the pyrrhic step, were especially efficacious in establishing the superior power of dramatic dancing in the public imagination. The mere fact that the pantomime performer wears an extravagant costume will shape the choice of movements. But costume choices do not naturally subordinate the expressive value of movement in creating characterizations, particularly in a genre that focused on the skill of the performer in designating characters through bodily gesture rather than through speech. On a higher theoretical plane, the failure to theorize relations between movement and narrative leaves completely obscure why the pantomime achieved unique professional status within the realm of "dance" and why the pantomime was a preferred mode of theatrical entertainment in the ancient world for nearly six centuries. This lack of theorization between movement and narrative has pretty much the same consequence as the lack of theorization between speech and movement in theater history of the same period. It creates the

misleading impression that the "great" moments of dance in the ancient world occurred before the third century BCE and that the pantomime was a marginal deployment of a movement "language" which achieved maximum expressive power before the imperialistic rise of Roman control over Mediterranean cultures.

In numerous articles published across three decades, Lillian Lawler (1898-1990) explained the historical evolution of ancient dance culture from a localized, cultic phenomenon to an international, professional art. Her work suggested that this transformation resulted from changed attitudes toward the expressive power of the body. In ritual dancing with a religious objective, the movement vocabulary of the body implied strong constraints on bodily movement to produce an "austere" or in any case appropriately serious expression of feeling (Lawler 1943), signified primarily by continual repetitions of a basic set of movements (Lawler 1946). Steps controlled the identity of the dance, and the effect of movement on the dancer, rather than on a spectator, determined the expressive power of the dance (Lawler 1927, regarding, especially, female bacchant dancing). By contrast, the expressive authority of pantomime, as a professional activity, depended above all on its effect on an audience. The pantomimes sustained the attention of audiences by continual and "surprising" variations of movements and through precisely calculated efforts to construct an exciting "image" of the body. Pantomimic action became a beautiful visual experience for spectators instead of an intense (and often exhausting) emotional adventure for the dancer (and village community). Of course, ritual or ceremonial dancing did not disappear with the rise of pantomime, but Lawler observed that ancient writers tended to view the difference between the two modes in terms of a "degeneration" or "corruption" of the "austere" mode by dancers with professional ambitions (Lawler 1943: 60-61). Pantomime associated bodily movement with voluptuous or erotic display of the body, and such display was apparently a constant sign of "degeneration" from the time of Horace to that of sixth century Christian ideologues.

To heighten voluptuousness, the pantomime did not locate the identity of dance in steps or in footwork but in the upper body, especially the hands, arms, and head. The pyrrhic step remained the basic source of propulsion, while innovation focused almost exclusively on the upper body. It was probably the virtuoso use of hands that above all differentiated the

professional performer from the occasional ceremonial dancer. Folk dances innovated, if at all, in the deployment of steps. But complexity of footwork does little to intensify the dramatic, visual qualities of dance, because increased complexity of steps tends to be dominated by rhythmic patterns that do not increase the emotional complexity of the spectator's response to the movement. (Tap dancing, for example, often contains elaborately complex steps, but it seldom conveys more than a mood of cheerful, spirited "friendliness"; and in any case, professional tap dancers usually supplement their steps with precise and often contradictory upper body movements to make the body "say more" than any combination of foot movements or purely rhythmic structures alone seems capable of saying.) But because the iconographical evidence does not successfully clarify when the shift to upper body expressivity occurred, one relies on the "evidence," confused and polemical as it is, of a "degeneration" in the performance culture of the ancients to determine the advent of the pantomimic aesthetic. In the *Poetics* (ca. 335 BCE), Aristotle (384-322 BCE) discusses tragedy in the theaters as if it were firmly under the control of literary texts and authors. He doesn't even allude to the pantomime aesthetic as a threat to the performance of this genre: dance and musical elements remain strictly subordinate to the literary values that define the tragic performance culture. If we assume the *Poetics* is a late work in Aristotle's career, then it seems unlikely that the pantomime, whose expressive power emerged within the institutionalized performance of tragic literary drama, did not gain control of the theater until after the death of Alexander and the stabilization of a new political order in the eastern Mediterranean. This order pursued an imperial vision of civilization at the expense of localized economies and cultural identities. The rise of pantomime coincided with the decay of the city-state as a model for the political organization of society.

Lawler's prolific research focused on the localized nature of ancient dance and its relation to cult religions. Ancient dances, she argued, were expressions of and responses to religious myths within a comprehensive religious cult system that encouraged the fragmentation of Mediterranean civilization into small, localized political units. Religious beliefs, when manifested chiefly through cult activities, lack the power to unify localized cultures into a large-scale, transcultural political apparatus. In two books (1993, 1994), Marie-Hélène Delavaud-Roux has examined the extent to

which religious dances survived (or did not survive) the historical pressures exerted upon the originating, localized cultures. The ancient religious dances, she implies, generally did not survive intact beyond the Hellenistic era. Rather, elements of dances survived into modern times (as Emmanuel and Prudhommeau had already suggested) as a result of an ambiguous signifying practice that allowed them to communicate a secular meaning outside of their cult context. Delavaud-Roux's research concentrated on the migratory expressive value of the "pyrrhic" movement (1993), which was a fundamental component of the pantomime aesthetic, and on the degree to which the performance of Greek literary drama incorporated dance elements, especially in choral passages. She tends to emphasize ancient dance as a group rather than individual activity (1994: 23, 145-179). In setting up a distinction between male-driven "armed dances" in the pyrrhic mode and female-driven "pacific dances" in a gestural mode, she furthermore revealed the authority of sexual difference to shape the secular institutionalization of bodily expressivity in the civic theater. In the theater, the male body became the locus for a synthesis of the pyrrhic and gestural modes of movement, women being forbidden to perform there. But this synthesis had the effect of heightening the association of dancing with masking, with the signification of multiple, conflicted, and concealed identities within the body. Because she focused on the shift from cultic to theatrical dance performance, Delavaud-Roux's research did not extend much beyond the Hellenistic era. She greatly marginalized the later shift from literary-vocal to pantomimic-bodily expressivity in theatrical performance; indeed, she treated the pantomime as but a remote echo of the pre-Hellenistic dance culture rather than as an art which had superceded that culture and rendered it remote for audiences in the imperial political environment.

Fritz Weege's *Der Tanz in der Antike* (1926) had the great advantage of integrating the pantomime (considered as a distinctly Roman art form) into a wide, international cultural perspective that included not only the substantial contributions of the Greeks to dance culture, but those of the Egyptians, the Etruscans, the Minoans, the Jews, and various ancient Middle Eastern cultures. Weege insightfully viewed the pantomime as a refined art form feeding off a complex cultural heritage. But he nevertheless regarded it as a minor, almost incidental achievement. In comparison with the other cultures that preceded it, what above all marked the Roman

contribution to dance art (or rather, marked the pantomime during the Roman Empire) was its "poverty" of imagination and lack of "fullness" in the appreciation of dance. For the Romans failed to value the dance as "a splendid instrument for the harmonic education of the body" (147). Because of a presumed suspicious, Roman attitude toward dancing bodies pervading the Empire, the pantomime, despite its considerable aesthetic complexity, became a symptom of decay or decline in the fortunes of ancient dance. A "full" appreciation of ancient dance apparently manifested itself more appropriately in some mysterious cult context, where, however, the sexual identities of dancers, at least in iconic representations, were less ambiguous than in the professional milieu of the theater. Weege's book contains a curious tension. On the one hand, he presents the "ancient dance" as a panorama of intersecting cultures. On the other hand, he marginalizes the pantomime as a decadent, over-refined phenomenon because it was in a sense too international, too lacking in a specific (localized) cultural identity. And this internationalism resulted apparently from an "unharmonic" Roman perception of the body as a fundamentally theatrical manifestation constantly capable of provocative (and often disturbing) transformation, metamorphosis, and instability of identity, not least of all in the realm of sexual difference.

A more precise image of the historical significance ascribed to the pantomime now emerges. In modern histories, the pantomime appears as a marginal or "decadent" phenomenon. It is decadent for a variety of reasons.

1) Some ancient writers, even defenders of the pantomime, refer to a time when dramatic dance embodied cherished values that have waned during the time they are writing.
2) Male dancers impersonated female roles in a manner that was apparently excessively voluptuous compared with the impersonations of female roles by tragic actors in the pre-Hellenistic theater.
3) The social status of pantomimes was much lower than that of tragic actors in the pre-Hellenistic theater, and because they lacked social prestige (which somehow negated their star appeal for often huge audiences), they were vulnerable to lives of dubious moral repute that somehow tarnished their artistry in the theater.

4) The pantomime detached language and speech from the body of the dancer and made the body the dominant source of expressive value in theatrical performance.
5) The pantomime aesthetic displayed little respect for literary texts and authors, for all language, music, and decorative effects took their cues from and remained subordinate to the expressive values emanating from the body of a star pantomime. This aesthetic therefore produced no important literary texts, no "life" independent of its performance context.
6) Because star performers rather than educated literary minds controlled the theater, pantomime performance was much more about acting as a pervasive reality than about characters in an imaginary (and remote) world. Imperial audiences for centuries clearly favored a sort of deconstructive treatment of ancient mythic material rather than efforts to construct the illusion of a mythic world that inspired enduring belief in its repertoire of heroic images, ideals, or spiritual ideologies.

But when was this (mythic) time in which dramatic dance was not decadent? It was that time, apparently, when theatrical performance entailed a superior unity of mind and body--that is to say, it was that time when text and speech dominated and indeed regulated bodily expressivity. No one provides anything resembling a precise date when dramatic dance was not decadent. In the *Ars Poetica* , written around 12-8 BC, Horace (65 BCE-8 BCE) condemned the "lasciviousness" of dancers in the theater and the enthusiasm of audiences for bodily spectacle (ll. 212-222), but he clearly assumed that it was still possible for authors of dramatic texts to reclaim the theater and move it to a "higher" level of achievement, provided they followed correct rules of dramatic composition which were by no means original to himself. Horace himself acknowledged that his model was archaic, not only for dramatic composition but for the relation between author and performance. That the fifth century Athenian theater of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides scarcely described the reality of Roman theater in his time did not trouble his attachment to an ideal that had survived for so long on paper rather than on the stage. This model was also Aristotle's in the *Poetics* over three hundred years earlier, for while he did not write with Horace's stern determination to restore order and sobriety to

an overly sensuous theater, he obviously preferred examples of drama from the previous century rather than from his own time. Laws of dramatic composition preoccupied him less than principles for appreciating elements of tragic performance that justified the writing of dramas in the first place. For Aristotle, it was only necessary to remind audiences of Alexander's time of powerful social-philosophical values embedded in the authority of literary language; such authority already resided in the great dramas of the previous century. By Horace's time, it was necessary to impose strict laws and rules of composition to establish the authority of a literary language (Latin) in a theater culture that, even before the comedy writer Plautus (ca. 254 BCE-184 BCE), consistently evaded and even repudiated such authority. But the authority of language is a political matter, a resource through which a culture articulates and circulates power, control over consciousness. Yet no one could argue persuasively that the authority of the Latin language in general decayed during either the Republic or the Empire. Nor for that matter did the authority of the Greek language decay, even though it failed to produce any tragic drama comparable to the achievements of fifth century Athens. Nor can one truthfully say that theater culture failed to attract serious literary work because it lacked the "authority" authors sought for language. If anything, the authority of theater was never greater than when the pantomimes controlled it, and the phenomenon of "decadence" may actually operate according to a different principle. The decline of literary drama coincided with the rise of a spectacular theater architecture and with a monumental expansion of public investment in and enthusiasm for theater, for the Empire provided theatrical performance spaces on a scale unprecedented for any civilization.

The focus of so much pantomime scholarship on the dubious social status or diminished social prestige of performers has created the impression that the pantomimes are interesting, not because of what they did in performance, but because their curious political identity encourages the formation of critical perspectives on the limitations of power and authority held by emperors, governments, ideologies, and audiences. The pantomimes appear as strange figures of popular culture whose function was to mediate underlying tensions between various political "factions," between imperial elites and broad public sentiments, and in this role they contributed to the evolution of an expanding authority of popular sentiment within imperial-authoritarian political systems. But such

scholarship tends to assign this mediating role to a generic (marginalized, stigmatized) class status imposed upon the pantomimes, not to semiotic values identified with pantomime performance. The effect in the end is to affirm the sovereign power and authority of class structures rather than to reveal the power and authority of a unique mode of bodily performance. Moreover, deeply embedded in the discourse on the social status of the pantomimes lies a largely implied attitude toward the professionalization of theatrical art. The decline of the literary drama also coincides with the rise of professionalism in theatrical performance and the desire for an all-year-long theater culture free of confinement within the localized, cultic notion of an annual dramatic festival or contest that kept performances strictly regulated during only a two-week period. Popular demand for constant theatrical entertainment depended on performers who devoted their lives to performance and whose livelihood depended on performance. The social status of performers declined because they appeared in the theater for money or favors and not for the honors, trophies, and hallowed laurels bestowed mostly on the very privileged, aristocratic men who performed in the cultic milieu. Professional performers understood the appetite of audiences for the performance of exciting personalities rather than for the effacement of personalities behind the masks of imaginary mythic characters. Performers found themselves obligated to audiences, to the fickle reality of human desires; audiences seldom felt themselves obligated to pay humbling respect to any sort of heroic ideal that lived more in words than in the body. With the expansion of Roman power in the Mediterranean, the status of performers sank even further, to the point that many performers were slaves, whose pursuit of freedom dominated their motives for performance and their desire to acquire the favor of audiences. The Romans hugely amplified the physical scale of theater in cultural life, but the monumental scale always worked to create an aura of tremendous power in the audience to decide the fate and fortunes of the performer, a living body. It did not create an aura of tremendous power in literary language or authors to articulate the fate and fortunes of audiences, whose identities in any case invariably seem less real than those of performers and sometimes even literary characters.

Such circumstances were responsible for the corruption of public veneration for serious literary drama, or so one can easily infer from the way the pantomime aesthetic has been marginally situated within ancient

cultural history. But a further political complication arises from the perception that dance, as well as literary, studies tend to venerate the pre-Hellenistic era--or rather, the pre-imperial period, since the imperial world view emerged with Hellenism, with the Macedonian invasion of Greece and the ensuing ambitions of Alexander. The decadence of theater culture then appears to coincide with the ascent of imperial politics, which definitely subordinate the authority of local cultures to a transcultural concept of power rooted, essentially, in a centralized organization of military and economic resources. With their small scale of power, local cultures seem more "democratic" because it is easier to see in them how representations "speak for" the society as a whole and constitute a basis for generalizations. Democracy means "common people" having a "voice." And when voice achieves the complexity of public utterance ascribed to literary drama, democratic ideals achieve affirmation. Even if modern ideas about democracy are remote from the reality of democracy in pre-Hellenistic Greece (Athens), the modern world still regards the Athenian example as the hallowed origin of an infinitely greater modern reality. Sophisticated literary language connects people to a complex metaphysical reality. But as the Greeks apparently discovered by the end of the fifth century, it does not connect people to a more intense or enlarged awareness of physical reality, because it is always trying to get people to see something hidden behind physical reality. In theatrical performance, a larger and more intense sense of the physical reality in which culture articulates itself occurs when perception focuses on the movement of the body in space and time, especially when bodily movement operates in different performance contexts, as the pantomime aesthetic did. The preoccupation with the body (rather than with the voice) as the dominant sign of expressive value in theatrical performance belongs to an imperial view of culture. An imperial perspective favors communication systems that transcend linguistic boundaries and make the body (rather than language, nature, or supernatural forces) the defining element of physical reality. The authority of law depends on the bodies that enforce the law, and the authority of bodies (above all military bodies) to define the physical reality of law depends on the skill of bodies to command space and perception. Such is the logic supporting the long, imperial-era preoccupation with bodily performance and the pantomime aesthetic. Conventional modern views of imperial politics tend to suppose that the concept of empire is antithetical

to democratic sentiment. Powerful elites or oligarchies, according to conventional thinking, impose imperial ambitions on huge masses of people, and theater history informed by democratic ideals pursues the task of showing how these ambitions constrain perception, squander opportunities for more truthful representations of reality, or disclose unfortunate tensions between rulers and ruled. That broad masses of people should assume responsibility for the creation of imperial ambitions obviously contradicts the democratic belief that they are not important beneficiaries of these ambitions. Yet large and diverse audiences were indeed responsible for the shift from a language-oriented to a body-oriented performance culture, not lawmakers and certainly not authors. The preoccupation with bodily expressivity entailed a larger appreciation of the physical rather than mythic nature of identity, which in turn entailed an enduring disillusionment with the power of literary language to release the body (and identity) from the oppressive constraints imposed upon it by highly localized cultures. Pantomime glorified the authority of the body to move with greater freedom and independence in the world rather than in a community.

Roman Pantomime Aesthetics

The Pantomime Performance Scene

To grasp the imperial nature of the pantomime aesthetic, one has to gather evidence from a variety of contexts--literature, dance, art, archeology, music, political history, domestic history, religious history--and in doing so, the scholar experiences perhaps the feeling of being an outsider entering foreign territories and staking some sort of claim within them. The pantomime operated in different performance contexts, yet a peculiar feature of the aesthetic was that it detached human action from any precise sense of context. It concentrated theatrical signification in the movement and decoration of the performer's body, so that performance migrated easily from the theater to the stadium to the villa and to the ceremonial procession. This is not to say that the pantomime did not take advantage of the unique expressive properties of particular performance sites. But rather that the pantomime belonged to a general performance culture that preferred to see the expressive power of human actions as independent of a "scene" or a highly specific, localized physical environment. Such enthusiasm for decontextualizing bodily performance was not unique to the pantomime; in artistic representations of other forms of performance, such as gladiatorial combats, Cybeleian processions, and acrobatic spectacles, one observes a constant effort to foreground the performer's body against an empty background [Figure 1].



Figure 1: Marble relief in the British Museum of a procession a maenad with a tambourine, a tibia player, and a god or Hercules figure with a panther companion, showing the tendency of Roman artists to foreground performing bodies against neutral, "empty," or undefined backgrounds. Photo: British Museum.

The extravagantly "theatrical" style of the Third and Fourth periods of Pompeian wall painting has led some historians to suggest that it is difficult to differentiate Roman representations of theatrical performances from representations of the myths which were the subject of the performances. But when representing the myths themselves, the artists tend to situate their subjects within a physical context. They at least put in a tree, hills, an architectural structure, some visual reference to a generic physical reality external to the human figures. In the altogether rarer images (in wall paintings and mosaics) of performances themselves, the artists tend to place the human figures against an empty white or colored background and to thematize overtly the tension between the human face and a mask or masks [Figure 2].



Figure 2: Man wearing mask with woman lyre player against an "empty" background in painting from Herculaneum, ca. 60-79 CE. Photo: Mimmo Jodice, from Guillaud (1990).

The Pompeian wall paintings are an important source of evidence concerning the pantomime aesthetic, but not because they represent performance with much accuracy. Rather, the images theatricalize domestic space and articulate a sophisticated, theatrical attitude toward the relation between space and daily human actions performed within it. The image was a metaphor for an attitude toward relations between space and body. The metaphor was not the image of performance; performance was actually another image of a similar attitude.



Figure 3: Stucco frieze from the underground vault of Porta Maggiore in Rome depicting a pantomimic performance of Agave displaying the head of Pentheus, with musician accompanying the scene. Photo from Weege (1926).

Figure 3 is perhaps the earliest image of pantomime performance that has survived. It comes from the underground stucco frieze vault in the Basilica of Porta Maggiore in Rome, dates from sometime in the first century CE, and depicts Agave brandishing the severed head of her son Pentheus while a companion maenad dances ecstatically. The severed head bears exaggerated, mask-like features, but it is extremely difficult to tell if Agave herself wears a mask. The female musician to the left emphasizes the idea of performance by tapping her drum in a sober, composed manner that contrasts with the ecstatic movement of the dancers. It is possible that the background contained a painted landscape, but this seems unlikely, because the frieze is not large, and painted objects in the background would make it difficult for the viewer to notice or read at a distance the bodily action with any clarity. And in any case, the whole point of the frieze technique is to foreground the bodies.



Figures 4 and 5: Wall paintings from Pompeii deposited in Museo Archeological Nazionale, first century CE. Photo: Rito Bacchico.

Figures 4 and 5 display a somewhat similar aesthetic principle. These are fragments of Pompeian wall paintings from the first century CE now deposited in the Naples Museum and they also depict Dionysian rituals. In Figure 4 especially, the self-consciously theatrical style of the image seems intensified by contrasting the brazen movement of the maenad at the left with the blatantly statuesque poses of the three other human figures and the leopard. A shift from extravagant movement to frozen pose was a feature of the pantomime; movement culminated in a spectacular pose. Both Plutarch and Lucian remarked on the delight of pantomime spectators in observing the details of a complex pose, and that early third century CE connoisseur of the pantomime, Philostratus, in his *Imagines*, compiled a sort of catalogue of popular and sophisticated poses for paintings inspired by theatrical enactments. The bodies in Figures 4 and 5 glow with an eerie luster that the black background intensifies. Even the doorway in Figure 5

opens into emptiness. But while these images of performance avoid contextualizing human action by giving much in the way of form to the physical environment, they nevertheless ascribe a powerful abstract identity to the space in which the bodies appear. Pantomime movement was partly about the emotional value, not of the objects that fill in space, but of space itself. The colored background sensualized the emotional value of space. This technique, which was not original with the Romans, appeared inevitably when artists wished to extract the performing body from the mythic body, as in Figure 6, one of a series of dancers depicted in a Pompeian wall painting of the first century CE. The technique is even more dramatically evident in the famous mural of the Villa of Mysteries depicting the performance of a stunningly enigmatic ritual against a blood-red background [Figure 7].



Figure 6: Pompeiian wall painting of a dancer representing “Summer” with black background, from the Villa of Diomedes. Photo: Fausto and Felice Niccolini (1896).



Figure 7: Wall painting of a mysterious ritual, part of the fresco depicting the ritual at the Villa of Mysteries, Pompeii. Photo: Karl Toepfer.

At the moment, however, my purpose is merely to identify an enduring, imperial attitude toward the aesthetic performance of the body. It is an attitude governed more by the body's relation to space than to place. It is an attitude dominated by the belief that the freedom and power of human identity becomes most visible or "real" when human action transcends the constraints or "borders" imposed upon it by a localized notion of place other than the space of performance. The pantomime appropriated spaces for performance; it did not claim a particular place, such as the theater, as its exclusive domain. This imperial attitude toward the relation between body and space controlled the organization and use of other performance elements in the performance culture: theater architecture, costume, musical composition, chorus deployment, and, of course, the treatment of language, speech, and voice. As Bier (1920), Robert (1930), and Weinreich (1948) long ago observed, the idea that the pantomimes Pylades and Bathyllus "invented" the genre in Rome in 22 BCE derives from a misreading of ancient texts, chiefly Atheneus (*Deinosophistae*, I, 20) and remarks in the *Anthologia Palatinae* (IX, 248).

These imply that the two pantomimes so enchanted the Emperor Augustus that he bestowed state protection on them and thereby accorded the genre the official recognition it needed to become fully institutionalized. It seems logical to assume that Augustus favored the pantomimes for a political reason: their art advanced the imperial objective of being comprehensible to large audiences everywhere in the Empire. But the imperial impulse of the aesthetic preceded Augustus, and the reasons for ascribing a Roman origin for the pantomime on the part of both ancient Greek writers and modern historians are themselves more political than scholarly. Although Greeks assumed some responsibility for shaping the pantomime aesthetic, the cultural identity of the aesthetic was always ambiguous. Alexandria was the major home and training center for pantomimes in the century that Augustus encountered Pylades and Bathyllus, both of whom came from Alexandria, where the dance drama absorbed not only Egyptian but oriental ideas about bodily expressivity. This is not to say, however, that the Romans did not make significant contributions to the art or that archaic performance values cultivated by the Etruscans and Italian tribes did not influence Roman appreciation of the art. The point is merely that, from the ancient perspective, the aesthetic was imperial because its identity was multicultural, insofar as it projected a cultural identity without any clear sense of "context."

The Pyrrhic Movement

As the body and human action become more visible as space dissolves context, the question naturally arises: did the pantomime observe principles of bodily movement that distinctively established and preserved its imperial and tragic identity? But to answer this question, it is perhaps more useful to ask another question: what movements achieve this objective? Plutarch, Lucian, Atheneus, and Libanius refer to the "pyrrhic" movements made by professional dancers; but the earliest description of this movement appears in the *Anabasis* (VI, 1) by Xenophon (ca. 430-354 BCE), written about 370 BCE. He describes a banquet in which soldiers performed with arms supposedly to honor the glory of dead warriors or to commemorate the heroic qualities of the warrior ideal: "After they had made libations and sung the paean, two Thracians rose up first and began a dance in full armour to the music of a flute, leaping high and lightly and using their sabres; finally, one struck the other, as everybody thought, and

the second man fell, in a rather skilful way. And the Paphlagonians set up a cry. Then the first man despoiled the other of his arms and marched out singing the Sitalcas, while other Thracians carried off the fallen dancer, as though he were dead; in fact, he had not been hurt at all" (Xenophon, *Anabasis*, VI, 5-6; 1922: 183-185). In Book 7 of his dialogue on *Laws* (ca. 350 BCE), Plato (ca. 425-ca. 347 BCE) described the pyrrhic dance in somewhat more detail: "The warlike division, being distinct from the pacific, one may rightly term "pyrrhiche"; it represents modes of eluding all kinds of blows and shots by swervings and duckings and side-leaps upward or crouching; and also the opposite kinds of motion, which lead to active postures of offence, when it strives to represent the movements involved in shooting with bows or darts, and blows of every description. In all these cases the action and the tension of the sinews are correct when there is a representation of fair bodies and souls in which most of the limbs of the body are extended straight" (Plato 1967: 815-816). Based on ancient literary descriptions, Poursat (1968) catalogued images of the movement in Greek ceramic art up to the first century BCE. Then Delavaud-Roux attempted an even larger inventory of pyrrhic images in 1993, and she presented evidence to suggest that this style of movement existed in Greece and Asia Minor prior to 700 BC. Soldiers sometimes performed the dance nude, but an even more peculiar feature was movement performed wearing helmets and brandishing shields, spears, or swords. Xenophon mentioned that at the banquet, an Arcadian girl, armed with a shield, "danced the Pyrrhic with grace" (Xenophon 1922: 186). Delavaud-Roux (1993) discerned local variations in the intensity with which different Greek communities absorbed the dance. Like others well before her, such as Phillpotts (1877: 151), she suggested a Cretan origin for the dance, with the Spartans regarding it as a regular element of military education, the Athenians treating it as a luxurious entertainment, and the Macedonians moving toward a blend of military education and entertainment. But Athenaeus, writing (XIV.30) in the early third century CE ascribed a Lacedæmonian origin to the dance, it "being a sort of prelude preparatory to war: and all who are more than five years old in Sparta learn to dance the Pyrrhic dance. But the Pyrrhic dance as it exists in our time, appears to be a sort of Bacchic dance, and a little more pacific than the old one; for the dancers carry thyrsi instead of spears, and they point and dart canes at one another, and carry torches. And they dance in figures having reference to Bacchus, and to the

Indians, and to the story of Pentheus: and they require for the Pyrrhic dance the most beautiful airs, and what are called the 'stirring' tunes" (Athenaeus 1854: 1007). (However, Irena Lexová, in 1935, presented quite archaic iconographic evidence to suggest that the Egyptians may have developed a style of pyrrhic movement well before it appeared in the Minoan or Greek world.) In the early phase of the dance, only Sparta permitted women to perform it, usually in the nude, but Xenophon acknowledged that in his time men outside of Sparta enjoyed seeing women perform the dance at banquets. But Delavaud-Roux was unable to identify local variations in the movement of the dance itself, other than occasional folk dance appropriations or grotesque parodies of it. Even these seemed to result not from distortions of the movement but from distortions of the body performing it, such as dwarf pantomimes or dancers costumed as satyrs or other beasts [Figure 8].



Figure 8: Roman wall painting from Pompeii depicting dwarves performing the Judgment of Solomon. Photo: Museo Nazionale, Naples.

The pyrrhic style therefore migrated easily throughout the fractured Greek world and, unlike other dance forms, offered an image of solemn, heroic, tragic deportment that survived everywhere efforts to parody it or transform the image (rather than the body of the performer) into an object of ridicule. The movement allowing the body to achieve and sustain a heroic, tragic aura follows a rather simple device that appears fairly abundantly in the visual evidence of several centuries. Pyrrhic movement involves placing one foot directly in front of the other, or one foot "challenging" the other, as Anthon (1848: 381) puts it, while the body as a whole maintains an erect, perpendicular axis in relation to the dancing surface. The movement projects a march-like quality, a sense of momentum that embodies stealth, steadfast determination, and commanding elegance.

But while the device itself is simple, its execution is not and its expressive potential encourages a heightened competitive spirit that eventually made the style appealing to persons seeking professional careers as performers. It is not a natural way of moving. Yet it is movement that allows the performer to construct a wide repertoire of expressive dynamics.

One can move with the soles of the feet flat on the ground to create a mood of stable, assured control over space; or one can move on tip-toes to create a mood of poised, alert, heightened precarious anticipation [Figure 9]. The movement can accommodate a wide range of speeds, tempos, and metrical orders without undermining the martial elegance of the body. The basic step movement also permits the body to accent or amplify rhythms within itself, such as dips, pauses, or curvatures in the vertical axis. The movement is impressive when advancing toward the spectator, when in profile, and even when in reverse (backpedaling). But more significant yet is the power of the movement to develop the expressivity of the upper body. In relation to the vertical axis, the turning or tilting of the head produces a strikingly dramatic tension between the plane of movement and the plane of the performer's gaze. Such tension further arises with a twisting of the torso at each step or a slinking motion that vaguely contradicts the martial uprightness of the basic position, as in the famous statue of the faun at the House of the Faun in Pompeii [Figure 10]. The pyrrhic step allowed for remarkable flexibility of arm and hand movements, either synchronized with the step or in tension with the rhythm of the step, or with one hand held high and the other held low, and arm and hand movements could shift from exquisite delicacy to startling violence. Another curious feature of the step is its capacity not only to accommodate but to encourage a kind of lilting effect associated with the expression of femininity [Figure 11]. Yet it is a mode of femininity that never seems to prevent the pyrrhic step from maintaining an effect of poised military composure and command over space. It is therefore not altogether bizarre that the pantomimes relied heavily on the pyrrhic step at the same time as they impersonated numerous tragic, mythic women--and the overwhelming majority of star pantomimes were male. Finally, the pyrrhic movement permitted dramatic pivots, smooth transitions to spectacular poses, and an elegant structure for initiating and concluding acrobatic stunts. Indeed, during the Empire, rope dancers fell under the control of the pantomime companies. The rope dance is itself an exaggerated expression of the pyrrhic step, which became

thrilling when performed in the circus stadiums, as an interlude between chariot races, without the security of a net. Moreover, the performer danced along a rope that inclined upward from the island in the arena to a higher point in the audience. Item 112, "De funambulo," in the *Anthologia Latina,* compiled in Africa around 533 CE, describes this stunt; and anyone who wants to discover how unnatural the pyrrhic step feels to the balance of the body should try walking uphill, one foot in directly in front of the other.

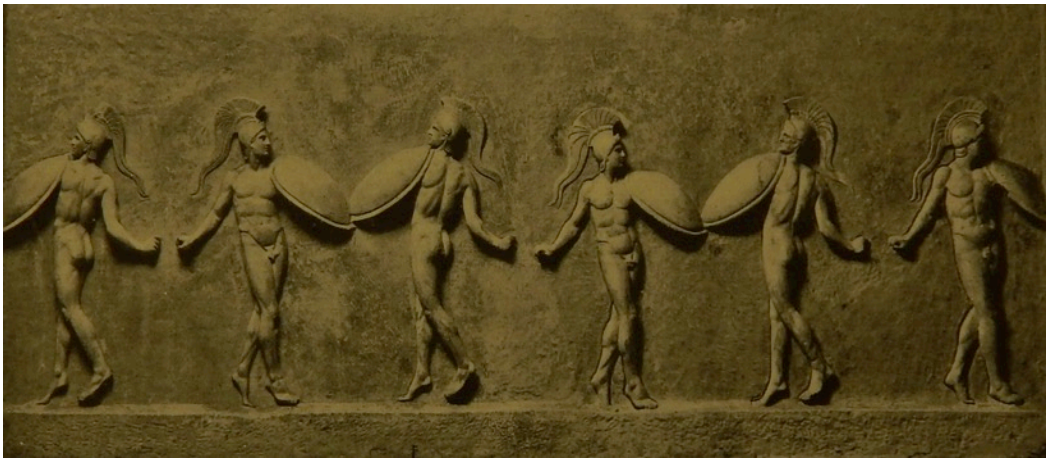


Figure 9: Frieze depicting the pyrrhic movement: marble relief in the Vatican dating from first century CE. Photo: Weege (1926).



Figure 10: Bronze statue of Faun performing pyrrhic step, from the House of the Faun, Pompeii, first century CE. Photo: Karl Toepfer.

All these qualities of the pyrrhic step, when used in combination, bestowed upon the body an image of intense dramatic complexity and urged the body toward characterization, toward the disclosure of concealed or conflicting identities within the body. It was a mode of movement that co-existed seductively with the display of masks and gorgeous costumes. In fact, the pantomime was not really about the mythic world; it was always about the multiple, theatrical nature of human identity in an imperial political domain. Audiences wanted to see the pantomimes put on and take off the masks, the lavish costumes, all displayed within the performance space. The pantomimes never performed entire stories; they performed only momentous scenes from stories, in succession, montage fashion, because the point of the performance was to reveal the performer's virtuosity in

moving from character to character, from male to female, from mood to mood, from one fate to another.

Yet the controlling principle of the pyrrhic step imbued all the spectacle and fantastic sensationalism with an elegance and martial command over body and space. This aura of elegance gave the pantomime a much higher cultural, economic, and political status than that bestowed upon the conventional street performance of farces by mimes, of gladiatorial contests and wild beast extravaganzas, and even of the chariot races and factions for which, eventually, the pantomime functioned primarily as a cheerleading intermezzo entertainment. The pyrrhic orientation of tragic movement was an effort to expand the signification of ecstatic bodily movement beyond the conventional Dionysian association with intoxicated maenadic wildness and "feminine" loss of control over body and space. It was, indeed, an art that could stir audiences to excesses, as indicated by the occasional, stunning outbreaks of rioting and social disturbance (from 15 CE until well into the sixth century) in different parts of the Empire, provoked, according to the state, by the public's adulation of pantomimes. But this "masculine" form of ecstatic dancing, as Delavaud-Roux called it, invested the body with a greater sense of freedom and power than the maenadic "feminine" forms of ecstatic dance much more closely linked to the Dionysian cult. As Lawler (1927) observed many decades ago, the maenadic dances, which organized movement according to a circular, looping principle of repetition, produced dances that had no beginning, middle, or end, and therefore confined the pleasure value of the spectacle to the performer. The maenadic dances showed bodies possessed rather than in possession; they showed the body consumed and controlled by a force external to it, by a context, by a god. Maenads danced in groups without a driving competitive objective (dancing for the invisible god, not the critical spectator), and so the repetitiveness of their movements did very little to differentiate individual bodies. The body always remained immersed within the circular (rather than advancing) movement of a group, of a peculiar, localized, cultic social context. The competitive impulse defining the pyrrhic organization of movement worked to differentiate bodies and intensify dramatic interest in movement as spectacle for people who watch instead of perform; it emphasized power emanating from the body rather than consuming it. The pyrrhic orientation moved dance toward idealization of the body and professionalization of performance. In the

imperial centuries following the Macedonian invasion, the pyrrhic construction of ecstatic movement dominated the theatrical tastes of audiences within the Greek and Roman Empires because it revealed the controlling, transformative power, not of gods, but of the human body.

However, the major question remains: what was the relation between movement and narrative in the pantomime? The narrative organization of pantomimes differed radically from that of dramatic performances in other cultures almost everywhere else in history, because, in the ancient Roman world, storytelling in itself possessed a value inferior to that of persuasive argumentation or revelation by example. Roman culture did not encourage the telling of original stories, so the idea of stories and imaginative experiences somehow shared by audiences for theatrical performances depended on the assumption that spectators in any part of Roman civilization already knew all the stories that anyone needed to know to "understand" motives for action within a space designated for the impersonation of imaginary identities. These stories derived overwhelming from ancient Greek mythology and sometimes from ancient Roman religion and mythology. Wüst (1949: 847-849) catalogued the titles of about 180 tragic works that could be associated with the pantomime. All the titles bear the names of characters from ancient Greek mythology, such as Ajax or Agammenon. However, it is not always clear from the ancient sources whether the titles refer to literary dramas or to performances in which a dancer impersonated a character. Indeed, in the ancient world, performers "owned" mythic characters to a greater degree than texts or authors. Ancient audiences in the first century BCE or in the fourth century CE did not evaluate a pantomime performance of Oedipus in relation to the character described by Sophocles' play nor that by any other author concerned with this character; they compared the pantomime's Oedipus with impersonations of the character by other pantomimes. Performance had nothing to do with affirming the authority of texts nor even of the myths themselves. Performance affirmed the authority of the myth—or more precisely, the ideology—of metamorphosis, the belief that all living things changed their forms as a result of divine energies stored within them.



Figure 11: Movements and poses with the pyrrhic step from frontal perspective using different masks, gestures, and props. Photos: Karl Toepfer.

Voice and Gesture in Pantomime

Voice persistently accompanied the performance of the mythic theme, but the voice was always that of an interpellator (narrator) or sometimes of a female chorus, never that of the dancer. The interpellator spoke in response to movements made by the dancer; the dancer did not take cues from the narrator or even from the music: the sonic dimension of performance always responded to actions initiated and often improvised by the body of the dancer. Language and speech in the pantomime was somewhat similar to the use of intertitles in silent films. Just as the scripts for silent films possessed almost no literary value, so did the scenarios for pantomime, occasionally produced by distinguished authors such as Ovid and Statius, lack the literary values that would justify their preservation for readers. Nevertheless, speech added considerable value to the performance, insofar as it dramatized the necessity of detaching speech from the body in establishing the body as the force that awakens language rather than language as the force that awakens the body. In pantomime performance, the solo dancer (or sometimes pairs of dancers) performed selected moments from mythic narratives, changing roles, masks, and even sexes according to an aesthetic strategy that reveals the theatrical, histrionic virtuosity of the dancer rather than the dimensions of a character. The dancer therefore might perform seven mythic characters from seven different mythic narratives, from Clytemnestra to Oedipus to Medea to Jason to Hippolytus to Thyestes to Leda. Because the interpellator's speech served primarily to caption or "title" scenes or movements, the audience did not expect originality on the linguistic channel of signification. Performance imagination depended entirely on the power of bodily movement to construct a new way of looking at "the same old stuff." What, then, was the point of speaking at all during the performance? It seems that even though audiences knew all the mythic narratives, they could not always or readily associate particular movements with the enactment of particular mythic scenes. They needed some sort of captioning to orient their reading of a scene. Such captioning indicates that pantomime movement did not conform to a highly codified system of signification, as occurs in various forms of Asian theater, in which the performance of a particular character entails the mobilization of an intensely specific, tradition-defined signifying practice. The pantomime world placed a higher value on the expressive qualities peculiar to the body of the performer, even if--or precisely

because--these qualities came into tension with preconceived images of either the performer or the character. Movement styles unique to the performer (rather than to a character or emotional condition) allowed the performer to achieve a competitive identity in the intensely competitive atmosphere of pantomime culture. The warrior heritage of the pyrrhic dance infused the movement with an inclination to glorify competitiveness, which operated even in the idea that the performer should invite the audience to compare himself in relation to the different masks and impersonations he adopted in succession. The relentlessly comparative mode of performance created intense competition between performers for the favor of audiences. This competitive spirit was already institutionalized in the friendly rivalry between Pylades and Bathyllus and then assumed an explosive, large-scale political dimension when pantomimes started to represent competing factions of the chariot clubs in the circus even more successfully than the chariot racers themselves. The passionate competitive spirit pressured performers toward innovation in performance, and the genre was thus much more dynamic than previous histories suppose.

The Romans regarded public displays of competitive prowess as central to any understanding of the acquisition and expansion of power. Competitive display of oratorical skills was fundamental in defining the political context of public life. It is therefore useful to examine prized oratorical skills, especially in relation to the communicative significance of physical gestures that might have informed the movement rhetoric or narrative organization of the pantomime. The powerful ancient authority on oratory was and is Cicero (106-43 BC). He wrote prodigiously and probably without equal on oratory, most comprehensively in *De oratore* (55 BC), but his interest in gesture was almost negligible and he made at best only quite vague references to it. At one point (III. lix. 221), he simply observes: “For delivery is wholly the concern of the feelings, and these are mirrored by the face and expressed by the eyes; for this is the only part of the body capable of producing as many indications and variations as there are emotions [...]. Consequently there is a need of constant management of the eyes” (Cicero 1942: 177-179). Locating deeper or even further comment on physical gesture in Cicero is a tedious and unrewarding task. Nevertheless, the absence of commentary on gesture is significant. Cicero did not believe that any “system” of gestural signification or bodily movement was effective in establishing the credibility, authority, or appeal

of a speech. A powerful speech apparently did not depend on any gestures for its strength, and the success of a speech in moving its audience depended entirely on the rhetorical logic of the language and the voice and on the coherence of the argument. This does not mean that Cicero regarded physical movement as an unimportant means of communication; rather, he did not perceive any codification of gesture as useful in determining the importance of a speech. Indeed, Cicero's reluctance to discuss gesture would suggest that movement was a form of communication in conflict with speech and not a supplement to it. Writing almost 120 years later, around 75 CE, Quintilian in his huge *Institutio Oratoria* devoted a section (XI. iii) to use of gestures in oratory. He describes a variety of commonsense gestures that provide effective support for speech, and some gestures that are always inappropriate. However, "the orator should be as unlike a dancer as possible" (Quintilian 1922: 291). Furthermore, when condemning "the unsightly habit of swaying" while speaking, he makes clear that movements supporting speech should always avoid any resemblance to dance: "Above all we must avoid effeminate movements, such as Cicero ascribes to Titius, a circumstance that led to a certain type of dance being nicknamed Titius" (313). On the whole, Quintilian professes deep skepticism toward the use in oratory of gestures borrowed from the theater; these distract from the power of the speech, even though, like Cicero, he acknowledges that orators can learn much from actors about vocal technique. In relation to an understanding of the pantomime, perhaps his most important comments concern the use of hands:

> *As for the hands, without which all action would be crippled and enfeebled, it is scarcely possible to describe the variety of their motions, since they are almost as expressive as words. For other portions of the body merely help the speaker, whereas the hands may almost be said to speak. Do we not use them to demand, promise, summon, dismiss, threaten, supplicate, express aversion or fear, question or deny? Do we not employ them to indicate joy, sorrow, hesitation, confession, penitence, measure, quantity, number and time? Have they not power to excite and prohibit, to express approval, wonder or shame? Do they not take the place of adverbs and adjectives when we point at places and things?* (289-291).

Quintilian makes perfunctory reference to a code whereby the hands signify the emotions he names. For example: "Wonder is best expressed as follows: the hand turns slightly upwards and the fingers are brought into the palm, one after the other, beginning with the little finger, the hand is then opened and turned round by a reversal of this motion" (297). He describes several other gestures of equal complexity, implying that study and proficiency of hand gesture is not instinctive or "natural" and must be practiced. He devotes special attention to the movement of the fingers, although he insists that, "the tremulous motion now generally adopted by foreign schools is, however, fit only for the stage" (299). But Aldrete (1999: 67-73) observes that Quintilian contradicts himself in his attitude toward the use of gestures borrowed from the theater, and he argues that oratorical gesture became more elaborate in the time between Cicero and Quintilian as a result of theatrical influences. At the same time, orators could maintain credibility with their audiences only if their speeches did not seem theatrical and decorated with contrived ("mimicking") gestures that undermined the authority of language. Thus, for example, "instructors in the art of gesture will not permit the hand to be raised above the level of the eyes or lowered beneath that of the breast, since it is thought a grave blemish to lift it to the top of the head or lower it to the lower portions of the belly. It may be moved to the left within the limits of the shoulder, but no further without loss of decorum" (Quintilian 1922: 303-305). Dance at any time was unlikely to abide by such a "rule."

Aldrete (1999: 50) contends that public awareness of oratorical gesture was so pervasive that one can speak of a code that informed physical communication in daily life as well as on the stage. But he doesn't present any evidence to show that the pantomimes relied on some sort of common oratorical gestural rhetoric to construct mythic characters. Instead, he discusses in detail the illustrations (published in Jones and Morey 1931) accompanying an illuminated Terence manuscript from the fifth century CE to establish the idea of a gestural code informing theatrical practice. However, it is difficult to see how these illustrations reveal much about a common gestural code, let alone a code for the pantomime. For one thing, the artist represented neither actions nor movements in sequence. Rather, he depicted a pose that typified a character in the play to produce a visual typology of the archetypal figures in Terence's plays [Figure 12]. Even so, the poses depicted do almost nothing to differentiate theatrical gestures

from the gestures of figures in artworks commemorating historical or mythic events or scenes from daily life. The obvious masks for the figures are what connect the viewer to a theatrical context. Moreover, if we assume that they indeed constitute a "code," the gestures depicted in this manuscript or described in detail by Quintilian over three hundred years earlier, while viable and perhaps even useful in dance performance, could hardly establish the pantomime as a unique and enduring mode of spectacle. But then the question arises: to what extent did the theater and especially the pantomime borrow gesture from oratory as a way of bestowing dignity or seriousness upon an art so persistently accused of lacking "decorum"?

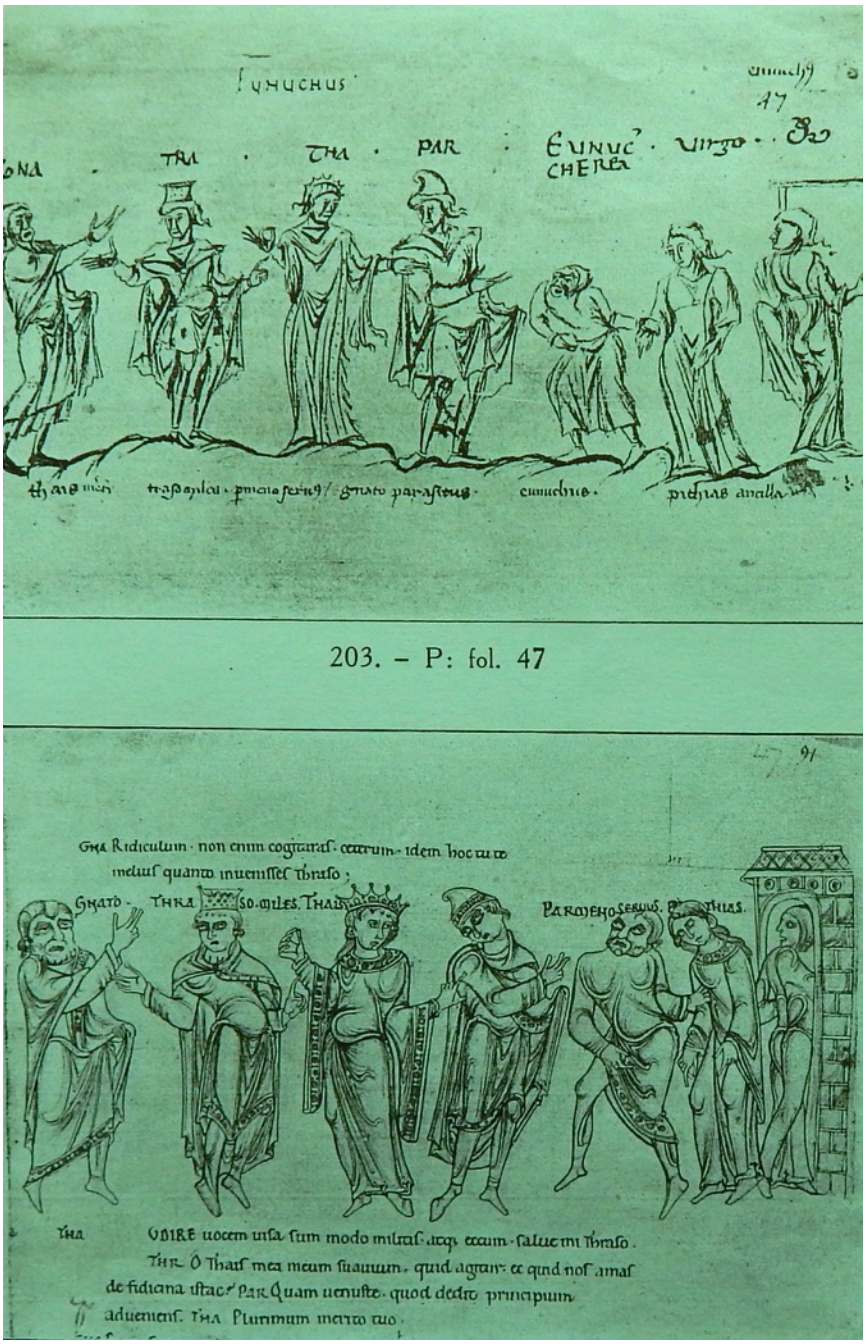


Figure 12: Typology of archetypal characters in Terence's play *The Eunuch* as depicted in the thirteenth century Terence manuscript, published in Jones and Morey (1931: folios 203, 205).

This question presupposes that pantomime could survive only by achieving decorum, a measure of respectability it never was able to attain in the several centuries of its prosperity. If anything, however, the pantomime

followed a code that subverted decorum and glorified freedom from respectability. But it is hardly evident that the pantomime adopted a gestural or choreographic code that preserved some sort of stable, ancient mode of anti-decorum. Yet the idea persists that the pantomime endured for so long because it perpetuated a movement code that performers handed down from one generation to the next. This idea supports the larger belief that the culture favored stability and "tradition" in the appreciation of aesthetic experience. Richard Beacham (1991: 142-143) contends that pantomimes "were expected to learn" movements ("a gestic vocabulary") "set by firm tradition from which the actor strayed at his peril." Yet it is extremely doubtful that the pantomime "tradition" entailed a choreographic code that even remotely resembled the complexity and precision of ballet, let alone the encyclopedic codifications of classical Chinese, Japanese, or other Asian theatrical dance cultures. The philosopher and dramatist Seneca (4 BCE-65 CE), in *Natura* 7.32.3, indicated that the First Century BCE pantomime Bathyllus established a school in Rome. His rival, Pylades, according to Macrobius, writing centuries later, in *Saturnalia* 2.7.12, apparently had several students, including the star Hylas. At least seven other pantomimes took the name Pylades in the following century (Leppin 1992: 284-288), but not because of any formal process for receiving the name. Pylades I did not actually establish a school that codified his unique style of performance, although Athenaeus (1.20) claimed the dancer had composed a theoretical treatise on the pantomime. Most likely, later performers took his name because they wished to evoke the luxurious style associated with him. But the evidence for the conflict between Bathyllus and Pylades is helpful in understanding the degree to which the pantomime conformed to a "firm tradition" requiring mastery of some sort of choreographic code. Bathyllus purportedly represented a comic strand of pantomime, a "satyr pyrrhica," by which was meant a kind of erotic travesty of mythic themes designed to entertain aristocratic patrons at villa banquets; whereas Pylades cultivated a voluptuous, refined style favored by audiences at the theater. However, in spite of the school he established, the obscene, irreverent, deconstructive style of performance Bathyllus perfected did not survive far into the First Century CE. The luxurious voluptuousness associated with the Pyladian style prevailed because it provided greater opportunities for performers to project the glamour and mystery of personality necessary to achieve stardom. Stardom did not depend on

displaying superior command of a conventional movement vocabulary; it depended on superior manipulation of production effects and on the cultivation through performance onstage and off of a unique, seductive, and cosmopolitan personality.

Perhaps the most comprehensive authority for the existence of a gestural code in ancient Rome was *La mimica degli antichi investigatta nel gestire napoletano*, published in 1832 by the priest-archeologist Andrea de Jorio (1769-1851). In this vast work, de Jorio attempted to align the gestural behavior he observed among the Neapolitans with the movement vocabulary found in artifacts of ancient art he had collected from his many excavations and which formed much of the collection preserved in the Naples Museum. His purpose was to show how the ancient civilization still lived in the gestural language of the Neapolitans. He compiled a kind of dictionary of gesture, an "ABC" of gesture, but he used entry categories that defined the emotion or motive of the "speaker" rather than the physical action performed by the speaker, because the same emotion or motive might be signified by different gestures, and the same gesture might be used to evoke different emotions. De Jorio catalogued about 115 emotions or motives. His method was to classify the repertoire of emotions accommodated by the gestural system, identify the gesture that signified the emotion, identify the evidence for the gesture, comment on the cultural context and significance of the gesture, and identify variant or alternative gestures for the emotion. To signify "Avarice," for example, a "concentric" form of love that urges one to place one's own interests above anyone else's, the performer uses the "hands as fists drawn toward the chest" (De Jorio 2000: 104). De Jorio refers to historical works that support his observation, and provides an illustration of contemporary life that describes the gesture, among other gestures discussed elsewhere in the text [Figure 13]. He then describes two other gestures, "snarl," and "index and middle finger horizontally extended edgewise, the other fingers closed," that, alone or in combination with the first gesture, may also represent avarice. But de Jorio did more than describe a gestural vocabulary; he described a "power of the speaker to choose" gestures in constructing narratives that revealed not only the uniqueness of the "speaker" but of the culture to which he belonged. He explores this point when he explains the condition of "Periphasis":

Thus someone lacking a gesture to denote being gravely ill or close to death, will first express "Robustness" and follow this with a gesture for "Past." Then he will denote the present (See Ora *"Now"), adding to it a gesture for "Negative." This will be followed by a gesture denoting the near future (see* Domani *"Tomorrow"), and finally he will make the gesture expressing "Death." Thus, with a necessary periphasis, he will have shown that someone who before was in good health, has passed into a state close to death. He can greatly expand his discourse by indicating the cause, the circumstances, the relations, the effects, and whatever else he believes necessary* (De Jorio: 2000: 325).



Figure 13: Plate XIII from Andrea De Jorio's *Gesture in Naples and Gesture in Classical Antiquity* (1832), which depicts a set of gestures by the figures in the image that supposedly communicate a complex range of attitudes or emotions requiring a lengthy caption as a "translation." De Jorio writes of the plate, titled "The adventuress goes for a walk": "A woman has taken a walk, not for the sake of health, as would be right, but for the purpose of passing time and chatting with others who also are busy only in killing it. She is reclining on a rustic seat, and she is holding in her left hand a closed fan which she carries with her for chasing away those flies which she finds too importunate [...]. With her right hand she is bidding welcome in a graceful, dignified and confident manner to the good-for-nothing who, in passing in front of her for the first time, now approaches her. Our gallant, as soon as he sees her, becomes respectful and reserved and he comes toward her with studied steps. Bowing down before the supposed lady he says to her: *Signora Marchesa!* at once expressing affection and extreme, though sham surprise. A gardener who is involved in a friendly conversation with the Marchesa's servant of the moment, cannot stop himself from laughing at what he sees. Therefore, without speaking, he explains himself in gestures, declaring the unfortunate Zerbino to be a fool [...] with his hands he adds another very expressive gesture, used by Neapolitans to mean an ass. His companion, who in this scene plays the part of a noble and faithful retainer, fearing his comrade's gesture might disturb the comedy, not allowing it to play out to the end, commands silence with his right hand while with his left hand he seeks to lower the hands of the imprudent gardener so that they will be behind the lady's head, and so not be seen by the good-for-nothing." De Jorio (2000: 359-360).

De Jorio's treatise showed how a code was not simply a prescribed way of using the body to signify emotions, motives or conditions. Rather, a code consisted of a large set of bodily movements that, when used in various combinations, might signify a particular emotion or condition while at the same time revealing the unique expressive power of the performer. The code does not prescribe rules of signification; it describes conditions under which movement may be understood. However, de Jorio contended that the Neapolitan gestural code was unique to the environment of Naples and not altogether shared by other Italian gestural "dialects," even if the dialects shared common ancient antecedents (De Jorio 2000: 17). Moreover, he largely excluded evidence from the theater, "because it is extraneous to our particular aims and also because it is a subject that has been widely dealt with by others," primarily Johann Jakob Engel (1741-1802), to whos*e Ideen zu einer Mimik* (1785) de Jorio makes frequent reference (De Jorio 2000: 13).

Engel's treatise described in abundant detail the code for acting on the stage in the eighteenth century. This code derived from the assumption that moral, psychological, and emotional conditions manifested themselves through specific gestures or movements; in other words, movements were correlates of a universal moral code that revealed itself through a universal language of bodily signs.

> *Astonishment, which is merely a superior degree of admiration, only differs from it in this respect: the traits which I have just pointed out become more characteristical; the mouth is more opened, the look more fixed, the eyebrows more elevated, and the respiration more difficultly retained […] To throw up the hands to heaven is an expression of admiration, amazement and astonishment, used by those who flatter and excessively praise* (Engel 1822: 74).
>
> *To lift up the right hand to heaven is the form and ceremony of an oath; an expression first used by the Patriarchs. To extend and raise both hands to heaven implies a double oath. Lauretus says, the lifting up the right and left hand signifies an oath with a communication and a promise* (Engel 1822: 130).

The large repertoire of gestures inventoried by Engel probably does constitute a "universal language" of expression, insofar as people from

different cultures or historical eras would read in the gestures the emotions or moral qualities Engel ascribed to them, even if people in any culture seldom actually use this "language," on stage or off, to reveal their emotions. In the eighteenth century cultural milieu, the code revealed above all a moral order that a more "realistic" deployment of gesture would obfuscate. Engel often referred to ancient writers to confirm the universality of the gestural code. But when he devoted a section to the Roman pantomime, he encountered a movement aesthetic that seemed outside the universal code he described. He reflected on the story told by Lucian (1936: 267-269) about a barbarian visitor to the court of Nero, who expressed great admiration for one of the emperor's pantomimes. When Nero later asked his visitor what gift he might give him, the barbarian replied that he would like to have the dancer. He said that the dancer could use gestures to interpret the ideas of "barbarian neighbors who do not speak the same language." But Engel disclosed deep skepticism toward the suggestion that ideas from different languages could be understood when translated into a movement code shared by peoples speaking different languages. Movement could communicate emotional conditions but not ideas embedded in particular cultures or localities (Engel 1822: 233-240). "[P]antomimical language will partake the inconvenience of all other languages, of being forced to recur to certain radical signs, and to analogies which, in designing equally a crowd of objects, do not indicate any with exactitude or precision, and of which it is impossible to divine the true signification, without first having gained a groundwork by instruction or by practice" (238). He further concluded that the complexity of the numerous themes Lucian ascribed to pantomime made it "almost impossible to form any idea of them" as performances (236). That is to say, the ideas embedded within the mythological themes could achieve expression through movement only when movement operated according to a code that was unique to the performer rather than to the culture. Saint Augustine reinforced this point when he reported that, "during the establishment of the pantomime at Carthage, an interpreter was necessary to explain them to the people" (239).

This discussion of de Jorio and Engel reinforces the supposition that the pantomime did not conform to an elaborate, culturally determined movement code that required performers to master a repertoire of rules and conventions established by "tradition" or implicit aesthetic consensus. On

the contrary, audiences expected pantomimes to perfect a movement style that was original and unique to the performer, a movement style that sharply differentiated the performer from others in relation to shared subject matter. Only the pyrrhic movement remained a constant, defining feature of this performance mode. The performer was free to develop the expressive power of the upper body. Performers realized that the same movement, no matter how simple, could produce quite different effects when juxtaposed with different masks, costumes, music, or scenic environments. The extreme youth of some pantomimes listed by Leppin (1992), including even children, further suggests that a formal system of training performers, if it existed, was less important in establishing the success of a pantomime performer than the display of a unique performance "aura," personal physical and kinetic qualities that captivated audiences, as Lucian reminded his readers: "[T]hat the appearance of the dancer is seemly and becoming needs no assertion on my part, for it is patent to all who are not blind" (Lucian 1936: 240-241).

Indeed, improvisation was apparently a significant charm of pantomime performance. Lucian devotes numerous pages to describing the manifold mythic themes adopted by the pantomimes, but he says hardly anything about the movements used to enact any theme, and he certainly never describes the "best" or "standard" way to display mastery of a theme. Perhaps his clearest statement regarding choreography applies to the genre as a whole: "In general, the dancer should be perfect in every point, so as to be wholly rhythmical, graceful, symmetrical, consistent, unexceptionable, impeccable, not wanting in any way, blent of the highest qualities, keen in his ideas, profound in his culture, and above all, human in his sentiments" (Lucian 1936: 282-283). He includes anecdotes that indicate the pleasure audiences took in contributing to improvised effects. In Antioch, audiences made fun of pantomimes whose physiques did not match their roles; they called out to the performers to adjust their actions in ways that called attention to ludicrous discrepancies between bodies and roles, for it is the audience that "regulates" the "good and bad points" of dancing (Lucian 1936: 276-279). Macrobius (*Saturnalia* 2.7.12-14), writing in the fourth century CE, describes how in Rome Pylades watched Hylas, his former student and eventual rival, perform a piece that concluded with the theme of "the great Agammenon." Pylades interrupted the performance when he called out: "You are making him merely tall, not great." "The populace then

made Pylades perform the same dance himself, and, when he came to the point at which he had found fault with the other's performance, he gave the representation of a man deep in thought, on the ground that nothing became a great commander better than to take thought for all" (Macrobius 1969: 183). On another occasion, Macrobius reports (*Saturnalia* 2.7.16), Pylades himself provoked calls from the audience while performing *Hercules Furens* in a manner that seemed inappropriate. Removing his mask, he interrupted the dance to scold his critics: "Fools, my dancing is intended to represent a madman" (Macrobius 1969: 183). However, Lucian describes a performance of the madness of Ajax in which the dancer may have gone too far ("overleaped himself") with improvisation. This actor tore the clothes off a musician, struck the actor playing Odysseus, and then stepped into the audience to sit with the senators, "between two ex-consuls, who were very much afraid that he would seize one of them and drub him." "The thing caused some to marvel, some to laugh, and some to suspect that perhaps in consequence of his overdone mimicry he had fallen into the real ailment" (Lucian 1936: 284-287). While the dancer was soon regretful of his performance, Lucian's description does reinforce the impression that audiences granted performers wide latitude in interpreting the mythic themes. But perhaps the improvisational element in the pantomime manifested itself most vividly in the hardcore pornographic enactments that sometimes occurred in the villa-banquet performance milieu, where audiences were even more likely to comment openly on the performance. When audiences enjoy the privilege of shaping the outcome of performance, as they certainly did in relation to triumphs, gladiatorial games, and chariot races, performers develop their careers through their skill at adjusting performances to the peculiarities and idiosyncracies of different audiences.

But while the pantomime did not conform to a gestural code, it nevertheless evolved according to aesthetic principles that defined the appeal and distinctiveness of movement within the art form. What did Lucian mean when he said that the dance should be rhythmical, graceful, and symmetrical? But to answer this question, it is useful to consider the "range" Lucian prescribes "for the dancer's learning," which entails an inventory of scenes apparently so complex in their physical demands that it is difficult to imagine a solo performer could realize entirely through movement: "the castration of Uranos, the begetting of Aphrodite, the battle

of the Titans, the birth of Zeus [...] the casting of lots among the three brothers [...] the power of the two Erotes [...] Then the dismemberment of Iacchus, the trick of Hera, the burning of Semele, the double birth of Dionysus [...] the daughters of Pandion, with what they suffered and did in Thrace." Lucian continues in this vein for several pages, listing "a very few themes that I have selected out of many" (248-265). At first glance, it may seem as if one could enact such themes only by employing almost unimaginable acrobatic agility or fantastic props. Quite possibly such was sometimes the case, although Lucian never pursues this suggestion. Rather, he stresses always the power of movement to reconcile complexity of theme with the manifestation of the elegant, the rhythmical, the symmetrical, and the graceful. So, for example, one might perform "the castration of Uranos" by shifting from an overtly "masculine" style of movement to a "feminine" style. In performing "the dismemberment of Iaachus," one might plausibly arise from the stage floor wrapped in a large cloth, upon which have been painted arms, legs, and torso; when moving, in the pyrrhic step with the arms draped under the cloth yet manipulating it, one could well convey the impression of limbs detached from the body. Similarly, "the burning of Semele" might transpire when the performer has his assistant drape him with a brilliant, flame-colored robe, which shimmers all the more when he executes writhing, flaming movements that allow the cloth to billow and snap. Alternatively, since "the burning" supposedly results from lightning bolts inflicted by Zeus, the performer, clad in a glittering, filmy chiton, could perform a turbulent spinning while brandishing a pair of shiny rods (lightning bolts) and then spiral downward to the floor to signify the incineration of the character into "ash." Archeological evidence even more strongly attests to the Roman fascination with props in dance performance. In the first century BCE relief from the Basilica of Porto Maggiore in Rome, the dancer impersonating Agave brandishes a sword and a severed head mask, while her attendant swings a vine [Figure 3]. Rita Paris (1981: 192-193) has described a sarcophagus mural from the first century CE depicting dancing maenads with a nude male who apparently represents Dionysos or Hercules [Figure 14]. In one panel, a maenad clashes cymbals while the nude male swings a cloak or an animal skin. In a second panel, a maenad holds some sort of disk in her outstretched hand, possibly a large tambourine, while the nude male lifts and animal skin above the leopard accompanying him. Reliefs and figurines from the Fifth, Fourth, and Third

Centuries BCE indicate a persistent delight in dancers who balance objects on their heads, snap *crotali* (clappers), or brandish bouquets of flowers [Figure 15]. Tanagra figures, popular throughout the eastern Mediterranean and in Alexandria in the fourth and third centuries BCE, show the exquisite skill with which artists could imagine the expressive possibilities of flowing garments on dancing female bodies (Danz 1962: VI-VIII; cf., Jiammet 2010) [Figure 16]. It is quite likely that dancers in ensuing centuries were aware of these possibilities, and indeed, it is even more likely that the realism and kinetic vitality of these figures results from the artists having carefully observed the performance practices of dancers throughout the Greek cultural domain.



Figure 14: Frieze of maenads with nude man from the end of the first century CE, excavated from the Casabianca district of Rome, now in the Museo Romano in Rome. From Paris (1981: 193-194).

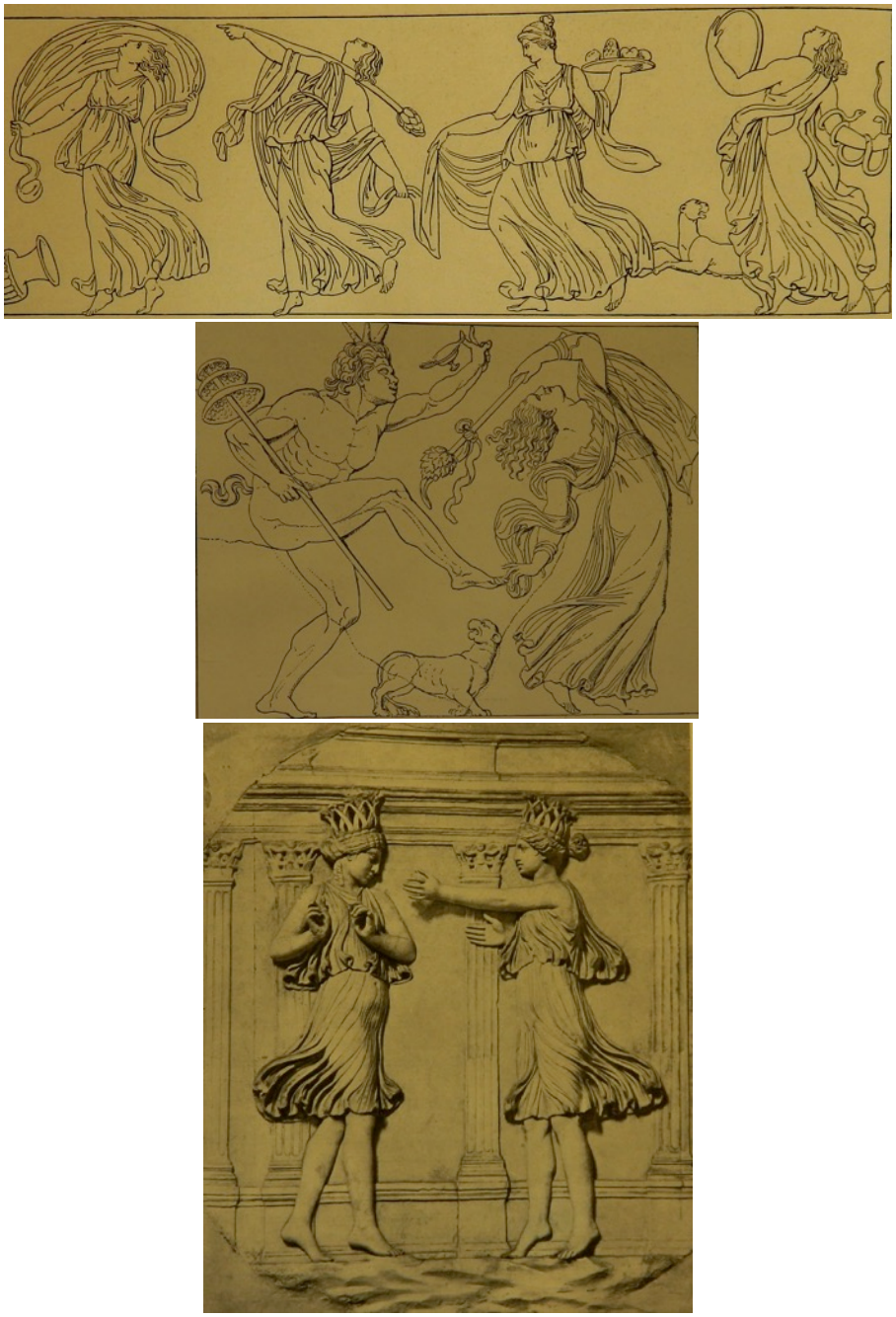


Figure 15: Friezes depicting dancers performing with props or wearing unusual headdresses. Top: First Century CE marble relief in Louvre, Paris. Center: First century marble relief excavated from the Villa Albani in Rome. Bottom: First century marble relief excavated from the Villa Albani, Rome, showing, in addition to the swirling of the fabric, a dramatic relation between the dancers, with the dancer on the left drawing her arms in and her head down in response to the dancer on the right reaching out to her with head leveled toward her. Photos: from Weege (1926).



Figure 16: Tanagra dancer showing how her dress is part of her dance. Replica of ca. 350 BCE figurine comes from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Photos: Karl Toepfer.

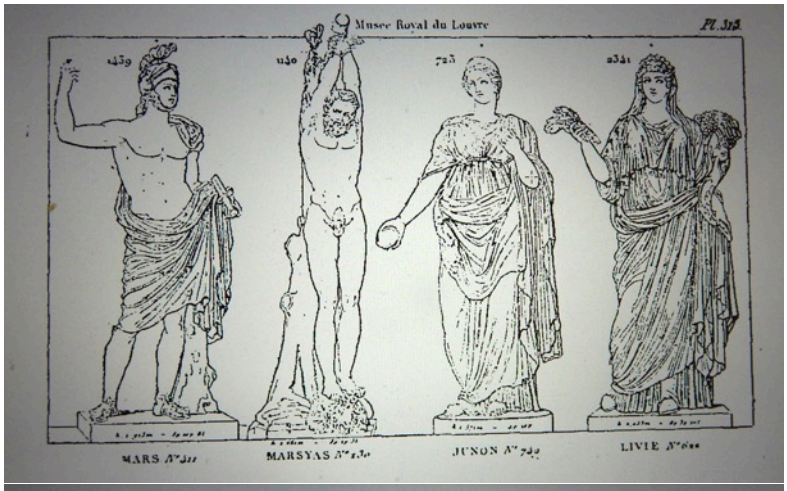
The Pose

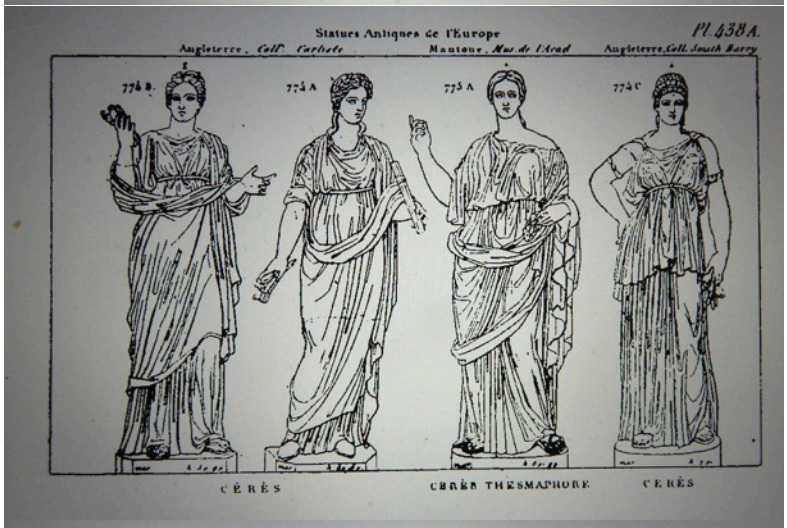
However, knowledge of this repertoire of performance devices does not explain the narrative logic of pantomime action. Rather, it amplifies the perception that the purpose of narrative organization of action is to reveal the virtuosity and personality of the performer rather than the psychology of the character impersonated or the authority of the character's mythic origin. The story was "about" the performer's ability to assume different identities and manipulate the theatrical devices necessary to achieve

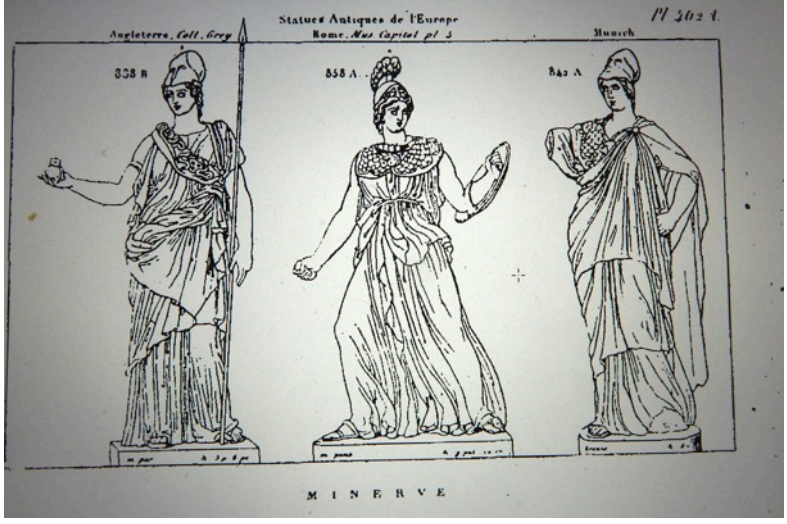
satisfactory "metamorphosis." Pantomimes became more competitive by escalating the sensationalism of stunts and enactments, particularly of lurid female roles, such as Leda, Semele, Pasiphae, and Ariadne. Audiences apparently reveled in the spectacle of male performers impersonating mythic women giving birth to gods and heroes, or such fantastic metamorphoses as Minerva born fully grown and armed out of the head of Jupiter, although how stunts like these were actually performed still remains the subject of speculation. Moreover, according to Plutarch (IX.15.747), a great measure of performance virtuosity lay in the performer's skill at executing poses. The performer's movements, which Plutarch calls "phrases," functioned as transitions between poses (Plutarch 1961: 289). The narrative consisted of a series of moments whose climax was a pose, the "terminating point of the movements" (Plutarch 1961: 289). A pose initiated a movement and then ended it to become the measure of transformation from one condition or identity to another. The audience contemplated the pose as if gazing at an artwork and evaluating it "like figures in a painting" (291). Writing two hundred years later, Libanius (LXIV.118) also mentions the importance of poses: "For [the performers] spin around us as though they have wings, and they finish in a motionless position as if they were fixed with glue. And with the position the picture presents itself. Another greater effort is to come to a stop at the same time as the song" (Malloy 2014: 175). Citing ancient authorities, Athenaeus, in the *Deipnosophistae* (I.21-22), written around 210-215 CE, suggests that alternating dance movements with poses date back at least to the time of Aeschylus (Athenaeus 1927: 95-96).

Salomon Reinach's (1858-1932) comprehensive inventory of Greek and Roman statuary, compiled over a span of thirty years (1885-1912), provides an excellent comparative description of pose conventions that pleased audiences of ancient sculpture across several centuries. But Reinach's endless inventory reveals that while ancient audiences persistently exhibited a taste for dramatic poses in sculpture, they did not pursue a taste for complexity of pose, in the sense of physical contortion or manifestations of intense physical exertion. Pose implied poise or "rest," as Plutarch called it, an impression of energy and power ready for release or an idealized command of great strength molded within a disciplined body [Figure 17]. Statuary audiences seemed more appreciative of subtle differences in basic heroic poses than of striking originality in a pose. It is

difficult to find evidence that the pantomime use of pose contradicted the taste for idealized poise in statuary. A pose, after all, is an opportunity to gaze at a body, a form, rather than an action. Furthermore, we should remember that for ancient audiences, statuary appeared in an architectural or design environment rich in delicate, brilliant color effects and attention to the manipulation of light and shadow. It is doubtful that pantomimes were any less attentive to color effects in the choice of mask, costume, and props to adorn a pose. In other words, even the same pose might cast a different effect if the performer simply wore a different mask and garment [Figure 11].


Musée Royal du Louvre
Pl. 315
MARS N° 311
MARSYAS N° 230
JUNON N° 749
LIVIE N° 600


Statues Antiques de l'Europe
Pl. 438 A.
Angleterre, Coll. Carlisle
Mantoue, Mus de l'Arad
Angleterre, Coll. Smith Barry
774 B
774 A
775 A
774 C
CÉRÈS
CÉRÈS THESMAPHORE
CÉRÈS


Statues Antiques de l'Europe
Pl. 362 A.
Angleterre, Coll. Grey
Rome, Mus Capitol pl. 5
Munich
838 B
838 A
843 A
MINERVE

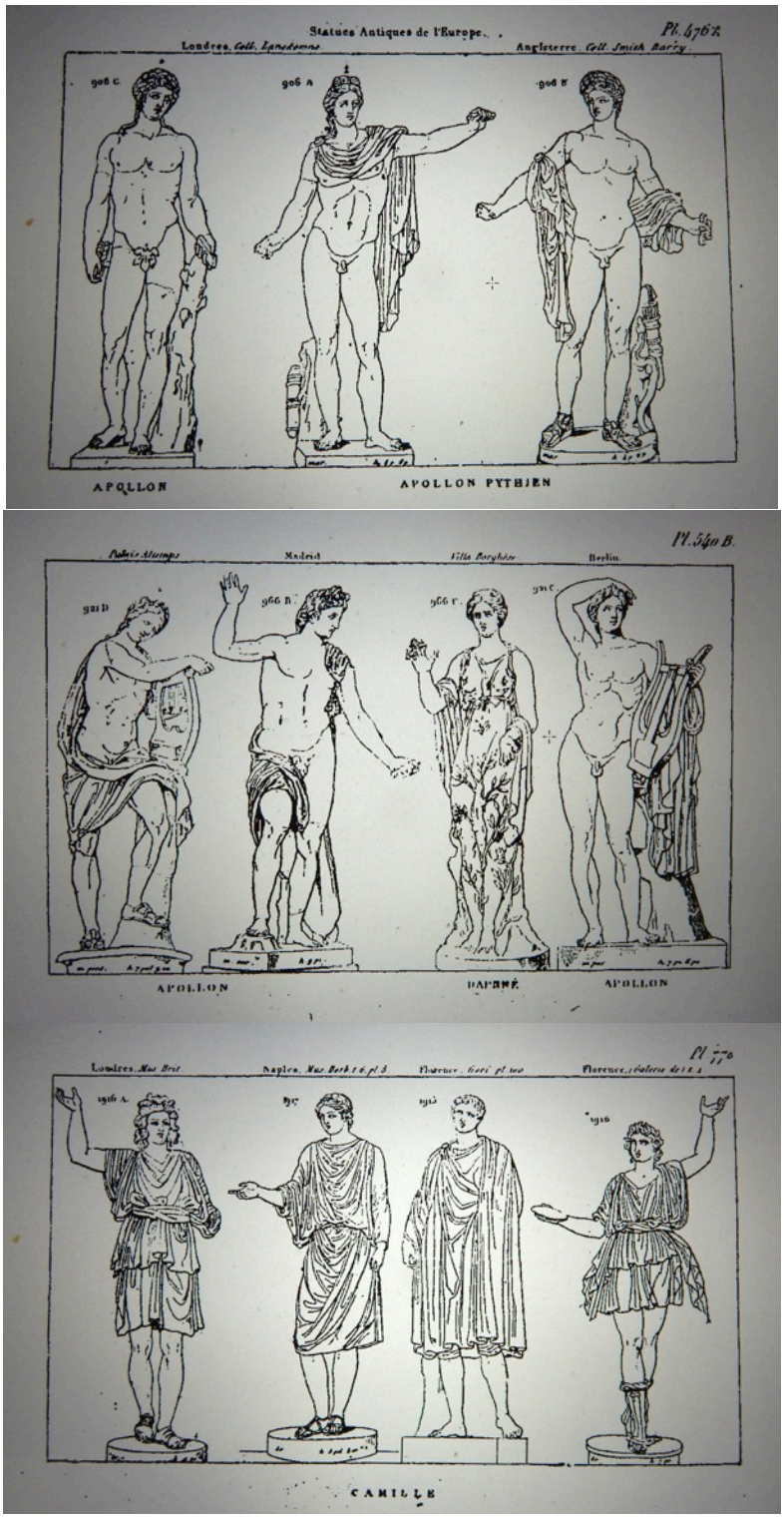


Figure 17: Roman statuary showing the diversity of poses that pantomimes, inspired by the statuary, could introduce into their performances. Photos: from Reinach (1906).

Just as useful for an understanding of pose aesthetics are the numerous Etruscan bronze mirror images catalogued by Eduard Gerhard (1795-1867) over several decades (1843-1897). “Decorated mirrors seem to have been an Etruscan specialty, unmatched in Greek art” (Brendel 1978: 201). These images, produced in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, not only convey a greater sense of physical intimacy than statuary; they tend to indicate a greater sense of movement as a result of their linear rather than plastic organization of the image. Only occasionally do the mirror images depict solitary figures. The artists obviously favor crowded group tableaux and only occasionally images of pairs [Figure 18]. An exceptional dramatic intensity pervades nearly all the thousands of images recorded by Gerhard: the artists delight in showing mysterious tensions, in producing conflicting perceptions of actions. The mirrored identity of the mirror holder “emanates” from or perhaps just mingles with the mythic identities engraved on the back of the reflective surface. Indeed, what is remarkable about the mirror scenes is the difficulty of differentiating poses from actions, which often coincides with the difficulty of differentiating gods from mortals. The voluptuousness, the erotic glamour of the images, saturated with so much nudity, is perhaps not surprising in objects designed to amplify consciousness of personal beauty. Nevertheless, the images ubiquitously suggest that for the Etruscans, dramatic power arises from the closeness of bodies, from scenes that provoke uncertainty about which body dominates perception. This aesthetic results from a compression of the space containing the bodies, from a pleasure in seeing bodies “revolt,” as Brendel (1978: 66) observes, against the forms that contain them.



Figure 18: Engraved figures crowded on the back of a bronze Etruscan mirror show an Etruscan in seeing multiple bodies luxuriating within an enclosed, decorative context, in opposition to the Roman enthusiasm for isolating bodies within a "empty" space. But by inscribing the image on the back of a mirror, the Etruscans implied that the image of the person holding the mirror contains "other" identities, anticipating the Roman fascination with the "metamorphosis" of human identity.

I do not mean to imply that the Etruscans displayed no enthusiasm for solitary figures nor that the Romans had no interest in representing intimacy. Rather, in the mirror images, the Etruscans revealed an attitude toward the basis of dramatic action that was unique and not shared by the Romans nor even by the Greeks. For the Etruscans, dramatic action arose from the sensuous power of bodies to compress space and circumscribe it. They perhaps distrusted too much the capacity of language to explain motives for action, and thus they did not invest much faith in literature to create a mythic cosmos through which one could decipher human destinies (see Brendel 1978: 144-145). Dramatic language somehow obfuscated or inhibited perception of the body in action. The Etruscan theater, at least as the Romans apparently understood it, evolved in relation to the perfection of a dance imagination and not in relation to literary innovation. The Romans cultivated a far more confident attitude toward the capacity of language to motivate and organize action, but they shared with the Etruscans the belief that dramatic language obfuscates perception of the body (the performer) by refracting perception toward an abstract imaginary, otherwise known as a "character." Drama in this sense was not so much the revelation of a mythic level of identity within the body as it was the revelation of the body's capacity to assume or project multiple identities. Human power did not reside in affirming or authenticating mythic forces; it resided in the body's capacity to aestheticize reality and make reality (rather than representation) the measure of aesthetic experience.

But the Romans differed from the Etruscans in their understanding of the body's aesthetic value. They saw how the body created or expanded space, rather than circumscribed it. In their art, the Romans showed greater enthusiasm than the Etruscans for representing space and incorporating space into representation, which is perhaps why they were slow to adopt painting as an art and then, after the brief, extraordinary period of the Second, Third, and Fourth Styles (late first century BCE to early second century CE), devoted their artistic energies to other media. In any case, they treated painting as an extension of architecture, a scenic backdrop to lived experience, rather than as a self-contained mode of representation. Imaginative painting of buildings and statues, however, preoccupied them until the end of the empire. Even in their wall paintings, the Romans

displayed greater interest than the Etruscans in investing space with aesthetic energy and in dramatizing the space between bodies. This pleasure in revealing the "power" of space is a central feature of the imperial aesthetic. It helps explain why the Romans, across several centuries, could build a monumental theater culture throughout the Mediterranean world without feeling any serious urge to compose any literary drama for it. They relegated dramatic language, dialogue, to the lowly street theater of the mimes. They built wide, shallow stages that could accommodate huge, frieze-like throngs of bodies, but these stages never inspired dramatists to write anything for them [Figure 19]. When they bothered with drama at all, which was mostly during the Republic, literary talents wrote for an improvised performance environment and not for the grandiose architectural monuments that emerged throughout the ancient world during the Empire. Indeed, these great and magnificent theaters were more suited to dramatizing the grandeur of a solitary figure in movement than to providing an engaging motive for interactive action between speaking bodies assembled on them.



Figure 19: The Roman theater at Leptis Magna, Libya, second century CE, showing the wide shallow stage favored by the Romans. Photo: Public domain.

The Roman concept of "spectacle" favored work that blurred distinctions between reality and representation. The aesthetic reality of the theater, as the Romans perfected it, should exceed whatever one could imagine being performed in it. Myth provided a cosmic rationale for action in the world, but myth was credible to the extent that it amplified uncertainty about the difference between reality and representation. Or rather: uncertainty about the difference between reality and representation issued from a deeper uncertainty about the relation between life and death and the degree to which death was somehow an extension of life. To aestheticize reality was to transform fear of death into a powerful aesthetic experience. Roman spectacles, encompassing forms of performance on a much larger scale than could appear on a theatrical stage, often accommodated a pervasive urge to see violent death as a thing determined by a human (rather than divine) aesthetic impulse. But the Romans probably appropriated even this philosophical perspective, if we consider the tomb paintings of gladiators in Paestum and indeed the evidence concerning the origins of the gladiatorial combats in either the Etruscan or Oscan cultures (cf., Pontrandolfo 1992). In addition to gladiatorial combats, violent death contributed to the aesthetic enhancement of reality in chariot races, wild beast shows, *naumachia* (staged sea battles), or such presumed instances as when in the performance of a play preceding a gladiatorial game, the death of an imaginary character entailed the actual execution by the sword of a prisoner substituted for the actor who until then had impersonated the character. It would appear that actual death was never a component of pantomime performance, insofar as the pantomimes themselves did not find a place for it in their choreographies. The very idea of solo dance performance would seem to preclude any possibility, short of suicide, of seeing death as anything but a representation, an impersonation, which was certainly done often enough.

But pantomime performance involved a wider domain of activity than the choreographies that appeared in performance spaces designated for them, and this domain of pantomime performance did sometimes include violent death. The Emperor Nero (reigned 54-68 CE) eventually ordered the death of the pantomime Paris (?-67 CE) because the actor had too much knowledge of the Emperor's crimes, because the actor had become a "dangerous rival" to the Emperor, or because he, the Emperor, had not made sufficient progress in learning the art from the actor (Tacitus,

Annales 13. 19-22; Suetonius, *Nero* 54). According to Tacitus, when the Emperor Claudius (reigned 41-54 CE) learned that his wife Messalina was engaged in an affair with the popular pantomime Mnester (?-48 CE), the dancer, a slave earlier compelled by Claudius to obey any command of Messalina, displayed an exceptionally Stoic response to the announcement from the Praetorian guard that they kill him immediately by order of the Emperor; he accepted a sword from a guard and stabbed himself. In 83 CE, the Emperor Domitian (51-96) also had a pantomime executed who had become the lover of the Empress Domitia Longina (Suetonius, *Domitian*, 3.1). Such scandalous stories, which could hardly have remained concealed from the public, no doubt intensified perception of the pantomime as a dangerous art. Leppin (1992: 190, 227, 247, 259, 267, 290, 295, 296) lists the known gravestone inscriptions that mention pantomimes or flute players who died as children or adolescents. Pliny (*De natura*, 7.184) remarks that two knights died after they slept with a pantomime named Mysticus. But pantomime performance could prove deadly for spectators as well as performers. Riots provoked by pantomime performances, which receive more detailed discussion later, occasionally became a serious social disorder from reign of Tiberius until the Fifth Century, especially in Antioch during the fourth century, when numerous spectators died as a result of clashes between rival fan clubs. "De funambulo," Item 112 in the *Anthologia Latina*, implies the ominous danger of pantomime performance with the image of a dancer in the hippodrome performing on a tightrope suspended above the audience between the island in the center of the stadium and the seats of the spectators (cf. Kay 2006: 141-145).

Perhaps, then, the oscillation between dance movement and pose accommodates a pleasure in the culture to see "real" articulations of this fundamental conflict between life and death (immortality). For the audience, the pose was what lingered in memory after the performance; movement was the condition of transformation, metamorphosis. The beauty and power of transformation depended on what it produced. Movement was therefore never an end or value in itself, which means that choreographic art could not develop independently of a central aesthetic objective: to create a memorable pose. Choreographic choices applied to a variety of dramatic scenes and might even seem arbitrary without comment from the interpellator. The beauty of the pyrrhic step provided a tragic, heroic movement that was generic and freed the performer to cultivate an

individual style around upper body movements and elaborate mask and costume choices, which, in their heaviness, might seem to oppress the body of a fleet-footed modern dancer. Performance complexity in the pantomime did not reside in fancy footwork or intricate steps, as was the case in the trance-like, endlessly repetitive "feminine" dances of the ritual cults. With the imperial aesthetic, movement functions to appropriate narrative rather than, as with cult dancing, to signify an exhausting submission to it. The pose represents a sort of momentary "conquest" over narrative, in which it is up to the performer, rather than to some external rhythm of narrative, to initiate action whose purpose is to metamorphose the body of the performer into another heroic pose or moment of conquest over narrative or memorable "end" to it.

At the same time, however, the pose allows the performer to resemble a statue, an image of deathlike immobility. But it is the performer who controls this tension, not the narrative: the mythic narrative material is both deathless and dead, a sort of energy of death, which the performer appropriates to demonstrate his power to metamorphose into new identities, to construct his "rebirth." The imperial ideology did not encourage the spectator to see movement in itself as a source of ecstatic freedom and power. For when movement is an end in itself, it is a cultic ("feminine") submission to the authority of mythic narrative, which achieves its authority by its ability to bestow cultic distinction on highly localized contexts. The pantomime inspired confidence in the imperial political system through its power to show bodies projecting a convincing heroic image in all manner of contexts: the theater, the circus, the villa, the temple procession, the army camp, the barge, the garden. With the pyrrhic step and the pose, the performer appropriated spaces with the same assurance that he appropriated myth.

Plutarch, however, asserted that the pose was like a painting, not a statue (Plutarch 1961: 291). Painting implies a higher degree of fantasy than the Romans tended to permit sculpture, although it is unlikely that audiences for the pantomime considered this distinction important in their appreciation of the pose. But in devising poses, pantomimes made choices or developed an aesthetic that we can understand by looking at the way in which a Roman spectator looked at a painting. In his *Imagines*, written around 200 CE, Philostratus (ca. 171-ca. 249) apparently describes many paintings that were on display in some sort of Neapolitan gallery, but these

were not anything associated with the glamorous Third or Fourth Styles, which had long since faded as an artistic practice. Philostratus describes a painting almost entirely in terms of how well it depicts a particular mythic scene by employing details that make the scene recognizable to the spectator. Here he describes a painting representing Dionysus and Ariadne (*Imagines* I.15):

> *For instance, the ivy clusters forming a crown are the clear mark of Dionysus, even if the workmanship is poor; and a horn just springing from the temples reveals Dionysus, and a leopard, though but just visible, is a symbol of the god; but this Dionysus the painter has characterized by love alone. Flowered garments and thyrsi and fawn-skins have been cast aside as out of place for the moment [...] and the Bacchantes are not clashing cymbals now, nor are the satyrs playing the flute, nay, even Pan checks his wild dance that he may not disturb the maiden's sleep. Having arrayed himself in fine purple and wreathed his head with roses, Dionysus comes to the side of Ariadne, "drunk with love" as the Teian poet says of those overmastered by love* (Philostratus 1931: 63).

The passage is useful in describing how the artist *might* have depicted Dionysus as well as how he actually does. Dionysus *might* wear ivy clusters, flowered garments, or fawn-skins; he *might* carry a thyrsis; he *might* accompany a leopard or a flute player or cymbal-crashing maenads. Here, however, he wears a purple mantle and a crown of roses. Just so, the pantomime might choose any of these attributes or combination of them to represent Dionysus, depending on the mythic action he wished to enact and on the circumstances under which he had to differentiate his Dionysus from that of competitors. The emphasis in the pantomime is on scenic attributes to make the character recognizable to audiences, not on a movement style or even on a physiognomy ascribed to the character. Even with these scenic attributes, the spectator might not recognize the specific mythic action performed by the character, nor possibly the character itself, and so the interpellator must provide a "caption" for the scene similar to (though probably more perfunctory than) Philostratus's description of the painting. With the focus on scenic attributes to designate character, it was not necessary for the performer to invent unique movements to identify

specific characters. The pyrrhic movement provided a seductive, generic foundation for "transformation," while freeing the performer from the pressure to devise a peculiar combination of movements to signify a character within a large repertoire of mythic figures shared by other performers. Choreography would then function to reveal a performer's personal uniqueness rather than a character's identity.

Let me recapitulate the aesthetic values guiding the narrative organization of action in the pantomime.

1) The performance contrasts mythic characters and moods to show how these identities and moods inhabit the same, solitary body.
2) The performer depends heavily on costume choices, mask, theatrical props, and "captions" from the interpellator (rather than on movement or gesture) to make the mythic character recognizable to the spectator.
3) A mythic scene begins and ends with a pose and may contain poses within it.
4) Virtuosity of posing is less about discovering a new position for the body than about finding new ways to costume and mask an old, familiar position.
5) The pyrrhic step is the basic mode of propulsion, which means that performers do not rely on innovative footwork to build innovation into dance movement.
6) Virtuosity of movement does not reveal character so much as the personality of the performer. Movement represents a mythic action without being specific to it, for its function is primarily to differentiate moods and to differentiate the performer from rivals.
7) Movement does not conform to a gestural code that catalogues pervasively accepted correspondences between specific gestures and specific emotions. Rather, movement develops according to an almost mathematical awareness of possible combinations for moving different parts of the body in relation to different spatial-temporal variables.

Combinations of Aesthetic Variables

The idea of a "mathematical" awareness governing choreographic choices appears transparent when we simulate the conditions of its application. The performer may execute the pyrrhic step quickly or slowly, and may move the hands, arms, head, torso, or shoulders quickly or slowly. The body may move forward, backward, diagonally, or in profile to the spectator. Speed and direction of movement are only two variables that complicate perception of the pyrrhic step in relation to a single arm movement [Figure 11]. The pyrrhic step itself may be performed in different ways: as an exultant march, as a stealthy circumnavigation, as a funereal procession, or as a voluptuous stride. In combination with turns, spins, sways, or abrupt shifts in rhythm, the step allows for the dramatization of fairly complex emotional conditions. Another set of variables enters when the step operates in tandem with different gestural possibilities for the hands, arms, head, torso, and shoulders. But these movements and combinations of them expand their expressive potential when the performer adds props and costume effects and cause the same movement to signify a different emotional aura. When occasionally the action involved two or more performers together, as is evident from Apuleius's description of the pantomime in Corinth, movement and pose may interact, and indeed, several bodies may be in movement employing different combinations of gestures. What is impressive about Apuleius's description of "The Judgment of Paris" pantomime in *The Golden Ass* (ca. 150 CE) is that he shows how the performance entails a luxurious interaction of props, costume effects, nudity, and elaborate combinations of movements. For example:

> [...] *And by and by, there approached a faire and comely mayden, not much unlike to Juno, for she had a Diademe of gold upon her head, and in her hand she bare a regall scepter: then followed another resembling Pallas, for she had on her head a shining sallet, whereon was bound a garland of Olive branches, having in one hand a target or shield: and in the other a speare as though she would fight: then came another which passed the other in beauty, and presented the Goddesse Venus, with the color of Ambrosia, when she was a maiden, and to the end she would shew her perfect beauty shee appeared all naked, saving that her fine and dainty skin was covered with a thin smocke, which the wind blew hither and thither to testifie the youth and flowre of the age of the*

dame. Her colour was of two sorts, for her body was white as descended from heaven, and her smocke was blewish, as arrived from the sea: After every one of the Virgins which seemed goddesses, followed certaine waiting servants, Castor and Pollus went behind Juno, having on their heads helmets covered with starres. This Virgin Juno sounded a Flute, which shee bare in her hand, and mooved her selfe towards the shepheard Paris, shewing by honest signes and tokens, and promising that hee should be Lord of all Asia, if hee would judge her the fairest of the three, and to give her the apple of gold: the other maiden which seemed by her armour to be Pallas, was accompanied with two young men armed, and brandishing their naked swords in their hands, whereof one named Terror, and the other Feare; behind them approached one sounding his trumpet to provoke and stirre men to battell; this maiden began to dance and shake her head, throwing her fierce and terrible eyes upon Paris and promising that if it pleased him to give her the victory of beauty, shee would make him the most strong and victorious man alive. Then came Venus and presented her selfe in the middle of the Theater, with much favour of all the people, for shee was accompanied with a great many of youth, whereby you would have judged them all to be Cupidoes, either to have flowne from heaven or else from the river of the sea, for they had wings, arrowes, and the residue of their habit according in each point, and they bare in their hands torches lighted, as though it had beene a day of marriage. Then came in a great multitude of faire maidens: on the one side were the most comely Graces: on the other side, the most beautifull Houres carrying garlands and loose flowers, and making great honor to the goddesse of pleasure; the flutes and Pipes yeelded out the sweet sound of Lydians, whereby they pleased the minds of the standers by exceedingly, but the more pleasing Venus mooved forward more and more, and shaking her head answered by her motion and gesture, to the sound of the instruments. For sometimes she would winke gently, sometimes threaten and looke aspishly, and sometimes dance onely with her eyes: As soone as she was come before the Judge, she made a signe and token to give him the most fairest spouse of all the world, if he would prefer her above the residue of the goddesses. Then the young Phrygian shepheard Paris with a willing mind

> *delivered the golden Apple to Venus, which was the victory of beauty* (Apuleius 1919: 531-537; Apuleius 1972: 257-259).

The narrator treats the performance, not as a predominantly choreographic experience, but as an almost monumental, dynamic mosaic of visual and musical sensations. Bodily movement is important here, not because it is a display of acrobatic virtuosity, but because it amplifies emotional contrasts and complexity. The narrator describes movement in the language of fundamental actions: dancers "show," "throw" their eyes," "accompany," "carry," "shake" their heads, "wink," "threaten," "look aspishly," and "make signs." But above all, they "bear" all sorts of glamorous props and physical beauty. The competition between the three goddesses does not unfold as a choreographic contest. Rather, it is more like a contest of processions, structured according to a predictable escalating scale of sensation. Venus wins the contest because her appearance is the most sumptuous. The performance makes no effort to dramatize any conflict within Paris about which goddess to choose. Until the end of the description, he adopts the pose of a transfixed spectator. Suspense lies entirely in the anticipation of an intensifying level of voluptuous imagery, bodies, and tones. If, as seems evident from the description, the audience recognizes the mythic scene, then no one watches the performance to see how the story will end; this was known before the day began. The narrative organization of action depends on the emotional resonance provoked by or correlated with purely formal properties of performance.

Yet the performance as a whole is not without serious narrative unpredictability and disruption. The passage merely describes the prelude to the main action of the performance, which is the copulation on stage between the donkey narrator and a woman accused of murder among many other crimes; the bestial act is part of her public humiliation before being eaten by wild beasts. Theatrical machines change the scene and display a luxurious bed "finely and bravely prepared, and covered with silk and other things necessary." With great anxiety, the narrator describes the anticipated copulation as an action designed for maximum theatrical effect without, however, proposing that the scene is anything other than "reality." This extravagant blurring of distinction between representation and reality arises out of the same impulse to treat reality *as* theater that established the appeal of chariot races and gladiatorial combats. The "Judgment of Paris"

ballet then seems like a grotesque parody or travesty of glamorous ritual performance efforts to evoke the mythic spirit of Venus on behalf of the ecstasies of carnal desire.

The "meaning" of the pantomime performance does not result from some special understanding of character, myth, social relations, history, or people, as is expected of text-driven performances. The "moral" of "The Judgment of Paris" is, for Apuleius, nothing more than an opportunity for extravagant satire. Social order in the performance is merely a sequence of ornamental processions; the concept of "judgment" appears utterly detached from any condition of doubt or internal conflict over the consequences of a decision. Although the performance functions ostensibly as a punishment of a monstrously immoral woman, the narrator makes clear in the complicated passage preceding the description of the performance that a large number of people, practically an entire society, is somehow implicated in her crimes. In other words, escape from intellectuality or insight is not a function of "entertainment" as such; nor is it the basis for a collapse, confusion, transcendence, or discarding of distinctions between representation and reality. Rather, the narrator describes how performance metamorphoses into reality—that is, into a condition when life itself is governed (or at least amplified) above all by aesthetic instead of moral, political, or economic values. Entertainment, as it appears in the passage on the pantomime, is not a matter of escape from reality or even from intellectuality. It is an escape from morality, from a religious or mythic justification for justice and social harmony. The invoking of mythic powers through theatrical performance leads to the staging of a sort of ecstatically obscene reality. At any rate, the narrator refuses to participate in the obscene punishment and runs away from it. But the passage reverberates with a larger implication when set against the other evidence of the pantomime aesthetic. The "meaning" of the pantomime lies in its power to free both performer and spectator from morality as it is encoded in narrative and representation. The pantomime adopts a form of performance that allows the spectator to observe the conditions under which a personality manifests its uniqueness, its freedom, its aloneness, beneath or despite layers of mythic fantasy, character, mask, costume, artifice, ceremonial procession, technical virtuosity, and even language. Personality asserts itself most freely or uniquely through physiognomy and physical movement. That this freedom from being

compelled to find one's place within a story told by others has the potential to create an ecstatic experience is the basis for transforming pantomime performers into stars and for establishing the appeal of pantomime performers around star personalities. The problem with the pantomime described in *The Golden Ass* is that it descends into monstrous vulgarity: the "unique personalities" revealed by the "reality" of performance, including especially that of the audience, are bestial. The beautiful evocation of myth in "The Judgment of Paris" not only fails to prevent Corinthian society from sinking into bestiality; it justifies the descent. Of course, this grotesque irony is the basis for extravagant comic effect in Apuleius's narrative, but it also exposes a disconcerting ambiguity of consequence embedded in the freedom of metamorphosis, the freedom to transform representation into reality.

Richard Brilliant has explained how, in wall paintings and relief sculptures, Roman artists perfected a "synoptic" or "reduced field" approach to the visual narration of mythic or historical events that was similar to the excerpted compilation aesthetic of the pantomime. Because the narratives were too complex and filled with too many details to be represented completely or efficiently, and because furthermore, it was necessary to interweave two or more narratives into a larger configuration of meaning, artists favored a "reduction of the narrative chain and greater concentration on a primary visual field" so that eventually, "during the course of the second and third centuries, viewers were obliged to change their behavior from reading through the narrative series to reading out from the salient imagery" (1984: 163-164). "Highly concentrated images" or "typological formulations," he says, were "readily accessible to the eye and mind of the viewer" and thus "could reveal greater content through association" (163). The object of this "synoptic" organization of narrative, which he calls *allegoresis*, was to "project myths as an allusive presentation" of an "inner truth" or "search for another, higher, form of reality" (164). In this aesthetic, the spectator or "beholder" assumes an increasing responsibility for the meaning of the "visual field," "manipulating" clarified, reduced forms and extracting "relevant content" in relation to a unique, personal context (164). If we apply Brilliant's argument to the narrative organization of the pantomime, then it would seem that the performance fulfilled a highly symbolic, ritual function of moving the spectator to a transcendent, elevated reality, "lacking either beginning or end," in which the viewer was

free to encounter, indeed construct, a mysterious relation between myth and reality that a more detailed or complete approach to storytelling prevented him from seeing.

Brilliant's argument is helpful in explaining the increasing tendency toward abstraction in Roman art, wherein mythic imagery becomes obscured by idiosyncratic, cryptic details of an elaborately formal nature, especially in the mosaic paintings from the third century onward. The problem with the argument is that it does not clarify the relation between mythic figures and the "higher reality" signified through abstraction. Why bother with mythic material at all in the face of a decaying belief in the power of myth to "explain" or define reality? In a broad investigation of ancient art before the emergence of Greek civilization, Henriette Groenewegen-Frankfort (1896-1982) described, in 1951, how ancient artists used abstraction and motionless posing to preserve a ritual function for the image. An image assumes a ritual function when it memorializes "the terrifying distance between the human and the transcendent" and serves to prepare the viewer for death and submission to an eternal, immutable power. A lack of dynamism defines temporal-spatial relations between figures. Art that does not pursue a ritual function, she contends, is "unpurposeful," insofar as it exists only to commemorate the excitement and "movement" of life itself and does "not give substance to the world of the dead through an abstract of the world of the living." Such art does not "immortalize proud deeds or state a humble claim for divine attention" (Groenewegen-Frankfort 1987: 216). It is art whose guiding objective is to remind the living of the beauties of life and to appreciate the pleasure of movement for its own sake. For Groenewegen-Frankfort, this secular or non-ritual function for art is most evident in Cretan civilization, wherein "the human bid for timelessness was disregarded in the most complete acceptance of the grace of life the world has ever known." In this art, "the beauty of movement was woven into the intricate web of living forms" and "revealed in human bodies acting their serious games, inspired by a transcendent presence" that nevertheless remained absent from representation itself (216).

The pantomime, however, does not fit comfortably into either Brilliant's or Groenewegen-Frankfort's categories of ritual and non-ritual function. The narrative organization of the action followed abstract, "synoptic" principles that emphasized formal relations between bodies,

time, and space without pointing to a "higher reality" for which myth was merely an emblem. The pantomimes subordinated myth to aesthetic objectives; the "higher reality" achieved through abstraction was intellectual, not spiritual, close to Groenewegen-Frankfort's notion of "serious games." The pantomime was tragic in the sense that it was a serious engagement with the physical relation between myth and the human body. Whereas literary tragedy attempted, to the extent that anyone in the Empire even bothered with it, to link serious "understanding" of a higher reality to superior storytelling skills, the pantomime linked such understanding to a kind of refined resistance to storytelling in which it was possible for performance to comment on the stories inside a person without actually telling them. On the other hand, the pantomime was not quite the "unpurposeful" art that Groenewegen-Frankfort ascribed to Cretan civilization. The pantomime depended on star performers to sustain its appeal for the public. Performers became stars because they "embodied" various mythic identities to a superior degree, and by becoming stars, they themselves cast an aura of myth, they intimated a "transcendent presence" whose capacity to stir up ecstatic feelings, intoxicating sensations of release and freedom, could seem more real than the gods or immortals they impersonated. Whenever performance moves toward an ecstatic result, it entails, not an "acceptance of the grace of life," but a release from the mundane world and a powerful sense of coming close to a higher level of being than otherwise seems accessible within "reality." I would suggest, then, that the pantomime fulfilled neither one function nor the other, nor did it accommodate double, contradictory functions. Rather, it projected an elaborate uncertainty of function that arose from a desire in Roman civilization to permit people to read performance narratives according to different, unstable apprehensions of "reality."

Pantomime Musical Accompaniment

The pantomime not only detached the voice of the narrative from the dancer but subordinated the voice to the movement. The interpellator took his cues from the movement, and thus conveyed the impression that language was a response to action rather than a cause of it. The relation of music to the performance reinforced this subordination of aural components to visual. Lucian makes almost no reference to music in his comments on the dance. In the Roman world, musicians do not appear to

have achieved the star status of pantomimes. The Romans absorbed the musical theories and practices of the Greeks, but unlike the Greeks, they did not ascribe a cosmic significance to music or treat the mathematical basis of Greek music theory as the mystical manifestation of a divine power. As Behn (1954: 126) observed: Roman music "found its fulfillment as the servant of an unconcealed materialism, through sensuous carousals," and through practical applications for the military and various public ceremonies. This attitude, however, does not mean that music was not important to the Romans, nor that they introduced no interesting innovations. They incorporated musical influences from the cultures they encountered, and a frequent complaint against Roman music was that it contaminated the civilization with foreign notions of beauty and pleasure. Etruscan musical traditions, which were only partially indebted to Greek traditions, played a major role in shaping Roman musical aesthetics. And when Rome annexed Egypt in the first century BCE, and the pantomime along with the Isis cult found an enthusiastic reception in Italy, Egyptian musical ideas began to penetrate Roman music culture, although this penetration occurred only to the extent that Egyptian musical ideas fit in with other Roman musical tastes and did not replace them.

The Greek musical practices that the Romans appropriated owed much to Near Eastern musical traditions dating back to the Babylonians and Sumerians. However, Greek music evolved in relation to complex theories of music that were a unique consequence of the Greek inclination to build comprehensive philosophical systems. The Greeks organized musical compositions according to a system of "modes"—or, more precisely, according to several modal systems. Modes apparently derived from the tuning of strings on the chief instruments of musical production, the lyre and the cithara (Gombosi 1939: 33-77). But some scholars have argued that the modal system developed from singing epic poetry and from an intimate connection between vocal performance and musical properties within the Greek language (see Anderson 1994: 84-112; Landels 1999: 110-129). However, the tones produced on an instrument are more likely to achieve a condition of "absolute" purity than the voice and thus provide more convincing evidence to justify a system of tonal relations. The lyre was of very ancient origin, the Babylonians having played as far back as 1800 BC, while the cithara was most likely of Greek invention. Visual representations show lyres containing from three to eleven or twelve strings of equal length

but tuned to different notes in a descending scale conforming to a particular mode (Gombosi 1939: 48-73 provides the most complete catalogue of the visual representations). Most representations show six or seven strings, which is sufficient to encompass an octave. The intervals between tones constitute a scale, but the tones are not fixed—they can be changed to produce a different pattern of intervals called a mode. The Greeks employed several modes, whereas modern Western music relies largely on two modes, the major and the minor of a single diatonic system. How the Greek modes operated is not altogether clear, partly because of confusion generated by the unstable representation of the number of strings on the lyre and cithara. Only a few scraps of Greek notated music are extant, and no examples of Roman music notation have survived. So scholars depend on ancient writings about music for clarification, although Greek remained the language for technical and theoretical discourse on the subject. Plato described some modes in relation to their effect on listeners, as did Aristotle. Aristotle's student Aristoxenos, writing in the late fourth century BCE, composed an extensive treatise on music, of which three books have survived. A second century CE writer, Claudius Ptolemy, composed a densely technical *Harmonics* that linked Greek music theory to zodiacal codes. In most likely the early third century CE, another commentator, Aristides Quintilianus, complaining about the "disgrace" into which learning about music had fallen, wrote a book that attempted to revive respect for Greek music theory, in which precise, mathematical proportioning of sound reveals the "incorporeal beginning of the soul" and manifests the movement of astral bodies and zodiacal energies (Aristides Quintilianus 1983: 72, 195). But even earlier, in a first century CE essay on music ascribed to Plutarch, the author explained Greek music theory, with extensive reference to Aristoxenos, in an effort to reclaim a tradition that, under the Romans, had supposedly succumbed to decadent practices shaped, as Plato had feared, by the voluptuous pleasures of the theater. But this essay is of further importance precisely because it acknowledges a substantial tension between musical practice, as the author observes it, and music theory as Greek philosophers several centuries before desired music to follow. At any rate, Greek music theory dominated the tonal organization of music in Roman civilization throughout the time in which the pantomime flourished. Nevertheless, the theory, which remained rooted in Pythagorean mathematical idealism, described "systems" of tonal relations

that sought to manifest an idealized cosmic harmony that, as a series of mathematical calculations, was often quite detached from the actual sound of music in the ancient world. “Pythagoras, that grave philosopher, rejected the judging of music by the senses, affirming that the virtue of music could be appreciated only by the intellect” (Plutarch 1874 I: 130). The Greek music theory writings are therefore not entirely reliable in explaining ancient music practice. Moreover, because these writings inevitably drift into bewildering technical complexities, they are subject to equally convoluted wrangling among scholars over meaning or implication.

Aristoxenos used the term “tetrachord” to describe a fundamental set of three intervals between four tones or semi-tones, with the sum of the intervals adding up to a fourth, so that four strings on a lyre might be tuned to d, e, f, and g, although the Greeks apparently assigned separate letters to every note rather than identify them as the same wave length at a different frequency, and what they called “low,” we regard as “high” (Landels 1999: 88). But the player can retune the lyre to produce a different set of notes, as long as they total a fourth between them. By adding strings, a player can include another tetrachord in descending tones. A “conjunction” of tetrachords occurs when the lowest note of the higher tetrachord is the highest note of the lower tetrachord. Tetrachords operate in “disjunction” when an interval separates one tetrachord from another to produce a complete octave. The Greeks combined three, four, or five conjunct and disjunct tetrachords into “systems” for regulating relations between conjunction and disjunction. The Lesser Perfect System consists of three tetrachords, while the Greater Perfect System uses four, and the Greater Perfect Non-modulating System contains five. Each system is divided into four sections that identify the notes within a spectrum: “the highest” (*hypaton*), “the middle” (*meson*), “the conjunctive” (*synhemmenon*), and “the excessive” or additional (*hyperbolaion*). Both the Greater Perfect and the Greater Perfect Non-modulating Systems include a fifth section, “the disjunctive” (*diezeugmenon*). The purpose of the Systems is to determine the central tone that links the tetrachords into octaves. Octave structures radiate outward (or higher and lower) from the central tone. Aristoxenos identified thirteen tones, compared with the twelve, including semitones (sharps and flats), in conventional Western music. But the Greeks also appreciated quarter tones, so some commentators discussed structures employing as many as fifteen tones. To determine absolute intervallic

relations between tones, it was necessary to apply the Pythagorean method for calculating the ratios of tones to each other, a process that quickly becomes quite complicated and abstruse, as is evident from explanations offered by Landels (1999: 130-135) and Gombosi (1939: 102-107). Most musicians probably did not pay much attention to the theory of intervallic ratios, but Greek acoustic engineers and musical instrument makers found it useful in shaping the material conditions for the production of musical sound. Aristoxenos explained that tetrachords belonged to one of three *genera*: the diatonic, the chromatic, and the enharmonic. Diatonic tetrachords consist of two whole tones and a semitone and build a scale containing five whole tones and two semitones, just as the diatonic scale functions in music today. Chromatic tetrachords built a fourth out of three semitones and whole tone; this genus was favored for the production of strongly emotional or intensely "sweet" music. The enharmonic tetrachord combined two quarter tones with two whole tones.

Aristoxenos and his disciples, as well as the Pseudo-Plutarch treated the enharmonic as the oldest and strongest tetrachord structure, although, as Sachs (1943: 206-207) pointed out, the evidence for microtones in Greek culture is "indeed relatively late," at the end of the fifth century BCE. But tetrachords built around microtones disappeared from music in the Hellenistic years and did not resurface. Pseudo-Plutarch wrote that "our musicians nowadays have so exploded the most noble of all moods, which the ancients greatly admired for its majesty, that hardly any among them make the least account of enharmonic distances. And so negligent and lazy are they grown, as to believe the enharmonic diesis to be too contemptible to fall under the appreciation of sense, and they therefore exterminate it out of their compositions [...]" (Plutarch 1874 I: 130-131). However, even without this genus plenty of complexity remained in the two other genera. Each genus of octave structure, according to Aristoxenos, adopted one of twelve *species*, which are often referred to as "modes" or "moods": *Hyperlydian, Hyperaeolian, Hyperphrygian, Hyperionian, Hyperdorian, Lydian, Aeolian, Phrygian, Ionian, Dorian, Hypolydian (Mixolydian), Hypoaeolian, Hypophrygian, Hypoionian,* and *Hypodorian* (Landels 1999: 99). "It is not fully clear whether these scales evolved from one another or existed side by side from the beginning" (Sachs 1943: 217). But the development of the modes was perhaps the source of greatest controversy for Greek theorists of music, and even in our own time, "we do not have a clear sense of the

significance and value in musical theory and practice of the species of octave" (Comotti 1989: 90). The Greeks designated a mode according to the central tone linking the octaves, so that each mode represented a different tone in the scale of thirteen to fifteen tones they employed. But this does not mean that the modes were synonymous with the concept of "keys" in Western music. "We should not forget," Comotti remarks, "that the basic system of Greek music was not the octave, but the tetrachord" (1989: 91), and, as he reminds his readers, within the tetrachord, the two inner notes of the fourth were "movable" while the outer notes were always fixed. This freedom to adjust the inner notes of the fourth would cause the central note linking the octaves to shift from the tone predicted by the circular structure linking the highest and lowest tones in the scale. The shift would, in a sense, "de-center" the melodic organization of sound and introduce an amplification of strangeness or instability to the composition. This instability of mood urged Plato, who judged all music on the basis of its assumed moral effect, to contend that some modes were dangerous. In *The Republic* (III, 397), he singled out the oriental Lydian modes and their chromatic variants as especially conducive to "soft," "lax," "convivial" or "dirge-like" moods, and in the ideal state, such modes, such "complex scales" and the "curiously harmonized" instruments that use them, would not be permitted and only the "older" and simpler Dorian (diatonic) and Phrygian modes would have a place. In *The Golden Ass*, the narrator observes that in the performance of the pantomime in Corinth, the flute player blows a "sweet, Lydian" tune (10.32). Plato contended that music possessed special power to forge its "way into the inward places of the soul"; the Lydian modes were dangerous because their chromatic intensification of emotional "color" in sound urged people toward emotions and action that were "lawless," "frenzied," or "unduly possessed by a spirit of pleasure" (*Laws* III; Plato 1926 I: 247). He linked the Lydian modes to the Dionysian religious ecstasies appropriated by the theater, which was responsible for inculcating a "spirit of lawlessness," with the result that "in place of an aristocracy in music there sprang up a kind of base theatrocracy" (247).

The complexity of Greek harmony, as the manifestation of an "ethos," was therefore a fundamental source of the moral controversies attached to the pantomime culture that exploited harmonic innovation, and much of Greek music theory navigated toward pure mathematics detached from actual sound as part of an ideological project to correct the "excesses"

that supposedly had corrupted musical practice. In the Platonic view of cultural history, harmonic innovations in music were in large part responsible, not only for the replacement of tragedy by pantomime in the theater, but for spreading an "ethos" that subverted the ambition of the Platonists to construct modes of intellectual discourse that superceded the need for any kind of theater. Plato's critique may suggest that chromatic harmony somehow caused people to dance in a *particular* way that was morally dubious, for he did not oppose all dancing. Indeed, he praised the beauty of the pyrrhic step and believed that young people should learn it (*Laws* II; Plato 1926 II: 29). However, his language does not altogether support a cause-and-effect relation between harmonic innovation and movement style. Music is dangerous, he contended, when it corrupts audiences, who can no longer distinguish good and bad qualities of performance and thus descend into "a liberty that is audacious to excess." Plato doesn't say that corrupt music makes the performers dance in a "lawless" manner, and the evidence of the pantomime obviously indicates, rather, that the performers moved in a calculated, disciplined way, albeit often in an improvised mode, and with qualities that were frequently voluptuous and even lascivious. But what makes movement voluptuous or lascivious? Plato's point is that *any* movement becomes voluptuous or lascivious when accompanied by particular melodies or modes of music—or, more precisely, by the freedom to juxtapose tones and thus construct complex contrapuntal and polyphonic effects. In his extant writings on music, Aristoxenos did not really discuss how the modes operate as contrapuntal or polyphonic structures, and it is difficult on the basis of available evidence to determine how the Greeks interwove melodic lines or set a melody in tension with an accompanying chordal configuration. It is possible that the Greeks employed slightly different notation systems for voices and instruments (Landels 1999: 221-227), perhaps because they did not treat vocal and instrumental sound as belonging to a completely unified harmonic system—that is, voices and instruments "translate" a purely theoretical tone into slightly different inflections. It is clear, however, that the Greeks never introduced polyphony into choral singing, and no evidence exists to suggest that the Romans violated the mysterious principle that groups of voices should always sing in unison. Yet polyphonic and contrapuntal complexity was inescapable in their music, because of the ways in which they combined instruments with each other, as well as with

voices. Curt Sachs (1943: 256-258) seemed to think that an understanding of Asian polyphonic practices might clarify how the Greeks put together different "parts," a speculation reinforced by Plato's warning on the dangers of importing "oriental" modes, although it is not altogether evident that in ancient times Asian cultures possessed contrapuntal techniques that were anymore "advanced" than what the Greeks themselves claimed from mythic origins. But Plato indicated the development of contrapuntal complexity when he complained of "the poets" whose "unmusical illegality" led them to create compositions that "mixed dirges with hymns and paeans with dithyrambs, and imitated flute-tunes with harp-tunes, and blended every kind of music with every other [...]" (*Laws* III; Plato 1926 I: 247). According to Plato's logic, as harmonic complexity increased, movement also became more complex, but not because movement had become more intricately synchronized with harmonic elements. On the contrary, harmonic complexity urged movement to become free of musical determinants and to function against a backdrop of sound rather than as proof of music's power to control and coordinate the body. In other words, pantomimes used music for dramatic effect, with the same sort of relation between movement and sound that prevails in movies, wherein actors shape often very complex movements before the music enters the performance.

Rhythmic Features of the Accompaniment

The synchronization of music and movement usually depends on rhythmic, rather than harmonic, organizations of sound. It is apparent, however, that the Greeks subordinated rhythm to harmony, in the sense that the "pulse" of music did not determine its mode of "mood." How the Greeks even signified rhythmic values remains quite obscure. Most scholarly commentary on Greek rhythmic practice arises out of protracted discussion of the metric system governing the composition of poetry, with probably the most monumental contribution in this direction coming from the writings of Rudolf Westphal (1826-1892), especially in his immense commentary on Aristoxenos, completed between 1883 and 1893. An assumption governing discourse on Greek rhythmic practice is that music emerges from literary language by functioning as a system for controlling the meaning and emotional resonance of words through patterns of syllabic accent and tonality. Because much of Aristoxenos's writing on rhythm was not preserved, Westphal relied on references to Aristoxenos's thinking in

the writings of other ancients, primarily Aristides Quintilian, who wrote, according to his editor, Thomas Mathieson, "sometime in the late third or early fourth century A.D.," although other scholars claim he wrote in the early third century (Aristides Quintilian 1983: 14). Aristides' thinking is at points so densely technical that it requires more than a little patience to read him. Consider this paragraph on rhythm:

> *There are also other mixed rhythms, six in number: cretic, which is composed of two trochee thesis [downbeat] and a trochee arsis [upbeat]; iambic dactyl, which is composed of a iamb thesis and a iamb arsis; trochaic bacchic dactyl, which consists of a trochee thesis and a iamb arsis; iambic bacchic dactyl, which is configured contrariwise to the aforesaid rhythm; iambic chroeic dactyl (it accepts one of the dactyls in the thesis and one in the arsis); and trochoid choreic dactyl, compounded analogously with the aforesaid rhythm. "Cretic" derived its name from that people; the rest have their names from the aforesaid feet* (Aristides 1983: 100).

His discussion of music is intensely abstract and only rarely does he make even the slightest reference to actual performance and none to any actual composition. It is very doubtful that musicians in the Roman Empire paid much attention to the theoretical principles he described, and this indifference was a motive for writing the treatise. In his only reference to the pantomime, he criticizes Cicero for condemning music as immoral while praising "the dancer" Roscius, "who at that time displayed himself with rhythms alone and these ignoble and inferior" (124). Nevertheless, Aristides perceived rhythm as the movement of music and the body (*orchestra*), and his remarks on the subject provide some insight into how the pantomime deployed music.

Rhythm, according to Aristides, refers to the interval of time between tones; melody is a calculated organization of these intervals that "moves the heart" (94). The smallest unit of time is called the "protos," which may also be called the point or pose. The point, so to speak, generates energy that "moves" in mathematical proportions or ratios of tones. *Arsis* is an upward movement of the body and *thesis* is a downward movement. A rhythm establishes a repetitive relation between upbeats and downbeats. Specific temporal values or durations ascribed to upbeats and

downbeats result from dividing a tone into "feet" "considered to have two (equal or unequal) phases each—not time units—and classified in four groups according to whether the ratio of length of the two phases was 1:1, 2:1, 3:2, or 4:3" (Sachs 1943: 260). These ratios are "related to intervallic sound by nature" (Aristides 1983: 95). The system for dividing tones into upbeats and downbeats derives from the metric patterning of accents imposed upon the speaking of poetic language. Music (as song) is assumed to have emerged from the exaggeration or intensification of tonal and rhythmic properties embedded in consonants, syllables, words, and sentences, although, as Landels (1999: 111-112) observes, in poetry, the Greeks imposed a metric pattern on the words rather than selected words that "naturally" accommodated the pattern. The metric system of upbeats and downbeats merges into the ratio system of phases (feet), to allow for numerous combinations of feet. Even if one includes pitch values in them, metric patterns do not produce melodies unless they are unstable, combined with other patterns that preclude the idea of "translating" upbeats and downbeats into notes. Nineteenth century commentators on Greek music, like Westphal, attempted such translations to show how the civilized orderliness of modern Western music has its origin or foundation in ancient musical practice. But the Greeks, subordinating rhythm to melody, treated rhythm as a mathematical combination of temporal intervals rather than as the controlling "pulse" of a musical composition. This means that Greek music and literature were not as closely aligned as some commentators have asserted. It also means that Greek rhythms were more unstable or richer than the study of prosody would indicate. Even if one assumes the dubious task of translating the downbeat as equivalent to a quarter note and the upbeat as equivalent to half a downbeat or an eighth note, as so many commentators do to "simplify" the relation between metric pattern and rhythm, the rhythms that emerge from poetic language are quite diverse and often unusual in Western music: 9/8 or 12/8 or 5/8 or even 11/8 (*tetrapodie*) rhythms were not as strange to the Greeks as they are to Western ears. But John Landels insists that it is necessary "to abandon the concept of lines of verse. The more elaborate structures of Greek song consisted not of regular repeated lines, but of metrical units of varying length, grouped together to form stanzas" (1999: 123). In other words, rhythmic structure shifted to accommodate melodic invention motivated by texts whose metric patterns were also unstable. Moreover, the

translation of metric patterns into musical notation does not take into account other important aspects of rhythm, such as rests, triplets, pedal points, or tempos, although Aristides alluded to them without explaining their significance (1983: 101-102). He declared that rhythmic "modulations arise in twelve ways," but he named only eight and did not discuss any of them, even in some vague relation to his contention that "the best rhythmic composition is that productive of virtue; the worst, that of evil" (1983: 102). But his reluctance to explore rhythmic modulation suggests that the music of his time pursued rhythmic practices that were too complex to function as manifestations of a divine, geometrically-ordered cosmology in which movement contains two "species": straight line or orbit (1983: 176).

The diversity of rhythmic meters hardly means that the ancients were enthusiastic producers of "danceable" music. On the contrary, complexity of "rhythmic modulation" favors "singability" over "danceability." The pantomime culture most likely encouraged the production of tunes audiences could hum and associate with the emotional ambience of a particular star or company. Music composed to synchronize the dancer's body with an external "pulse" was probably not a priority, insofar as pantomimic virtuosity was not synonymous with the display of superior skill at synchronization. Music *accompanied* the dance in the way that it accompanied singing, which could even mean that the rhythm of the accompanying music was different from the rhythm of the singer or dancer or that, in any case, the dancer could still feel comfortable moving to a melody in such "awkward" meters as 7/4 or 9/8. For dramatic effect, the pantomime could move slowly while the music moved quickly, and vice versa. If synchronization occurred, most likely it was because the musicians followed the dancer, the star, producing particular tones to coincide with movements when the dancer decided to make them. As a result, the rhythmic structure of the music could become even more complex than an "awkward" meter. In any case, how would synchronization work? In conventional dance practice, upbeats lift the body and downbeats bring the foot to the ground. But if the dancer is narrating, not one but several mythic scenes in succession, conventional synchronization of the body with upbeats and downbeats, no matter what the rhythmic meter, merely diminishes dramatic power and at best confines the performance to a predictable, if not mechanical, display of acrobatic agility. The combination of acting with dancing requires a more complex relation to music.

A Hypothetical Scene

Consider, for example, a situation in which the performer enacts the scene from the House of Atreus myth in which Atreus welcomes his brother Thyestes to his home for the purpose of reconciling the brothers after Thyestes had seduced Atreus's wife and become her husband. But the reconciliation banquet is only a ruse: the dinner consists of Thyestes' sons, but he does not know that until Atreus informs him, completing one of the most sensational scenes in the mythic repertoire and providing an excellent opportunity for memorable theatrical sorcery. What might be the relation between music and movement in this scene? Assume an orchestra of three female musicians playing an aulos, a tympanum, and cymbals. The scene begins with the pantomime assuming the pose that completed his previous scene, and the music is that which concludes the previous scene. The pantomime's assistant comes forth from the chorus to remove the dancer's mantel while the dancer removes his mask and displays it, assuming briefly a new pose. The aulos player recapitulates the theme that pervaded the previous scene. The musicians would then vamp while the assistant attaches a new mantel to the pantomime, who places the mask in the mask rack and reaches for the mask of Atreus, displays it next to his face, and then covers his face with it, as the assistant fastens it from behind. At the moment the mask covers his face, the musicians begin a new composition, let us say in a brisk 6/8 time and in a shiny Dorian mode. The pantomime strikes the "Atreus pose" as the assistant retreats to the chorus. The aulos plays the "inviting" melody, supported by a rhythmic accentuation in which the cymbals clash on the second beat and the drum taps on the fifth beat. The pantomime then initiates the "welcoming" section of the scene with movements appropriate to the deception Atreus executes, such as: imploring a god to bless the reconciliation of the brothers, presenting an attitude of graceful humility, urging his guest to receive gifts, encouraging the perception that he is harmless or weak or regretful or preoccupied by a noble wish or perhaps all of these things. And if the audience requires orientation to the mythic context, the interpellator, standing slightly apart from the musicians, can speak a helpful caption: "Atreus, poisoned with desire for revenge, welcomes his adulterous brother Thyestes to his palace." Such a caption is sufficient to establish Brilliant's "synoptic" function for the scene. The pantomime could conclude the welcoming section by balancing

with upraised arm a sumptuous platter piled with cooked meats and, after turning or gliding acrobatically, setting the platter on a tripod. At this point, the pantomime might assume another pose, which displays Atreus in a mood of profound anticipation, a frozen struggle to constrain an intensity of excitement at the bestowal of a "gift." The music shifts into a darker, Lydian mode, chromatic harmony in a slow tempo of 4/2. The aulos blows a somber melody in a lower register, while the drum strikes on the first and third beats. The pantomime then moves into the "revelation" section. Again, the cymbals clash on the second beat, but they also clash whenever the pantomime turns his head or moves his left hand in a sweeping, lifting, or thrusting gesture. The aulos player distorts the melody through *rubato* exaggerations whenever the dancer moves forward or raises both arms above his waist. In the revelation section, Atreus projects an aura of triumphant fulfillment. He encircles the platter, as if in a trance; he extends his right arm and receives from the assistant an opulent goblet, from which he takes a sip and vibrates with exhilaration. With his left hand, he draws a dagger from his belt and spins around and around, brandishing the weapon and the goblet, while the cymbals clash with each revolution. Then abruptly he approaches the platter, flipping the dagger and sipping. He pokes the meat with the point of the blade, as if offering it to his imaginary guest. He sways, as if performing some mysterious culinary rite, until suddenly, from underneath the meat, is revealed a small pair of masks, signifying the faces of Thyestes' sons. With the dagger, Atreus plucks the masks from the platter and lifts them high. He advances toward the audience, displaying his gruesome trophies and performing a giddy, self-enthralled dance. He delicately sets the masks in the great goblet and strikes the final pose of the scene, in which he gazes at the ghastly goblet in his uplifted hand as if admiring a marvelous piece of art. The pantomime is now ready to initiate the next scene, which might even be the same story fragment seen from Thyestes' point of view.

I do not propose that this speculation constitutes a "reconstruction" of how pantomime actually took place, although I have imagined a performance according to the knowledge of pantomime production available from the historical record. Indeed, a problem with such a speculation is that it is perhaps too generic, in the sense that it does not account for the historical periodization of the pantomime: the speculation could apply equally to a pantomime in the first century BCE and to a

pantomime in the fourth century CE. How performances of the Atreus scene differed across different times in terms of theatrical and musical tastes or styles remains obscure in such a speculation. Nevertheless, it is clear from the speculation that in a performance involving these generic features, the theatrical elements considerably complicate the relation between music and movement. This complexity only increases if other possible musical and theatrical effects enter the performance, such as a song sung by a lone voice, a choral song, a larger orchestra, a more elaborate costume and mask, more props, a more active participation of the interpellator, a more acrobatic mode of movement, or the addition of another performer impersonating Thyestes. Historical periodization of pantomime performance styles probably entails identifying the extent to which such complexities "color" or modify the generic model imagined here. But further complexity would distort the model if it were possible to identify movement styles unique to a performer or performance group or to performance locale: even if the same performance concept were followed, the Atreus scene might well appear differently if it were performed for an audience in Alexandria or Gaul rather than in Rome. Yet it is precisely the intricate embroidering of such sensuous, material details in the telling of myth that so annoyed the ancient theorists of music across several centuries, from Plato to Aristoxenos to the Pseudo-Plutarch to Ptolemy to Aristides, and urged them to complain that music had sunk into a decadent phase, having become the servant, so to speak, of unwholesome fantasies that prevented people from a deeper, supposedly "universal" intimation of the "incorporeal beginning of the soul." However, the complexities introduced by the model enactment of the mythic scene indicate that the "synoptic" approach to the use of mythic material did not entail a simplification or reductivism to satisfy less demanding or less sophisticated audiences than supported the epic poets or idealized festivals of Greek drama in times long past. On the contrary, the pantomime represented for its audiences a more "advanced" form of mythic narrative than the poetry and drama of earlier and more "primitive" eras, in somewhat the way that the imperial idea of governance in the Mediterranean world superseded the tribal and city-state political structures that preceded the Hellenistic period. The pantomime did not function to prepare audiences to assume civic responsibilities nor to connect civic communities to destinies and moral crises embedded in myths; it functioned to estrange audiences from

myth and to treat myth as a manifestation of a collective imaginary shaped, modified, intruded upon, transformed, or metamorphosed by "reality," all those sensuous, material details and stylistic idiosyncracies imposed upon myth by performance. As will become evident, the audience that cultivated the pantomime was aristocratic, in the sense that pantomimes molded their aesthetic to accommodate the tastes of a ruling class and expected audiences from other classes to emulate those tastes. The taste of the ruling class was for experiences that demonstrated the aesthetic authority of "reality," not the moral authority of myths or ideals associated with a mysterious cosmic order. The Atreus scene is not "about" how powerful passions destroy family ties, nor is it an "explanation" of how the passions defining the "fate" of an individual contribute to the fate of an entire society. The scene is "about" how a person may employ beautifully executed gestures to conceal violent, depraved motives. It is "about" the disturbing mutability of human identity, the inability or refusal of humans to see corruption beneath beautifully contrived gestures, movements, and details. Myth is not the raw material for understanding the logic or "story" of a fate bestowed upon a society; it is the raw material for understanding the process of metamorphosis. The central problem for the culture is not how to move humanity toward the ideal, toward a more just or unified society; but how to recognize "reality," how to perfect perception, how to trust one's senses and thus respect the limitations of one's trust in others, no matter how intimately others are known.

Sung Accompaniment

The musicians who accompanied the pantomimes were obviously an important aspect of the represented action. But the size, composition, and performance contribution of the musicians remains obscure. Visual evidence indicates that Roman spectators liked seeing the musicians in the same frame as the dancer, unlike in conventional Western theater, ballet, opera, movies, and dance, in which the musicians perform out of sight, in a pit or off stage, or on a recording [Figure 3]. Audiences apparently saw music making as a dramatic action that contributed to the spectacle value of the performance. Different instruments and voices created different dramatic auras, but it is by no means clear what the "standard" musical ensemble for pantomime was, and most likely, for separate pieces within

the pantomime program, different instrumentalists and singers combined to provide a variety of musical interludes.

A chorus was apparently a feature of many pantomime companies, and probably most choruses were entirely female. The sex of the chorus is significant. The chorus of ancient Greek drama was entirely male, because women were forbidden to perform in the theater. Perhaps the idea of female choirs emerged in the Hellenistic theater out of the hetaere culture of Greek brothels and entertainment salons. But it's also possible that the Romans, who did not forbid women from performing in the theater, encouraged the introduction of female choirs and felt far less inhibition than the Greeks about displaying their desire to hear female voices sing. However, the historian Titus Livius (59 BCE-17 CE), in his *History of Rome* (7.2), composed 27-9 BCE, asserted that when in 364 BCE the Romans invited the Etruscans to perform a play as a way to urge the gods to alleviate a terrible pestilence, the actors only danced to the music of a flute "in the Tuscan fashion," and did not speak or sing. It was only afterwards that young Roman men "began to imitate them, exercising their wit on each other in burlesque verses, and suiting their action to their words. This became an established diversion, and was kept up by frequent practice." Livy pointed out that these young men "chanted satyrical verses quite metrically arranged and adapted to the notes of the flute, and these they accompanied with appropriate movements." And he explained that it was the actor Livius Andronicus (285-204 BCE) who, at least a hundred years later, "for the first time abandoned the loose satyrical verses and ventured to compose a play with a coherent plot. Like all his contemporaries, he acted in his own plays, and it is said that when he had worn out his voice by repeated recalls he begged leave to place a second player in front of the flutist to sing the monologue while he did the acting, with all the more energy because his voice no longer embarrassed him. Then the practice commenced of the chanter following the movements of the actors, the dialogue alone being left to their voices" (Livius 1912: online). But it is clear from Livius's account that one should not confuse "the chanter" with a chorus. Hieronymus (St. Jerome), writing in the late fourth century CE, remarked that Pylades in Rome introduced the chorus to pantomime productions in 22 BCE, although it cannot then be supposed that the chorus replaced the solo singer (Hieronymus, *Chronicles of Eusebius*, 189.3). Wille (1967: 167-168), in examining the fragments of Republican tragic drama,

detected traces of choral text in imitation of Greek models, but was unable to determine if they were spoken or sung. In any case, the singing of "virtuoso solo arias" quickly superceded whatever attempts the tragedians made to produce choral songs. From the beginning, the Roman dramatists appear to have assigned the chorus a marginal role, and they amplified the marginality by thinking of singing as above all a solo activity. But the concept of the chorus probably changed with the professionalization of the theater. Even for the Republican dramatists, the chorus never fulfilled the role that Horace, in the *Ars poetica*, ascribed to it, as the "well-meaning advisor, the passionless mediator, the reliable observer, the friend of justice and peace" (Wille 1967: 168). Livy (7.2) implied that the chorus represented a dubious or stigmatized sector of society when he remarked that, as a result of Livius Andronicus's innovations, "the young people left the regular acting to the professional players and began to improvise comic verses. These were subsequently known as *exodia* (after-pieces), and were mostly worked up into the 'Atellane Plays.' These farces were of Oscan origin, and were kept by the young men in their own hands; they would not allow them to be polluted by the regular actors. Hence it is a standing rule that those who take part in the Atellanae are not deprived of their civic standing, and serve in the army as being in no way connected with the regular acting" (Livy 1912: online). Unlike Athenian audiences, Roman audiences did not perceive a "communal voice" as rational or reliable. But that does not mean they took no pleasure in choral performance. Rather, the pantomime cultivated a different function for the chorus as a multipurpose ensemble whose identity was mutable and unstable. In his description of the pantomime in Corinth, Apuleius details the actions of a very large ensemble; those who appeared in the pyrrhic procession re-entered as "extras" in the extravagant retinues of Juno, Minerva, and Venus. The pantomime chorus, composed mostly if not entirely of slaves, functioned to perform multiple tasks in relation to the pantomime production as a whole. Before the star pantomime appeared, the chorus might sing a song, then some members might perform a dance, while another member might afterward perform acrobatic stunts. Yet other members might assist in the preparation of theatrical effects. A distinction in status between the musical and choral ensembles is probably irrelevant. Procopius's account of the Empress Theodora's days as a member of a pantomime chorus stresses that choral performers assumed duties as prostitutes.

Choral songs, when they appeared, were popular tunes, hymns, or paeans. The choral interludes that appear in the tragedies (60-65 CE) of Seneca (4 BCE-65 CE) or in the *Octavia* (70 CE) bear almost no resemblance to the use of the chorus in pantomime productions, even though, with their eight or nine foot meters, they convey a strong enough lyrical impulse that Seneca may have considered them songs ("Canite, o pubes inclita, Phoebum!" — *Agamemnon*, l. 310). Seneca's choruses are simply too dense with arcane erudition, extravagant descriptions, grandiose philosophizing, and ornamental vocabulary to submit to musical elevation. These monumental overflows of language lack the refrains, the repetitions, and the simple, single-minded emotional focus of a song meant for performance in a theater. Nevertheless, the very complexity of his choruses indicates that Seneca viewed the group or "communal" identity signified by the chorus in a manner that resembled the pantomime perception of the chorus: communal identity was too complex, too mutable, and too saturated with linguistic pyrotechnics to "represent" some larger category of shared social identity or even the community designated by the text. The reason the Romans showed little interest in cultivating the choral tradition of Greek drama is that they saw any category of group identity as too dynamic or unstable to achieve credible representation through a unified, unison voice. A song with an autonomous theme might justify the unison voice, but not some moral crisis capable of reinforcing the uplifting architecture of dramatic narrative. Pantomime choral songs probably functioned to stimulate a mood of bacchanalian revelry, a loosening of inhibition in the audience. Seneca's choruses, with their interminable Stoic moralizing and panoramic erudition, have the exact opposite effect, but in their exhausting extravagance, they do share with the bacchanalian spirit an affinity for a "community" defined through its excesses.

In his essay on the dance, Lucian (*De saltatio* 23) remarked that "singing combined with dancing does in truth stir the heart-strings, and it is the choicest gift of the gods" (Lucian 1936: 237). This assertion, combined with Titus Livius's explanation in his history of Rome (7.2) of how Livius Andronicus turned over the speaking of monologues to a singer, suggests that at least sometimes solo songs accompanied the movement of the pantomimes, although further evidence to support this supposition is quite difficult to excavate. Visual evidence of performance includes instrumentalists but not singers, even if one speculates that a lyre player

was also a singer. Apuleius does not mention singing in connection with the "Judgment of Paris" pantomime in Corinth. Presumably a song that accompanied a mythic scene contained lyrics explicitly related to the character or action impersonated. But the process of composing a song that is specific to a scene is much more complicated than composing or selecting purely instrumental music to accompany the scene. The composer and pantomime must work closely together to coordinate movement and lyrics, and the pantomime must give up some measure of freedom to determine the movement for the scene. Purely instrumental music allows for greater flexibility than songs to build the star pantomime's repertoire. The same instrumental piece can be used for different scenes or the same the scene can work with different music. When music follows movement, choreographic improvisation and experimentation is easier. But when the music is sung, spectator perception becomes more strenuously divided between aural and visual tracks, and thus weakens focus on the pantomime's virtuosity. Moreover, songs more than instrumental compositions depend on their performers to establish their expressive power, and it would not be to the pantomime's advantage to depend much on a singer's health to sustain his own appeal. An interpellator rather than a singer was therefore the favored device for injecting language into the scene.

Nevertheless, both choral and solo singing was apparently a feature of pantomime programs. Hendrik Wagenvoort (1920: 102) cited a Diomedes' quotation of a fragment of Suetonius that originally "pantomimes and flutists and choruses sang in comedy" and that as a result of competition between them, they separated into different art forms, although it is not clear how competition in comedy urged the performers to drift into tragic modes of performance. Gaston Boissier (1861: 13) interpreted this passage to mean that the actors, who had previously danced during songs, while speaking dialogue without music, confined themselves to excelling at purely pantomimic impersonations, becoming *saltare tragoediam*; the singers became *cantare tragediam*, and the flutists became concert artists. Otto Ribbeck (1875: 633-637) somewhat later proposed that Republican tragedy was a combination of song, aria, monologue, and dialogue. He was determined to reconcile the existence of ancient Latin drama fragments, which are all vocal parts, some containing what he regarded as purely sung meters, with Livy's statement that Livius Andronicus had established a

convention of detaching the "singer" from the actor, which, in effect, eliminated the need for drama itself or literary control over theatrical action. If anything, though, his uncertainty about what was sung and who was singing simply indicated that Roman dramatic performance during the Republic underwent a confusing evolution and that the Romans themselves were uncertain, even doubtful, of the power of language or words or voice to reveal the significance of the mythic scene. But Wagenvoort was skeptical of earlier explanations. He proposed instead the appearance of an "intermediate form" of performance, the *cantica tragica*, which became extinct before the end of the Republic and perhaps functioned to transform tragic drama into a sort of opera. When Nero, however, attempted to revive tragic singing, "the new songs were no longer formed by their connection to the surrounding dialogue [...] they not only had the same origin as pantomime, but they also betrayed the same ambition to dissolve the boring tragic action into the most sensational episodes" (1920: 111). But embedded in these speculations is the belief that Roman culture sought some technique to infuse tragic theatrical performance with language or at least voice. Without the word or the voice, some special power was presumed absent from a tragic mode of performance, and language itself seemed to achieve vitality in the theater only in the debased domain of comedy inhabited by the mimes. However, even if one accepts Wagenvoort's idea of an "intermediate form," the *cantica tragica*, this form clearly failed to establish the "special power" of language to generate tragic drama beyond the end of the Republic. Nor was the *cantica tragica* effective in preventing the dominance of pantomime in the tragic domain at the beginning of the Empire (22 BCE). Nero's "new songs" for his tragic performances were probably variations on the format for pantomime programs; he was innovative insofar as he sought to display his virtuosity in all the roles offered by an entire program, not just the mythic scenes of the star pantomime. With singing, he could demonstrate his artistry as a musician and poet, as well as an actor. A more plausible explanation is that Roman culture disclosed a deep skepticism toward the power of language to "represent" reality accurately from the beginning of the theater culture in 364 BCE, when the Etruscan dancers somehow persuaded the gods to lift the plague where linguistic appeals had failed. An enduring preoccupation with the body as the truest manifestation of reality motivated and sustained

a fascination with pantomimic action that undermined or inhibited faith in language and speech to create "new" or "other" identities within the self.

Yet singing was a feature of pantomime programs, for the Romans appreciated songs as autonomous, self-contained aesthetic experiences. Wille (1967: 218-220) reviews the evidence of Roman song-art before the time of Catullus (87-54 BCE), whose poems achieved enough popularity as songs that Horace (*Satires* 1.10.18) condemned the singer Tigellius and the composer Demetrius for the protracted droning they inserted into their adaptations of lyrics by Catullus and Calvos (Wille 1967: 220). In general, musicians in Roman civilization had low social standing, and singers perhaps assumed an even lower position than instrumentalists in the status hierarchy of music culture. The epigraphic evidence for singers consists entirely of persons, 25 altogether, who were either slaves or freed slaves. Of these, ten were women, all of whom were slaves (Wille 1967: 318-319). The epigraphic inventory for instrumentalists is much larger. Instrumentalists were sometimes freeborn, but the vast majority were slaves or freed slaves. Musical virtuosity no doubt helped slaves achieve their freedom, but perhaps it was more difficult to demonstrate virtuosity as a singer than as an instrumentalist. It may be that some singers, chiefly women, accompanied themselves on the lyre, as a way of amplifying their virtuosity, but most likely they did not do so in relation to the star pantomime's performance. When manumission was a central objective of virtuosity, it was not likely that the pantomimes would encourage a situation in which the virtuosity of the musician might undermine perception of the dancer's virtuosity. Moreover, a further complication for song was the mysterious attitude toward *portamento*, which occurs when the musician slides from one tone to another, producing a *glissando* sound. Before the Hellenistic era, the Greeks expected singers to move from one tone to the next, including microtones, with perfect intonation, without sliding into them. *Portamento* was forbidden, for, as Ptolemy tersely remarked: "Sliding tones are the enemy of melody" (Sachs 1943: 207). But in the Hellenistic era, when the preoccupation with microtones faded, *portamento* effects proliferated, coupled with an enthusiasm for *mellisma*, in which a syllable could slide across several notes, and a singer could disclose considerable uncertainty about the "true" tone of a syllable or word. This sliding effect makes the voice, perhaps more than an instrument, more sensuous or voluptuous, more fluid and unstable, than when producing clearly differentiated shifts

in tone. But whereas on the lyre, the musician could mathematically calculate the difference between tones by dividing the string into exact sectors, a singer did not enjoy such a reliable method of hitting the correct note. The possibility of committing a distracting intonation error was therefore greater for singers than for instrumentalists and a further motive on the part of pantomimes to avoid sung accompaniments. Most solo singers probably came from the chorus, and the pantomime ensemble encouraged their talent to the extent that it benefited the pantomime program as a whole. Solo singers thus best demonstrated their virtuosity through the singing of songs that preceded the appearance of the star pantomime and contributed to the unique "aura" cultivated by the pantomime ensemble. These songs intensified the "Dionysian" mood associated with pantomime as an art form and provided spectators with supplementary evidence of the ensemble's unique ability to evoke an atmosphere of voluptuous luxuriousness. The repertoire of songs would range from hymns and paeans to gods or even to the star pantomime or to patrons to melodies celebrating or lamenting erotic romance, carnal pleasures, or the qualities of the seasons to bawdy if not obscene tunes not much different from what might be sung in a brothel.

Instrumental Accompaniment

The music that accompanied the pantomime scenes was largely instrumental. But the scale of instrumental ensembles remains obscure. Visual and literary representations of musical accompaniments rarely indicate more than three instruments, even though the Romans were capable of assembling huge orchestras, often consisting of only a few different types of instruments, for grandiose state ceremonies, such as triumphs, funeral processions, and arena spectacles. According to the *Historia Augusta* (*Vopiscus Carinus* 19.2), the Emperor Carinus (ca. 250-285 AD) sponsored a gigantic orchestra consisting of 100 trumpets, 100 horns, 100 flutes, and 100 tibia players accompanying 1000 pantomimes and gymnasts. The Romans enjoyed the music of a fairly wide range of instruments, but the pantomime culture was quite selective in its use of them. It is therefore useful to summarize the qualities and functions of the instrument repertoire.

The *tibia* (or *aulos*) was the most commonly used instrument for accompanying theatrical performances of all kinds, including the

pantomime. This instrument was a woodwind, double-piped and double-reeded, made from a specific Mediterranean reed, *arundo donax* (Landels 1999: 28), although Theophrastus (371-287 BCE), in his history of plants, observed that tibias could also be made of tree wood, bone, or ivory. Each pipe, divided into three sections, contained holes for six notes. Although it often mistranslated as a "flute," the tibia actually sounded more like an oboe, giving off an intense, piercing, and wailing tone. The instrument appears to have entered Greek culture from Asia at a quite ancient time, for evidence (from Crete) of similar instruments dates as early as 2300 BCE (Aign 1963: 122). Depictions of male and female tibia players in tomb paintings and mirror engravings indicate the Etruscan fondness for the instrument. Some representations of tibia players show the performer using a mouthpiece, called a *phorbeia*, strapped around the neck and over the head, to hold the instrument steady [Figures 1, 3]. The tibia became so strongly identified with a distinctive Roman musical tradition that in 115 BCE conservatives succeeded in enacting legislation that forbade any kind of performance except the music of Latin tibia players, singers, and clothed dancers, although this decree apparently had no effect in diminishing the expanding popularity of stringed instruments (Wille 1967: 219).

The Greeks developed five types of tibia roughly equivalent to soprano (*parthenikos*), alto (*paidikos*), tenor (*kitharisterios*), baritone (*teleios*), and bass levels (*hyperteleios*), with the *kitharisterios* so named because it was played with the cithara. But the Romans appear to have modified the instrument by introducing pipes of unequal length at least as early as the second century BCE. The reason for the unequal lengths is obscure, but the longer, right reed undoubtedly produced a deeper tone. A contrapuntal relation between left and right reeds was, however, unlikely; left and right played in unison or, perhaps, the right reed produced a drone tone under the melody played on the left reed. Production notes attached to the manuscripts of Terence's six plays (ca. 160 BCE) indicate the use of a different tibia to accompany each play (Landels 1999: 188; Wille 1967: 169-170). The combining of tibia types most probably did not occur. A few artworks depict a tibia player performing with a lyre player or, even more rarely, with a syrinx (pan-pipes). Otherwise the overwhelming majority of images representing tibia players shows this instrument as the sole source of musical accompaniment for a scene, and only occasionally does a figure clashing cymbals or tapping the tympanum supplement this solitary

accompaniment. The Romans lacked the polyphonic or contrapuntal consciousness to build orchestral compositions that combined the different types of tibia, and indeed, in the theater, they do not seem to have imagined compositions containing more than two parts, except for percussion punctuation. Orchestras containing many instruments, such as the huge ensembles assembled by Carinus, functioned almost entirely to amply a single melodic line; the multiplication of instruments simply increased the volume of a unison sound and thrilled audiences by the sheer magnitude of sonic power. A large mosaic in Zliten, near Tripoli, probably dated somewhere in the second century CE, twice represents two horns, one trumpeter, and an organist accompanying the contests of five pairs of gladiatorial combatants; the same instruments, but clearly not the same musicians, accompany gladiatorial performances on two different days (Ville 1965: 147-154) [Figure 20]. It's possible that this combination of instruments could introduce interesting polyphonic effects, but most likely the horns and perhaps even the organ simply sustained a drone or pedal point under the melody or fanfare of a single instrument. In any case, none of these instruments accompanied a theatrical performance.

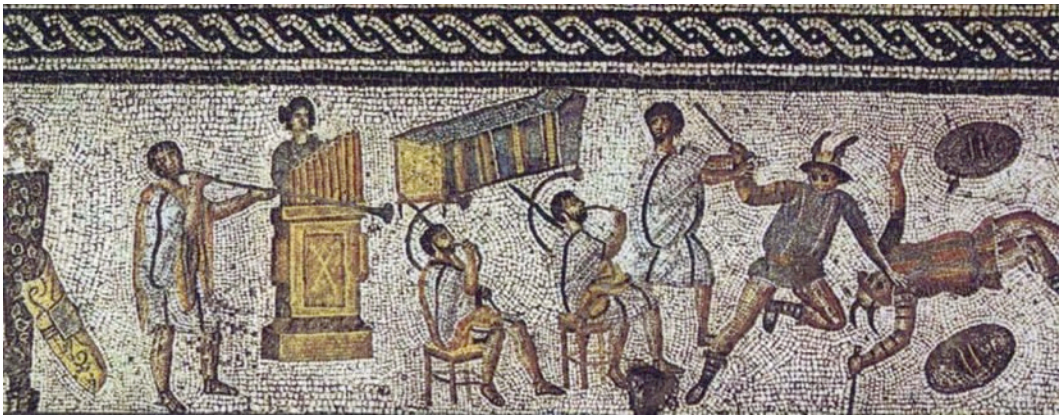


Figure 20: Part of the late first century Zliten mosaic, from a villa near Tripoli, showing musicians integrated with gladiatorial spectacle. Photo: Public domain.

The Romans associated musical instruments with specific occasions and did not permit any instrument to be used for any occasions other than those prescribed for it. The tibia served a wider set of occasions than any other instrument, including theatrical performances, sacral-cult performances, and private concerts. Because of its reedy sound, the tibia was the most appropriate instrument for evoking energies or spirits

identified with the earth, especially the divine powers celebrated by the Dionysian and Cybelian cults. Roman artists delighted in depicting both outdoor and interior occasions for tibia playing, and theater audiences regarded the tibia player as a visible and engaging element of the performance, for the player could move with choreographic calculation to reinforce the emotional ambience of a scene. The player could point the reeds upward, horizontally, or downward; the player could sit or stand while playing; and he or she could sway with the melody or even dance. On the basis of a passage in Cicero (*Lucullus* 2.7.20), Wille (1967:169) contends that, "Roman theater performances began with a musical overture from the tibia player, which preceded the prologue." But the evidence is not sufficient to make this claim more than plausible. It is clear, however, that the tibia, more than any other instrument, stimulated (or at least announced) an atmosphere of emotional-psychic release, a mood of relaxation from constraints on the expression of desire, an amplified sense of freedom, and thus, an appeal for movement.

In images of them, tibia players never appear alone; they always accompany an action or interact with another instrument. It seems unlikely, then, that in the pantomime program, a tibia player would perform a solo piece without collaborating with a dancer, a singer, or another instrumentalist. Harpists are another matter. Roman art contains numerous images of solitary lyre players, both male and female, and quite possibly the appeal of the instrument lay in its capacity to detach the performer from the rest of humanity and amplify the uniqueness and even loneliness of his or her individuality. The lyre was of ancient origin; the Egyptians appear to have developed an elaborate harp culture as early as 3000 BCE, but lyres probably entered the Greek cultural domain from the Middle East with the legacy of the Babylonian civilization. Greek rhapsodes favored the lyre for the singing of epic poetry, hymns, and paeans. The poets accompanied their own singing. As the rhapsode tradition decayed, the lyre ceased to become the exclusive property of poets, and audiences valued the instrument for qualities that were independent of the language the poets had expected it to "support." The Greeks devised chamber orchestras of lyres and introduced interactions between the lyre and other instruments, such as the aulos, the cithara, and the syrinx. The Egyptians, however, remained the culture most preoccupied with the possibilities of harp music, although the instrument probably had its origin in

Mesopatamia before 3000 BCE. Harp technology in Egypt was so sophisticated, even before the Minoan civilization, that the lyre was perhaps an adjunct to larger and more complex harps containing 21 to 29 strings. The Greeks in the fifth century began to show some fascination with the large, sometimes giant, "arced" and "angular" harps used by the Egyptians, but these instruments do not seem to have gained a secure place, other than as beautiful objects for display, in the Greco-Roman civilizations and certainly not in the theater culture of either civilization. It is not clear why the large harps did not acquire a strong presence in the Mediterranean world. Most likely, both the Greeks and especially the Romans believed that large harps inhibited the mobility of the performer and undermined the expectation that music should stimulate movement in the performer or expand the power of music to migrate to new and different performance sites. Large harps, as represented in Egyptian art, connoted an excessively stable performance environment in which music remained "entombed," sealed off from other sectors of a rigid social hierarchy.

As perfected by the Greeks and adopted by the Romans, the lyre was a small harp that the performer cradled in the left arm and plucked with the right hand. Some performers used a plectrum to pluck the strings. Lyres came in slightly different shapes and sizes, made of wood formed into a U with a small resonating box. The conventional lyre contained seven or eight strings of equal length, with each string tuned to a different note according to the "mode" of a piece. The lyre could encompass an octave and, by dividing the strings with one hand while plucking with the other, move upward or downward another octave. The sound was bright, sparkling, shimmering. The Greeks devised a kind of large lyre, the *cithara*, from the Greek *kithara* (string player) and Assyrian *chetarah*; the word *guitar* derives from this earlier nomenclature. This instrument contained a larger resonating box and thicker strings than the lyre to produce heavier and deeper plucking tones [Figure 22]. Lucian (*De saltatione* 26, 68) uses the word *kithara* (rather than *lyra*) to describe musical accompaniment of pantomimes, so perhaps he makes no distinction between lyres and citharas, as his translator, A.M. Harmon, apparently assumes, or we can assume that a cithara was as likely as a lyre to accompany the pantomimes (Lucian 1936: 238-239; 270-271). The lyre player could sit or stand while playing the instrument and could accompany himself or herself while singing. The player could walk while strumming and even participate in

certain stunts, such as playing while standing on the shoulders of another performer. In Homer's time, the lyre was associated with mythic storytelling in an aristocratic warrior milieu, the Orpheus myth being the most obvious example of the instrument's power to release the male hero from chthonic darkness and return him to Apollonian radiance. But by the fifth century BCE, it had become the favored instrument of Greek heterae. Privileged Roman women studied the lyre and produced concerts within a salon milieu, and by the third century CE, Athenaeus could observe that the lyre was a "feminine instrument." The pantomimes could thus select the lyre as an appropriate accompaniment because the implied "feminization" of the music served to sustain the association of the pantomime with the evocation of an aristocratic aesthetic. The Romans designed exquisitely ornate and gorgeous lyres that could glitter with jewels and golden details, and as such, these glamorous instruments could function as captivating elements of a theatrical spectacle.

Although the lyre was the most satisfying instrument for solo performance, it collaborated well with other instruments, including other lyres, the syrinx, the tibia, the tympanum, and cymbals, but not horns or trumpets, for these never appear with lyres in either literary or visual descriptions of musical performances. Athenaeus (*Deipnosophistae* XIV, 618) quotes Ephippus as asserting that "the music of the flutes [auloi] and the lyre is a joint partner in our stage plays; for when one adapts his mood skillfully to that of his associates, then, and only then, do we get the greatest delight" (Athenaeus 1937: 329). A painting of an outdoor Bacchic rite from Herculaneum in Monaco shows a female tibia player and a female lyre player accompanied by three other women playing, respectively, cymbals, tympanum, and crotali, with the crotali player also using her foot to work the scabellum (Guidobaldi 1992: 62) [Figure 21]. Otherwise Roman era descriptions of lyre performance do not mention a combination of more than three instruments, with a conventional limit of "orchestra" size consisting of one lyre, one tibia (or syrinx), one cymbal player, and one tympanum. Of course, some pieces on the pantomime program could well involve musical accompaniments requiring smaller combinations of these instruments. One of the panels of the first century CE ritual wall paintings at the Villa of Mysteries in Pompeii depicts a nearly nude older man playing the lyre while a boy plays the syrinx; on a panel opposite these musicians appears the nearly nude figure of a female dancer performing the pyrrhic

step while clashing cymbals over her head [Figure 7]. The meaning of this vast and fascinating depiction of a mysterious cultic rite is the subject of endless, tortured debate, so it is by no means clear how the viewer was expected to read the represented temporal relation between the numerous figures in the entire painting (cf., Sauron 1998; Grieco 1978; Kirk 2000). But even if the solo cymbal player represents a later (or earlier) moment in the narrative logic of the painting, the *spatial* design of the painting produces in the viewer the effect of being surrounded by numerous figures performing actions simultaneously, as if to suggest that actions in different times and spaces are related to each other without actually causing each other according to a strictly linear narrative logic. This mode of abstraction strengthens the idea that music and movement in one place and time are part of the music and movement of another place and time.

From this way of thinking arises an antiphonal aesthetic of sound diffusion. Enthusiasm for antiphonal effects raises the question of the physical relation of the musicians to each other. As mentioned earlier, visual artists seemed to treat the musicians as part of the "scene," placing them close to the actor, to other musicians, and sometimes to the spectators. But the extent to which this closeness to other figures was a convention of performance or a convention of visual representation remains obscure. In the Zliten gladiatorial mosaic, the musicians seem to share the same space as the combatants, which is probably a misleading representation of the actual conditions of performance [Figure 20]. Another mosaic, now in the Vatican Museum, depicts a bizarre scene of two male tibia players accompanying two female dancers. One tibia player assists a male crotali player, and the other tibia player apparently assists two other crotali players. Each tibia player also taps the beat with a scabellum attached to his foot, which makes clear that each player is performing different music. Some sort of arch apparently separates the two dance performances, and a male dwarf stands under the arch next to a table with crooked legs [Figure 21].



Figure 21: Top: Template of a painting from Herculaneum in Monaco depicting an orchestra. Photo: from Guidobaldi (1992: 62). Bottom: Vatican mosaic depicts dancers and musicians beneath a wild beast competition. Photo: from Buranelli (2002).

Perhaps the artist wished to depict a kind of improvised dance contest or celebration, so that what the viewer sees is two dance performances occurring at the same time in different places or in the same place at different times. The picture invites the viewer to compare two slightly different performances that in reality could not have been seen simultaneously. Yet this visual distortion of space-time relations has its correlate in performance, not only through the synoptic organization of the pantomime program, but in the spatial relations between the musicians and the dancers. In imagery of cultic ritual processions, artists tend to expand the space between musicians to intensify a sense of freedom and

movement. Cymbal players, perhaps invariably female, always seem to dance.



Figure 22: Second century CE statue of Apollo carrying a cithara, Berlin Pergamon Museum. Photo: Public domain.

The Romans encouraged mobility in their musicians because they associated music with the movement of powers or energies across temporal and spatial boundaries. The broad, even vast stages of Roman theaters, up to 200 feet wide, accommodated a processional, frieze-like organization of action, but the action never included more than several bodies. The purpose of these monumental stages was not to fill them with awe-inspiring masses of bodies, but to dramatize the space between bodies, to reveal the possibilities of movement. The tibia player may be "close" to the dancer, in the sense that the spectator keeps both in the same field of vision. But the reason for keeping the musician close to the actor is to signify that persons

who may seem "remote" from an action are nevertheless a part of it, just as the actor himself is "close" to the "remote" mythic figure he impersonates. If the musician is "close" to the dancer, she does not necessarily stay in a designated spot on the stage; she follows the dancer. Quite likely, if both tibia and lyre accompanied the dancer, the dancer would perform *between* the two musicians, allowing for them to produce a sort of stereophonic effect. If cymbal players always danced, they certainly had plenty of space to dart in and dart out for dramatic clashes. When present, the chorus, which, at full strength, probably consisted of no more than six or seven members, was always "there," watching, when individuals within it were not performing some small part, but never so "present" that it undermined focus on the pantomime's virtuosity. At least in relation to theatrical performances, Roman audiences showed little interest in seeing large masses of bodies in movement; their taste in this direction found fulfillment in "reality," in the huge scale of triumphs, grandiose funeral, wedding, or cult processions, military parades, and spectacular games. The pantomime culture never glorified group unity or the power of crowds. It focused relentlessly on the beauty of unique soloists, and a group, always small, was attractive only insofar as it was possible for a few talented soloists to work together.

The pantomime aesthetic also admitted the *syrinx* or pan-pipes, but the function of this instrument in the theater is quite uncertain. The instrument is of very ancient and unknown origin. It produced a flute-like sound by blowing directly into the bores of dried reed stems. The Greeks tended to make the stems of equal length bound together by twine or beeswax. Different tones resulted from using beeswax to seal off a portion of the bottom of the pipe to raise its pitch. A typical Greek syrinx contained five to seven reeds, capable of quite limited tonal range and dynamic contrast. Evidence of female players of the syrinx is scanty, but this is no doubt due to the loss of the archeological legacy (Behn 1954: fig. 145). In his second century CE novel *Daphnis and Chloe*, Longus (1916: 160-161) observed that Echo "was educated by the Nymphs, and taught by the Muses to play on the hautboy [tibia] and the pipe, to strike the lyre, to touch the lute, and in sum, all music" (Longus 1916: 160-161) The Greeks associated the haunting sound of the instrument with the gamboling or playfulness allowed in a rural setting, with evocations of Pan, but not necessarily with agricultural activities. Because it conjured up a mood of primitive simplicity, the Greeks

do not seem to have ascribed a high status to the syrinx (Landels 1999: 69-71). The Roman world, however, saw greater possibilities for the instrument. Roman syrinxes, following models established by the Etruscans and Italians, contained as many as twelve reeds, and they were cut to different lengths to produce different tones. Syrinx makers produced beautiful instruments made of wood or bronze and embellished with elegant decorations. Moreover, the music of the syrinx no longer evoked an exclusively pastoral mood. Roman musicians brought the instrument indoors and allowed it to participate in a refined, closed off environment—or rather, they allowed the spirit of Pan to inhabit elegant villa interiors. Nevertheless, in the theater, the syrinx remained a subsidiary instrument, incapable of transcending its ancient association with a primeval stirring of nature. It was therefore not the appropriate accompaniment for the great majority of tragic mythic scenes performed by the pantomime. A syrinx accompaniment to the Atreus scene described above was probably unimaginable in the Roman world, even as a travesty of tragic pretensions in the comic domain of the mimes. The visual evidence indicates that a more appropriate use of the syrinx was in the articulation of romantic themes involving the adventures of Hercules, the intrigues of Venus, the pastoral fantasies containing Dafnis and Chloe, Pan and Echo, the sylvan dreaminess that Claude Debussy evoked so exquisitely in *The Afternoon of the Faun* (1892).

Roman spectators enjoyed the sound of powerful, metallic horns that were of Etruscan origin. The Greeks devised a kind of trumpet, the *salpinx*, containing a long thin tube with a cupped bell that they used almost exclusively in relation to military maneuvers and ceremonies. But this instrument seems to have disappeared with the ascent of Roman civilization, which adopted horns favored by the Etruscans. “Horns and trumpets are an invention of the Etruscans,” Athenaeus declares (*Deipnosophistae* IV. 183; II 1928: 311). The Etruscans cultivated two types of horns appropriated by the Romans: the *tuba* and the *bucina* (*cornu*). The Etruscan trumpet, the *lituus*, had a long, widening bore with a curved bell. The Roman trumpet, the tuba, perfected by the first century BCE, had a narrower bore and a flared bell. It made a loud, intense, searing sound that reverberated across great distances. Ennius described the sound as “terrifying.” Some visual artists depict players in procession raising the instrument high, as if launching the sound into the sky and filling the air with an enormous announcement. The instrument functioned almost

entirely in a military atmosphere. It was used to signal attack, retreat, and formation and to add solemnity to military ceremonies, triumphs, and grandiose funeral processions of military leaders. The players were always male. The Etruscan *bucina* was a large curved horn, but the Romans made it an even larger instrument with a wider bore that coiled around the body of the performer and a much wider bell so that it became what nowadays people would consider a sousaphone. It made a deep, droning sound that underpinned a melody played on another instrument. Like the tuba, the *bucina* was primarily an instrument for martial occasions, in which groups of tubas and *bucinas* in procession collaborated to amplify the mood of solemn spectacle. Neither the tuba nor the *bucina* had keys, so it is not clear how the instruments could produce variations in tones. Perhaps in groups different instruments had different pitches that permitted the production of chords or overlapping tones. Although Virgil, in the *Aeneid* (VII.511-515) describes Allecto, a female fury, blowing a "long, hellish note" on the *bucina* to rally the Latins to war against Aeneas, women in Roman civilization did not play this instrument.

Neither the tuba nor the *bucina* had any "place" in theatrical productions or performances involving imaginary persons or dances. However, both instruments contributed to the excitement of arena spectacles. The Zliten mosaic in Tripoli shows pairs of *bucina* players and single trumpet players, along with single organ players performing accompaniment to gladiatorial combats [Figure 20] (Ville 1965: figs. 15 and 16). Dated around 230-240 CE, another monumental mosaic, covering the floor of an opulent villa in Nennig near Trier, contains an image of a *bucina* player and an organ player; this image is part of a complex design that also includes images of gladiatorial combats (Parlasca 1959: 35-36, plates 36-37). The idea of musicians accompanying human combats, although explored by the Greeks, was a passion with the Etruscans (Thuillier 1985: 232-233). The Etruscans used either tubas or *tibias* to announce the start and the end of contests and to celebrate the victor of a contest. But the *tibia* was the favored instrument for accompanying the contests themselves, with the tuba replacing the *tibia* when a city lacked *tibia* players capable of assuming the musical aspects of the contests: a "character more provincial, more barbaric" was the result of allowing the trumpet to "replace" the *tibia* in "not only giving the signal for combat but also in accompanying the entire action" (Thuillier 1985: 239-241). However, it is not clear how the tuba

could replace the *tibia* in connection with *musical* accompaniment when the tuba was simply incapable of the tonal variety provided by the *tibia*. The Romans, on the basis of the mosaic evidence, developed musical accompaniments to gladiatorial combats by replacing (probably around the end of the first century BCE) the *tibia* with the water organ and adding tubas and *bucinas* to create small (but loud) ensembles, although Thuillier himself points to two Etruscan funeral steles, dated, respectively, 450-420 BCE and 390-360 BCE, that depict two and three tuba players accompanying boxing matches (1985: 144-145; 223-224). If the *tibia* was the favored instrument for accompanying the combats, why would a funeral memorial insist on tubas to evoke the memory or afterlife of the dead chief? It would seem, then, that aesthetic rather than logistic values defined the nature of musical accompaniments to gladiatorial combats. Did this aesthetic impulse provide the tuba and the *bucina* with a place in the hippodrome, where the pantomimes became attached to the different chariot racing factions? Did the pantomime ensembles employ trumpets and horns to accompany the processions glorifying the chariot claques and teams?

But these questions do not provoke confident answers. Jean-Paul Thuillier (1985: 81-109) does not discuss any musical effects in relation to Etruscan horse or chariot races, for he has no information to support such a discussion. Despite widespread representation and commentary on the chariot races in the literary and artistic record of the Roman world, scarcely any reference to musicians has emerged. A single tuba player appears in only two images depicting events in the hippodrome. One of the mosaics in the huge complex at Piazza Armerina (ca. 315-350 AD) shows a tuba player standing beside an official (*editor*) preparing to bestow the victory palm on a charioteer (Humphrey 1986: 226-233) [Figure 23]. A complicated terracotta mould, probably from Rome in the late fourth century CE but now missing from the British Museum, shows three charioteers bearing victory palms with the central figure standing between the other two victors; next to him (on his right) stands a tuba player and on his left stands a woman holding the reins of horses while a child poses before her. And behind all these figures and horses rises the hippodrome obelisk, two pillars topped with statues and a two-storey "pavilion" (Humphrey 1987: 250-251). But the absence of musicians from the extant visual record of the hippodrome races probably doesn't signify much anyway about the relation of music to the

spectacle, because neither the pantomimes nor the claques appear at all in the record. What is clear, however, is that the artists in both cases associate the tuba player with an official task, the bestowing of the victory palm. Most likely, occasions for tuba playing were the responsibility of the hippodrome administration and not the chariot teams and factions or the aristocratic families that sponsored them. These occasions would include fanfares for ceremonies and processions celebrating the races as a whole (not individual teams) and fanfares signaling the start of the race, the end of the race, the bestowing of the victory palm, and perhaps the sinking of the dolphin effigies that indicated which lap had begun. Whatever music accompanied the processions of individual teams and pantomime entourages for the claques was "private" insofar as it symbolized an aristocratic rather public sponsorship. Like the arena spectacles, the hippodrome contests were the responsibility of public authorities. These authorities, representing the army, the imperial cult, or provincial or municipal governments, preserved the symbolic signification of music. Tubas and *bucinas* belonged to the realm of "public" music; they were the "sound" of the state, the army, the public. Control over musical sound was a measure of state authority. Governments sometimes allowed aristocrats to own gladiatorial units and produce *venationes* (wild beast shows) in the arena (Wiedemann 1995: 41-43). But it was necessary for the music that accompanied the gladiatorial contests to project an "official" status that did not give one team or combatant an advantage over another. The circus (hippodrome) was a similar performance environment, in which the administration of the contest could not appear to favor one team over another, including music choices that could stir crowds and disturb the contest. Music did not accompany the races (as it did the gladiatorial contests), so the main use of music in relation to the pantomimes was in the processions promoting the individual teams and factions to which the pantomimes were attached. The appropriation of the trumpets and horns by the state, the army, and the emperor detached the pantomime from the military culture that originally gave rise to the pyrrhic movement. The pantomimes and the aristocratic patrons who sponsored them had no claim to a "sound" and a power owned by the state and by the military that assured the "reality" of the state. This sound designated a limit to the power of the aristocracy in its control over public spaces and pleasures. Thus, the

exclusion of tubas and *bucinas* from the pantomime musical repertoire resulted from political, not aesthetic or logistic motives.



Figure 23: Fourth century CE mosaic from Piazza Armerina in Sicily showing tuba player beside official bestowing a victory palm on a chariot racer. Photo: Public domain.

Another wind instrument with an uncertain relation to the pantomime was the water organ. In his *Pneumatika*, Hero of Alexandria (ca. 62 AD) described the complex construction of this instrument along with many other mechanical devices and automata (Hero of Alexandria 1851: section 76). But the Greek engineer Ctesibios (ca. 270 BCE) probably devised the instrument described in Hero's treatise. The organ used water pressure to control the flow of air pumped (using foot bellows) into a set of eight to ten pipes rising from a "small altar of bronze" holding the water. The performer pressed "keys" that allowed air to flow into the pipes, but it is not clear how many keys were available. A second performer was necessary to tread on the bellows. The mechanics of the instrument were intricate, and Landels (1999: 267-270) has attempted to explain them in even greater detail than Hero. The organ made a very loud, reedy sound, as if created by an extremely powerful and complicated *tibia*. This sound, along with tubas and *bucinas*, was an appropriate accompaniment to the gladiatorial games; a section of the Zliten mosaic shows a female organ player. One might therefore suppose that, like the trumpets and horns, the

sound was arena-oriented and "public" and belonged to the state. However, the large and beautiful mosaic from Mariamin, in Syria, dating from the late fourth century CE, depicts an orchestra of six female musicians preparing to perform a concert on an indoor stage [Figure 24]. One of the women stands behind a large organ while two little boys tread the bellows. The instrument is ornately decorated and contains many more pipes than organs represented elsewhere, perhaps twenty-four or twenty-six altogether. The refinement of the garments, along with the blatant frontal posing of the women, indicates that the performers were aristocrats. The mosaic "came from an apsidal room, evidently a dining room; the diners would recline in the apse, while the entertainers performed in the rectangle space in front" (Dunbabin 1999: 171). It would appear, then, that at least in the eastern sector of the late empire, the organ was compatible with indoor entertainments and could accompany pantomime performances or participate in program interludes. The organ, along with an expansion of the orchestra, would constitute an innovation in the pantomime aesthetic. The mosaic depicts an unusually large orchestra that includes, beside the organ, a *tibia* player, a cithara player, and three percussionists. Whether such a large orchestra actually supported pantomime shows cannot be confirmed or denied. But the extraordinary refinement of the image, along with the monumental effort to memorialize the performance, does indicate that aristocratic entertainments in the late empire had evolved toward an expanded repertoire of sounds, sensations, and precision effects, to accommodate the expectations of an audience for rarified, exquisite pleasures. The pantomimes depended on aristocratic patrons, not audiences in the public theaters, for their livelihood. So it is not unreasonable to suppose that the pantomimes enjoyed access to musical resources of the scale and variety shown in the mosaic. What is peculiar about this orchestra is that it does not achieve its size through multiplication of instruments; the orchestra has expanded by including different individual instruments. State-sponsored orchestras tend to favor a doubling or multiplication of favored instruments, like tubas, *bucinas*, and *tibias*, to produce powerful sounds that reverberate across vast spaces and above the rumble of crowds, with Carinus's extravaganza of 284 CE attempting to set some sort of precedent in this regard. By contrast, the aristocratic aesthetic glorified in the mosaic emphasizes the ensemble as an interplay of highly distinct, individual sounds, and indeed, by placing the

tibia player next to the organ, the picture further implies that the sound of the *tibia* differed from the sound of the organ, which here may have resembled tones similar to those ranging from a bassoon to an alto flute. If pantomimes could acquire an orchestra of this size and diversity, they could rely on a large number of subtle sonic effects to embellish, amplify, or color their movements. Such sounds, which in the pantomime aesthetic always followed the movement rather than anticipated it, would encourage the performer to complicate the choreography, so that particular physical gestures—the turn of the head, the sweep of the left arm, the thrust of the right arm, the teetering of the whole body—would, in a particular scene, prompt an associated sound from a particular instrument, perhaps in a manner somewhat similar to the relation between actor and orchestra in a traditional Chinese opera theater. If its function as accompaniment to gladiatorial shows and *venationes* is any guide, the water organ would have supported the pantomimes only in those mythic scenes that depicted heroic combats. However, the Mariamin mosaic presents the organ within a highly feminized performance space, far removed from the martial masculinity of the gladiatorial arena, although, as the woman organist in the Zliten mosaic implies, some Roman audiences did not find a woman out of place contributing, on this instrument, to a blaring, exhorting sound that perhaps also served to stir the crowd yet resounded above its roar.



Figure 24: Late fourth century or early fifth century mosaic of female musicians from a villa in Mariamin, Syria. Photo: Public domain.

Pantomime musical accompaniments also sometimes included a variety of percussion instruments. But enthusiasm for these instruments served to satisfy a delight in the peculiar sounds they made rather than to explore or strengthen the rhythmic structure of a composition. Except for the *tympanum*, Greek and Roman music made no use of drums, although the Assyrians had already developed a type of kettledrum and deployed sets of them in large-scale processions. To the extent that they were aware of them, the Romans disclosed no interest at all in complicated African drumming techniques, but probably not because they regarded drumming as a manifestation of an inferior culture. The barbarian tribes from Germany also displayed a complete lack of interest in drumming. The Greeks and Romans were obviously uncomfortable with music that established the primacy of rhythm over tonality or indeed allowed music to function as a power controlling the movement of the body, which is the case when the "beat" is strong enough to "drive" the body to synchronize its movement with a rhythmic configuration. Music signified freedom insofar as the movement of the body inspired it rather than the other way around. Thus in the pantomime, the music followed the dancer. The pantomime

located the source of dance-like movements within the body rather than in sensations or pulses external to it. In a sense, the dancer was "free" of musical rhythm or even tonality, which act as coloring devices to establish the mood of a scene rather than as the "drive" determining the movement of the body. The external sound world became synchronized with the movement of the dancer, which meant that musicians had to watch the dancer, the body in motion, to guide the performance of the music. It further meant that that a powerful, predictable beat could not enslave the body to synchronized movement patterns that would suggest that the dancer has surrendered to the music or "obeys" its "natural" impact on the nervous system.

One drum was ubiquitous in the ancient world: the *tympanum*. The Roman cultural domain never employed any other drum. The *tympanum* resembled a tambourine, except that it had no bells or jingles. It was a wooden ring covered by an animal hide on only one side of the ring. The performer held the ring with one hand and tapped the hide with the fingers of the other hand. Performers never struck the hide with both hands, nor did they use any beaters, which means they never tapped out any sort of complex rhythmic pattern. They purpose of the drum was not to provide a "pulse" for the music or to sustain an ostinato motif. From a musical perspective, the *tympanum* provided a dramatic tone that resounded either regularly or at special moments that coincided with unique gestures or harmonic climaxes. Visual evidence of *tympanum* players across centuries indicates that performers used drums of different sizes to produce higher or deeper tones. But Roman paintings, mosaics, and reliefs never show more than one *tympanum* player in a scene; while *tympanum* players in the pantomime ensembles may have used different drums for different scenes, it is quite unlikely that more than one drummer ever performed in relation to any scene. Probably the most famous image of a *tympanum* player is the first century mosaic of street musicians from Pompeii attributed to Dioscurides of Samos, which shows a masked male tapping the inner surface of the hide as he holds the instrument level with the floor [Figure 25]. Lansdel (1999: 81) speculates that this curious performance technique might have produced a unique "low, muffled sound," but it is not clear how such a sound was useful. It may be that tapping the drum on the inside did not produce a sound any different from tapping the outside surface of the hide, in which case, the choice to hold the instrument level with the floor

was the result of seeking a special visual effect. At any rate, this image is by no means representative of *tympanum* performance in the visual record. Nearly all images of *tympanum* players show female performers (always only one), maenads, participating in a Dionysian procession or bacchanale. The female performer always holds the instrument high, with the hide facing the spectator, and she dances and tilts her head back or upward to signify an ecstatic mood, quite the opposite of the almost grotesque delicacy and intimacy Dioscurides depicted in his image of the street musicians. Artists associated the instrument with an atmosphere of intoxication or revelry. It therefore is quite probable that in the context of pantomime performance the instrument appeared only in those program pieces and mythic themes related to exultant celebration or euphoric abandon. The drum never appears in other, non-Dionysian processions, nor in relation to any other rituals. The performer contributed an exciting image to the pantomime performance, striking the drum while swirling or spinning and always to punctuate a dramatic gesture or twist of the body; the drum itself often contained beautiful decorations and tassels on the ring. But these effects would occur only intermittently in any pantomime program. The primary purpose of the *tympanum* was not, as Landels (1999: 81) suggests, to "emphasize the rhythm that was already inherent in the melody." It was to show the "wildness" and "striking" power of female excitement, perhaps further strengthened by the stark juxtaposition of the animal percussive tone and the shrieking cry of ecstasy.



Figure 25: First century mosaic of street musicians from the villa of Cicero, Pompeii, in the Museo Nazionale, Naples, showing the large tambourine, accompanied by cymbals and tibia, a combination unlikely to create complex rhythmic patterns, even if the rhythms themselves were complex and unstable.

To "emphasize the rhythm," musicians sometimes employed the *scabellum*. This was a clapper attached to the foot of the musician, who tapped out a simple rhythm while playing another instrument. The purpose of the *scabellum* was to produce a kind of ticking sound that imposed, simultaneously, a sense of urgency and steadiness on the music. It was physically impossible for the performer to produce a rhythmic configuration anymore complex than a simple metronomic beat, and musicians never seemed to have used more than one clapper at any one time. Moreover, the *scabellum* appears only occasionally in images of musicians, nothing approaching the ubiquity of cymbals and tympani. As the Vatican mosaic suggests [Figure 21], the clapper was useful for infusing a measure of "liveliness" into a dance number that had no specific mythic content and was simply a display of physical agility. Indeed, the mosaic

contrasts this device for amplifying "liveliness" with the use of wooden hand clappers or *crotali* to inject "liveliness" into the performance of the competing dancer. The use of *crotali* was much more common in the ancient world than the use of the *scabellum*, and representations of *crotali* players appear across many centuries, from at least the eight century BCE to the fourth century CE Mariamin mosaic (Aign 1963: 106). The performer could dance while playing *crotali* and create many striking visual-sonic effects by swinging body and arms while piercing the air with clusters of clicking or snapping sounds. Clappers were usually attached to both hands and could produce much more complicated rhythmic configurations than the *scabellum*, which is probably why they did not function primarily to "emphasize the rhythm" of the music. Rather, the *crotali* provided a peculiar *sound* that was appealing to audiences in relation to particular kinds of music and dance. In the visual evidence, *crotali* players are largely female and represented as solo dancers whose use of the instrument enhanced the visual interest of the performance, but no evidence has emerged to indicate that pantomimes themselves handled *crotali* to support their movements. The clicking sound would occur only occasionally, to introduce a uniquely mysterious mood that was memorable because of the surprising rather than expected effect of the sound.

Cymbals, on the other hand, apparently enchanted audiences so much that they resounded frequently. Indeed, cymbal performance was so interesting that spectators delighted in the spectacle or the image of solo cymbal players. But ancient cymbals, made of bronze, produced a different sound from the cymbals of today. They were smaller and transmitted a high-pitched, bell-like tone when struck together as a pair of metal plates each containing a hollowed out cup within a bronze disk. Cymbals came in different sizes: some were very small and produced a delicate tinkling sound, while others reached the size of a salad plate and shattered the air with explosive crashing sounds. These instruments were ancient well before the Romans started using them. The Old Testament includes several references to the use of cymbals in religious processions and rituals (Psalm 150: 5; Ezra 3: 10; 1 Chronicles 25: 12 Chronicles 5: 12; 2 Samuel 6: 5). The Egyptians only began using cymbals around 800 BCE, so it is likely that the origin of the instrument was the near east. But only in the Roman world did cymbal playing become a sign of refined voluptuousness. As with *tympanum* players, cymbal players in paintings and reliefs were everywhere

female, maenads performing ecstatic dances; artists showed them nearly nude and often with the cymbals clashing above their heads and their heads turned or tilted upward, while their bodies, poised on tip-toes, assumed elongated or "aroused" poses. Images, of course, never show more than one cymbal player in the scene, for the audience accepted that an instrument individualized a player rather than subordinated her to the instrument's power to duplicate or multiply its sound. But cymbal playing had less to do with perfecting a musical effect than with enhancing the image of the power of a hard, hammering, metallic tone to animate the female body toward ecstasy, to signify its "wildness." Thus, the technique of cymbal playing entailed the display of a choreographic technique, which may well have included the performer's skill in making the polished plates flash and gleam or in devising unusual ways to strike the plates. Performers struck the plates over the heads or spun around while striking them or fluttered their arms between crashes. A fascinating second century CE mosaic from Madaba, Jordan depicts a female dancer with cymbals attached to her wrists and ankles; her pose indicates that she drops her hand and raises her foot to allow the wrist cymbals to strike the ankle cymbals [Figure 26].



Figure 26: A second century CE mosaic of a woman dancing with cymbals attached to her ankles along with a nude male or hermaphrodite dancer, from a villa in Madaba, Jordan. Photo: Madaba Museum.

Here cymbal playing has become an acrobatic art, and as the mosaic artist assumed in choosing his subject, it was an art capable of solo performance. It's true that the Dioscurides mosaic of the street musicians in Pompeii

shows a masked male cymbal player delicately clinking a pair of small cymbals [Figure 25]. But, as with the depiction of the tympanum player, this mosaic is hardly typical in its representation of cymbal performance in the pantomime, even if the scene renders fairly realistically a typical street concert. While pantomime cymbal players might play as delicately as the street musician, the class distinctions between mime and pantomime or between popular and aristocratic entertainment make the mosaic unhelpful in giving an accurate image of cymbal performance in the pantomime. The pantomime, with its emphasis on competitive star personalities, required that even the most incidental performers infuse theatrical performance with mythic glamour, which is to say with an aura of voluptuousness that emerges above all when the performance space's abiding function is to signify magnitudes or capacities for luxuriousness.

Small bronze bells were perhaps another percussion instrument whose sound delighted audiences for the pantomime. Archeological excavations have retrieved these bells from numerous locations; I have not found any reference to them in the visual and literary sources. Graves from the Villanova period (1100 BCE-700 BCE) in Northern Italy contained flat, iron or bronze plates in the shape of bells that were incised with intricate geometric decorations. Little beaters were found with these bells, but these instruments assumed a largely symbolic rather than practical function in protecting the dead, for in some cases they make no sound at all when struck (Beck 1954: 128, fig. 166). Etruscan grave sites also contained bronze bells, often fairly large and of exquisite design. The Etruscans were unique among the societies of antiquity in ascribing a special power to bells. Beck (1954: 135) suggests that bells were widespread in the Etruscan culture. They hung from a metal cord, chain, or string at the entrances to dwellings and sounded when stirred by the wind. Because of their mysterious power to ward off malevolent, invisible spirits in the air or earth, bells may have cast an appealing aura in processional or theatrical performances when women walked or danced while striking them, although it is difficult to find visual or literary evidence to support this function for the excavated artifacts. The reason I feel somewhat comfortable in supposing such a function is the Mariamin mosaic (ca. 350 CE) found in an aristocratic house from the Syrian town of that name [Figure 24]. In this enchanting image, a woman with two beaters strikes eight bronze or brass bowls set in two rows on a table. The bowls thus should produce an entire octave of bell tones.

Dunbabin (1999: 171) says this mosaic, now in the Hama Museum, belonged to a room that contained a stage, and the mosaic itself places the female musicians on a stage. The mosaic implies considerable sophistication in the use of bell sounds in concert performance. By using two beaters, the performer is capable of producing chords as well as complex melodies and a carillion effect. True, the bowls on the table immobilize the performer to a greater extent than bells carried in the performer's hands, just as the organ stabilizes the performer. Nevertheless, the mosaic suggests the richness of "color" or chromaticism that audiences in the Late Empire could expect of bell sounds in a theatrical milieu. The archeological evidence of an enthusiasm for bells, combined with the lack of any evidence to indicate a prohibition or convention against the use of bells in theatrical performances, inclines me toward the probability that pantomimes felt free to exploit these delicate sounds in performance.

Summary of Components Supporting Pantomime Musical Accompaniment

Theater music in the Roman world functioned according to a hierarchical system of signification. Music that was appropriate or satisfying to audiences of the pantomime conformed to rules or conventions governing the forms of music, the types of musical instruments, and the roles of musicians in performance. In the pantomime aesthetic, the focus of perception was always the star dancer-actor, and music was subordinate to the ambitions of the star. The music therefore always followed the movements of the dancer and shifts in tonality or rhythms resulted from physical cues given by the dancer. The star performers did not build dances around given pieces of music; rather, the accompaniment functioned like a soundtrack, with music especially composed for the performance of a scene or given pieces heavily edited to fit the objectives of the dancer. Nevertheless, star performers faced severe constraints on their power to use music, although at the time, it is possible that no one even acknowledged the intensity of these constraints, so ingrained were the conventions controlling the production of music in the ancient world. Music amplified the idea that performance revealed the individuality of the performer rather than the power of an identity achieved through repetition or uniformity of shared traits. Theater orchestras were small and contained no doubling of instruments; hippodrome orchestras contained some doubling to produce a

louder sound. But instruments for the theater were limited to the lyre, cithara, tibia, syrinx, organ, tympanum, cymbals, crotali, scabellum, and bells, and never were all these instruments allowed to play together. Instruments were appropriate only for particular scenes and not any scene. An orchestra containing more than three musicians was quite rare. Singers might appear in the pantomime program, but seldom as accompaniment for the star pantomime's movements. The theater favored instruments that allowed the musicians to move while playing, so that making music was synonymous with dancing. Pantomime musical performance was largely a female profession, with some instruments, such as cymbals, performed exclusively by women. The trumpets and horns played in the hippodrome or in processions for state functions "belonged" to the military and only men were permitted to play them. The music itself derived from the complicated system of "modes" developed by the Greeks. But in Roman times, the pervasive taste was for a musical aesthetic that deviated substantially from the musical ideals that created the mode system. Audiences appreciated intensely chromatic effects that "moved" the listener toward deeper emotional engagement with the "reality" of the performance. Music stirred rather than calmed. But lyrical and melodic structures prevailed over rhythmic structures as the foundation of emotional provocation. Complex drum patterns requiring two hands were virtually non-existent, not because of any taboo or superstition against drumming, but because the Roman culture could not even imagine a way in which drumming might be interesting. The sole drum used by the culture, the *tympanum*, could not produce a complex rhythm and functioned more to provide an important tone than a rhythmic underpinning. The subordination of rhythm to melody actually allowed music to adopt a wider range of rhythmic structures than music dominated by a strong "pulse." Complex melodies encouraged unusual rhythmic structures, which in turn enhanced the instability defining relations between time and movement. Synchronization between movement and the "beat" was not a significant sign of choreographic virtuosity. Music functioned more like a comment on the action rather than a determinant of it, a way of cueing the audience's response to the action. By depressing the value of the "beat," pantomimes dramatized the "freedom" of the performer from an external power, including even the mythic identities they enacted. In the imperial aesthetic of the pantomime, both music and myth were subordinate to the star

performer's ambition to treat myth as something that "belonged" to him, like a set of jewels, rather than anything that controlled or usurped him. The unstable tension between music and movement was the key to the performer's "transcendence" of language, for it was always language that was the great constraint on the freedom to move, to metamorphose glorified by the imperial aesthetic.

Costume

Pantomime costumes emphasized the beauty of the performer's body and movement. In the pantomime aesthetic, luxuriousness implied above all a refined physical sensuality. Performers selected and designed costumes on the basis of how well the costumes made them look. The "authenticity" of a costume had nothing to do with revealing the impersonated character, nor did it have much to do with glorifying the status or rank of the character impersonated. They glorified the performer. In the fourth century CE, Libanius defended pantomimes for their use of gold embroidery in their tunics (Libanius 1908: Paragraph 52). He also defended the wearing by male pantomimes of feminine costumes, for these, like the adorning of long hair, signify an artistic imagination, an urban luxuriousness, not moral degeneration (Paragraphs 52-56; Malloy 2014: 156-157). Pantomimes employed costumes that allowed them to move freely while glorifying the contours of their bodies. Such costumes were slight variations on the basic clothing worn by virtually all people in the ancient world, the chiton or tunic for males and the *peplum* or *stola* for females [Figures 3-5, 14, 15]. Roman culture did not invest much significance in elaborate designs or complex weaving practices that designated the wearer's capacity for luxurious effects until after the Christianization of the Empire, when the Byzantine royalty introduced increasingly opulent patterns into fabrics to signify rank and wealth. "Roman clothing was simple and elegant, practical and comfortable. Based on the rectangles that came directly from the loom, first in wool and linen, then in cotton, in silk, and in combinations of fibers, the basic garments for men, women, and children were the tunica, toga, peplum, stola, palla, and pallium" (Goldman 1994a: 217). These garments could be dyed in a wide range of colors in different shades or intensities: yellow, green, blue, purple, pink, violet, orange, turquoise, black, and indigo; and some parts of the Empire, particularly Egypt, developed industries that specialized in producing borders, hems, or

trims that could be sewn (sometimes with cloth-of-gold) onto the basic garments (Sebesta 1994). But the beauty of a dye and the quality of the cloth were for the Romans a more important sign of wealth or status than the splendor of designs sewn onto the cloth. Cloaks or mantels worn with the *tunica* (male chiton) could provide dramatic color contrasts, and different cloaks served different functions. A short cloak such as the *abolla*, a variation of the chlamys, was largely decorative and symbolic and associated with the military, as was the somewhat larger *paludamentum*, whereas all classes wore the *paenula*, which often provided a hood. The *laena* and the *lacerna* were variations of the *abolla* but designed for summer and winter wear respectively (Norris 1924: 71-72). In one of his letters on oratory, the Numidian lawyer-rhetorician Fronto (ca. 100-160 CE) referred to pantomimes who use the same scarf to signify a swan's tail, the hair of Venus, the wrath of the Furies, and "many other things" (Fronto 1867: 157). Another male garment was the *pallium*, a kind of large scarf that, when worn with a *paenula*, was looped over the right should, "then across the breast to the left shoulder again, falling down to the back" (Norris 1924: 108). The *tunica* among the Romans did not contain sleeves until the third century CE, when the emperors Commodus and Heliogabulus adopted the dalmatica, although not without inspiring much condemnation. The sleeved tunic nevertheless became a widespread fashion, but hardly because this sort of long shirt had long been in use among Dalmatian peasants and also among the Asian people from whom Heliogabulus was descended (Norris 1924: 98-99) [Figures 11, 17]. Norris, however, says (99) that the *dalmatica* was "always worn without a belt," which means that it was not effective in emphasizing the contours of the wearer's body, but more effective than the tunica in displaying embroidered ornamental designs; whereas the tunica, remaining pervasive well into the middle ages, brought the fabric close to the body through sashes, cord belts, or bands ("girdles"). Nothing in the visual record suggests that the pantomimes ever favored unbelted tunics or *peplums*, even after the Christianization of the Empire, for it was the Christians who made the dalmatica into a kind of opulent curtain for disguising rather than revealing the body (cf. Wyles 2008).

The toga is the costume most peculiarly identified with the Romans, and it seems that all Romans wore it up until the fourth or early third centuries BCE. But because it projected such a powerful nationalistic aura even before the third century BCE, lawmakers began regulating the wearing

of the toga, so that by the second century BCE, its use was primarily ceremonial and symbolic and limited to aristocratic males. The toga maintained its ceremonial function until the end of the Empire, but it was not a form of dress that anyone was likely to see outside Rome or even outside state or aristocratic-sponsored occasions in Rome (Stone 1994; Wilson 1924; Goette 1990). While comic dramas of the third and second century BCE fell into genres defined by the different togas the characters wore, the pantomime completely avoided this costume. The toga was simply too historical or too local in its symbolic resonance to evoke the mythic ambience of the performance. The grand dignity associated with the costume, not to mention its encumbering constraint of the body, made it unsuitable for dancing; indeed, a performer perhaps risked censure or punishment for ridiculing the national dignity by dancing in a toga. A few scholars assert or insinuate that Roman prostitutes and adulteresses wore "plain" togas to signify their low status (Stone 1994: 13; Sebesta 1994: 50). Such an insinuation is the only credible basis for considering the possibility that the toga had any place in the pantomime culture. But the evidence for this insinuation derives from passages in Juvenal (*Satires* 2.6) and Martial (2.39; 10.52) in which prostitutes actually do not wear togas. Rather, Juvenal describes how decadent homosexuals dress up as women at orgies (it's not clear that they wear togas), and Martial, in the two epigrams, provides even less reliable evidence, because in neither case does he refer to a woman wearing a toga. Instead, he ironically invokes the toga as a symbol of a national dignity that an adulteress and her lover and a eunuch fail to embody. This is hardly convincing evidence that "the toga—a mark of manhood—was often worn by prostitutes" (Martial 1921: 67), and so the idea that the toga had any place in the pantomime culture must still find a foundation.

The stola worn by girls and women was a long tunica whose belt or "girdle," fastened around the waist or under the breasts, allowed the hem to rise or fall. It was a supremely elegant dress that emphasized the female form by clinging to the body. It consisted of a large piece of cloth that draped around the body while affixed over the shoulders by pins, brooches, or fibulas [Figure 17]. The upper part of the stola was sometimes densely crinkled, but the garment as a whole in any case magnified the folds in the cloth shaped by the contours of the body, most notably in the pelvic area. "The whole garment was evidently cut much longer than was convenient,

and was always raised by an invisible belt or cord at the waist, giving the turned under effect [...]. The foldover edge made a line just above the hips; in some instances horizontally, in others curving upward at the center, this being due to more material being pulled through the belt at the sides to make the skirt even" (Norris 1924: 32). Because the stola required so much cloth, the wearer saved money by using material sometimes thin enough to be diaphanous. A male performer impersonating a female character would have little difficulty in slipping a stola over a tunica, especially if assisted by one or two members of the ensemble, and this bit of "metamorphosis" could prove theatrically exciting by striking an effective pose while the assistants attached gleaming pins or brooches and looped the belt around the waist before offering the mask to the actor. It is, however, not so easy to imagine a female performer wearing a stola who metamorphoses into a male character wearing a tunica. But if female performers, who appeared at least from the second century CE onward, conformed to the conventions of the pantomime, then they were expected to impersonate characters of both sexes. Knowledge of performances by women pantomimes is so scarce in the written sources that it is perhaps the case that public morality did not encourage the writers whose testimony is extant to discuss the work of these artists. The most obvious way for a female performer in a stola to metamorphose into a male character is for her to have her assistants take off her stola and put on her tunica. Her momentary nakedness provides a dramatic effect that is competitive with the male opportunity for metamorphosis. In *The Golden Ass*, Apuleius, describing the "Judgment of Paris" pantomime in Corinth, comments on the abundant nudity of male and female performers, especially Venus, who "appeared all naked, saving that her fine and comely middle was lightly covered with a thin silken smock, and this the wanton wind blew hither and thither, sometime lifting it to testify the youth and flower of her age, sometime making it to cling close to her to show clearly the form and figure of her members" (Apuleius 1972: 256-257). It is doubtful that women in the pantomime business saw much profit by embodying or even symbolizing the virtues or sacral dignities expected of well-born Roman matrons and monumentalized through worship of the Vestal Virgins. The pantomime appealed to its aristocratic patrons and to a diverse sector of the public because it promised release or freedom from the constraints on happiness and sexual morality imposed by state, familial, and communal ideals of virtue and

sobriety. It offered privileged access to aesthetic rather than moral values, and the display of beautiful bodies was the strongest manifestation of this privilege.

Nudity

Indeed, the display of nudity shaped audience perception of the pantomime much more than the display of extraordinary costumes. The pyrrhic movement was originally a display of warrior nudity [Figure 9]. Visual artists for centuries pervasively depicted dancers in various degrees of nudity. Recently, Pierre Cordier (2005) has described at length the extent to which imperial Roman civilization encouraged and discouraged the display of nudity according to an elaborate, uninscribed code that designated when the display of nudity was appropriate, depending on the social relations between those displaying their nudity and those viewing it. Nudity was appropriate in art only in relation to certain themes; it was appropriate in public only in relation to particular functions, including the theater and bathing, but never in relation to a situation in which nudity leveled distinctions between social classes or social status. Indeed, the code may have been so intricate that it regulated degrees of exposure of the body, thus encouraging in the pantomime scenes in which otherwise nude performers wore masks. Art that represented mythic themes was abundant with nude or partially nude figures, and in images related to Dionysos (Bacchus), nudity was almost inescapable [Figure 27]. The pantomime sought to "bring to life" the sort of mythic images that appeared in paintings, friezes, sculptures, and mosaics; performance functioned to affirm the "reality" of myth, although perhaps it would be more accurate to say that myth functioned to affirm the idea of a "reality" that existed beyond the power of the culture to define or control it but within the power of individuals to experience. In *The Golden Ass*, Apuleius uses the "Judgment of Paris" scene to show how the "perfect beauty" of the naked and almost naked bodies of the male and female performers has the effect of metamorphosing a glamorous myth of selecting the most beautiful body into the communal "reality" (that is, pleasure) of enjoying the bestial degradation of a murderous, "wicked harlot." Literary chroniclers sometimes make disparaging remarks about the immodesty of the pantomimes to indicate the moral decadence of the culture about which they are writing. In his *Roman History*, written about 30 CE, Veillius

Paterculus (19 BCE–31 CE) explains (ii.83) how the "treacherous" general Glaucus Plancus, assigned by Caesar to guard his former employer Cleopatra, staged a banquet pantomime in which he performed the role of Glaucus the Nereid, "a dance in which his naked body was painted blue, his head encircled with reeds, at the same time wearing a fish's tail and crawling upon his knees" (Veillius 1924: 227). Nearly six hundred years after Plancus performed his dance, Procopius, in the *Secret History*, described (9.15) how Theodora (500-548 CE), future empress of Byzantium, displayed her nudity before pantomime audiences. By referring to state regulation of nudity, he makes clear that nudity was an expected feature of pantomime performance:

> *She would throw off her clothes and exhibit naked to all and sundry regions, both in front and behind, which the rules of decency require to be kept veiled and hidden from masculine eyes. […] Often in the theater, too, in full view of all the people she would throw off her clothes and stand naked in their midst, having only a girdle about her private parts and her groins—not, however, because she was ashamed to expose these also to the public, but because no one is allowed to appear there absolutely naked; a girdle around the loins is compulsory. With this minimum covering she would spread herself out and lie face upward on the floor. Servants upon whom this task was imposed would sprinkle over her private parts, and geese trained for the purpose used to pick them off one by one with their bills and swallow them. Theodora, so far from blushing when she stood up again, actually seemed to be proud of this performance. […] Many times she threw off her clothes and stood in the middle of the actors on the stage, leaning over backwards or pushing out her behind to invite both those who had already enjoyed her and those who had not been intimate yet, parading her own special brand of gymnastics* (Procopius 1966: 83-85).

Lucian defended the pantomime against accusations of excessively voluptuous nudity by ignoring them, although these, of course, eventually became an obsessive feature in the anti-theater diatribes of early Christian propagandists, such as Tertullian, for whom the pantomimes best typify that "immodesty of gesture and attire which so specially and peculiarly

characterizes the stage" (Tertullian, *De spectaculis*, 10.84). Instead, Lucian justified what for him were the merely modest costumes of the pantomimes by condemning the affection of actors for ludicrously extravagant costumes in the performances of spoken literary dramas: "As far as tragedy is concerned, let us form our first opinion of its character from it outward appearance. What a repulsive and at the same time frightful spectacle is a man tricked out to disproportionate stature, mounted upon high clogs, wearing a mask that reaches above his head, with a mouth that is set in a vast yawn as if he meant to swallow up the spectators! I forbear to speak of pads for the breast, for the paunch, wherewith he puts on adscititious, counterfeit corpulence, so that the disproportion in height may not betray itself the more conspicuously in a slender figure" (Lucian 1936: 241). In any case, a costume was significant and beautiful, not because it accurately or glamorously bestowed rank, importance, class, or wealth upon either the character or the performer, but because, along with sensuous movements, it invited the spectator to evaluate the whole performance in relation to the erotic appeal of the performer's body. Pantomime identified erotic appeal with the "incarnation" of a mythic persona. But to say that pantomime "reduced" erotic appeal to the incarnation of a mythic persona is to miss the point of this art and to betray an anxiety about the phenomenon of incarnation that did not afflict audiences in antiquity.



Figure 27: Nudity of mythic identities appears in a wall painting from Pompeii, first century CE, showing Andromeda and Perseus, in the Museo Nazionale, Naples. Photo: Maiuri (1953).

Accessories

The aesthetic appeal of pantomime costumes depended on the use of accessories. Pantomimes could strengthen the theatrical effect of their performances by the wearing of beautiful helmets, brooches, tiaras, sashes, wreaths, fibulas, or jewels. Performers could supplement accessories with props, such as swords, shields, wands, torches, mirrors, or flowers. Apuleius mentions numerous props and accessories in his description of the pantomime in Corinth. Mercury wore "little wings of gold" and carried a gold apple. Juno wore a "white diadem upon her head" and brandished a "regal scepter." Minerva "had on her head a shining helmet, whereon was bound a garland made of olive branches, having in one hand a target or shield, and in the other shaking a spear as she would fight." Castor and Pollux wore "pointed helmets with stars." Accompanying Minerva were

"two young men, armed and brandishing their naked swords in their hands." The many Cupids in Venus's retinue carried torches, while the "comely Graces" scattered before her "garlands and loose flowers." In the Porto Maggiore frieze, the dancer playing Agave, clad in a diaphanous *tunica*, swings a sword in one hand and raises the severed head of Pentheus in the other [Figure 3]. In the mysterious image of a theatrical performance engraved onto a fourth century CE silver plate (Parabiago Plate), several performers wear fitted sleeves, peculiar headpieces, and flowing *pallas* [Figure 28]. Impersonators of Hercules most likely carried a lion skin or a club or both. The cuirassed breastplate, which might contain elaborate, gleaming ornamentation, was another accessory that pantomimes could affix to their bodies with great dramatic flair and then display with further flamboyance through powerful shifts from pose to movement (Gergel 1994). In the painting from the Casa del Medico in Pompeii depicting some sort of pantomime of a tribunal performed by dwarfs (supposedly the Judgment of Solomon), several figures wear cuirassed breastplates as well as plumed helmets [Figure 8]. The palla was a large scarf worn by women and its functions were manifold, not least of which was to bestow a dramatic effect on the woman who wore it [Figure 16]. "The variety in methods of draping the palla around the figure was endless. When of exaggerated length, it was wound many times around the body and over the shoulders; if the texture were of the flimsiest, it would be wound many more times, with the two ends trailing on the ground or carried over the arms" (Norris 1924: 115). When worn by dancers, the *palla* emphasized a voluptuous, flowing, rippling quality, as indicated in a series of images from Pompeii showing partially nude female dancers (maenads) moving as if floating in space. The equivalent of the *palla* for men was the *pallium*, although this garment, "associated with philosophers" and "all learned men, including orators" (Norris 1924: 107), probably was not so widespread among men as the *palla* was among women. However, the *pallium* (like the *palla*) was useful in producing a decorative display of the nude body, as indicated in numerous images of nude males posing with a pallium draped around the shoulders or around the waist. In these pervasive instances, the *pallium* functions less as a veil than to signify a discarded veil—or rather, perhaps, to signify a veil that follows the will of the performer rather than the custom of a society [Figure 17].



Figure 28: Fourth century silver plate (Parabiago Plate) depicting a procession honoring Cybele attended by armed guards (Korybantes), the leading two performing the pyrrhic step. Photo: Museum of Archeology, Milan, Giovanni Dall'Orto.

The Romans developed a wide variety of footwear in styles that drifted in and out of fashion over long periods of time. As with other garments, footwear was a marker of social status based less on types of shoe than on the quality of materials used to make the shoe. For pantomime performance, only some types of show were appropriate. Pantomime performers required shoes that allowed them to move freely and at the same time metamorphose into different identities. To change shoes implied an action as dramatic as changing a mask or a mantel if it was to interest an audience. Lucian (1936: 239) therefore complains about actors in tragic spoken dramas who produce a "repulsive and at the same time frightful spectacle" by being "mounted upon high clogs" or *kothurni*, the platform boots of archaic Greek origin that attempted to make the performer achieve "disproportionate stature." The available visual evidence supports his contention that *kothurni* had no place in pantomime performance. Indeed, the vast majority of dancers in images perform barefoot. However, we must welcome the possibility that pantomimes employed, for theatrical effect,

sandals or boots that they ornamented with jewels, tassels, or luxuriously designed thongs or straps. A painting from Pompeii (House of the Golden Cupids), depicting Jason before Pelias, shows a man in a blue tunica wearing elegant gray boots, an especially dramatic detail when one considers how rarely painters felt inclined to described any kind of footwear. In the Milan silver plate, ca. 350 AD, depicting Cybele in a chariot pulled by lions, dancing soldiers wear ornate boots, and their movements suggest they perform the pyrrhic step [Figure 28]. The famous Villa of Mysteries fresco, from the first century CE, features a female angel who wears memorably elegant high boots while swinging a whip, presumably at the person to whom she directs her gaze, the half-naked kneeling woman painted on the wall at a right angle to the angel [Figure 29]. The upper body of the angel is naked and only a *palla*, yellow and trimmed in purple, wraps around her waist. The boots therefore imply an obscure symbolic significance, like the whip and the wings, and indeed they enhance the erotic appeal of the figure by bestowing a touch of constricting severity that contrasts ambiguously with the flowing palla and dance-like movement of the body. Mielsch (2001: 42-43) suggests, without great confidence, that the boots, worn by so naked a woman, serve to represent Lyssa, who "embodied the wildness or enthusiasm of the Dionysian cult in Tarentino and Etruscan images from the fourth century BCE." But female performers and even male performers impersonating female characters may well have used the *calceus*, a laced shoe boot of Etruscan origin that completely enclosed the foot in a soft hide (Bonfante 1975: 203). The visual evidence associates the *calceus* entirely with aristocratic figures. The statue of an empress, dating from the fourth century CE, now in the Norwegian Institute in Rome, displays the exquisite charm of her shoe boot, studded, according to L'Orange, with pearls (L'Orange 1971: 97). But excavations in many sites, "from Britain to Dura-Europos," indicate that classes of persons outside the aristocracy wore the *calceus* (Goldman 1994b: 119). The *calceus*, like the sandal or the boot, could be a beautiful accessory in itself, and this beauty was significant for performance insofar as it amplified the unique, star identity of the pantomime rather than reinforced the "authenticity" of the character impersonated.



Figure 29: Fragment of a wall painting from the Villa of Mysteries, Pompeii, showing an angel wearing boots, First Century CE. Photo: Karl Toepfer.

Masks

Perhaps the most mysterious costume accessories associated with the pantomimes were masks. Lucian asserted that the pantomime's "mask itself is most beautiful, and suited to the drama that forms the theme." But he also insisted that pantomime masks did not look like those used in the performance of spoken tragedies and comedies. The pantomime mask's "mouth is not wide open, as with tragedy and comedy, but closed, for he has many people who do the shouting in his stead" (Lucian 1936: 241). Yet it is not certain that masks were always part of every pantomime's performance. Apuleius, in his description of the "Judgment of Paris" pantomime, made no mention of masks worn by any of the many performers in the scene, and other literary commentators on the pantomime avoid explicit reference to masks. Fulminating against the idolatry of the theater, even Tertullian, in *De spectaculis* (XXIII), treated masking in the pantomime above all as a matter of transvestism (men impersonating women), a worse manifestation of masking than the facial masks of tragic actors in the spoken drama, although he did not explicitly

separate pantomimes from the conventional use of masks in performance. In the Porto Maggiore frieze, the figure of Agave holds high a mask designating the head of Pentheus, but she herself appears not to wear a mask [Figure 3]. The mysterious, apparently late Empire silver plate examined by Otto Jahn (1813-1869) appears to depict a pantomimic performance involving the handling of torches by some of the dancers. Masks are displayed but the several performers either do not wear masks or the artist represents the performance as if the spectator cannot distinguish the mask from the performer's actual face (Jahn 1867: 74-82, Tafel CCXXV) [Figure 30]. Bieber (1961: 231-232), supported by Elia (1965: 177), proposed that a spectacular wall painting at Pompeii, in the House of Pinarius Cerialis, depicted a pantomime representation of the contest between Apollo and Marsyas [Figure 31a]. But although Bieber assumes that masks were a pervasive element of pantomime performance, none of the several figures in the painting, a couple of whom are naked, appears to wear a mask, and the scene does not even contain images of masks as autonomous, decorative symbols, such as appear in so many other paintings. On the other hand, the visual evidence does not seem to reinforce the assertion (e.g., Bieber 1961: 237) that the mimes always performed without masks, for they do wear masks in perhaps the most famous images of them.



Figure 30: Engraving of an enigmatic performance on a silver plate described by Otto Jahn in 1867 displaying masks in uncertain relation to the performers, late fourth century CE.

The Roman mask culture followed a complicated aesthetic because it arose from an inclination to treat masking as both an efficacious, stabilizing value and an obstacle to clarity of perception. In the 1961 edition of her book, Margarete Bieber provided a comprehensive, though not complete, survey of the archeology and representations of masks in Greco-Roman antiquity. Her evidence reveals that the Roman preoccupation with masks manifested itself in two conflicting ways. On the one hand, masks could

possess the status of a kind of *fetish object*, a thing worth representing in itself because its meaning transcended any relation to an impersonation by a particular person. On the other hand, masks served a *performative* function to dramatize the belief that a particular person projected "other" or multiple identities and was thus capable of "metamorphosis." The performative and fetish functions entailed different mask aesthetics.



Figure 31a: First century CE wall painting from the Pinarius Cerialis, Pompeii depicting a pantomime performance of the contest between Apollo and Marsyas, with curtain suspended above the action, from Elia (1965).

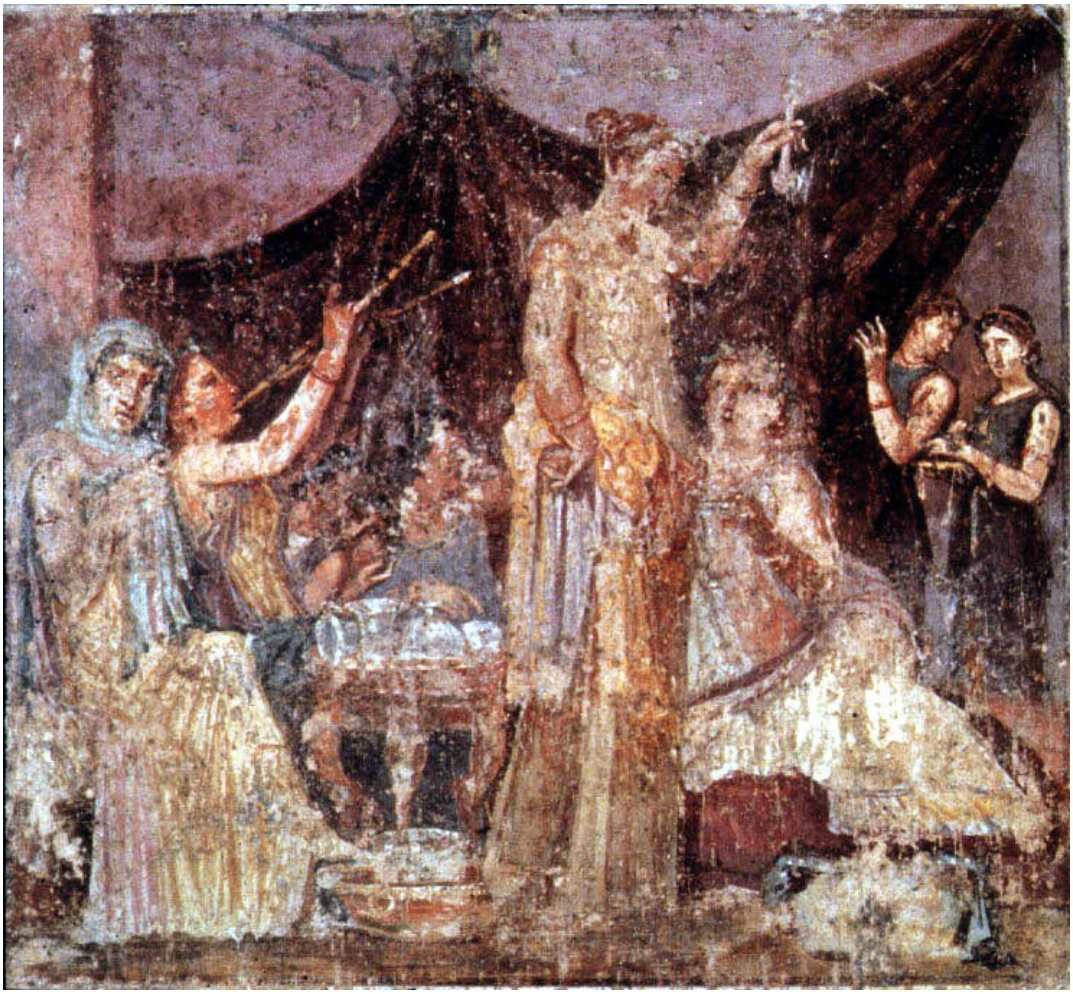


Figure 31b: First century Pompeiian wall painting of a woman holding a thyrsus accompanied by a tibia player before a large curtain, with a pair of performers or servants standing outside the curtain. The painting apparently depicts a ritual performance. Photo: Naples Archeological Museum.

But before discussing these two functions, let me examine the Roman preoccupation with masks itself. The Greeks did not share the same preoccupation. For them, at least in the Athenian theater of the fifth century BCE, masks belonged above all in the theater and enjoyed little, if any, importance outside of it in the sense that the Greeks regarded masks as symbols of a basic condition defining humanity. They saw the mask as a device for concealing the identity of the actor, so that audiences would not confuse the actor with the role. The mask allowed the actor to assume roles that otherwise he would be afraid to play, and by freeing the actor from public misperception or censure, the mask also freed dramatists to deal

with messy themes, motives, or characters that are independent of those who enact them in a designated space, the theater, at a designated time, the festival. When the acting of plays was the privilege of aristocrats, the mask served to protect the actor from his inclination to play roles that in some way compromised the dignity of his social class. The mask preserved a distinction between a "real" identity and a mythic or imaginary identity.

By the time the Romans began to consider that theater might be a worthwhile pleasure, in the third century BCE, actors had long since ceased to enjoy a privileged status anywhere in the ancient world. They now belonged to the lowest classes; many of them were slaves. Audiences expected performances that entailed a display of exceptional prowess, glamour, charm, or ingenuity. They required professional performers governed, not by literary ideals, but by audience tastes and commercial motives. It was not to the advantage of a professional actor to hide his identity. On the contrary, success as an actor depended on the extent to which performance was the revelation of the performer's unique personality. In the pantomime, after all, nudity was a pervasive attraction. Masks did not separate a "real" identity from an imaginary one; rather, they signified how a single personality projected multiple identities. People wore different masks in different situations, so that no mask was a completely reliable image of a person's character. Indeed, from this perspective, the face itself was a mask, and the concept of a "real" identity implied a dynamism, fluidity, and instability of being. The idea of a "real" identity as something essential or absolute was a myth or, from the Roman perspective, an illusion. Masks codified a will to self-transformation, and acting was a cultural codification of a human power to achieve metamorphosis. Thus, the pantomimes displayed their masks before wearing them. Thus, actors sometimes wore masks and sometimes did not, or some actors in a play wore masks and some did not. Thus, visual artists represented theatrical scenes in which figures do not wear masks, even if in performance they actually did. The mask was an object that a performer *chose* to use because it dramatized his own body in a unique way and not because the cultural milieu, seeking to regulate the representation of "character," imposed it upon the actor as a "convention."

Roman culture tolerated and even encouraged the perception of human identity as something divided by contradictory images of itself. Masks symbolized a constant conflict within the self insofar as they

possessed a value independent of their practical use for an actor. To make masks and collect or display them as decorative emblems is to fetishize or objectify a desire to respect, honor, or at any rate appreciate the power of this "eternal" yet masked conflict defining human identity. Bieber presents many examples of bronze, stone, and terra cotta masks and masked figurines that apparently decorated homes throughout the domain of Roman civilization; these examples she supplements with images of masks in paintings. These masks assume stereotypical qualities that easily separate into symbols of either tragedy or comedy, with comic masks much more numerous than tragic. Whether tragic or comic, the masks project a uniform, even monotonous sameness of expression. The tragic mask is always a variation on a cry of horror or dismay, and the comic mask is always a variation of a grotesquely distorted laugh or grin. The bulging or hollowed out eyes, the gaping mouths, the corkscrew hairstyles (tragedy) and balding pates (comedy) that define these masks are actually caricatures of masks rather than of social types. The presence of these artifacts theatricalized an environment. To display a masked figurine or a painted image of a mask or a frieze of persons holding such masks was to announce: "Here we acknowledge the power of masks, independent of whoever wears them, insofar as they are grotesque exaggerations of identity pervasively and eternally imposed on humans by myth or rather, by a human inclination to mythologize a fundamental conflict within all human identity between tragic and comic conditions." These often elaborately carved stone, marble, terra cotta, or frescoed masks, with their permanence and sometimes monumental dimensions (such as the mask towers at the theater of Ostia [Figure 32]), signified immutable identities or conditions imposed upon people rather than assumed by them. For this reason, the mask artifacts have little connection with the performance masks used by pantomimes. While such fetish masks may bear some resemblance to the masks actually used by mimes and tragedians, their autonomous, rigidifying power merely reinforced the inferior social status of the performers and constrained their ability to represent the power of "metamorphosis." Indeed, even the tragic masks on actors in representations of theatrical scenes are such caricatures of tragic expression that they often evoke an atmosphere of bizarre comedy or at any rate fantastic remoteness, as if to suggest that the tragic condition was more absurd than anxiety-inducing. This quaint remoteness seems only amplified when tragic actors appear on

"stilts" (*okribantes*) that "elevate" their bodies and attempt to make them "larger than life"; as already noted, Lucian viewed the performance of tragic scenes by actors using stilts and exaggerated masks as "ridiculous." And Philostratus (*Apollonios Tyana*, V, 9) describes the provincial performance of a tragic scene in Spain in which the actor, "walking on high stilts" and "with a wide open mouth," had only to speak to frighten the unsophisticated spectators out of the theater, as if they were "persecuted by a demon." Philostratus invites his reader to see this confusion of the demonic with the human as amusing. But it is amusing only because the description of the actor's performance is itself amusing (Philostratus, 1912: 483-485). Certainly the tragic masks seem merely weird compared with the powerful aura of foreboding or doom cast by a masked gladiatorial helmet.



Figure 32: Mask towers at the theater in Ostia, second or third century CE, displaying masks *not* worn by pantomimes. Photo: Karl Toepfer.

Julius Pollux (180-238 CE), in his *Onomastikon*, described 28 types of tragic masks (IV, 132-142) and 44 types of comic masks (IV, 143-155). Bieber (1961: 245) believed this inventory surveyed "the typical wardrobe of the

traveling troupes" and as a result could give "only a small selection of those used in different periods." If this is true, then both tragedy and comedy were the responsibility of the same ensemble and the social status of the actors remained constant whether they performed in tragic or comic scenes. Pollux classified masks for both genres according to social class, gender, and age. But each category of classification contained significant variation. For example, in the "young man" category, the inventory listed eight masks for tragedy and eleven for comedy; tragedy provided eleven "women's" masks but comedy only five. However, tragedy included no "courtesan" masks, while comedy supported seven, as well as masks for two "young servant maids." Tragedy inspired masks for six different "old men" but no old women, while comedy had opportunities for nine old men and three old women. Tragedy needed only three "slave" masks while comedy required seven. Pollux's catalogue implies that the masks used by a single ensemble displayed a much wider range of expressions and differentiating attributes than the fetish artifacts depicted in Bieber's treatise. Masks served to demonstrate the individuality, not only of characters and actors, but of the mask makers. The fetish masks probably functioned in much the same way as Venetian carnival masks do today: they signified a kind of permissive or carefree atmosphere; they were not an image of a standardized, uniform code of representing characters that spectators expected actors to use. Theater mask makers required pliant materials to carve or mold the details that bestowed individuality upon a face. Perhaps some masks were ceramic or even metallic, but most were probably made of wood or wax, then varnished and delicately painted. Unlike the fetish masks, theater masks were delicate objects that showed the mask maker's skill at combining unique physiognomic details with expressive textural and color effects. The pliancy of the materials perhaps does not mean the performers wore masks that were "realistic" in the sense of simulating the face of a real person. Rather, performers favored masks that produced a refinement or subtlety of expression one would never expect in a fetish mask. Some actors simply relied on cosmetic coloring of their faces; Maiuri (1953: 94) contended that the actress playing the courtesan in Figure 33 employed "the thickly powdered face of the typical *hetaira*." The grotesque physiognomic exaggerations of the fetish mask, especially the huge mouth, were probably not a consistent feature even of the mime or tragic performances of literary drama. A Terence manuscript from the fourth or fifth century CE precedes

each play with a miniature display of masks for all the characters in the text. Of the masks displayed, fewer than half have the enlarged mouth, and even in miniatures that purport to depict scenes from the plays, only some actors wear masks with gaping mouths—indeed, some characters, chiefly female, appear not to wear masks at all [Figures 12, 34] (Jones and Morey 1931). The point is that even in the performance of literary drama and farcical mimes, actors relied as much on their faces as on masks to signify the emotional life of characters. A comparison between faces and masks was a fundamental element of performance.



Figure 33: Masked characters performing a scene from a mime comedy, first century CE wall painting from Pompeii. Photo: Maiuri (1953).

In any case, as Lucian insisted, the gaping mouth mask had no practical value for the pantomimes. Such a mask hardly amplified the mood

of aristocratic voluptuousness the pantomime sought to cultivate. The physical beauty of the performer was essential to the power of the genre, and only masks that somehow heightened this beauty were acceptable. Following John Jory, Marie-Hélène Garelli discusses in some detail four clay feminine pantomime masks, dating from the second or third centuries CE, deposited in the British Museum and in the Römisch-Germanischen Museum in Cologne that show the mouths closed. "The masks do not appear to show any emotion," and they come from Dura-Europas, Timgad (Algeria), Arroniz (Northern Spain), and Germany, thus indicating a widespread performance convention of allowing the performer to infuse a scene with a specific emotion through physical action rather than expecting the mask to signify an emotion with a character (Garelli 2007: 220-221, figures 9 and 10; Jory 2001). In the fourth century CE silver plate described by Jahn in 1867, the artist has depicted a mysterious, torchlight pantomime scene of inscrutable solemnity [Figure 30]. Four masks are on display before the scene, but no one in the scene obviously wears one, none of the masks feature the gaping mouth, and when thirteen unmasked performers appear behind four mounted masks, it may be that the masks merely constitute symbolic décor and have no representative function within the performance itself. Or it may be that the masks merely signify that one is viewing a theatrical scene, and without the masks one would not know that the artist sought to represent a theatrical scene, because in the theater it was not easy to distinguish myth from reality—that is, it was not easy to distinguish the actor from the character he played because it was not altogether easy to distinguish mask from face. The sort of "beautiful mask" that achieves this effect of fusing reality with myth appears in a first century CE wall painting from the Casa del Braccialetto d'Oro in Pompeii [Figure 35].

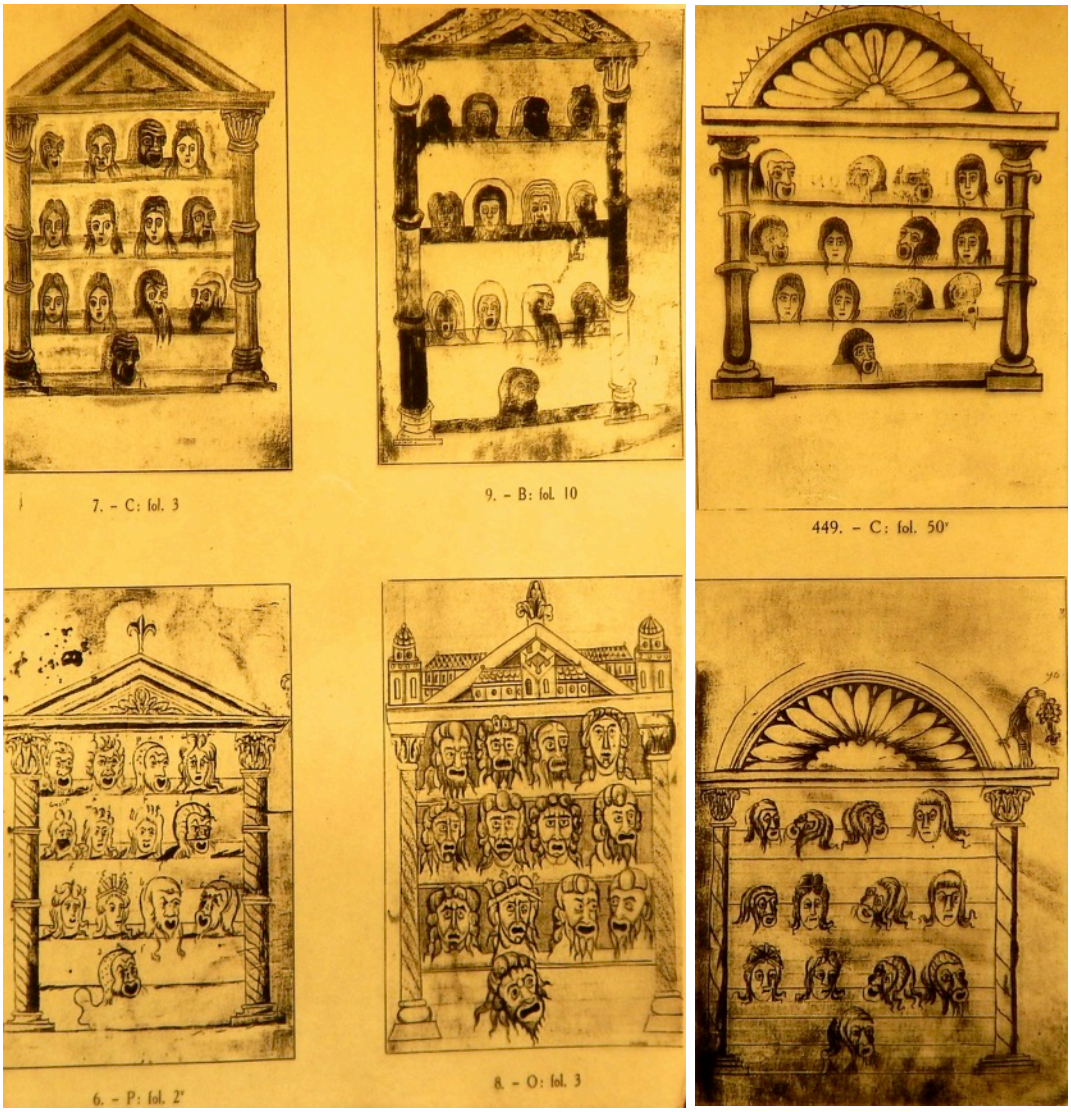


Figure 34: Masks on display as depicted in miniatures illustrating the Terence manuscripts from the fourth or fifth centuries, from Jones and Morey (1931).

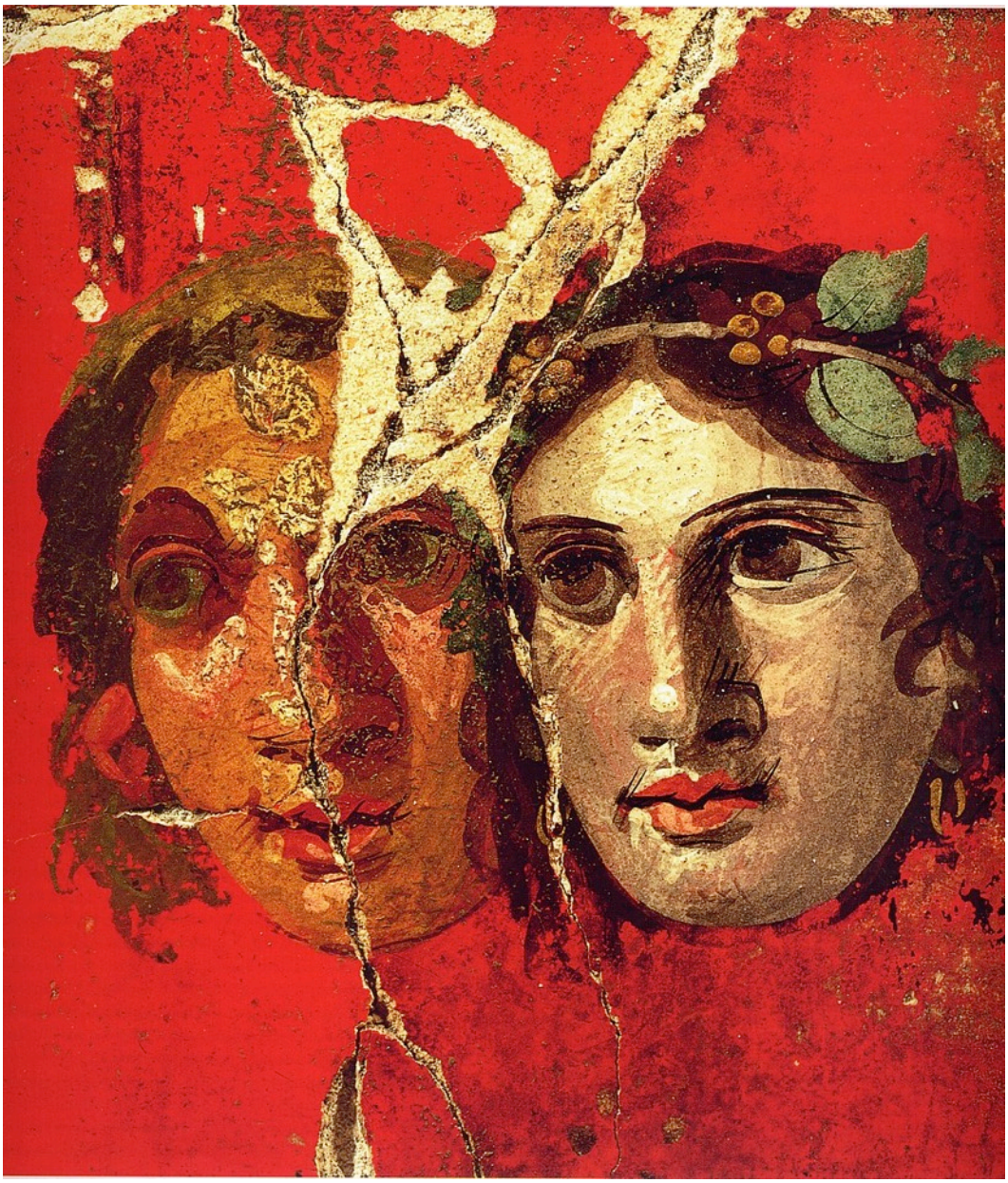


Figure 35: Roman wall painting from the First Century CE, Pompeii (House of the Golden Bracelet) depicts sexually ambiguous masks with closed mouths. Photo: Public domain.

The painting depicts two masks side-by-side, yet remarkably lifelike, as if to create some uncertainty in the viewer about whether a mask or a face is the object of representation. It's not even clear if the masks assume male or female identities; perhaps the mask on the right signifies Dionysos. These masks, with their idealized rather than grotesque physiognomy and their

refined, mysterious emotional coloring, suggest the kind of masks favored by the pantomimes (Dierichs 1997: 58). When an actor held such a mask next to his face, the effect was much more dramatic than if he held some variation of the gaping mouth mask of comedy or tragedy, for it was always more dramatic to reveal that the difference between the ideal and the real was *less* than the absurd difference between the real face and a grotesque *deformation* of the face resulting from a fetishized eternal, immutable tragic or comic condition of humanity. Further evidence that the pantomimes used idealizing or at any rate physiognomically attractive masks comes from a fourth century CE ivory relief discovered in Trier (deposited now in Berlin) that depicts a female pantomime holding up three masks in her right hand while holding a lyre in her left [Figure 36]. These masks do not have gaping mouths. Bieber contended that the masks "represent a hero, a heroine and a youth," while the "sword, crown, and lyre indicate the content of the Fabula Saltica" (1961: 236).[1] But an especially startling feature of the image is how closely the mask nearest the face of the pantomime resembles her own face. The artist's effort to carve the three masks together reinforces the perception that each face is the metamorphosis of the other, that the mythic face is embedded in the real face, and that the real face is itself but a mask. Pantomimes used masks to the extent that masks idealized a condition of metamorphosis and the mutability of human identity: masks dramatized the ability of a person to choose or assume an identity rather than the power of fate to determine identity. The Trier ivory relief provides an exquisite representation of this theatrical condition of metamorphosis. The artist places the pantomime's lyre next to her sword, and, having clothed her in a flowing palla, he nevertheless further contrasts her sword with the nakedness of her belly and navel. With her crown, lyre, sword, masks, and nudity, the pantomime provokes great uncertainty as to what her "essential" identity is. The crown, if that is what it is, perhaps bestows a queenly aura on her. But the important thing is that she embodies the imperial idea of multiple identities absorbed into a single female body.[1]

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[1] Bieber (1920: 125) earlier believed that this pantomime figure was male, but the care with which the artist sculpted the figure's breasts with a chiton yet insisted on exposing a feminized navel and belly makes it difficult to understand why Bieber even supposed the figure was male.



Figure 36: Fourth century ivory relief from Trier depicting a female pantomime. The pantomime holds masks with closed mouths. Photo: Edith Hall.

The Pantomime Performance Program

The imperial aesthetic of the ancient Roman dance-theater appealed to audiences through a *complex of opportunities* to exploit props, costumes and fabrics, facial expressions, nudity, peculiar movements and poses, luxurious color effects, acrobatic stunts, and the fusion of dancer and musician into a single figure. The performance of these "opportunities" further entailed interludes involving performances by musicians, choirs, singers, and narrators. A hypothetical sequence of acts preceding the star pantomime might include a rendition of the pyrrhic dance, which leads to an accompanied song, followed by a series of solo acrobatic stunts, a nude female dance duet, a poetic recitation with choir accompaniment, and a group dance of maenads with choir accompaniment. The audience is then ready to receive the herald's grandiose proclamation of the star pantomime. This "loose" way of organizing theatrical entertainment, according to the talents of particular performers rather than to the storytelling needs of audiences, allows the theatrical producer to expand or contract the number of individual performance pieces to fit the circumstances of specific performance occasions. The evidence for these dance and acrobatic performances does not suggest an effort to impersonate imaginary characters, as in a drama, for the mask, such an important element of the pantomime itself, is conspicuously absent from the evidence of performance by the dancers and acrobats. Indeed, nudity, not masking, dominates perception of this theatrical pleasure. Dance and acrobatic performances were much more abstract than the pantomime; they focused exclusively on the excitement generated by different bodies rather than characters. But in resisting the urge, through impersonation, to show the "otherness" within bodies, the existence of "imaginary" identities, these pieces, individually, lacked the power to sustain audience interest beyond several minutes. It is therefore unlikely that a series of dances, stunts, and musical interludes lasted more

than an hour, if even that long. The important thing is that the performers could reconfigure the hour and their talents in relation to a different emotional logic, so that, for example, the performance before the appearance of the star pantomime might begin with a maenadic dance and conclude with a pyrrhic dance, or dispense with a maenadic dance and include instead a rope dance by children wearing diaphanous costumes and glittering jewels. Obviously such entertainment depends on the efforts of a disciplined, professional troupe capable of conveying some measure of confidence in the idea of performance as a triumph of group or ensemble activity. And yet it is remarkable how rarely one encounters evidence of group dancing from the fourth century BCE onward. The images of the pyrrhic dance in the Acropolis Museum and the Villa Borghese are well known, as are occasional depictions of maenads linking hands. In contrast to the post-Hellenic eras, the fifth century Greek enthusiasm for depicting festival and cult group dances seems astonishingly abundant. And this diminishment of interest in depicting group dancing hardly coincides with a diminished interest, from the fourth century BCE onward, in the representation of group actions of great variety and complexity. Rather, with the Hellenistic era, the artistic imagination perceived dance as a phenomenon that amplified awareness of isolated individual figures rather than of group cohesion. The culture no longer perceived dance as a physical action that encourages and sustains the unison, choral identity ascribed to the festival, cult, and tribal groups of the pre-Hellenic era. Yet representation of group identity through dance by no means disappeared. On the contrary, a more complex perception of group dance emerged through the fragmentation of the performance ensemble across a sequence of pieces. This aesthetic encouraged the perception that unison group dance was either the pleasure of a provincial sensibility longing for village uniformity and synchronicity of movement or an image of myth-inspired communal coherence that was unable, due to individualizing impulses within it, to sustain itself beyond a brief “number” in a set of pieces. The dance section of the performance satisfies a need to see group unity as a power that extends across different bodies, moods, talents, and references without necessarily including everyone in the group at the same time and without requiring an imaginary set of references (a story) to show a connection between figures in one discrete segment to figures in another. What connects the performers to each other is an effort to bestow pleasure

on the idea that an aesthetically satisfying group contained an assortment of individuals who represented different talents and different cultures in different relations to each other in different spatial and acoustic configurations that produced different sensations and emotional currents: different bodies moving differently nevertheless created a unified image of The Body. The sequence of songs, dances, stunts, musical interludes, and recitations absorbed influences not only from the Greeks, but from the Egyptians, the Etruscans, the Italians, and Near Eastern cultures, and the sequence as a whole proposed a body-centered rather than word-centered idea of group action that could combine and recombine disparate cultural strands. It is an aristocratic aesthetic of group identity, in contrast to a demotic aesthetic promoted above all through mass unison movement or, as in the case of the mimes and even the obscure performance of a tragedy, through the stabilization of performer identities by subordinating them to the imaginary "characterizations" of a story imposed upon The Body. This aristocratic perspective resists the idea of the group as a unity of class, ethnic, physiognomic, linguistic, or narrative identities and instead favors an idea of the group as a reconfigurable assortment of allegiances governed by the concept of a troupe or company rather than by the authority of a star, a story, or a synchronized mass ensemble.

Pantomime Performance in Theaters

The notion of reconfigurable relations between bodies allowed the pantomime troupes to perform in a wide range of spaces. The troupes did not depend on a particular set of spatial conditions for their performances to take place. Rather, performances took place in relation to occasions and circumstances determined by the owners of the troupes, the aristocratic patrons, who assigned their troupes to perform mostly in three types of spaces: 1) theaters; 2) villas; and 3) hippodromes. But pantomimes sometimes found assignment in other types of spaces, such as public and cult processions, and, most likely, at least in the later empire, nightclub or brothel environments. Freedom of bodily movement implied a freedom to inhabit all kinds of spaces and theatricalize them. The pantomime aesthetic transcended the spaces in which it materialized. The body of the performer was the dominant source of spectacle, and the scenic context was seldom more than the "reality" in which the performance took place. The idea that environment determines identity or character, which drives scenic art to

achieve greater and greater complexity and detail, was completely alien to the pantomime culture. However, while government officials showed little or no inclination to ban pantomimes from particular spaces or sites, the culture as a whole determined that some spaces were not appropriate for pantomime performance. Pantomimes never appeared in the amphitheater, the site pervasively designated for the performance of gladiatorial combats and *venationes*. It is not clear why the pantomimes had no place in the amphitheater, but probably the primary reason was political. The owners or sponsors of pantomime ensembles aligned them with "factions" or fan clubs that a sponsor could mobilize on behalf of his political ambitions. Factions functioned like political parties—or rather, like guilds capable of testing political authority. However, Cameron (1976: 193-229), contradicting other scholars, argues that the factions, designated as "Blues," "Greens," "Reds," or "Whites," arose first with the pantomimes, who in the fourth century CE extended their successful organization of fan clubs to include enthusiasts for chariot teams in the hippodromes. The implication in Cameron is that the fans of chariot teams were above all fans of pantomimes, that owners of pantomime ensembles also owned chariot teams, and that, if the owners of pantomime ensembles and chariot teams were not the same, chariot teams sought pantomimes who brought with them a bloc of fans. In any case, gladiatorial fighters did not inspire fans clubs or factions, even if they had fans, even if, occasionally, aristocrats sponsored gladiators or gladiatorial teams, and even if, in the amphitheater, non-pantomime theater ensembles could perform tragic scenes of old dramas in which the death of a character entailed the actual execution of a condemned prisoner. Audiences might cheer the struggles and triumphs of a particular gladiator, and especially valiant gladiators could stir and unite entire audiences. But, as condemned men incapable of choosing any other life, they could not symbolize or represent a distinct political perspective within an audience, for they were representative of a doom or inescapable fate, not of any choice before the citizenry. Neither the pantomimes nor their audiences would find their pleasure in metamorphosis credible in the amphitheater, which rigidly reduced human identity to a vulnerable body hardened with muscle and armor. The gladiatorial contests appealed to a contrary aspect of a contradictory attitude toward the transformation of identity within the culture, and the culture accommodated this contradiction by separating the function of the amphitheater from any other space inhabited by the

pantomimes, who were otherwise "free" to perform in any space that welcomed them. The culture did not assign a special place for them. When emperors or politicians regarded pantomimes as a menace or a troublesome influence on audiences, they banned them altogether from cities and compelled them to wander elsewhere.

Roman civilization invested enormous state and public resources in the construction of theaters, and during the Empire, the scale of investment in theater architecture, as a portion public spending, exceeded that of even those modern societies cultivating a supposedly generous attitude toward theatrical art. Provincial cities throughout the Empire built theaters of a monumental splendor that such cities or cities of comparable size or importance have seemed incapable of achieving since the collapse of the Western Empire in the late fifth century CE. The Romans regarded theaters as large-scale public works projects. The primary function of theater construction was to demonstrate the wealth, generosity, and power of the government and patrons who sponsored the construction. Cities and towns in the imperial era built theaters to signify their economic or social importance, and the signification of this importance depended more on the scale of construction than on the scale of public appetite for theatrical entertainment. Theater designers built according to the desires of patrons, not according to the needs of theatrical artists, which meant that theaters provided other kinds of activities besides theatrical performances. Indeed, most theatrical performances did not take place in the grand municipal theaters at all. The mimes operated more often in an improvised, mobile performance environment that found much of its audience in the street, while the pantomimes performed mostly in villas or in spaces obtained for them by their patrons. The state or municipalities owned theaters open to the public, but outside of the imperial family, neither owned pantomime ensembles. Thus ensembles did not establish residency in theaters; they performed there because their patrons bought time in the theaters. Unlike the mime companies, the pantomime ensembles, subsidized by their owners to demonstrate the wealth and access to luxurious pleasures of a family, did not perform with a commercial motive and therefore did not depend on attracting large audiences to sustain their existence, and even when they did attract large audiences, perhaps more so in the hippodromes than in the theaters, the pantomimes would hardly have regarded the size of the audience as an accurate measure of a "market value" ascribed to the

pantomime aesthetic. Pantomime performances functioned primarily as "gifts" to audiences from the patrons, who sponsored performances as a way of defining and developing political constituencies, clienteles, or blocs of patronage beneficiaries. The calendar for performances did not conform to a public appetite for theater; rather, it operated according to the desire of sponsors to commemorate or honor some special occasion, such as a birthday, the visit of dignitaries, a marriage, or the manifestation of a god.

In short, pantomime performance and Roman theater architecture did not evolve in relation to each other. Theater builders did not design theaters around the needs of the pantomime aesthetic, and the pantomime aesthetic did not need theaters to achieve its fulfillment. Nevertheless, pantomimes sometimes performed in theaters, and when they did, their performances could take advantage of architectural features that were unique to Roman theater design. When the pantomime assumed a prominent status in Roman culture at the end of the first century BCE, the Romans had already begun to build theaters in stone and marble, emulating in more durable materials the opulence of the wooden theaters constructed in the east during the Hellenistic era. The enormous theater built in Rome by Pompey in 55 BCE, perhaps the largest theater ever built in the ancient world, established the determination of the Romans to regard theater architecture as a projection of civic power completely independent of whatever happened as performance within it [Figure 37].



Figure 37: Reconstruction of the Theater of Pompey, built in 55 BCE and operating throughout the Roman Empire. Photo: University of Caen.

The experience of being in the theater must in itself immerse the spectator in an aura of "greatness," regardless of the motive that brought the spectator into the theater. Unlike the Greeks, the Romans viewed theater as a self-contained institution, separate from the natural world and in no way dependent upon a "beautiful" site for its justification. Because of their skill in building with arches, vaults, and stone foundations, the Romans could erect theaters on completely flat ground: they did not require, as the Greeks did, a hillside to support the audience. They situated a theater in a functional relation to other civic buildings, so that people saw the building as an extension of a unified or connected administrative domain or complex. At the same time, Roman theaters everywhere conformed to a set of architectural conventions that differentiated theatrical spaces from other performance spaces and assured a strict separation of performance categories within the culture.

In the archetypal Roman theater, the audience faced the stage in a perfect half-circle of concentric rows or rings of seats (the *cavea*) that rose above the lowest point in the theater, the orchestra, from between 30 and 45 degrees. The orchestra was also generally a half-circle that magnified the distance between the spectator and the action on the stage. The

performance function of the orchestra is obscure when one considers it relation to the stage. Some theaters, such as Djemila (in Africa), Pompeii, and Herodes Atticus (in Athens), provide steps from the stage into the orchestra, indicating the passage of action from the stage to the orchestra (Bieber: 1961: 203, 212). But, according to documentation in Bieber (1961: 191, 206, 209), other theaters, such as Aspendus (in southern Turkey), Ostia, and Sabratha (in Africa), do not provide steps; moreover, at Ostia, for example, the stage is over five feet above the orchestra, making a transition of action from the stage to the orchestra awkward at best, although it is possible that in the same scene some action could enter the orchestra from the *paradoi* while other action entered the stage from behind the *scaenae frons*, without any action moving from the orchestra to the stage or vice versa. According to Vitruvius Pollio, in *De architectura*, 13-16 (ca. 15 BCE), the orchestra is reserved for spectators of high rank; therefore the stage must not rise above five feet to assure the visibility of the action to these spectators. But this explanation raises questions. Because the orchestra is a flat space, it could accommodate only a few spectators (who presumably supplied their own chairs) without blocking the view of others in this space. However, if these few privileged spectators sit on the periphery of the orchestra, the space also provides excellent opportunity for performance. Indeed, the orchestra seems designed precisely for this purpose. Bieber (1961: 215, 217) contends that in Greece, where the Romans did not build amphitheaters, gladiatorial combats, animal combats (*venationes*), and aquatic spectacles took place in the orchestra. These shows, she contends, are the reason why we find thick parapets surrounding some orchestras there. To further support her contention, she quotes Dio Chrysostomus (*Oratio*, XXXI, 121), who remarks (ca. 100 CE) on the slaughter of fighters "among the very seats in which the hierophant and other priests must sit." If it is the case that gladiatorial combats took place in some theater orchestras, such as the Theater of Dionysus in Athens, it is not clear why the parapet is necessary, especially when it partially obscures the view of the action for high-ranking spectators seated behind the parapet in ornate stone chairs (Bieber 1961: 213). If the parapet completely walled the perimeter of the orchestra, spectators in the orchestra could reach their seats only through the paradoi. Gladiatorial combats seem feasible in the orchestra, though never on the scale that was possible in the amphitheater, but the orchestra was a doubtful site for wild animal fights and aquatic

spectacles. The parapet was not high enough to contain animals, nor was the orchestra deep enough to hold water capable of supporting any aquatic spectacle (not to mention the difficulty of damming up the paradoi and sealing all the leaks in orchestra floor brickwork), although at Corinth, the evidence, dating from 217 CE, both architectural and iconographic, for animal fights in the orchestra is persuasive (Bieber 1961: 216-217, 252-253). At Pompeii, which had its own amphitheater for gladiatorial combats, the small theater contains a remnant of a parapet around the periphery of the orchestra, which itself has four rings of steps each wide enough to hold chairs for spectators (Bieber 1961: 175). The orchestra is too small for gladiatorial combats, although large enough for theatrical action. In general, then, the parapet most likely functioned to separate spectators according to some class or privileged distinction that arose from spectator proximity to the performers, which implies that the orchestra was an expected or frequent site of performance. However, this peculiar parapet class distinction does not appear to have been universal in ancient theater architecture anymore than the presence or absence of steps leading from the stage to the orchestra. It would seem therefore that the inclusion or exclusion of steps into the orchestra was a choice made by the builders of a theater and not the result of a universal assumption about the performance relation between the stage and the orchestra.

The issue of steps from the stage to the orchestra amplifies the possibilities of pantomime performance. The performer brings to the theater a repertoire of mythic scenes. But the choreography is flexible enough to adapt to a peculiar architectural configuration and spectator expectation whereby each mythic scene can 1) take place entirely on the stage, or 2) take place entirely in the orchestra, or 3) take place partially on the stage and partially in the orchestra (given steps into the orchestra), or 4) take place entirely on the stage with the musicians in the orchestra, or 5) take place entirely in the orchestra with the musicians on the stage, or 6) take place entirely in the orchestra or entirely on the stage, even though the architecture provides steps from the stage into the orchestra or the performers insert their own steps. The advantage of the orchestra is that it allows for depth of action in the sense of forward-backward movement. The advantage of the stage is that it allows for strong lateral, panoramic, frieze-like movement. Because of its ambiguous relation between orchestra and stage, Roman theater architecture offered greater freedom of action than

the classical Greek theater, where all of the action took place in the full circle orchestra. The stage was actually an invention of the Hellenistic era, which saw the end of the orchestra as a site of dramatic action and which relegated the chorus (insofar as a chorus still had a place in the theater) to the orchestra (Bieber 1961: 117-119). In the Hellenistic theater, the stage was quite high above the orchestra (twelve feet or so). By elevating the action and pressing it more tightly against a decorative scenic backdrop or architectonic context, the Hellenistic theater, which emphasized the authority of performers and spectacle over that of authors and texts, achieved a monumentalization of theatrical action that was not possible within the orchestra alone. The Romans appreciated the monumental effect, but grasped that monumentality intensified by increasing the elevation and the scale of the scenic backdrop (the *scaenae frons*) rather than the stage (see Courtois 1989: 81). A low wide stage against a high backdrop reinforces the monumentality of human action more effectively than a high stage against a high backdrop, because a high stage cuts into the scale of the *scaenae frons* and intensifies the perception of the action as constrained on a kind of precipice that entails either a laborious ascent or an elevated remoteness of the actors from the spectators which was perhaps incongruous with their social status. The Roman *scaenae frons* could rise three stories and well over 100 feet, but the theater artists in the Roman theater world never appear to have considered staging action anywhere but on the low stage and in the orchestra.

At the advent of the Imperial era, the Roman stage (*pulpitum*) was already typically 30 meters wide and only about 5 meters deep. A wide, shallow stage prevailed everywhere the Romans built theaters, but the size and scale of the stages did not conform to any convention. At the Theater of Marcellus in Rome, completed about 15 BCE, the stage was about 45 meters wide and about nine meters deep. The theater held about 11,000 spectators. The North African theater at Sabratha, built around 200 CE, contained a stage that was 42.7 meters wide and 8.55 meters deep, although the *cavea* held only about 5,000 spectators (Caputo 1959: 26). At Lecce, the second century CE theater held about 6,000 spectators, but the stage was only 25 meters wide and 5 meters deep (D'Andria 1999: 28-29). It took me 33 steps to traverse the 30 meters width of the stage, which is 5 meters deep, in the large theater in Pompeii; this theater, transformed from a Greek to a Roman model between 200 and 80 BCE, held about 5,000 spectators (Bieber 1961:

171-173; Baker 2005). A proportionate correlation between stage width and seating capacity doesn't seem valid. From a performance perspective, the obvious advantage of a wider rather than narrower stage is that a wider stage can hold more performers. But this advantage is obscure when considering that plays seldom had more than four persons on stage at once, and pantomimes, with musicians, seldom more than five. A wide stage could present several acrobatic performances at once, and, presumably, would enhance the display of spectacular stunts, such as a sequence of somersaults, leaps, flips, or canon-like dance movements. But widening the stage by ten or fifteen meters beyond the norm of thirty meters would not provide any special advantage in displaying even these actions, because the excitement of a stunt does not intensify by increasing the number of actions it takes to complete it, but by increasing the physical complexity of the stunt, which, given the size of the human body, seldom depends on increasing the space needed to accommodate the complexity. (This principle does not apply, however, to the performance of tightrope acts.)

The stage was usually built of wood; most likely its surface was painted with brilliant decorative patterns. The stage was shallow compared with theaters built since the Renaissance. The shallowness assured the expansion of action laterally and panoramically rather than trajectorally, although even at five meters depth, a performer still had sufficient room for the powerful display of backward and forward movements. At five meters, the stage comfortably could hold a rack displaying the pantomime masks, the performer lifting and turning the mask to all sections of the *cavea*, an assistant (or even two) helping the performer to attach costume accessories, and several musicians or a chorus behind these persons, though such crowding of bodies on such a wide stage was probably not common. Because the musicians followed the dancer, they most likely performed on stage with the pantomime, so they could see his or her movements. The extant iconography depicting the relation between musicians and dancer suggests that the musician or musicians stood to the left of the performer as seen by the spectator [e.g., Figure 3]. Conceivably the musicians could perform in the orchestra when the dancer was on stage, but then they would have to face the stage to see the performer and the sound would not radiate as effectively to the audience. The interpellator was probably also on stage, perhaps to the right of the performer as seen by the spectator, or at any rate on the opposite side of the performer in relation to the musicians,

assuming the Roman fondness for panoramic or frieze-like sequencing of human figures in imagery. It is not clear what the advantage is of a left to right reading of the figures on stage that flows from chorus to musicians to pantomime to interpellator. If the arrangement was right to left, the effect would seem pretty much the same, and, lacking more abundant proof to support the left to right hypothesis, it might well have been the case with some ensembles that the musicians were on the right and the interpellator on the left, perhaps even switching positions within the same performance.

However, in later centuries, when the pantomime appears to have evolved beyond the glorification of a solo star pantomime, the Romans may have explored the options for producing "planes of actions" in the sense of introducing tensions between foreground and background actions. The enigmatic fourth century CE silver plate described by Jahn (1867) depicts three levels of action involving thirteen figures, with four each on the "top" and "bottom" levels and five in the middle level [Figure 30]. If one supposes that this entire image represents a single scene, then how would it look in a theater? The bottom level, with the masks displayed, could take place in the orchestra, while the torch-bearing dancers of the middle level perform on the stage. The top level, with a woman leading a female prisoner, could depict an action issuing from behind the *scaenae frons* and breaking up the dance: the strange machines on either side of the action at the top suggest levers for raising and lowering a curtain, although why the spokes radiating from the wheels do not extend throughout their circumference is yet another of many puzzling details in this bizarre theatrical scene (Jahn proposed, unpersuasively, that the devices are water organs). But an even more confusing depiction of depth of action occurs in the first century CE Pompeian painting of a pantomime discussed by Olga Elia (1965). The painter has crowded six figures together, including a rider on a horse [Figure 31]. They perform in or on the periphery of an orchestra-like stage or podium, but, unlike Jahn's plate, the figures do not produce a unified effect. It is as if the artist wished to depict all at once different elements of a performance program (nude shield dances, equestrian stunt, dramatic scene, and actor stepping backstage to the prop room) without relying on a left-to-right sequencing of the discrete actions in the program. If we assume that the artist's subject is "theater" rather than any particular mythic scene represented in the theater, then he has foregrounded the nude shield dancers because they perform closest to the audience, on the periphery of

the orchestra, and perhaps they also performed first (if we are sorting for a consecutive sequence of actions). The dramatic scene then occurs deeper in space, and the horseman performs his act above or behind the spaces occupied by the other performers. If, however, we assume that the artist did indeed represent a mythic scene as might be seen in the theater, with so much extraordinary action happening all at once, then his picture confirms that in the first century CE the Romans treated the orchestra and the stage as a unified performance space that allowed for grandiose mythic scenes that could include exultant female warrior dancers celebrating on the periphery of the orchestra the union of the man and woman in the middle while the rider on the stage makes his horse and cape leap exuberantly.

But with either assumption, it is at least evident from this otherwise confusing picture and from the silver plate that the Romans saw action in the theater unfolding in planes as well as fresco-like on the stage. Apuleius's description of "The Judgment of Paris" pantomime in *The Golden Ass* (ca. 152 CE) reinforces this point: the scene contains goats feeding on grass, a hill with a sprouting brook, and numerous figures dancing, parading, and posing. It is difficult to see how the spectacular swirl of action depicted could happen on a conventional Roman stage, though the author definitely assigns the action to the theater in Corinth. The author describes in succession the appearance of Paris, Mercury, Minerva, Juno, and Venus, who apparently do not leave the scene, for he describes them again and the large entourages that accompany them, playing music and dancing. Then: "After the judgment of Paris was ended Juno and Pallas departed away sadly and angrily, shewing by their gesture that they were very wroth and would revenge themselves on Paris; but Venus, that was right pleased and glad in her heart, danced about the theater with much joy, together with all her train. This done, from the top of the hill through a privy spout ran a flood of wine coloured with saffron, which fell upon the goats in a sweet-scented stream, and changed their white hair into yellow more fair" (Apuleius 1972: 259). A credible performance of this swarming spectacle in a conventional Roman theater would require most of the action to occur within the orchestra, with the goddesses and their entourages streaming in from the *paradoi* while the stage was reserved for Paris, Mercury, the goats, and the hill with the gushing stream. To produce the stream, theater technicians could have funneled water through the central door of the Corinth *scaenae frons* into the hill on stage that most likely would have concealed the door.

Getting water to the theater was not a problem, for the remains of a fountain exist in the courtyard behind the theater. But the water might have been piped under the stage and funneled up into the hill on stage through a trap door. A cavern under the stage was a common feature of Roman stages, and the theater at Corinth appears to have accommodated one. Caputo (1959: Plate 15, Figs. 27 and 28) provides excellent documentation of the understage, less than two meters deep, at Sabratha, which indicates that trapdoors opened up only onto the stage, not into the orchestra. (See also Bieber 1961: 205 for an illustration of the understage at Dugga in Tunis.) Moreover, the Romans do not appear to have developed underground or catacomb-like spaces for their theaters as they did for their amphitheaters. With no deep underground space in which to store very large objects, like monumental statues or horses, it was quite difficult for anything larger than a crouching man to arise onto the stage from beneath it. But Apuleius does remark that, "by certain engines the ground opened and swallowed up the hill of wood" (Apuleius 1972: 259). Such an effect could happen fairly easily using the central door of the *scaenae frons* to feed the rigging that dismantled the hill. But to have the "engines" located in the understage would seem unnecessarily complicated and inefficient, given the tightness of the space under the stage and the difficulties involved in moving and operating the machinery in the space. But perhaps an effect such as Apuleius describes occurred using a combination of the central door and a sliding trapdoor that allowed parts of the hill to fall into the understage while other parts got pulled through the central door, assuming that the piping to produce the stream and wine spray was built into the scenery rather than into the theater.

Of course, the language in Apuleius is fiction: the author did not intend the reader to evaluate the passage on the basis of its accuracy in depicting an actual sequence of actions in the theater. Nevertheless, the extravagance of action he describes was plausible within the conventional Roman theater architecture of his era and well before that time. Indeed, the narrator describes with nearly perfect precision and detachment the mixture of wonder, enchantment, and expectation of a mysterious transformation of bodies that would most strongly motivate a person to attend the theater. The author's objective is not only to satirize the provincial world the narrator encounters, but the whole concept of metamorphosis that was central to any understanding of "reality" in the

pagan consciousness of that time. The pantomime scene is only one of many variations on the theme of metamorphosis in the book. But no matter how exaggerated the scene may appear, the author has to present it in a way that was familiar to his reader in order to set up the real object of his satire, which is the metamorphosis of theater into a spectacle of death, when the narrator, the ass, suddenly discovers himself implicated in the theatrical action: the audience expects him to copulate with a vile adulterous woman in a "bed finely and bravely prepared, shining with tortoise-shell of Ind, rising with bolsters of feathers, and covered with silk and other things necessary" (Apuleius 1972: 259). Following this degradation, wild animals would tear apart the woman and devour her. With this section of the book, Apuleius shows how the glamorous pleasures of pantomime performance mask a dark, bestial, malignant desire in the audience for the degradation, slaughter, and punishment of others. The object of satire is not so much the extravagances of the theater as the Roman obsession with the metamorphosis of theater into reality, which means the staged, aesthetic transformation of life into death. Apuleius apparently anticipated by more than sixty years the actual transformation of the theater at Corinth in 217 CE into a site capable of offering theatrical spectacles, gladiatorial combats, and animal fights, although whether any of these spectacles were combined to the extent that he imagined in *The Golden Ass* remains unknown.

Perhaps the most impressive, dominant feature of Roman theater architecture, the *scaenae frons* was an elaborately decorated wall rising behind and high above the stage. In many theaters, the height of the *scaenae frons* was equivalent to the height of the highest point in the *cavea*, sometimes more than thirty meters. The *scaenae frons* for the theater in Orange, built in the first century CE, rose 36 meters. The typical facade contained three stories, with the first story somewhat higher than the upper two. In the early years of the Empire, a two-story *scaenae frons* was typical, and in the eastern part of the Empire two-story walls remained the norm [Figure 38]. The first story usually contained a central door onto the stage flanked by two slightly smaller doors, although some theaters did contain as many as five or six doors on the first story. The second and third stories also contained doors, but these did not open onto any staging area as such. While it was not impossible to stage spectacular stunts using the upper stories, the primary purpose of these levels was to bestow magnificence and grandeur upon the theatrical enterprise. All stories offered elaborate

configurations of columns, niches, statues, tabernacles, entablatures, podia, and pediments. Twenty columns per story was normal, although the enormous wall at Sabratha used 32 columns on each of its three stories (Bieber 1961: 206; Caputo 1959: 27). Some columns supported niches holding tabernacles and statues. The life-sized or larger statues, sometimes twenty or more, represented gods, muses, or emperors. Niches often indented the wall, and sometimes the indentations were curved. The elaborateness of the façade seems to have depended entirely on the amount of money the builders had to spend. The low wall supporting the stage itself also contained elaborate decoration that functioned in unison with the ornamentation of the *scaenae frons*. On this low wall appeared sculpted friezes; some theaters constructed niches for the insertion of more statues, and these niches could be curved inward, as at Sabratha, Ostia, Dugga, Djemila, or Pompeii, or set into cave-like tabernacles, as at Leptis Magna.

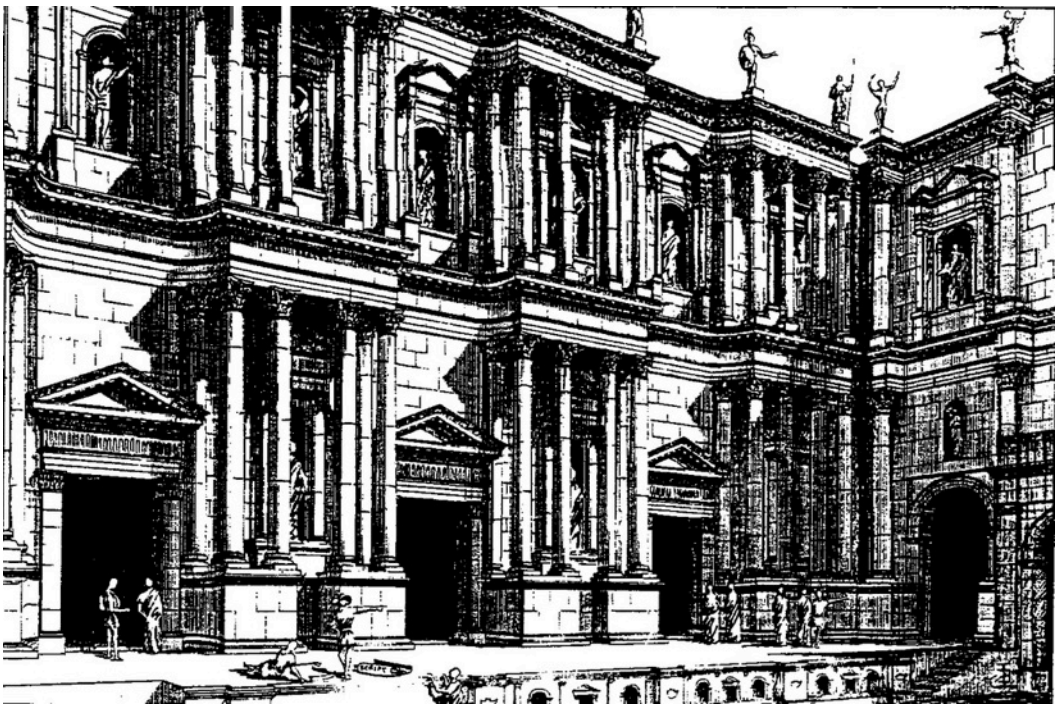


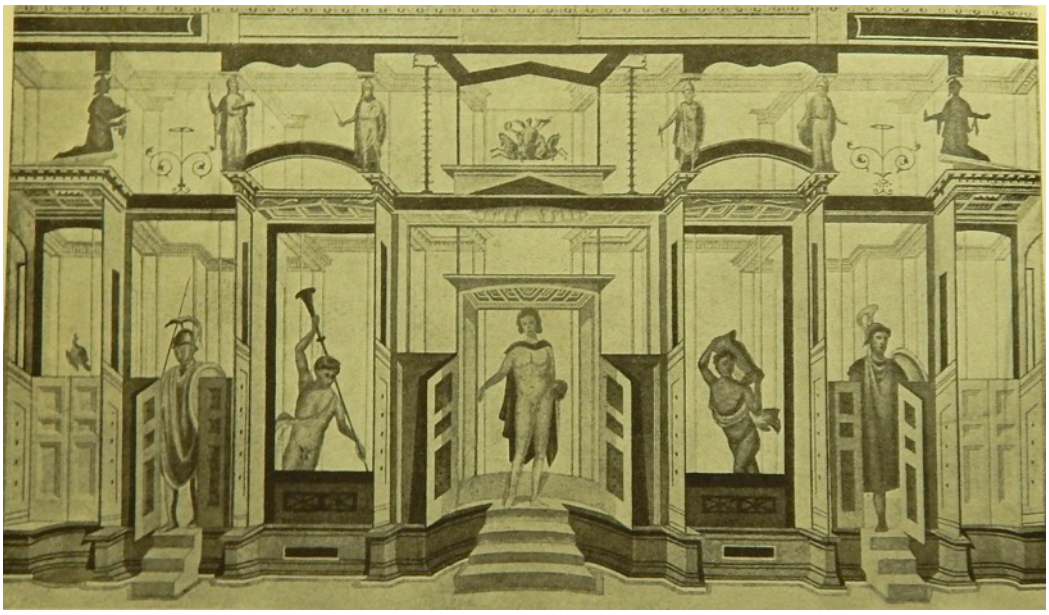
Figure 38: Reconstruction of the *scenae frons* of the South Theater of Jerash, Jordan, ca. 100 CE, from Ian Browning (1982).

The niches exude an enigmatic aura. The evidence for their theatrical function comes primarily from wall paintings, most particularly from the images in the House of the Gladiators in Pompeii. But the

evidence is confusing. Bieber contends (1961: 232) that a painting in the House of the Gladiators depicts a pantomime performance of Apollo and Marsyas, with the actor posing for each role in each of the niches, left to right, in the sequence in which he performed them [Figure 39]. However, it is difficult to see how the niches functioned practically, given the architectural conditions the painter describes. Both the *regia* and the two flanking *hospitalia* appear to enclose the posing figures in columned pillars that would obscure the view of any spectator not seated directly in front of the stage. The shadows cast by these enclosing structures would further complicate efforts of spectators to see the poses ascribed by the artist, who pays no attention at all to the intricate shadow effects his elaborate architectural scheme would produce. In this and other paintings from the House of the Gladiators, the artist even attaches half doors to the niches, further amplifying the drama of bodily revelation or pose, especially since some of the bodies (actors and athletes) are nude. Most likely the artists have produced composite images that strive to idealize things they have seen in performance and things the performance urges the spectator to imagine. It is therefore plausible that pantomimes used the *regia* and the *hospitalia*, with their little staircases, to present the poses that initiate and end the movements of the pantomime, although in reality these niches would have to dispense with the columns if spectators were to appreciate the dramatic effect of the poses. Probably these paintings refer to niches specially built of wood for use in an indoor theater; niches of the sort depicted do not seem to belong to the architecture of the large outdoor theaters, which sometimes contained statues but otherwise could not function as the artists for the House of the Gladiators represent them. At any rate, the *regia* and the *hospitalia* function as extensions of the *scaenae frons*, the purpose of which is to transform all action occurring before it into an eternal monument, with human figures ever seeking to become statues, immortal beings frozen in poses of physical or expressive perfection. The painting of Apollo and Marsyas shows a nude male holding a lyre in the *regia*, while on either side of him are clothed males speaking from a *pulpitum*, which would suggest that the artist saw the pantomime musicians as taking their positions either in the *regia* or in a niche and the interpellator assuming a position in the *pulpitum* or in a similar indentation of the *scaenae frons*. The visibility of these figures was perhaps not vital to the performance, and indeed, by placing them in these shadowy niches, the

performance would become more mysterious, as voices and music emanated from bodies the spectator could not see distinctly.

Another mysterious scenic effect associated with the *scaenae frons* involves the use of curtains in the niches or doorways. Bieber (1961: 201, 203-206, 216) inventories the archeological evidence of shaft holes inserted into doorways and niches to provide curtain rods in theaters in Orange (France), Dugga (Tunisia), Merida (Spain), Sabratha (Libya), and Corinth (Greece), all built mostly in the second century CE. Radke-Stegh (1978: 69-77) surveys even more theaters, contending that throughout the empire curtains were a common feature of theaters by the middle of the first century CE. She cites literary sources that propose the introduction of theater curtains from Greece in 133 BCE, and by 56 BCE, when Cicero made reference to a theater curtain in his defense of Caelio, it was easy to associate the lifting of a curtain with the revelation of an action one was not supposed to see. It does seem that the use of curtains was by the second century CE pervasive or



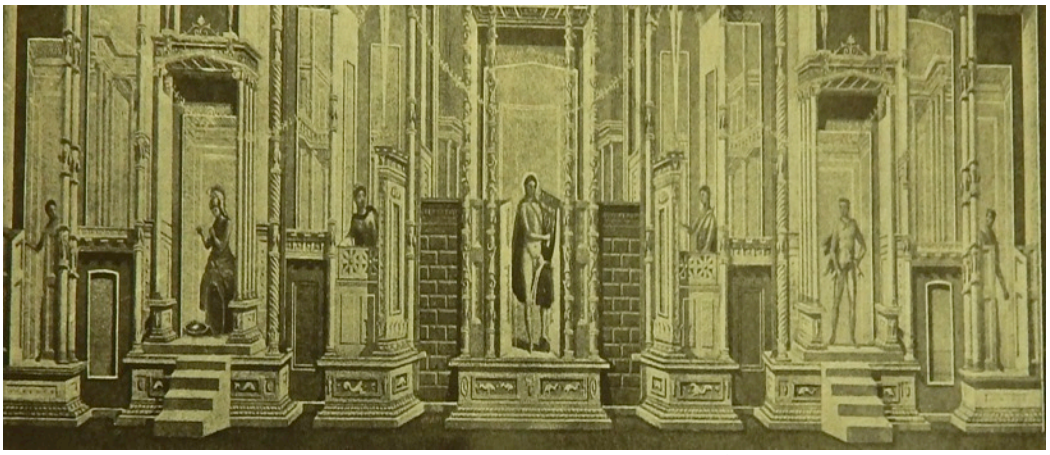


Figure 39: First century wall paintings from Pompeii (House of the Gladiators) showing theatrical performances occurring on stages with columns and niches (*hospitalia*) that would obscure the spectator's view of the action if performed on an actual stage. Photos: from Bieber (1961: 232-233).

conventional, although Radke-Stegh argues (85-86) that after the second century they lost their appeal, ostensibly because spectators felt that the use of curtains interrupted the excitement of the performance. But how the curtains functioned in pantomime performance remains obscure. The idea that a huge curtain encompassed the entire length of the *scaenae frons* remains in dispute, with skeptics probably holding the more convincing position (Radke-Stegh: 70-71), although it is possible that smaller, indoor theaters did have curtains that spanned the entire *scaenae frons*. However, two types of curtain had no connection to the theater architecture. The *aulaeum* was a tapestry attached to a large frame to form a screen that concealed the performers until the performance began. Phaedrus, in Book V, Fable 7 (ca. 45 CE), describes this curtain as "falling" as a pantomime commences. Radke-Stegh found no evidence to support the idea that the *aulaeum* served to separate scenes from each other or assumed any other function than to signify the beginning of the performance by "sinking" (80). Ovid and Virgil make reference to ornamental designs and figures stitched into the tapestry, an effect presumably applied to curtains for doorways and niches (81), with the sponsors of the performance paying for the weaving of the images into the fabric. The Romans also used the term *siparium* to refer to theater curtains, but almost entirely in relation to performances by mimes, who performed before the curtain and then went behind it when completing a scene or preparing to enter a scene (Beare 1955: 260). The

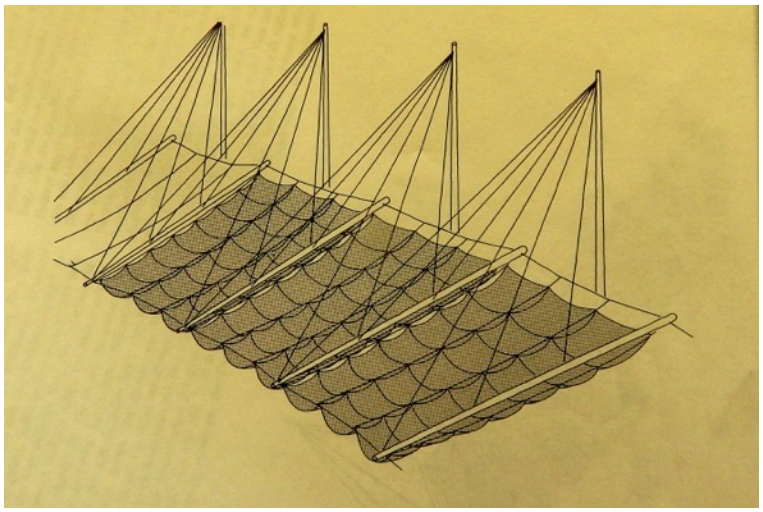
siparium appears to have consisted simply of a large, heavy cloth hung on a movable or easily dismantled frame; this contrasted sharply with the more opulent *aulaeum* and signified a less refined or vulgar level of performance that supposedly "did not belong in the theater," even when, in the second century CE, mimes began performing tragedies and comedies in theaters (Reich 1903: I, 608).

How curtains functioned in the doorways and niches is more difficult to ascertain, even though the archeological evidence for their existence is abundant and pervasive. An ambivalent attitude toward curtains seems to emerge from the historical record: the Romans provided abundantly for their use, yet theaters did not use them in a way that has elicited much insight from the artifacts of history. The wall paintings are not especially helpful or at least the artists do not find curtains useful in embellishing their architectural fantasies. Bieber publishes a pair of images of marble sarcophagus friezes in the Louvre that depict actors performing before *siparia* (250), although these images suggest that the artist has sculpted a curtain as a convenient and less demanding way of signifying "theater" than deploying a theater architectural trope. More interesting is a painting in the Naples Museum that shows a group of women seated around a small table watching another woman, standing, apparently about to begin a dance accompanied by a tibia player at the table who raises her instrument [Figure 31b]. A curtain hangs behind them, and peering behind the curtain are a man and a woman, servants presumably. The dancer appears to hold a ball in her right hand while raising with her left hand a curious object, perhaps some kind of wand or incense holder. The curtain functions to seal off from whatever is behind it any view of the unfolding dance scene, so that what the painter depicts is probably not a theatrical but a ritual performance the excitement of which depended upon an atmosphere of secrecy. Curtains closed off a doorway or niche from the spectator, and as long as they remained closed, the spectator anticipated that eventually they would open to reveal a figure of beauty hidden behind them. In other words, curtains were a device for concealing and revealing particular bodies and costumes at special moments rather than a conventional component of performance that identified the entrances and exits of performers. The Romans apparently associated curtains with the execution of mysterious actions; they projected a symbolic significance rather than served a practical function, since the Romans did not seem to

use them to cool rooms or to shut out light. This point achieves reinforcement by examining the painting of a pantomime published by Elia [Figure 31a]. Above the action on the stage hangs a large piece of fabric looped into a kind of bow that resembles a canopy. The purpose of this canopy is quite obscure, though it does fill the space above the performers with a great but pliant weight that at least bestows upon the scene an opulence or luxuriousness otherwise lacking in the architecture itself. That probably was the primary purpose of curtains in pantomime performance: when the patrons felt like spending money on them, they signified a transitory luxuriousness, an ephemeral and velourous plushness, neither hiding nor revealing anything, but contrasting glamorously with the frozen eternity signified by the *scaenae frons*.

Another transient feature of the monumental theater architecture was capable of introducing a mysterious effect on pantomime performance. This was the *vela*, an enormous canopy or screen that shielded spectators from the sun and cast deep shadows on the stage. In use as early as 69 BCE and apparently a Roman invention, it was a complicated apparatus that involved a mechanical releasing of masts 30 meters in length from which unfurled large velum, linen, or canvas sheets or "sails," richly colored, that extended over a large section of the audience; the Romans never developed a solution for covering the entire theater and the orchestra as well as seats close to it never received protection from the sun. Graefe (1979) produced a very detailed treatise on the *vela erunt*. He annotated all of the many literary references to the canopy, identified all the structures throughout the Roman world that employed the canopy, and described the intricate engineering required to make it work. Figure 40 from Graefe (156) shows one of several theoretical relations between the masts, the rigging, and the *velum*; it also shows the extent to which the canopy covered the audience at the theater in Aspendus in Turkey (160-180 CE), although it is possible that this theater had a permanent roof (Graefe, Plate 24); and Figure 41 shows a possible arrangement of the canopy extended from the top of the *scaenae frons* over the stage of the theater in Aspendus. But the velum primarily protected spectators from the sun. It is possible that, through precision use of ropes and pulleys, engineers were able to build canopies capable of tilting up and down and thus when hoisted at an angle more than parallel to the floor of the theater also able to cast a greater shadow over the theater. The theaters never used the *velum* to protect spectators from rain or wind; the

cloth was too fragile to withstand these elements, and it was better to cancel performances due to these elements than to believe that any sort of engineering could defeat them (13-14, 165). Unlike amphitheater performances, which often lasted from early in the morning until dark, performances in theaters occurred only occasionally and lasted maybe three or so hours, usually in the afternoons. The theater used the *vela* only if the sponsors of a show could afford to pay for its operation, which was expensive and required numerous operators (9), and if the sponsors could they advertised that the canopy would be drawn as an added lure for spectators (8), although the social rank of spectators determined their seating in the theater. But because of the technological limitations of the canopy engineering, even some spectators of fairly high rank might not receive protection from the sun. Of course, a theater's relation to the movement of the sun ultimately controlled the movement of shadows across the audience and the stage. The evidence for the *vela* seems most prevalent in theaters facing north, where spectators had the sun at their backs (167); theaters that faced south or west allowed the *scaenae frons* to cast a great shadow over the stage, although the theater at Aspendus, which faced southeast, had a *vela* that deepened significantly the shadow already cast by the *scaenae frons*, as depicted in Figure 42. Even without the *vela*, the complex architectural configurations of the *scaenae frons* created an intricate distribution of shadows that became increasingly elaborate and



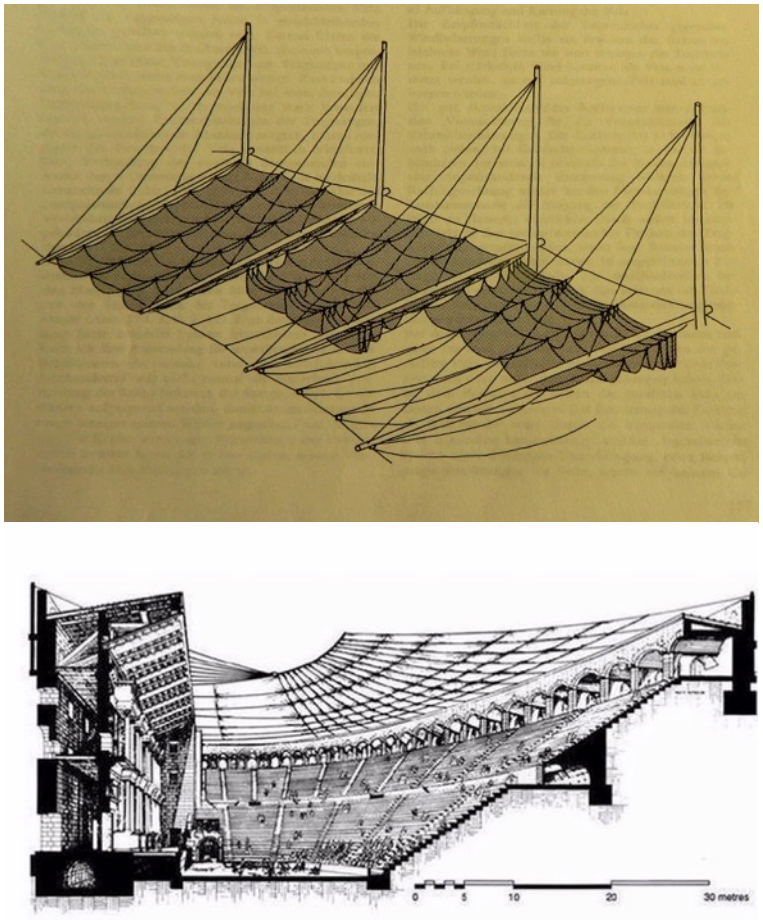


Figure 40: Top: Theoretical relations between the masts, the rigging, and the *velum* to produce a canopy for protecting spectators or performers from the sun in a Roman theater. From Graefe (1979: 156). Bottom: Reconstruction of theater at Aspendus, Turkey, with velum. From Izenour 1977.

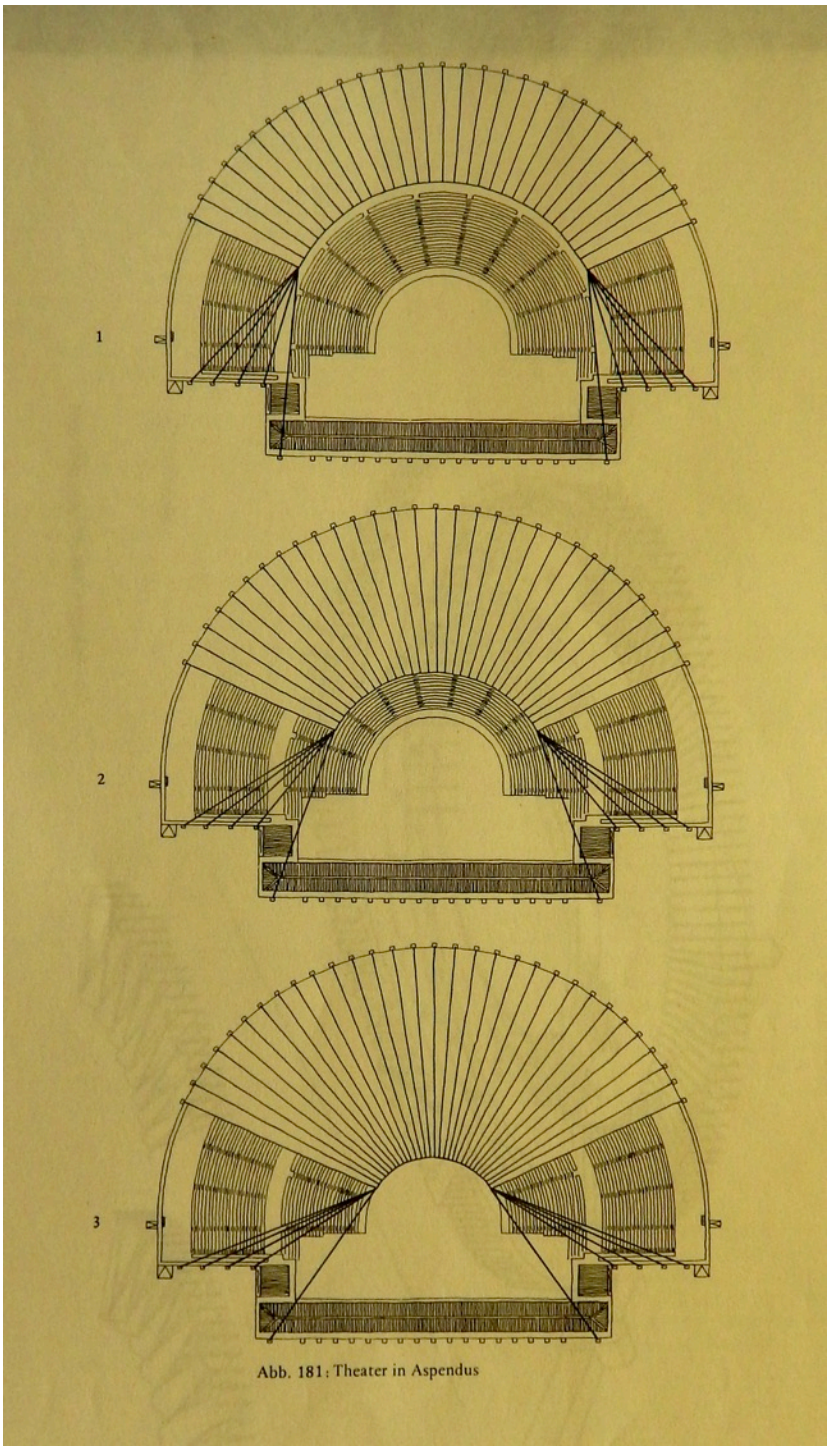


Figure 41: Possible configurations of the canopy extended from the top of the *scaenae frons* over the stage of the theater in Aspendus, Turkey. From Graefe (1979: 158).

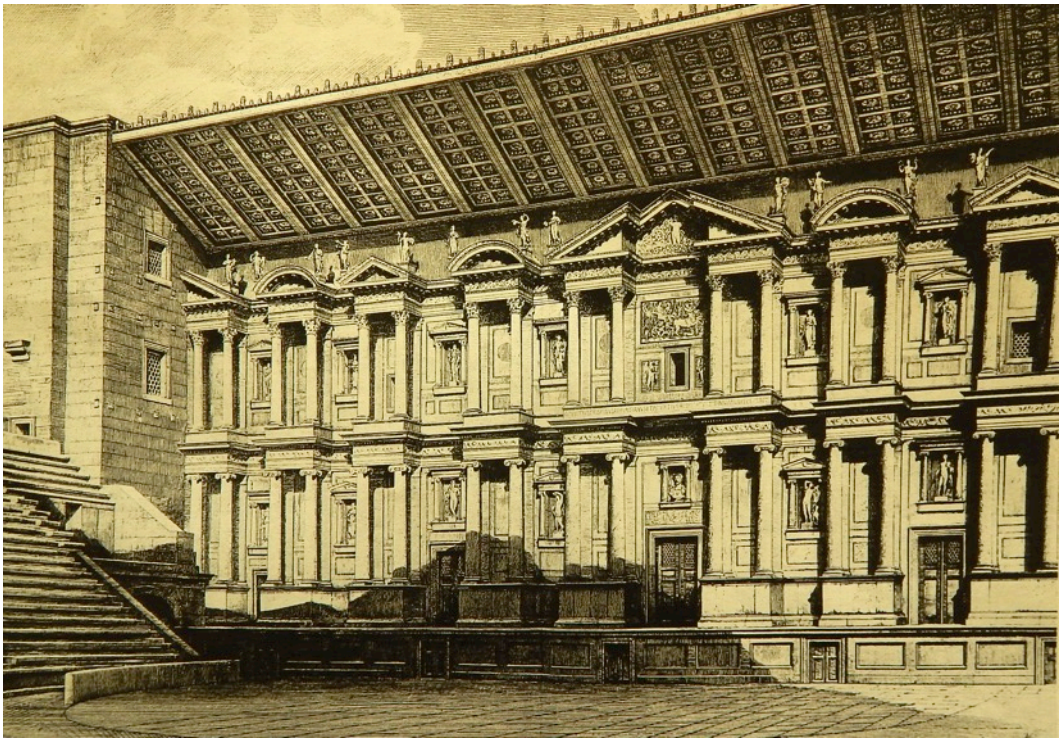


Figure 42: Reconstruction of the theater at Aspendus, Turkey, showing shadows cast by the *velum* rather than by the roof over the stage. From Lanckoronski (1890: Plate XXVII).

extensive as the sun moved closer to the horizon. Indeed, it may be that covering the stage with a vela was a way to reduce the complexity of shadows cast by the *scaenae frons* and to create an even, if subdued, level of illumination on the stage. With a theater facing north or east, however, the *vela* might not have prevented sunlight from saturating the stage. Unfiltered sunlight on the stage may have been very intense for spectators, but one must remember that the *scaenae frons* was for the most part painted in rich colors that absorbed rather than reflected the light. Even so, bright light would make jewels and metallic costume accessories, as well as powerfully dyed fabrics, gleam intensely, as Nero apparently understood when, according to Cassio Dio (Epit. 62 (63, 6)), he ordered everyone in the theater, on stage and in the audience, to wear gold he provided, and the stage itself contained numerous gold decorations meant to shine extravagantly in the sunlight. But for most theaters, an elaborate *scaenae frons* would create a labyrinth of shadows that lengthened as the sun sank toward the western horizon. The movement of the shadows across the *scaenae frons* and even across the stage produced the impression of an

animate architecture given life, so to speak, by the performance that motivated an audience to witness the gradual engulfing of the performers in shadows. The degree to which the performers exploited or at least adapted to the interplay between light and shadow on the stage or in the niches amplified the mystery of the performance. Even if a theater had a hard roof over the stage, as was the case at several sites, the *scaenae frons* would still have created impressive shadow effects insofar as the roof, tilted upward in a calculated relation to the movement of the sun, permitted sunlight on the façade while allowing shadows to encroach upon the stage. The use of a *velum* canopy would produce another effect. The linen sheets were dyed in brilliant colors, and as the sunlight hit them, the sheets functioned like a filter to soften the light and color it, saffron, red, or blue. Lucretius (4, 74-84) describes (ca. 53 BCE) the mysterious effect of the vela on the entire theatrical experience:

> *And commonly*
> *The awnings, saffron, red and dusky blue,*
> *Stretched overhead in mighty theaters,*
> *Upon their poles and cross-beams fluttering,*
> *Have such an action quite; for there they dye*
> *And make to undulate with their every hue*
> *The circled throng below, and all the stage,*
> *And rich attire in the patrician seats.*
> *And ever the more the theater's dark walls*
> *Around them shut, the more all things within*
> *Laugh in the bright suffusion of strange glints,*
> *The daylight being withdrawn. And therefore, since*
> *The canvas hangings thus discharge their dye*
> *From off their surface, things in general must*
> *Likewise their tenuous effigies discharge,*
> *Because in either case they are off-thrown*
> *From off the surface. So there are indeed*
> *Such certain prints and vestiges of forms*
> *Which flit around, of subtlest texture made,*
> *Invisible, when separate, each and one*
> (Translation by William Ellery Leonard).

Lucretius suggests that the *vela* did more than shade the spectators and the performers; it turned them into phantasmal figures, "vestiges of forms," who reflected "strange glints" and disclosed the "subtlest" intimation of mortality, an exquisitely aestheticized aura of death.

The Romans amplified the mysterious effect of shadows by sometimes building a smaller kind of theater covered by a solid roof made of wood, the *Odeon*, an invention of the Greeks. This smaller theater usually seated at most only a few hundred spectators, although some *odea* achieved a capacity of 5,000-6,000 spectators. The *odeon* functioned primarily as a site for concerts and lectures, but it is likely that pantomimes performed more often in *odea* than in the grandiose "open" theaters, since those families that owned pantomime ensembles were the likeliest to have the resources to build private *odea* on their villas or subsidize municipal *odea*. The design of an *odeon* followed the basic Roman model for theater architecture: a half-circle for the audience, an orchestra, a raised stage and a *scaenae frons* with doorways, niches and tabernacles, a backstage *scaenae*, *paradoi*, and multiple entrances and exits. The scale of the architectural elements was reduced, although the width of the stage, if not the depth, remained in some cases the same as in the big theaters (20-30 meters); smaller *odea* had a *scaenae frons* of only one instead of two stories, as imagined by the wall artists of the House of the Gladiators. Illumination within these roofed theaters is difficult to explain. In 1980, Meinel published an impressively thorough analysis of *odea*. After examining in detail the construction of odea in Pompeii, Athens, Pergamon, and Corinth, he proposes that illumination within the *odeon* resulted from a series of windows built into the walls of the theater but situated high above the stage and indeed above the highest level of the audience (42, 55, 75-76). These windows, he speculates (for the physical evidence for their existence has vanished), would all be the same size, all reside on the same plane, and reside on three walls but not on the wall holding the *scaenae frons* and the stage. The number of windows needed to produce "enough light" is not clear. He suggests that at Corinth, the *odeon* contained 23 windows based on the evidence of the number of pillars supporting the roof (75), but this supposition is weak without more knowledge of the size of the windows. He does not speculate on the number of windows for other *odea*. The theater designer George Izenour, who seems not to have consulted Meinel, devoted much less space to lighting in his book on roofed theaters of antiquity while

devoting a large amount of space to the unresolved problem of "overreverberation" in *odeum* acoustics, which was not a major issue for pantomime performance. The excellent architectural reconstructions of *odea* imply, however, that he, too, believed that the Romans used windows high above the audience to illuminate the interior space (Izenour 1992: 72, 82, 88, 94, 98, 106-107, 118, 125. 131) [Figure 40]. Yet it is difficult to see from these speculative drawings how the windows could have illuminated more than a portion of the audience (or any of the stage) at particular moments of the day. Indeed, it is difficult to believe that no matter how many windows of whatever size were set so high above the stage and away from the *scaenae frons* that much light ever hit the stage. The light entering the windows would become diffused mostly at the upper level of the theater. Even fairly large windows or apertures have limited power to illuminate much space beyond the immediate vicinity of the opening. Only light coming directly opposite from the stage would have much chance of bringing good illumination to the stage, and that would happen only if the theater stood in a position to allow sunlight to enter through windows high in the back of the theater to penetrate downward and deeply to the stage. But the sun might be able to do that only momentarily, and in any case its movement would create a rapidly shifting web of shadows on the stage, depending on the size of the windows and the amount of space between them, with the brightest light rising up the *scaenae frons* and away from the action on stage. The most practical way to illuminate with sunlight the stage under the roofed theater is to build a kind of skylight immediately before the *scaenae frons*, although Meinel contends that lighting for the stage of the Pompeii *odeon* came from doorways on each side of the *paradoi* leading to the stage (Meinel 1980: 42). It was not beyond the ingenuity of Roman engineering to construct hatches or gables on the roof that would permit sunlight to pour directly down onto the stage. However, no evidence exists to suggest that the Romans actually constructed such skylights, although they certainly understood the principle well through their skill at atrium design and at devising the captivating *ocula* of the Pantheon in Rome (126 CE). The purpose of a roof over the *odeon* is to permit performances when the sun does not shine, when the sky is overcast or it is raining, or when it is night. The primary purpose of the windows is to provide ventilation: as warm air rises, windows at a high level allow cool air to circulate throughout the interior of the building. To enter an *odeon* was

to enter a cool, dark space that shaded all of its occupants from all the heat, noise, distractions, and elemental intrusions of the world. While the windows may have ushered in some feeble light upon the stage, the primary illumination of the stage came from oil lamps. Torches provide a unique, warm, shimmering, flickering glow that illuminates flesh and fabrics in ways that one will not see in natural or even electric light. Colors become softer and yet more gleaming when suffused with the color of the flame. Research teams have used 3D graphics and animation to reconstruct interior light in ancient times. These research teams have modeled ancient interior lighting conditions in different spaces by measuring the properties of light when it pours through windows at different times of the day, showing that the light hardly diffuses evenly but is concentrated in beams that shift direction significantly as a result of the movement of the sun, leaving much of the interior space in darkness or in considerable shadow (cf., Chalmers 2001). Teams also simulated interior scenes lit by flame after calculated the properties of flame in relation to the positioning of lamps and the properties of different fuel sources, with the chief fuel source being olive oil, which was the common fuel source for oil lamps in the Roman world. These investigations reinforce the assertion that light from oil lamps creates a warm, soft, orange-gold glow that makes figures in wall paintings more "alive" than with electric light or even with sunlight and mosaic floors more vivid and gleaming. In an *odeon*, however, lighting with lamps entailed some complexity. To avoid impeding action on the stage and to avoid obscuring the action from the spectators, lamps on tripods were best placed in the orchestra and against the paneling that raised the stage above the orchestra. If the action encompassed the entire length of the stage (20-30 meters), which is unlikely, then about 20 lamps on tripods, each capable of producing about 200 candelas of luminosity, would create an eerie footlight glow on the performers. Lamps might also be placed inside the *hospitalia* or *regia* or perhaps next to the little staircases leading into these niches. It is also possible that the Romans used candelabras suspended over the stage, although the light from such contraptions would not have helped much in illuminating the action beneath them. The rate of fuel consumption in ancient oil lamps is uncertain and dependent on the amount of fuel in the lamp and the thickness of the wick, with torches consisting primarily of linen rags soaked in oil wrapped around a stick, although the Romans devised a torch that mixed sulfur with lime and

continued to burn even when doused with water. Of course, a problem with oil lamps is the smoke they emit. Presumably the drafts created by the multiple entrances to the theater and the windows allowed the smoke to dissipate quickly and waft upward toward the high ceiling and the accelerating air current. It's not clear if the smoke produced any sort of "veil" on the performance; digital simulation research has yet to yield any confident answer in regard to the effect on performance of smoke from the oil lamp technologies used by the Romans. Figure 43 documents an effort to simulate the effect of oil lamps on a university stage. The images show six torches spaced two feet apart with a masked actor placed before a curtain. While this documentation is not scientific in replicating exactly the conditions that would prevail in an *odeon* or villa during ancient times, it does reveal the peculiar ambience that torchlight bestows upon performance and the catacombian effect of light from flames that would motivate the Romans to build roofed theaters and to watch the pantomimes perform in enclosed spaces regardless of the time of day or the weather.

Roman theater architecture systematically sought to dramatize the ephemerality of performance with the eternality of the mythic and institutional power structures that made the performances available. The movement of light and shadow within the theater intensified the contrast between the brevity of life and the infinity of death by intensifying the extent to which action occurs under very fleeting conditions, some of which are the result of a natural order that transcends human designs. The authority of the social order to which all persons in the Empire belonged achieved reinforcement from this architectural collaboration with a "greater" natural order and the mythic apparatus for acknowledging it. Even in the *odeon*, life seems "small" in scale compared with "the order of things" that designed the theater and the occasions for which it was used. As Lucretius intimated in the passage from *De res natura*, what was most alluring about attending the theater was the evocation of a phantasmal dimension to life when performance collaborated with architecture to exploit the modulating tension between light and shadow.



Figure 43: Experimental pantomime performance using oil-fueled torch lamps to simulate indoor (*odeion*) performance conditions at San Jose State University, November 2012. Composite photo of a single figure (from video): Karl Toepfer.

Villa Performance

While theaters provided important opportunities for pantomime performance, it is good to remember that those opportunities were occasional rather than regular. Pantomime ensembles performed in theaters only because their owners saw some larger advantage to themselves in allowing their ensembles to perform in theaters as a "gift" to the audiences. For the most part, pantomimes performed for much smaller audiences consisting largely of persons belonging to the aristocracy or to the higher levels of government. Ownership of a pantomime ensemble was a measure of an aristocrat's wealth, but it was a measure only to the extent that it could be displayed and shared with diverse audiences. For this reason, ownership of a pantomime ensemble probably conferred a greater image of wealth than simply owning slaves or houses or valuable commodities. A pantomime ensemble signified a superior capacity for luxuriousness insofar as one owned an ensemble for the purpose of "sharing" with others the beauty of its performance. It is not at all clear

what hierarchy prevailed in relation to various capacities for luxuriousness through performance and spectacle. Was owning a pantomime ensemble a higher or lower measure of status than owning gladiators or a chariot racing team? Perhaps, if gladiator or chariot racing teams belonged to groups of investors rather than to a sole individual. Perhaps not, if the giving of gladiator contests or chariot races exerted greater impact on the public when the owners sought to use the spectacles to claim their influence over their audiences and thereby strengthen their political power. And perhaps such distinctions are not even helpful: some owners of pantomime ensembles probably invested in gladiatorial spectacles, even though the Empire kept pantomime performances and gladiatorial spectacles strictly separate, never combined. Moreover, in some parts of the Empire, owners assigned pantomime ensembles to support and agitate the fan clubs for the chariot teams in which the owners had invested. But the "giving" of gladiatorial spectacles and chariot races allowed aristocrats to exert influence primarily over large public audiences. While pantomimes also allowed their aristocratic owners to cultivate the favor of public audiences, they were even more useful in allowing their owners to exert their influence over other aristocrats and high-ranking officials from beyond the local environment. The major reason for owning a pantomime ensemble was to impress other aristocrats with an entertainment that was exclusive, designed for a privileged and chosen audience. Because access to pantomime performance depended on quite arbitrary circumstances, on the unique socio-political ambitions of pantomime owners, the public could regard the "gift" of pantomime performances as a more privileged activity than attending gladiatorial spectacles or chariot races, which, having become deeply institutionalized well before the establishment of the Empire, the public treated as an expectation, as entertainments "owed" it, as fundamental components of the "bread and circuses" philosophy of state governance. What bestowed exclusivity on pantomime performances was their occurrence in "private," luxurious settings—the great houses and villas of those who owned the pantomime ensembles

Howe (2007: 13) observes that houses belonging to "the families of the 300 to 600 men of the senatorial order and the perhaps ten thousand of the 'equestrian', or business, class" [...] were as much instruments of their social power as they were places of luxury and retreat." He further remarks that, "This need for the elite to appear politically effective was the driving

force behind a great deal of continuous innovation in Roman culture from the third century BC onward, from the importation of gladiatorial spectacles to aspects of Greek art and architecture" (14). "The wealth and drive" of the Roman elite "to create an effective and innovative show sparked an explosion of artistic creativity.

> *They assembled their resources to invent an innovative type of "lofty and lordly" seaside villa, with "libraries, picture galleries, and basilicas, outfitted in a manner not dissimilar to the magnificence of public works" and they continued to build them over the next two centuries, and build them ever more elaborately. The art and architecture which they commissioned to surround themselves and their highly political house guests, with their numerous allusions to classical divinities and legends, were as much an assertion of their erudition, "dignitas" and sophistication as were their collections of art, their libraries, their skilled cooks, their entertainers, their resident philosophers and poets, their exotic fishponds, and their jewels and silverware* (15).

The scale of some estates was enormous, designed to support the lives and work of many persons, as Rostowzew explained in detail back in 1904 (Rostowzew 1990: 41-77) and as evidenced most spectacularly by the ruins of Hadrians's Tivoli villa and the mysterious, gigantic residential complex of Piazza Armerina. Indeed, as the Empire grew older, villas became such self-sufficient communities that towns in Sicily and elsewhere decayed or lost their justification for development (Wilson 1983: 95). Estates as large and as luxurious as those described by Rostowzew (1990), Drerup (1957, 1990), Mansuelli (1990), and Bergman (2010) could easily have accommodated pantomime ensembles as part of the extensive staff required to make the properties effective in achieving their social, political, and recreational goals. Even if pantomime owners could not or did not wish to keep their ensembles in their villas or in the villas of others when they traveled, they could rent apartments for their performers, as was evidently the case in Pompeii and Ostia, at least when one considers the apparently thriving business in seasonal rentals of apartments and inns in those cities. But presumably an owner who could maintain a pantomime ensemble in villas enjoyed higher status than an owner who was improvising, so to speak, or in the early phase of his adventures in high society entertainments. Because

nearly all pantomimes were slaves or freedmen, it is highly unlikely that an owner would expect a pantomime ensemble to do nothing but perform shows. Even if an ensemble gave a performance once a week, which would be exceptional rather than commonplace, especially when other or competing pantomime ensembles as well as other spectacles can claim the attention of audiences both aristocratic and popular, the owner would expect the members of the ensemble to perform other duties besides rehearsing and performing pantomime acts. A typical pantomime ensemble built around a single star performer would include a dozen or so persons, in addition to the star: two or three musicians, a chorus of maybe four or five, three or four acrobats and dancers, and an interpellator, as well as maybe three or four persons involved with off stage mechanical and production support. Only very large villas could accommodate this many persons in addition to the other servants the owner relied on to make the villa and his life operate as expected. Indeed, a major reason the pantomime evolved around a single star performer is that the resources to sustain a larger scale of production would emerge only if the aristocracy gave up its privileged access to the pantomime and allowed the state or municipalities to treat pantomime entertainment as public investment paid for primarily with taxes raised from the aristocracy. Such a public approach to pantomime performance would defeat the purpose of pantomime ensembles to establish degrees of exclusivity and distinction within the aristocracy and to establish the authority of the aristocracy to bestow "gifts" on the public if gifts were to remain a significant instrument for "swaying" sectors of a local or regional public. When it was convenient, owners could collaborate in merging pantomime ensembles to produce larger shows for larger and more public audiences. The Corinth performance described by Apuleius in Book X of *The Golden Ass* is an example of a larger production that would rely on performers from more than one owner. It is important to remember that, because of the dubious moral status ascribed to pantomimes and the performances, pantomime ensembles served their aristocratic owners rather than aristocratic households or any particular sector of the aristocracy. Pantomimes could provoke tensions and divisions within aristocratic circles and even within aristocratic families they entertained. In his epistles (Book 7, Letter 24, to Geminius), Pliny the Younger describes (ca. 80 CE) a woman, Ummidia Quadratilla, who "retained a set of pantomimes, whom she encouraged more than becomes a lady of quality,"

but who apparently never encouraged her grandson, Quadratus, to see any of the pantomime performances she arranged.

> *Quadratus never witnessed their performances, either when she exhibited them in the theater, or in her own house; nor did she exact his attendance. I once heard her say, when she was commending her grandson's oratorical studies to my care, that it was her habit, being a woman and as such debarred from active life, to amuse herself with playing at chess or backgammon, and to look on at the mimicry of her pantomimes; but that before engaging in either diversion, she constantly sent away her grandson to his studies: a custom, I imagine, which she observed as much out of a certain reverence, as affection, to the youth*.

Indeed, Quadratus tells Pliny that "the first time I ever saw one of my grandmother's freedmen dance" was at the Sacerdotal Games in which her troupe had entered the competition, after her death. Pliny commends Quadratilla for protecting her grandson from her pantomime entertainments while disparaging

> *a set of men of a far different stamp, [who] in order to do honour to Quadratilla (I am ashamed to employ that word to what, in truth, was but the lowest and grossest flattery) used to flock to the theater, where they would rise up and clap in an excess of admiration at the performances of those pantomimes, slavishly copying all the while, with shrieks of applause, every sign of approbation given by the lady patroness of this company. But now all that these claqueurs have got in pay is only a few trifling legacies, which they have the mortification to receive from an heir who was never so much as present at Quadratilla's shows* (Pliny the Younger 1915: 58-63).

The motive for writing about Quadratilla was that she left two thirds of her estate to her grandson—that is, she recognized in Quadratus sterling scholarly qualities, a "pristine dignity," a superior capacity for "glory," while nevertheless cultivating a base or corrupting enthusiasm for pantomime. But it is evident from the letter that in receiving the pantomime troupe from his grandmother as part of her will, Quadratus did not disband the

troupe or sell it or give it away; he entered it into the competition of the Sacerdotal Games, and he assumed that, even if she shielded him from pantomime performances while she was alive, his grandmother believed the pleasures of pantomime performance would prove useful and engaging for him when she was no longer around to enjoy them herself. Presumably by entering his pantomime troupe in the Sacerdotal Games, Quadratus enhanced his prestige as a lawyer or politician, but not simply because he displayed the measure of his wealth by now owning a pantomime ensemble. Pliny's letter reveals how pantomimes functioned as a major measure of aristocratic character: the "true aristocrat," like Quadratilla and her grandson, does not scorn, discard, or shame the pantomimes; nor does the true aristocrat, unlike Quadratilla's "claques," suffer an "excess of admiration" for the pantomimes. The true aristocrat adopts a more detached attitude toward the pantomimes, for he sees them as serving a social and political purpose beyond entertaining their audiences: this detached attitude toward the pantomimes is what allows both the aristocracy and the public to believe in the integrity of the owner, to trust him with power.

Roman villas were as varied as the individuals and families that owned them. How pantomimes performed within villa settings depended on their skill in adapting to the unique or defining spaces offered by a villa. A generous capacity for improvisation was necessary to accommodate the peculiarities of space and occasion controlling villa performances. A few grandiose villas contained their own indoor theaters, and the peculiar features of performance of such theaters have been described above. But most villas did not contain theaters; performances took place in spaces considered appropriate in relation to the general components and functions of villa architecture, for even if villas varied according to the tastes and circumstances of their owners, the basic architectural organization of villas followed the general principles that Vitruvius described in *De Architectura* (Book VI, Chapters 1-6, ca. 20-15 BCE), wherein the author prescribes close attention to symmetry, carefully calculated structural proportions, and sensitivity to the proprietary functions of spaces. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (1994: 38-61) explains in detail "the social coding of architectural form and decoration" shaping the "articulation" of Roman houses, wherein the richest houses maintained a pronounced distinction between "highly visible" and "invisible" areas that separated the display of luxurious living from the

living and working quarters of servants. He stresses (44), however, that this distinction did not entail separation of private from public functions within the domestic spaces, for Roman civilization, especially at the highest levels, entailed an "incompatibility of public life with privacy," at least to a degree that is alien to our own time. "The Greek house is concerned with creating a world of privacy, of excluding the inquisitive passerby; the Roman house invites him in and puts its occupants on display. Vitruvius's contrast is not between space for visitors and space for family but between space for uninvited and for invited visitors" (45). Clearly only specifically designated spaces within the villa were appropriate for pantomime performance, with the *peristyle* being the most obvious, and the *exedra* and the *cenatio* possibly engaged for this purpose. Figure 44 shows a ground plan of a villa in Pompeii that lacks a theater, although a single ground plan does not indicate the variety and complexity of villa design. Wallace-Hadrill further observes (52) "the sheer proliferation of spaces for entertainment" in the "richer surviving houses of A.D. 79," and Vitruvius (VI, 6, 2) recommended that the ideal villa contain at least three dining rooms, one each for spring, autumn, and summer. To some extent, then, the scale on which the owner desired or was expected to reveal his status and his capacity to entertain visitors determined the opportunities for pantomime performance within the villa, assuming that the owner appreciated the advantages of owning a pantomime ensemble, which, of course, not all owners did, although even owners who did not own ensembles might well host visitors who did own them and brought their performances as "gifts" for the host.

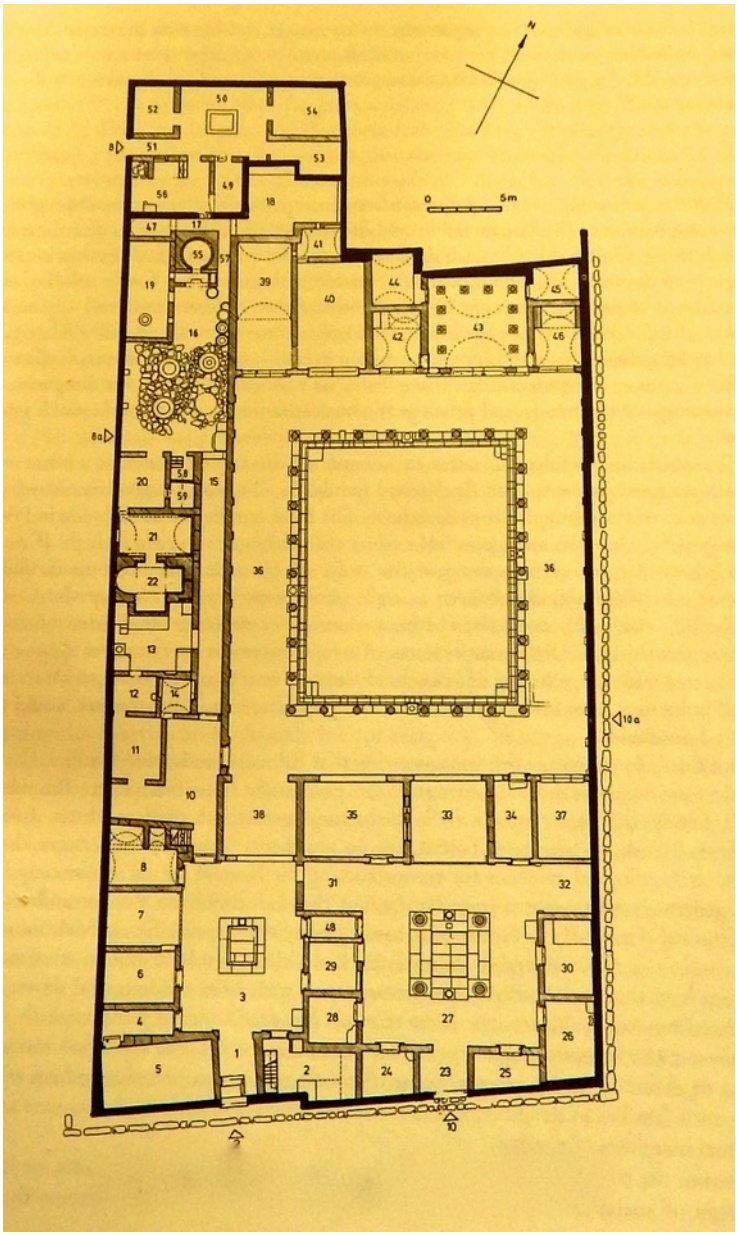


Figure 44: Ground plan for the villa Casa del Labirinto, Pompeii, first century CE, from Wallace-Hadrill (1994: 115), after Strocka (1991).

The *peristyle* seems the space most likely to provide the best environment for pantomime performance. Wallace-Hadrill (1994: 86-87), evaluating the statistical data on Vesuvian houses, points out that only 35% of the sites surveyed contain a *peristyle*, and of those that do, the size and style of the *peristyles* vary greatly, with only 14% having three or more colonnades and the average area in square meters ranging from 231 (no

colonnade) to 1970 (8 colonnades). A *peristyle* is an unroofed space in the interior of the house; often, but not necessarily, the *peristyle* contained a garden, a fountain or pond, statues, a marble floor with mosaics, or a combination of these elements. A colonnade often surrounded the open space on three sides, with the fourth side usually a kind of portal entry to the *peristyle* from the entrance to the house and the atrium that greeted all who visited [Figure 45]. The function of the *peristyle* was to display the capacity of the owner to cultivate beauty and pleasure, although some *peristyles* apparently assumed the mundane task of growing vegetables. Owners whose villas lacked theaters could organize pantomime performances in the *peristyle* only if the design of the *peristyle* provided sufficient opportunities for the performances to reveal the superior luxuriousness the owner could command. In other words, pantomime performers, no matter how gifted at improvisation, would not have infinite capacity to adapt to any and every *peristyle* design. If an owner decided to acquire a pantomime troupe and did not own a villa with a theater but he did have a *peristyle*, then the *peristyle* would have to assume features that assured the owner of an effective merger of performance and *peristyle* to achieve an expected atmosphere of luxuriousness. A garden dense with plants might provide an elegant setting for the performances as long as the plants remained decorative elements within the organization of the *peristyle* and not a major opportunity to impress visitors. That is, for the owner of a pantomime ensemble, the design of the *peristyle* was subordinate to the goals of pantomime performance rather than pantomime performance subordinate to the splendor of the *peristyle*. For the *peristyle* to be an effective performance space, it must make the performance visible from viewing points in the corridors of three colonnades or corridors surrounding the performance space. The corridors themselves must be wide enough to accommodate spectators comfortably, even luxuriously. The *peristyle* does not have to be spacious; it needs only to be large enough to accommodate a handful of performers. The star pantomime does not require a large space in which to execute distinctive movement, and even acrobats who precede the pantomime or collaborate with the pantomime in an ensemble piece can produce remarkable dances or stunts within a fairly small space. Figure 46 depicts in the *peristyle* for the House of the Vetti in Pompeii with gardening, statuary, and pathway as imagined rather than actually excavated. But in this plausible configuration,

the *peristyle* would provide an excellent performance space for pantomime entertainments, with the pantomime situated at either end of the *peristyle* or in the middle or at any point along the pathway. Good views of the performance would be available from divans or positions in the wide corridors of the colonnades. The plants do not obscure a view of the action; oil lamps could even support nocturnal performances. This configuration offers an elegant, luxurious, sufficiently spacious, and yet fairly intimate site for accommodating the peculiar attributes of pantomime performance. It is the kind of *peristyle* configuration that the owner of a pantomime ensemble would find highly useful for displaying the ensemble regularly to guests quite accustomed to privileged, luxurious entertainments.



Figure 45: Peristyle with colonnades in first century CE Villa of Mysteries, Pompeii. Photo: Public domain.

By contrast, the main *peristyle* of the Villa Poppaea (62 CE) at Oplantis appears designed to accommodate a larger scale of entertainment, although archeological evidence indicates the presence of a large tree in the space. However, the larger space may merely function to accommodate a larger audience rather than a larger performance ensemble. The Villa Poppaea contains another, smaller *peristyle*, as well as other spaces that

could serve pantomime performance on this huge estate, in which the spectacular wall paintings indicate an intense enthusiasm at least for a theatrical domestic environment. A *peristyle* with some kind of garden would link theatrical performance to plants, water, sky, sunlight—that is, to a "natural" order of things or perhaps to an aristocratic power to cultivate theatrical identities as luxuriously as plants in a garden. The smaller *peristyle* at Villa Poppaea has a little wall around it, as does the *peristyle* at the Villa of Mysteries in Pompeii, and these walls would seem to impede effective viewing of performances within these charming, cozy spaces from the colonnade corridors that surround them. Yet a stage or platform set up within the *peristyle* could elevate the actors in a way that is preferable to having them perform at ground level. But *peristyle* pantomime performance in the villa milieu did not depend on an atmosphere of luxurious intimacy or cultivated integration with a garden. For example, the *peristyle* of Diocletian's palace at Split (ca. 300 CE) apparently made no concession to a penchant for gardening [Figure 47]. While it is unclear if Diocletian or his entourage indulged any appreciation at all for pantomime performance, the configuration nevertheless evokes a highly theatrical atmosphere, with its steps, imperial archways, sculptured facades, and multiple opportunities for dramatic entrances (Wilkes 1986: 41-46). The much smaller *peristyle* in the Casa di Nettuno e Anfitrite at Herculaneum contains high walls rather than a colonnade, and beautiful mosaics decorate the walls to create a mysterious, cool, *submerged* atmosphere; indeed, three theatrical masks adorn the top of the shrine-like edifice perpendicular to the famous mosaic of Neptune and Aphrodite. *Peristyle* performance did not depend on nature, on an elegant garden, to demonstrate the capacity of the pantomime owner to provide his guests with an atmosphere of luxuriousness. Rather, a premium sign of luxuriousness was the ability of a pantomime ensemble to adapt comfortably to different settings. In the villa environment, the pantomime ensemble should impose its glamour on any space assigned to it, just as the organization of pantomime performance, with its discrete mythic scenes, songs, acrobatic interludes, and choral pieces, allowed for the reordering, truncation, expansion, or creation of individual moments to suit the mood, taste, or setting designated by the occasion, the audience, or the villa owner.



Figure 46: First century CE peristyle of the Casa di Vetti, Pompeii, with imagined rather than reconstructed garden. Photo: Sailko.

But, as Wallace-Hadrill observes, *peristyles* were only occasionally a feature of villa architecture. It was not necessary for a villa to contain a *peristyle* for the owner to support pantomime performances. Where else within a villa might a pantomime ensemble perform? The *atrium* might seem the space that most closely resembles the *peristyle* in architectural features, and *atria* were often as large as *peristyles*; indeed, the large *atrium* of the Villa Poppaea at Oplantis, with its flamboyant, theatrical wall paintings is certainly inviting as a performance space. But while the *atrium*, with its pool (*impluvium*), skylight (*ocea*), statuary or beautiful wall paintings, may provide a dramatic entrance to a house or villa, it is not an appropriate space for theatrical entertainment. The *atrium* functions as a transition zone between public and private spheres; it is like a lobby or vestibule. People enter and exit the house through the atrium, and the space must preserve that function during a performance. Not everyone living or working in or even visiting the house would have been a spectator of the performance, and their business on behalf of the house or in relation

to other affairs should not disturb the performance. The *atrium* does not provide the atmosphere of privileged exclusivity that pantomime performance bestows upon its spectators in the villa milieu. Moreover, as Wallace-Hadrill indicates (87), even some large houses in Pompeii and Herculaneum did not contain *atria*, suggesting that "changing architectural fashions," "a shift away from the atrium matrix" in the first century CE accounts in part for the absence of *atria* from a "group of handsome houses" at those sites.

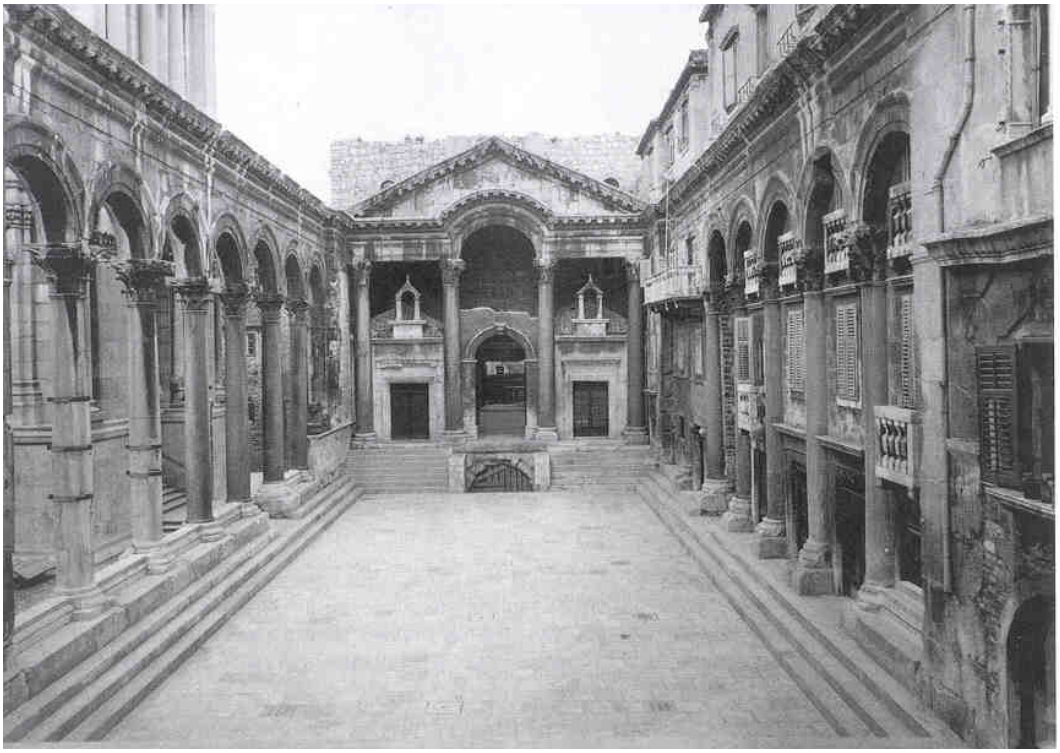


Figure 47: Peristyle for Emperor Diocletian's palace at Split (Croatia), ca. 300 CE. Photo: Public domain.

Another candidate as a performance space in the villa environment is the *triclinium* or dining room. It is not difficult to imagine that wealthy Romans would combine luxurious eating with luxurious entertainment; indeed, in popular mythology, banquets in the Roman Empire seem to require some sort of erotic performance often involving voluptuous dancing and perhaps epitomized by the Bible's reference (Mark 6:22) to Salome dancing before Herod at his banquet in Judea. In the film *Demetrious and the Gladiators* (1954), the Empress Messalina (Susan Hayward) entertains

the proto-Christian Demetrious (Victor Mature) in her palace *triclinium* that opens onto a *peristyle* garden in which eight or so young women in white chitons perform a chorus line dance that is somewhat closer to a Ziegfeld Follies number than to anything resembling ancient Roman choreography. In conventional Christian morality, the *triclinium* is a useful signifier of the hedonistic "decadence" of either upper class paganism or imperial appetites. While luxurious dining pleasures are invariably features of upper class living, it is nevertheless important to consider the pleasures of the *triclinium* in relation to basic realities.

In many villas, the *triclinium* was a fairly small room consisting of a round or rectangular table surrounded by three, seven, nine, or eleven couches, with each couch sitting one or two persons, although a few villas contained a *triclinium* with thirteen or fifteen couches. Seating was hierarchical in relation to the status of the host or the guest, if the guest enjoyed a higher status. Some *triclinia* contain couches of stone that form walls around a well-like space into which the table bearing food rested. But many villas preferred to use furniture couches of elegant design, which allowed the room to be used for other purposes than dining [Figure 48a]. A conventional size for the room was between 4.5 and 7.0 square meters, but larger spaces were feasible; Dunbabin (1991: 128, 130) mentions a villa in Africa (The House of Neptune in Acholla) that was 11.2 by 9.5 meters and another one in Numidia (Djemila) that is 27 meters long. Usually the door to the *triclinium* opened onto the *peristyle* to allow for a refreshing view while dining. The conventional seating of diners was to place them in a U-shape around the table bearing the food and facing the door or view onto the *peristyle*. Villa owners tended to avoid constructing a large *triclinium* that would seat more than 20 diners; they favored instead the construction of further *triclinia*, and some villas contained three or four *triclinia* (Dunbabin 1991: 130).

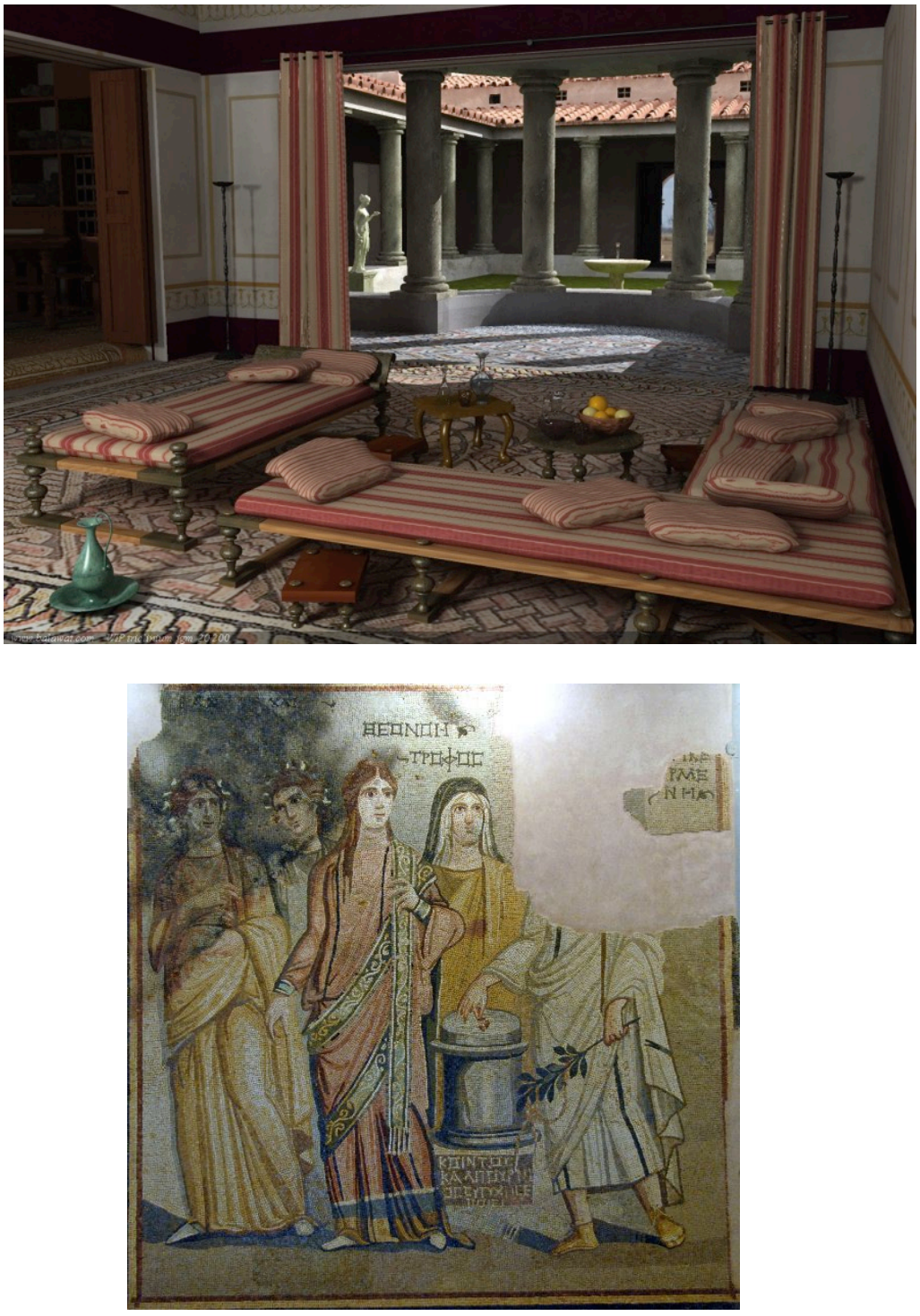


Figure 48: a) Reconstruction of a *triclinium* featuring a view to the *peristyle* in the background. Photo: Unidentified Spanish web source; b) Mosaic of a possible pantomime performance from the *triclinium* of a villa in Zeugma, Turkey. Photo: Zeugma Mosaic Museum.

The *triclinium* theatricalized the dining experience and thus provided a superb opportunity for the host to display his wealth and taste. Dining integrated eating and entertainment in a distinctive or memorable way that furthered the larger ambitions of the host, and the architecture of the entire villa evolved from the scale of entertainment the host pursued in relation to social and political goals. The room might contain a mosaic floor and wall paintings with themes related to dining, hunting, food, or food production. In 2002, archeologists uncovered a large, evidently second or third century CE mosaic in the *triclinium* of a villa in Zeugma, Turkey. The mosaic depicts an elegantly dressed woman, labeled Theonoe, attended by three other women and approached by a man (only partially visible due to damage) in a white tunic-robe bearing a laurel branch [Figure 48b]. The dramatic quality of the image has urged Görkay (2006) and Dunbabin (2010) to propose that the mosaic may depict a pantomime of the Theonoe myth, in which case the man in the white robe is actually her sister Leucippe disguised as a priest, who is searching for Theonoe, whom pirates had kidnapped years before. The artist does give Theonoe a distinctly mask-like visage, although it is not at all clear to what extent, if any, the image depicts an actual pantomime performance, as opposed to signifying that the myth of Theonoe was the subject of a pantomime performance. Just as importantly, though, the mosaic implies that the *triclinium* was the place within the villa where pantomime occurred (Görkay 2006: 28). In the *triclinium*, it was important to display the food artfully in beautiful bowls and platters, with the food itself often being of an exotic kind. The Apicius cookbook (ca. 370-410 CE) describes manifold recipes for dishes that require exotic ingredients or elaborate preparation. The food itself was a central component of the entertainment, and no competing entertainment should distract the diner from appreciation of the host's cuisine, except possibly the use of musicians to provide decorative tones for the moment. Figure 49 depicts an exceptionally large, imperial-sized *triclinium* in which three musicians perform while a party of four dines. Diners evidently did not consume large amounts of food. The standard meal consisted of three courses: appetizers, a main meal, and some kind of dessert or refreshing fruit, with wine as the primary beverage. The spaces for accommodating the tables that bear the food were small, and the tables could not hold more than a couple of large platters. Servants might replace exhausted trays, platters, and bowls, but such disruptive rhythm of service would further

inhibit the performance of theatrical scenes while eating. Moreover, conversation and convivial exchange of thoughts, stories, and ideas was essential to achieving the social or political goal of the dinner, with the food itself being an important motive for conversation, and sensible organization of the dinner would avoid entertainment that distracted diners from their own roles in developing an entertaining conversation. Indeed, for hosts who lacked the resources to provide opulent entertainments, the success of the occasion depended above all on the food and the conversation. But this implies that for those hosts who did have the resources to provide the occasion with more than food and conversation, the entertainment had to be of sufficient charm to focus attention and command appreciation for the host's skill at developing superior performance talent.

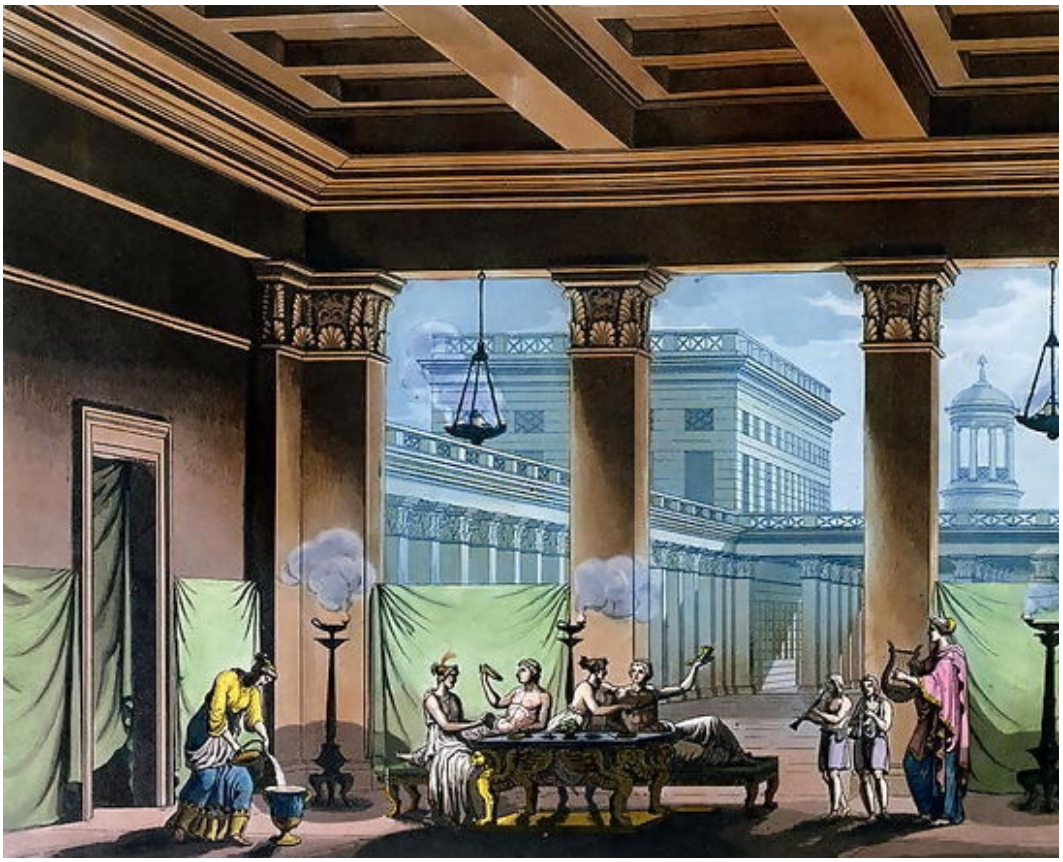


Figure 49: A large, imperial-sized *triclinium* as imagined in 1823 by Jules (Giulio) Ferrario, *Le Costume ancien et moderne; ou, Histoire du gouvernement, de la milice, de la religion, des arts, sciences et usages de tous les peuples anciens et modernes, d'après les monumens de l'antiquité et accompagné de dessins analogues au sujet*, Europe, Vol. 1, Part 2, Milan: De l'imprimerie de l'editeur, 1047.

It is therefore doubtful that at well-designed dinner parties entertainers performed during the eating of the meal. Rather, they performed either before or, more likely, after the meal, as is indicated in Xenophon's description of the banquet in *The Symposium* (9.1) when, "now the tables where removed [...] and they had poured out the libation [...] there entered now a Syracusan, with a trio of assistants: the first, a flute-girl, perfect in her art; and next, a dancing-girl, skilled to perform all kinds of wonders; lastly, in the bloom of beauty, a boy, who played the harp and danced with infinite grace" (Xenophon 1897: 297). But the inclusion of a performance entails a carefully planned timeline for the entire occasion. If the performance occurred before the meal, then the timing and duration of the performance would effect the preparation of the food, especially if servants involved in food preparation also participated as entertainers. If the performance occurred after the meal, then the meal itself would unfold within a schedule that accommodated the needs of performers to prepare costumes, masks, props, and performance instruments in time for their designated appearance. If dinners occurred in two or more *triclinia*, the coordination of meal-serving times and performance times entailed a carefully managed schedule that limited the amount of time for each activity, each course, and each act. Certain large households might have enough servants to allow for a division of labor between food staff and entertainment staff, but even so, the success of the host in managing the occasion would depend on organizing the time for dramatic impact and not on getting diners to forget about time. The villa dinner functions differently from the public, festival sort of banquets that the patrician class sponsored within towns and communities, where perhaps a more relaxed attitude toward time prevailed because much more time was available to consume and a great many more people participated in the event. Accommodating the technical requirements of the performers facilitated an optimum performance for the guests and strengthened the aura of privileged exclusivity associated with villa entertainments. Optimal performance also meant controlling the duration of the performance; it meant compressing as much excitement or pleasure into calculated "moments" so that the performance was distinctive and memorable. The evidence for conventional or typical performance duration times is very scanty. It is clear, however, that audiences in the imperial era showed little enthusiasm for detailed or protracted stories; they favored instead the performance of scenes, extracts,

highlights, or memorable moments from stories already known to the audience. The narrative logic of performance developed in relation to a succession of scenes, acts, or stunts ("tricks") that formed their own abstract emotional architecture rather than emerged from the emotional values internal to an imaginary world or story. The interest of performance centered on the metamorphosis of performers, not characters, which means, in a cultural milieu where only "old stories" had value and new stories seemed unnecessary, that stories existed primarily as raw material from which performers only extracted those "moments" that served the demonstration of metamorphosis, that supported whatever change in spectator attitude or disposition was useful in achieving the host's social or political goals. Time did not increase in value because of a cumulative involvement with an imaginary world; it increased in value because of an intense, powerful collection of discrete "moments" that connected otherwise disparate identities or bodies. This notion of temporal value shaped theatrical performance as much as it did gladiatorial shows. Many and probably most villa entertainments did not includes pantomimes; the host provided entertainments that aligned with his tastes, resources, and ambitions. Pliny obviously would not provide pantomimes at his dinner parties, even if he had the money to maintain them, and most likely he would not appreciate pantomimes as a guest at someone else's party. Entertainments might include the reciting of poems, singing, dances, acrobatic feats, the execution of stunts, or combinations of these performance categories. Christopher Jones (1991: 191-192) compiles references from Xenophon, Athenaeus, and Plutarch to indicate the nature of "dinner theater" in the imperial era. Girls dancing or somersaulting with or between knives was apparently a recurrent stunt from the time of Xenophon (*Symposium* 2.1-2) to Plutarch (*Questiones* OC 7-8, 711). Athenaeus quotes a letter describing a party given by a Macedonian chief that featured an all-girl orchestra of *sambuca* players and a team of female acrobats somersaulting naked over swords, among other acts (129A, 130A). Xenophon describes a *symposium* performance (ca. 365 BCE) in which a girl dances with as many as twelve hoops fed to her by a boy while accompanied by a flute (2.8). The same girl also performs somersaults over a ring of knives (2.11), reads a poem while posing on a turning potter's wheel (7.2), and then dances with the boy a scene from the tale of Dionysos and Ariadne (9.2-7). In the *Oneirocritica* (1.76 ca. second century CE), Artemidorus

mentions similar acts as things people dream about, and he explains the portent of such dreams in relation to the status or identity of the dreamer. But what is significant in Artimedorus is that banquet entertainments that Xenophon described almost four hundred years earlier had maintained their charm not only because of the unique skill required to perform them, but because they possessed some power to portend or intimate fate.

In a huge section (chapters 28-73) of the *Satyricon* (ca. 60 CE), Petronius (ca, 27-66 CE) describes an extravagant dinner party in Puteoli given by the stupendously rich freedman real estate tycoon Trimalchio, who provides his several male guests with a seemingly endless series of fantastically exotic meals. Much of the entertainment for the party involves the serving of the meals by a vast number of servants. Indeed, Trimalchio has so many slaves that many do not even know who he is. But they are responsible for entertaining the guests by dancing or singing as they serve the ostentatious meals, by assisting Trimalchio in playing practical jokes on the guests, and by providing opportunities for the guests and Trimalchio to perform humorous scenes of their own improvisation. Much of the entertainment consists of gossip shared amongst the guests, the telling of bizarre stories, and the uninhibited bragging of Trimalchio about his accomplishments, possessions, and erudition. Several times, however, Trimalchio interrupts the conversation to allow his slaves to perform with scenes including a stenographer's report on properties Trimalchio has acquired in the past year (chap. 53), yet another boy dancing on a ladder assisted by a "very boring fool" (chap. 54), a boy reciting a poem while impersonating Bacchus, another boy distributing lottery tickets whereby guests receive humorous gifts analogous to translating combinations of words into bizarre objects (chap. 56), and a troupe of actors performing a skit about Diomedes, Ganymede, and Helen that becomes integrated with the serving of food as an actor performing the insane Ajax attacks a roast hog and presents the guests with slices of pork skewered onto his sword (chap. 59). Trimalchio himself recites a couple of poems, and the guests entangle themselves more than once in his theatrical game playing by begging him to "pardon" slaves for their "mistakes" in performing or serving. At one point (chap. 53), he says he bought an acting ensemble, but ordered them to perform only Atellane farces, though he says that only rope dancers and horn players give him intense pleasure. In any case, he does not present his guests with an Atellane farce, and perhaps only the

Diomedes and Ganymede skit comes closest to anything even remotely resembling a pantomime. The entire dinner is a fantastic theatrical debauch. The main performer, however, is Trimalchio himself, with his guests as subsidiary or supporting performers feeding off of his cartoonishly extravagant generosity; the performances by the slaves are merely incidental to the entertainment generated by the host and his guests. The *Satyricon* is a kind of satire on the power of unlimited wealth to plunge all expectation of pleasure in life, of "a good time," into the realm of escalating, monstrous (though not ruinous) excess and hardly represents a typical villa dinner party. But the scene is nevertheless helpful in understanding how the villa entertainment worked: guests contributed significantly to the entertainment value of the occasion; the host played a major role as an entertainer; the occasion accommodated a large measure of improvisation; performances by slaves or professionals should not overshadow or undermine the luster or commanding charm of the host. Trimalchio's dinner party is a profligate debauch because his only goal in giving it is to overwhelm his low status guests with the enormous magnitude of his wealth and personality. A host with a more ambitious goal would bring a much more disciplined approach to the event (with no doubt far less ribald effect), especially if his guests were of equal or higher status. Pantomimes do not appear at Trimalchio's party perhaps because these would infuse the occasion with a seriousness or artistry that competes too strongly with the comic vulgarity of the host and his slacker guests. A pantomime troupe theoretically conveyed an aura of glamour and refined, "serious" luxuriousness on any occasion at which it performed. But this aura was acceptable only when it amplified rather than eclipsed the glamour of the troupe's owner, which meant that the owner had to regulate carefully performances and access to the performers and had to maintain constantly the assumption that enjoying any connection at all with the pantomime ensemble was a major privilege granted exclusively by the owner and a basis on which to negotiate powerful privileges for the owner. Trimalchio wants nothing from his humble guests other than their awe or boundless gratitude, which, however, he does not really win. A host or hostess seeking to build alliances, assert influence, or achieve status elevation in relation to dinner party guests would produce a much more disciplined occasion than Trimalchio's banquet; the use of pantomime scenes would function to confer glamour not only on the host but on the guests; above all the

performance should create an exalted, seductive perception of the host as a gifted manager of life as a performance, as a powerful aesthetic experience, and as a reservoir of mysterious and irresistible manifestations of luxuriousness yet to come. Pantomime thrived in atmosphere of intense competition. Owners competed with each other in presenting their pantomimes, so it was important for an owner to pay serious attention to the quality, duration, and deployment of his pantomime troupe. But the glamour cast by the ensemble or its star could be dangerous when instead of enhancing the glamour of the owner it cast a shadow over him.

Much of the danger arose from the erotic allure of pantomime performance, especially for female spectators, and the danger could affect even the highest or most powerful levels of the imperial aristocracy. Messalina's infatuation with her star pantomime Mnester, who earlier had been the lover of Poppaea Sabina, mother of Nero's wife Poppaea, was part of a larger effort on her part to topple the regime (41-54 CE) of her husband, the Emperor Claudius, in 48 CE, and thus to expand her voracious appetite for power with a new husband and emperor, Gaius Silius, according to the *Annales* (109 CE) of Tacitus (Book XI). Empress Messalina and most of her huge entourage perished as a result of her libidinous excesses, although Claudius considered, but only briefly, sparing Mnester, because, as the actor pointed out, Claudius himself had said that Mnester should do whatever Messalina wanted after having already spurned her advances. But the freedmen surrounding Claudius persuaded him that sparing Mnester would only outrage those noble families whose members had died because they had belonged to Messalina's entourage. In his chapter on the Emperor Domitian, Suetonius, in the *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* (ca. 120 CE), asserts that the Empress Domitia's love for the imperial pantomime Paris caused the Emperor to banish and divorce her (apparently around 83 CE), although his love for her remained so strong that he recalled her and married her again a year or so later (12.3.1); he then supposedly had executed one of Paris's students because the boy resembled too much the star pantomime (12.10.1), and he forbade pantomimes to appear on public stages, only in villas (12.7.1); he even expelled a *quaester* from the Senate for performing like a pantomime (12.8.1). Even if Tacitus and Suetonius merely accepted these stories uncritically in their efforts to discredit the Flavian dynasty, they inserted them with the idea that the reader would grasp the power of alluring pantomimes to destabilize governmental control over Roman

society and over the most intimate relations between social classes, and also grasp that this allure was inherently unhealthy and always in tension with the best morality.

Intimacy of performance was, however, an essential component in establishing the exclusivity—and thus the allure for aristocratic audiences—of pantomime entertainments in the villas. The *triclinium* compelled a close physical relation between performers and audience. Even with a view onto the *peristyle*, the *triclinium* does not offer space for the performance of spectacular or elaborate physical actions by solo performers, let alone ensembles. The space before the diners was for most *triclinia* quite small. Some *triclinia* contained a kind of small corridor surrounded by the diners in which a performer might appear, but this feature was by no means pervasive in the design of *triclinia*. Performance at dinner parties revealed the advantages of building movement around the pyrrhic step, which allowed for complex and exciting movement of the torso, hands, and head without depending on a large stage for violent movement of the legs or any sense of a body rushing, leaping, or sweeping through space. The pyrrhic step provided elegant, dramatic transitions from one pose to the next; what most delighted the audience was the power and beauty of the pose. The "intimate" space of the *triclinium* was also what encouraged a performance aesthetic that favored soloists rather than groups of performers. The *triclinium* is an excellent space for displaying the skill of a talented and beautiful pantomime accompanied by no more than three musicians framed by the doorway opening onto the *peristyle* and assisted by an interpellator in the corner behind the pantomime and perhaps by another slave entering from the *peristyle* corridor according to cue to help the pantomime change masks or adjust costume. With so much villa entertainment linked to small audiences reposing in the *triclinium*, it is not surprising that pantomime became so strongly identified with a star soloist. This "intimate" scale of performance allowed owners to manage talent and resources for competitive entertainment without much strain and yet always within a domain of exclusivity advantageous to those who appreciated this art.

Villa Pantomime and Eroticism

But this "intimate" scale does not mean that *triclinium* design was large enough to support only a solo pantomime performance. From the

writings of Xenophon, Petronius, and Plutarch, it is evident that banquet entertainments followed conventions that, at least in terms of modes of performance, endured across hundreds of years. Sometimes banquet acts or scenes involved two performers, independent of musicians or assistants. In the final chapter (9.1-7) of *The Symposium*, Xenophon describes a sort of two-person pantomime as the culminating entertainment of the banquet; the performance could well have taken place at a banquet in Rome hundreds of years later, except that for his banquet Callias has hired a troupe of professional entertainers owned by a "Syracusan," whereas of course during the imperial era, the host would own the entertainers. The performance depicts the marriage of Dionysus and Ariadne:

> *[A] sort of throne was first erected in the inner room abutting on the supper chamber. Then the Syracusan entered, with a speech: With your good pleasure, sirs, Ariadne is about to enter the bridal chamber set apart for her and Dionysus. Anon Dionysus will appear, fresh from the table of the gods, wine-flushed, and enter to his bride. In the last scene the two will play with one another. He had scarce concluded, when Ariadne entered, attired like a bride. She crossed the stage and sate herself upon the throne. Meanwhile, before the god himself appeared a sound of flutes was heard; the cadence of the Bacchic air proclaimed his coming.*
>
> *At this point the company broke forth in admiration of the ballet-master. For no sooner did the sound of music strike upon the ear of Ariadne than something in her action revealed to all the pleasure which it caused her. She did not step forward to meet her lover, she did not rise even from her seat; but the flutter of her unrest was plain to see.*
>
> *When Dionysus presently caught sight of her he loved, lightly he danced towards her, and with show of tenderest passion gently reclined upon her knees; his arms entwined about her lovingly, and upon her lips he sealed a kiss; she the while with most sweet bashfulness was fain to wind responsive arms about her lover; till the banqueters, the while they gazed all eyes, clapped hands and cried "Encore!" But when Dionysus rose upon his feet, and rising lifted Ariadne to her full height, the action of those lovers as they kissed and fondled one another was a thing to contemplate. As to the spectators,*

> *they could see that Dionysus was indeed most beautiful, and Ariadne like some lovely blossom; nor were those mocking gestures, but real kisses sealed on loving lips; and so, with hearts aflame, they gazed expectantly. They could hear the question asked by Dionysus, did she love him? and her answer, as prettily she swore she did. And withal so earnestly, not Dionysus only, but all present, had sworn an oath in common: the boy and girl were verily and indeed a pair of happy lovers. So much less did they resemble actors, trained to certain gestures, than two beings bent on doing what for many a long day they had set their hearts on. At last when these two lovers, caught in each other's arms, were seen to be retiring to the nuptial couch, the members of the supper party turned to withdraw themselves; and whilst those of them who were unmarried swore that they would wed, those who were wedded mounted their horses and galloped off to join their wives, in quest of married joys*. (Xenophon 1897: 397-398)

This "pantomime" as such does not include much physical action. Ariadne enters and for the most part simply sits on her throne; Dionysus performs most of the physical action, dancing before her, reposing at her knees, and then lifting her. The scene is primarily a sequence of poses, ending with the lovers passionately embracing before exiting--"retiring to the nuptial couch." Ariadne stirs the audience by a mysterious action that reveals her pleasure in hearing the music—"a flutter of unrest"—even though she does "not even rise from her seat." The idea of the scene is to awaken a beautiful emotion in the audience without relying on elaborate physical tricks—such as the girl dancing with hoops earlier in the banquet—or on language. In this milieu, nothing is more beautiful or intimate than two beautiful bodies drawn together. What pleases the audience above all is being close to the performance of erotic gestures and poses, and these do not require much space; indeed, they require a small space wherein the distinction between the real and the imaginary becomes blurred. The diners are close enough to the performers to see that they are not acting but actually love each other. This real emotion in the performers has the power to provoke intense erotic desire in the spectators, which brings the performance and the banquet to an end—or rather, allows erotic feeling to triumph over entertainment and representation. Intimacy of performance facilitates the realization of erotic desires within the

spectators. At the conclusion of *The Symposium*, the married men, inspired by the erotic pantomime, hurry away to make love to their wives, while the single men drift into masturbatory reveries of carnal conjugality they expect someday soon to enjoy. In the *Satyricon*, after Encolpius, Asclytos, and Giton leave Trimalchio's house and stumble back to the inn where they are staying, Encolpius attempts sexual activity with Giton, but Asclytos "steals" Giton and "carries" him away to his own bed, "where he wallowed around without restraint with a 'brother' not his own, while the latter, not noticing the fraud, or pretending not to notice it, went to sleep in a stranger's arms, in defiance of all human rights" (Chap. 79). Pantomime performance created an atmosphere that urged spectators to materialize their erotic desires—that is, to regard the occasion for the performance as an opportunity for the gratification of sexual desires, which circulate within the dinner party as "gifts" or "favors" provided by the host. In *The Golden Ass* (Chapter X), Apuleius blatantly links pantomime to pornographic entertainment that dissolves distinctions between real and mimicked sexual performance. The reputation for licentiousness ascribed to pantomimes derived from their skill at suffusing the villa scene with an implicit or unspoken understanding of expanded permissibility in experiencing the relation between conviviality and intimacy. The movements, the poses, and the aura of the pantomime, always anyway the physical embodiment of a mythic level of reality, equated intimacy with sexual attraction, with the freedom of bodies to function as beautiful gifts. This power of pantomime to dissolve, in the villa milieu, the various social distinctions between bodies was why some owners would not even own pantomime ensembles and why other owners who did own ensembles might not use them to entertain guests whose "traditional" moral values echoed Cicero, who, in *De legibus* (2.39 ca. 43 BCE) denounced dancing at banquets as a "source of destruction" that will "overturn entire states." Anthony Corbeill (1997: 104-107) argues that for late Republicans like Cicero and Lucilius, dancing at banquets by men, either performers or diners, was synonymous with pleasure in effeminacy and disclosure of homosexual inclinations; a pagan, Nonius (ca. 400 CE) remarks: "among the ancients, dancers or pantomimes were called *cinaedi* [queer sluts]" (*Compendiosa Doctrina* 1888: 8), and around 500 CE, a Syrian bishop, Jacob of Sarugh (ca. 451-521 CE), wrote several lengthy "homilies" (actually diatribes) against pantomime dancing, for it is "a foster-mother who teaches her sons to commit fornication"

(Jacob of Sarugh 2008: 414); Craig Williams (1999: 194-196) provides further examples of Latin writers using the term *cinaedus* to describe dancers and pantomimes in a derogatory manner. But this centuries-long prejudice among moral conservatives against the power of pantomimes to undermine sexual inhibitions and to encourage the feminization of men was obviously not strong enough to constrain the increasing use of pantomime entertainments in the villa milieu. During the imperial era, laws were necessary to regulate (rather than suppress) pantomime performances for "private" audiences. Under Augustus, the *lex Juliana* (18 BCE) and *lex Papia Poppea* (9 CE) established a legal framework that simultaneously preserved the moral stigmatization of actors and yet allowed and perhaps even encouraged the villa culture to develop the erotic ambitions of pantomime entertainments. These laws, which defined adulterous relations and their penalties, clarified distinctions between actors and other social classes: persons of the senatorial class were forbidden to marry freed persons; neither freeborn persons or members of the senatorial class were allowed to marry persons who were actors or whose father or mother was an actor, according to the lawyer Ulpian (ca. 170-223CE) in one of his "fragments" (*Tituli* 13.2). The main concern of these laws was to prevent sexual desires from undermining class distinctions, so that marriage best served the state when it existed only within social classes and not across them. Moreover, the laws apparently exempted some categories of people from prosecution and penalties, and although the extent of these categories remains uncertain, actors and dancers, along with slaves, appear in virtually any list of exempt categories (McGinn 1998: 194-195). Aside from the shadowy *lex Scantina*, which was an anti-rape law, proscription of homosexual behavior and of those "who give themselves up to works of lewdness with their own sex" was not a feature of Roman law until Justinian published his *Institutes* in 533 CE (Justinian 1910: 505). In practice, these laws established that the state would not prosecute anyone for adultery who had sexual relations with persons belonging to an exempt category, and indeed, it is not altogether clear if unmarried persons could be prosecuted for adultery by having sexual relations with married persons outside of their social class (McGinn 1998: 195). These lacunae in the laws help explain why Messalina's affair with Mnester, her plaything, did not distress Emperor Claudius so much as her liaisons with the aristocrat Gaius Silia. They also explain why for centuries the villa culture could build around pantomime performance a

permissive atmosphere of sexual opportunities and "favors." The voluptuous sensuality of pantomime movements and bodies, the constant invocation of bodily "metamorphosis," and the assertion of pantomime performance that the most powerful or seductive "scenes" in life do not depend on speech or skillful use of language to dissolve the distinction between reality and representation imbued star pantomimes with a mysterious glamor, affirmed that even slaves could project a captivating aura, and stressed the authority of images, poses, and masks to achieve the realization of desires. This erotic allure of the pantomime extended well beyond the exclusive domain of villa entertainments and accounts for the great, enduring public fascination with pantomimes, for the eagerness of public audiences to accept pantomime performances in the theaters as important gifts bestowed upon them.

From the perspective of the imperial government, the marriage laws were strong enough to assure that pantomime performances did not disturb the social order, for it is difficult to find any further legislation effecting pantomimes until very late in the empire. Occasionally emperors such as Augustus, Tiberius, and Domitian banned or restored public performances of pantomimes in Rome or elsewhere, but these proscriptions and restorations, which arose from political calculations related to public fan clubs of pantomimes, covered only performances in theaters and were in any case imperial decrees subject to the whims or moods of the emperors who imposed them; they were not laws, they were not statutes requiring ratification from the Senate, for the decrees never constrained aristocratic access to pantomime performances in the villas, only aristocratic use of the pantomimes to stir and manipulate public sentiments. A combination of moral and sexual conventions, a government always careful to maintain clear categories of social identity that overwhelmingly privileged members of the aristocracy, and aristocratic ownership of pantomimes was sufficient to prevent the erotic allure of pantomime performance from escaping the control of it by the villa culture and becoming symbolic of a "new" social order, a "new" vision of freedom across the empire. If pantomime performance had been a commercial venture, it would be subject to laws, to contractual obligations, to court decisions, and to testimonies. But it was not; it was the property of an estate, and thus subject primarily to laws governing the formation and distribution of estates. In the late empire, many and perhaps most Christians understood pantomime performance as a much greater threat to the "new" social order they sought to build than

managers of the state, even when Christian, ever supposed was the threat it posed in relation to any social order. No magnitude of public love for pantomimes, no measure of concern for state security, no level of Christian indignation, no condition of economic crisis, no power of artistic ambition, and no intimation of commercial opportunity could, until the the late second century CE, dislodge pantomime performance from the villa culture and the social and political goals it served so "intimately" and with such erotic intensity in the convivial ambiance of a *triclinium*.

Pantomime Innovation and Aristocratic Competition

It may seem as if an immense conservatism defined pantomime performance in relation to the *triclinium*. The banquet pantomime performance of Daphnis and Ariadne that Xenophon described around 380 BCE in *The Symposium* could perhaps have taken place at a banquet in 300 CE. The format of the banquet had hardly changed at all over seven hundred years: a small group of guests reclined around tables, tasted different, often exotic meals, engaged in "convivial" conversation, and after they finished eating, they sipped wine, while the host provided "intimate" entertainments that might include pantomimes. Guests often interacted with the performers, commented on the performers, compared them with other performers, which further inspired exchanges of gossip, anecdotes, displays of erudition, or philosophical commentary. The end of a banquet might well entail the initiation of sexual liaisons with other guests or with persons "made available" by the host. The evidence of *triclinium* entertainment from Xenophon, Petronius, Plutarch, and Macrobius indicates a remarkable continuity of structure and ambiance. The format was apparently so successful at achieving the social or political goals of villa banqueting that innovation seemed unnecessary, and one might assume that *triclinium* entertainments cultivated an aesthetic that encouraged improvisation without innovation.

However, the retention of conventions across many centuries does not mean that innovation was absent. During the imperial era, villa owners clearly escalated the atmosphere of luxury while dining by introducing beautiful wall paintings and mosaic floors, by using elaborately crafted serving utensils, by having male and female guests together, by perfuming the *triclinium*, by installing elegant divans and cushions for reclining, by serving new exotic dishes, and by expanding the number of persons serving

the guests, which probably entailed increasing the diversity of entertainments offered guests. The evidence does not suggest that hosts during the imperial era sought to increase the number of guests in the *triclinium*; rather, some villa owners designed two or three *triclinia* in their villas, although it is not clear that they did host banquets involving more than one *triclinium* at the same time. Even if they did, the number of guests would still remain quite small compared with public feasts they sponsored. Dunbabin (1991: 136, 147) contends, on the basis of a mosaic fragment from Carthage, which she dates to the last quarter of the fourth century CE, that banqueters may have begun to sit in benches or chairs at long tables at that time, although Blanchard-Lemée (1996: fig. 45) thinks the scene depicts a feast in the fifth century CE; it also depicts a pair of dancers with *crotali* accompanied by an old man playing Pan pipes. These male *crotali* dancers are perhaps the most interesting feature of the fragment. The villa owner probably had no pantomimes if he wished to commemorate his status by depicting these two dancers, instead of performers who enjoyed much higher status as artists, although to be sure much of the image is missing. Why two dancers using *crotali*? It is doubtful that a second *crotaleum* was necessary to amplify a rhythmic pattern shared by both dancers, for the sound of a single pair of castanets was quite loud, especially in such a small space as a *triclinium*. More likely each dancer performed a separate rhythmic pattern to produce a complex rhythmic interplay of sound and movement, like a contest or duel of clicking and movement. The performance of such a dance would require considerable skill that one might encounter only very rarely. That perhaps was what the villa owner wished to commemorate in the mosaic: the *innovation* in banquet performance that he enabled. Banqueting was an intensely competitive activity for hosts, for banqueting functioned to enhance the status of the host and affirm his ability to advance people within the social hierarchy. Competition encourages innovation, and the imperial state apparatus encouraged aristocratic families to compete with each other for positions, opportunities, and honors within the bureaucracy and within the economic infrastructure. Banqueting operated like a contest in a culture that supported contests of all sorts. Innovation in banquet entertainment was necessary for hosts to establish their competitiveness in using the banquets to achieve social and political goals.

Innovation might involve a wide spectrum of entertaining performances: dwarf performers, bizarrely gifted acrobats, scantily clad women performing gymnastic stunts, such as the famous "bikini girls" in the fourth century CE mosaic of Room 38 at Piazza Armerina (Wilson 1983: 41). Iconographic evidence supports, up to a point, the notion that villa ensembles entertained audiences with a range of stunts and acrobatic dances. Artists over the centuries consistently celebrated innovative or "novel" aspects of performance. Artworks from the fifth century BCE to the fourth century CE show non-pantomimic dancers and acrobats as solitary figures who display adroit manipulation of props while moving. Figure 50a shows female caryatid dancers from the fifth century BCE performing the pyrrhic step while balancing crown-like "baskets" on their heads (Lawler 1974: 109-110). Fifth and fourth century BCE images include dancers performing with "clappers," balancing on tables or pedestals while manipulating objects, and engaged in contortionism or nude twirling of their bodies. The third century BCE produced figurines of the so-called "veiled" female dancers in a variety of poses and movements that indicate the erotic charm of bodies undulating against the luxurious fabric wrapped around them. The Taranto National Museum contains two nude dancing figurines as a pair, and although it is not altogether clear if these two were meant to be seen together or are simply variations of a popular pose, the subtle differences between the two suggest a conscious effort on the part of the artist to treat the pose as a dynamic, theatrical phenomenon, as a way of comparing dancers with each other. In the second century BCE, dance figurines show even greater sophistication in cultivating tension between nudity, swirling diaphanous fabric, and elegance of movement [Figures 50b; Lawler 1974: 78, 103, 111, 132, 134]. The third and second century figurines reveal an unprecedented awareness of the dancing body as a source of interest when seen from any angle, not just a frontal or profile view, but the second century figurines suggest a new enthusiasm for exploring the expressivity of the face while dancing. A first century CE image introduces even greater complexities [Figure 50c]. Here the preoccupation with linking dance and nudity entails a pleasure in describing the elegant power of the dancing body to manipulate a complex assortment of props: the staff in one hand and an unidentified thing in the other; the fabric decorously looped around one arm, over the shoulder, down between the breasts, and over the other arm. The curious headdress somehow magnifies the ambiguity of the

movement, simultaneously propulsive and twisting, to show the body in profile and frontal perspectives at the same time.



Figure 50: a) Fifth century BCE caryatid dancer, Berlin, Pergamon Museum, Photo: Weege (1926: 41); b) Second century BCE figurine dancers, Taranto Museo Nazionale, Photo: Caratelli (1983: Plates 587, 599); c) First century CE relief of a dancer moving with a thyrsus, hand mirror, and shawl; Weege contends (96) the dancer is a hermaphrodite, Photo: Weege (1926: 108).

First century mural paintings from Pompeii perpetuate the theme of graceful bodies moving with a range of props: a large tambourine, a platter, a pair of cymbals, and, most intriguingly, balancing a large basket of grapes on the head while carrying a thyrsus [Figure 6]. But these paintings are most informative for the measure of color they invest in dance. Nudity continues to seem an alluring feature of dance, but then one observes the effect of delicate, varied fabric colors in heightening the charm of watching dance and encouraging diaphanousness and fabric layering to compete with a possibly greater urge in dance to reveal the body. First century Pompeii also produced the strange sequence of wall paintings, now at the Naples Museum, depicting rope dancers suspended in a kind of sprawling, dark attic-garden above the gaudy panel of theatrical architecture that originally stood beneath them [Figure 51]. Marble dance figures from the second century indicate an expanded interest in showing relations between nudity and movement by exploring a wider range of dance positions than previous

art encompassed (Dietrichs, 46-49, 60); here, at last, emerges a sense of dancers interacting with other bodies, or at least with each other, subsumed under the eternally popular theme of "maenads," although a gravestone image of a naked teenage dancer from Aquinium (Hungary) manages to convey a congenial naturalistic perception of the dancer, freed from mythic idealization and thus reinforcing the view that nudity in performance was more a matter of theatrical convention than an element of artistic fantasy (Kob 1997: 171) [Figure 52]. Yet in a fourth century mosaic from Madaba, Jordan, a female dancer wears a long dress that does not flatter her body but which also does not impede perception of her delight in performing the fancy trick of clashing cymbals attached to her wrists with cymbals attached to her ankles; next to her dances a nude male or possibly a hermaphrodite, although Piccirillo describes the figure as a "satyr" (Piccirillo 1993: 76, fig. 33) [Figure 26].

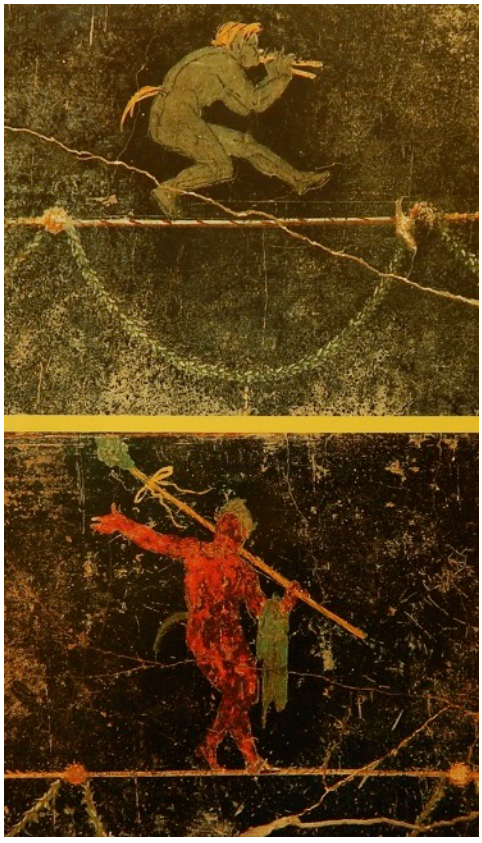


Figure 51: First century wall paintings from Pompeii (House of Cicero) depicting acrobats performing on ropes. Photo: Guillaud (1990: Plates 26, 28).



Figure 52: Female dancer on a second or third century CE gravestone from Contra Acquincum (near Budapest). Photo: Kob (1997: 171).

Innovation therefore was a feature of villa entertainment because it strengthened the social competitiveness of villa owners. The introduction of pantomimes was itself a major innovation in the imperial villa culture. But this innovation resulted from an even larger innovation. With the establishment of the empire under Augustus, pantomime performance moved away from being an art of professionals who earned their living by performing in theaters, as was the case during the Hellenistic period, to an art owned by wealthy patricians who nourished the art through the slaves and freedmen attached to their estates. When Pylades and Bathyllus moved to Rome (22 BCE), Alexandria quickly lost its status as the center for learning the art of pantomime; the study of pantomime became decentralized. Performers learned the art primarily by watching other

performers at entertainments, a situation that would encourage less standardization of performance and greater diversity of performance styles compared with a professionalization of the art, where regulatory guilds or associations tend to favor "standards" or protective conventions that assure appropriate "value" for the price paid to see the performance. During the imperial era, the "value" of pantomime performance did not depend on what audiences were willing to pay to see the performance; it depended on what social or political goals the performance aided the owner in achieving. In a sense, the value of the performance was a matter of the price the owner was willing to pay to achieve or sustain a "competitive" social status. The displacement of the *cantica tragica* at the end of the Republic by the pantomime facilitated the displacement of theater by the villa as the primary site of pantomime performance, where voices belonged mostly to the guests and not to the performers. But to gain a deeper understanding of innovation in pantomime performance, it is best to examine a third zone of pantomime performance to comprehend the scope of innovation for the art.

Pantomime performance in the villa culture extended beyond the realm of dinner parties and exclusive occasions for small aristocratic and elite audiences. The owners of pantomime ensembles used their artists to pursue unique interfaces with the public to achieve political ambitions that the private entertainments alone could not achieve, although the villa performances were nevertheless crucial in developing this larger public interface.

Members of pantomime ensembles sometimes performed in religious or civic processions sponsored by wealthy citizens who wished to engage public attention to their seriousness about benefitting the communities wherein the processions occurred. Public processions to celebrate or commemorate a wide range of occasions were, of course, a feature of Roman cultural life for hundreds of years prior to the introduction of pantomimes. However, with the advent of the Empire and particularly with the enthronement of Tiberius as Emperor in 14 CE, a significant shift in the organization of processions occurred, at least in relation to the involvement of pantomimes. In the *Annals* (1.77), Tacitus, in a very enigmatic paragraph, refers to "disorders" or "disturbances" or some sort of excessive freedom ("licentia") linked with theater in Rome that had started the year before (that is, in 14 CE), and the following year erupted into extensive rioting in which many civilians died as well as many soldiers

attempting to quell the violence. When the Senate debated the matter, some elders considered actors to be the cause of the disturbances and proposed a law that would allow praetors to scourge actors. But a tribune of the people, Haterius Agrippa, opposed such a law, presumably because he believed it would exacerbate rather than curtail the violence, which would explain why Tacitus bothers to mention that Asinius Gallus then rebuked Haterius Agrippa, while Tiberius, who was present, remained silent, feigning an attitude of indulgence toward free senatorial debate. The Senate rejected the proposed law, and instead enacted "many" other laws that put an end to the unrest, at least for several years. Augustus, the Senate determined, had decreed that actors were exempt from scourging, and Tiberius had no inclination to overturn the previous emperor's decree, although Suetonius (*Augustus* 45.4) remarks that Augustus ordered the whipping of actors who had misbehaved. The laws enacted by the Senate fixed the amount of pay actors received, Senators were forbidden to enter the house of a pantomime, knights should not surround pantomimes in the street or elsewhere appear as if they were players of the theater, and praetors had the authority to exile all those responsible for the disturbances.

Civilians and soldiers died when the soldiers constrained crowds attempting to attack a magistrate. In theory, magistrates were responsible for sponsoring the *Augustalia*, the musical and theatrical contests that celebrated Augustus on his birthday (23 September) or 12 October. Augustus had died on 19 August 14 CE. The magistrates may have felt that with the death of the emperor, it was not necessary or appropriate to continue the *Augustalia*. His successor, Tiberius, disclosed no enthusiasm for public entertainments and may well have believed that continuing the *Augustalia* was not helpful in establishing his authority to move the empire in a new direction. However, Dio Cassius, writing in the early third century, asserted (56.47.2) that the disturbances of 14 CE resulted when a pantomime refused to enter the theater for "the stipulated pay." He says the tribunes convened the Senate on the day of the rioting to request more funding than the law allowed, which indicates a sense of urgency about the issue, but Dio then abruptly "ends [his] account of Augustus" with remarkable refusal to supply further details about this obviously ominous conclusion to the life of the man, Augustus, his history so ardently venerates (Swann 2004: 375-376). Perhaps he felt the less said the better.

But Tacitus's account of the riot of 15 CE suggests that in 14 CE, the Senate agreed to raise the pay of actors, and the following year, the instigators of the disturbances decided to pursue the same strategy of creating public havoc to extort greater funding for their theater entertainments. The strategy failed to intimidate the Senate and the new emperor. Or rather, having suppressed the riots through military action, the Senate took time to debate, less on how to prevent further riots, since the new regime had already made clear its willingness to resort to violent force to curb unruly crowds, but more on how to subordinate the theater culture to a new idea of how it should operate within the empire. After all, the Senate's enactment of a law capping the pay of actors would seem to reject altogether the ostensible motive for the riots and to suggest that the rioters did not represent public sentiment as a whole, for neither the emperor nor the Senate sought to punish the general public by banning pantomime performances in the theater, although that option eventually found favor. Arthur Murphy's 1753 translation of the passage in Tacitus is probably more accurate when he renders "At theatri licentia" as "theatrical factions" rather than as "the theater," as in other translations (Tacitus 1832: 69). Tiberius and the Senate did not want to "scourge" the actors, because they did not believe the actors were at the root of the disturbances. The actors were pawns in a larger game played by factions attached to the actors. But these factions were under the control of knights or aristocrats who saw the pantomimes as useful in building political constituencies. The violence of the riots seems to have entailed more than an intense protest against the government's unwillingness to spend more on the theatrical contests. The instigators of the violence saw the contests as foundations for the expansion of political power bases, and control over the contests was key to preserving these foundations, which Tiberius and the Senate regarded as dangerous. The riots attempted to demonstrate the power of theatrical factions, fan clubs associated with particular pantomimes, to define the political ambitions of the aristocrats who hired pantomimes to entertain their clients and constituents. The magnitude of the violence implies that it encompassed fighting between rival factions or at least rampaging meant to test the authority of the state to control the ambitions of the instigators. Competition between rival factions included the ability of individual factions to outbid others for the favor of a star pantomime, but the fees sought by the stars probably cost the instigators less than the cost of

maintaining the fan clubs. The pantomime riots of 15 CE were about the costs the instigators were willing to pay to establish ambitious political identities. This apparently was not a problem as long as Augustus generously compensated the imperial pantomimes, and the pantomimes could not expect anyone to outbid the emperor who gave them access to Rome.

Roman Politics and Pantomime Evolution

Consequences of the Pantomime Riots

The pantomime riots of 14 CE arose out of a profound cultural shift that emerged with the new emperor. During the reign of Augustus, pantomimes were freedmen, like Pylades and Bathyllus, and perhaps mostly from distant regions of the empire. These pantomimes could treat their performances as a business, selling shows to those who found these entertainments useful in building political opportunities. Augustus curbed the "lawlessness" (Suetonius *Augustus* 45.4) of the pantomimes by instituting (2 CE) a rigid hierarchy of seating in the theater (Suetonius *Augustus* 44.1-2) that situated spectators according to their social rank; he also had actors scourged and banished for offending persons of superior rank; the *lex Julia* (18 BCE) had already codified the inferior status of actors. However, the erotic charisma of the pantomimes extended well beyond the theater, and Augustus's laws were obviously ineffective in controlling it. Therefore, according to Tacitus, the Senate forbade knights to "surround" pantomimes as they "go forth" in public. Why would knights surround pantomimes on the streets? The most persuasive answer is that knights who favored or sponsored a particular pantomime moved in entourages through the streets as a way of proclaiming their affiliation and gathering audiences—a kind of promotional stunt or procession. Pantomimes received protection from the knights against hostile parties attached to rival pantomimes and political factions. Even though pantomimes may have received generous compensation under Augustus, it is difficult to believe they could earn enough to pay for fan clubs or *claques*, which Libanius (*Orations* 41.9), speaking of Antioch in the fourth century CE, claimed to reach as many as 400 persons per *claque*, although Alan Cameron (1976: 234) does contend that the pantomimes paid for their *claques* "to ensure that their act was adequately appreciated." However, the only evidence he presents to support this assertion is a vague quotation from John Chrysostom (*Homilies in Matthew* 37. 6-7): claques "sell their voices to their bellies. For the sake of three obols they prostitute their salvation to the dancers," which does not really clarify who pays the three obols (Leyerle 2001: 39). Indeed, he goes on

to refer to sources, Eunapius (*Vita Sophistrarium* VI. 2. 8) and Suetonius (*Nero* 20. 3) that comment on emperors, Constantine and Nero, who paid for their theater *claques*, with Nero paying 40,000 sesterces to leaders of different sections within his imperial *claque*, which, Suetonius says, consisted of 5,000 young men "from the common people."

William Slater (1994: 139-144) does not clarify why the knights surrounded pantomimes in the streets, but nevertheless he proposes that the riots resulted from the desire of knights to become pantomimes themselves. The knights, he says, were willing to risk the ignominy the *lex Juliana* imposed on them for pursuing careers on stage to acquire the huge sums of money pantomimes could earn. The unwillingness of Tiberius to provide sufficiently generous funding for the *Augustalia* contests, Slater argues, diminished this career option. The Emperor and the Senate, he contends, embodied a conservative Roman hostility toward the emasculating influence of the Greek gymnasium, with its oiled and perfumed bodies and pleasure in the display of male physiques, which the pantomimes apparently appropriated with great success. But this attitude seems to belong to the era of the Republic. What more likely agitated the Senate was the hooliganism and extortionate behavior of the *claques* than any threat to Roman morality from the seductive aura of Greek body culture. Presumably Tiberius did not want his administration evaluated according to the expectations and values identified with Augustus. If he accommodated the claques' demand for greater pantomime subsidies, then the Emperor (and members of the Senate) risked getting caught up in an escalating cost of managing political ambitions that did not align with his own. By capping the cost of pantomimes, the Emperor and the Senate made it more difficult at least for knights to outbid each other to retain the services of pantomimes whose performances as "gifts" to the public played a significant role in forming and clarifying the constituencies of the performance sponsors. The idea behind the legislation was to make it harder to create pantomime stars by inflating their salaries or by associating star power with the money invested in a star and the claque attached to the star. While some knights may have announced a desire to appear on the stage and become stars themselves, it is quite possible that such announcements were a form of posturing, a ploy to publicize their ambition to shape a new, post-Augustean direction for themselves, and behaving as if they were exempt, immune, or indifferent to the *lex Juliana* helped to

disclose this ambition. The dominant goal of these knights was to use pantomime performance to establish power bases that would enable imperial opportunities for them. From Tiberius's perspective, a "new direction" implied moving away from the idea that aristocrats could buy constituencies and opportunities by allowing the imperial government to escalate the cost of those opportunities. Tacitus and Suetonius (*Tiberius* 46-47) describe the Emperor's distaste for subsidies of almost any sort and his awareness that when he (or Augustus) had been charitable, their generosity did not make reliable friends. When the Senate heard the plea of Hortalus for a subsidy to his distinguished but financially troubled family, Tiberius withheld sympathy, for "if a man is to have nothing to hope or fear from himself, industry will languish, indolence thrive, and we shall have the whole population waiting, without a care in the world, for outside relief, incompetent to help itself, and an incubus to us" and "if we drain [the Treasury] by favouritism, we shall have to refill it by crime" (Tacitus, *Annals* II, 38; 1931: 441). The failure of Hortalus to improve his family fortunes even after Tiberius reluctantly provided him a subsidy could only reinforce the Emperor's conviction that indulging aristocratic ambitions at state expense was not helpful in strengthening his own position. Tiberius's aversion to making public appearances nourished his aversion to spending on public works projects, including, certainly, the theater, where apparently he believed many in the audience circulated unkind words about him (Suetonius, *Tiberius* 66). Tiberius was hardly the most exemplary proponent of the "bread and circus" philosophy of governance. Nevertheless, he appreciated the political value of pantomime performance, for he did not wish to eliminate it, only to curb the extortionist violence of the claques. The cap on star performer salaries meant that pantomime sponsors could not build constituencies around the status, popularity or wealth of star performers; constituencies would emerge in relation to deep uncertainty about the "real" economic value of the performance talent. But this uncertainty would actually encourage the expansion of pantomime culture rather than its decay.

The legislation of 15 CE led rather to the decay of the professional pantomime, to the decay of the commercial development of the art. Under Augustus, the incentive for becoming a pantomime arose from the belief that acquiring pantomime skills from those educated in the art according to the Greek model as processed by the Alexandrian school of pantomime was

an appealing path to upward mobility within imperial society. Under Tiberius, it became very difficult for a professional pantomime to amass enough wealth to achieve serious, if indeed any, upward mobility. The law forbidding knights to enter the home of any pantomime had the effect of compelling aristocrats to summon pantomimes to their own homes if they wanted to do business with the performers. But even summoning the professional pantomimes might prove unhelpful in developing political ambitions if the supply of professionals remained limited and it was no longer convenient to outbid one's rivals to obtain their services. The most efficient method for developing the pantomime culture was within the villa domain itself, by training slaves and freedmen to emulate the professionals. Villa owners could improve their status by their success in perfecting the talent of the people they "owned." Under Tiberius, pantomime performance shifted away from independent, entrepreneurial ensembles to adjuncts of villa households. The rivalry between Bathyllus and Pylades assumed a legendary status in public consciousness, as rivalry between factions and between ensemble owners dominated the evolution of the art. Theaters became secondary or auxiliary sites of performance, which took place primarily in villas. The art became dispersed and fragmented as it spread further from Rome. Such codification of the art as derived from the Alexandrian school weakened as performers groomed within the villa milieu absorbed more local influences, tastes, and distinctions. Innovation in performance occurred less systematically and probably more often as ensembles responded to local opportunities, resources, and objectives. Competition between owners for constituencies most likely intensified the introduction of innovations and variations in performance more quickly than would have been the case had the Greco-Alexandrian model remained entrenched. The end of the *Augustalia* did not mean the end of public contests between pantomimes in Rome or elsewhere. But it did mean that success in the contests depended on unique or novel performance qualities rather than on how well performance honored Augustus or any subsequent emperor, especially Tiberius, who showed little interest in public competitions of any sort. While the Tiberian legislation of 15 CE led to the decay and probable extinction of a distinct professional class of pantomimes, it facilitated, accelerated, and expanded upward class mobility for slaves and freedmen who became pantomimes. Slaves who were pantomimes enjoyed higher status within the slave hierarchy than many

slaves who were not pantomimes, and slave pantomimes could well believe that strong performance skills were a path to manumission. Freedmen who were pantomimes of course enjoyed even higher status if they were on a sponsor's payroll or benefited from a sponsor's investment. They achieved this status because of the claques attached to them, the entourages or gangs that presumably were also on the sponsor's payroll. Within this villa-controlled organization of the art, pantomimes had little incentive to act independently of their owners or sponsors or to auction themselves off to the highest bidder. Violence between rival factions probably did not disappear altogether, but pantomime riots approaching, indeed exceeding, the magnitude of the 14 and 15 CE riots did not arise until much later in the empire, in the fourth century and far from Rome. The transition from Augustus to Tiberius clarified in public consciousness that the knights could not use their wealth, position, or resentments to build careers, power bases, or constituencies by financing extortionate violence. But the transition also confirmed that the pantomime was a valuable instrument of political power, a fundamental representation of the empire's capacity to provide upward class mobility. The transition established that the pantomime was an art belonging, so to speak, to the aristocracy, and efforts to make it a "popular" art, as perhaps the knights from the tribune sector tried to assert through the riots of 14 and 15, would not succeed, no matter how big or passionate the fan clubs might become. Any art that is a "gift" to the public is not really popular. The public delighted in pantomimes and showed great and even quite discerning appreciation of their skills, but pantomime did not become an art that encouraged the public to see itself represented beyond the image of a solitary moving figure, within whom lived manifold mythic identities. The gift-economy of the pantomime milieu implied that both pantomimes and their audience always "owed" something to the gift givers. Pantomime codified a political compact between the aristocracy and the public (constituencies) that stabilized the hierarchical class structure of the empire and located the possibilities of class mobility ("metamorphosis") entirely within the actions of a solitary individual rather than within the collective movements of a social class.

As the villa owners assumed greater responsibility for pantomime culture, they saw opportunities to use their pantomimes for other kinds of performance than entertainments in the *peristyle*, one of which included processions. Tacitus's remark that the new law forbade knights to

"surround" pantomimes in the streets suggests that in Augustus's time, professional pantomime stars created their own processions as they moved about the streets with their entourages. Public processions had been a frequent and much appreciated feature of Roman and Italian life for a very long time, with the Etruscans, though not deeply interested in developing complex public urban spaces, nevertheless apparently enthusiastic about some kinds of processional spectacle that are difficult to decipher yet probably inspired imitation or emulation by neighboring societies (Steingräber 1986: 301; plates 64 and 65; Torelli 2000: 127, 239).

Processions were largely civic and communal activities that could occur on manifold occasions depending on the goals of their sponsors. A procession could celebrate a religious ritual, a birthday, a marriage, a harvest, an inauguration, the dedication of a building or a holiday; it could also accompany a funeral or the appearance of a government official. Processions appear to have been commonplace throughout the empire, yet information is very scarce about how they worked as performances. Even the most spectacular processions, associated with the infrequent "triumphs" in Rome honoring generals who achieved great victories (Beard 2007: 69), have little documentation to explain them and much ancient writing about the triumphs is tangled up with mythic or fanciful statements designed to advance a particular writer's agenda long after the events described. In *The Deipnosophistae* (V, ii, 193c-203d; 1928: 377-421), Athenaeus, writing around 200 CE from a lost Greek source, described in great detail an enormous procession celebrating Dionysios staged nearly five hundred years earlier in Egypt by Ptolemy II Philadelphus. No document exists that describes a Roman procession in even remotely similar detail, although Appian, in *The Mithridatic Wars* (116-117, ca. 155 CE), does describe, in some detail, the triumph in Rome that Pompey sponsored in 61 BCE as memorable for its spectacular display of vast, sumptuous, and exotic plunder confiscated from the defeated Mithridates. Ptolemy Philadelphus's procession was memorable not only for the many thousands of richly attired persons who paraded along with a huge entourage of exotic animals, but for the stupefying array of gold objects displayed in each section of the enormous event. Athanaeus provided lavish detail on this procession because the purpose of the procession was to display the immeasurable wealth of Ptolemy Philadelphus, to reveal an unsurpassable capacity for luxury. The Romans seemed to have experienced a conflicted understanding of the

function of the triumph, which was an Etruscan invention (Dumezil: 1966 Vol. 2, 566): was the procession a representation of a sponsor's or community's wealth or of its power, for some commentators and the Senate itself viewed ostentatious displays of wealth as corrupting and leading to the decay rather than the consolidation of power? While the infrequent triumphs sponsored by victorious generals incorporated into their processions a display of the plunder they had confiscated from their defeated foes, the triumphal processions themselves functioned above all to display power, not wealth. The famous sculptural depictions of the triumphal procession on the Arch of Titus in Rome (82 CE) are remarkable for their elegant, vivid, commanding, and seriously (almost somberly) posed bodies, with the muscular horses of Titus's chariot foregrounded to emphasize an idea of imperial power under the emperor's reins that even the noble bodies around him cannot match. The section showing the procession somberly carrying the menorah and trumpets captured in Jerusalem in 70 CE is likewise remarkable for its skillful symbolic evocation of *triumph* over a culture that possessed great wealth—originally the menorah and trumpets were painted gold against a blue background (Piening 2013), which dramatizes effectively the idea of wealth as the object of conquest while the object of procession is to glorify the power of conquering bodies. But this image of the triumph idealizes the event. Supposedly triumphs required the approval of the Senate, which expected participants in the procession to present an image of dignity, nobility, an even solemnity, as perhaps modeled by the procession of nobles represented in the frieze of the Augustan Ara Pacis (13 BCE). However, as Mary Beard (2007: 67-68) has observed, some ancient writers reflecting on the triumphs, sometimes hundreds of years after they happened, complained that they were evidence and cause of decadent extravagance, a corrupting public appetite for luxury and ostentatious display of wealth. But the precipitous decline in triumphs during the imperial era had less to do with moral concern over presumed deleterious effects of extravagant displays of plunder and more to do with imperial usurpation and consolidation of large scale public ceremonies. As Beard remarks: "it was not in the interests of the new autocracy to share with the rest of the elite the fame and prominence that a full triumphal ceremony might bring, especially military prominence" (2007: 70).

While the triumph may have been the summit of processional performance in the Roman world, it is by no means clear to what extent the extravagance or solemnity of triumphal processions modeled the use of pantomimes in commonplace processions throughout the empire. In his description of Pompey's triumph celebrating the victory over Mithridates, Appian (XII.17) says that the procession included tableaux or staged scenes of Mithridates' fall:

> *There were carried in the procession images of those who were not present, of Tigranes and of Mithridates, representing them as fighting, as vanquished, and as fleeing. Even the besieging of Mithridates and his silent flight by night were represented. Finally it was shown how he died, and the daughters who perished with him were pictured also, and there were figures of the sons and daughters who died before him, and images of the barbarian gods decked out in the fashion of their countries* (Appian 1899 I: 410).

This procession occurred forty years before the apparent introduction of pantomimes to Rome. But Livy contended (*History of Rome* 39.6) (ca. 10-12 CE) that the triumph celebrating Cneius Manlius Vulso's defeat of the "Asiatic Gauls" in 187 BCE, in which considerable riches confiscated from the Gauls were displayed, revealed that "it was through the army serving in Asia that the beginnings of foreign luxury were introduced into the City," including "girls who played on the harp and sang and danced" at banquets. In other words, the use of performers in triumphal processions did not coincide with the introduction of pantomimes to Rome, and it can be assumed that during the imperial era the use of pantomimes in more commonplace processions was not an especially bold innovation. Most processions did not exist to display the wealth of the sponsoring community; they functioned to display the stability and unity of the community, its veneration of traditions, of heroes, gods, distinctive events (such as marriages, births, deaths, and harvests), and festive occasions. They probably followed formats that varied little from performance to performance, and some processions probably contained elements that resemble processions still performed in parts of Italy today. But the introduction of pantomimes into a procession does entail a unique political dimension because of the alignment of pantomimes with the factions or

claques controlled by the ensemble owners. In other words, the presence of pantomimes in a procession could undermine communal unity, if pantomime owners and their factions were rivals for power and were not able to agree on the conditions under which public processions involving their pantomimes would prevail. Extant historical sources are not much help in clarifying how disruptive such potential for communal disunity was, but then the historical sources do not provide much evidence about how processions in general operated or how ambitious politicians built up their power bases at the local level. Nevertheless, after the legislation of 15 CE, nothing in the historical sources indicates that the presence of pantomimes in the streets or as performers in processions in Rome or elsewhere was a cause for concern at the imperial level.





Figure 53: Third century mosaics of religious processions. Top: The Triumph of Bacchus, Sousse Museum, Tunisia. Bottom: Dionysian procession, from El Jem, Musee National du Bardo, Tunisia.

Pantomime and Religious Procession

Images are only somewhat helpful in understanding how pantomimes may have participated in processions. Mosaics from villas and friezes on sarcophagi sometimes depict processions, often in fanciful ways, inspired by mythic ideas of celebration, with Dionysian parades a favorite theme. In the Dionysian images, nude or semi-nude figures ride wild animals, blow horns and bang tambourines, strum harps, brandish a thyrsus, grape cluster or wine jar, assume dancelike poses, or ride in chariots pulled by lions, leopards or centaurs, all combined to convey an ecstatic sense of communal/orgiastic abandonment [Figure 53]. Pantomimes would seem compatible with processions promoting a bacchanalian mood in public. Indeed, Apuleius, in *The Golden Ass* (ca. 150 CE), describes (X.46) in great detail the bacchanalian "triumph" that precedes the pantomime in which the ass-protagonist is expected to perform a pornographic scene; actually, it is difficult to separate the procession from the performance itself, as the procession, like the one in which Pompey celebrated his defeat of Tigranes over two hundred years earlier:

> *When the day of triumph came, I was led with great pompe and benevolence to the appointed place, where when I was brought, I first saw the preamble of that triumph, dedicated with dancers and merry*

taunting jests, and in the meane season was placed before the gate of the Theater, whereas on the one side I saw the greene and fresh grasse growing before the entry thereof, whereon I greatly desired to feed: on the other side I conceived a great delectation to see when the Theater gates were opened, how all things was finely prepared and set forth: For there I might see young children and maidens in the flowre of their youth of excellent beauty, and attired gorgiously, dancing and mooved in comely order, according to the order of Grecia, for sometime they would dance in length, sometime round together, sometime divide themselves into foure parts, and sometime loose hands on every side: but when the trumpet gave warning that every man should retire to his place, then began the triumph to appeare. First there was a hill of wood, not much unlike that which the Poet Homer called Idea, for it was garnished about with all sort of greene verdures and lively trees, from the top whereof ran downe a cleare and fresh fountaine, nourishing the waters below, about which wood were many young and tender Goates, plucking and feeding daintily on the budding trees, then came a young man a shepheard representing Paris, richly arrayed with vestments of Barbary, having a mitre of gold upon his head, and seeming as though he kept the goates. After him ensued another young man all naked, saving that his left shoulder was covered with a rich cloake, and his head shining with glistering haires, and hanging downe, through which you might perceive two little wings, whereby you might conjecture that he was Mercury, with his rod called Caduceus, he bare in his right hand an Apple of gold, and with a seemely gate went towards him that represented Paris, and after hee had delivered him the Apple, he made a signe, signifying that Jupiter had commanded him so to doe: when he had done his message he departed away. And by and by, there approached a faire and comely mayden, not much unlike to Juno, for she had a Diademe of gold upon her head, and in her hand she bare a regall scepter: then followed another resembling Pallas, for she had on her head a shining sallet, whereon was bound a garland of Olive branches, having in one hand a target or shield: and in the other a speare as though she would fight: then came another which passed the other in beauty, and presented the Goddesse Venus, with the color of Ambrosia, when she was a maiden, and to the end she would shew her perfect beauty, shee

> *appeared all naked, saving that her fine and dainty skin was covered with a thin smocke, which the wind blew hither and thither to testifie the youth and flowre of the age of the dame. Her colour was of two sorts, for her body was white as descended from heaven, and her smocke was blewish, as arrived from the sea: After every one of the Virgins which seemed goddesses, followed certaine waiting servants, Castor and Pollus went behind Juno, having on their heads helmets covered with starres. This Virgin Juno sounded a Flute, which shee bare in her hand, and mooved her selfe towards the shepheard Paris, shewing by honest signes and tokens, and promising that hee should be Lord of all Asia, if hee would judge her the fairest of the three, and to give her the apple of gold: the other maiden which seemed by her armour to be Pallas, was accompanied with two young men armed, and brandishing their naked swords in their hands, whereof one named Terror, and the other Feare; behind them approached one sounding his trumpet to provoke and stirre men to battell; this maiden began to dance and shake her head, throwing her fierce and terrible eyes upon Paris and promising that if it pleased him to give her the victory of beauty, shee would make him the most strong and victorious man alive. Then came Venus and presented her selfe in the middle of the Theater, with much favour of all the people, for shee was accompanied with a great many of youth, whereby you would have judged them all to be Cupidoes, either to have flowne from heaven or else from the river of the sea, for they had wings, arrowes, and the residue of their habit according in each point, and they bare in their hands torches lighted, as though it had beene a day of marriage. Then came in a great multitude of faire maidens [. . .]* (X, 46; 1972: 256-258).

Presumably Apuleius exaggerates his description for satiric effect, to expose a public obsession with the fantastic "metamorphosis" of bodies even in or perhaps especially in provincial towns like Corinth. But this lengthy passage makes clear that pantomimes contribute decisively to the fascination with metamorphosis through their performances in public processions as well in villa *peristyles* and on theater stages, and a remarkable feature of this contribution is that the process of metamorphosis assumes even more powerful representation by the peculiar melding of the procession with the staging of the "Judgment of Paris"

pantomime, which the community expects to include a scene where the donkey-hero engages in public sexual intercourse with a condemned woman. Apuleius satirizes the bacchanalian idea of metamorphosis that motivated certain kinds of procession. It is possible, though, that he describes a scene that was familiar to his readers, a fairly accurate representation of a provincial procession, to show how the phenomenon of metamorphosis, as embodied most dramatically by the transformations of the narrator, is so deeply embedded within commonplace pretensions of transformation, such as communal processions, that no one can really recognize it—it is not "familiar" or visible within the mythic masquerades of social unity. This interpretation seems even more possible by considering the startling ending of the book, in which the narrator, having been transformed by a witch from a cynical, pleasure-loving adventurer into an even more cynical donkey before being restored to human form, becomes an adept in a cult of Isis, renouncing altogether the identity with which he began the book to achieve, at the command of the goddess, "great glory by being an advocate in the court" (1972: 282). Apuleius links the participation of pantomimes in a procession to a religious activity, namely a cult of Venus, although the description makes clear that it is difficult to separate religious observance from theatrical enactment and allegorical representation of the world. The nudity of the figures and the luxuriousness of the props and accessories clarify that voluptuousness in the performance of religious rituals was not exclusive to the bacchanalian mood of Dionysian cults. The magnitude of voluptuousness in a religious procession had little to do with the attributes or values ascribed to the god or goddess. Apuleius's induction into an austere Isis cult at the end of the novel hardly means that Isis somehow cast a shadow of austerity and sobriety over all her worshippers in the Roman world. Roman religious cults did not follow a uniform set of ritual practices. While a unique set of signs identified a god and a cult associated with the god, cults varied in their ways of honoring their gods and interpreting messages from the gods. No hierarchy existed to regulate religious cults; there were only imperial proscriptions against religious activities deemed detrimental to the well being of the empire. Cults emerged in relation to highly local conditions. A god might inspire several cults within the same city, and these cults, having their own temples, priests, and sponsors, might have no connection with each other. As Georges Dumezil explains: "In Rome [...] as far back as one goes, each

priest, college or sodality, has its own department; cases of pluralism are rare and regulated, and the replacement of one priest, college, etc., by another is exceptional" (1966 II, 578). In the Roman religious cosmos, gods act differently in relation to different places and people: cult activity was an intensely local phenomenon, an attempt to control or understand a god's mysterious relation to a unique time and place. To obtain the most favorable relations with the gods, people did not worship one god exclusively or above all others, and they shifted their devotion to divinities when portents or auspicious signs indicated that another god might prove more helpful in dealing with an immediate, local problem. Cults attracted followers based on the people who managed the cults, chiefly the priests and sponsors, and not on any power of belief in a presumed, inherent, transcendent authority of the values ascribed to the god or goddess. In comparing Roman religions with Vedic religion in India and Celtic religion, where "priests were essentially equivalent and interchangeable," Dumezil remarks: "in India every sacrifice requires the combination of several priests holding quite different parts, each articulated with the others. [. . . F]or the Vedic Indians the differentiation lies not in the men, but in the roles which each, indiscriminately, may be called on to fill for the length of the ceremony; while for the Romans it lies with the men, each of whom has his own autonomous specialty" (578). He goes on to observe that each *flamens* or cult official is "autonomous and solitary" and works in "isolation" from others of his status (580-581). The reason why Roman religions focused on "sacerdotal" men and their personalities rather than on abstract roles is that for the Romans a religious "principle" was credible or efficacious to the extent that humans "embodied" it. A *flamens* "is valuable as much by reason of his body as by his words and his actions [. . .]." "He is the palpable, human end of a string of mystic correlations [. . .]" (581). This idea that humans "embody" the aura, so to speak, of the gods they worship is what provided an opportunity for a range of persons, including slaves and pantomimes, to participate in religious processions. Embodiment in this sense is alien to Christian doctrine, wherein faith in God entails a transcendence of the body in order to achieve the revelation and perfection of a greater, deeper, immaterial, and metaphysical level of identity: "the soul." Indeed, from the Christian perspective, pagan rituals are a kind of theater insofar as they encourage the idea that the god has inhabited the body of the worshipper and given the worshipper a new identity. St.

Augustine, in *The City of God* (Book II, Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 8 [413-426 CE]), says that actors are especially knowledgeable about the secret (obscene) rituals of the pagans, that theater began in Rome as a religious response to pestilence, and that cult rituals or "assemblages" pervasively involved the "licentious acting of players," although, of course, he neglects to mention that the Church incorporated elements of pagan processions into its own processions. Korinna Zamfir bluntly asserts: "Priests of both sexes often enacted the divine drama through ritual, by means of impersonation and mimesis" (2013: 331). At any rate, pantomime owners who were also sponsors of cults and temples could deploy their pantomimes in processions and perhaps even in temple performances to gain the favor of gods and to attract constituencies.

A Bacchic inscription in Greek, dating from 160-170 CE, unearthed in Tusculum, a suburb of Rome, and now at the Metropolitan Museum reveals the complexity of cult organization. The inscription rested at the base of a lost statue of the Dionysian cult's founder, Pompeia Agrippinilla, an aristocratic woman whose family had migrated to Rome from Asia Minor, and listed the first names only of about 400 of the cult's members, their rank, and apparently their order in the procession to the sacred site. Although Dionysian cults appealed strongly to women, this particular cult included numerous male followers, and many of the members bore titles that are quite obscure, such as "bearers of the winnowing fan" ([a kind of cradle] three women), "bearer of the sacred phallus" (one woman), "fire-bearers" (two women), "chest bearers" (three women), a "secretary" (female), as well as various categories of bacchantes (*bassaroi* and *bakchai*), initiates, and "silent" novices. At the top of the list are the "hero," Macrinus, the "torchbearer" Kathegilla, seven priests, three priestesses, the "hierophant" Agathopous, two "bearers of the god" (*theophoroi*), and some sort of custodian of Silenus (Alexander 1933: 264-270; Vogliano and Cumont 1933: 215ff.; Alföldy 1999: 172-182). Only 70 of the names are Roman; the rest are Greek, and only a third of the names are female. Vogliano contends that the upper leadership of the cult consisted of family members and persons of senatorial families, while many and perhaps most of the other persons listed were part of the family's entourage (Alexander 1933: 264). But the inscription probably does not list all members of the cult, only those who contributed payment toward the shrine or cave to which the cult had

brought the statue. While it does not explicitly indicate the presence of pantomimes, the inscription exposes the scale and intricacy of the procession—it was a large-scale performance entailing manifold components, with ten priests and priestesses and several section leaders involved in the design and management of the project. Agrippinilla may not have owned pantomimes, but even if she did, the inscription would not have identified them as such, for it lists all persons only according to their status within the cult. Pantomime owners who also sponsored cults could assign their pantomimes to enhance processional performances. More likely, pantomimes saw a benefit to themselves by adopting the cult enthusiasms of their owners, as was obviously the case with so many humble men and women recruited into Agrippinilla's cult. Performances of plays to honor the god would take place outdoors and not in the temple, if the cult even had a temple, for temple architecture, no matter how grand, creates interiors that encourage stillness, awe, and intimacy or solitary encounter with the god. Most private cults probably did not have temples; rather, they designated sacred spots for the performance of their rituals: groves, caves, woodlands, ravines, fields, or maybe beaches. The Greeks shaped the idea of performing plays as a way of gaining the respect and attention of the gods, but the Romans seem to have absorbed the idea via the Etruscans in the fourth century BCE, if we accept Livy's account (VIII, 2) of how the Romans imported dancers and "scenic representations" from Etruria to "placate the wrath of heaven" during a prolonged pestilence. The government integrated dancers, theatrical spectacles, and gladiatorial games (which the Romans had absorbed from Oscan and Etruscan funeral rites) into public (state) religious rituals with such seriousness that at least from the third century BCE on considerable anxiety arose when a dancer or musician made a mistake, and it was necessary to repeat the entire ritual to avoid offending the god (Cicero *De Haruspicum Responsis* [57 BCE] III, 23).

But with the establishment of the Empire, worship of the state gods (chiefly Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Juno, and the Vestae) became increasingly linked to the deification of the emperor—that is, the government encouraged the public to see the state as having a divine power in itself or at least a kind of supernatural identity that put it into a more intimate relation with the gods than during the Republic. In effect, the deification of the emperor deepened the belief that the fate of Rome depended less on

accommodating the ambiguous, arbitrary, and often inscrutable messages of the gods and more on adapting to the ambitions and mysterious desires of Rome's human leaders in a world in which efficient administrative control mattered more than arcane relations between the future and cryptic "signs" or portents. As a result, emperors saw no great supernatural benefit in performing plays as part of state religious rituals; the government supported the performance of plays as part of a secular, political scheme, chiefly through the sponsorship of theatrical contests (like the *Augustalia*) in Rome—if an emperor, such as Nero, cultivated an appreciation for theater. While Apuleius shows that private cults as late as the second century CE continued to perform plays as part of religious festivities, most private cults followed the state religious practices by dispensing with plays as supernatural communications, preferring instead to make the rituals more dramatic and allowing worshippers a larger role in the performance of rituals that had become more theatrical. With the importation and accommodation of eastern gods into Rome, ritual practices became aesthetically more elaborate and less focused on correct procedure. The ceremonial beauty of the communication with the god took precedence over arcane, "superstitious" organization of detail. Ritual elements, including invocations, auguries or prophecies, the reading of signs, sacrifices, and especially processions, became more dramatic insofar as cults offered a larger sense of the "metamorphosis" of the worshipper than the "old" religious rituals in which worshippers performed, almost mechanically, obscure actions that emphasized their detachment from remote, inscrutable deities. Even Apuleius's description of the pantomime performed at the Venus festival makes it difficult to separate procession from play, performers from bystanders, and the town from the scenery of the spectacle—for metamorphosis is precisely this dissolution of clear distinctions between identities.

A prominent example of this alignment of state and private cults is the "mysteries of the Mithra." Under the Empire, this archaic, eastern, exclusively male cult, composed almost entirely of soldiers, ascended from obscurity in Persia to become a kind of shadowy adjunct to the emperor cult: indeed, worship of Mithras was inseparable from demonstration of loyalty to the emperor (Merkelbach 1998: 154-160). The cult was secretive, conducting its rites in quasi-subterranean chambers and shunning public

scrutiny of its activities. Processions in public were not a feature of the cult any more than the performance of plays. Nevertheless, membership in the cult involved the performance of intensely elaborate acts of initiation, invocation, purification, sacrifice, and declarations of loyalty to the emperor as well as pleas to the god for protection in battle. Within the cult, members advanced in "grade" through a series of complex performances or "ordeals" that dramatized the transformation of the worshipper in relation to an esoteric system of mystical powers ascribed to creatures (bull, lion, raven, toad, stag, snake, eagle), objects (diadem, lamp, torches, sword), natural elements (fire, water, rock, tree), and planets. Each of seven grades involved ritual practices that dramatized the transformation of the worshipper's identity within the cosmic power hierarchy. Purified initiates knelt nude before flaming altars while priests and other members enacted scenes from the mythology of Mithras and the symbolic interaction of the mystical powers. "Caterpillars, pupa, bees, transformation, metamorphosis: it is clear how well these phenomena harmonize into a mystery cult, in which a phased ascension occurred through seven distinct forms" (Merkelbach 1998: 90). Some rites were apparently monumentally complex, judging from the manifold Mithras friezes and reliefs that have been excavated from throughout the ancient world. In some rites or at least in the rites of particular strands of the cult, members wore lion masks, but all rites occurred in narrow caverns (not temples) illuminated only by torches that cast flickering shadows on walls covered with murals depicting the peculiar symbolic images associated with the architecturally segmented sectors of initiation (Merkelbach 1998: 77-108, 283, 288-289, 292). Passage from one grade to the next was an intensely emotional experience, a gripping drama that tested the worshipper's capacity to abandon parts of his identity for the sake of acquiring a new identity infused with powers from an ethereal world accessible only to members of the cult. This idea of metamorphosis as something achieved through emotionally stirring cult ritual practices that dissolve distinctions performer and spectator is one major reason why the Empire invested so heavily in the building of monumental theaters everywhere without showing much interest at all in the performance or even writing of plays as conventionally understood in our time. Conventional distinctions between performer and spectator, between text and performance, between role and identity or mask and face simply did not offer as powerful an experience of metamorphosis as cult

rituals that dissolved these distinctions using effective theatrical devices for allowing worshippers to step "outside" of themselves. Pantomime performance embodied this imperial aesthetic of metamorphosis more concretely, more intimately, and more objectively than any of the other arts, because it showed that the value of metamorphosis was not dependent on a particular configuration of cosmological beliefs; it was an ideology that defined the social consciousness or world view of a hugely diverse civilization seeking to absorb and integrate manifold identities and possibilities for becoming "someone new."

Most cults, unlike the Mithras cult, needed to produce public activities to attract followers and to assert their influence over local affairs. An annual or semi-annual festival in honor of the cult's god was a common feature of cult public activity, and a festival inevitably entailed a procession, although processions might well occur without a festival context. Processions offered the greatest opportunity for a cult to demonstrate in public its power to achieve metamorphosis for its followers, not only because a procession was a communal movement from one place to another, distinctly different place, but also because the organization and "staging" of a procession revealed the skill with which a cult was able to make its followers appear "different" from how the rest of the public usually perceived them, for they wore costumes and sometimes even masks, they sang, and they carried idols, flowers, sacred objects, and images associated with the cult's mythic domain. Writing around 220 CE, Athenaeus delighted in describing dances related to religious dramatic festivals in Greece at the time of Aeschylus and Sophocles, and he quotes poets or scholars who claim that the gods themselves dance, as when he says that "Eumelus, or Arctinus, the Corinthian, somewhere or other introduces Jupiter himself as dancing, saying [as if conjuring a procession]—

> *And gracefully amid the dancing throng*
> *The sire of gods and mortals moved along* (*Deipnosophistae* I, 40; Athenaeus 1854: 36).

Athenaeus then names several men who achieved distinction "among the ancients" for their dancing, and presumably (it's not altogether clear) these men performed in relation to the "ancient" religious festivities. Even less clear is whether Athenaeus is recalling the origins of enduring religious

practices involving dance or waxing nostalgic over vanished aesthetic elements in rituals, an uncertainty that is perhaps inescapable when the ultimate purpose of the discourse is the pedantic display of erudition. Visual and textual references to religious processional dances are numerous for the Attic era; Nilsson (1906: 148, 195ff., 242, 246, 303, 380, 415, 420ff., 434) identified much evidence of public choral female dancing for various cults (Demeter, Artemis, Dionysius, Aphrodite, among others) in the Attic-Hellenistic period. Based on document fragments they compiled, the Edelsteins (1945: 196-197) attempted to describe a generic procession of the Asclepius cult "in later centuries," but their description is still very vague:

> *[I]t was customary for the pious to carry the statue of the deity with them. In Athens the procession was supervised by the archon (T. 567); in other places other officials were in charge of it. In some cases, it seems, everybody took part in these parades, men and women, and small children, even those under seven years (T. 787). In Epidaurus, the communities which were on friendly terms with the host city had the right to send legations which in an official capacity participated in the pageant, a cause of pride to the smaller neighboring towns. The animals which they intended to sacrifice were taken along with those dedicated by the city of Epidaurus (T. 563). On special occasions, however, the procession was limited to certain groups of citizens, men selected from each tribe, the best of the city; they appeared in white garments, and with flowing hair, holding in their hands garlands of laurel for Apollo and branches of olive for Asclepius (T. 296). Or the procession had to be formed by young people, carrying in their hands suppliant boughs, bright offshoots of the olive (T. 593). In Cos, at the yearly festive assembly of the national god, the "children of Asclepius," the physicians, staged a very costly procession of their own (T. 568)* (Edelstein 1945: 196).

It is difficult to grasp from this description how processions of the Asclepius cult differed from the processions of other cults or how Asclepius processions changed over time in relation to new political, economic, or social pressures. The scanty textual evidence allows the description to provide only a rudimentary, "timeless" idea of a routine, mediocre procession in which the focus is on who is in the procession rather than on how the procession operates as a performance. The intense competition for

glory across the whole of imperial society assured that cult processions in the Empire, even in the poorest zones, were more varied and alluring than the pitiful textual documents beyond Apuleius imply. It is possible, though, that with the ascension of the imperial cult, coinciding with the disappearance of play performances as an element of ritual, cult activities operated much more in the private than the public sphere—that is, processions occurred in relation to the ambitions of local politicians and leaders and not in relation to a specific time of the year associated with a god's blessing, as happened during the Republic. For that reason, those who chronicled the history of the state and of Rome itself, where the vast majority of state religious rituals took place, perhaps regarded cult rituals as utterly provincial affairs, no matter how alluring they were as spectacles, and thus peripheral to the main story of the emperors' connections to the gods, even if cults made efforts to align themselves with state religious practices.

Indeed, the most vivid textual description of a cult procession is from the Republican era (ca. 55 BCE) in Lucretius's *De rerum natura*, wherein the poet "does not imagine a mythological scene [but . . .] has a real, cultic event in mind" (Summers 1996: 337):

> *Seated in chariot o'er the realms of air*
> *To drive her team of lions, teaching thus*
> *That the great earth hangs poised and cannot lie*
> *Resting on other earth. Unto her car*
> *They've yoked the wild beasts, since a progeny,*
> *However savage, must be tamed and chid*
> *By care of parents. They have girt about*
> *With turret-crown the summit of her head,*
> *Since, fortressed in her goodly strongholds high,*
> *'Tis she sustains the cities; now, adorned*
> *With that same token, to-day is carried forth,*
> *With solemn awe through many a mighty land,*
> *The image of that mother, the divine.*
> *Her the wide nations, after antique rite,*
> *Do name Idaean Mother, giving her*
> *Escort of Phrygian bands, since first, they say,*
> *From out those regions"twas that grain began*

Through all the world. To her do they assign
The Galli, the emasculate, since thus
They wish to show that men who violate
The majesty of the mother and have proved
Ingrate to parents are to be adjudged
Unfit to give unto the shores of light
A living progeny. The Galli come:
And hollow cymbals, tight-skinned tambourines
Resound around to bangings of their hands;
The fierce horns threaten with a raucous bray;
The tubed pipe excites their maddened minds
In Phrygian measures; they bear before them knives,
Wild emblems of their frenzy, which have power
The rabble's ingrate heads and impious hearts
To panic with terror of the goddess' might.
And so, when through the mighty cities borne,
She blesses man with salutations mute,
They strew the highway of her journeyings
With coin of brass and silver, gifting her
With alms and largesse, and shower her and shade
With flowers of roses falling like the snow
Upon the Mother and her companion-bands.
Here is an armed troop, which by Greeks
Are called the Phrygian Curetes. Since
Haply among themselves they use to play
In games of arms and leap in measure round
With bloody mirth and by their nodding shake
The terrorizing crests upon their heads,
This is the armed troop that represents
The arm'd Dictaean Curetes, who, in Crete,
As runs the story, whilom did out-drown
That infant cry of Zeus, what time their band,
Young boys, in a swift dance around the boy,
To measured step beat with the brass on brass,
That Saturn might not get him for his jaws,
And give its mother an eternal wound
Along her heart. And it is on this account

That armed they escort the mighty Mother,
Or else because they signify by this
That she, the goddess, teaches men to be
Eager with armed valour to defend
Their motherland, and ready to stand forth,
The guard and glory of their parents' years… (Lucretius 1916: 67-68).

It is difficult to believe that a real procession would have actual lions pulling Cybele's chariot, but Lucretius clearly depicts actions occurring in a city street, so it is easy to suppose that in a real Cybele procession humans would impersonate the lions, just as "the armed troop […] represents the "arm'd Dictaean Curetes." The scene is wild, spectacular, and suffused with turbulent emotions. The members of the procession pantomime scenes from the myth of Cybele and Attis, a kind of voluptuous, surging dance drama supported by various luxurious details (Cybele's turret crown, the Phrygian entourage, the cymbals and tambourines, the "fierce" horns, the "terrorizing crests," the knives), which violently agitate the crowd and urge them to heap "brass and silver" coins upon the wild entourage, as well as a blizzard of "roses falling like snow." Presumably the procession included people whose job was to pick up all the "alms and largesse" tossed to Cybele by the crowd. But the money is there because a powerful, calculated, flowing pantomime has urged the crowd, "the rabble," to give, to release themselves, to become transformed, for a moment, into warriors "eager with armed valour to defend their motherland." The performance generates an astonishing complex of conflicting emotions in the audience: "solemn awe," savagery "tamed" by "care of parents," shame for ingratitude toward parents, frenzy, panic and "terror of the goddess' might," "bloody mirth," exuberant generosity, intense protectiveness, and eagerness to "stand forth" in "glory" as guardians. This level of performance is possible only with considerable preparation, a deep understanding of how details of theatrical action move audiences without any words being spoken; Lucretius does not even mention any singing of hymns. With cult theatrical imagination achieving such an exciting and engaging impact on audiences, it is understandable how, after the pantomime legislation of 15 CE, the patrician class could feel confident that it could develop a sophisticated pantomime culture without the help of a professional (commercial) theater class and without a theatrical aesthetic that relied on texts or even theaters.

But Lucretius describes a cult procession that took place over thirty years before pantomimes were introduced to Rome. It may be that when Pylades and Bathyllus appeared in Rome in 22 BCE, the Augustan society decided to experiment with a commercialized pantomime, believing that, with the emperor's oversight, competition for the audience market would lead to escalating quality of performance in this medium. When, however, the "excitement" of pantomime performance became increasingly entangled with the engagement of audiences through unruly claques attached to the pantomime stars, the commercialization phase came to an end: theater, from the perspective of Tiberius, the Senate, and probably Roman society as a whole, should never lead to social disorder nor to the formation of Mafioso-style gangs owned by knights seeking to extort their way into positions of power. At any rate, the powerful cult processional aesthetic described by Lucretius apparently adapted well to the new imperial environment even as the state (public) religious cults became integrated into the emperor cult with its tendency toward remote, platitudinous solemnity. But visual evidence prevails over textual sources in relation to cult processions in the imperial era. Much, if not most, of the imagery comes from the private sphere: mosaics from villas, reliefs from sarcophagi, and even from elaborately decorative features of tableware, such as the Dionysian figures embedded in the Great Dish of the Mildenhall Treasure (Hobbs 2012: 22-23). This imagery is quite fanciful and processions of the Dionysian cult are a favored theme. Nude or semi-nude figures of both sexes dance, ride lions, satyrs and centaurs sometimes appear, children sometimes appear, figures may lead leopards, lions, elephants, or camels, and maenads bang tambourines or blow horns or flutes. But the artists strive to infuse their images with movement by having humans assume dance-like or delirious poses and by having animals display animated expressions. The scenes may depict fantasy processions, but the desire of the patrons who commissioned the artworks to commemorate so vividly, even ecstatically, the processions of the cults to which they belonged does suggest the great power of the procession to constitute a transformative experience in the life of the villa or in the life of the deceased. In the imperial era, the performance of cult processions could, like pantomime performances in the villas, establish the influence of their designers (rather than the cult gods) over local populations.

The silver Great Dish of the Mildenhall Treasure in the British Museum shows how refined and glamorous processional imagery had become in the provincial villa culture late in the fourth century CE [Figure 54]. Perhaps just as spectacular, though, is the Parabiago Plate in Milan, which also dates from late in the fourth century [Figure 28]. This is possibly the silver lid of an urn. The imagery depicts figures and symbols associated with the cult of Cybele and complex relations between natural forces, divinities, zodiacal elements, allegorical figures, and humans (Shelton 1979: 185). But our interest in this mysterious encoding of a turbulent and "tragic" cosmos centers on the middle section, which shows Cybele and Attis seated in their chariot pulled by four lunging lions. Accompanying them are "three dancing Corybantes," as Shelton calls them, each brandishing the "knives" that Lucretius explains are the "Wild emblems of their frenzy, which have power/ The rabble's ingrate heads and impious hearts/ To panic with terror of the goddess' might." While all the figures in the image have been designed with considerable refinement and dramatic effect, the three dancers capture the attention of the viewer, perhaps even more than the goddess and her consort. The dancers are larger than any other figures. But they also exude a vividness that the artist and probably also the commissioner of the plate wanted emphasized. The two dancers in front of the lions perform the pyrrhic step with shields upraised and their torsos turned inward toward the goddess behind them. The third Corybante strikes a militant, heroic pose behind the chariot, conveying the sense that the movement of the pyrrhic step culminates in the powerful, statuesque pose that shields the goddess from manifold dangers. The dancers wear the distinctive *endromides* boots associated with the depiction of "horsemen, deities, warriors, heroes, personifications of the city, generals, and emperors" (Goldman 1994: 123; Morrow 1985: 178). It may be, though, that members of particular cults wore such boots to signify their membership, for in the Villa of Mysteries fresco nearly three hundred years earlier, a nude boy reading a book wears laced boots as does a winged female figure. The helmets of the Corybantes are also unusual, somewhat sleeker than the typical centurion's helmet, a kind of armored variation of the Phrygian cap worn by Attis. Unlike the other figures in the Parabiago plate, the Corybantes appear as if the artist had actually seen them in a procession. The idea is that the procession is the key to the power of the cult and its access to a complex array of cosmic energies. And the Corybantes dominate

perception of the procession; their pyrrhic dancing leads the chariot of the goddess and urges the chariot forward from behind.



Figure 54: Great Dish of the Mildenhall Treasure showing Dionysian procession. Photo: British Museum.

For viewers of the plate and for viewers of the procession the artist has represented in the plate, the dancing Corybantes connect the Cybele cult to a turbulent, ecstatic metamorphosis of its followers. But it's not clear from the imagery in the plate or from the sparse knowledge of Cybele processions, which center overwhelmingly on the pre-imperial era (Summers 1996: 342-348), if the artist intends for the dancers, with their high-status boots and helmets and larger scale, to signify the elevated rank of those who appear as Corybantes in the procession or merely to represent the dance-like frenzy of those devoted to the goddess, regardless of their rank. Shelton (1978: 185) says that "technical details and stylistic parallels

[…] suggest a place of manufacture in the West, perhaps in the city of Rome," although it does not seem inconceivable that the plate was made in the vicinity of Parabiago after Milan became the capital of the Western Empire in 286 CE. A Milanese manufacture strengthens the idea that the artist modeled the Corybantes on persons he actually saw in the procession of the local Cybele cult. Even if the artist worked in Rome, the patron probably entrusted the manufacture of the plate to someone close to the cult and familiar with the excitement generated by the cult procession. Considering that social rank apparently did not correspond with rank or position within the cult procession, it is possible that pantomimes performed the roles of the Corybantes in the procession to achieve the most sophisticated dramatic effect. What is unlikely, however, is that three powerful male pantomimes would come from the same sponsoring family. Three pantomime Corybantes would imply a consortium of families sponsoring the cult, which is certainly possible as long as different families did not compete with each other in relation to a common political goal, although it is hardly clear that private cults accommodated such cooperation or alliance. More likely is that the Corybantes performers studied pantomime movements and sought to emulate them in the procession. Pantomime clarified the idea of metamorphosis by connecting bodily movement to the incarnation of mythic identities—to other, greater beings within the body. The pyrrhic step, the foundation for all movement in the pantomime, glorified a linear presentation of movement and was therefore highly appropriate for processional activity. In the Parabiago plate, we may not be seeing pantomimes escort Cybele and Attis, but we do see a visual imagination intensely stirred by the pantomimic metamorphosis of unknown bodies into mythic figures. The plate is evidence of the power of pantomimic movement to connect bodies to ecstatic experience well beyond the conventionally designated spaces (theater, villa) for its performance. That is because the mythic scenes enacted by the pantomime always remained subordinate to a much greater ideology—an imperial aesthetic—that linked movements of the body to the experience of ecstasy regardless of place, social rank, or affiliation with a spiritual doctrine.

Pantomime and Political Affiliations

Another feature of pantomime culture was its involvement with the factions attached to chariot racing teams in various cities, particularly in the eastern part of the empire. This involvement apparently only occurred late in the history of the empire; Alan Cameron (1976: 194-195) cannot find evidence for an earlier date than 490 CE. But the evidence for the involvement focuses on the social disorders that resulted from it. Why this peculiar involvement occurred when and where it did requires some background.

The legislation of 15 CE regulating pantomime performances did not put an end to troubles attributed to these artists and their sponsors. In 23 CE, according to Suetonius (*Tiberius* 37, 2), Tiberius exiled leaders of factions and the pantomimes they supported after a bloody incident in a theater, although Dio Cassius (lvii, 21, 3) suggests, with even less clarity, that he banished all actors from Rome because they debauched women and caused "tumult." It is hard to discern much from these sparse remarks by historians writing long after the event. Did Tiberius ban all pantomimes or all actors or only some pantomimes who had violated the law of 15 CE? Did banishing pantomimes mean that the pantomimes could not perform in public theaters? Or does it mean that they could not live in Rome and perform in villas? Are the "leaders of the factions" different from the sponsors of the factions? Perhaps the most one can take from these remarks is that something involving the pantomimes and their factions happened in a theater, and the emperor, always suspicious of any public entertainment, felt compelled to intervene with a measure of severity. Dio (lix, 2, 3) says that upon the death of Tiberius (37 CE), Caligula "at once" recalled the actors, implying that the actors had not been banished to remote places but could simply be summoned to the stage without difficulties. What had actors been doing for fourteen years that allowed them to restore theater culture to Rome "at once"? Presumably they had performed and educated new actors in provincial towns and in villas located outside Rome. What is clear, though, is that Tiberius never considered pantomimes as a threat to morality or public order outside Rome. Only the attachment of pantomimes to factions within Rome created political turmoil, which the emperor regarded as potentially damaging to his power, even though by 23 CE he

was spending more time away from Rome than in it. By 26 CE he had discarded Rome altogether to spend the remaining eleven years of his regime on Capri, and he was determined that in his absence Rome could not use pantomimes to build factions or popular moods of discontent. The mythic content of pantomime performance did not inspire factionalism or discontent. Nor could ambitious politicians build discontent or factions from the emperor's supposedly unpopular unwillingness to fund public spectacles. For most of the imperial era, the factions attached to chariot racing teams seem not to have worried emperors or the Senate, even though sponsors of pantomimes may well have invested in chariot racing teams and their factions. The factions attached to pantomimes were so volatile because the pantomimes projected such an intense sexual aura on stage and off. Pantomime performance linked erotic feeling to political ambition or "charisma." The suave movements and poses of pantomimes fostered an atmosphere of highly competitive attractiveness or glamour. They incarnated an erotic and even ecstatic idea of the power of metamorphosis. The incarnation of this idea is inflammatory, awakening and amplifying competitive energies that destabilize societies rather than unify them—which is why it is a valuable, though highly risky, instrument of political power. The violence of the claques against each other and sometimes toward those who belonged to no faction was proof of the power of the pantomimes to infuse their fans with wild and thrilling feelings of transformation into persons free of the constraints by which others must live. But the power of the pantomimes lay not only in their skill at displaying different roles for privileged audiences; it also lay in their success at constructing a seductive personality off stage as well as on stage. Seductiveness of this sort has a contagious effect. Sponsors of pantomimes became themselves seductive insofar as their indulgence in pantomimes led to public perception of them as representatives of a particular political disposition—they appeared as advocates for a more permissive, more indulgent, a "freer" and more luxurious, even voluptuous philosophy of governance, compared with those who perhaps favored a more "disciplined" or austere approach to governance and found the factions attached to the chariot racing teams more congenial to their aspirations, although even these were not above ruthless behavior against each other's teams in the hippodromes (Futrell 2006: 191). The kinetic-erotic aura of the pantomimes inspired in their followers a desire to perform themselves *actions*

considered of sufficient transformative magnitude because of the clarity with which they revealed that the most exhilarating experience of power entailed the infliction of violence.

It is not clear if Caligula, in summoning pantomimes to the stage in Rome, also permitted the restoration of the factions; the ancient sources are silent. Suetonius says (*Caligula* 55, 1) that Caligula was so fond of the freedman pantomime Mnester that he kissed him openly at the theater and personally whipped any spectator who made the slightest noise while Mnester performed. So, at least in relation to the imperial pantomime Mnester, the strongest faction was the most silent. In the reign of Claudius (41-54 CE), however, the factions again stirred up trouble. In 47 CE, Claudius delivered edicts curtailing the behavior of "the populace" at theaters after spectators had mocked a consul and several others "of rank" (Tacitus, *Annals*, XI, 13). Meanwhile, the notorious Empress Messalina pursued an adulterous sexual liaison with Mnester, the Emperor's pantomime. Mnester apparently had a peripheral role in Messalina's extravagant scheme to replace her husband on the throne with her chief lover and then husband, Caius Silius, "the handsomest of the young nobility of Rome" (Tacitus *Annals*, XI, 12). When Claudius finally acknowledged the scope of his wife's debauchery and treachery, he ordered the deaths of many men who belonged to her orgiastic and conspiratorial entourage. His own advisors worried that he would grant clemency to Messalina, whom he nevertheless loved, when she made desperate appeals to him, but he did not, and she died by the sword of a tribune (*Annals* XI, 37-38). However, the case of Mnester "caused some hesitation." He explained to the Emperor that he, Claudius, had placed the pantomime in a difficult position when Messalina, so "desperately enamored" of Mnester that she had bronze statues made of him, "found herself unable in any way either by making him promises or by frightening him to persuade him to have intercourse with her, [...] had a talk with her husband and asked him that the man should be compelled to obey her, pretending that she wanted his help for some different purpose. Claudius accordingly told Mnester to do whatever he should be ordered to do by Messalina; and thus it came about that he lay with her, in the belief that this was the thing he had been commanded to do by her husband" (Dio Cassius LX, 22, 3). Mnester could not disobey either the Emperor or Empress without risking his life; as he reportedly remarked,

"Others had sinned through a bounty of high hope; he, from need; and no man would have had to perish sooner, if Silius gained the empire. The Caesar was affected, and leaned to mercy; but the freedmen decided him, after so many executions of the great, not to spare an actor: when the transgression was so heinous, it mattered nothing whether it was voluntary or enforced" (Tacitus *Annals* XI, 36). What role, if any, the theater factions played in this scandal is obscure, although many of those executed could well have been sponsors of factions, and the incredibly brazen behavior of Messalina and her entourage was possible because of the many people who saw opportunities for themselves by doing her bidding. Dio Cassius writes (LX, 28) of "people" being "vexed" at Mnester's "failure to dance" because Messalina was "keeping him with her"; indeed, "the people" protected Mnester by refusing to inform Claudius of "the true state of affairs." But Claudius was apparently fond of his pantomime, even though Mnester rose to prominence under the despised Caligula. And that was the central problem with pantomime: the same artist could inspire the affections of Caligula, Claudius, and Messalina, and an art that could stir the emotions of three such diverse persons was inherently destabilizing. The Messalina scandal showed that the sexual allure of pantomime possessed the potential to undermine the empire, to cripple the credibility and authority of the imperial leadership, and to link the "metamorphosis" of identity as pantomime incarnated it to fluctuating, untrustworthy loyalties, desires, intimacies, and affections.

Under Nero (reigned 54-68 CE), problems with the pantomime culture assumed a new form, apparently as a result of the emperor's own taste for dissolving distinctions between theater and reality. Tacitus explains (*Annals* XIII, 25) that, during the consuls of Quintus Volusias and Publius Scipio (ca. 56-57 CE), Nero delighted in disguising himself as a slave and venturing at night with an entourage of thuggish pals into the streets of Rome, where he engaged in brawls and deceits with persons who did not know he was the Emperor. "When it was notorious that the emperor was the assailant, and the insults on men and women of distinction were multiplied, other persons too on the strength of a licence once granted under Nero's name, ventured with impunity on the same practices, and had gangs of their own, till night presented the scenes of a captured city" (Tacitus 1876: 239). Nero then encouraged the rivalry between pantomime

claques into "something like a battle by the impunity he allowed, and the rewards he offered, and especially by looking on himself, sometimes concealed, but often in public view [...]." The violence soon became a social calamity, the "only remedy" for which was the "expulsion of the offending actors from Italy" and "the presence once more of the soldiery in the theater." Around 59 CE, however, Nero allowed the banished pantomimes to return to Italy, but he forbade all pantomimes from performing in his newly established Neronia, a huge festival celebrating (60 and 65 CE) competitions in the field of singing, poetry, oratory, gymnastics, and riding (*Annales* XIV 20; Suetonius, *Nero* 12). According to Cassius Dio, though, Nero also instituted a Juvenalia to celebrate the sacrifice of his beard to Jupiter, and in these "youth games" he compelled Roman aristocrats to display some kind of performance talent, including pantomime, for in one presentation of the games, a rich noblewoman at least eighty years old, Aelia Catella, "danced in a pantomime" (LXII, 19; also Suetonius, *Nero* 11). Then, according to Suetonius (*Nero* 54), Nero shortly before his death planned to study pantomime so that he could perform "Turnus in Virgil"; "and some write" that he ordered the assassination of the pantomime Paris to eliminate comparison with a master rival, although Elaine Fantham (2013: 20) doubts the reliability of this assertion, arguing that Nero's artistic obsession was always singing, not dancing. Of course, the purpose of all this gossip about Nero's taste for pantomime in these historical sources is to reinforce the perception that any affinity for pantomime at the highest levels of government only weakens the Empire, only undermines the moral authority necessary for the ruling class to achieve economic and political stability throughout the Empire. These historians, adopting a largely conservative view of state and nation that idealizes a time long before they were born and perhaps even before the Empire, were deeply skeptical of the concept of "metamorphosis" when applied to life beyond the realm of private cults or individual spiritual experiences. They could not see imperial power as itself a manifestation of metamorphosis, a kind of vast theater, a system of masks and shifting identities linked to shifting alliances and allegiances, a huge, dynamic apparatus powered, driven by the idea that identity everywhere was unstable, capable of change and transformation in relation to ever shifting opportunities for advancement, release, or good fortune. The pantomime culture vividly incarnated this imperial ideology and thus established an "intimate," corporeal relation between subject and

emperor, as if this relationship itself were a body fluctuating between movement and pose, between face and mask.

Great instability certainly befell the Empire after the death of Nero and "the Year of Four Emperors" (68-69 CE). When stability prevailed under Vespasian (69-79 CE), the historical sources found almost no reason to comment on pantomime, even though the emperor was generous in spending on public entertainments (Suetonius, *Vespasian*, 19). But then, Vespasian was a skillful producer of propaganda. His sponsorship of writers like Tacitus and Josephus, along with his intimidation of anyone who wrote critically of him, assured that historical chronicles would leave a favorable impression of his rule, especially when compared to the reign of Nero, whom many throughout the Empire remembered more fondly than the historical chronicles imply (Ferrill 1965). However, Pliny the Elder, a friend of Vespasian, in the section of his *Natural History* (ca. 77 CE) on sudden deaths (VII, 54), mentions the case of two knights who died on the same day in the arms of the pantomime, Mysticus, who was "remarkable for his singular beauty." He classifies the case under "instances of persons dying a happy death" (Pliny 1855, 216). Perhaps, then, under Vespasian, pantomimes and their sponsors enjoyed very good times indeed.

But under Domitian, Suetonius observes, pantomimes again contaminated the morality of the imperial capital. The emperor's wife, Domitia, became infatuated with the pantomime Paris (*Domitian* 3; cf. Leppin 1992: 272-274), and as a result, he divorced and banished her, but then took her back, although he forbade pantomimes from performing in public (*Domitian* 7) and he executed a young student of Paris because the boy "resembled his master" in appearance and performance (*Domitian* 10). Pliny the Younger, in his *Pangyriucus Traiani* (ca. 106 CE; 46. 2f.), asserts that Nerva recalled pantomimes during his reign (96-98 CE), but that when Trajan succeeded to the throne (98-117 CE), he banished public performances of pantomimes (ca. 100 CE) yet eventually (ca. 107 CE) permitted them to return to the stage. According to Pliny's logic, "the same populace, having watched and applauded an actor-emperor [Nero], has now turned against the pantomimes and damns their effeminate art as shameful for our time." Pliny also claims that Trajan "considered praise originating from those effeminate actors a degradation of his name" (*Panegyricus* 54, 1-2; Vossius 2010: II, 875). However, Marcus Fronto, in one of his letters (41.5 ca. 165 CE) to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, says that Trajan, "a supreme

warrior, nevertheless occasionally took delight in pantomimes" (Fronto 2013: 137). These tiny scraps of evidence about pantomime culture, embedded within voluminous commentaries on poetry, rhetoric, and praise of imperial power, indicate the willingness of the writers to avoid correlating pantomime performances with instability at the highest levels of government. Indeed, after Domitian, when the Empire enjoyed a prolonged period of expansion and great prosperity, efficient management of the pantomime culture appears to have become a commendable skill of the imperial leadership. Both Pliny and Fronto treat the pantomime as a necessary entertainment for the "vulgar crowd" (Pliny), but not as a matter worthy of discussion among aristocratic aesthetes such as themselves, who find literature and rhetoric of much greater value to their class. A point they both emphasize is that pantomime is an effeminate art, an art that "nevertheless" a "warrior supreme" can enjoy "occasionally." This effeminate art could never be a danger to the empire; its purpose was to affirm the feminine identity of the populace in relation to the patriarchal emperor. By the time (ca. 165 CE) Lucian wrote his defense of pantomime, the main controversy surrounding it was apparently whether it could be taken seriously as an art. When around 200 CE Tertullian condemned pantomimes in *De spectaculis*, the effeminate and perverse identity of pantomimes constituted a serious threat to Christian morality because it represented the immense seductive power of imperial institutions in the grip of unholy, satanic, feminine spirits.

At any rate, the historical sources are silent regarding the activities of the claques in Rome from the reign of Trajan until the Christian era. It is doubtful that these had disappeared from Rome due to strong imperial intervention. More likely, the aristocratic sponsors of public pantomime performances had discovered that imperial regulation of performances in Rome was more effective in advancing political ambitions than the pre-Trajan system, when certain politicians could establish their clout or desire for greater power and office by demonstrating their capacity to cause social disorder. In his treatise on astrology (ca. 155 CE), Vettius Valens describes a complicated series of planetary movements that shaped the life of a pantomime. Valens says that when the pantomime was twenty, he was arrested "during a mob uprising." But with "the help of his friends," who defended him before the governor, "he was released through the pleas of the crowd and became even more famous" (Valens 2010: 107). Moreover,

"four signs" related to Venus, the moon, Saturn, and the Ascendant" were "indicative of the riot, the quarrelsomeness, and the rivalry throughout the affair." Valens goes on to remark that when the pantomime was 32, "he lost his office, his rank, and his livelihood, and lived in disgrace," because he was inattentive to planetary abnormalities that put him at odds with "the Lot of Fortune," and "as a result he caused his own downfall, being arrogant and boastful" (Valens 2010: 107)—he had no "friends" to help him. This incident, which probably occurred around 140 CE, suggests that the social turmoil caused by pantomime performances and claques—the "rivalry" and "friends" of pantomimes—had shifted to the provinces, while in Rome, some kind of hierarchy of imperial favor inhibited the claques from engaging in bad behavior; they had no incentive for being associated with notions of "riot" and "uprising."

Outside of Rome, outside of Italy, the art of pantomime gradually expanded its function of being an emblem of imperial power rather than of aristocratic luxury. The strongest evidence for this expansion comes from the eastern regions of the Empire. During his reign (117-138 CE), the Emperor Hadrian embarked on a vast program of public works in those regions, including the building of numerous theaters, the founding of cities, and the establishment of festivals (Birley 1997: 166-174, 186-187, 215-228). The idea was to make imperial power more pervasive and palpable throughout the Empire and less dependent on the peculiar political dynamics in Rome. As a result of these extensive imperial investments in the provinces, citizens grasped that their concept of the future, their economic and political opportunities, and their capacity for "transformation" lay in their connection to other parts of the empire, not with unique cultural values and institutions that separated them from Roman hegemony—a goal that the Jews completely underestimated in their catastrophic attempt to rebel against Roman authority in 132-136 CE. The *Historia Augusta* claims that Hadrian gave "popular entertainments of unbounded extravagance" but "never recalled from Rome a single wild beast hunter or actor"; "in honour of Trajan he caused essences of balsam and saffron to be poured over the seats of the theater. And in the theater he presented all kinds of plays in the ancient manner and had the court-players appear before the public." He furthermore "often gave the people military exhibitions of Pyrrhic dances" (*Hadrian* 19.2; *HA* 1921: 61). Relentlessly inquisitive, the emperor apparently cultivated engagement

with artists and philosophers, yet "however ready Hadrian might have been to criticize musicians, tragedians, comedians, grammarians, and rhetoricians, he nevertheless bestowed both honours and riches upon all who professed these arts, though he always tormented them with his questions" (*Hadrian* 16.8; *HA* 1921: 53). The goal of such engagement was to establish that performing artists could achieve their highest status in the Empire without having to satisfy audiences in Rome. Pantomime might seem an excellent medium for representing the idea of a hegemonic Roman identity built from the metamorphic expressive power of the body, because it did not require as much "translation" as other media in cultures that hesitated to embrace Roman values and expectations. But perhaps it was actually the semantic ambiguity of physical movement that was the key to metamorphosis and "hegemonic body." Hadrian experienced difficulties with the Jews in Palestine when he initiated a proscription against circumcision and inaugurated a plan to rebuild Jerusalem as a pagan city. A passage in the Hagigah section (5b) of the Babylonian Talmud describes a "pantomimic conversation" in Hadrian's palace in Palestine (ca. 130 CE) performed for the emperor by a Christian and Rabbi Joshua ben Chanania. "The former showed by gestures that the God of Israel had hidden His face from the Jews; the latter showed, by a movement of the arm, that God still stretched forth His hand to protect Israel" (*Hagidah* 1891: 22; Graetz 1902: 406; Graetz 1908: 133). The Talmudic passage does not explain the circumstances under which this strange gestural dialogue took place between representatives of alien religions. Although Hadrian asked the Christian and the Jew to "explain" their movements, he does seem to have wanted the performers initially to use only their bodies to describe the Jews' relation to God. The passage implies that the Christian and the rabbi used different movements to dramatize how God either hid his face from the people of Israel or extended an arm to protect them, but it also implies competing interpretations of similar movements, so that pantomime obfuscates rather than clarifies the body's relation to God. From the Emperor's perspective, bodily movement encodes ambiguous messages that political factions "mistranslate" to advance their agendas and diminish uncertainty about significations from God or the gods. That is the point of pantomime: to embody a fundamental ambiguity about the sources of metamorphosis within the body, within human identity. Because of the semantic ambiguity of human movement, it is socially beneficial to

integrate the body into a larger (imperial) system of institutions in which a "higher power" (imperial authority) arbitrates conflicting interpretations of what bodies "say" or desire. This logic explains why Hadrian and subsequent emperors established contests in the east that included pantomime, which previously had operated there as an aristocratic entertainment without any official status or association with the imperial cult, although probably Hadrian's most successful attempt at imperial institutionalization of bodily ambiguity was his creation of the hugely popular Antinous cult, following the death of his beloved boyfriend in 130 CE.

Hadrian's successor, Antonius Pius (138-161 CE), preferred to stay in Rome throughout his long, peaceful, and prosperous reign, but he steadily displayed great generosity, "equanimity," toward the provinces. The *Historia Augusta* says that "he was very fond of the stage," and that he sponsored games involving spectacular displays of wild animals—"all the animals of the whole earth" (*HA*, *Antonius Pius*, 10.9; 11.2; *HA* 1921: 129). This was the period in which the pantomime flourished as Lucian (ca. 125-180 CE) had experienced it by the time he wrote his treatise on it around 163-165 CE. It is most likely, also, that Apuleius wrote, in *The Golden Ass*, his description of the pantomime in Corinth during the reign of Antonius Pius (ca. 150-158 CE). Lucian makes repeated reference to dancers and performance sites in Greece, Asia, and even Egypt, and he constructs the impression that the pantomime has reached its most refined expression in the east. When he wrote his treatise, Antioch, "a very talented city, which especially honours the dance," was evidently already a major center of pantomime culture (Lucian Vol. 5 1936: 277).

The fortunes of the pantomime and the Empire further increased during the strange joint reign of the brothers Marcus Aurelius (161-180 CE) and Lucius Verus (161-166 CE). In his governing style, Aurelius consistently displayed prudence, careful calculation of all options, a highly intellectual mind, and an intense desire to act justly, while Verus became notorious for his love of luxurious, extravagant entertainments, even though, in carrying out instructions from his brother, to whom he always deferred, he largely succeeded in achieving ambitious goals. Fronto, in one of his letters to Aurelius, condescendingly implies that the Emperor is right to support, as Trajan did, pantomime entertainments in Rome as a way of rewarding the public for its civic good behavior, by which he apparently means its

willingness to abandon the "vulgar," rowdy, and insolent activities previously associated with the claques (Fronto 2013: 137). Aurelius sent Verus to the east to conclude a campaign against the troublesome Parthians. But Verus took his time getting there, engaged as he was in hunting expeditions and opulent entertainments in the cities he visited, "accompanied by orchestras and singers" (*HA*, Verus, 6.9). "And when he came to Antioch, there he gave himself wholly to riotous living" (*HA*, Verus, 7.1). He was evidently so fond of the pleasures that city offered that "many of the jibes which [the Syrians] uttered against him on the stage are still preserved" (*HA*, Verus, 7.4). In addition to great enthusiasm for chariot racing and gladiatorial combats, Verus displayed a passion for pantomime. Upon his return to Rome (165 CE) to celebrate his triumph over the Parthians, Verus "brought actors out of Syria as proudly as though he were leading kings to a triumph. The chief of these was Maximinus, on whom he bestowed the name Paris" (*HA*, Verus, 8.7). The *Historia Augusta* (Verus 8.10-11) goes on to remark that, "Verus maintained also the actor Agrippus, surnamed Memphius, whom he had brought with him from Syria, almost as a trophy of the Parthian war, and named Apolaustius. He had brought with him, too, players of the harp and the flute, actors and jesters from the mimes, jugglers, and all kinds of slaves in whose entertainment Syria and Alexandria find pleasure, and in such numbers, indeed, that he seemed to have concluded a war, not against Parthians, but against actors." Following the triumph, Verus built a "notorious villa" outside Rome in which to enjoy his "boundless extravagance," but he didn't live long to explore new dimensions to his "debauchery." The two emperors crossed the Alps to repel barbarian invaders, and when they had accomplished this task, they returned to Aquilea, where soon after, Verus suddenly died of a heart attack while trying to hurry his way back to his villa, leaving Aurelius to govern the Empire alone (*HA*, Verus, 8.6; 9.7-10).

The almost comical partnership between the brother emperors was immensely valuable in demonstrating that Rome could function as a vast, imperial power while cultivating "unbounded" appetites for luxurious pleasures. By bringing so many entertainers from Syria, Verus established the east as a powerful source of innovation and splendor in the art of entertainment, and this was a major reason for defending the east. The Empire had entered a phase in which the idea of itself as a "civilization" could not rest alone on the efficiency and efficacy of its laws, public

services, engineering ingenuity, military prowess, and economic ambitions: Aurelius and Verus linked the "happiness," so to speak, of the Empire's citizens to an unprecedented magnitude of leisure, to an unprecedented diversity of pleasures or aesthetic experiences. This idea of pleasure as a pervasive, even defining, feature of "civilized" life throughout the Empire—rather than as a luxury distributed arbitrarily or inscrutably by Fortune—was itself an unprecedented development in the evolution of state power, although Christian or moralistic historical perspectives frequently associate it with manifestations of "decadence," of an inclination toward "excessive" sensual indulgence and loss of focus on some "higher" sense of purpose to justify a vast government. But at the time of Aurelius and Verus, the metamorphosis of the state into something "higher" than a protective shield against famine, pestilence, lawless behavior, and barbaric enemies appears to have meant that the state was powerful and rich enough to regard such dangers, not as crises, but as occasional themes for testing administrative efficiency and ingenuity. Such is an implication one can draw from the entertaining accounts of Verus and Aurelius in the otherwise moralistic *Historia Augusta*.

With Aurelius and Verus, a significant shift in the pantomime culture apparently took place. Pantomimes became tightly integrated into the imperial administration. They began to receive something like official positions and titles and were no longer merely hired entertainers. With this elevation in status, pantomimes associated with the emperor dominated the hierarchy of status within pantomime culture. The pantomime ensembles owned or sponsored by aristocrats no longer controlled or defined performance trends or expectations. More precisely, pantomimes associated with the imperial cult enjoyed a distinct advantage in terms of prestige, claque support, and public favor. Such is the implication of the scholarship on Greek inscriptions from Asia Minor related to pantomimes, particularly Tiberius Iulius Apolaustus, a freedman of Trajan, during the reign of Commodus (177-192 CE) (Slater 1995: 280-282, 289-290; 1996: 200-201; Robert 1930: 119-121). Around 180 CE, Greek cities, under imperial auspices, began to hold festivals that included pantomime competitions (Slater 1995: 271-272), and these competitions attracted the most innovative and gifted performers of the art, downgrading the Italian competitions that had operated since the time of Augustus. Inscriptions on monuments for pantomimes identify the prizes won by the pantomime. Styles of

pantomime developed in the eastern provinces supplanted the Alexandrian style of pantomime cultivated in Italy and descended from Bathyllus and Pylades. Pantomimes in the east set the standard for excellence in the art, and Antioch became famous, indeed notorious, for its extravagant support of pantomime culture. As a result of imperial encouragement, pressure, or investment, a variety of cities in the east initiated pantomime competitions: Delphi, Eusebia, Sebasta, Epheseia, Pythia, Leukophryneia, Magnesia (Meander), Isthmia, Pergamum (Slater 1995: 266, 269). Public performances of pantomimes in theaters became more common, as municipalities and the imperial cult found it expedient to provide these "gifts" to their constituents, although aristocratic families may have decided that it was more convenient, politically and economically, to operate through public institutions. The *Historia Augusta* describes how, under Commodus, the freedman Cleander rose to a position of enormous influence in the government (185-190 CE) as a result of the emperor's desire to devote himself to extravagant pleasures and "debaucheries" (*HA*, Commodus, 6.4). Dio Cassius echoes the *Historia Augusta* in asserting that Cleander "amassed more wealth than any who had ever been named *cubicularii*" by selling "senatorships, military commands, procuratorships, governorships, and, in a word, everything" (*Roman History*, LXXIII, 12. 3-5). Dio further remarks (12.5) that of this vast wealth Cleander had accumulated through bribery, fees, taxation, and extortion, "A great deal of it he gave to Commodus and his concubines, and he spent a great deal on houses, baths, and other works of benefit either to individuals or to cities" (Dio Cassius 1927: 97). Cleander's predecessor, Perennis, may have set the example, for he was "driven by an insatiable lust for money" (Herodian, *Commodus*, 1.8). Seeing how open Rome was to the sale of imperial authority and how focused the emperor was on the pursuit of extravagant entertainments, cities in the east probably petitioned the emperor for subsidies to support pantomime entertainments or bribed the emperor to obtain official recognition for their pantomime contests. Both Perennis and Cleander, brazenly ambitious, could build, for the right price, a popular power base in the east by bestowing imperial favor and protection on innovative civic initiatives, like theaters and the competitions performed in them. It's possible that by this time, claques in Rome paid the emperor a fee to organize and demonstrate on behalf of their star pantomimes, a complete reversal of the situation in 14-15 CE, when the claques attempted to extort

money from the emperor to foster the pantomime rivalries. In the western part of the Empire, however, pantomime culture showed far less inclination to adopt the Italian and Greek enthusiasm for public competitions, prizes, and juries. In Gaul, Hispania-Lusitania, and Britannia, vast estates governed economic life, and military affairs dominated urban centers. Pantomime remained largely an exotic entertainment within the villa culture, and when it was an occasional gift to the public by pantomime owners, it was in relation to the owners' agenda and schedule rather than in relation to an official, civic calendar of festivals.

The situation in North Africa seems more muddled. During the second and third centuries, cities and towns in North Africa demonstrated considerable enthusiasm for establishing civic institutions and developing glamorous urban societies, including the construction of the sumptuous theater at Sabratha, begun under Aurelius and completed under Commodus, an opulent theater with attached odeon in Carthage, and numerous other, smaller theaters in Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, and Morocco (cf., Theatrum 2015). It is surprising how many theaters the Romans built in North Africa in the second and third centuries CE in what our time would consider obscure and remote places (Lachaux 1979: 14, 20, 26). Jean Claude Lachaux (1979: 15) identified 31 theaters in "Africa proconsularis," which consisted mostly of what is now Tunisia, and all of these were apparently built between 114 CE (Carthage) and possibly 305 CE (Ammaedara). While the evidence of extensive theater construction in the region does not necessarily mean that these towns hosted extensive theatrical activity, it is also evident that the hinterlands of the Empire in North Africa were vastly more blessed and prosperous than they are today. The town of Ammaedara (Haidra), with two theaters constructed between 198 and 305 CE, lay considerably inland, on what was then the border between Africa proconsularis and Numidia and what is now the border between Tunisia and Algeria; devoid of military significance, the town was nevertheless "important" and "rich" because of its functions as a gateway to the Empire and as a hub for the processing of foods grown in the valley for transportation to the coast (Pagniol 1912: 70-71). Timgad, in Algeria, was only a little less remote than Ammaedara, yet there was discovered the longest inscription related to pantomime found anywhere in the ancient world, a memorial to the dancer Vincentius, who died at the age of 23 late in the second century, but whose skill at moving his hands could captivate

audiences until evening fell (Bayet 1955). In other words, during the second and third centuries CE, North Africa had the audiences and resources to support a sophisticated pantomime culture. Yet it is difficult to discern a distinctly North African approach to the art, even if Rome first embraced pantomime as Bathyllus and Pylades had developed it in Alexandria back in the first century BCE. In the second and third centuries CE, the African sector of the Empire did not pursue the opportunities for closer integration with Rome that occurred in the eastern sector of the Empire. The ruling elites in North Africa apparently considered it to their advantage to maintain a measure of autonomy from Rome, and Rome itself, while investing extensively in North African infrastructure projects throughout the second and third centuries, was never forgetful of the Punic wars, and probably felt that it was wise not to trust any "influence" from a region in which many people still spoke the Punic language, even after Septimius Severus became in 193 CE the first (and only) emperor from Africa (cf. Matthews 1957: 23-25). For these reasons, the African sector did not produce an alternative or counter-Eastern form of pantomime as a manifestation of its "influence" over Rome; instead it appears that the African sector absorbed the Eastern approach to pantomime, judging from St. Augustine's remarks in the *Confessions* (III. 2, ca. 400 CE) about his enthusiasm in his youth for shows in Hippo Regius depicting "lovers when they sinfully enjoyed one another." It was the Eastern sector that saw pantomime as a measure of its influence over its Roman masters, a sign of its ascendency.

Pantomime Repertoire and the Performance of Imperial Ideology

In the East, pantomimes did two major things to enhance the power of their art to excite audiences. First, they vastly expanded the range of scenes from Greek mythology that were appropriate for pantomimic performance. This is evident from Lucian's protracted discussion of mythic scenes that he ascribed to the pantomime repertoire as he observed it in Syria, Antioch, and Greece in the middle of the second century CE. He delights in overwhelming his reader with the abundant variety of mythic "moments" that pantomimes were able to embody.

> *[…] the castration of Uranus, the begetting of Aphrodite, the battle of the Titans, the birth of Zeus, the stratagem of Rhea, the substitution of*

> *the stone, the fetters of Cronus, the casting of lots among the three brothers. Then in order, the revolt of the Giants, the theft of fire, the fashioning of man, the punishment of Prometheus, the power of the two Erotes, and after that, the errancy of Delos, the travail of Leto, the killing of Pytho, the plot of Tityus, and the discovery of earth's central point by the flight of eagles"* (Lucian 1936: 248-251).

But this is merely the beginning of an extensive inventory of mythic scenes that constitute "the dancer's learning," for the dancer "must know everything," "beginning with Chaos and the primal origin of the world [...] down to the story of Cleopatra the Egyptian" (248-49). Lucian describes many mythic moments that even in his time were familiar probably only to highly educated audiences and in any case not readily recognizable in performance without help from the interpellator.

> *[...] the wandering of Demeter, the finding of Core, the visit to Celeus, the husbandry of Triptolemus; the vine planting of Icarius, and the sad fate of Erigone; the story of Boreas, of Oreithyia, of Theseus and Aegus. Also, the reception of Medea and her flight to Persia, the daughters of Erechtheus, and the daughters of Pandion, with what they suffered and did in Thrace. Then Acamas, Phyllis, the first rape of Helen, the campaign of the Dioscuri against the city, the fate of Hippolytus, and the return of the Heracleidae [...]* (Lucian 1936: 250-253).

Lucian classifies the mythic material according to its geographical origin: Athens, Megara, Corinth, Mycenae, Sparta, Elis, Crete, Thessaly, Thrace, Asia and the "many dramas there," Phoenicia, as well as "the Ethiopian tale of Cassiopea, Andromeda, and the Cepheus" and "somewhat mystic Egyptian tales"—"Epaphus and Osiris and the transfigurations of the gods into their bestial forms" (262-263). Italy, however, only contributes the myth of "Eridanus, and Phaeton, and the poplars that are his sisters, mourning and weeping amber" (260-261). The idea that a pantomime would have all of these mythic scenes in his performance repertoire is not credible, even if, at best, the cosmic scope of this mythology was part of his consciousness. To enact so many scenes with physical movements that are distinctive and sufficiently competitive in relation to other pantomimes

who presumably were also performing this vast repertoire would have entailed a choreographic and scenic imagination or indeed genius of monumental scale, especially at a time when pantomime was becoming a large scale industry, while nevertheless most pantomime performances by stars probably lasted no more than an hour with maybe twelve scenes consuming five minutes each. Even the spectacular Corinthian pantomime described by Apuleius would have involved the elaborate coordination of numerous performers in relation to the enactment of a single mythic scene: The Judgment of Paris. Rather, Lucian's inventory of mythic themes "selected out of many, or rather out of an infinite number" (264-265) that are fundamental to "the dancer's learning" is a rhetorical device to drive the point that the whole of Greek mythology is available to pantomime culture, as long as pantomime remains a serious rather than comic art.

The inventory conveys the impression that spectators of pantomime were able to see an enormous array of mythic figures incarnated by a large, expanding, and diverse class of dancers operating across different geographical zones. The catalogue of mythic themes further reinforces the perception of a grandiose metamorphosis of human identity through pantomimic performances throughout the eastern empire. But this metamorphosis is the work of a plenitude of pantomimes competing with each other by introducing in performance "new" or unexplored sections of the mythic database. The idea that all pantomimes knew how to dance all the mythic scenes in Lucian's sprawling inventory presupposes a standardization of pantomime performance. But, as discussed earlier, pantomime performances followed conventions that undermined standardization of the art: there was no "code" by which the dancer performed this or that mythic scene. Standardization of performance entails the functioning of an academic pedagogy that implements educational goals assuring that all performers achieve a common level of skill expected of those working professionally. But Lucian does not mention any schools responsible for "the dancer's learning." In any case, it is extremely difficult to believe that any school, even with numerous teachers, could provide a curriculum or pedagogic method that enabled all students to master or even devise choreography for such a vast repertoire of mythic scenes. Pantomime schools apparently existed during the Hellenistic period, when theater performances were the work of a socially advantaged professional class, rather than slaves and freedmen. The school in Alexandria, from

which came Bathyllus and Pylades, was perhaps the most famous pantomime academy relic of the expired Hellenistic world, but also possibly the last. Instruction probably focused on developing a repertoire of movements, a movement vocabulary, rather than on clarifying the relation between movement vocabulary and the representation of mythic figures. When Bathyllus and Pylades came to imperial Rome, they discovered that the Romans loved rivalries between performers, they encouraged intense competition between performers, and they saw pantomime and the concept of metamorphosis as articulations of power dynamics within their society—that is, pantomime was the articulation of an ideological rather than philosophical world-view. Competition encourages innovation, which is the enemy of standardization and "professionalization" as the Greeks understood it. From the time of Bathyllus and Pylades to the Tiberian legislation of 15 CE, a fairly small number of pantomimes operated in Italy. These pantomimes were professionals familiar with the Alexandrine vocabulary of performance. They could build their careers around a small number of mythic scenes, for what captivated the Romans was the opportunity to compare different dancers in relation to the same mythic scenes. Comparing one actor with another or indeed comparing an actor to the different roles he performed in a single performance established the primacy of the performer over the character and over the mythic material, making the performance above all a narration of enactments rather than the narration of a myth.

With this mode of comparing performances, audience attention centers on identifying "the better" or "the best" performance of a mythic scene rather than on acknowledging an alternative version of the scene in a presumably less hierarchical cultural environment that is not so preoccupied with the larger themes of winning, triumphing, and conquering. Pylades, with his tragic or serious style approach to the mythic material, apparently triumphed over Bathyllus and his supposedly more light-hearted or perhaps satiric handling of myth. But of course, determining what is "the best" or "better" performance is often highly subjective and even controversial. This uncertainty about what is the best or highest level of performance gives rise to opportunities to exert the levers of "influence" or power within the society; it allows for the politicization of performance to an intense degree. Thus, the greatest or most powerful kind of performance (which replaces the best or highest) is not necessarily the

most popular, but the one with the most generous sponsor, the one with the strongest claque, the one with the most passionate constituency, or perhaps the one with the most success in asserting the concept of rivalry. Evaluating pantomime performance involves more than a critique of what happens on a stage or in the villa peristyle; it is necessary also to assess the public persona constructed by the pantomime--his success in advancing the ambitions and political goals of his sponsors, his factions, or his imperial benefactors. Augustus sought to introduce "objectivity" into the evaluation of pantomime performance by initiating a contest in Naples in 2 CE, which then led to the Augustalia games with a category for pantomime competition (Suetonius, *Augustus*, 98).

But with the death of Augustus and the pantomime riots that ensued in 14 and 15 CE, sparked by Tiberius's disinclination to preserve the Augustalia, it was evident to Tiberius and the Senate that pantomime contests had less to do with objective evaluations of pantomime art and a lot more to do with creating opportunities for knights and their pantomime claques to establish in public their "influence" in relation to imperial largesse. The legislation of 15 CE undermined the power of the contests to determine the "influence" of pantomime claques and their sponsors and established pantomime as above all a villa entertainment; indeed, contests disappeared until a sort of revival in Campania around 100 CE. The rivalry between schooled, professional pantomimes evolved into a rivalry between aristocrats to fashion slaves and freedmen into pantomime artists. One learned the art by working with a pantomime attached to an estate to which one "belonged," rather than from an academic environment that focused on mastering a basic movement vocabulary. This mode of education fostered greater individuality or diversity of performance styles, as pantomimes shaped their art to accommodate the idiosyncratic tastes and goals of their owners and the communities that surrounded the villas.

At the same time, however, the diversity of themes or scenes could expand only to the extent that pantomimes moved beyond the repertoire of "appropriate" scenes established in Italy by the academically educated artists who introduced the art to the Romans. The freedmen and slaves who entered the pantomime culture following the legislation of 15 CE were not likely to have had an erudite education in Greek mythology, and not likely either to have the resources to improve their education a great deal in this direction. It was to their advantage to develop highly distinct performance

styles in relation to a stable set of "appropriate" mythic scenes familiar to Roman audiences, who themselves probably had a fairly circumscribed knowledge of Greek mythology—that was one reason why the Romans invented the role of the *interpellator*. But when Verus made his trip to the east, he saw that the Greeks did not build their pantomime culture around a core set of "appropriate" mythic scenes. Rather, the eastern pantomime culture developed highly localized connections to Greek mythology, as pantomimes built their repertoires from the geographical origins of the mythic scenes. That is why Lucian makes a point of identifying mythic scenes according to their geographical origins. The repertoire for the whole of the eastern sector was therefore much larger than the Italian repertoire, even if the repertoires of individual pantomimes were no larger than those in Italy. While visiting the eastern sector, Verus grasped the opportunity to expand a stagnating pantomime culture in Italy by bringing back various pantomimes from the east who would introduce a wider range of mythic scenes and infuse the pantomime culture in Rome with a new competitive spirit. Moreover, through his importation into Rome of eastern pantomimes, Verus established the expansion of the mythic repertoire as an imperial initiative, subject to imperial management, consolidation, and centralization. The idea emerged, through Verus and with Aurelius's consent, that the entire empire would perceive Rome as determining the scope of the mythic imagination and its incarnation through the movements of pantomimes. But the deeper motive for expanding the range of mythic scenes through imperial initiative was to consolidate imperial authority over the concept of metamorphosis and thus create a much greater sense of the pliancy of human identity within the empire, a much greater appreciation of how the empire enabled its citizens to become "someone else" or at least to adopt more complex ways of constructing their identities, which implied a greater condition of freedom.

Pantomime in the Eastern Empire: Female Pantomimes

The eastern sector expanded the pantomime mythic repertoire primarily by focusing on erotic scenes from Greek mythology. As Lucian puts it, referring to the amorous affairs of the gods, "Before all else, however, [the pantomime] will know the stories of their loves, including the loves of Zeus himself [...]" (Lucian 1936: 262-263). By the time of Verus, the "influence," so to speak, of the east was shifting pantomime from a largely

tragic to a largely erotic mode of performance. In the following decades and centuries, pantomime content only became more erotic and even pornographic, as one might presume from reading, in the *Secret History* (9.20-22; ca. 558 CE), Procopius's description of Theodora's Leda and the Swan performance in Byzantium (ca. 520 CE). Documentation of pantomime culture during the long Pax Romana is weak because the Church guardians of morality omitted so much of it from the historical record, believing that it was not to their benefit to leave behind evidence indicating that the Roman Empire remained powerful and healthy despite imperial fostering of entertainments that were so contrary to Church dogma. Of course, since the time of its introduction in Rome the pantomime culture had projected an intensely erotic aura. But the documentation largely attributes this aura or notoriety to the supposed sexual availability of pantomimes off stage or to the sexual ambiguity or "effeminacy" of pantomimes or to the power of glamorous star pantomimes to awaken, through their suave movements, disturbing erotic desires in knights or aristocratic female spectators. The claques may have recruited followers by providing access to sexual favors from members of pantomime ensembles. The historical commentary does not contend that the mythic scenes in performance were especially erotic; if anything, commentators introduce a tone of condescension, as if to suggest that because they evoked mythic figures through their bodies rather than through poetic words, pantomimes were unable to project the "heroic" level of identity associated with Greek mythology or with its sculpture, if not its literary language. However, by the time (162 CE) of Verus's visit to Greece, Apuleius had probably already written Chapter X of *The Golden Ass*, in which the pantomime performance in Corinth appears as a kind of communal orgy, a pornographic bacchanal. Nudity was commonplace in pantomime programs, justified perhaps by the use of poses to emulate or indeed compete with nude statues of mythological figures. Female pantomimes had become a feature of even provincial ensembles when Apuleius wrote *The Golden Ass*. A stone epitaph excavated near the Baths of Caracalla and dated in the late second century or early third century CE describes the life and character of a woman who was a pantomime in addition to being a devoted wife and mother (Starks 2008: 138-145).

However, most evidence of female pantomimes comes from the fourth century CE or later. Aristaenetos, the name ascribed to an otherwise

unknown Greek writer from the fifth century CE (Bing 2014: xiii-xiv), wrote a literary letter to a pantomime named Panarete, in which he praised her skill as a "painter of realism":

> *You write down actions, you express all sorts of words, you are absolutely the body image of all nature, using your hands for different formations and varied expressions instead of colours and speech, and like some Egyptian Proteus you appear to change from one character to another to the accompaniment of the artful song of the chorus. The people have risen straight up in amazement [...]* (Starks 2008: 111; Aristaenetos 1610: 119-120).

The Greek Anthology contains three epigrams ascribed to Leontius Scholasticus, who, inspired by images of her, writes praise of one Helladia, a Byzantine pantomime in whose "dancing of this goddess of war ['the lay of Hector'] there was both desire and terror, for with virile strength she mingled feminine grace" (*Greek Anthology* 1918: 330-331). The North African poet Luxorius, writing at the time of the Vandal occupation (ca. 525 CE), mocked a diminutive pantomime named Macedonia, who "always dances the part of Andromache and of Helen and of others who had a tall figure" because in vain "she thinks she can become like them by playing their roles and she wants her body to grow by her make believe movements" (Rosenblum 1961: 126-127). A small ivory relief, found in Trier and now in Berlin, depicts a pantomime holding a seven string lyre in one hand and three masks in the other hand [Figure 47]. The date of the relief is uncertain. Bieber (1961: 236) proposes "about the fourth century," while Bell (1978: 262) suggests the early sixth century. Bell also ascribes an Egyptian origin for the relief. The sex of the pantomime has also provoked uncertainty. Hall (2013: 463) claims the figure is male, but others, including Bieber and Bell, assert that the figure is female. As Bell remarks, the face contains "features that recur in ivories of the early sixth century such as the Ariadne in the Cluny Museum." The torso, furthermore, displays intensely feminine qualities. The hat is a curious item and apparently confers a special status on the pantomime, rather than on any impersonated character; if anything, it adds to the femininity of the figure. At the very least, the relief evokes an atmosphere of sexual ambiguity: the artist creates deep uncertainty about whether the pantomime has a feminine or a

feminized identity. This leads to the question: what was the motive for allowing or encouraging women to become pantomimes?

Female dancers had been a feature of ancient entertainments long before the introduction of pantomime to Rome. Romans had even celebrated some female dancers before the advent of the pantomime. In his *Letters to Atticus* (4.15), responding to an inquiry about her from his correspondent, Cicero wrote favorably of Arbuscula, a dancer who was "a great success" at the performance he attended, while Horace, writing of the same dancer in the *Satires* (I, 10, 76), remarks on her skill at returning hisses to a sector of the audience that had hissed her performance. Cicero also remarked (77 BCE), in his speech *For Quintus Roscius the Actor* (VIII), that a female dancer of his time, Dionysia, could earn 200,000 sesterces per year (approximately $1,050,000). Pliny, in his *Natural History* (7.159), while describing persons who lived to a great age, mentions a dancer, Galeria Copiola, who performed at the votive games (9 CE) for Augustus at the age of 104; she had begun her career at the age of eight. But these women were *emboliariae*, dancers of interludes (*embolia*) between scenes or sections of larger theatrical programs. Women and girls as dancers, acrobats, singers, or musicians were evidently a feature of Roman entertainments well prior to the pantomime and had their precedent in Etruscan forms of entertainment. It is not clear when women first became mimes, but they seem to have preceded female pantomimes by a considerable span of time. Reich (1903 I: 529) hints that female mimes appeared on the Hellenistic stage, but his earliest evidence is Orelli inscription 4760 (= CIL 6, 10106), a fragment referring to Claudia Hermione, an archmima, "the first to inherit," from some time in the late Republic. Other inscriptions mention an archmima, Fabia (CIL, 6, 10, 107) and Basilla (CIG, 8, p. 1023) (Henry 1919: 381; Schwabe 1900: 10). Horace, *Satire* 2, 55, mentions an actress named Origo, for whom one Marsaeus gave up his "paternal estate and seat." Cicero (*Philippics* 2, 22) mentions the actress Volumnia (Cytheris), as a mistress of the "profligate" Marc Anthony, who preceded him (49 BCE) on "an open litter" through various Italian towns followed by a "car full of pimps and a lot of debauched companions"; in a letter to Papirius Paetus, Cicero (FIX, 26) even mentions that he dined with her at the home of Volumnius Eutrapelus, although he "had no suspicion she would be there" (Cicero 1900: 102). Virgil (*Eclogue* X), Ovid (*Tristia*, II, 445), and Martial (*Epigrams* 8.73. 5-10), and especially Propertius (*Elegies*, I), who calls her

Cynthia while the others refer to her as Lycoris; all of them mention her apparently notorious later significance as the deeply beloved mistress of the politician-poet Gaius Cornelius Gallus (70-26 BCE), prefect of Egypt. Gallus wrote numerous elegies about Cytheris, of which only a few fragments exist (Raymond 2013: 59-67; Gibson 2012: 172-185; Hollis 2007: 219-226). In one fragment, he laments her departure to the Rhine and hopes that Alpine frosts and the icy river will not hurt her (Camden 2004). His affair with her may have begun as early as 45 BCE, and he remained devoted to her until the end of his life, even though she seems to have abandoned him and he even chides her in another fragment for her "misbehavior" (*Pap. Qasr. Ibrim inv.* 78-3-11/1 (LI / 2). An epitaph (CIL, 6, 10096) for a freedwoman, Eucharis, who died at the age of fourteen, claims that she "was the first woman to appear before the people on the Greek stage," but although she was "learned and cultivated in all accomplishments," her most distinctive achievement apparently was that she "lately adorned the games of the nobility with [her] dancing" (Langeveld 2013: 53-54). Langeveld claims that the epitaph comes from the late Republic, but Henry (1919: 380) believed it was "probably from the time of Nero." However, references to female mimes during the Empire are extremely scarce until the Christian writers began condemning the theater; Juvenal (*Satires* I, 36) and Martial (*Epigrams* I, IV) refer to an actress, Thymele, who performed in farces for the emperor. Of course, at least one famous painting excavated from Pompeii depicts a female mime in the first century CE [cf., Figures 45, 49].

If female mimes were a facet of Roman theater culture before the establishment of the Empire and a feature of the culture under the Empire, why, then, did female pantomimes not appear until at the earliest the middle of the second century CE? Perhaps one reason lies in the story of the relationship between Cytheris and Gallus. For Virgil, Ovid, and Propertius, Gallus's passion for the actress awakened a fatal hunger to write poetry that was as powerful as his political ambitions, although Gallus himself never blamed Cytheris for his downfall and eventual suicide. Because of his love for her, Gallus created a new way of writing about erotic passion, the elegy: a passionate love always ends sadly and can only be remembered elegiacally, even if, as in the case of Gallus, the passion lasts for many years and even if the object of passion is not altogether virtuous. However, from the standpoint of the imperial elite, especially Augustus, Cytheris might well have inspired a sense of confidence or recklessness in Gallus that

exceeded his better judgment, causing him to speak too uninhibitedly about his political ambitions and causing the Senate and the Emperor to see him as a dangerous opponent. It was not that Cytheris "influenced" Gallus in the manner of a conspirator plotting her own rise to power in collusion with an equally ambitious ally. Rather, Gallus consorted too openly and happily with a woman who earlier had been the mistress of Marc Anthony, a man catastrophically divided by the claims of his mistress and the claims of state power. The actress had infected Gallus, a man of relatively humble origins, with an excessive estimation of his ability to control his identity. His "metamorphosis" depended too much on her own bewitching power of metamorphosis. This mode of metamorphosis was dangerous for the stability of the new empire: the transformation of a state was not synonymous with the transformation of an individual. The imperial elite could easily assume that, when embodied by actresses, especially ones as notorious as Cytheris, women revealed a dangerous dimension to the concept of metamorphosis, for they had the power to make the metamorphosis of a man depend on the metamorphosis of a woman, which could well lead to deception, betrayal, and catastrophe. At any rate, Augustus, with his amendments to the *lex Juliana* (18 BCE), among other actions, imposed a moral tone, apparently not popular, that intensely discouraged women from pursuing any roles other than daughters, wives, and mothers. The rise of the pantomime diminished the cultural status and importance of mime. Pantomime incarnated the idea that all mythic identities, male and female, were under the control of a male performer, and thus reinforced the perception of metamorphosis as a concept arising within and governed by a male body. The claques attached to male pantomime stars and their sponsors created a volatile political atmosphere for the emperor. The introduction of female pantomime stars most likely would have intensified the volatility of the claques; even the aristocratic sponsors might have experienced great difficulty in managing their claques if their pantomime stars were female. Perhaps for this reason, no law appears to have been introduced forbidding women to become pantomimes: such a law was unnecessary to keep women from entering the profession, even if women desired to become pantomimes. It was not that women lacked interest in pursuing careers as pantomimes or that audiences had no desire to see female pantomimes; it was more likely that aristocratic sponsors saw no benefit to their political ambitions in building pantomime

ensembles around female stars. Educating and elevating to stardom a female pantomime would entail a radical political goal and inaugurate a level of competiveness that was simply unimaginable to the ruling class, the sort of self-destructive action that characterized men like Marc Anthony and Gallus.

For at least a hundred and fifty years, then, pantomime was an entirely male form of performance, supported sometimes by female dancers, singers, acrobats, and musicians. By the middle of the second century CE, Rome had understood for some time that the Greek aristocracy believed it served its interests best by enjoying autonomous privileges rather than by struggling to achieve a dominant role in the Empire. The Greek aristocracy simply lacked the resources to build large-scale power bases and to compete with immensely powerful Roman and Western Empire families for control of the Empire. Within Greece, the political goal of pantomime performance was to affirm the autonomy rather than imperial competiveness of the aristocracy. A manifestation of autonomy was a freedom to innovate within a performance environment that was not situated in such a complex political apparatus or hierarchy as in Italy; the Greeks could further claim to possess greater authority over the scope and "authenticity," so to speak, of the mythic material that was the basis for pantomime performance. Moreover, because the Greek aristocracy lacked the resources of the Roman elites, the organization of public performances of pantomimes apparently unfolded in close collaboration with municipal governments, a relic of the old *polis*-centered idea of governance—in other words, public performances relied much more on tax revenues than in Italy or elsewhere in the Empire. In this context, the idea that the performance was a "gift" to the public required the sponsors to be more attentive to the diversity and subtlety of audience tastes and enthusiasms than was perhaps the case in Italy. While the claques most likely operated in Greece, too, it was also most likely that they were not so deeply implicated in a huge web of political alliances as they were in Italy, because aristocratic sponsors did not have the money to fund large payrolls of "clients." It was not until the capital of the Empire shifted to Constantinople that pantomime claques became powerful, disruptive forces, and even then, such claques achieved this distinction in Constantinople and Asia Minor, not in Greece. The claques in Greece were probably much like social clubs that gathered people according to aesthetic tastes rather than the expectations of an

employer. That is to say, claques arose in response to unique artistic features of a performer rather than in relation to the performer's ability to represent a larger social-political perspective outside the mythic world represented in performance.

As mentioned already, the Greeks greatly expanded the range of erotic themes performed by the pantomimes; pantomime culture focused largely, perhaps even exclusively, on describing the peculiarities of erotic desire. The expansion of erotic themes enabled male pantomimes to incarnate an ever-increasing repertoire of female identities, so that the scope or limits of the performer's art rested upon his skill at impersonating different manifestations of the opposite sex. That is a major reason why Pliny, among others, could refer to pantomime as an "effeminate" art. It may be, however, that by the middle of the second century CE Greek audiences had become distrustful or impatient with male pantomimic representations of feminine identities. The autonomy of the Greek aristocracy depended on its power to "reveal" feminine identity in a bolder fashion than Rome encouraged: pantomime culture thus evolved in relation to a struggle for control over the construction of feminine identity. From its beginning, pantomime was about sexual ambiguity and the notion that metamorphosis involved the interaction of masculine and feminine sectors within a single body. But if the performing body is always only male, then as male pantomimes proliferate, it becomes evermore and even extremely difficult for pantomimes to become stars by constructing distinctive representations of both male and female identities. They can expand the range of erotic themes, but eventually the introduction of new characters will require a more elaborate movement vocabulary for *all* pantomimes, if each pantomime is to achieve sufficient distinction to become or remain a star. The pantomimes would favor standardization or replication of each other's movements to reduce competition between each other under the philosophy that all benefit when none are better than any other. From the sponsor's perspective, this attitude undermines both the idea of aristocratic autonomy and the credibility of claque-fronted political powerbases. Indeed, the attitude undermines the very concept of stardom and encourages provincial allocation of pantomime talent. The introduction of female pantomimes would intensify competition between all pantomimes and bring greater diversity to the movement vocabulary for embodying male and female identities within a single body. After all, the whole point of

excluding women as pantomimes (but not dancers, acrobats or singers) was that a female body would produce quite different representations of mythic characters, even if female performers replicated the movements of male performers. Female pantomimes would create a different relation of the mythic characters to the audience. It could not escape the thinking of the Greek sponsors that encouraging women to impersonate mythic characters, male and female, connected to heavily erotic themes, would create, in the public spaces of performance, a new relation between the (mostly male) audience and the performance: the sponsors would establish their privileged autonomy as brokers of a sexually permissive milieu in which sexual favors dispensed by agents attached to the theater ensemble received a kind of mythic endorsement through the performance. In his discussion of Empress Theodora's origins, Procopius indicated this link between promoters of mythic erotic performance in public and pimping (*Secret History* 9. 8-12), and although he wrote centuries after the introduction of female pantomimes, his writing (ca. 558 CE) does evoke a cultural atmosphere (ca. 510-518 CE) in which "Circus" performers, "Dancing Masters," and female performers, of whom Theodora was a pantomime, provided entertainments that facilitated sexual transactions off stage:

> *Now for a time Theodora, being immature, was quite unable to sleep with a man or to have a woman's kind of intercourse with one, yet she did engage in intercourse of a masculine type of lewdness with the wretches, slaves though they were, who, following their masters to the theater, incidentally took advantage of the opportunity afforded them to carry on this monstrous business, and she spent much time in the brothel in this unnatural traffic of the body* (Procopius 1927: 106-107).

The second century CE seems to have ushered in a long period of relaxed sexual morality, perhaps precipitated by the behavior of emperors themselves, who in so many cases consolidated their power by demonstrating their immunity to moral censure. Apuleius's description of the Corinth public porno-pantomime in *The Golden Ass* suggests how even in relatively provincial communities an extravagantly libidinous, even orgiastic spirit could grip an entire town. By the end of the second century, the early Christian writer Tertullian had completed his *De Spectaculis* (ca. 198 CE) condemning the "filthy lewdness" and "immodesty" of the theater

"such as finally the pantomime submitteth to in his own body from his childhood, that he may be able to be an actor. The very harlots also, the victims of the public lust, are brought forward on the stage, more wretched in the presence of women, from whom alone they were wont to conceal themselves, and are bandied about by the mouths of every age and every rank: their abode, their price, their description, even in matters of which it is not good to speak, is proclaimed" (Tertullian 1842: 207-208). Subsequent Christian writers would continue this condemnation, but it is clear from *De Spectaculis* that well before the end of the second century, the Carthaginian pantomime culture had adopted the Greek fixation on erotic themes about which, according to Tertullian, it was impossible for a Christian to speak without becoming "defiled." Perhaps the identification of pantomime with intensely erotic performance was why Greek artists discouraged the inclusion of pantomimes in competitions (Slater 1995: 289).

The Expansion of Imperial Control over Pantomime Performance

When Verus visited Greece and Antioch in 162 CE, his aristocratic hosts made him aware of their innovations in pantomime culture, and, impressed, he bought up many pantomimes and auxiliary performers and brought them back to Rome. But his purpose was not merely to give Italy more exciting entertainments. He wanted the imperial government to shape the destiny of pantomime and not simply regulate it when its enthusiasts got out of hand or performers misbehaved. Under Verus and Aurelian, Rome would centralize the pantomime culture of the entire empire: the emperor's pantomimes would represent the greatest and most innovative talents in the art and drive the competitive framework that would make pantomime function, basically, as an industry within the Empire. The guiding assumption for centralizing the art was that the most accurate measure of the power and health of the Empire was the scope and depth of the entertainments enjoyed by imperial citizens, for these could be enjoyed only to the extent that citizens were free of worry about dark intrusions into their lives, such as famine, disease, invasions, civil conflicts, and economic catastrophes. This philosophy embraced other entertainments besides the pantomime, but with pantomime the imperial government could maintain a decisive role in nourishing and propagandizing the concept of metamorphosis, which was fundamental to

the "message" of pantomime and to the idea of "freedom" as most inhabitants of the Roman Empire understood the term. Verus died in 169 CE, but his importation of pantomimes from the east was only the initial phase in the process of centralizing the pantomime culture. Subsequent emperors developed an industrialization program through the establishment of pantomime contests and subsidies to local communities for the construction of theaters, the formation of festivals, connected primarily with the imperial cult, featuring pantomimes, and the provision of "gift" performances by stars or contest winners. On the basis of the Apolaustus inscription (CIL VI 10117) and the "Inschrift von Magnesia" (FdD I1L1 551), Slater (1995: 289-290; 1996: 203-204) thinks that Greek pantomime contests under imperial auspices began somewhere between 175 and 180 CE, although possibly as early as 166 CE, at Thyateira, when a pantomime, Ulpius Augustianus (Paris), performed to celebrate the "undefeated emperors" (TAM V. 2 1016; Slater 1996: 204). For emperors, properly adjudicated (official) contests were a better and more accurate way to create pantomime stars than the aggressive promotional activities of claques, although even after 180 they remained infrequent. A pantomime would rise to glory through a hierarchy of contests in the east before receiving an invitation from the emperor to perform in Rome, and, having achieved this distinction, could return to the east as a revered star. Slater (1995: 286-288) published a list of fragmentary inscriptions attached to statues in Greece erected to honor the pantomime Apolaustus and others for victories in contests, and these inscriptions indicate a hierarchy of places and their prizes—Delphi, Pergamum, Athens, Nicomedia, Ephesus, Nicaea, Miletus, Corinth, among many others. To facilitate the industrialization of pantomime culture, emperors did not set up a special ministry of pantomime or even of public entertainments; rather, they appointed pantomimes to official positions or set up the assignment of official positions to pantomimes who performed well on behalf of the emperor or his deputies. According to an inscription from Ephesus, Apolaustus received a "councillorship" at Delphi sometime around 180 CE (Slater 1995: 265-266). Statuary inscription ILS 5186 announces that an imperial freedman, L. Aurelius Pylades, "the leading pantomime of his time," received appointment, in Puteoli, as a local decurion and priest between 185 and 192 CE. Another statuary inscription, from Lepcis Magna (IRT 606), dated between 211 and 217 CE, honors M. Septimius Aurelius

Agrippa, a freedman of Emperor Commodus, and also "the leading pantomime of his time," and lists his appointments as a town councilor for Verona, Vicetia, and Lepcis Magna; a wealthy friend from Mediolanum, Italy received the approval of the town council of Lepcis Magna to erect the monument. According to Dio Cassius (78.21), a freedman of Caracalla, Theocritus, taught the Emperor dancing, as a result of his friendship with the Emperor's freedman chamberlain, Saoterus; but Theocritus was not successful as a performer with Roman audiences. He gained greater favor with "rather countrified" audiences in Lugdunam (Lyon). But he soon "advanced to such power under Antoninus that both the prefects were as nothing compared to him." Commodus made him commander of an army against the Armenians, who defeated him. Nevertheless, he "kept travelling to and fro for the purpose of securing provisions and then hawking them at retail, and he put many people to death in connexion with this business as well as for other reasons. One of his victims was Flavius Titianus. This man, while procurator at Alexandria, offended him in some manner, whereupon Theocritus, leaping from his seat, drew his sword; and at that Titianus remarked: 'That, too, you did like a dancer.' This angered Theocritus extremely, and he ordered Flavius to be slain" (1927: 333).

In 204, according to a lengthy inscription excavated in Rome, the Emperor Septimius Severus, following the example set by Augustus in 17 BCE, sponsored a revival of the ancient Secular Games in which three different imperial pantomimes (Pylades, Marcus, and Apolaustus) performed each day for three consecutive days (June 4-6) in three different theaters, each pantomime performing each day in a different theater. The inscription does not indicate if the pantomimes performed the same or different scenes for each performance or if the different theaters and performance schedules entailed separate audiences for each theater or separate audiences for each performer or simply different performance times for any audience. Whatever the case, the pantomime performances appeared within a vast, imperially-managed spectacle that placed great weight on nocturnal sacrifices to Jupiter and the Terra Materna and featured, among other ritual ceremonies, a concert by a chorus of 109 aristocratic women, led by the Empress Julia Domna, and all listed in the inscription, while the Emperor himself and his sons, Caracalla and Geta, performed at least in the ritual sacrifice to Terra Materna. On the days when the pantomimes performed, spectators could also attend wild animal

hunts (*ludi venationes*) and chariot races (*ludi circenses*); so it may be that the scheduling of the pantomime performances over three days allowed spectators to see all of them as well as the races and the hunts (Hülsen 1932: 374; Cumont 1932: 121-122; Romanelli 1931; Rantala 2013), although this does not explain altogether why the performances took place in three separate theaters close to each other, including one built of wood especially for the Games. Probably no one theater or even two could accommodate all the spectators for any one performance of a pantomime. It is clear, however, that in the Severan Secular Games pantomimes provided the only theatrical entertainments; the huge program contained no enactment of stage plays. The Emperor apparently had at least three star pantomimes who could command large audiences in competition with other, more grandiose entertainments. But what is especially engaging about this spectacular event is the scale on which the imperial political imagination envisioned the integration of diverse entertainments and religious rituals into a single, enormous, mysterious festival that defines the greatness of the Empire. Severus aligned his vision with that of Augustus by following the program of the Secular Games in 17 BCE, except that pantomimes completely replaced literary dramas and eliminated any idea of spoken "dialogue" as a necessary component of scenic presentations. But the Secular Games also integrated the sexes into public performance milieu with the large female chorus, and it integrated aristocratic performers, such as the female chorus and the performers of the nocturnal rituals, with freedman performers in the arenas, hippodrome, and theaters. With this integration, pantomime was no longer largely an emblem of aristocratic privilege, autonomy, and power; it was a key component of the imperial propaganda apparatus for controlling public perception of the consolidation of mythic and human power within the emperor. The extensive inscription functioned to remind subsequent generations of a performance whose impact resonated long after all those who witnessed it were gone. Eventually the integrated vision of public performance developed in the Secular Games of 204 provided a basis for the imperial attachment of pantomimes to the chariot racing teams, but the more immediate result was to consecrate, so to speak, the authority of imperial pantomimes within not only the hierarchy of entertainment culture throughout the Empire, but within the mythic-religious framework that justified the Empire.

Successive emperors further consolidated imperial control of pantomime culture. During the dark reign of Caracalla (211-217), the Emperor extended citizenship to all free persons outside of Italy, so that, according to Dio Cassius (*Caracalla* 9), he could greatly expand the tax base and thus provide abundant compensation to the Army for its loyalty. But a lot of money went into the construction of entertainment facilities outside of Rome and in municipalities across the Empire, including several theaters in North Africa. Always suspicious of conspiracies against him, he subordinated the aristocracy by compelling wealthy families to construct at their own expense many pleasure buildings outside of Rome, even if he never visited the sites while spending so much of his reign away from Italy (Dio Cassius 1927: 298-299). These claims are helpful in reading the inscription (IRT 606), from the time of Caracalla (211-217), found at Lepcis Magna honoring the pantomime Marcus Septimius Aurelius Agrippa, "the foremost pantomime of his time." Agrippa received honors from the city councils in Verona and Vicetia (Vicenza), and then received appointment from the Emperor as a councilor in Lepcis Magna.[2] Carolynn Roncaglia (2015: 206-208) contends that the inscription indicates how, in addition to imperial patronage, "local regional networks" aided in the development of a career worthy of the inscription, and she speculates that the Milanese sponsor of the inscription, Publius Albucius Apollonius, facilitated Agrippa's connection to Verona and Vicetia through the "network" of "connections" to which he belonged. But the network must have functioned in a particular way, if one follows Roncaglia's reasoning, insofar as the Emperor (which one is not clear), having "educated" one of his own pantomimes in Rome, sent him to Apollonius in Milan. Why? The inscription says that Agrippa was a "friend of a rare kind" to Apollonius,

[2] A councilor's job was to collect taxes for the city and the emperor, to contribute to the maintenance and construction of public buildings such as baths, theaters, libraries, wells, bridges, and docks, to contribute to the sponsoring of entertainments and festivals, and to represent the city in relation to imperial ceremonies and imperial requests for data about the region and its resources. Depending on the size of the municipality, a council could have from a dozen to as many as six hundred members. Originally only aristocrats could serve as councilors, but during the Empire, qualifications for the job broadened: members of the council had to be landowners of a sufficient but never precisely determined magnitude, because one of the tasks of the councilor was to help pay for public services. Usually it was the council that elected persons whom members of the council had nominated. Members served for one year, but many who were qualified to serve because of the amount of land they owned sought to evade the responsibility of serving by joining the Army or by securing positions within the imperial bureaucracy (Lewin 1999: 397-398).

which presumably means that Agrippa was intensely loyal to Apollonius and helped his patron significantly to advance his own political ambitions. Agrippa was more than an entertainer; he was an agent of the Emperor. Apollonius needed a star pantomime to develop a power base in Milan; the Emperor needed a star pantomime to strengthen the imperial cult and its claque in Northern Italy. Agrippa was the "rare kind of friend" in whom Apollonius could share ideas and aspirations that went beyond the details of the pantomime's performances for the public. It could even be that Agrippa went to Verona and Vicetia before he went to Milan, and that in each of these places, his star performances enabled councilors to meet their responsibilities to the public and to the Empire. The concept of the "local regional network" of "connections" should be considered in relation to an imperial network of connections. Apollonius's family, the Albucii, lived in Liguria and Piedmont (Roncaglia 2014: 207), and it is by no means obvious that the family's influence extended beyond these regions. Rather, through his performances in Verona and Vicetia, Agrippa strengthened councilors and their claques in those communities, and he was able to do the same for Apollonius in Milan. Agrippa, rather than Apollonius, facilitated the "connections" between Milan, Verona, and Vicetia, because his task was to strengthen the Emperor's political base or "network" in Northern Italy. The inscription reinforces this point by observing that the Emperor (Severus?) *appointed* Agrippa as a councilor for Lepcis Magna. Moreover, in Milan, Agrippa apparently received no honors but was only "accepted as a member of the youth organization," which is a curious way of saying he was involved with a claque but perhaps a discreet way of implying that in Milan Apollonius faced serious political difficulties that the pantomime, a "rare kind of friend," helped him to overcome to a degree that was worth commemorating forever in the inscription. From the time of Severus onward, a goal of emperors was to extract more resources from local communities, which meant that the emperors intensified pressure on town councilors to provide more public services and dissolved distinctions between classes of citizens, so that more persons became responsible for collecting and paying taxes (Jones 1964: 20-21). The inscription indicates the major significance of at least freedmen pantomimes of the Emperor in consolidating imperial power: through the guiding, theatrical-ideological concept of metamorphosis, pantomimes incarnated not only the enduring

power of archaic myths; with the reign of Severus, they incarnated the immediate but possibly even more abstract power of the Empire.

During his rather short reign (218-222), the teenage Emperor Elagabalus apparently appointed pantomimes to positions more important than town councilor. Herodian (*Historia Augustus*, "Elagabalus," Part I, 6) claims that Elagabalus "took from the stage" as "associates" or advisors "many whose personal appearance pleased him" (*HA* 1924: 117); he appointed a pantomime as prefect of the guards (*HA*, "Elagabalus," I, 12.1; *HA* 1924: 132). But this pantomime, Comazon, gained the favor of the Emperor because he commanded a legion in Syria that supported Elagabalus's claim to the throne after Macrinus had plotted the assassination of Caracalla, although before he received his Syrian command, Comazon had been "sent to the galleys" for some sort of misbehavior (Dio Cassius, *Elagabalus*, 3; Dio Cassius 1927: 445). Elagabalus further appointed Comazon the city prefect for three consecutive years, and apparently he even survived the downfall of his master. If these assertions are true, then one can also assert that pantomimes were distinctive figures in the ancient world because of their skill in assuming different roles off stage as well as on stage. Indeed, it is doubtful that a person could even become a pantomime without successfully metamorphosing his identity in real life, for it was no longer the case since at least the pantomime riots of 15 CE that one became a pantomime by going to a school and absorbing a formal, institutionalized curriculum that provided a credential, so to speak, for entering this profession. In this respect, pantomimes strengthened the ideological concept of metamorphosis by dissolving clear distinctions between life and theater in the fluid construction of identity that was a fundamental goal within the Empire.

Elagabalus himself cultivated a flamboyantly theatrical personality and vividly embodied the gender ambiguity identified with pantomime performance. The historical sources write disdainfully of his extravagance and fantastic appetite for luxury. Among manifold actions described by the historical sources as depraved and monstrous, Elagabalus sometimes dressed as a woman and "sometimes wore a hair-net, and painted his eyes, daubing them with white lead and alkanet. Once, indeed, he shaved his chin and held a festival to mark the event; but after that he had the hairs plucked out, so as to look more like a woman" (Dio Cassius, *Elagabalus*, 13. 3; 1927: 467); "and whereas he had appeared before the harlots in a woman's

costume and with protruding bosom, he met the catamites in the garb of a boy who is exposed for prostitution" (*HA*, "Elagabalus" II, 26.3); he dressed "himself up as a confectioner, a perfumer, a cook, a shop-keeper, or a procurer, and he even practised all these occupations in his own house continually" (*HA*, "Elagabalus" II, 30.1); "he would go to the taverns by night, wearing a wig, and there ply the trade of a female huckster. He frequented the notorious brothels, drove out the prostitutes, and played the prostitute himself" (Dio Cassius, *Elagabalus*, 13.3; 1927: 463); "When adultery was represented on the stage, he would order what was usually done in pretence to be carried out in fact" (*HA*, "Elagabalus," 25.4); "moreover, he used to have the story of Paris played in his house, and he himself would take the rôle of Venus, and suddenly drop his clothing to the ground and fall naked on his knees, one hand on his breast, the other before his private parts, his buttocks projecting meanwhile and thrust back in front of his partner in depravity" (Herodian, *Elagabalus*, 5.5; *HA* 1924: 117); "he would often appear in public after dinner dressed in a Dalmatian tunic, and then he would call himself Fabius Gurges or Scipio, because he was wearing the same kind of clothing which Fabius and Cornelius wore when in their youth they were brought out in public by their parents in order to improve their manners" (*HA*, "Elagabalus," 26.2); in addition to having himself circumcised, "he carried his lewdness to such a point that he asked the physicians to contrive a woman's vagina in his body by means of an incision, promising them large sums for doing so" (Dio Cassius, *Elagabalus*, 16.7; 1927: 471); "when Aurelius addressed him with the usual salutation, 'My Lord Emperor, Hail!' [Elagabalus] bent his neck so as to assume a ravishing feminine pose, and turning his eyes upon him with a melting gaze, answered without any hesitation: 'Call me not Lord, for I am a Lady.'" (Dio Cassius, *Elagabalus*, 16.5; 1927: 471). Even if the accuracy of the sources is questionable, in their cumulative effect, these citations serve to demonstrate the determination of the Emperor to treat his identity as malleable thing that he could fashion according to an idea of metamorphosis that the historical and even contemporary sources ascribe to his Syrian origin and worship of the Asian sun god Elagabal. But his enthusiasm for incredibly luxurious banquets, elaborately staged orgies, and spectacular stunts, such as a naval battle in a lake of wine, indicate a boy supremely privileged to indulge his exceptional capacity to treat his own life as well as the lives of others as components of an ostentatiously

unrestrained theatrical activity of his own design. Considering how hostile the historical sources are toward what they regard as the Emperor's almost limitless depravity, it is rather surprising that his reign lasted as long as it did. But it may be that the Emperor's spectacular strangeness captivated the Roman public more that it or the historical sources cared to acknowledge. It was like witnessing an astonishing experiment in the exercise of power. Modernist writing about the Emperor such as Louis Esteve's *Elagabal ou un Lénine de l'androgynat* (1933) and Antonin Artaud's *Heliogabale ou l'anarchiste couronne* (1934) tends to treat him as a mysterious foreign creature whose subversion of gender norms was the basis for an anarchistic upheaval within Roman society. As Martijn Icks (2011: 200) says of Artaud's analysis of Elagabalus's motives: "All his acts are deliberate attempts to break through the superficial order of Roman society and reveal the opposing principles that lie beneath it." The Emperor was the first to allow a woman, his mother, to enter and address the Senate; he then created an all female senate that passed numerous "absurd" rules regarding the dress and behavior of women (Herodian, *Elagabalus*, 4.1-3); he married several women, including a Vestal Virgin; he married a man and openly became his wife; he engaged openly in sexual relations with numerous persons of both sexes and of different classes; and "he used to dance, not only in the orchestra, but also, in a way, even while walking, performing sacrifices, receiving salutations, or delivering a speech" (Dio Cassius, *Elagabalus*, 13.3; 1927: 467). But these actions do not really suggest an anarchist philosophy of social organization; rather, they intimate that Elagabalus introduced an "effeminate," feminized, and to some extent feminine approach to imperial power insofar as he sometimes (and perhaps not often enough) deferred to his mother and grandmother on matters of governance in addition to following his own transsexual ideas about his role as Emperor. In effect, he embodied at the summit of imperial power the image of mythic sexual ambiguity that was the central feature of pantomime performance. For him, the manifestation of imperial power reached its apex to the extent that he could dissolve all distinction between life and theater, between male and female, so that only death marked the difference between fantasy and reality. He died young and violently, but even the motive for his death at the hands of soldiers remains ambiguous or at least muddled in the accounts of it in the historical sources—it may even be that his own grandmother, Julia Maesa, paid to have him assassinated.

His successor was his cousin and another teenager, Alexander Severus (208-235), whom Julia Maesa had persuaded Elagabalus to make as his heir. Under the guidance of his mother, Julia Mammaea, Alexander Severus projected an image of imperial identity that strongly contrasted with that of his cousin. He was a figure of modesty, prudence, judiciousness, generosity, affability, refinement, and cowardice, and these qualities eventually destroyed him and his mother. When he ascended the throne, he dismissed from office all those whom Elagabalus had appointed "from the lowest class" (*HA*, "Alexander Severus," 15.1), but although "he never had dramatic entertainments at his banquets" (41.5), because he believed "actors… should be treated as slaves… ministers of our pleasures" (37.1), he was enthusiastic about sponsoring entertainments for the public (24.3; 43.4; 44.7). Also: "All the dwarfs, both male and female, fools, catamites who had good voices, all kinds of entertainers at table, and actors of pantomimes he made public property; those, however, who were not of any use were assigned, each to a different town, for support, in order that no one town might be burdened by a new kind of beggars" (33.2). What does it mean that pantomimes were made public property? Presumably the statement means that pantomimes who once performed exclusively for the Emperor now performed exclusively for the public either in shows sponsored by the Emperor or in shows sponsored by citizens who leased or rented the pantomimes from the imperial government; Severus showed a penchant for imposing taxes on all kinds of entertainments, and his mother had a reputation for avarice (Herodian, *Alexander Severus*, 6.1.8). Perhaps, then, the Emperor converted the imperial pantomimes from an expense to a revenue stream. Most likely, though, the Emperor integrated pantomime entertainers into the imperial administrative apparatus. They were no longer the private property of the Emperor; they were an item in the vast inventory of state-owned properties, like land, buildings, offices, archives, animals, accounts, warehouses, ships, archives, training facilities, and mines, although of course the Emperor retained enormous discretionary power to employ these resources. As pantomime culture became integrated into the imperial bureaucracy, its future depended less on the whims, tastes, and fortunes of emperors and aristocratic sponsors and more on the fate and health of the Empire.

Pantomime and the Third Century Crisis

With the murder of Alexander Severus in Germany, the Empire entered a protracted period of deep uncertainty about who should be emperor—the so-called "Crisis of the Third Century." For the next forty years, numerous men battled to become emperor and the Empire fractured into rival territories engaged in almost perpetual civil and foreign wars. But the pantomime culture adapted well to this dark metamorphosis of the Empire. Although references to it are scant, it is nevertheless evident that pantomime never lost its appeal and apparently, at least in the imperial court, adopted some interesting refinements. The elderly Gordian I ruled, along with his son, Gordian II, for only thirty-six days (238 CE), but when he was, among numerous other appointments, a Consul of Italy, under Alexander Severus, he "gave stage plays and Juvenalia [wild beast hunts] in all the cities of Campania, Etruria, Umbria, Flaminia, and Picenum, for four days at his own expense" (*HA*, "The Three Gordians," 4.6; 1924: 388-389). This event recalls the Secular Games sponsored by Septimius Severus in 204 in which public pantomime performances took place in conjunction with wild animal hunts and gladiatorial combats. Gordian's production, however, if the *Historia Augusta* is credible here, was on a much larger scale than the Secular Games, and in line with his previous efforts, as an *aedile*, to impress the Roman public with his generosity in presenting spectacular gladiatorial and wild beast shows involving hundreds of gladiators and exotic animals each month for the entire year he served his term of office ("The Three Gordians," 3.6; 1924: 385-386). These "surpassed the imperial games themselves" and caused other ambitious politicians to resent him as much as admire him. Thus, when he and his son became co-emperors, they lacked sufficient friends when they needed them. When his grandson, Gordian III, another teenager, became emperor in 238, he amassed a huge army in Rome to march against the usurper, Maximinus, in Aquileia. To celebrate the departure of this army, Gordian hosted "a solemn ritual," during which "sacred rites were performed, stage-plays ["*ludi scenae*," the term used to described the pantomime performances at the 204 Secular Games] and sports in the Circus given, [and] a gladiatorial show was presented" ("Maximus and Balbinus," 8.5; 1924: 462-463). The *Historia Augusta* attempts to connect this large-scale public entertainment to a Roman "custom" of preparing the population for war by evoking "the avenging power of Fortune" through spectacles of killing under the assumption that

"to behold fighting and wounds and steel and naked men contending among themselves" meant "that in war they might not fear armed enemies or shudder at wounds and blood" ("Maximus and Balbinus," 8.7; 1924: 464-465). However, the need of the *HA* to explain this occasion for spectacles actually suggests that the "solemn ritual" was an innovation on the part of Gordian III and his advisors: the shows functioned to awaken a drive to victory in the population rather than to celebrate a triumph over adversaries. As the emperor aligned pantomime with other forms of entertainment in a festival organization modeled after the Secular Games format of performances, the festivals themselves functioned to *change* public attitudes rather than to simply affirm them. Imperial festivals rallied people to a cause, to some larger, political idea regarding the future of the people themselves rather than merely to a favorable view of the emperor. In this period of perpetual struggle between claimants to the throne, emperors, even if they came from the nobility, could not trust the Senate to support them, nor could they trust the Army to subordinate its ambition to decide who would be emperor. Delivering speeches and harangues to power-anointing constituents was not sufficient to awaken a public feeling of commitment, not so much to the emperor himself, but to a decision made by the emperor, such as to take up arms against Maximinus. Once a man became emperor, it also became incredibly difficult for him to project an aura of triumph over manifold adversaries, foreign and domestic, even if he did defeat rivals and invaders. Emperors therefore depended heavily on the implementation of large-scale public works to demonstrate the legitimacy or strength of imperial power. The integration of entertainments into huge, festival organizations of performances was a category of public works requiring elaborate administrative skill and logistics. These events showed, perhaps more vividly or viscerally than other, less dramatic public works, that the imperial bureaucracy functioned efficiently and steadfastly, no matter how perilous were the internal and external threats to the Empire. Imperial power really lay in the control of a vast, complex bureaucratic system for distributing public benefits and not so much in the distributing of favors to those who were "loyal," for this was a time in which it was not possible to reward loyalty as generously as in previous generations, even if it was possible to feel, let display too quickly or too ardently, loyalty to any of the numerous camps that emerged during the Crisis purporting to resolve it. In 248, Marcus Julius Philippus ("Philip the

Arab") staged even more spectacular Secular Games than Septimius Severus had presented in 204 when, to commemorate the thousandth anniversary of the founding of Rome, he arranged for a thousand pairs of gladiators to combat in the Circus along with chariot races; a huge number of wild animals apparently died in the Coliseum as objects of spectacular hunts. But the *HA* says that before Philip had him murdered, Gordian III planned to use these entertainment resources to celebrate his triumph over the Persians (33.2; 1924: 445), even though he had died four years previously. However, Philip's effort to use the Secular Games to strengthen his popularity in Rome failed to consolidate his power within the Empire: Gothic invasions and a military revolt in Pannonia brought an end to his regime and life in 249.

Presumably the Secular Games in 248 followed the model established by Septimius Severus and included pantomime performances, but the *HA* is silent on this. Nor is it at all clear to what extent, during a year, the imperial government or politicians sponsored integrated or unique public entertainments involving pantomimes. How often in a year could a public spectator in Rome watch a pantomime performance, assuming the government budgeted such entertainment in relation to the calendar? Perhaps the answer to this question is unknowable. In the earlier years of the Empire, when pantomime was mostly a private entertainment of aristocrats, public performances as "gifts" occurred in relation to the diverse political ambitions of individual sponsors and the schedules they developed to pursue their ambitions. In the late second century, as the emperors tightened their grip on the aristocracy, gifts of public performances became increasingly the responsibility of consortiums of sponsors acting through municipal councils and in tandem with imperial construction of theaters throughout the Empire, so that these "gifts" came in part from the emperors, especially if public pantomime performances operated as competitions for prizes. With the Crisis of the Third Century, however, this system may have frayed. The concept of competition is worth pondering. Imperial pantomimes may have set the standard for accomplishment in the art. But from our perspective in the twenty-first century, a peculiar feeling of incongruity emerges at the idea of the non-violent spectacle of pantomime competing for public enthusiasm with intensely violent entertainments like gladiatorial combats, wild beast killings, and chariot races. It may well be that pantomime never really competed directly with

these other entertainments, that the scheduling of pantomimes during a year, along with the scheduling of other entertainments, never placed potential spectators in a position of having to choose one entertainment over another, even when the schedule was as complex as was evidently the case in the organization of the Secular Games in 204. Moreover, the Games program indicates that the emperor had at least three pantomimes at his disposal. During the year, did these pantomimes compete with each other for audiences? Or did one perform in Rome for public audiences, while the others performed elsewhere in Italy? Did the imperial cult support three claques, one for each pantomime—or one claque for all three imperial pantomimes? Did the imperial court schedule its public pantomime performances in collaboration with aristocrats who also wanted to sponsor public pantomime performances? Or were aristocrats compelled to schedule their shows around imperial control over the reservation of theaters in Rome? Indeed, with Rome having at least three theaters, was it nevertheless even permissible for the three theaters to offer pantomime entertainments at the same time? If rival or even different pantomimes performed at the same time and day, could each performance be expected to fill theaters accommodating 15,000 spectators? To get even three thousand spectators into a public theater, how much time did one need to promote the event? Even if a claque had five hundred members, could one expect all members of the claque always to attend every performance by the star pantomime? Though pantomime was not a commercial enterprise, how did sponsors of pantomime performances calculate the impact of performances on subsidiary commercial activities, such as taverns, vendors of food and beverages, vendors who sold or rented cushions, and persons hired to serve spectators or protect them? To what extent was a spectator conflicted about which performance to attend or indeed about attending any performance at all? What motivated a spectator to attend a pantomime performance *rather* than a chariot race, a wild beast hunt, or a gladiatorial combat? Did membership in a pantomime claque preclude membership in a chariot team claque? While it may never be possible to answer such questions accurately, these were nevertheless questions that guided organizers of pantomime performances, including the emperor. The answers, when they became evident to the organizers, bear upon the decision of the emperors in the fourth century to attach the pantomimes and their claques to the chariot racing teams throughout the Empire. But in

the turbulent third century, questions about pantomime performance appear to have centered on how to "integrate" it into other forms of performance or at least into a larger idea of metamorphosis than had sustained the art in previous centuries.

In an article on pantomime competitions, Ruth Webb contends, largely on the basis of evidence from epitaphs, that pantomime entered public performance contests occasionally or selectively during the reign of Trajan (98-117 CE), beginning in Naples (Webb 2012: 230). The concern of public officials about the influence of claques probably motivated hesitation about including pantomime in contests, although Webb refers to scholars who speculate that pantomimes nevertheless performed at contests, as they sometimes did at festivals, as paid entertainers and received "special honors" for their performances. Impresarios or magistrates hired these pantomimes, apparently as a way to increase public interest in the contests without generating the controvery that might ensue when a jury named a pantomime the "victor" (cf., Webb 2012: 238). But Webb herself then speculates on how, when pantomime entered official competition, juries or audiences judged the performances. She suggests that pantomimes may have engaged in "danced dialogues" involving improvised "alternating gestures": "One possibility might be purely technical: a sequence of difficult movements which the other dancer had to surpass" (248). She further proposes that, "on a more general level, competitive performances in both mime and pantomime imply a fixed form with recognised rules and norms. The spectators who judged the dancers were therefore using shared criteria and were not simply expressing personal preferences" (248-249). But this contention assumes that some sort of academy or school established "rules and norms" that performers and even spectators learned systematically. This is how modern ballet dancers think about competitions: as a virtuoso display of techniques learned in school; it is not how acting competition works. As discussed earlier, pantomime academies, such as they were, disappeared from the Empire when the Senate in effect forbade aristocrats from hiring professionally trained pantomimes and motivating them instead to own their own pantomime ensembles. One then did not become a pantomime by going to school but by becoming attached to a pantomime ensemble, by becoming a protégé of a pantomime with an aristocratic sponsor. Pantomimes became competitive, but not because they learned all sorts of "rules and norms" that all other pantomimes learned from some

credible, academic authority. Epitaph evidence commemorates pantomimes as young as nine, twelve, and fourteen years old; they practiced their roles guided by mentors, but they did not spend time going to a school. Innovative performance skill was much more important to pantomime competitiveness than virtuoso mastery of a "fixed form with recognised rules and norms." Pantomimes found favor with audiences or judges by coming up with new movements, new poses, mysterious costumes and masks, introducing less familiar mythic themes, strange erotic moods, and voluptuous glamor. It was this emphasis on innovation in performance as the basis of competitiveness that made pantomime such an "unruly" category for public contests and inflamed the passions of audiences or those assigned to judge the performances. In this respect, pantomimic innovation furthered the goal of the art to embody the ideology of metamorphosis.

Pantomime was always an embodiment of competitiveness; it was always about the competitive power of masks, poses, and movements, so that even individual performers externalized the competition between the masks and identities that resided within themselves. After Verus, public competitions between pantomimes apparently appealed to audiences throughout the Empire. Yet the idea of pantomime competing against other forms of entertainment perhaps did not inspire enthusiasm, at least from an imperial perspective, considering how carefully the Secular Games scheduled pantomime performances in such as way as not to conflict with other entertainments. Indeed, the process of "integrating" pantomime performances in relation to other forms of entertainment, culminating, in the fourth century, with the attachment of pantomimes and their claques to chariot racing factions, suggests that pantomime was *too* competitive, in the sense that, faced with having to choose entertainments, large sectors of the public *preferred* pantomime to chariot races, wild beast hunts, and gladiatorial combats. Why, in the fourth century, did the emperors attach the pantomimes and their claques to the chariot factions? If pantomime was not competitive against other forms of entertainment, at least in relation to the general public, why not simply allow aristocrats to sponsor pantomime performances for the villa audiences, with occasional "gifts" to the public, as happened originally? Pantomime shows did not cost nearly as much money to produce as chariot races, wild beast hunts, and gladiatorial contests, all of which required numerous personnel to manage people and animals, facilities, and, as with the gladiators, schools and dormitories.

Pantomime shows were bizarrely small in scale compared with other popular entertainments, yet these other entertainments were unable to overshadow pantomime—whereas the appetite for spoken or text-driven drama had largely disappeared altogether even before pantomime came to Rome. In fact, pantomime endured well beyond the end of the chariot races, the wild beast hunts, and the gladiatorial combats.

One might argue that pantomime prospered so long and so competitively due to the powerful sway of the claques attached to the art. But then the question arises: what made pantomimes so attractive as venerated objects of claques? To answer this question effectively, it is best to acknowledge that the claques operated within a larger system of communication than was embedded within the unique performance aesthetic of a star pantomime. Claques acquired power or "influence" insofar as they expanded the scope of the concept of metamorphosis that pantomimes embodied. Pantomimes died, retired, or lost their appeal, but claques did not disappear because their star pantomimes had disappeared. Claques attached themselves to new pantomimes; people could join a claque or leave it regardless of whether the star pantomime was the "best" representative of the art or the idea of metamorphosis, even if, as the emperors after Verus hoped, pantomime contests could decide the matter "objectively." Claque members may have moved from one claque to another, although probably not from a pantomime claque to a chariot faction. Cameron (1976: 225-226) asserts that before the "amalgamation" of pantomime and chariot racing claques in the fourth century, chariot racing claques were never as "rowdy" or disruptive as pantomime claques and only became so after the amalgamation, which suggests that before the amalgamation chariot racing claques were more exclusive in their membership and followed some sort of behavior code associated with a more well-mannered, prudent, and stable sector of the public. From the imperial perspective, the primary motive for merging the pantomime and chariot racing claques was not to make pantomime claques more docile, but to consolidate imperial control over the entertainment industry. A more centralized organization of resources for entertainment allowed the imperial government to allocate more revenue for other things than entertainment and to constrain the ability of aristocratic sponsors of claques to invest too strongly in potentially threatening political power bases. Claques outside Rome had to become the responsibility of municipal

consortiums rather than individual aristocrats if the aristocrats (town councilors) were to meet the financial obligations of their class. From the standpoint of the pantomime, the merger of the claques opened up opportunities for performance in previously excluded spaces (hippodromes) and perhaps more importantly expanded opportunities for the pantomime to connect with a larger set of sponsors who could facilitate his advancement, through political appointments, beyond and after his career in the theater. From the perspective of a pantomime claque member, the merger presumably implied access to a grander claque hierarchy and thus allowed the claque member to rise higher and faster within the faction hierarchy and within the society. For the member of the chariot-racing claque, the merger probably facilitated greater or happier access to homosexual and heterosexual experiences, insofar as the ambiguous sexual culture of pantomime ensembles and their associates offered off-stage pleasures that were otherwise not so rewarding elsewhere.

The claques functioned as social networks that provided unique opportunities for members to improve their sexual, economic, and social identities—to achieve some measure of "metamorphosis" or, as might be said nowadays, upward mobility. It is possible that in the early Empire, members of chariot racing claques paid dues, whereas sponsors hired members of pantomime claques. But as the imperial government exerted greater control over the entertainment industry, this distinction may have disappeared, and the pantomime claques, in collaboration with the town council consortiums, may have themselves, with revenues from dues, become sponsors of pantomime performances. If so, then, with the merger of the claques, the cost of producing chariot races, though probably not pantomime shows, was distributed across a larger set of sponsors, easing the financial burdens of aristocratic and imperial sponsors. This view aligns with the recognition that by the middle of the fourth century much of the aristocracy throughout the Empire was retreating from engagement with city building and responsibility for public culture and instead amassing enormous, self-sufficient estates, like Piazza Armerina, where pantomimes might be guest performers but the hosts, lacking the incentives or even the ambitions to pursue imperial political careers propelled by power bases, no longer felt much motivation to provide "gifts" of performances to potential constituents. The aura of sexual ambiguity cast by pantomime culture was central to the art's power to embody the concept of metamorphosis—or

rather, the concept of metamorphosis achieved its most persuasive representation through the pantomimic embodiment of sexual ambiguity. This component of the pantomime culture was the driver of change (and volatility) within the art and in relation to the political-social functions attached to the art. It was, indeed, this component that was an obsessive target of criticism from those seeking to Christianize the ancient world even after the Empire became a Christian state. Nevertheless, despite the practical economic and political reasons for bringing pantomimes into the circus, it remains peculiar that pantomime became part of the overtly "masculine" entertainment of chariot racing. Perhaps the imperial government believed that associating pantomime with chariot racing would make the art more masculine. More likely, though, it was the other way around: the public did not look upon pantomimes as less masculine or "effeminate" because they played female roles or because they accommodated homosexual and heterosexual pleasures. Pantomimes infused the circus with a potent erotic atmosphere that made chariot racing more exciting, more than a competition between teams of horses. It was also a contest between competing modes of desirability within the crowd: pantomimes charged their factions with an intensified sense of sexual vibrancy, of being, not just thrilled, but thrilling, in an ardently visceral way. The pantomimes got their factions to move in highly competitive, choreographed discharges of excitement that did not depend on the success of the faction's chariot team for their motivation or pleasure in thrilling the crowd. More will be said about the relation of the pantomimes to the circus. The point here is that a peculiar set of historical circumstances arising out of the Crisis of the Third Century allowed the pantomime claques to function differently from the fan clubs attached in modern times to movie stars, rock stars, and sports teams.

The Crisis of the Third Century brought about a fundamental metamorphosis of the Empire as a whole, to which pantomime made a peculiar contribution that was more significant than one might assume from reading the *Historia Augusta* as its authors probably expected it to be read. In the manner of other mandarin ancient histories, the *HA*, when it bothers to mention it at all, tends to regard pantomime as a distracting pleasure of emperors, as evidence of a luxurious taste that interferes with wise imperial governance, rather than as the instrument of larger ideas of imperial cultural policy. The *HA* treats pantomime as something that

reveals the "character" of emperors in a generally unflattering way, but in doing so it inadvertently implies that emperors revealed and even helped shape the "character" of pantomime as a phenomenon that survived numerous regimes and calamities far more successfully than other arts or entertainments with which it co-existed throughout its long life in the ancient world. Pantomime adapted well to complicated and stressful historical realities, because of the flexibility of its performance conditions and because of its focus on metamorphosis as the motivation for performance: adaptation was above all a matter of skill at releasing and manipulating multiple identities within a body, at devising masks and presenting movements, poses, and bodies themselves as masks. This durable ideology was evidently of great value in organizing and sustaining the imperial state apparatus, even if it contradicted the Christian ideology that there is only one true God in the universe and every human being can only have one "true" body or identity.

The *Historia Augusta*, however, sees the affection of the emperor for pantomime as an affliction or vice that undermined his ability to lead the Empire out of the Crisis. During the almost fantastically turbulent reign of Gallienus (253-268), when the Empire suffered from manifold invasions, insurrections, and secessions in Egypt, Pannonia, Gaul, Bithynia, Italy, Sicily, Anatolia, Illyricum, Mesopotamia, and Macedonia, the Emperor apparently maintained a keen enthusiasm for pantomimes. Upon the death of Macrianus and his son, who attempted a coup in 261, Gallienus "gave spectacles in the circus, spectacles in the theater, gymnastic spectacles, hunting spectacles, and gladiatorial spectacles" and "surrendered himself to lust and pleasure" (*HA*, "The Two Gallieni," 3.6-7). After suppressing a revolt of Byzantine troops, in 262, the Emperor "celebrated a decennial festival with new kinds of spectacles, new varieties of parades, and the most elaborate sort of amusements," including "wagons bearing pantomimists and actors of all sorts," among numerous other "marvelous and astonishing" performances (*HA*, "The Two Gallieni," 7.4-8.7). Moreover, "concubines frequently reclined in his dining-halls, and he always had near at hand a second table for the jesters and actors" (*HA*, "The Two Gallieni," 17.7), further evidence of how Gallienus had "wasted his days and nights in wine and debauchery and caused the world to be laid waste" (*HA*, "The Two Gallieni," 16.1). The *HA* includes several passages that describe in detail Gallienus's pleasure in luxurious clothing, his appetite for sexual orgies, his

devotion to fastidious grooming and bathing, his culinary extravagances, his love of poetry and scholarship, and his inclination to go "forth to the sound of the pipes and [return] to the sound of the organ" (*HA*, "The Two Gallieni," 11, 16, 17), all of which lead to the final summation: he "spent his life with pimps and actors and jesters" (*HA*, "The Two Gallieni," 21.6). Obviously the *HA* presents these salacious details to discredit Gallienus, presumably in an effort to demonstrate the salvational identity of the emperor who succeeded him, Claudius, who may have borne some responsibility for the murder of Gallienus but was also an ancestor of Emperor Constantius II, for whom the author possibly wrote the history, although it may well be the case that for the author a more positive evaluation of Gallienus's complicated leadership style was not acceptable to a somewhat later imperial audience.

Twentieth century historians are much more respectful of Gallienus's exceptional accomplishments during a time of continuous catastrophe; indeed, the Emperor's amazing skill in holding the Empire together for nine years is even discernable through the grotesquely hostile filter of the language the *HA* uses to describe his regime. But historians of the modern era tend to detach a revised and more positive assessment of Gallienus from almost every reference to the salacious details of his personality and enthusiasm for theater in the *HA*, as if these were either irrelevant to a discussion of Gallienus's political and military achievements or exaggerations and fabrications so extreme as to be useless as "evidence" of serious imperial leadership. Lukas De Blois (1976) is perhaps the most glaring example of this dismissal of the salacious details in the *HA*, but others have followed his path: Mennen (2011: 31-45), and Geiger (2013), although even other ancient historians of Gallienus's reign—Zosimus, Zonaras, Aurelius Victor—avoid affirming the voluptuous qualities ascribed to Gallienus by the *HA*. Perhaps, for these historians, a more "impartial" history emerges without such details of "private" life under the assumption that these details are complete fabrications, whereas other details of Gallienus's career are verifiable insofar as they appear in other texts or are at least "believable." The interminable and labyrinthine scholarly debates about the authorship, accuracy, date, language, and motive for writing the *HA* make it difficult indeed to know what to do with any references in the text related to pantomime and theater. But the chapter on Gallienus is an especially grandiose mess, because it contains so many vivid details

purporting to describe the Emperor's love of spectacle, particularly regarding the processions he staged following the death of Macrianus and then following the suppression of the Byzantine revolt (*HA* 3.6; 8-9), as well as his enthusiasm for theatrical effects in his personal life. Are the details fabrications because the author presents them in a severely disapproving tone? If the point of the chapter is a satire or even a parody of historical writing, as Syme (1968) argued, then the writing should be much more exaggerated and extravagantly fabricated, for as it is the language creates such deep uncertainty about what is true, what could be true, and what is not true that it is very hard to discern where the humor lies, even for an erudite imperial or senatorial audience, in details that supposedly took place long before the composition of the text. At any rate, the text presents such an unstable image of Gallienus's identity (as well as that of other emperors) that it is as if the author has inscribed a kind of pantomimic impersonation of him, has fashioned, not only the emperor's, but his own identity out of various masks that completely obscure the distinction between the emperor himself and the man performing him, a phenomenon that the author's audience might have appreciated more than a historiographical satire or a propagandistic agenda. The *HA* in this sense presents a "truth" about the lives of the emperors that bears some similarity to the "truth" that pantomime embodies in the presentation of mythic figures and their performers.

In his 1997 biography of Gallienus, John Bray attempted to excavate some of this "truth" in the *HA* by looking beyond the author's motive in writing the text and seeing under the masking language a more enigmatic man than the *HA* cared to acknowledge. For Bray, Gallienus, aside from his innovative reforms of the military and the imperial administration, introduced a remarkably liberal "sexual politics" into the ancient world. The Emperor consulted with a "council of matrons"; he was deeply devoted to his wife, who accompanied him on campaigns, and they shared an enthusiasm for Greek philosophy; he nevertheless also loved at the same time a German (Marcomanni) princess, Pippara, whose integration into the imperial court enabled him to recruit the Marcomanni tribe to assist the Romans against the barbarian invasions; he allowed non-aristocratic women to socialize with persons of his own class at state banquets; he treated Queen Zenobia's attempt in 267 to secede from the Empire to create her own Palmyrene Empire as a lesser priority than repulsing German

invaders from Northern Italy (Bray 1997: 171-230). Bray asserts that Gallienus's approach to sexuality stemmed directly from his acutely theatrical sensibility, which in the distorted idiom of the *HA* translates as a "life spent with pimps and actors and jesters," even though he actually spent most of his life surrounded by military men (21.5). Then there is the curious matter of the coin issued (ca. 265-266) under Gallienus, which depicts his head in profile with his name inscribed in the feminine gender, "Galliena Augusta." MacCoull (1999) contends that the coin, which he says depicts the bearded Gallienus in a "feminine" manner (because of the hairstyle), inscribes a "bisexual" identity for the Emperor in that the purpose of the coin was to commemorate the victories of Odaenathus over the Persians by "visually representing" Gallienus as becoming "assimilated" to the sexually ambiguous Palmyrene goddess Allat, who was similar to the Roman goddess Minerva. According to Van den Hengel (2005) the emperor sought to reduce sexual difference to a single "masculine power" to absorb feminine otherness, and he rejects MacCoull's interpretation, arguing that the coin instead depicts the patriarchal authority of the Emperor to conquer sexual otherness, although if this was the point the coin was supposed to make it is hard to see why the government bothered to assign a feminine name to the emperor. Neither interpretation is satisfying, but it is quite a challenge to come up with better explanations. What is nevertheless evident from the coin is that the Emperor saw a political advantage in attaching a feminization of his name to his image, and this advantage intersects with the advantage of pantomime in representing imperial power: It is not so much that imperial power resides in the capacity of the emperor to reduce all sexual otherness to a single "masculine power." Rather, imperial power resides in the ideology of metamorphosis, which manifests itself most clearly in the ability of a body to change its sex and, from Gallienus's perspective, in the emperor's capacity to make what is feminine masculine and what is masculine feminine, like a pantomime.

The Emperor Aurelian (reigned 270-275) receives credit, as "Restitutor Orbis," for ending the Crisis and restoring the Empire to its pre-Crisis borders. He was a severe military man who spent most of his career leading campaigns against Rome's many enemies, but, like Gallienus, he understood the supreme value of spectacle as an emblem of imperial power. According to the *HA*, when Aurelian celebrated in a single triumph in Rome in 273 his victories over Zenobia and the barbarian invaders, he introduced

some astonishing theatrical effects: in addition to "two hundred tamed beasts of divers kinds from Libya and Palestine, the procession featured eight hundred pairs of gladiators, and the captives from the barbarian tribes," including Blemmyes, Axomitae, Arabs, Indians, Bactrians, Hiberians, Saracens, Persians, Egyptians, Goths, Alans, Roxolani, Sarmatians, Franks, Suebians, Franks, Germans, and Vandals, "all captive with their hands bound fast," and ten women, dressed as warriors, who "had been captured among the Goths after many others had fallen"; four opulent chariots, "adorned with gold and silver and jewels," led the procession, one of which displayed the captive Zenobia in "golden chains, the weight of which was borne by others," and this chariot she designed herself when she imagined herself entering Rome in triumph; Aurelian appeared in a chariot, pulled by four stags, that "once belonged to the King of the Goths"; "[t]hen came the Roman people itself, the flags of the guilds, the mailed cuirassiers, the wealth of the kings, the entire army, and, lastly, the senate" (*HA*, "The Deified Aurelian," 33-34; 1932: 258-262). Following this enormous triumph, Aurelian hosted several days of chariot races, plays, wild beasts hunts, and gladiatorial contests, as well as a naval battle (*HA*, "The Deified Aurelian," 34.3; 1932: 261-262). Aurelian was a man of austere tastes, who imposed regulations on the extent to which citizens could display wealth through their dress or gold or silver ornamentation, "but he took marvelous pleasure in actors [mimis]" (*HA*, "The Deified Aurelian," L.4; 1932: 292-293), which Crevier/Mill (1814: 175 [Crevier 1754: 108]) understood to mean as "Pantomimes were what pleased him most," which seems correct. Though he is most famous for his huge military and diplomatic victories, a curious feature of Aurelian's reign was his attention to dress codes and his willingness to incorporate innovations in attire:

> *He furthermore granted permission to commoners to have coaches adorned with silver, whereas they had previously had only carriages ornamented with bronze or ivory. He also allowed matrons to have tunics and other garments of purple, whereas they had had before only fabrics of changeable colours, or, as frequently, of a bright pink. He also was the first to allow private soldiers to have clasps of gold, whereas formerly they had had them of silver. He, too, was the first to give tunics having bands of embroidery to his troops, whereas previously they had received only straight-woven tunics of purple, and*

> *to some he presented tunics with one band, to others those having two bands or three bands and even up to five bands, like the tunics to-day made of linen* (*HA*, "The Deified Aurelian," 46.5-6; 1932: 285-287).

The evidence does not exist to connect these fashion details directly to Aurelian's enthusiasm for pantomime. What is nevertheless evident is that these innovations in fashion design indicate a desire on the part of citizens and soldiers to theatricalize and dramatize their appearances in public spaces, and such innovations arise from and lead to a more self-conscious way of moving and positioning one's self in relation to others within public spaces, a kind of imperial mode of movement, modeled ostensibly by the emperor himself. It is doubtful, however, that this self-consciousness could have emerged without guidance from the pantomime culture and from the influence of fashion-minded pantomime claques, because so many citizens and soldiers might never see the emperor and his circle very closely or often to gain sufficient knowledge of an imperial mode of movement that escaped representation in statues, mosaics, or coins, but they would see pantomimes project the mythic imperial image and movement as these gave "marvelous pleasure" to the emperor.

The salient point here is that pantomime stimulated innovations in public life, and, from the imperial perspective, achieved these innovations with the "permission" of the emperor. While triumphs were a feature of Roman culture long before the founding of the Empire, what made them exciting was not so much their power to connect audiences to a mighty sense of tradition and heritage but their power to immerse audiences in a monumental feeling of confidence about a new direction for Roman society. A triumph was a kind of augury of a great future, a prophetic message of great, liberating opportunities to come. But spectacles most persuasively proclaimed the advent of a new era when they themselves introduced memorable performance innovations. Thus, among other sensations, the Aurelian triumph featured four highly unusual chariots and a group of captive German women displayed as Amazons. When the Emperor Probus (276-282) celebrated his own victories over the Germans and the Blemmyae, he hosted, besides three hundred pairs of gladiators in the Coliseum, a wild beast hunt in the Circus in which he planted a forest of "great trees" uprooted from elsewhere; wild animals—"one thousand ostriches, one thousand stags and one thousand wild-boars, then deer, ibexes, wild sheep,

and other grass-eating beasts"—were supposed to roam through the forest while the "populace was then let in, and each man seized what he wished." Then Probus "brought out one hundred leopards from Libya, then one hundred from Syria, then one hundred lionesses and at the same time three hundred bears; all of which beasts, it is clear, made a spectacle more vast than enjoyable" (*HA*, "Probus," 19. 4-7; 1932: 376-378). The *HA* also remarks on the "novel spectacles" that the emperors Carus, Numerius, and Carinus introduced through the "series of games" that was "the most noteworthy event of [their] rule" (*HA*, "Carus, Carinus and Numerian," 19.1; 1932: 448-449). At these games was "exhibited a rope-walker, who in his buskins seemed to be walking on the winds, also a wall-climber, who, eluding a bear, ran up a wall, also some bears which acted a farce, and, besides, one hundred trumpeters who blew one single blast together, one hundred horn-blowers, one hundred flute-players, also one hundred flute-players who accompanied songs, one thousand pantomimists and gymnasts, moreover, a mechanical scaffold, which, however, burst into flames and burned up the stage — though this Diocletian later restored on a more magnificent scale" (*HA*, "Carus, Carinus and Numerian," 19.2; 1932: 448-449), although probably most of this description is a fantasia of exaggeration. One thousand "pantomimists and gymnasts"? It is hard to imagine how such a huge ensemble could perform other than as mass choreography involving elaborate coordination of manifold stunts and dance movements. But such coordination would also entail considerable planning and rehearsal, as well as recruitment of performers; the term "pantomimists" must refer to persons attached to pantomime ensembles or to acrobatically talented amateurs invited to participate in the games, for even New York City today, with its immense, year long performing arts schedule, probably does not provide enough performance opportunities to sustain five hundred professional dancers. Nevertheless, what the *HA* strives to emphasize is that the future of Rome is bigger and stranger spectacles, that managers and performers of shows exert inordinate influence over the public and emperors, and that "future givers of spectacles may be touched by a sense of shame and so be deterred from cutting off their lawful heirs and squandering their inheritances on actors and mountebanks" (*HA*, "Carus, Carinus and Numerian," 21.1; 1932: 450-451). The emperors awarded "Greek artists and gymnasts and actors and musicians both gold and silver and they bestowed on them also garments of silk" (*HA*, "Carus, Carinus and

Numerian," 21.1; 1932: 450-451); Carinus "filled the Palace with actors and harlots, pantomimists, singers and pimps" (*HA*, "Carus, Carinus and Numerian," 21.1; 1932: 450-451); the aristocrat Junius Messalla provokes contempt because he "cut off his natural heirs and bestowed his ancestral fortune on players, giving a tunic of his mother's to an actress and a cloak of his father's to an actor," and he obtained luxurious costumes of "such splendour as never before was seen on the stage" (*HA*, "Carus, Carinus and Numerian," 20.4-6; 1932: 450-451). The reign (282-285) of the Emperor Carinus, despite success against another wave of German invaders, was especially odious because his enthusiasm for theater people and luxurious garments somehow grossly strengthened his appetite for homosexual pleasures, "unwonted vices and inordinate depravity" (*HA*, "Carus, Carinus and Numerian," 16.2; 1932: 440-441). Zonastras, Eutropius, and Victor do not bother to mention such details related to imperial governance. But even if the *HA* exaggerates or fabricates the details, it is evident that the author, ending his account of the emperors from what feels like a senatorial perspective, sees spectacles as doing more than proclaiming or symbolizing a new direction for the Empire: they are, for the emperors and the public, the most powerful *fulfillment* of any vision of the future.

The Merging of the Pantomime and Chariot Racing Factions

Most of Alan Cameron's 1976 book about the circus factions deals with the fifth and sixth centuries. He does not assign a specific date for the merger of the pantomime and circus factions, but he does suggest that a prefect or general superintendent for "actors and charioteers" existed "as early as 362," under Emperor Julian (1976: 220), which the Theodosian Code (6.4.13) apparently affirms from a cryptic decree of 361: "Out of the three praetors who, being formally designated, are wont to produce a show, three are to devote themselves to the needs of the show and the pleasures of the people, while two are to provide the funds to be available in sufficient amount for the workshops of the said city" (Csapo 1995: 330). I have presented evidence to propose that imperial consolidation of pantomime and hippodrome entertainments took place much earlier, during the Crisis, although the path toward consolidation had begun even earlier, with Verus, and assumed some kind of enlarged administrative status with the Secular Games of 204, which entailed a complex coordination and scheduling of

entertainments sponsored by the emperor. Charlotte Roueché doubts that the emperors ever achieved total control over the public entertainment apparatus, which she contends received "provision from other sources even into the sixth century" (Roueché 1993: 46, also 49-60).

But while the emperors began coordinating the scheduling of pantomime entertainments with other forms of imperially sponsored spectacles in the third century, the attachment of pantomimes to circus entertainments probably did not occur until well into the fourth century, and probably also occurred only in particular areas of the Empire. Chariot racing and its basic "rules" have their origins of course in ancient Greek and Etruscan cultures, but it was the emperors, starting with Julius Caesar, who saw in the sport an effective instrument for dramatizing the emperor's relation to his subjects and for institutionalizing the idea (or myth, perhaps) of Victory achieved through intense competition between talented contestants as the dominant sign of a powerful civilization and its people. Innovations in hippodrome entertainments came almost entirely from emperors, as Humphrey has explained (1986: 73-82, 102-106, 126-131, 635-638). Emperors transformed an informal sport into a grandiose emblem of imperial power; they introduced the monumental architecture of the Circus Maximus, which became the model for subsequent large-scale hippodromes throughout the Empire; and they shaped the concept of the Circus as a vast monument to imperial power. Under imperial initiative, hippodrome construction expanded, especially after the beginning of the third century in North Africa, the Eastern Empire, and Spain; Gaul and Britain show far less development of the sport, at least based on archeological evidence, although a sophisticated hippodrome operated near Trier (Humphrey 1986: 295ff.). Hippodromes developed in relation to imperial residences in various cities and in relation to the residences of high officials in the government. As with the Circus Maximus, hippodromes appeared in close proximity to the emperor's residence to show that the stadium functioned as an extension of the emperor's personal living space. Trajan introduced around 103 the idea of putting the *pulvinar* or imperial box "at the same absolute elevation as the people, so that they could see him as well as he could see them" (Humphrey 1986: 80), whereas previously the emperor viewed the race from a highly elevated *pulvinar* or even more remote distance, although it is not clear if subsequent emperors followed Trajan's example. The organization of races and teams was the work of men, investors, closely

affiliated with the upper levels of the imperial government and its offices. Men invested in chariot teams as a measure of their status and access to power rather than as the basis for developing a constituency or political power base. Winning chariot races could secure very lucrative prizes for drivers and teams, but so many variables shaped the winning of a race that it was not easy to predict the winner of a race on the basis of the horses or the driver.

The Libyan-born charioteer Porphyrius (480-ca. 540) achieved huge fame for winning so many races, even winning races for opposing factions on the same day, which at least demonstrated that the race was not about which horses were superior to their competitors. But Porphyrius was able to win for two opposing teams (factions) on the same day (*diversium*) only twice in his career, and was the only charioteer to achieve this peculiar feat, which suggests that no matter how skillful the driver, the outcome of a race was far from predictable. Possibly the noise of the factions could contribute to the winning of a race. However, only a few major cities—Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Carthage, perhaps Milan—maintained circus factions; none operated in the hippodromes of Greece, according to Humphrey (1986: 441), and he further contends that the construction of hippodromes in the East preceded the introduction of factions (1986: 439). The monumental circuses of Rome, Constantinople, and Antioch could accommodate, respectively, 150,000, 100,000, and 80,000 spectators, while Cameron (1976: 311) observes that a faction contained "at best a thousand or two." With each racing day containing from 12 to 25 races and with each race involving seven long laps, it is difficult to believe that any faction in itself could maintain the vocal energy to spur their horses and drivers to victory throughout the long day, especially if the factions had to compete with each other to achieve that goal. Moreover, Pliny the Younger contended (ca. 80 CE) that members of factions did not care so much about horses and drivers as they cared about the color of their faction, for horses and drivers could switch colors even on the same day: "If, indeed, they were attracted by the swiftness of the horses or the skill of the men, one could account for this enthusiasm. But in fact it is a bit of cloth they favour, a bit of cloth that captivates them. And if during the running the racers were to exchange colours, their partisans would change sides, and instantly forsake the very drivers and horses whom they were just before recognizing from afar, and clamorously saluting by name" (*Letters* 9.6; 1915: 185). Cameron

argues that the factions did not represent the "voice of the crowd" or any popular constituency (1976: 293), although that does not mean that they lacked considerable political significance. Indeed, as Cameron has explained, the hippodrome factions were fairly tame and inauspicious until, in the fourth century, the emperors began to assign pantomimes to circus factions and merged the pantomime factions with the circus factions. It is therefore not altogether clear what the function of the hippodrome factions was other than to serve as social clubs, and this uncertainty probably contributed to the decision of the emperors to assign pantomimes and their more volatile factions to the hippodrome factions, in the belief that pantomimes could engage audiences more emotionally in the total hippodrome experience, especially when it was so difficult to predict the outcome of races and determine betting odds. Pantomimes constructed the impression that "the total hippodrome experience" was much larger than a contest between teams of horses. It was about how the competitive conditions of Victory or Fortune depended as much on the excitement of spectators, the public as a whole, as on the favor of the gods, as symbolized by statues of the son-god (Apollo) or obelisks on the *spina,* or on the strength of horses or the unique skills of drivers. The outcome of "the total hippodrome experience" had to be of direct benefit to the spectator, regardless of who won the races, and one benefit was to *move* with excitement in response to urgings from pantomimes to compete with other sections of the audience as a whole to claim the attention of the entire crowd and the emperor. At the same time, the emperor presided over this vast spectacle as a detached, god-like figure whose attachment to any faction was variable, never fixed, so that he could intervene "fairly" in resolving the disputes, sometimes quite violent, that arose between factions when the pantomimes became fixtures of hippodrome entertainment. In a sense, pantomimes made the movements or noise of sections of the crowd, not just a faction, surge with intimations of victory or good fortune that, through imperial favor or mediation, could befall those so deeply stirred, inspired, or awakened by the spectacle of imperial generosity.

The circus never had more than four factions—only the Blues, the Greens, the Reds, and the Whites—and these names for the factions long preceded the establishment of the Empire; John Malalas (ca. 491-578), writing around 535, even claimed that the four factions date from the time of Romulus (Malalas 1831: 176). When the emperors assigned pantomimes

and their factions to the circus, they did not create new factions. The old factions remained, with the pantomime factions absorbed or subsumed under the circus factions. The Reds and the Whites never appear to have been as strong, at least in the major cities, as the Blues and the Greens, in terms of numbers and involvement in often violent activities beyond the hippodrome, and Cameron suggests that the Reds and the Whites functioned, in the major cities, as shifting subsidiaries or adjuncts of the Blues and Greens (1976: 61-68), presumably to create greater competition between teams and greater uncertainty about the outcome of races. He further contends that the factions did not represent larger political aspirations or sentiments circulating within sectors of the population as a whole: "The circus factions deserve no prominent mention in any history of popular expression" (1976: 311). Some scholars challenge Cameron's position. Michael Whitby (1999) has argued that the factions were fronts designed to protect the elite aristocrats who subsidized them: the factions functioned somewhat like organized crime syndicates that, at the behest of elites, engaged in clandestine illegal activities profitable to their sponsors in return for some measure of immunity from prosecution achieved through the influence of the elites. However, it is not clear what sort of illegal activities necessitated over many decades the sponsorship of publically flamboyant hippodrome clubs as disguises for corruption or why elites would "tolerate" the rioting of factions as a way to intimidate emperors in relation to a policy or action over which they otherwise had no "influence" or why it was necessary to have at least two factions, so often hostile to each other, to achieve this goal. Liebeschuetz (2001: 251ff.) proposes that the factions operated as lobbies for public political sentiments as the imperial government centralized bureaucracy and limited local access to levers of power; the hippodrome was the primary and possibly even exclusive public zone in which the emperor interfaced with the public. But the issues that require such lobbying remain obscure as do the differences between the factions in determining which public sentiments they would "represent" in lieu of official representation. Citing religious sources, Bryk (2012) suggests that the factions may have represented religious affiliations (Greens: Monophysites; Blues: Chalcedonians), while Parnell (2013) proposes that the factions functioned somewhat like political parties that voiced popular discontent with imperial decisions or social decay. Roberto (2010) contends that the factions were imperial auxiliaries that served to keep social

discontent distracted or stifled (although it is not clear, then, why the emperor would need more than one faction); they were powerful enough to make or break emperors, as supposedly demonstrated by the role of the Greens and Blues in unmaking and making the emperors Phocas (602-610) and Heraclius (610-641) or threatening the emperors Anastasius and Justinian (in relation to the Nika riot of 532). The evidence for these theories of faction function comes largely from the sixth and seventh centuries. In 502, however, Emperor Anastasius (491-518) banned pantomimes from the hippodrome in Constantinople and possibly from hippodromes elsewhere in the Empire, as a result of factional rioting in 501 connected to the Brytae festivals, in which 3000 people died (John of Antioch, frag. 309; Malalas 1986: 222 [*Excerpta de insidiis* 39]; Joshua the Stylite, 46.1; Marcellinus Comes (501) VIIII). The scope of Anastasius's ban is unclear. Joshua the Stylite says the Emperor decreed that, "the dancers should not dance any more, not even in a single city throughout his empire." But the Malalas *Chronicle* says that the Emperor exiled the four dancers attached to the four factions. Brooks (1911: 484) contended that the Emperor banned the dancers as a result of Green-instigated disturbances provoked by the Brytae festival. Nicks (1998: 247-256) contends that Anastasius banned the pantomimes in an effort to drain the power of factions to cause social disorder, with the Green faction, a strong supporter of the Brytae festival, the chief culprit in the instigation of public violence. Greatrex and Watt (1999: 3) assert that the Brytae riot led to the "wholesale abolition of pantomime dancing." Anastasius had banned *venationes* in 498, presumably as part of his vigorous effort to reduce state expenditures and taxes (Bomgardner 2002: 219; Meier 2009: 225-229), so perhaps the 501 riot was an excuse to reduce state expenses in regard to theatrical entertainments, which can hardly have pleased the factions, even if Anastasius's tax reduction schemes were popular with the public as a whole. But Greatrex and Watt contend that Christian morality shaped the suppression of the orgiastic Brytae festival, which involved nude and apparently nocturnal swimming by the dancers in the pool provided by the theater orchestra, especially when this festival is linked elsewhere in the Empire to the Maiuma festival, which also experienced periodic suppression since the late fourth century (1999: 17-19).

In any case, Procopius describes the lascivious theatrical performances of the Empress Theodora in her youth, and these occurred

after the ban on pantomimes or Brytae dancers, when Theodora was only about one year old. Her father, Acacius, was the "keeper of wild beasts" for the Greens, but Procopius says the beasts "were used in the amphitheater in Constantinople," not the hippodrome, so it seems that the Greens maintained a kind of circus that put on performances in the amphitheater without killing the animals as in the *venationes* (see Meier 2009: 228). Furthermore, Procopius says that when Acacius died, his wife requested that the pantomime for the Greens, Asterius, make her new husband the keeper of wild beasts, because "the dancing masters had the power of distributing such positions as they wished." But Asterius had accepted a bribe to hire another man for the job. Theodora's mother then presented her daughters in the amphitheater "in the attitude of suppliants." The Greens remained unmoved, but the Blues decided to "bestow on the children an equal office, since their own animal-keeper had just died" (9.2-7; 1927: 98-99). This passage makes clear that after Anastasius's ban of 501, pantomimes continued, during Anastasius's reign, to have close connections with the factions, but not apparently in the hippodromes, and to hold important offices, now paid probably by the factions instead of the state. Procopius designates Theodora as a mime, a comedienne, a performer of pornographic skits, "for she was not a flute or harp player, nor was she even trained to dance" (1927: 100). But then he describes her apparently public performance ("in sight of all the people") of Leda and the Swan, which with its mythological theme and pornographic choreography, aligns with the pantomime aesthetic. Procopius constructs a rather blurry image of Byzantine theater when Theodora performed: theater people seem integrated with amphitheater circus spectacles involving animals; actors project hybrid identities, neither mimes nor pantomimes but perhaps something like revue performers; the pantomimes, "the dancing masters," exert power in the amphitheater but no longer have any relation to the hippodrome; both the animal circus and the theater apparently operate through the factions and the state is no longer the controlling sponsor of these entertainments. The blurry image of theater was the result of factions and performers attempting to comply with Anastasius's ban while maintaining, within their talents and resources, opportunities to entertain large audiences and uphold the complex social network provided by the factions. After 501, pantomimes ceased to have any connection with the hippodromes in the East; nevertheless, the factions continued to engage in

violent activities; in 507, when in Antioch, the Green faction, incited by the champion charioteer Porphyrios, attacked a synagogue and killed many Jews, because the Jews tended to favor the Blues (Malalas 1986: 222-223; Van der Horst 2006: 55-57); in 512 in Constantinople, the factions again rioted, possibly in relation to conflicts between Blue and Green partisans of the Nestorian and Monophysite doctrines (Malalas 1986: 225), and then again in 514 when Anastasius closed the hippodrome while dealing with the insurrection of Vitalian.

Then in 520, early in the reign of Emperor Justin (518-527), the hippodrome in Constantinople was again the site of factional violence: "When the chariot races had been held, the faction members created a disturbance in the afternoon. The soldiers came out and killed many of them," after which, amazingly, "the factions were reconciled, while the prefect Theodoros was watching the afternoon session, and both left the hippodrome, joining in revelry. The next day they assembled in the hippodrome and asked the emperor to watch the races, and the factions chanted requests for dancers. The Greens called for Karamallos, the Blues for a certain Porphyrios from Alexandria, the Reds and Whites for their favourites. The emperor granted each faction what it asked for. After this they rushed with their cloaks through the city and the hippodrome, and paraded in celebration over nearly all the city. Members of the factions joined together and dragged around some of the riff-raff [...] and threw them into the sea" (Malalas 1986: 232-233 [*Excerpta de insidiis* 43]). However, it is not clear if Justin restored the pantomimes to the hippodrome or if he restored the pantomimes to the factions for use in the amphitheater and in theater ensembles operated by the factions, if, under Anastasius, the factions had lost their pantomimes because of earlier disturbances. Though the request for the pantomimes came in the hippodrome, an imperial institution, it occurred the day after the races, so it is likely that the Emperor and the factions treated the occasion as a matter of a general petition rather than as a hippodrome-specific agenda. After 501, pantomimes receive no mention from historical sources in connection with violence perpetrated by the factions or in relation to the hippodrome. Marcellinus Comes mentions that in 521, Justinian, then Consul for the East, "published his generosity" by sponsoring lavish "spectacles" and "machine shows" involving numerous wild beasts and decorated horses, but he makes no reference to pantomimes or actors or

dancers (*Chronicon* 521, XIIII. Justiniani et Valerii). Further violence by the factions occurred in 522-525, instigated by the Blues, who "rioted in all the cities of the east, attacking officials in every city," although the motive for the disturbancs remains obscure (Malalas, 17.12. 27-30; cf. Main 2013: 15-20). In 525, Justin enacted a law that allowed a man of senatorial rank to marry a courtesan who had repudiated her morally dubious way of life. The law enabled Justinian to marry Theodora (Procopius 1927: 110), but it is not clear if the law had any application beyond this one instance, and it may have been enacted in conjunction with another decree issued the same year, ostensibly in response to disturbances caused by the Blues in Antioch, that "prohibited spectacles" and banished "all dancers throughout the East," except Alexandria (Malalas 1986: 236). It may be that, as a condition for passing the marriage law, Justinian and Theodora agreed to eliminate any further possibility of women from theatrical backgrounds becoming members of the senatorial class, which meant eliminating from existence an entire category of professionals, although why Alexandria should remain exempt from the decree is somewhat obscure: it was probably the place to which "all the dancers" were banished; it was also where Theodora embraced the Monophysite doctrines that released her from the world of theater and prostitution.

On January 13, 532, the infamous Nika riot took place in Constantinople, the most destructive event in the history of factional violence. The rioting began in the hippodrome, during races, when both Blues and Greens pleaded with Justinian to "show mercy" regarding members of their factions whom the city prefect had condemned for crimes. When the races concluded without any response from the Emperor, the factions united and began rampaging throughout the city, setting fires and attacking the prefect's office. Rioting continued for five days as the factions collaborated to overthrow Justinian and install a new emperor. The insurrection came to an end when Belisarius, with a force of Heruli soldiers at his command, laid siege to the rioters gathered in the hippodrome and slaughtered them all, perhaps as many as 30,000 (Malalas 1986: 275-281; Procopius 1914: 219-230). No account of the event mentions the involvement of pantomimes or dancers, nearly all of whom, presumably, worked then in Alexandria. However, as a former pantomime, the Empress Theodora's motive for urging Justinian to crush the rebellion rather than flee is fundamental in understanding the destruction of pantomime culture in the

East. She was probably instrumental in getting Narses to bribe some members of the Blues to turn against the Greens. Theodora realized that her own ambitions as well as her husband's remained stunted as long as the factions resisted imperial efforts to control them and their sense of impunity before the law. She also understood that the power of the factions depended in large measure on their provision of hybrid spectacles and "dancers" in the factional networks of theaters and amphitheaters throughout the Empire—that is, on the sex industry that operated in conjunction with the entertainments and from which Theodora herself came. In spite of the 501 and 525 bans on dancers and spectacles, the factions managed to perpetuate their unsavory and often criminal enterprises; Procopius devotes an entire chapter (VII) to chronicling the criminal activities of the factions with special attention to the "outrages" of the Blues, supposedly favored by the detested Theodora. The factions by 532 were looking for an emperor who "owed" them more than Theodora or Justinian cared to acknowledge. Theodora's power depended on acknowledging what she "owed" to a larger public constituency than whatever small sector of the public the factions purported to represent. Her credibility as an empress rested on her ability to embody the power of Christianity to bring about her "metamorphosis" from courtesan-actress to imperial wife, especially if she was to act as protector of the controversial Monophysites, whom she credited for her salvation and repudiation of her immoral life. At the time of the Nika riot, it was necessary, from the imperial perspective, to show the complete triumph of the Christian idea of metamorphosis over the old, orgiastic, libidinous idea of metamorphosis attached to the seductive movement of bodies. That triumph entailed the destruction of the factions. Justinian immediately set about rebuilding the city destroyed in the rioting, but it took a number of years to rebuild the factions and even to restore the chariot races. In the East, however, pantomime was extinct. It had largely disappeared before the Nika riot, not because it had lost its audience, but because it was too costly, financially, politically, and morally, to sustain. After the riot, no one thought it was even possible for it to come back. In her personality and life story, Theodora most dramatically incarnated or "performed" this ideological shift in the way people in a now less ancient world thought about the transformation of their identities. It was not an irony that a former pantomime incarnated this shift; rather, her incarnation of "metamorphosis" was so powerful, so

capable of shaping reality, that theatrical representations of it were no longer necessary.

Pantomime in Gothic Italy

In the Western Empire, a murkier fate befell pantomime culture, which seemed to thrive at least in Italy as long as the Goths controlled the region from their capital in Ravenna. According to the historian Cassiodorus (ca. 485-585), Theodoric, King of the Goths in Italy from 493 to 526, in a letter to his minister Speciosus in 509, remarks that senators should not bother to respond to insults heaped upon them by raucous circus spectators: "For where shall we look for moderation, if violence stains the Patricians? [...] [Y]ou must distinguish between deliberate insolence and the licence of the theater. Who expects seriousness of character at the spectacles? It is not exactly a congregation of Catos that comes together at the spectacles. The place excuses some excesses. And besides it is the *beaten* party that vents its rage in insulting cries. Do not let the Patricians clamour what is really the result of a victory for their own side, which they greatly desired" (*Variae* I.27; Cassiodorus 1894: 29; Cassiodorus 1886: 159-160). In the same year, Theodoric addressed his officers Albinus and Albienus, as well as "illustrious men and patricians," regarding a "Petition of the Green party [informing] us that they are oppressed and that the factions of the circus are fatal to public tranquility" (Cassiodorus, *Variae*, I.20; Cassiodorus 1894: 25). He therefore instructs his audience "to assume patronage of the Green party, which our father of glorious memory paid for." (Hodgkin, in Cassiodorus 1886: 155, thinks Theodoric "alludes to Theodoric's adoption by Zeno.") Theodoric then instructs: "So let the spectators be assembled, and let them choose between Helladius and Theodorus which is fittest to be Pantomimist of the Greens, whose salary we will pay" (Cassiodorus 1886: 155-156). Then the Emperor makes a very mysterious remark that Hodgkin does not include in his translation of the address: "For this is what I would call the higher level of music, namely the hands speak for the closed mouth, making something understood by gestures that are scarcely recognizable in texts or scriptures." ("*Hanc partem musicae disciplinae mutam nominavere maiores, scilicet quae ore clauso manibus loquitur et quibusdam gesticulationibus facit intellegi, quod vix narrante lingua aut scripturae textu possit agnosci*.") Theodoric's enthusiasm for pantomimes may have resulted from his lack of confidence in using Latin; Hodgkin says he was illiterate or

at least "unable to speak or write Latin with fluency" (Cassiodorus 1886, 15; Hodgkin 1891: 145). As the chief legal counsel for the Emperor, Cassiodorus actually wrote the memos, letters, and addresses ascribed to Theodoric, which probably explains why Cassiodorus felt it was important to include Theodoric's cryptic but otherwise irrelevant (or "digressive," as Hodgkin puts it) remark about the skill of pantomimes to make clear what texts make "scarcely recognizable." Indeed, in a letter to a patrician, Symmachus, from around 511, Theodoric praises the grandeur of theater in ancient times and Symmachus for his efforts to restore glory to theaters near Rome. While the Emperor remarks that the "respectable arts" of ancient Greece "gradually withdrew their association with modesty," the panegyric contains a large paragraph on pantomime, which has superseded the Tragedy and Comedy of Greek invention:

> *To these were added the speaking hands of dancers, their fingers, their clamorous silence, their silent exposition. The Muse Polymnia is this, showing that humans could declare their meaning even without speech. Human Muses, according to the Greeks, are virtues to each other. Light and pointed feathers are on the foreheads [of pantomimes]since their perceptions are swift thoughts of the loftiest matters. The pantomime actor, who derives his name from manifold imitations as soon as he comes on stage, is lured by the ensemble of musicians, skilled in various instruments. Then the hand of meaning expounds the song, and, by the eyes of melody, as if by letters, it instructs the spectator's sight, in the essence of things, declaring not by writing what is written. The same body portrays Hercules and Venus, of a woman in the sea, the king and a soldier; it renders an old man and a young, imagines that in one there are many in such a variety of impersonations* (*Variae* IV.51; Cassiodorus 1894: 138).

The attitude toward spectacles and pantomime disclosed in these documents of the *Variae* are clearly different from the darkening mood of suspicion and suppression toward factions and theater in the imperial court of Constantinople, where the struggle for control over Christian religious dogma and instituions was perhaps more intense than in Ravenna. Theodoric, like most Goths, was an Arian who nevertheless pursued a policy of toleration toward his largely non-Gothic, Nicene/Catholic subjects in

Italy. It seems that in regions of the Western Empire controlled by Germanic kings adhering to Arianism pantomime was able to thrive. Arianism, which postulated that Jesus was a human subordinate to God rather than equal to God in the Trinity, appealed to the Germans because they converted to Christianity through the teachings of the Cappodocian Greek bishop Ulfilas (311-383), who translated the Bible into Gothic and was an adherent of the Arian creed; in his youth he had been a prisoner of the Goths (Hodgkin 1891: 179). A further feature of Arianism that made it controversial was that it did not stigmatize its followers if they referred in a positive manner to pagan gods and goddesses. In his letter to Symmachus, Theodoric invokes Polymnia, the goddess of sacred music and dance, who assumes some responsibility for the "virtue" of "showing that humans could declare their meaning even without speech," and he indicates delight that in pantomime performance the "same body performs Hercules and Venus." However, in the same letter, he also observes that "the succeeding age" (presumably the period when the theaters Symmachus repaired fell into decay—that is, the fourth century) "corrupted the inventions of the ancients by mingling obscenties, so that pleasure was found by driving minds recklessly toward bodily lusts," a phenomenon that "the Romans uselessly imported." The passage vaguely insinuates that the era of intense eroticism in pantomime is over now that distinguished patricians like Symmachus are restoring glory to theaters, or it may be that Theodoric is implying that pantomime in the Gothic Kingdom no longer embodies the hyper-eroticism of pantomime in the Eastern Empire and therefore does not deserve the fanatical denunciation of it that it receives from the clergy in the East. Theodoric always sought to maintain harmonious relations between Arians and Catholics, and in his rhetoric and policies, abundantly documented in the *Variae*, he actively and sometimes forcefully discouraged fanatical clergy from exercising influence he regarded as excessive or subversive.

When he died in 526, the Gothic Kingdom began to disintegrate. His grandson, Athalaric (516-534), succeeded him, but because he was only ten years old, his mother, Amalasuntha (495-535), became queen regent. Under her, Ravenna remained the capital of the Gothic kingdom. Like her father, Amalasuntha sought to create a synthesis of Gothic and Roman culture that would provide a powerful alternative to the elaborately mysterious, Greek-dominated bureaucracy of the Eastern Empire. Amalasuntha tried to

educate her son to embody refined Roman qualities, but the Gothic nobility were deeply suspicious of a woman as their leader, and she was unable to prevent Athalaric from capitulating, fatally, to the violent excesses of the Gothic warrior elite. As regent, she was the author of many, perhaps most, letters ostensibly signed by Athalaric. In a letter to the Senate in Rome, written around 533, Athalaric complained that teachers of grammar and rhetoric in Rome had not received sufficient or even any compensation for their work, and he commanded the Senate to correct the injustice: "For, if I bestow my wealth on actors for the pleasure of the people, and men who are not thought so essential are meticulously paid, how much more should payment be made without delay to those through whom good morals are advanced, and the talent of eloquence is nurtured to serve my palace!" (Cassiodorus IX, 21; Vitiello 2017: 52). Even if she did not have a high regard for the pantomimes, Amalasuntha nevertheless saw them as worthy of subsidy and an important element in her ambition to assimilate the Goths into Roman culture. With the death of Athalaric, however, she found herself surrounded by enemies in the Gothic aristocracy. She consequently planned to move to Constantinople with the Gothic treasury, but Gothic nobles intercepted her, imprisoned her at Lake Bolseno, then assassinated her in her bath (Jordanes, *Gothic War* LIX; Procopius, *Secret History* 16; Cassiodorus, *Variae*, X; Bury 1958 [1889]: 159-166). In her murder, Justinian had an excellent justification for launching the Gothic War that decimated the Gothic Kingdom and restored Italy to Byzantine rule. The end of Gothic rule meant the end of Arianism in Italy and the complete triumph of the Nicene doctrine that dominated the imperial court in Constantinople and the Eastern Empire. The spectacular mosaics of Justinian and Theodora, completed in 547 in the Basilica San Vitale in Ravenna, dramatically symbolize the triumph of the Byzantine Christian world view in Italy, which spelled the end of pantomime culture in Italy and probably elsewhere in the West, as it was now evident that Arianism had weakened its followers. In any case, after Cassiodorus, references to pantomime cease to appear in the historical record. Even the clergy falls silent in regard to a dangerous art that has now vanished. But it is also clear that pantomime did not vanish in the West because it had lost its audience or lacked relevance in a new political environment. It vanished because, unlike Amalasuntha, neither the Gothic aristocracy in Italy nor the Imperial Byzantine government saw pantomime as useful in reconciling their differences.

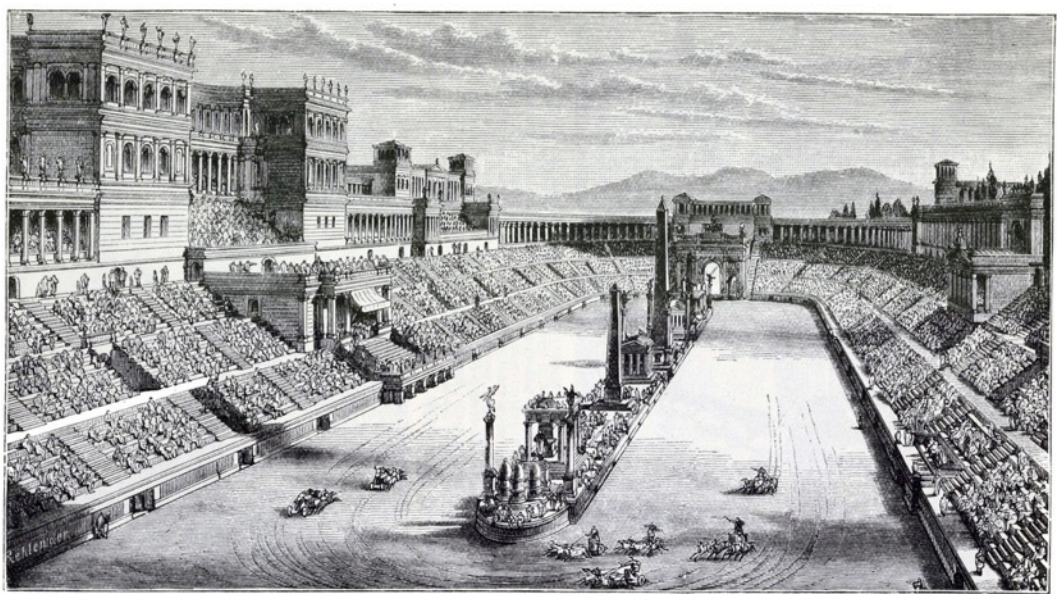


Figure 55: Nineteenth century engraving of the Hippodrome, Rome, with *pulvinar* (*kathismа*) on the left.

Pantomime in the Hippodrome

Chariot racing and its factions continued in Constantinople and possibly a few other cities in the East until the early eleventh century, immune, apparently to the Church's condemnation of all pagan entertainments (Cameron 1976: 297-308). However, without the pantomimes attached to it, chariot racing never recovered the cultural-political importance it enjoyed in the Roman Empire even before the integration with the pantomimes. Indeed, after the fall of the Gothic Kingdom, chariot racing seems to have disappeared altogether from Italy and probably from the regions in the West as well as North Africa. What made the performances of the pantomimes in the hippodromes so exciting and so capable of stirring up disruptive emotions in audiences? One cannot answer this question without becoming entangled in a great deal of speculation, because of the paucity of evidence regarding pantomime performance in the hippodrome. It is necessary to examine the structure of hippodrome races to identify the opportunities for pantomime activities. An afternoon in the hippodrome involved 12 to 24 races. Each race involved seven laps. Each lap in the Circus Maximus in Rome was about a mile altogether, so each race probably lasted about 11 minutes, if chariots

averaged about 40 miles per hour, and although this circus served as model for circuses elsewhere in the Empire, many circuses outside Rome were smaller. Prior to the first race, a great procession entered the circus through the *carcares* (starting gates) and proceeded counter clockwise once around the *spina*, returning to the starting gates. The procession probably usually included the following: a set of female dancers, a set of musicians (trumpeters and aulos players), a group of officials responsible for organizing the circus, sponsoring the factions, and managing the chariot teams, and the teams themselves. The teams would at best only number as many as the number of drivers available to drive them, for in an afternoon at the circus, there would be more teams than drivers, who participated in more than one race and drove more than one team. It is not clear where or if the pantomimes appeared in the procession. If they did participate in the procession, they probably marched with the colors and banners representing each team and faction. It is more likely that the factions themselves did not participate in the procession but merely sat in their designated sections of the stadium, from where they could cheer the passage of their teams and faction standards. Madigan's discussion (2012: 42-43) of processions related to *ludi Romani* suggests that in the circus the procession paused at the shrine or shrines on the *spina* to make ritual gestures of "thanksgiving for victory": "Statues of the gods and *exuviae*—their robes, attributes and perhaps masks—were brought into the Circus on *fercula* (stretchers) and *tensae* (carriages) respectively" (Humphrey 1986: 78; Brown 1915: 17). The procession on occasion could be even more spectacular with the display of silver statues, festooned elephants, and luxurious litters and carriages carrying senatorial figures. The order in which procession participants appeared does not seem to have followed any rule or convention, and the evidence suggests that procession organizers enjoyed some freedom to improvise in relation to the resources available to them. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (ca. 60 BCE-7 BCE), writing in the early years of the Empire, describes a procession from the Forum into the Circus Maximus in ancient times: "Those who led the procession were, first, the Romans' sons who were nearing manhood and were of an age to bear a part in this ceremony, who rode on horseback if their fathers were entitled by their fortunes to be knights, while the others, who were destined to serve in the infantry, went on foot, the former in squadrons and troops, and the latter in divisions and companies, as if they were going to school; this was

done in order that strangers might see the number and beauty of the youths of the commonwealth who were approaching manhood" (*Roman Antiquities* VII, 72; Dionysius of Halicarnassus 1940: 361-363). But this level of participation by the aristocracy in the procession occurred only rarely and only in relation to momentous occasions in which the emperor was in attendance to commemorate a major victory. In Rome and Constantinople, a shrine stood on the *spina* directly before the emperor's box, the *pulvinar* (*kathisma* in the East), so the appropriate officials would make gestures of thanksgiving to both the god and the emperor [Figure 55]. The emperor was not in the procession; he reached the *pulvinar* through a special route that directly linked the stadium with the imperial palace. The exact location of the *pulvinar* is not certain, although it is possible that when Trajan renovated the Circus Maximus built by Augustus he moved the *pulvinar* from a high elevation in the stadium to a position nearer the track itself so that it was easier for the audience to see the emperor (Humphrey 1986: 80-81). In Rome, chariot racing could occur up to 66 days in a year (Kyle 2007: 304). It is very doubtful that the emperor would or even could attend every day races were given; it is also doubtful that the procession for each racing day, even in Rome or Constantinople, involved as much display of grandeur or luxury as appears from historical accounts. To produce a distinctive, grandiose procession every week for a year is a logistical nightmare. Most processions, especially away from the imperial capitals, were probably exciting without relying on spectacular emblems of luxury and splendor. A papyrus from Egypt, dated about 552, lists a circus program, presumably for a racing day in Oxyrhynchus, in which the procession *follows* the first race (*Oxyrhynchus* 2707*)*. The procession was perhaps exciting to the extent that dancers moved in different, intriguing ways each day they participated. Dionysius of Halicarnassus describes the movements of dancers in a monumental procession:

> *The contestants were followed by numerous bands of dancers arranged in three divisions, the first consisting of men, the second of youths, and the third of boys. These were accompanied by flute-players, who used ancient flutes that were small and short, as is done even to this day, and by lyre-players, who plucked ivory lyres of seven strings and the instruments called* barbita*. The use of these has ceased in my time among the Greeks, though traditional with them, but is preserved by*

> *the Romans in all their ancient sacrificial ceremonies. The dancers were dressed in scarlet tunics girded with bronze cinctures, wore swords suspended at their sides, and carried spears of shorter than average length; the men also had bronze helmets adorned with conspicuous crests and plumes. Each group was led by one man who gave the figures of the dance to the rest, taking the lead in representing their warlike and rapid movements, usually in the proceleusmatic rhythms* (*Roman Antiquities* VII, 72; 1940: 365-367).

The author, himself a Greek, then explains that these "proceleusmatic rhythms" invoke "the armed dance called the Pyrrhic," which arises from "a very ancient Greek institution," and he quotes passages from Homer about dance that he associates with the heroic Roman motivation to appropriate Greek mythology into the processional ritual of pleasing the gods. Following the dancers were bands of men "impersonating satyrs and portraying the Greek dance called *sicinnis* [Sileni]," which "mocked and mimicked the serious movements of the others, turning them into laughter-provoking performances," which Dionysius claims is "an ancient practice native to the Romans." Then:

> *After these bands of dancers came a throng of lyre-players and many flute-players, and after them the persons who carried the censers in which perfumes and frankincense were burned along the whole route of the procession, also the men who bore the show-vessels made of silver and gold, both those that were sacred owing to the gods and those that belonged to the state. Last of all in the procession came the images of the gods, borne on men's shoulders, showing the same likenesses as those made by the Greeks and having the same dress, the same symbols, and the same gifts which tradition says each of them invented and bestowed on mankind. These were the images not only of Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, Neptune, and of the rest whom the Greeks reckon among the twelve gods, but also of the son of still more ancient from whom legend says the twelve were sprung, namely, Saturn, Ops, Themis, Latona, the Parcae, Mnemosynê, and all the rest to whom temples and holy places are dedicated among the Greeks; and also of those whom legend represents as living later, after Jupiter took over the sovereignty, such as Proserpina, Lucina, the Nymphs, the Muses,*

> *the Seasons, the Graces, Liber, and the demigods whose souls after they had left their mortal bodies are said to have ascended to Heaven and to have obtained the same honours as the gods, such as Hercules, Aesculapius, Castor and Pollux, Helen, Pan, and countless others* (*Roman Antiquities* VII, 73; 1940: 368-373).

But the author describes a procession that he himself never saw, for the votive games that the procession inaugurated took place hundreds of years earlier, under the dictator Aulus Postumius Albus Regillensis (ca. 497 BCE). Nevertheless, the description is useful in showing how the procession into the Circus Maximus functioned in the mythic-historical imagination of audiences over the centuries as a visceral embodiment of a large-scale communal connection to a cosmic power of victory that builds a superior civilization. In reality, processions into the Circus Maximus or into any other hippodrome during the imperial era were never so monumental as the one Dionysius describes, nor did they have to be in a society that was able to provide exciting chariot races, among other entertainments, almost every week rather than once in a long lifetime. In the imperial era, it was absurd to honor as many gods as consumed the procession for the votive games under Aulus Postumius: the main thing was to honor the emperor who provided the games and presided over a vast civilization that was the consequence of great victories bestowed upon and by emperors, and emperors streamlined the procession to reinforce this point. The Emperor Constantine established in Constantinople an annual, May 11th ceremony in the hippodrome he constructed: he had a "statute made of himself made of gilded wood, bearing in its right hand the *tyche* of the city, itself gilded, which he called Anthousa. He ordered that on the same day as the Anniversary race meeting this statue should be brought in, escorted by soldiers wearing cloaks and boots, all holding candles; the carriage should march around the turning post and reach the pit opposite the imperial *kathisma*, and the emperor of the time should rise and make obeisance as he gazed at this statue of Constantine and the *tyche*" (Malalas 1986: 175). From week to week, the procession should be dramatic without being costly; it should honor the emperor without the distractions of honoring many other persons or gods. From week to week, the procession could differ by honoring different gods or persons without honoring everybody all at once. On some occasions, the procession (or an interlude) might even

include scenes that nowadays seem fantastically grotesque. In 271, the Emperor Aurelian (reigned 270-275) supposedly paraded the captured Queen Zenobia on a camel in the Antioch hippodrome, while the Emperor Zeno (reigned 474-491) in 490 is said to have paraded on poles the heads of the conspirators Leontius and Illus in the Constantinople hippodrome when those heads were brought to him from Antioch (Malalas 1986: 164, 218). Moreover, under the emperors, the great majority of the participants in the procession were slaves and freedmen, not the aristocratic "youths of the commonwealth who were approaching manhood" that Dionysius imagined, which from the imperial audience perspective was probably much more interesting than a parade of members of a privileged boys club.

With the introduction of female pantomimes in the late second century, and with the integration of pantomimes into the circus during the Crisis of the Third Century, an even more dramatic change in the procession could occur: by the early fourth century at the latest, female dancers replaced male dancers, and apparently the female dancers led the procession. This is the implication of iconography on the base of the Theodosian obelisk placed on the *spina* in the hippodrome in Constantinople, where it may have functioned as a sun dial and cast its shadow over the *kathisma* (Safran 1993: 427). Theodosius had the obelisk, built by the pharaoh Thutmose III for the temple at Karnak around 1450 BCE, transported from Alexandria to Constantinople in 390. The pedestal built to support the obelisk depicts the Emperor watching the spectacle unfold before him in the hippodrome on all four sides of the monumental block [Figure 56]. The southeast side of the block, which "has both the greatest number and the highest degree of individualized figures and faces," shows Theodosius, standing in the *kathisma*, holding a laurel wreath and flanked by members of his administration (Safran 1993: 422). (In the other three panels, Theodosius sits in the *kathisma*.) Below Theodosius appear the heads of 42 men, in two rows, who presumably represent either spectators (factions?) or the men responsible for organizing the races and driving the teams. Under these two rows, at the bottom of the panel, is a row of eleven dancers and musicians. All the dancers are female; the musicians are male: one holds a Pan flute, one holds an *aulos*, another holds either an *aulos* or a horn, and the fourth operates a water organ. The three dancers to the left of the flute player adopt a different movement configuration from the four dancers to the right.



Figure 56: The base of obelisk in the Hippodrome at Constantinople, ca. 390, showing the Emperor Theodosian in the *kathisma* surrounded by high officials, below him the faces of chariot sponsors or faction leaders, and below them dancers and musicians associated with the Hippodrome entertainments supervised by pantomimes. Photo: Public domain.

The dancers to the left undulated with their arms splayed, while three of the dancers to the right move in unison holding hands; the fourth dancer performs a variation of the pose assumed by the three dancers to the left of the flute player. The sculpture has suffered considerable damage, but it appears that the women wear extravagant headgear or hairstyles with their flowing chitons. The whole panel constructs a complex image of the Emperor in the stadium, but probably it does not represent a particular scene or moment in the circus protocol; rather, the image is a composite of the Emperor reviewing the procession, awarding the laurel leaf, and acknowledging an honor. The image conveys the impression of the dancers "in front" of everyone else or leading the procession to the Emperor. But why are three of the dancers moving differently from the other four? It may be that the artist wants to develop the idea of movement by altering the poses, but it may also be that the artist intends to show that the dancers

perform different dances at different moments in the circus schedule. In any case, the artist associates the dancers with the Emperor and the *kathisma*, even if it is not clear if he also associates the dancers with the factions, if indeed the two rows of male heads represent factions. It is not evident that pantomimes appear anywhere on the panels of the pedestal, so presumably pantomimes were never in the vicinity of the *kathisma*, but stationed with the factions they represented. Safran (1993: 416-417) contends that the factions sat opposite the *kathisma* on the other side of the *spina* and that they sat next to each other, which however, is difficult to believe. If they sat next to each other, their chanting, during interludes between races and as chariots passed them during races, would drown out each other unless they reached some kind of agreement to "take turns" chanting at specific moments. But the factions agreed about almost nothing related to anything in the hippodrome. The excitement of factional activity would be greater if the factions sat in different sections of the stadium, where it was possible for the audience as a whole to differentiate the chants and movements of the factions and to experience the factions in a sort of dialogue with each other. It could be that hippodrome administrators rotated different sections of the stadium among the factions, which would allow the audience as a whole to be closer to a different faction on different racing days. If factions sat in different sections of the stadium, their commotions would have greater impact when separated according to the moments when the procession passed by them or when the chariots rushed passed them. Moreover, by placing the factions in different sections of the stadium, it was possible for pantomimes and other circus artists to perform simultaneously during intervals between races. If all the factions sat in the same section of the huge stadium, it would have been very difficult for the majority of spectators to see the interlude performances sponsored by each faction, even if these performances occurred simultaneously, although it is possible that if the factions did sit together, they somehow agreed to alternate responsibility for presenting performances during the interludes. If the factions sat separately, of course, they would have to produce more interlude performances than if they agreed to share the responsibility, but if they rotated their positions in the stadium from week to week, they could present the same interlude performances from week to week under the assumption that different sectors of the audience would be closer to them from week to week. Malalas observes that the Emperor Theodosius (401-

450), who openly favored the Greens, made this faction sit opposite him, for "Those whom I support I wish to watch opposite me," and "he transferred the garrison troops who used to watch from opposite the *kathisma* to the Blue section," which apparently was on the same side as the *kathisma*, which itself was a pretty large section, although the distinction between "to the left" of the emperor and "opposite" the emperor is hard to decipher. He also instructed the Greens to sit "to the left" of governors in all other hippodromes in the Empire (Malalas 1986: 191). Nevertheless, it is evident that moving the factional sections from one place to another in the hippodrome was something the emperor could do easily, though not every week, and that in any case the factional sections were not next to each other.

It is also difficult to believe that the big hippodromes in Rome and Constantinople reached their capacity of 150,000 or more spectators week after week. But even if audiences were at 50% of capacity, it is still a very large audience, and it would be to the benefit of factions to remain separated from each other so that the many spectators near them could at least differentiate their chants from the roars emanating from elsewhere in the stadium. Moreover, the dancers on the obelisk panel belonged to the emperor, not to the factions, and so, presumably, they took seats in a lower section under the *kathisma*. Perhaps they performed a brief dance when the emperor awarded the laurel wreath to the victor. Perhaps their dance after each victory award was part of the interlude entertainment. Perhaps the different movement configurations of the dancers on the obelisk panel indicate that two sets of dancers performed different dances during the interlude on each side of the *spina*. Whatever the interpretation, the dancers assume an importance in the pedestal commemoration of the emperor that was not granted the pantomimes or possibly even the factions. The dancers in the panel bestow an erotic aura on the Emperor and remind the viewer that he provided not only the chariot races but entertainments in the hippodrome that were just as exciting as the chariots races—not that anyone sitting in the hippodrome could see the figures carved onto the pedestal placed on the *spina*. (The inscriptions in Latin and Greek on the pedestal refer only to the emperors Theodosius and Proclus, not to any gods, and commemorate them for raising the obelisk.) But audiences saw the procession, and the procession was worth watching from week to week because of the dancers, whose choreographies could vary

from performance to performance, guided, probably, by a pantomime. Though it was a routine ritual, the procession would be consistently dramatic, even when the emperor was not in attendance, because it showed the authority of the emperor to make everything move about the great track with power, efficiency, and glamor.

During the races themselves, the factions chanted encouraging phrases to spur their chariot teams to victory, and these chants resounded with, according to Dio Cassius, writing about events surrounding the downfall of the Emperor Pertinax in 193, "a rhythmic swing" (*Roman History* 74.2.3; 1927: 126-127). Dio may have been referring to the chants of theater claques, but the chanting techniques developed in the theaters were probably the basis for chanting in the hippodrome when the pantomimes became integrated with the hippodrome factions. In the theaters, the factions probably chanted in response to the poses of their pantomime, and these chants—such as Dio's quote, "Huzza! Huzza! You are saved! You have won!"—were significant mostly, if not entirely, in relation to public contests between pantomimes at occasional festivals starting in the latter half of the second century (Cameron 1976: 236 makes a more hesitant reference to theater). The idea is that the chant is about ten or twelve syllables long and delivered with a distinct rhythm that differentiates the exhortation from that of other factions. In the hippodrome, the faction as a whole would deliver the chant with choreographed bodily movements somewhat similar to cheerleading sections of American college football games. The faction's pantomime would lead the faction and train it, guided by the assumption that the faction's performance in the hippodrome had to be competitive with that of other factions. This can be an exhausting performance for the faction if the faction performs a chant every time a chariot passes by: in a day at the hippodrome, the faction would chant seven times in each of 24 races, for a total of 168 times. This tally excludes chants in response to the procession, to the awarding of victory wreaths to factional teams, and to interlude entertainments. No doubt the chants varied from race to race by calling the names of different charioteers or different slogans, but even so, the faction would have to sustain an exceptional amount of energy. Nevertheless, such a grandiose scale of commotion was probably necessary for the factions to achieve the power to "intimidate" audiences, as Cameron supposes the factions exerted, especially after the pantomime claques became integrated with the circus claques (1976: 236-237). However, the

failure of factions to intimidate audiences in the hippodromes, particularly in relation to issues outside of the hippodromes, was a major reason why the factions resorted to violence inside and outside of the hippodromes. It may well be that the entertainments provided by the state were much more engaging for hippodrome audiences than the commotions of the factions and perhaps even the races themselves, and these entertainments included the pantomimes, who, unlike the factions, were on the imperial payroll.

Entertainments occurred in the intervals between races. These intervals lasted several minutes. The emperor awarded a victory wreath to the winning charioteer, accompanied by fanfares or chords on the water organ and movements of dancers. Following the awarding of the wreath, spectators might witness any of a range of performing artists, including pantomimes, dancers, acrobats, tightrope artists, singers, or trained animals. The circus program included in the Oxyrhynchus papyrus 2027, which dates from around 552, lists performances between each of the six races presented. The procession and a performance by "the singing rope dancers" followed the first race; the rope dancers appeared again after the second race. Following the third race appeared a "gazelle and hounds"; mimes appeared after the fourth race and a "troupe of athletes" after the fifth. A "Farewell" took place after the sixth and final race. The program obviously documents a very provincial event with only six races in what was probably the small hippodrome located near Oxyrhynchus, about a hundred miles south of Cairo on a tributary of the Nile. The papyrus was apparently submitted to officials for approval. Other, less detailed papyrus circus programs from Oxyrhynchus (six altogether) list mimes, "hoop artists," "vocalists," or gymnasts as interlude entertainers (Mountford 2012: 128-140). Mimes performed instead of pantomimes because by this time, pantomimes were banned throughout the Byzantine Empire. In the *Secret History* (9.2), Procopius mentions that Acacius, the father of Theodora, was "Master of the Bears" for the Green faction in Constantinople, and then when Acacius died, Theodora's mother, in the hippodrome, petitioned the Greens to make her new husband Master of the Bears; when the Greens refused the petition, the Blues made her new husband their Master of Bears. Presumably the title "Master of the Bears" was generic and referred to the manager of a menagerie that supported entertainments attached to the factions, and presumably the new husband was qualified to assume the title because he had worked with Acacius. Procopius makes clear that

pantomimes supervised this position, which means, in effect, that the emperor (Justin) accepted the appointment, even if Procopius implies that it was the Blues (supposedly the faction favored by the emperor according to the Greens and others, including Procopius, hostile to Theodora) who welcomed the petition from Theodora's mother. Pantomimes supervised all of the entertainments in the hippodrome, which is why, when factional riots broke out, emperors banned or exiled the pantomimes. It was not that pantomimes instigated or incited the factions; it was that without the pantomimes, the factions lost considerable entertainment value in the hippodrome, and without the interlude entertainments organized by the pantomimes, large sections of the hippodrome audience disappeared, and with them disappeared also the ability of the factions to rally popular support for their petitions or efforts to "intimidate" the emperor.

The evidence of the Oxyrhynchus papyri suggests that each interlude contained a different type of entertainment. However, in an afternoon offering up to 24 races, it would have been a very challenging task to present 24 distinct entertainments in one day, let alone from week to week and in competition with the entertainments presented by other factions. It could be that interlude entertainments rotated from one faction (pantomime) to another, which means that the whole circus program was under the control of hippodrome administrators rather than under the factions. Some kinds of interlude entertainments were easier for the audience to see in a large hippodrome than others, such as gazelle hunts and tightrope dancers, or the African funambulist from around 533 celebrated in item 101 of the *Anthologia Latina* (Kay 2008: 141-145). But even these acts are difficult to place in their hippodrome context. Gazelles chased by dogs around the track don't seem particularly difficult for spectators throughout the stadium to enjoy, but what kinds of things could bears perform that most of the audience could see in the vast stadium? Perhaps they simply paraded around the track accompanied by dancers. Elephants appeared only occasionally: after the third century, when the elephant population of North Africa declined precipitously, the cost of securing and maintaining these creatures was too high for the state to provide a menagerie containing them. More likely was the use of equestrian acts to entertain hippodrome audiences, although the nature of these acts remains very obscure because the evidence of them is so frail. In mosaics of the third and fourth centuries, horses, horses and their riders, and riders on

horses are recurrent themes, but the representation of equestrian stunts is extremely rare and mostly focused on the theme of nereids riding creatures that are half-horse and half-dolphin. It's possible that in the third century and the first half of the fourth century pantomimes staged stunts like a parade of Amazons on horseback or Bellerophon riding a winged horse or invited the imperial cavalry to circle the track [Figure 57].



Figure 57: Fourth century mosaic from Rhodes of Bellerophon killing the chimera, possible stunt for pantomimes in the Hippodrome. Photo: Archeological Museum of Rhodes.

But when the Empire became pervasively Christian, mythological themes probably gave way to more abstract, acrobatic equestrian stunts. Other animals such as giraffes, bulls, lions, tigers, panthers, and camels probably made an appearance when they had been imported for use in *venationes* held in amphitheaters; Bomgartner (2002: 219) asserts that the circus factions managed the animals assigned to *venationes* in the amphitheater, although by the end of the fourth century it is evident that the cost of securing, maintaining, and presenting such animals made the provision of *venationes* an infrequent rather than regular event until they finally disappeared in both eastern and western parts of the Empire in the early

sixth century. It is possible that pantomimes and hippodrome administrators attempted to stage mythical scenes involving wild animals and bring to life spectacular images like the "Triumph of Bacchus," with the god in a chariot pulled by four tigers, as in the famous third century mosaic in the Sousse Museum in Tunisia [Figure 53]. Such a stunt would require considerable expertise on the part of the "Master of the Bears" and his assistants. No modern circus has presented such a stunt, although the Soviet lion tamer Irina Bugrimova (1910-2001) trained her beasts to walk a tight rope in the 1950s. In 1897, according to an article in the *New York Evening World* (February 7), the Barnum and Bailey circus planned to present in Madison Square Garden a race between a chariot led by lions and one led by tigers, with the lion chariot driven by a female chimpanzee. The article describes the training and difficulties involved in producing the stunt, but it is not clear if the circus actually presented it. The lion tamer Joe Arcaris (1909-2002) in the 1940s at the Benson Animal Park in New Hampshire managed to get a pair of lions to pull a wagon driven by a human (Burck 2012). But the main point is that, as organizers of hippodrome interlude entertainments, pantomimes had to exercise considerable imagination in creating engaging spectacles week after week in the vast stadium, which means that the skill of the artists who produced these entertainments probably greatly exceeded the capacity of modern circus artists (and scholars) to replicate such spectacles or even imagine them. Over many decades, the pantomimes, in competition with each other, must have built a very large repertoire of stunts and spectacular scenes that could bear repetition every once in a while, but which also had constantly to expand to sustain the appeal of hippodrome entertainments as manifestations of imperial power. It was when these interludes became stagnant or ritualized and lacking in sufficient "entertainment value" that in the early sixth century emperors began to see that effective representations of imperial power no longer depended on the popular appeal of any public entertainments or on the clamor or acclaim of any faction. They now could do without the pantomimes and so could the public.

Tightrope walkers or "singing rope dancers" also appeared during hippodrome interludes. But how did these stunts take place? Was a rope or ropes stretched from a pillar on the *spina* to a distant point in the stadium above the audience? Or was the rope stretched between two pillars on the *spina*? The poem "De funambulo" in the *Anthologia Latina* conveys the

impression of a rope rising toward a point higher than the position from which the dancer began to "ascend [...] along a path scarcely easy for birds" (Kay 2008: 141); in the hippodrome setting, this scene would imply a rope stretched from a pillar or pole on the *spina* to a pole somewhere in the upper sections of the audience, which would indeed be quite a difficult and spectacular feat. But perhaps it was more practical to stretch a rope between two poles on the *spina*. In either case, it was a performance that could be seen by everyone in the audience. The Oxyrhynchus 2027 circus program refers to the appearance during interludes of "singing rope dancers." This little phrase implies a group of performers who during interludes a) sang songs or choruses; b) performed dances; c) walked a tightrope or perhaps more than one tightrope; d) sang and/or danced while walking on a tightrope. It is therefore possible that the same group of performers was responsible for four different types of interlude performances and maybe more if different acts featured different individual members within the group of singing rope dancers. As for the interlude dances, these might include a pyrrhic dance, perhaps with shields and javelins, as indicated by the "De pyrrhica" item (No. 104 [No. 115R]) in the *Anthologia Latina*, in which:

> [...] *the battles of Mars are simulated when the two sexes move against each other. For the war dance pitches the female group against the males and makes weapons move as in military fashion, though the weapons are not tipped with any hard steel, but, being made of boxwood, only give off sound. Thus do they aim their javelins, turn and turn about and protect themselves with their shields, nor is man or woman hurt in coming together. The display has fighting, but the contests bring peace, for the pleasant sounds of the organ command them back to their places on equal terms* (Kay 2008: 151-155).

The pyrrhic or corybantic dance might in another interlude be contrasted with a maenadic dance. A satyr dance might appear in conjunction with a parade of animals or with the maenads. Other interlude dances might feature acrobatic use of cymbals, balls, hoops, swords or wreathes. Or dances might include movements in which dancers linked arms or held hands to create swirling effects. Oxyrhynchus circus programs refer to "gymnasts" or "athletes" performing interlude stunts. What sort of singing

took place during the interludes is more difficult to imagine. Presumably, for acoustic reasons, the singing was choral, and we may recall the appearance of a large female chorus at the Secular Games of 204. Most likely, though, choruses in the hippodrome were much smaller and consisted of persons who also danced ("singing rope dancers") or performed musical instruments, as was the case in the organization of pantomime ensembles. These choirs perhaps sang songs praising the emperor, chariot teams, the seasons, or the virtues of different arts and pleasures. It is, however, difficult to believe that anything they sang could be heard without a great hush filling the hippodrome, which implies that the pantomimes gave some sort of visual cue for spectators to be silent—surely a startling contrast to the roar of the factions elsewhere during the program. Perhaps on some occasions, a chorus sang a song of sufficient familiarity that allowed the audience to sing along, although it is not clear that ancient songs, with their tendency toward elaborate flexibility of rhythm and pitch and melismatic improvisation, ever achieved the standardization necessary for a song to become "popular" enough for audiences to know it well enough to sing it.

Pantomimes themselves performed during the interludes, if we assume, on the basis of the Oxyrhyncus circus programs, that mimes replaced pantomimes after pantomimes had been banned throughout the eastern Empire in the early sixth century. Pantomimes performed, not so much because the tragic, mythic themes that defined the pantomime repertoire resonated so well in the circus atmosphere. More likely what captivated audiences was the theme of metamorphosis, the deployment of masks, the transition from movement to pose, the transformation from one identity to another, from one sex to another, as indicated in Item 100 (111R), "De pantomimo" of the *Anthologia Latina*: "Declining a male physique with a feminine inflection and adapting his subtle frame to both sexes [...]" (Kay 2008: 136). Pantomimes could adapt easily to the interlude situation, for the performance of a couple of transformations could occur within a few minutes, and pantomimes would have "character" repertoires large enough to generate a sense of variety or surprise from week to week. But it is difficult to see how any pantomime performance in the hippodrome could be seen by most of the audience. Even in the largest theaters, pantomime performance entailed a very compact use of space. In the hippodromes, pantomimes could not achieve the concentrated tension between

movement and pose, face and mask, if they had to spread their performances across the length of the track. The interlude would never be long enough for a pantomime to perform a sequence of scenes or transformations around the track, although it is possible that at different interludes, the pantomime moved along the track to perform a different set of transformations. But the question remains: how were those sections of the audience that could not see well the performance entertained? A possible solution to the perceptual problem is that during interludes featuring pantomime performance, the pantomimes for each of the factions performed before the section in which each faction sat. If factions were distributed in different areas of the hippodrome, then spectators in those different areas would be able to view at least one pantomime performance (along with the accompanying musicians and singer) with greater clarity than a single pantomime performance in only one section of the stadium. If factions rotated their section in the stadium from week to week, then audiences were likely to see a wider range of pantomime performances. Otherwise, for any individual pantomime performance to be seen within the interlude on all sides of the hippodrome would require some sort of *deus ex machina* apparatus that suspended the performer above the crowd and perhaps moved the hoisted performance platform from one side of the stadium to the other, although such a technology, while hardly beyond the engineering skills of the Romans or Greeks, probably would have somehow received mention in surviving sources if it had actually existed.

Another interlude activity appears to have been petitions or addresses by spectators to factions, to the emperor or his deputy, or to imperial administrators like governors. In the *Secret History* (9.6), Procopius describes how the mother of Theodora, when (ca. 507) she "saw the whole populace gathered in the Circus, she put garlands on the heads and in both hands of the three girls and caused them to sit as suppliants. And though the Greens were by no means favourable to receiving the supplication, the Blues conferred this position of honour upon them, since their Master of the Bears also had recently died" (1935: 104-105). The idea that spectators could "sit as suppliants" suggests that particular sections of the hippodrome or particularly identified spectators enjoyed a designated opportunity to address a mediating representative of the imperial government. This scene seems related to the theme of public "acclamations," which, after 330, coincided with the spread of Christianity

throughout the Empire and with the consolidation of imperial power at the expense of local councils and *curiae*. Most public acclamations, which usually took place in theaters, primarily consisted of praise for emperors or governors, appeals to the emperor to resolve disputes concerning religious doctrine (which had the potential to incite violence), or petitions to address grievances (Liebeschuetz 2001: 209ff; Maxwell 2006: 58-64; Karantabias 2015: 129-131). However, the inclusion of acclamations added another layer to the administration of the circus programs. Not every petition to present a panegyric, to seek clarification on a matter of religious doctrine, or to pursue a grievance could find a place in the hippodrome schedule. So a petition had to undergo a vetting process before it could be fitted, if at all, into the interlude schedule for a particular circus program. Most likely, acclamations in the hippodrome focused on matters related to the factions, to the races, to hippodrome behaviors and practices, and to opportunities to participate in processions or interludes. Yet the acclamations were not entirely formal events that closely followed a script. They provided an opportunity for the emperor, the emperor's deputy, or a governor to hear directly from spectators, factions, or other persons with interests in the circus, so that the event was a public dialogue in which the imperial government could, after open discourse, respond to appeals for its help. It is likely, though, that hippodrome administrators were wary of petitions that in such a public context might embarrass the imperial government. The emperor (or governor) and his advisers had to calculate the political consequences of a decision that did not favor the petitioner, the factions or a particular faction, or a particular constituency within or without the hippodrome. On the other hand, the credibility of the petition process sank if the government's response was overly predictable. Yet the evidence for public displeasure toward imperial responses to acclamations in the hippodrome is actually quite scant across two hundred years.

Even so, as Christianity strengthened and doctrinal conflicts intensified, the hippodrome became an increasingly dangerous place until the aftermath of the 532 Nika riot. Malalas reports that in 370, the Emperor Valentinian, having learned that a tribunal had found his palace administrator, the eunuch Rhodanos, guilty of confiscating the property of a widow by filing fraudulent charges against her, became angry when Rhodanos refused to make restitution. Valentinian instructed the widow "to approach him while he was watching the races, and the woman went up to

him at the time of the fifth race in the morning. While the *praepositus* Rhodanos was standing next to him on his right, the emperor gave the order and he was dragged from the *kathisma* before the whole city, and was taken to the curved end of the hippodrome and burned." The Emperor gave the widow all of Rhodanos's property, for which "he was acclaimed by the whole people" (Malalas 1986: 185). In 378, the eastern Emperor Valens (reigned 364-378), facing public discontent for his failure to suppress barbarian tribes invading Thrace, ran into difficulties "at the exhibition of the sports of the Hippodrome," where the spectators "all with one voice clamored against the emperor's negligence of the public affairs, crying out with great earnestness, 'Give us arms, and we ourselves will fight.' The emperor provoked at these seditious clamors, marched out of the city, on the 11th of June; threatening that if he returned, he would punish the citizens not only for their insolent reproaches, but for having previously favored the pretensions of the usurper Procopius; declaring also that he would utterly demolish their city, and cause the plough to pass over its ruins, he advanced against the barbarians, whom he routed with great slaughter" (Socrates 1890: 117). It is reported that in 383, the Emperor Theodosius, while on his way from Constantinople to Rome, visited Thessalonika, where the public "rioted and insulted" him about the billeting of his soldiers. "While watching the races in the city with the hippodrome full, he ordered his archers to shoot at the crowd and as many as 15,000 were killed" (Malalas 1986: 188). A less adversarial interaction between emperor and hippodrome audience apparently took place during the reign of Theodosius II, "when the circus was filled with spectators" during a storm, the violence of which "increased and there was heavy fall of snow. Then the emperor made it very evident how his mind was affected towards God; for he caused the herald to make a proclamation to the people to this effect: 'It is far better and fitter to desist from the show, and unite in common prayer to God, that we may be preserved unhurt from the impending storm.' Scarcely had the herald executed his commission, when all the people, with the greatest joy, began with one accord to offer supplication and sing praises to God, so that the whole city became one vast congregation; and the emperor himself in official garments, went into the midst of the multitude and commenced the hymns" (Socrates 1890: 165).

Opportunities to see the emperor interact with the public during the acclamations interludes provided a powerful motivation to attend the

hippodrome spectacles, at least in Constantinople. In the late Roman Empire, acclamation interludes constituted the most dynamic and engaging interface between imperial power and public sentiment. In these interludes imperial power manifested itself most vividly as a highly volatile "performance" and not as a highly stabilizing ritual. I have tried to show here that the hippodrome shows formed a monumentally complex entertainment apparatus, and the faction pantomimes assumed major responsibilities in the operation of the apparatus. But the acclamations interludes were at the heart of the apparatus, sometimes the most exciting feature of it. The idea that the shows functioned as escapism, as a "distraction" from the problems of living, is misleading. For hippodrome audiences, entertainment was an intensely political experience, a way of becoming activated or awakened by imperial power. The relation between the emperor and the audience (especially the factions) was always ambiguous, and thus open to surprise, to startling and sometimes fantastic gestures, and to violent surges of excitement. Even when only the emperor's deputy (the so-called "Mandator" in later times) or a governor presided in the *kathisma*, the spectator could go to the hippodrome with the expectation that the representatives of imperial power would make some unforeseen or unanticipated gesture, statement, decision, or stillness that ignited the spectator's feelings about his or her relation to the imperial government. This was the basis for "excitement" about being in the hippodrome from week to week, even if the races disappointed or the interludes were not sufficiently innovative. The entertainment apparatus did not anesthetize the spectator's political sensibility; it amplified it and compelled it to reveal itself as yet another aspect of performance in the hippodrome. Spectator excitement in this context implied physical agitation, and agitation probably achieved its most intense political expression during the acclamations interludes, as an index, so to speak, of favor bestowed upon the imperial government. This favor was volatile and not always or even mostly aligned with any faction. It was aligned with the imperial ideology of metamorphosis, with movement toward a condition of being, more or less, stronger, happier, richer, or freer, from race to race, interlude to interlude, week to week, month to month. By integrating the pantomime and hippodrome cultures, the imperial government greatly magnified the performance of the metamorphosis ideology. The circus program was a monumental transformation of the pantomime aesthetic

structure. Pantomime performance structured the idea of metamorphosis through a sequence of abrupt shifts from movement to pose, from character to character, from mask to mask, from one sex to the other, to show how the body of the performer contained multiple identities who incarnated dynamic, living mythic figures. Hippodrome performance structured the idea of metamorphosis through a sequence of abrupt shifts from race to race and interlude to interlude, to accommodate the belief that "the crowd," the *populi*, contained within it multiple moods or sentiments as well as multiple identities (Romans, Greeks, Jews, pagans, barbarians, Syrians, Egyptians, and so forth) whose emotional responses to powers governing their lives shifted from moment to moment, from race to race, from interlude to interlude, from acclamation to acclamation, and from one political issue to another, such as taxes, the fate of prisoners, the appointment or corruption of officials, the price of food, the protection of the poor, the management of public works, or interpretations of religious doctrine. The imperial elite did not see the crowd or the public as embodying a unified identity that evolved in relation to a single, unified narrative of its destiny, as national societies tend to do. They saw the crowd as a conglomeration of competing and shifting identities and sentiments that could be best served through a complex, centralized program of diverse and often competing narratives of metamorphosis. The hippodrome provided a single vast space in which the public could gather, but the circus program, the entertainment apparatus, fragmented public sentiments across a huge series of discrete scenes, all capable of agitating and thus transforming the spectator's relation to external powers, not just from one race or interlude to the next, but from week to week, month after month, year after year, in an almost cosmic sense of rhythm toward an evermore "exciting" state of being. If you disliked the emperor's decision to increase, for example, the tax on olive oil, then you might feel better if, in the seventh race, you won your bet on the Green team in a race after all that the emperor provided. Something new or at least different would happen "next," and your mood would change, you would see that the general situation in which "everyone" finds themselves will change abruptly, because you are not part of one big, shared story; rather, to get at the symbolic significance of the hippodrome experience, you constructed your life from fragments of an imperial narrative or program consisting of discrete competitions, of which the outcome was never certain, and of

equally discrete, but "agitating" interludes. This was the public structure of the pantomime aesthetic, in which the "story" is not of a controlling myth wherein one finds oneself but of the transition from one identity to another, from one state of being to another.

Pantomime and Christianity

The integration of the pantomimes with the hippodrome culture apparently worked well enough for about two centuries, insofar as the imperial government considered it fundamental to its survival and the public as a whole was unable or unwilling to develop alternate systems for integrating the many discrete and competing factions within it. But the entertainment apparatus nevertheless encountered great challenges to its stability and seductive power. The imperial government began the integration sometime in the late third or early fourth centuries. Emperor Constantine had established the Empire as a Christian state by 330, even though most of its citizens were not Christian or "completely" Christian. Throughout most of the fourth century, emperors promoted Christianity while pursuing a policy of toleration toward older religious traditions. The Emperor Julian (reigned 361-363) attempted to restore the authority of the pagan network of gods, but this project died with him, and the policy of toleration resumed as the most effective way to maintain harmony within the Empire. However, the leaders of the Christian Church believed that the policy of toleration prevented Christianity from achieving the full measure of its power to bring salvation to humanity. Toleration allowed competing interpretations of scripture to create uncertainty about the true path to salvation and about who had control over religious doctrine. As long as the Empire pursued the policy of toleration, Christianity would remain as splintered as the manifold forms of pagan worship, and it would never achieve the power to transform the whole of society. It was evident to the clergy leadership that sermons denouncing the sinfulness of the theater and the hippodrome, no matter how scathing or threatening the language, did not keep people from attending these entertainments and thus did not compel them to accept completely the word of the Church. In the second century, Tertullian had condemned the circus and the theater because of their idolatry, their glorification of statues, images, monuments, performances, and myths that polluted the soul and morality of the spectator, for "the demons, predetermining in their own interests from the

first, among other evils of idolatry, the pollutions of the public shows, with the object of drawing man away from his Lord and binding him to their own service, carried out their purpose by bestowing on him the artistic gifts which the shows require" (*De Spectaculis* 10.13). Around the middle of the third century, Cyprian of Carthage (ca. 200-258) condemned the pantomimes because their enactments of perverse erotic behavior gave permission for spectators to emulate these polluting pleasures:

> *[W]hat a degradation of morals it is, what a stimulus to abominable deeds, what food for vice, to be polluted by histrionic gestures, against the covenant and law of one's birth, to gaze in detail upon the endurance of incestuous abominations! Men are emasculated, and all the pride and vigour of their sex is effeminated in the disgrace of their enervated body; and he is most pleasing there who has most completely broken down the man into the woman. He grows into praise by virtue of his crime; and the more he is degraded, the more skilful he is considered to be. Such a one is looked upon— oh shame! And looked upon with pleasure. And what cannot such a creature suggest? He inflames the senses, he flatters the affections, he drives out the more vigorous conscience of a virtuous breast; nor is there wanting authority for the enticing abomination, that the mischief may creep upon people with a less perceptible approach. They picture Venus immodest, Mars adulterous; and that Jupiter of theirs not more supreme in dominion than in vice, inflamed with earthly love in the midst of his own thunders, now growing white in the feathers of a swan, now pouring down in a golden shower, now breaking forth by the help of birds to violate the purity of boys. And now put the question, Can he who looks upon such things be healthy-minded or modest? Men imitate the gods whom they adore, and to such miserable beings their crimes become their religion* (*Ad Donatus* 1.8; Cyprian 1868: 7).

Perhaps realizing that such arguments had not succeeded in diminishing the appeal of the circus and the theater for so many who professed to be Christian, John Chrysostom (349-407), while acknowledging that the theater is "the Devil's show," actually placed the weight of his condemnation on the spectators rather than on the performers, because the

spectators went to the theater or the circus to engage in sinful activities and associate with unsavory people rather than to watch enactments or races. He focused particularly on the presence of "harlots" in the theater, where a Christian will encounter "a woman, a prostitute, entering bareheaded and with a complete lack of shame, dressed in golden garments, flirting coquettishly and singing harlots' songs with seductive tunes, and uttering disgraceful words." Just seeing this woman will corrupt the Christian, "For even if you did not have intimate relations with the prostitute, in your lust you coupled with her, and you committed the sin in your mind," and then, "saturated with that woman, you return home as her captive, your wife appears more disagreeable, your children more burdensome, and your servants troublesome, and your house superfluous" (Chrysostom 2012: [274]). But in relation to his prodigious output of sermons, Chrysostom actually made less reference to the "satanic assemblies" that convened in the hippodrome and the theater than one might expect in such a vast compilation of preaching. One reason for this restraint is that he apparently found theater too alluring if described in detail, even if presented completely as the devil's work. In Homily I in *On the Gospel of John*, he proposed that God has made "all heaven his stage, his theater, the habitable world; his audience all angels." In other sermons, Chrysostom developed the idea that the Church should function as a powerful alternative to theater, because it provides a greater spectacle of "truth" than anything conjured up by Satan in the theater, and he employed highly dramatic language to distinguish Christian and Satanic spectacle:

> *For the son of thunder, the beloved of Christ, the pillar of the Churches throughout the world, who holds the keys of heaven, who drank the cup of Christ, and was baptized with His baptism, who lay upon his Master's bosom with much confidence, this man comes forward to us now; not as an actor of a play, not hiding his head with a mask, (for he hath another sort of words to speak,) nor mounting a platform, nor striking the stage with his foot, nor dressed out with apparel of gold, but he enters wearing a robe of inconceivable beauty. For he will appear before us having "put on Christ," having his beautiful "feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace" (Eph. vi. 15); wearing a girdle not about his waist, but about his loins, not made of scarlet leather nor daubed outside with gold, but woven and composed of*

> *truth itself. Now will he appear before us, not acting a part, (for with him there is nothing counterfeit, nor fiction, nor fable,) but with unmasked head he proclaims to us the truth unmasked; not making the audience believe him other than he is by carriage, by look, by voice, needing for the delivery of his message no instruments of music, as harp, lyre, or any other the like, for he effects all with his tongue, uttering a voice which is sweeter and more profitable than that of any harper or any music* (Homily I in *On the Gospel of John*; Chrysostom 1848: 2).

Chrysostom further deepened the idea of the Church as a *place* competing with the theater for the time and attention of Christians by comparing theaters to synagogues and accusing Jews, around 386, of being in the grip of demons, for "these Jews are gathering choruses of effeminates and a great rubbish heap of harlots; they drag into the synagogue the whole theater, actors and all. For there is no difference between the theater and the synagogue" (Homily I.2.7 *Against the Jews*). From his perspective, theater, because of its use of masks, possesses exceptionally dark power to threaten the authority of the Church to control sexual identity, gender roles, and sexual behavior. As Blake Leyerle remarks: "Whereas church fathers in the west condemned theater as idolatrous because of its pagan imagery, Chrysostom indicts it because of its satanic excitation of internal urges" (2001: 45). She contends that his thinking about theater is clearest in his sermon *Against Those Men Cohabiting with Virgins* (ca. 390), sometimes referred to as *Against Spiritual Marriage*. In this homily, he denounced Syneisaktism, yet another issue that threatened the unity of the Church, whereby men, usually priests, and women purportedly lived together chastely and never engaged in any sexual acts, a circumstance that Canon 3, promulgated at the Council of Nicea in 325, had already forbidden. Here Chrysostom focused his condemnation not on theatrical performers or on the satanic assemblies sitting in the theater or on the lurid stories performed in the theater, but on an abstract concept of theater, whose essence, he claimed, is masking, the concealment of "real" identities and feelings behind false or imaginary identities. He doesn't try to prove that men and women hide behind a mask of chastity while practicing spiritual marriage; instead, he argues that sexual urges can never be suppressed or absent when men and women live together without being married—they

can only pretend to be chaste, and their "spiritual marriage" is a theatrical masquerade. By this logic, "lustful" urges require masking, and masking in itself entails the concealment of lustful urges, so that theater and sexual desire construct each other and are mutually dependent phenomena. It is doubtful, though, that Chrysostom's argument persuaded either theatergoers or church-goers, much less practioners of Syneisaktism; the sermon was designed for the ears of the clergy. In relation to the failure of the Council of Nicea Canon to suppress Syneisaktism, Chrysostom's homily sixty-five years later functions more seriously as an exhortation to consolidate power and authority within the Church. From his perspective, the survival of the Church (as opposed to Christianity) depended on its authority to control sexuality, and controlling sexuality meant controlling—and, indeed, suppressing—theater and all salient attributes of theater, especially masking.

The Church, however, could not consolidate its power or prevent new schisms from further dividing it by building some sort of popular consensus through sermonizing, pastoral activities, doctrinal councils, and impressive charities. These things encouraged more people to become Christian, but they didn't clarify who was leading a Christian life and who wasn't. Chrysostom didn't attack specific pantomimes or charioteers as agents of Satan, because by the time he composed his sermons (ca. 390), probably all pantomimes and charioteers were Christians. After several years (381-388) of Christian persecution of pagans, the co-emperors Theodosius (reigned 379-395) and Valentinian II (reigned 375-392) banned all blood sacrifices and decreed that "no one is to go to the sanctuaries, walk through the temples, or raise his eyes to statues created by the labor of man," even though most of the Western Empire still remained pagan, and consequences were severe for those who violated the decrees (*Theodosian Code* 16.10.10). Schisms, heresies, doctrinal disputes, and competing religious systems strained the ability of the Church to construct a unified identity for itself. From the standpoint of the clergy, it was necessary for the Church to gain decisive influence over "secular" domains of governance and access to resources for enforcing Church laws. To gain this influence, various factions of the Church intimidated the imperial government by inciting their followers in different parts of the Empire to considerable acts of violence and persecution against pagans, Jews, Arians, and other "heretical" branches of Christianity during the 380s, with perhaps the most

spectacular act of persecution being the destruction of the Serapeum in Alexandria in 391. The success of Saint Ambrose (340-397), Archbishop of Milan, in managing and then suppressing in 385-388 the Arian schism favored by Germanic sectors demonstrated the skill of a charismatic Church leader in solving problems at the behest of emperors (Valentinian and Theodosius). But the violence of the Church-led persecution against pagans, Jews, Manicheans, and schisms like the Arians caused many people to claim they were Christians, even if sermons and biblical references did not directly inspire them. For Chrysostom, such persons concealed themselves behind a "mask" of Christianity, and a very troubling manifestation of this dubious type of Christian identity would be pantomimes claiming to be Christians. It was therefore necessary, from Chrysostom's perspective, to attack the concept of theater itself, of masking, to establish the authority of the Church to control imperial activities like the theater and the hippodrome.

The question then arises: If by 391 it was illegal in the Empire to practice pagan beliefs openly, and if during the previous decade, the imperial government, pressured by myriad outbreaks of Church-led violence, displayed a progressively diminishing inclination to maintain the policy of toleration toward all religious systems other than the what it regarded as "the Church," then what was the impact on pantomime performance in the theater and the hippodrome? It could well be that on occasion pantomimes continued to perform the ancient mythic scenes in the houses and villas of aristocrats, who, as a class, tended to cling more ardently to the pagan belief system than other classes (Cameron 2010: 3). These pantomimes, however, would declare themselves Christians, if they hoped to have careers performing in theaters or hippodromes. In doing so, they perfectly embodied Chrysostom's idea of wearing a "mask" of Christianity. The Theodosian decree of 391 had loopholes: it forbade sacrifices, the entering of temples, and the worship of "statues"; it did not specifically forbid representations of mythological figures. After all, Procopius, in the *Secret History*, claims that Theodora performed her Leda and the Swan act in a theater almost 130 years after the decree (9.9). Nevertheless, in the context of public theaters and hippodromes, it is difficult to believe that as a result of the decree the imperial government continued to subsidize, as an element of its policy of toleration, processions and performances featuring pagan themes, images, and statues, especially

since under the Emperor Gratian (reigned 375-383) the government in 382 had already ceased to provide subsidies to any pagan cults and even confiscated property that had no Christian heirs (Symmachus *Relationes* 3). What instead did the government subsidize?

In a 1964 article, Ramsay MacMullen ventures a way of approaching this question. He proposes that in the fourth century, life itself became more theatrical and symbolic (452-454). Under the influence of the theater, barbarians, and eastern fashions, the dress of people throughout the Empire became self-consciously ornamental, presumably because more efficient manufacturing and distribution systems, combined with government subsidies, particularly in support of the enormous imperial army, made the new fashions affordable to large sectors of the population (cf. Ammianus *Res gestae* 22.4; 1986: 237-238). Soldiers, seeking to wear more decorative uniforms, were significant in stimulating public appetite for ornamented dress (MacMullen 1964: 440). Clothing appeared in manifold colors, with elaborately embroidered hems, cuffs, and collars (Norris 1924: 117-118). Fabrics became richer and finer; the use of cosmetics and raiments proliferated. People became less inhibited about wearing jewelry, medallions, "badges," brooches, and ornate belts, fibulae, cloaks, helmets, and caps. Banners, standards, shields, swords, scabbards, and insignia, like crosses and animal images, became richer in color and detail, to amplify the symbolic values associated with the wearer's identity. In terms of hippodrome processions, idols, images of gods, and references to mythological themes disappeared, replaced completely, probably by 382, with grandiose and glamorous appreciations of the emperor and the guardians of the Empire, mixed with powerful Christian symbols like the cross. The procession became like a *tableau vivant*, depicting, in quasi-allegorical style, the achievements and beneficial attributes of the emperor and marvels brought from the provinces (MacMullen 1964: 454). The emphasis was on displaying the splendors of a unified, contemporary social order rather than on celebrating the fusion of diverse and capricious powers defining a pagan cosmos. Processions and interludes became abstract spectacles, focused on achieving emotional excitement through optimum ceremonial design, through stirring colors, shimmering banners, shields and palm leaves, carefully contrived chants and fanfares, parades of synchronized movements and poses, and scenes of acrobatic virtuosity. By the end of the fourth century, performances in the hippodromes probably

bore some similarity to fashion shows, with spectators themselves dressing more self-consciously, more "colorfully," than in previous eras, under the assumption that their "role" in the spectacle had become much more complex and scripted than in the preceding centuries. Spectators and performers alike saw their voices, movements, clothes and the bodies under them as symbolic of a higher and greater organization of power than any mythological iconography could capture, a power symbolized above all, less by the sign of the cross or Christ, than by the remote, resplendent figure of the emperor.

In the theaters, mythological themes also disappeared after 382. Pantomimes seemed to have continued the practice of structuring their performances around a sequence of discrete scenes that displayed their skill at embodying different identities and masks. But they replaced mythological figures with archetypal or allegorical figures, and situated these figures within intensely erotic scenes. In his *Confessions* (III.2), St. Augustine describes the corrupting impact of stage-plays he saw in Carthage, probably in the late 370s, but he makes no reference to pagan themes in the shows. Instead, he explains how the "tragical passages" depicting "feigned and scenical passions" made him "unclean," inciting lustful feelings and then inciting pity on the characters and on himself for submitting to lustful feelings. At the time he attended the theater, most of the audience, including himself, was Christian, and pantomimes, who were likely also Christians, felt their performances achieved higher entertainment value if they removed all references to either pagan mythology or Christian symbolism, so that the Church would not have reason to castigate spectators for enjoying pagan sinfulness or theatrical desecrations of holy figures. In *The City of God*, written about 410, Augustine explained why Christianity was not responsible for the decay of the Roman Empire and the invasion of Rome by the Visigoths. He therefore referred to "theatrical exhibitions" and "licentious entertainments" as phenomena belonging to a remote, pre-Christian and sometimes even pre-imperial era in which the gods "extorted from the Romans these solemnities and celebrations in their honor" to obscure from humans the power to recognize the true God; and he dismissed "the [pagan—that is, pre-Christian] dramas which poets write for the stage" as merely literary objects, lacking "the filthiness of language which characterizes many other performances," and things that "boys are obliged by their seniors to read

and learn as a part of what is called a liberal and gentlemanly education" (I.32; II.8). It would not help his argument if he referred to contemporary theatrical spectacles performed by Christians primarily for Christians under a Christian government that failed to protect Christians from pagan invaders. Still, he does insinuate that "some of those who fled from the sack of Rome and found refuge in Carthage" were pagans seized by "the voluptuous madness of stage-plays," which so infected them that "day after day they seemed to contend with one another who should most madly run after the actors in the theaters" (I.32). Augustine uses this ambiguous language, because the "voluptuous" theater, the "filthy" performances that were "recently" seen in Carthage were neither pagan nor, from his perspective, Christian, even if the performers were Christian. But it is not clear how pantomime retained its reputation for "voluptuousness" shorn of its mythological heritage while being still too seductive for Augustine to describe in any detail. Ismene Lada-Richards (2008: 309-310) tries to bring some clarity to fourth century pantomime performance by referring to Themistius (317-390), a pagan stateman, orator, and philosopher, who, in his Oration 28, written about 388, criticizes sophists in Constantinople who "often bring their eloquence out to theaters and festive assemblies, where it is arrayed in gold and purple, reeking of perfume, painted and smeared with cosmetics, and crowned with garlands of flowers." In this luxurious environment, "they emit a whole range of sounds and, like Sirens, sing songs full of pleasure" and "their audiences salute and praise them in turn" (Themistius 2000: 175). Lada-Richards contends that fourth century philosophers "dressed luxuriously and ostentatiously, as if measuring themselves up against alluringly attired pantomimes" (2008: 308-309). Their purpose in doing so was to explore the "treacherous notions of sensual over-refinement, androgynous grace and the erotic excitement associated with a doubly gendered performing body" (309). But Lada-Richards's point in bringing up Themistius and the sophists is to support a perception of pantomime detached from particular historical circumstances: "Pantomime's roaring success must have made it abundantly clear [to the sophists] that the unsettling of gender-norms through the practice of corporeal dialects of sexual ambiguity as well as the eroticisation of the male body were not so much 'high risk' investments for the astute performer as potentially high earners" (311). She follows her reference to Themistius with a reference to Lucian, writing over two centuries earlier,

who commented on the habit of rhetoricians to adopt "soft" and "womanish" qualities (311-312). From its beginning, however, pantomime focused on themes of sexual and gender ambiguity. The quotation from Themistius would be more helpful if placed in relation to the disappearance of mythic themes from the public theaters by the time he made his remarks. Lada-Richards implies, without ever referring to the turbulent Chrisitianization of the Empire, that "the practice of corporeal dialectics of sexual ambiguity" in pantomime continued unperturbed in the fourth century, just as it had in Lucian's time. The implication is true insofar as a phrase like "the practice of corporeal dialectics of sexual ambiguity" is vague enough to cover what pantomime generally was across five centuries. But she can go further: the quotation from Themistius suggests that pantomime continued to dwell intensely on erotic themes, even though pagan mythic themes had disappeared, because the Church had condemned the mythic themes for their corrupting erotic content. By the time Themistius made his remarks, the Church castigated theater as a whole, not because of its pagan content or because it presented Christian imagery in an unacceptable manner, if at all, but because theater presented an idea of human identity as a variety of "masks" or "other selves" that are in tension with the Christian theological doctrine of a single, "true" self in which God resides. Yet the Church, faced with managing the constant threat of schisms, found it more practical to condemn theater abstractly than to seek to suppress it altogether. How, then, did pantomime maintain its focus on "deviant" erotic performance, as Lada-Richards puts it, without a pagan rationale?

Perhaps pantomimes maintained their repertoires and traditions of voluptuous movements and poses but no longer wore masks that depicted mythic figures; instead, they wore masks that portrayed "neutral" but theatrically engaging identities. In this regard, the drawing of the fourth century plate or lid discussed by Otto Jahn in 1867 is provocative [Figure 41]. Jahn observes that it is difficult to determine which of the thirteen figures depicted are wearing masks, and only the bearded figure in the upper right clearly wears a mask similar to one of the masks depicted in the lower left corner. If, indeed, an aim of the image is to obscure distinctions between masks and faces, then it is possible a feature of late fourth century theatrical performance was the use of highly realistic masks that did not evoke recognizable mythic figures but some kind of mysterious, "other," contemporary person inhabiting the body of the performer. Jahn says that

Luigi Lanzi (1732-1810) was wrong to claim that the disk shows a Bacchic rite (1867: 74). He proposes, rather, that the image depicts three separate "tragic scenes" of a theatrical performance (75). The upper row, like the bottom row, presents four figures, with the leftmost female looking over her shoulder at the scene before or behind her. The middle pair in each row features one female urging another toward the right, apparently toward the rightmost figure, who is male in the top row and female in the bottom. The rightmost female in the bottom row covers her face with her hand, and it may be that, in theatrical performance, the same person played this figure and the rightmost male figure in the top row, and this may also be the case with the other figures in those two rows. Two pairs of masks flank the figures on the bottom, while a strange device flanks the figures on the top. Jahn supposes that this device is a musical instrument, possibly a water organ, although this conjecture requires more argumentation than he provides (76). What is more evident is that the top row echoes the bottom row, although it is not clear if the right pair of masks is male or female. All of the figures wear long-sleeved garments, an attribute associated with eastern ("Palmyrene") rather than western imperial fashions (cf. Sebesta 1994: 164, 168). In the middle row, four women carrying torches swarm around a woman running or dancing without torches; the leftmost figure brandishes only one torch while the other three women hold a torch in each hand. All of the women have cloth sashes or capes attached to their dresses, and these flutter to create a dancelike movement. Jahn says the torchbearers are "pursuing" the woman without the torches, although the artist dramatically complicates this perception by having the torchless woman extend her arms between the pairs of torches held by the figures on her left and right. In the theater, a dance with torches would be a fascinating acrobatic stunt: for Jahn, the dancers vaguely evoke Errinyes, but he acknowledges that nothing in the imagery connects to any "known mythological scene" (76). The inscrutable symbolism of the picture may remind other viewers of the alluring crypticity of the murals at the Villa of Mysteries in Pompeii, except that the plate projects a more personal than cultic symbolism, as if the viewer witnesses episodes from the life of a unique female character, who perhaps experiences a sacrificial fate. But the drawing provides a glimpse of what a non-pagan, not explicitly Christian tragic theatrical performance might have looked like in the late fourth century, a performance involving highly refined realism of masks,

idiosyncratically symbolic poses, pantomiming of "dark" or mysterious movements (such as urging a bound or kneeling person toward someone more powerful), acrobatic stunt dancing, and a fragmented narrative in which scenes "echo" or compare with each other rather than grow out of each other. Even though it depicts no overt sexual actions or nudity, the image nevertheless exudes a powerful, eerie erotic aura in its depiction of so many female figures (possibly played by men in a theatrical performance) implicated in sadomasochistic tensions, magnified further by the contrast between the woman kneeling while raising her torches and the dancers swirling with torches.

The image suggests how pantomime could move in a new direction, adapt to the ascending Christian reality, and prosper, after 391, for over a hundred more years. It was necessary for pantomime to move away from the pagan mythology that had sustained it for nearly four centuries and which by the end of the fourth century found its vast decadence best represented, perhaps, by the death-haunted scraps of fussy versification by Ausonius (310-395) and the tedious, extravangantly picturesque inventory of mythic escapades in the now very remote fantasy lands of Nonnos's never-finished *Dionysiaca* (ca. 400). The relation between Ausonius and Nonnos is somewhat analogous to the relation between pantomime and its mythic source material. Pantomime presented fragments, scenes, mere moments from an enormous repository of mythic identities, a seemingly endless network of connections between gods and humans that no single, coherent narrative could contain. Or rather: pantomime demonstrated that the only way humans could shape the mythic cosmos into a narrative was through an equally enormous compilation of performance fragments. The mythic cosmos was too big for any performance or performer. The cosmic "story" of human interaction with divine forces unfolded through each pantomime choosing selected scenes from the enormous repository in competition with other pantomimes choosing selected scenes. As more pantomimes appeared, the range of mythic scenes expanded. Over the years, over decades, over centuries, more and more scenes of the cosmic "story" got told through manifold performers throughout the Empire. But no single performer, no single spectator, no single audience, no single generation, no single era, and no single place could ever see or even know the whole story. Christianity, of course, provided a simpler or more compact narrative of

God's relation to humans, but it was a story only the Church allowed to be told.

By the end of the fourth century, paganism had sunk into an engulfing decadence from which it could never recover, but it took a long time to die out. In spite of the imperial ban on sponsoring any pagan entertainments after 382, in some more remote regions of the Empire, it seems that pantomime still relied on pagan imagery to attract audiences, even though audiences proclaimed themselves Christians. Over a hundred years later, around 500, the Syrian theologian and bishop Jacob of Serugh (451-521) delivered several homilies condemning pagan themes in the performances of mimes and pantomimes. In Homily 3 of "Against the Spectacles," he lists the evil attributes of theater: "dancing, amusement and music, the miming of lying takes; Teaching which destroys the mind; responses (or choruses, chants) which are not true; troublesome and confused sounds; melodies which attract children; ordered and cherished songs, skillful chants, lying canticles (composed) according to the folly which the Greeks invented" (Moss 1935: 105). Pantomime, he adds, is the "mother of all lasciviousness," "a spring of licentiousness," "a sport which encourages children to forget admonition; a net which ensnares boys in the *ways* of a vicious life. It is a disordered foster-mother who teaches her sons to commit fornication; a teacher who instructs her pupils in the stories of idols. It is a mimer of wanton sights concerning the bands of the goddesses; the preceptor in whose stories there are many gods" (Moss 1935: 105-106). In Homily 4, in a passage deemed corrupt, he asks, in whom does Truth find its most confident representative, "he who is the preacher in the house of God or he who is the mimer of idols?" (107). He goes on to ask rhetorically of his Christian audience: "Ought we then to believe in female goddesses? Dost thou consent to cherish gods who love adultery? Is thine ear willing that the report of the house of Zeus the adulterer should fall on it? Is it well for thee when thou seeest the depravity of female idols? Canst thou endure, being the servant of Jesus, to take delight in Apollo?" (108). These remarks, among many others like it in the Homilies, might incline one to believe that pagan themes were still very much alive on the stage, at least in Syria, even though the imperial government had ceased to fund public spectacles featuring pagan themes for well over a century. Were there any pagan aristocrats by this time, even in Syria, who cared to spend money sponsoring public performances featuring the adventures of pagan gods?

Charlotte Roueché observes that Jacob's linking of theater to pagan mythology was "a *topos* of Christian criticisms" of it, and it "would therefore be rash to assume that the stories presented to the people of the towns of Syria—whether by mimes or pantomimes—were limited to the pure canon of Greek mythology" (2009: 178-179). But perhaps the issue is not so much the extent to which pantomime performance was "limited to the pure canon of Greek mythology" but the extent to which pantomime performance even included it. Jacob complains about scenes or characters that the readers might presume he had seen performed on Syrian stages. He condemns Zeus, who "became famous through adultery, and committed fornication with many women," which then compels the bishop to describe the "various forms" by which Zeus was "seeking a *stratagem* for his lust" (1935: 110). He uses the phrase "they say" to describe the scenes he blames the pantomimes for performing. "This adulterer, they say, begat all the gods" (110). "Once, they say, he became a bird, and committed fornication with one woman, as he desired" (110). "They say another god made himself like unto a he-goat that he might commit fornication in that very form [...]." (110). "And another, they say, had a sweet-toned harp [...]" (110). "And the god, they say, was running, but was not overtaking the girl [...]" (111). "According to their tale, a damsel was conquering the gods in running [...]" (111). "And afterwards, they say, the earth overthrew the god" (111). "Another, they say, the daughter of the gods, on account of lust overflowed in sleep, and she was received in a shell-fish [...]" (111). "The father of all the gods, they say, was committing immorality with men and women [...]" (112). Does Jacob mean that pantomimes "say" these things or spectators of the shows say these things or that anyone with knowledge of Greek mythology says them? He does make more explicit connections between the mythic stories and pantomime: "For if he, the flute of Satan (sc. the actor) does not take his origin from paganism, why then does he introduce the story of Artemis? If he is not the friend of the idols and the lover of dead images, wherefore by his gestures does he call to mind the goddess of the Ephesians? [...] But if he is certain there is only one God, wherefore (does he praise) many gods by means of *crowds* of spectacles? [...] he mimes the stories of the gods, and burns perfumes at the plays, in order that he may do great honour for tales that are true for him" (106). "The mimer of spectacles meditates on the gods" (109). "Shall these things be called virtuous? But if not wherefore are they mimed?" (111). "He who maddens you with dancing makes use of these

tales; from here (sc. these tales) are his mimings [...].” “These are his plots which, even though he is silent he makes manifest. He is veiled and mimes and ye exult with shouting” (112). Moreover, Jacob does “not circle over all the tales of mimings, so that I might not waste the time with empty and loathsome inventions.” “By means of these outward gestures, these stories are made manifest [...]” (112). However, it was necessary for Jacob to connect pantomime with pagan mythology because any attachment to pagan images that his Christian audience pursued was proof that it had failed to achieve a true Christian identity, which would probably not be the case if he connected what the pantomimes performed to life itself, with all of its adulteries and sexual peculiarities. The real reason for his hostility toward theater is not the pagan “stories” but that which he presumes the stories have inspired: adulterous, perverse, or brazen eroticism. Pagan mythology and theater are merely part of a “plot” devised by “Satan” to corrupt human souls, and imperfect Christians fail to see the paganism embedded even in the performance of a pantomime who “is certain there is only one God.” Most likely, though, pantomimes adapted mythic scenes to accommodate audience expectations arising from pantomime’s reputation for producing an intensely erotic atmosphere. Like Theodora performing Leda and the Swan in Constantinople, the pantomimes in Syria performed variants of mythic scenes, not to stimulate belief in a mythic cosmos, but as pretexts for showing what the audience wanted to see—strange, passionate, or glamorous forms of sexual behavior. The sexual spectacle on the stage was the basis for sustaining the auxiliary business of pantomime ensembles: providing sexual favors, access to sexual opportunities, in exchange for money, privileges, or appointments. In Constantinople and other large cities, this auxiliary business operated in conjunction with the factions attached to the pantomimes. But Jacob makes no reference to factions, and it appears from Jacob’s homilies that the “lascivious” shows he complains about were not the result of factional sponsorship. It therefore is likely that Jacob describes shows put on by pantomime ensembles touring Syrian towns like Edessa and Batnae (Serugh), where Jacob became bishop in 519.

It was evident, however, that denunciations of pantomime by Church leaders like Jacob of Serugh and John Chrysostom did little to undermine the enthusiasm of Christians for pantomime performance. Richard Lim has explained how fifth century imperial managers of public spectacles in Carthage and Milan struggled to recruit actors to sustain a

complex and demanding schedule of theatrical entertainments that sometimes consumed over a quarter of the days in the year. Even by the end of the fourth century, "the dearth of actors and actresses was already a problem," because so many, in converting to Christianity, had abandoned the stage. The shortage of female actors was especially acute. To recruit more actors, the Emperors Honorius and Theodosius in 414 issued a decree to recall female actors and introduced policies to prevent actors from leaving their profession; a tribune, the *tribunus voluptatum*, oversaw the operation of the shows in a way that would protect the actors from censure or stigmatization from the Church. This strategy was apparently successful. Much later (509), Theodoric appointed a *tribunus voluptatum* to act as a "guardian" of the actors, "for the exhibition of the 'pleasures of the people' must be administered with a certain discipline. [...] For the stage actors do not seek their own enjoyment so much as they compel their souls to serve the happiness of others while they surrender the control over their own bodies to a perverted way of life" (Lim 1996: 165, 169, 172). Pantomime challenged the authority of the Church to define a healthy Christian morality and to exert control over the lives of Christians. Any challenge to the authority of the Church contained within it the potential for producing schism within Christianity. Schisms prevented the Church from consolidating power great enough to compel broad social change throughout the Empire, which for Church leaders meant the enactment and enforcement of laws that expanded the resources of the Church and created a "holy" condition of existence for Christians. For the Church patriarchs, it was not enough to have Christians running the imperial government; it was necessary to have a government aligned with the Church's goals and hierarchy, even if it was, in the fourth century, not yet clear who was in control of the Church or indeed what constituted the "true" Church. As long as the imperial government pursued a policy of religious toleration, it was possible to have a vast empire of Christianity without a Church at all, and then Christianity would become just as diffuse and limited in its power to bring salvation or remptive metamorphosis as the paganism it replaced. In the fourth century, the Church consolidated its power through its efforts to rid the Empire of paganism and other non-Christian doctrines (Manicheanism, Zoroastrism, Judaism), which by the latter half of the century meant ending altogether anything that might resemble a policy of religious toleration. In his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (ca. 439), Socrates

Scolasticus (ca. 380-440) described the strife, after Constantine had died, within the Church, between the Church and non-Christians, between the imperial government and the Church, between Christians and the Church, and between Christians and the government. Violence apparently flared up as much in relation to conflict within the Church over Arianism as in relation to conflict between Christians and pagans, even before most citizens considered themselves Christian. In 341, when Bishop Athanasius returned to Alexandria from a synod in Antioch in which "confederates of Eusebius" had denounced him, "a tumult had been excited on his entrance and many were killed in the riot," "a tumult raised by partisans of George the Arian" (1886: 83, 90). The same year, in Constantinople, violence erupted when Arian bishops had designated Macedonius I to replace Eusebius, while the orthodox congregations had selected Paul. Holding court in Antioch, the Emperor Constantius sent his genral, Hermogenes, to subdue the tumult and send Paul into exile. Instead, "the people became exasperated as is usual in such cases; and making a desperate attack upon him, they set his house on fire, and after dragging him through the city, they at last put him to death" (88). The Emperor, however, refused to appoint Macedonius as Bishop of the Church, because of the cleric's involvement in the death of Hermogenes and other violent activities. But the conflict was not over. The following year, in Constantinople, the orthodox congregations again selected Paul to become head of the Church, a decision that enraged the Arian Emperor Constantius, who by this time favored the Arian Macedonius. Constantius sent his Praetorian Prefect Philip to install Macedonius as head of the Church. Philip sent Paul into exile and organized a spectacular procession that brought Macedonius to the church, an event that attracted a huge crowd. But then, "an irrational panic seized the multitude and even the soldiers themselves; for as the assemblage was so numerous and no room to admit the passage of the prefect and Macedonius was found, the soldiers attempted to thrust aside the people by force." The carnage was monstrous: "about 3150 persons were massacred on this occasion" (91). As Bishop of Constantinople from 342 to 346 and then from 351 to 360, Macedonius was not averse to using violence to suppress his many enemies: "Many were punished with exile; some died under the torture; and others were put to death while they were being led into exile. These atrocities were exercised throughout all the eastern cities, but especially at Constantinople" (110). He initiated vast persecutions

against not only Catholics but Novations as well and employed horrifying tortures to compel people to become Arians (130). "Such were the exploits of Macedonius on behalf of Christianity, consisting of murders, battles, incarcerations, and civil wars: proceedings which rendered him odious not only to the objects of his persecution, but even to his own party. He became obnoxious also to the emperor on these accounts [. . .]" (132).

In 361, Christians retrieved bones excavated from the ruins of a pagan temple and displayed them in "a kind of triumphal procession," which enraged pagans, who attacked the Christians: "some they killed with the sword, others with clubs and stones; some they strangled with ropes, others they crucified, purposely inflicting this last kind of death in contempt of the cross of Christ." Then the pagans "dragged George [the Arian] out of the church, fastened him to a camel, and when they had torn him to pieces, they burnt him together with the camel" (151). In 366, following the death of Liberius, Bishop of Rome, violence broke out when supporters of Bishop Damasus clashed with supporters of the Arian Bishop Ursinus over who would become Pope, and "many lives were sacrificed in this contention; and many of the clergy as well as laity were punished on that account by Maximin, the prefect of the city" (211). In 391, Alexandria experienced intense religious violence when Christians destroyed the Serapeum, and "The pagans of Alexandria, and especially the professors of philosophy, were unable to repress their rage at this exposure, and exceeded in revengeful ferocity their outrages on a former occasion: for with one accord, at a preconcerted signal, they rushed impetuously upon the Christians, and murdered every one they could lay hands on" (234). Socrates describes numerous other incidents in the fourth and early fifth centuries of public "tumult" and disorder arising from hostility between religious factions in, among yet other places, Rome (129), Seleucia (135), Constantinople again (194, 231, 265, 277), Milan (211), Ephesus (268), and Alexandria (286), including the murder in 415 of the female philosopher Hypatia by a Christian mob, incited by monks, who accused her of paganism and of conspiring with the city prefect, Orestes, who refused to acknowledge Cyril as the new Patriarchate of Alexandria (292-294) because of the bishop's efforts to wrest control of secular authority.

But Alexandria, which "never ceases from its turbulence without bloodshed," experienced even greater religious violence in 415, when Orestes announced, in the theater, new laws regarding "theatrical

amusements," which the Jews opposed, because of their enthusiasm on the Sabbath for indulging that "evil that has become very popular in almost all cities, a fondness for dancing exhibitions." Although the Jews were, Socrates says, "always hostile toward the Christians they were roused to still greater opposition against them on account of the dancers." Cyril's agent in the audience, Hierax, applauded the laws. "When the Jews observed this person in the theater, they immediately cried out that he had come there for no other purpose than to excite sedition among the people." Orestes seized Hierax and subjected him to torture in the theater, and when "Cyril, on being informed of this, sent for the principal Jews, and threatened them with the utmost severities unless they desisted from their molestation of the Christians. The Jewish populace on hearing these menaces, instead of suppressing their violence, only became more furious, and were led to form conspiracies for the destruction of the Christians." The Jews "therefore sent persons into the streets to raise an outcry that the church named after Alexander was on fire. Thus many Christians on hearing this ran out, some from one direction and some from another, in great anxiety to save their church. The Jews immediately fell upon and slew them." The Christians responded the next day when Cyril, "accompanied by an immense crowd of people," went to the synagogues "and took them away from [the Jews], and drove the Jews out of the city, permitting the multitude to plunder their goods" (291-292). Although Socrates blames pantomime for offending Christian feeling and for inflaming religious hostilities, he does not say that the pantomimes of Alexandria incited either Christians or Jews to violence, nor does he accuse the pantomimes of being non-Christian.

The reason for recounting all these incidents of religious violence is to clarify the role of the pantomimes and the factions attached to them in the religious issues that shaped Christian identity in the late Empire. Socrates refers to "tumults" and public violence involving crowds, "partisans," mobs, and "many" who were Christians or pagans or Arians, but he is hardly specific about the demographic composition of these throngs beyond general sectarian affiliations. Cameron contends that the hippodrome factions were not significant in stirring up religious violence: "the factions did not either initiate or even dominate the sort of violent behavior for which they became so conspicuous. They merely indulged in it for its own sake, in pursuance of their own petty and pointless rivalries" (1976: 291). Rather, he says, "it was the monks, not the factions, who

elevated urban violence into one of the major problems of the late Roman world. Above all, perhaps, it was the monks who accustomed both the inhabitants and the authorities of late Roman cities almost to expect a certain level of violence during popular disorders" (1976: 291). But Cameron doesn't actually say that the hippodrome factions were not involved in religious violence. Instead, he argues that 1) the hippodrome factions never espoused or represented a particular religious affiliation, at least throughout the fourth and fifth centuries; 2) the factions did not necessarily share the same religious affiliation as the emperors; 3) the factions never fought with each other over religious issues; and 4) by about 500, the factions were all aligned with the Orthodox doctrine, "since one of the main purposes of the religious side of the hippodrome ceremonial was to serve as an incentive to religious *solidarity,*" although the Blues displayed a bias toward the Monophysitism favored by Theodora (1976: 140-153). Cameron regards the factions as similar to today's soccer hooligans, but actually they seem more like quasi-gangster organizations, which doesn't mean that they weren't useful to people with political agendas. To reprise: The factions were powerful social networks that provided access to opportunities for members, including some appointments by the emperor, most likely in relation to aspects of the entertainment industry (Malalas 1986: 202). The motives for joining one faction or another depended on the values, friends, and affiliations associated with the faction, which, as a social network, brought members access to sex, rackets, and business enterprises operated by the faction. At best, emperors had an ambivalent attitude toward the factions. On the one hand, factions were useful in generating exciting acclamations and arranging appealing entertainments in the hippodromes and theaters. On the other hand, the Blue and Green factions engaged in criminal activities and public disorders that severely challenged the power of emperors to control them, especially by the beginning of the sixth century. While religious riots, incited largely by fanatical monks and bishops, occurred throughout the fourth and fifth centuries, turbulent activities by the hippodrome factions occurred most evidently toward the end of the fifth century and into the sixth. Cameron rejects the idea of a connection between religious and hippodrome violence. Nevertheless, around 489 in Antioch the Greens, who were "responsible for many riots and murders in the city at that time," "began a fight with the Blues" in the hippodrome, which escalated to an attack on the governor, who resigned.

The Greens then burned down a synagogue, "because the Jews were on the side of the Blues" (Malalas 1986: 218). A monk, who "had shut himself in a tower on the wall" of the city and "spoke through a window to those who came to pay their respects," urged the Greens to attack the Jews—"they rioted because of the monk." When the Emperor Zeno heard of these actions, which included digging up corpses in the Jewish cemetery and burning them, he is said to have replied, "They ought to have burned live Jews, too" (Malalas: 1986: 218-219). In 495, again in Antioch, the Greens attacked the governor in the hippodrome: "there were many fatalities and serious fires, and the four dancers were exiled" (Malalas 1986: 220). Meanwhile, in Constantinople, around 505, the Greens appealed to Emperor Anastasius in the hippodrome to release several of their members whom the city prefect had arrested for throwing stones. When one of the Greens threw a stone at the Emperor, the bodyguard hacked him to death, which caused "the crowd" to become violent, setting fires and destroying much property. "After many had been arrested and punished," the Emperor appointed "a patron of the Greens" to become city prefect (Malalas 1986: 221-222). Then in 507, yet again in Antioch, the Greens plundered and burned down a Jewish synagogue "and massacred many people." Anastasius sent a high official (*comes Orientem*) to restore order. One of his deputies attempted to arrest members of the Greens, who started to riot. The rioters fled into a church, but the deputy pursued them there and stabbed and then beheaded the leader of the rioters, "with the result that the holy sanctuary was drenched with blood." The Greens amassed and attacked both the police and the Blues who were supporting the police. The Greens prevailed and invaded the basilica of Rufinus and the basilica of Zenodotos, which they burned down with other buildings. They murdered the deputy in a gruesome manner and drove the *comes Orientem* out of Antioch. The Emperor then appointed an Antiochene to deal with the violence, and "this man brought vengeance and fear to the city" (1986: 222-223). In 523, with Justin as emperor, the Blues "rioted in all the cities" of the Empire, committing murders and attacking government officials "in each city," including the slaying of Hypatius, "a man of no mean station," "in the sanctuary of Sophia" (Procopius, *Secret History* IX.35; 1935: 115). Apparently the appointment of special prefects in Constantinople and Antioch restored order "in all the cities" and punished many of the participants. The Constantinople prefect executed the wealthy ringleader of the violence,

which displeased Justin, who replaced the prefect. The major consequence of this incident was the prohibition of "spectacles" and the banishment of pantomimes from all areas of the Empire except Alexandria (Malalas 1986: 235). Procopius contends that the Emperor's nephew, Justinian, had a hand in organizing the violence as part of his plan to intimidate all those who might challenge Justin's designation of him as heir to the throne, while the Blues assumed that "it was destined that before long they themselves should rise to the control of the affairs of the Romans" (*Secret History* IX.35-39; 1935: 115-117). Regardless of whether this is true or not, both the Blues and the Greens apparently expected more of Justinian when he became emperor than what he gave them. In January 532, when Justinian refused to release prisoners from the Greens and the Blues who had been condemned in Byzantion for terrible crimes, possibly murder, both factions rioted in Constantinople, "killing indiscriminately" and burning many buildings, including the hippodrome, and attempted to overthrow Justinian and replace him with the reluctant Hypatius. As discussed earlier, the so-called Nika riot was the largest ever public disorder instigated by the factions. Justinian (reigned 527-565) felt that imperial power no longer had any credibility unless he destroyed the Blues and Greens and almost annihilated them altogether in Constantinople; so, with Theodora's encouragement, he ordered his general, Belsarius, to deal appropriately with the rioters who had gathered in the hippodrome, and perhaps as many as 30,000 people were killed (Malalas 1986: 275-280; Procopius, *History of the Wars* I.24; 1914: 219-239). But when this event occurred, the pantomimes had already been proscribed throughout the Empire and no longer held appointments to any hippodrome factions. The idea that the pantomimes ever directly incited the factions to violence is at the very least questionable, as is the idea, proposed by Cameron, that a theatrical contingent brought violence into the factions when the imperial government merged the theater factions with the hippodrome factions. That integration took place long before the factional riots of the late fifth century. That is not to say that the pantomimes did not have a connection to factional violence, but rather, that the connection requires a different explanation.

Thoughout the fourth and into the fifth centuries, religious riots regularly troubled the imperial government. The hippodrome factions were "quiet" during this period—the sources do not identify them as responsible for any major public disorders. During the fourth and into the fifth

centuries, the great majority of riots motivated by religious feeling arose out of the conflict between Arianism and Orthodoxy. A doctrine developed by Arius of Alexandria (ca. 256-336), Arianism preached that Jesus, "the Son," was subordinate and obedient to God the Father, for "there was a time when the Son was not," (Socrates Scolasticus, *Ecclesiastical History*, V; 1886: 23). Jesus therefore had a beginning and an end, was not eternal, and therefore was a human messenger of God rather than the embodiment of God. Orthodox theologians denounced this doctrine and declared that the Son was "the same being" or "of the same being" as God and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is an eternal being, who appeared as a human but has always lived without beginning or end. Emperor Constantine (reigned 306-337) initially was hostile to Arianism and ordered the destruction of all Arian's theological writings and the execution of anyone harboring such writings. But having underestimated the strength of Arian sentiment among Christians, he introduced the policy of toleration. Upon his death, his three sons agreed to divide the Roman Empire between themselves, but they were not able to agree on how to do that nor did they share the same view of Christian doctrine. Constantine II (reigned 337-340), who was the co-emperor of the Western Empire, supported trinitarianism as promulgated by the controversial Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria (ca. 296-373), while Constans (reigned 337-350), who was co-emperor over Italy, Dalmatia and North Africa, before also assuming control over the Western Empire upon the death of Constantine II, favored the trinitarian doctrine sanctioned by the Council of Nicea in 325. However, his brother, Constantius (reigned 337-361), co-emperor of the Eastern Empire and then sole emperor of the entire Empire, adopted the doctrine of semi-Arianism, which basically eliminated the concept of the Holy Spirit while admitting the eternal identity of the Son, although this attempt at a compromise position, which he sought to impose upon the Church through councils he convened, actually intensified conflict within the Church. But all three brothers wound up pursuing some variation of the policy of toleration insofar as they did not forbid altogether particular religious creeds. Constantius's successor, Julian (reigned 361-363), who repudiated his Christian upbringing in favor of restoring paganism, expanded the policy of toleration, but of course he tried to use the imperial government to the advantage of those he assumed shared his complicated, Neo-Platonist paganism. Jovian (reigned 363-364) restored Christianity as the state religion, while his successors, the co-emperors Valentinian

(reigned 364-375) and Valens (reigned 364-378) represented contradictory theological perspectives, with Valentinian favoring trinitarianism and Valens a supporter of Arianism. Facing huge, manifold threats to the Empire, the co-emperors indifferently or clumsily maintained some semblance of the eroding policy of toleration, probably because they assumed such a policy would prevent religious conflicts from becoming as much a menace to the Empire as the escalating series of invasions, usurpers, and rebellious tribes they were struggling to subdue. Gratian (reigned 375-383) at first struggled to strengthen the policy of toleration (Socrates Scolasticus, *Ecclesiastic History* V.2; 1886: 220). But he soon perceived that the policy of toleration exacerbated rather than dissipated conflicts within the Church; he therefore convened a synod of Orthodox bishops who repudiated Arianism and issued decrees that allowed for the confiscation of Arian properties and the expulsion of Arians at least from the East, although at that time (382) a majority of the Eastern population may not even have been Orthodox (Socrates Scolasticus, *Ecclesiastic History* V.2, V.7; 1886: 220, 224-226). At the same time, Gratian (and Theodoisus) forbade any further expenditure on spectacles or entertainments featuring pagan themes or iconography. The Eastern Empire was now completely under the control of persons professing Orthodoxy, while Arianism migrated westward, reversing the situation that prevailed when the sons of Constantine divided the Empire among themselves forty-five years earlier.

During all this time, the Empire, especially in the east, regularly experienced religious riots, as described previously, as well as numerous, sometimes murderous conspiracies by religious factions against each other, while factions pronounced anathemas, excommunications, expulsions, exiles, confiscations, and condemnations upon each other with almost maniacal zealousness. The numerous councils convened by emperors or the clergy to resolve the conflict between Trinitarians and Arians had failed to unify the Church, in large part because neither faction, having no army or police under its control, could not effectively enforce decrees issued at the councils on those who rejected the decrees. Intense, powerful, but contradictory feelings in relation to the nature of God and Christ divided the entire Empire. Assailed by various military threats to the Empire, emperors did not want to send armies away from border regions to quell religious unrest within their own subjects. Emperors favored the policy of toleration insofar as it kept the Church weak, regardless of whether Arians

or Trinitarians ran the imperial government. Clergy on either side might incite their followers to violence and shameful acts, but no side could completely destroy the other or defeat a prefect with a well-trained, armed police unit. A divided Church meant that the public saw the imperial government rather than the Church as the primary power shaping the lives and affairs of citizens. The Arians, as the "heretical" sect, displayed less inclination than orthodox Christians to see the necessity of a unified Church. Orthodox clergy realized even before the Council of Nicea that it was not enough to have orthodox believers running the Empire as long those serving the emperor regarded the imperial government as a "higher power" than the Church. From the perspective of the orthodox clergy, a unified Church entailed compulsion, the enactment of imperial laws that regulated and enforced theological doctrines. The unity of the Church was synonymous with the unity of a religious doctrine and imperial power. To achieve this goal within a heterodox Christian environment that was constantly vulnerable to schism, violence was unavoidable—the hyper-intense feeling of belonging to no higher power than the Church must be released and its destructive consequences understood as a sign of God's profound displeasure with those who failed to embrace the supreme power of the Trinity. Monks and bishops grasped that it was easier to deliver sermons that inflamed their followers to violence against their opponents than it was to deliver sermons that persuaded their opponents to become followers. The monks did not need an alliance with hippodrome factions to launch riots. Indeed, it was not to their advantage to develop any partnership with the hippodrome and pantomime cultures they so fervently denounced in their sermons as the work of Satan. In any case, the sources do not connect the hippodrome factions to a religious element in a riot until the incident of 489, in Antioch, when the Greens, attacking the Jews for their support of the Blues, consulted the monk in the wall. But in this incident, the Greens had already begun their riot, and this visit with the monk merely served to sanction their violence against the Jews. In regard to the incident at the theater in Alexandria in 415, in which a riot broke out in response to the prefect's edicts about theatrical amusements and pantomimes, hippodrome factions receive no mention at all in Socrates or Malalas. The orthodox clergy measured and amplified its power to pressure the imperial government into unity with Orthodoxy by the extent to which it regularly initated violence against Arians, Jews, pagans, and heretical

sects with impunity, with insuperable ferocity, and without the help of morally compromised partners like the hippodrome factions, whom emperors never trusted anyway. Like the martyrs they glorified, orthodox clergy displayed a much greater willingness to die for their Trinitarian beliefs than any other religious group was willing to die for its doctrine.

In 378, an invading army of Goths destroyed the Roman army at the Battle of Adrianople, about 200 miles from Constantinople. This catastrophe signified that the policy of toleration no longer allowed the imperial government to strengthen its forces against invaders. The very young Emperor Gratian saw total imperial commitment to Orthodoxy as necessary to recovering the confidence and determination to defeat the invaders of the Empire and all those who would undermine faith in the imperial government. He and his successor Theodosius enacted laws in 382 and 391 that persecuted Arians, Jews, pagans, and heretics. Such laws did not end religious rioting incited by monks and controversial bishops, especially in Alexandria, but they did assure that the hippodrome administration, the pantomimes, and most likely also the factions associated with public spectacles adhered to Trinitarianism or at least professed Orthodoxy. For nearly a century, the hippodrome factions focused their energies on expanding their activities in the hippodrome, on building their shadowy business enterprises, and on collecting appointments, opportunities, and favors from the emperors, including protection from the Church, which never ceased to denounce the immorality of pantomime. They do not appear in the chronicles as significant sources of public violence. However, by the 480s, competition between the Blues and the Greens escalated into bitter conflicts beyond the realm of the hippodrome. In 489, the Greens in Antioch, feeling disfavored by the Emperor Zeno or perhaps by the governor, attacked the Blues and then the governor; six months later they "killed many" in the hippodrome before burning down a synagogue (Malalas 1986: 218). This was the beginning of a series of major riots involving hippodrome factions in Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, and then "all cities," as have been described already and which culminated in the monster Nika riot of 532 in Constantinople that decimated the Blues and Greens and resulted in the loss of many thousands of others. The Greens seemed to have been the more aggressive faction; they nurtured grievances against the emperor or the emperor's appointed governor, whom they believed favored the Blues in

relation to whatever opportunities they expected from the imperial government, even though Zeno and Anastasius did make gestures of accommodating the Greens in response to violence the Greens had initiated. The imperial bias toward the Blues is perhaps most evident in the fascinating hippodrome dialogue from 531 between the representatives of the Greens and the Blues and Emperor Justinian's Mandator, a complete translation of which appears in Cameron (1976: 319-322). In this dialogue, the Greens complain that the emperor is shutting them out of imperial appointments, allowing murderous conspiracies against the Greens to go unpunished, and accusing the Greens of having committed murders that are the work of others. But the Greens apparently had similar complaints and resentments well before 531, and they had released their discontent in mob violence and criminal plots that nevertheless had not succeeded in extorting a more profitable relation to the imperial government. The Blues, however, according to Procopius, were no less corrupt. They mostly and constantly engaged in criminal activities, and because "no attention was paid to the offenders by the city Government, the boldness of these men kept steadily rising to a great height" as people outside of the factions paid to avoid being killed by the Blues or bribing the Blues to kill enemies who sometimes did not even have a connection with the Greens. "And these things took place no longer in darkness or concealment, but at all hours of the day and in every part of the city, the crimes being committed, it might well be, before the eyes of the most notable men. For the wrongdoers had no need to conceal their crimes, for no dread of punishment lay upon them, nay, there even grew up a sort of zest for competitions among them, since they got up exhibitions of strength and manliness, in which they shewed that with a single blow they could kill any unarmed man who fell in their way, and no man longer dared to hope that he would survive among the perilous circumstances of daily life" (*Secret History*, 7.22-28; 1935: 85-87). Procopius describes other criminal schemes perpetrated by the Blues "at this time" (that is, 525-530), but his main point is that under Justinian the Blues enjoyed an expanding sense of impunity which the Greens also expected to enjoy, although he claims that Justinian owed the Blues their impunity because under Justin they intimidated those who might have challenged Justin's decision to make Justinian (reigned 527-565) his heir to the throne. But this gangster-style mode of civic disorder, though seemingly detached from religious issues that inflamed people to violence, should be

seen in the larger framework of Late Empire sectarian power politics that includes other public turbulences in the early sixth century that *were* emphatically religious in nature and the two failed rebellions of general Vitalian in 514. A religious motive sparked the rebellions. In 511, Emperor Anastatius announced his intention to add the phrase, "He who was crucified for us," which was a feature of some "eastern" churches, to the Trisagion prayer that includes the words, "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us." The new phrase indicated that Christ was mortal and suffered "for us," which contradicted the Trinitarian doctrine that Christ was eternal and transcended all suffering. The population of Constantinople "rioted violently," thinking that a Syrian official was responsible for inspiring Anastasius's announcement, and sought to replace Anastasius with a new emperor of their choosing. The hippodrome factions appear not to have played a role in the violence. In the hippodrome, Anastasius addressed the public with humility and succeeded in pacifying the crowd. But soon after, he ordered the arrest of persons responsible for murders and destruction caused by the riot, "and after countless numbers had been executed, excellent order and no little fear prevailed in every city of the Roman state" (Malalas 1986: 228). Vitalian saw the riot as an opportunity for a more systematic attempt to overthrow Anastasius, and in gathering the support of large military and popular forces, he denounced Anastasius's failure to uphold the Chalcedonean creed. But Anastasius was always skillful at disarming his opponents with gifts, generous offers, and suave rhetoric, and his deceptions proved disastrous for Vitalian. The religious riots of the fourth and fifth centuries demonstrated that Orthodoxy, even if it was a minority sector of the population in the Eastern Empire, could gain control of the Church and the imperial government if monks and their allies persisted in aligning their uncompromising beliefs with violent public activities that pressured the government to accommodate Orthodoxy and severely compromised the government's inclination to pursue conciliatory agreements between contentious sectors of the public. Riots were a successful strategy for asserting power, for compelling "unity" within the society and its political, religious, and cultural institutions. But this strategy depended on adherents who believed unto death in the absolute authority of a doctrine. The riots and rebellions that afflicted the Empire in the late fifth century and culminated in the Nika riot were in large part the work of new power-seekers—Vitalian, the

Blues and the Greens. They believed that by creating havoc in public on a larger and larger scale, they could extort from the government greater privileges and resources than they would otherwise ever receive from emperors whose preferred ambition was to curtail and indeed reduce the factions to at best an ornamental auxiliary status within the elaborate imperial ceremonial apparatus. The public disturbances of the late fourth and early fifth centuries were a reaction to the advent of a series of emperors—Zeno, Anastasius, Justus, and Justinian—who showed a rising determination to avoid any repetition of the turbulent Church strategy for asserting transforming power without imperial authority or without clear popular consensus. The hippodrome factions did not and could not have "faith" in the Emperor the way the Orthodox monks had faith in the doctrine of the absolute unity of God and Christ. This lack of faith, engineered by the emperors with treacherous cunning, doomed the undisciplined factional grasp for power in 532, even if at the time Justinian was not sure he had enough faith in himself to quell the unrest. In this sense, the sectarian and factional violence that wracked the Late Empire all arose from the schismatic conflict over the nature of Christ's identity. This conflict structured the organization of power within the society. It was not the factional violence itself that ended the pantomime culture; it was the destructive power of schism within the doctrine of Christ's identity that put an end to pantomime.

Schism, rather than mere sectarianism, is built into the doctrine that the Son is "of the same being" as the Father, because it is language that purposely prevents any unity of meaning, even though it explicitly constructs a unity of identity for the Father and the Son. It is a test of faith to believe in this unique power of God to create a being, Christ, who could assume a human form without being human, who could be "the same as the Father" without being the Father, and who could be the Son without being subordinate to the Father. Arianism taught that the Son is subordinate to the Father, he was a human being who "was begotten," lived, and then died, and he was a human who embodied God or His divinity rather than signified the eternal being of God, having no beginning or end. It is perhaps difficult nowadays to see how dangerous this doctrine seemed to the Trinitarian branch of Christianity, but in the fourth and fifth centuries Arianism represented an obstacle to the realization of a new concept of worldly power built around the unity of state and Church, which, as a

manifestation of God's power, were, so to speak, "of the same being." Trinitarianism taught that no human can ever be or become God and that God is beyond any possible "embodiment." Belief in Trinitarianism or Arianism defined one's identity and legitimized or sanctified power to control other lives. As long as Arianism in its manifold variations persisted, it was always possible for another human being to become God, for God to "beget" another Son, or indeed for God to construct an "alternative" path to salvation. The pantomimes had a long history of embodying gods and showing how humans carried within themselves the conflicts and passions of deities and external, "cosmic" powers beyond the control of those in whom the gods resided. A pleasure of pagan pantomime was seeing the beautiful metamorphosis of bodies when they "begat" gods and obscured the distinction between gods and humans. By the late fourth century, however, pantomime had adapted to the Christian reality and had abandoned pagan themes in favor of an extravagantly voluptuous eroticism that purported to embody what might now be called the divine mysteries of "nature." The Church therefore condemned pantomime for the deviant sexuality of its themes and performers, which nevertheless received state sponsorship because of pantomime's unique power to magnetize public attraction to the emperor and his generosity. With their mysterious, agitating performances of metamorphoses, pantomimes became experts at organizing glamourous imperial acclamations, which entailed attaching the pantomimes to hippodrome factions and mobilizing the factions in relation to the imperial ceremonial agenda. However, as long as the emperor sanctioned and sponsored pantomime performances, the public could still perceive the body as a site of a metamorphosis that enhanced one's access to imperial power, if not to God Himself. Imperial pantomime carried wthin it a residue of Arianism, a sense that the body contained more power or aspiration to power or connection to some "cosmic" power than the Church deemed healthy for its own good in its perpetual struggle to prevent schisms from fracturing Christianity and turning Christians against each other. Perhaps this idea of the body's power through theatrical metamorphosis encouraged the hippodrome factions to believe they were stronger than they proved to be. In this way the pantomimes had an oblique relation to the factional violence that supposedly led to the demise of pantomime culture, even though no evidence exists that directly links the pantomimes to the violence and even though factional violence continued

after the suppression of pantomime culture. But the Nika riot arose because the factions felt Justinian was stripping away their privileges, appointments, and status, and none of his efforts to placate them included restoring the pantomimes. For pantomime did not belong to the factions, the people, the aristocracy, or the Church; it belonged to the emperor, and the emperor decided the fate of pantomime according to his ambitions, not the Church's or anyone else's. This situation intersects with yet another variable: in 525, two years after the Blues rioted "in all the cities," Justinian, who was by then virtually co-emperor with Justin, married the former pantomime porn queen Theodora, a perfect example of how a humble and even stigmatized body could metamorphose into a figure of immense power. The banishment of the pantomimes coincided with the marriage, not with the riots of 522-523. A special law was necessary to permit the marriage, but more importantly, an imperial decree banning the pantomimes was necessary to foreclose any repetition of Theodora's metamorphosis, any belief that a person could dance his or her way to imperial power and thus become a threat to the emperor. Justinian could lose the pantomimes if he gained through marriage to one of them a long and successful reign, which indeed he did. This confluence of factors put an end to pantomime that was sudden and even violent to the extent that pantomime performance did operate autonomously within imperial society or outside of the turbulent schismatic struggles to control human identity, the violent relations of the hippodrome factions to the emperor and to the civic populations, and the emperor's almost absolute power to impose the "death" of a now ancient but now also potentially subversive art at a time when belief in the metamorphosis of the body had given way to a belief in its immutable "authenticity." Pantomime did not disappear because of Church hostility to it or because audiences no longer appreciated it. Pantomime disappeared because the Emperor decided through his marriage to signify a new kind of imperial authority over sexuality, which perhaps achieved further manifestation through his quite vicious persecution of homosexual clergy in 528 (Malalas 1986: 251), through Theodora's efforts to release prostitutes from brothels (Procopius, *Secret History*, 17.5), and through he and his wife's complex relation to the equally strange and powerful marriage of his great general Belisarius (505-565) and Antonia (484-567?).

After 525, nothing more is heard about the pantomimes except for a curious and very lonely remark in the *Eccelsiastical History* (ca. 589)

written by John of Ephesus. John claims that in 588, Gregory, the Patriarch of Antioch from 571 to 593, traveled to Constantinople to answer "long deferred" charges concerning his luxurious life, his sexual indiscretions, his supposed pagan inclinations, and his unpopularity with the citizens. Gregory brought with him many expensive gifts for "the whole senate, every man and woman of rank, and all churchmen," with the result that he was acquitted of all charges and instead treated with "great honour." "With the view of appeasing and quieting his people," Gregory asked the Emperor Maurice (reigned 582-602) to build a hippodrome in Antioch, and "he even took with him from the capital a troop of pantomimists," "wherewith to erect this church of Satan" (John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History*, V.17; 1860: 225-227). John, however, was intensely biased against Gregory and perhaps eager to believe much of the scandalous conduct ascribed to Gregory by the many enemies he had gained while making his diocese the largest property owner in Antioch. Evagrius Scolasticus, in his *Ecclesiastical History* (ca. 593), presents a different version of Gregory's visit to Constantinople, on which Evagrius accompanied him. He describes Gregory as a man "in intellect and spiritual virtue absolutely supreme among all, most energetic in whatever he embarked on, invulnerable to fear, and most unsusceptible to yielding or cowering before power" (Evagrius 2000: 262). He ascribes the charges against Gregory to the governor, Asterius, who in Antioch gathered supporters among the upper class, "the popular element, and those who practiced trades in the city," as well as the Blues and the Greens. The Emperor replaced Asterius and summoned Gregory to a synod in Constantinople. Gregory presented his defense before "the patriarchs of each place," "the sacred senate, and many of the most holy metropolitans." This tribunal acquitted him "after many conflicts" (Evagrius 2000: 296-297). Evagrius does not mention Gregory receiving any pantomimes, nor does he even refer to Maurice building a hippodrome in Antioch at Gregory's request. But Evagrius is also intensely biased: he worked for Gregory and he writes panegyrically about him and Maurice. Whether or not Gregory brought pantomimes to Antioch therefore remains maddeningly unverifiable, and the assertion that he did may simply have been a further attempt to impugn a man who seemed exceptionally skillful at outwitting his many resentful adversaries. If it is true that he brought a pantomime troop to Antioch, then somehow vestiges of pantomime culture survived through the decades in Constantinople under the clandestine protection of

the emperors and, most ironically, an upper clergy that was somehow immune to any damage from their association with or pleasure in this art. But the pantomimes would have been a gift from the Emperor.

Summary of Pantomime's Evolution in the Roman Empire

An emperor facilitated the introduction of pantomime into the Roman Empire and an emperor ended pantomime in the Empire. Pantomime was an art that prospered in an imperial world. It was a dynamic art that evolved primarily in relation to competitive pressures exerted by pantomimes themselves. In Alexandria and in the Hellenistic period, before pantomime came to Rome, the pantomime performer probably sang and danced the mythic roles. In Rome, however, this unity of voice and movement appeared constraining and limited both the expressive power of song and the signifying power of the body. Bathyllus and Pylades built their unique and popular performance personas around the concept of the voice coming from other bodies than the pantomime's. With them, pantomime was an exclusively solo performance. When these two achieved fame, pantomime was the work of professionals who established their credentials to perform by graduating from schools and affiliating with a network or guild of appropriately educated performers, mentors, and teachers. These professionals performed for money and developed their repertoires in relation to an academic curriculum that presumed to define the scope and limits of the art. The rivalry between Bathyllus and Pylades further consolidated pantomime as an intensely competitive cultural activity, in which audiences constantly compared one pantomime with another in relation to the same set of mythic themes or scenes. The narrative organization of pantomime performance arose out of a comparative appreciation of the pantomime's performance of different "characters" inhabiting his body, so that the performance narrative was not about the mythic figures but about the performer's "metamorphosis" from one identity to another. However, neither the emperor nor the public ever showed any inclination to endorse a "standard" for evaluating pantomime performance as fostered by the curricula of performing arts academies. The hierarchy of value in pantomime performance thus developed through the auras of star pantomimes, whose seductive performative qualities extended well beyond performance spaces and were uniquely capable of captivating aristocrats. Pantomimes became useful in advancing the political ambitions

of aristocrats, who strengthened the star status of pantomimes by sponsoring claques attached to the stars, so that competition between pantomimes entailed competition between claques and their aristocratic sponsors. But the public disturbances resulting from conflicts between claques over pantomime fees in 15 CE led to a profound change in pantomime culture. The legislation of 15 CE, led by Tiberius, basically put an end to a professionalized class of pantomime performers. Pantomime became the work of slaves and freedmen whose education in the art was more informal and idiosyncratic than was the case with pantomimes trained in the Alexandrian academic tradition. Pantomimes became part of ensembles owned or contracted by aristocratic families. Most performances took place in villas, with occasional performances in theaters presented by aristocratic sponsors as "gifts" to potential constituencies. The fortunes of pantomime in Rome depended on the favor of the emperor, but the art spread rapidly throughout the Empire, as aristocratic families nurtured an entertainment that provided a powerful erotic ambiance, emphasized the theatricality of the body over the obfuscating sonorities of speech, and competed strongly and economically with other entertainments like gladiatorial combats, *venationes*, and chariot races. The spread of pantomime entailed a proliferation of pantomimes and an intensification of competitive drive for unique star qualities or performance styles. Innovations were inevitable. By the middle of the second century CE, pantomime was no longer always or only a solo performance, the range of mythic themes expanded almost extravagantly, and performances involved the introduction of novel scenic devices, acrobatic stunts, and glamorous costume accessories, as indicated especially by the pantomime scene described in *The Golden Ass*. Female pantomimes apparently made their earliest appearances sometime in the latter half of the second century. The Crisis of the Third Century precipitated further changes. The sponsorship of public entertainments throughout the Empire became increasingly centralized and under imperial control, as aristocratic families and municipal councils lacked the resources to provide "spectacles" on the scale expected by the public. As the imperial government consolidated its control over the entertainment industry, the "center" of pantomime culture shifted from Rome to the east and to Greek leadership in the art. In the fourth century, the consolidation involved the integration of pantomimes into the hippodrome culture and the merging of theatrical and hippodrome

factions. Pantomime culture remained impervious to condemnation of it by Christian patriarchs, but by the 380s, in accordance with imperial imperatives, pantomimes had themselves become Christians and developed a "non-pagan" approach to the dominant performance theme of "metamorphoses" that nevertheless stressed voluptuous eroticism. Within the hippodrome culture, pantomimes received imperial appointment to represent chariot-racing factions and to supervise interlude entertainments and ceremonial performances. Beyond the hippodrome, pantomimes signified a sexual ambiguity or libidinousness that the factions, especially the Blues and Greens, found very helpful in recruiting members and partners in their shadowy and even underworld business enterprises. The conflict within Christianity between Orthodoxy and Arianism, which inspired so much public disorder throughout the Empire in the fourth and fifth centuries, did little, if any, damage to pantomime culture, as long as the pantomimes and factions received protection and privileges from the emperor. In the late fifth and early sixth centuries, however, the factions (Blues and Greens) instigated a series of riots in response to efforts of emperors to curtail their privileges and compel them to conform more severely to the increasingly elaborate imperial ceremonial protocol, which by then entailed the complete unity of the imperial government with Orthodoxy. Because of his passion for the former pantomime Theodora, Justinian's ability to secure and sustain imperial power depended in no small part on his determination to inaugurate a new era of sexual morality. His marriage to Theodora occurred, it would seem, at the expense of pantomime culture. The pantomimes were banished throughout the Empire about the same time. In an Empire dominated by Orthodoxy and guided by a man whose love for Theodora might well represent the ultimate triumph of seductive theatricality over sacred authenticity, there was suddenly no longer any tolerance for the notion that sexuality and "metamorphosis" were fundamentally theatrical phenomena. As long as pantomime culture thrived, it carried within it remnants of Arianism, a potential for sparking schism, violent division within Christianity and within the Empire.

The Disappearance of Pantomime in the West

The end of the pantomimes was almost congruent with the end of theater altogether in the Byzantine Empire. Mimes continued to linger for a few decades, at least in some remote regions of the Empire, according to a few Oxyrhyncus papyri. But theater was probably extinct well before the end of the sixth century, or at best we have no evidence for its existence in the Empire until the appearance of a few forlorn and hardly exciting examples of Christian drama in the tenth century, with even the anonymous though ambitious eleventh century *Christos Paschon* apparently composed only out of an entirely literary impulse, with no life in the theater (White 2010: 385; Puchner 2002: 314-317). In what had once been the Western Empire, the fate of pantomime culture is less clear. There, too, pantomime seems to have disappeared by the middle of the sixth century insofar as no evidence for it exists after that point. When the Byzantines reclaimed Italy from the Goths in 535-537, the imperial ban of pantomimes prevailed at least in those regions of the country, like Ravenna, firmly under Byzantine control. But elsewhere in the west, pantomime most likely disappeared because no imperial power existed to support it and because either the Goths lacked appreciation of the art to invest in it or communities and aristocratic families lacked resources to sustain it. Yet unlike in the east, in the west the political and religious conditions did not entirely preclude the survival of the art. Catholicism was dominant in Italy and throughout the west, but Arianism remained strong there, especially among the Goths, whose introduction to Christianity had mostly come through the teachings of the Arian, Gothic-Greek Bishop Ulfilas (311-383). Catholics favored a policy of co-existence with Arianism in the belief that Arians would inevitably convert to Catholicism the more they were exposed to the doctrines and lithurgical practices of Catholicism (Amory 1997: 256-263). But while the Catholics adopted a less dogmatic approach to the Arian heresy than the Orthodox Church, they apparently did not believe that pantomime was

helpful in undermining the appeal of heretical doctrines or in attracting new converts. Sixth and seventh century texts from the Catholic realm make no reference to pantomime or theater, not even to denounce it.

The Goths, however, had their own performance tradition, although it is unclear if their predilection for Arianism sustained it or if their immersion in Roman culture undermined the functions it served in the forests of the north. Around 100 CE, Tacitus described "German" tribes who performed "ancient hymns—the only style of record or history which they possess"—that celebrated "a god Tuisto, a scion of the soil, and his son Mannus as the beginning and the founders of their race." The Germans sang to awaken courage for battle within themselves, and one of their hymns invoked "Hercules, the first of brave men" (1914: 266-267). "Their shows are all of one kind," he writes, regardless apparently of whatever differences pertained otherwise to the multitude of Germanic tribes inhabiting Germania, "naked youths, for whom this is a form of professional acting, jump and bound between swords and upturned spears" (1914: 296-297). Tacitus also mentions an eastern German tribe, the Nahanarvali, who performed some sort of "prehistoric ritual" in a grove presided over by a "priest in female dress" (1914: 324-325). The extent to which any of these practices remained within the performance aesthetic of "barbarian" cultures in the sixth century is unknown and probably quite remote. In his sixth century history of the Goths, Jordanes, himself descended from Goths, chronicles two thousands years of purported Gothic history without reference to a single instance or aspect of a performance culture among the tribe, for Jordanes contains nothing of the anthropological focus in Tacitus. Nevertheless, though Jordanes's history derives from a much larger, lost history of the Goths by Cassiodorus, virtually the entire history of the Goths up to the fourth century, much of which is mythic or simply fictional, resided in the memory of Gothic societies over the centuries as conveyed through the voices of the tribal archivists, skaldic figures, for the Goths had no written language until Ulfilas translated the Bible into Gothic around 360 (Heather 1991: 61-67). As the term is used conventionally, skaldic poetry refers to a literary art, the earliest evidence for which comes from the ninth century. But in pre-literate Teutonic societies, someone like a skald must have functioned to tell the stories that skalds later sang from texts they composed in Old Norse—this person perhaps mostly recited genealogies of kings and the battles they fought, with the idea that these "histories"

inspired in their listeners the courage to engage in battle, for "the barbarians lived the pathos of heroism to the fullest" (Wolfram 1988: 7). Runic inscriptions from Germany and Scandinavia, the earliest of which date from around 160 CE in Denmark, link to a skaldic or archival performance function insofar as they relate to heroic commemoration or magical invocation, although the Goths apparently had only a faint connection to runic culture (Looijenga 1997: 24). According to Bertha Phillpotts, "Runic verse is closely akin to skaldic verse" (1920: 29). But the key point here is that the runic culture developed as a result of Germanic tribes interacting with Romans to produce what the barbarians regarded as their own "secret" writing, "something hidden from outsiders" (Looijenga 1997: 17-18, 61). The great majority of runic artefacts date from the sixth and seventh centuries, although numerous artefacts from earlier times have been discovered over a vast area from Scandinavia to Germany and Eastern Europe (Looijenga 1997: 10). In the barbarian cultures, the oral, archival performance of tribal history evolved in relation to this idea of a secret, exclusive, aristocratic, warrior ethos. It is possible that the preponderance of runic artefacts from the sixth and seventh centuries is the result of the intensification and expansion of runic inscription within barbarian culture and an intimation of the rise of Teutonic cultures across Europe in later centuries. But if so, the Goths were only indirectly responsible, insofar as by the fifth century their connection to runic culture was nil, for they had their own written language, used exclusively by themselves, and a proliferation of runic culture in Germania at that time and into the seventh century was probably due in no small measure to an awareness among Teutonic peoples of the rise and fall of the Goths in Italy and Western Europe, an awareness or gathering self-consciousness that resonated for centuries through the oral performance aesthetic. The longest rune yet discovered, the Rök stone in south central Sweden, carved around 800, makes exalted reference to Theodoric in its commemoration of a dead son. But this runic inscription seems merely to foretell an impending tide of Germanic literary activity, derived from oral models of storytelling, that first, in the ninth and tenth centuries, simply invoked the misty but glorious memory of Theodoric, such as in the Deor, Waldere, and Widsith poems, and then, in the eleventh century, culminated in the various epic refashionings of Theodoric's spectacular life as the mythical Dietrich of Bern (Verona), most memorably, perhaps, in the monumental *Nibelunglied* (ca. 1200).

The question therefore arises: did the proto-skaldic performance aesthetic of the Goths, however it may have been perpetuated through the Gothic language, inhibit or encourage the Roman pantomime culture? While no documentation on pantomime in the Western Empire exists after the death of Theodoric in 526, neither does any documentation on the proto-skaldic performance aesthetic of either the Ostrogoths or the Visigoths. The philosophy of co-existence between Goths and Romans that prevailed in Italy and the west was not especially congenial to the preservation of pantomime culture, but neither was it a major barrier, for the Goths showed a willingness and sometimes a great eagerness to adopt some Roman customs, especially in the realms of law, commerce, and governance (Wolfram 1988: 194-197, 288-290). But Goths and Romans tended to live separately from each other, with only the upper levels of Gothic and Roman societies developing any inclination toward an idea of "integrating" the two cultures. The Gothic rulers in Italy and the western regions often granted a considerable measure of autonomy to local communities, which precipitated an intensification of regional affiliations. After the death of Theodoric and even well before then in Gaul and Hispania, this autonomy became increasingly aligned with declining investment in urban society, as territorial governance shifted toward kings, whose chief priority was to "settle" their peoples on country estates and allotments, which often entailed exempting Gothic settlers from taxation or reducing taxes to Roman estate holders whose lands had generated allotments (Innes 2006: 56-60). Some Roman aristocrats owned vast estates in Gaul and Hispania, but it was no longer to their advantage to sponsor urban entertainments or to procure advancement within the Empire or even to preserve the Empire in the west. Indeed, many wealthy Romans saw a more powerful life for themselves by ascending the hierarchy of the Catholic Church than by serving any secular bureaucracy. This attitude is already evident in the letters of the Gallo-Roman aristocrat, Ruricius, Bishop of Limoge (485-510), who wrote to his aristocratic friends, mostly other Church officials, in a highly refined, even flamboyantly suave, style in which the continual references to, discourses on, and expressions of kindness, generosity, humility, affection, grace, and exaggerated self-deprecation function as a coded rhetoric for the signification and exchange of wealth and power, especially since Ruricius and his friends always seem to write from some mighty country estate where they are able to write

elegantly, using metaphors and examples derived almost entirely from the beauties of nature around them and free of any need to refer to anything in any city or even to any community outside of themselves, let alone to any of the violence caused by the invading Franks (Ruricious 1999: esp. 105-106). In this villa-oriented centering of civic and religious power, one could hardly expect the Catholic leadership to show an abiding concern for the decline in urban investment if the strengthening of cities entailed the sponsoring of entertainments, like pantomime, that glorified the body and provided opportunities for factionalism, schism, and an expansive assertion of secular authority. It was therefore up to the Gothic rulers to decide the fate of pantomime in the west. Their Arianism was not a problem for pantomime and might even have been helpful in sustaining the art. The Arian creed was always subordinate to the tribal king, and it had no hierarchical structure within itself to precipitate the kind of ferocious power struggles that plagued the Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

But outside of Theodoric, no Gothic kings anywhere in the west seem to have betrayed the slightest appreciation of pantomime, and even Theodoric presented games and pantomime entertainments as gifts to his Roman rather than Gothic subjects, not as an art that could achieve integration with a Gothic proto-skaldic performance aesthetic. The Goths believed that they were separate from the Romans, and that this separateness gave them the power to rule. They grasped that their own culture was replacing the Roman culture, but they did not really see each culture transforming the other to produce a new kind of imperial world. In a letter to his brother-in-law, the poet-bishop Sidonius Apollonaris (430-489) described his encounter, around 454, with Theodoric II, King of the Visigoths from 453 to 466. The King, he writes, is robust, good-natured, lacking in pretention, disciplined, diligent and sensible rather than zealous about performing his duties. He gives a banquet for his guests that is remarkable for its lack of ostentation, formality, or trivial talk. “At the supper sometimes, though rarely, comic actors are introduced who utter their satiric pleasantries: in such fashion, however, that none of the guests shall be wounded by their biting tongues. At these repasts no hydraulic organs blow, no band of vocalists under the guidance of a singing-master intone together their premeditated harmony. No harpist, no flute-player, no choir-master, no female player on the tambourine or the cithara, makes melody. The king is charmed only by those instruments under whose

influence virtue soothes the soul as much as sweet sounds soothe the ear" (Sidonius Apollonaris, *Letters*, 1.2; Sidonius Apollonaris 1892: 358). After Theodoric II, it is very hard to locate any evidence for a greater or even equivalent interest in any performing art on the part of Gothic kings. Nevertheless, the Goths must have maintained some kind of performance aesthetic in relation to their proto-skaldic culture, although they might not have relied on the Gothic language to construct it. Wherever they ruled in the former Empire, it is remarkable how the Gothic language failed to take hold. Indeed, the languages that became French, Spanish, and Italian, even in their most archaic forms, contained almost no words borrowed from the Gothic language, and thus it seems that the Goths in the west adopted Latin as their primary medium of communication, even in relation to their own cultural history. As the Gothic *foederati* became increasingly autonomous, Latin metamorphosed into regional dialects that eventually became separate languages without becoming at all "Gothicized" by the original language spoken by the ruling culture. The performance aesthetic may even have moved away from the proto-skaldic tradition to a hybrid format that incorporated Roman elements derived from the pantomime.

Around 950, Emperor Constantine VII (905-959) compiled *De ceremoniis aulae Byzantinae*, which describes the various ceremonies performed by the imperial court in Constantinople. Some of the ceremonies date back to the sixth century, but it is not clear if the descriptions of these older ceremonies means that such ceremonies continued to be performed at the time of the compilation or if Constantine included them for a historical purpose, as a kind of repository of imperial performance strategies. One section of the book (I: 83; Reiske 1829: 381-386) describes a dance performed on the ninth day of Christmas by members of two Gothic "factions." The performance takes place in one of the dining halls of the palace, where the Goths have nineteen seats at the entrance and eat with the imperial retinue. Each faction of Goths has a "master" or "commander" (*drungarius*): Greens, on the right, and on the left, "Venetians." The Goths of both factions wear leather cloaks, "shaggy" hair, and "different kinds of masks." The Officer of Theatrical Scenes and Games summons the factions, and the factions approach the Emperor's table bearing shields, which they strike with swords or "rods," making a "great noise," while one of them cries out "Tul, Tul." When they reach the Emperor's table, the factions encircle it, with one faction inside the circle of the other faction, and with one faction

apparently moving clockwise and the other counter clockwise. They do this three times. Then they are "quiet," with the Venetians on the left of the table while the Greens are on the right. Representatives from each of the factions sing to the "masters" a "so-called Gothic chant" or hymn built around "the number of the letter of the Greek alphabet." The song praises God for those "crowned with victory." Following this is a recitation of poems consisting of "edicts against the enemy" and praise of the Romans and the Emperor, to which the master of the Goths cries "Ampaato," "giving at the same time a sign of the favor with a high hand." The Goths then beat their shields and cry, "Tul, Tul." The singers continue, completing four quatrains of verse based on the obscure alphabetical principle, which conclude with a blessing: "may the powers of your mind be as the sun. Christ is present to each of you, healing and nourishing each of your minds. Accept, O Lord, will of dominion over me and the judges of the ends of the empire." The Goths cry out: "Tul, Tul," and then run out as they ran in, beating their shields, Venetians on the left and Greens on the right (Reiske 1829: 381-384).

The Gothic performance has provoked much scholarly confusion. It is not clear if the performance is something that happened long before the compilation and was a unique event worth remembering or if the performance occurred with some regularity at Christmas time and appeared in the book as a piece within a vast repertoire of imperial ceremonies for different occasions, although Goths are not mentioned anywhere else in the book. The "so-called Gothic chant" is quite difficult to decipher in relation to some sort of numerical-alphabetical principle based upon the Greek or Latin rather than Gothic language, so perhaps the Goths sang the chants translated from the Gothic (Kraus 1895: 254). But the few words that are in Gothic--"Tul," "Ampaato," and "Iber,"--have a meaning that no one can identify. Weiner (1921: 329-330) proposed that "the language used by [the Goths] is that of the Spanish Mozarabs, that is, Catalan, with an admixture of Arabic words," for he assumed "the Goths who were present at the Byzantine court in the tenth century can have been only Spanish Goths," even though by that time the Visigoths had virtually disappeared from Spain. Moreover, the text itself says the Goths belong to two factions, the Greens, presumably attached to the imperial court apparatus in Constantinople, and the "Venetians," perhaps Ostrogoths settled in the Veneto region of Italy. A later entry in *The Book of Ceremonies* (II, 35)

mentions five dances performed for a birthday celebration by the Venetian and Green factions, but makes no reference to Goths (Reiske 1829: 633). Because of this anomaly, both entries suggest that these performances occurred before the time of the book's compilation and that they were not a regular feature of the imperial ceremonial calendar. Westbrook (2013: 14) suggests that the Gothic dance dates from "the late fourth century" and somehow "survived into the tenth century," which seems highly unlikely because, again, of the lack of reference to Goths anywhere else in the book and because of details in the description of the performance, such as the obscure or mangled account of the Gothic chant. Philpotts (1920: 186) considers it possible that the Goths might be Varangians or "members of an East Germanic tribe" without explaining why the text refers to a faction from Venice, which she calls "the Blues," even though elsewhere the book (I: 69) makes specific mention of a "Green Russian faction" (*Prasini russae factionis*) involved in the performance of an acclamatory hymn (Reiske 1829: 311). Kraus contends that the dance dates from a time "in which the Goths were still providing imperial military service, which from Justinian onward was not the case," although he acknowledges that even in medieval times, Germans sometimes dressed in animal costumes and wildly brandished weapons during the twelve days of Christmas (1895: 231). However, the dances described in both I: 83 and II: 35 project a disciplined, military precision rather than folkloric exuberance. Westbrook (2013: 252) says that iron masks excavated in the 1930s from the ruins of the palace in Constantinople were "probably used for the Gothic dances," although these have been dated from the end of the twelfth century (Bolognesi Recchi-Franceschini 1995: 132). Finally, Cottas (1931: 6) explicitly links the Gothic shield dance to the pyrrhic movement associated with pantomime. She then links the Gothic dance to a pyrrhic dance, L'Arnaoute, performed in the eighteenth century in the hippodrome of Constantinople by Macedonian butchers in which two teams of fifteen dancers encircle each other "in a sort of agitation" to reenact Alexander's battles against Darius in front of their commanding general—one group armed with knives and the other with spears. The detailed description of this performance appears in Madame Chenier's *Lettres grecque*, evidently written before she moved from Constantinople to Paris in 1762 (1879: 132-134, 143-147). But Chenier herself (1729-1808) made no connection between l'Arnaoute and the Gothic dance; for her, l'Arnaoute is the vestige of an archaic, classically Greek dance

tradition, including the Pyrrhic step, dating back to the time of Athenian tragedy (the beginning of the *Choro*) and preserved over the centuries through Greek communities ("villages Grecs") in Dacia, Bulgaria, and Wallachia, where Chenier's family had business connections with governing lords ("hospodars") (Chenier 1879: 149-152; Faguet 1902: 6). It's possible, though, that descendants of Goths, settled in these communities, perpetuated a kind of military dance that combined elements of the Gothic dance described in *The Book of Ceremonies* with some "archival" remnant of the Teutonic sword dance described by Tacitus. But the main point is that the Byzantine Gothic dance indicates how feeble was the capacity of the Goths to provide any kind of alternative to pantomime performance in fulfilling their role as providers of acclamatory entertainment for the Emperor.

As previously implied, however, the limitations of the Goths in absorbing the pantomime aesthetic were due to pressures internal to Gothic culture rather than to constraints imposed by Byzantine culture. These pressures were perhaps most evident in the circumstances that determined the tragic fate of Amalasuntha, Queen of the Ostrogoths (495-535; reigned 526-535), briefly discussed already. She was the daughter of Theodoric the Great and the widow of a man, Eutharic, descended from the highest level of Gothic nobility. When her father died in 526, her son, Athalaric (516-534), became king and she became the queen regent. Her ambition was to align the Gothic culture more closely with Roman culture and thus to build a more integrated society within Italy. She sought to achieve this goal by educating her son in the refined values of the Roman aristocracy. But Athalaric experienced intense pressure from the Gothic nobility to resist this education. Gothic nobles approached the Queen and urged her to release her son from the book learning he received from three Gothic elders, "For letters, they said, are far removed from manliness, and the teaching of old men results for the most part in a cowardly and submissive spirit." Fearing that the nobles were plotting against her, Amalasuntha relented, but under the tutelage of the nobles, Athalaric fell in with some licentious boys, who, "by enticing him to drunkenness and to intercourse with women, made him an exceptionally depraved youth." He died suddenly, and Amalasuntha found herself running a kingdom in which a sector of the Gothic nobility, unwilling to accept orders from a woman, conspired against her. She cultivated a close relation with Justinian and

Constantinople, hoping either for resources to develop her vision of a new, integrated Italian society or for an escape to Constantinople. She arranged for the assassination of three Gothic nobles and their relatives who were plotting against her, and she unwisely entered into a pact with the learned but unscrupulous Gothic prince Theodahad (480-536), whom she had prosecuted for his fraudulent seizure of Tuscan lands. She believed she could placate the Gothic nobility by creating the illusion that she governed the Gothic kingdom in partnership with Theodahad, a nephew of Theodoric the Great. The illusion, however, was hers. Theodahad's treachery was spectacular. Unforgiving of Amalasuntha's punishment of his real estate frauds, he conspired with the relatives of the nobles Amalasuntha had executed, arrested the Queen, and attempted to deceive Justinian about the arrest. He imprisoned Amalasuntha in a villa on Lake Bolseno, then, fearing the wrath of relatives linked to the assassinated nobles, he ordered the murder of the Queen in her bath (Procopius 1919: 15-39). This murder enraged Justinian and precipitated the long imperial war that devastated the Gothic kingdom and which by 552 put an end to Gothic rule in Italy and indeed even to any idea of Gothic "influence" upon Roman culture. The husband of Amalasuntha's daughter, Matasuntha, Vittigis, quickly succeeded Theodahad as King of the Goths, when Theodahad, who was apparently incapable of acting without treachery, even toward his own people, failed to protect the Goths in Naples against the invasion by Belisarius's army. Vittigis arranged for the assassination of Theodahad, but it was too late for him to turn the tide against the Goths. When Totila succeeded him, the Goths thought they had a savior. He showed considerable skill in adopting Roman techniques for gathering supporters, even among the Romans, and for waging war against the imperial forces. But he lacked the vision of a new, integrated, imperial civilization that motivated Amalasuntha, and eventually a huge imperial army led by Narses destroyed him, his army, and most of what remained of Gothic Italy. By this time, the integration of Gothic and Roman culture was irrelevant to the imperial government—without victorious warriors, "Gothic culture," as such, ceased to exist.

Amalasuntha believed that the warrior ethos of the Goths would keep the Goths separate from the Romans and eventually destroy the Gothic kingdom. An implication of this belief is perhaps evident in a letter that Cassiodorus, her secretary and an erudite scholar of Greek and Roman

literature, wrote on behalf of Athalaric to a Governor Severus conveying the Queen Regent's desire (order, actually) that nobles should spend more time in cities, for while the countryside offers many pleasures, "'Why should so many men refined by literature skulk in obscurity?" "Let the cities then return to their old splendour; let none prefer the charms of the country to the walls reared by the men of old. Why should not everyone be attracted by the concourse of noble persons, by the pleasures of converse with his equals? To stroll through the Forum, to look in at some skilful craftsman at his work, to push one's own cause through the law courts, then between whiles to play with the counters of Palamedes (draughts), to go to the baths with one's acquaintances, to indulge in the friendly emulation of the banquet—these are the proper employments of a Roman noble; yet not one of them is tasted by the man who chooses to live always in the country with his farm-servants" (Cassiodorus *Variae* 7.31; 1886: 561-566). With Amalasuntha as their sovereign, the Gothic nobility saw the difference between Gothic and Roman culture as a matter of conflict between "masculine" and "feminine" constructions of cultural identity, with the refinements of urban life, including the enjoyment of "spectacles," implicated in the insidious "feminization" of Gothic manliness. But by the time Amalasuntha came to power, pantomime had virtually disappeared from Roman culture in the east and was now something Theodoric had supported as a gift to the Romans in the Gothic kingdom. The problem for the Gothic nobility was that his daughter seemed to regard Roman cultural productions, like pantomime, as gifts to the Gothic people. Pantomime projected an ambivalent or enigmatic cultural identity insofar as it was no longer officially Roman, not sufficiently Christian in its semiotics, and by no means inclined to abandon its body-centric aesthetic for the voice-oriented, magic-word addicted proto-skaldic culture of the Goths. Yet within this ambiguity lay the power of pantomime as an artistic medium. It was this ambiguity that allowed the Goths in Constantinople to "borrow" the martial, pyrrhic movement and masking from pantomime to construct their own Christmas dance for the Emperor without being identified as "feminized" Romans or anyone but Goths.

In the Vandal kingdom in North Africa, governed entirely by men, pantomime could prosper in an environment whose citizens, Roman, Punic, and barbarian, largely believed the Vandals had freed them from onerous imperial taxes, oppressive landowners, Orthodox strictures, and corrupt

imperial officials. North Africa was a stronghold of Arianism to the point of making life quite difficult for Catholics. But the Vandals could not build their economy without resorting to piracy, raiding, and plunder, which meant that they relied on the sea rather than on the land to secure their future, unlike the Goths, who were never confident of their ability to achieve power through the sea. In their mode of governing, the Vandals were flexible, opportunistic, and even improvisatory. However, they underestimated the magnitude of land-based resources they needed to sustain a fleet capable of dominating the Mediterranean, and they underestimated the role of seemingly remote geopolitical conditions in determining their success at raiding without assuming the need for reliable allies, even among the Goths, with whom they were in almost constant conflict. As long as the Byzantines were preoccupied with huge European threats to the Empire, North Africa remained a peripheral concern, for the Vandals, having grown accustomed to the pleasant life afforded them by their possession of North Africa, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, and the Balearic Islands, showed no enthusiasm for large, imperial ambitions that would require their rather small but affluent population to become much more disciplined and much less "separate" from the different peoples they ruled. In 534, Belisarius invaded the kingdom with a rather small fleet and army, and restored the lands to the Empire, although Justinian's motive in sending Belisarius may have been primarily to end piracy. In any case, the Vandal kingdom came to an abrupt end before the death of Amalsuntha, before Justinian and Belisarius embarked on the invasion of the Gothic kingdom in Italy. The imperial government completely dispersed the Vandal population into different sections of the Empire, so that it virtually disappeared as a distinct ethnic identity.

Nevertheless, for about a hundred years, the Vandals operated a kingdom in which a substantial portion of the population enjoyed a leisurely existence. The poems of the North African Luxorius suggest that he lived in an indulgent society, even though he wrote at the very end of the Vandal kingdom. His fleeting verses evoke an atmosphere of refined aestheticism, utterly devoid of Christian sentiment. He marvels, for example, at pleasure gardens, an exotic fountain, mysterious statues, the beauty of allegorical paintings, the beauty of a black Egyptian animal fighter, a pornographic sarcophagus, the gentle qualities of otherwise wild animals, and a blind man who by touch can discern the whiteness of a

woman's skin. He makes fun of the sexual peculiarties of both men and women, he makes fun of homosexuals, dwarves, hunchbacks, a hermaphrodite, and the vanities and delusions of various egocentric persons he knows, such as (No. 24) the female pantomime, Macedonia, a dwarf, who performs the roles of great women like Andromache and Helen to make herself grow taller (Rosenbaum 1961: 150-151). In a couple of poems (75 and 76), Luxorius writes scornfully of a cymbal dancer, Gattula, whose ugliness completely undermines her skill in dancing with cymbals; she furthermore degrades herself by squandering her bonuses on gifts for men in the vain hope of awakening their affection (Rosenbaum 1961: 156-157). Several poems deal with charioteers and the delights of the hippodrome. But in the context of all these poems, the reader gets the impression that pantomime in Arian North Africa remained insulated from the Christianization of it in the east, still devoted to themes from pagan mythology, still immersed in hyper-voluptuousness, if given also to freakish sensations and pleasures. When Belisarius reclaimed the Vandal territories for the Empire, Arianism vanished, and with it the pantomime, for one reason that Justinian launched the war against the Vandals, which was not altogether popular in the east, particularly with the clergy and the land owning class, was to rid the world of the Arian heresy, which was fundamental in maintaining the "separation" between Goths and Romans. It is evident that the Vandals tolerated pantomime and probably even created conditions under which the art thrived. Pantomime might have continued to thrive, if the Vandal elite had been wise enough to build alliances with either Justinian or, even better, with Amalasuntha, who sought to strengthen her precarious position in Ravenna by cultivating a partnership with the Vandals. But under King Hilderic, the Vandals in 526 had murdered Amalfrida, Theodoric's sister, the mother of Theodahad, and widow of the Vandal King Thrasamund, ostensibly because of her conspiracy in 523 to overthrow Hilderic after he recalled from exile Catholic and Orthodox bishops in an effort to improve his relations with the Byzantines (Cassiodorus *Variae* 9.1; 1886: 574). The point, however, of killing Amalfrida when both Amalasuntha and Justinian had ascended to their respective thrones was to signfy that the Vandals were separate from both the Gothic Kingdom and the Empire and that any idea of alliance between the Goths and the Vandals was doomed. This decision eventually proved as fatal to the Vandal Kingdom as to the Gothic Kingdom, for it

showed Justinian that the Vandals were unprepared and unwilling to wage war, incapable of rising above piracy, and that Amalasuntha, if not the Goths, would find her greatest ally in Constantinople. To a large degree, then, the end of pantomime was a collateral result of the disparate political ambitions of two women, Amalasuntha and Theodora.

The Ideological Shift from Performer-Driven to Text-Driven Performance

The fall of the Goths and the Vandals in the west and Justinian and Theodora's consolidation of virtually absolute power in the east brought an end to the pantomime culture by 534. The Church--Arian, Catholic, and Orthodox--played at best only an incidental or subsidiary role in the extinction of the pantomime, even though it was the most hostile force in relation to the art. Pantomime was enormously popular without being a popular art, for its aesthetic, under the Romans, embodied an imperial-aristocratic understanding of relations between human identity and action—the imperial ideology of metamorphosis. That is to say, pantomime depended for its existence upon the will of emperors and aristocrats to appreciate its significance in achieving a larger political goal of structuring the distribution of power, "gifts," identities, and opportunities ("movement") within imperial society. Pantomime did not arise "organically" from a sector of the society as a ritual or cathartic activity in which people believed that watching or performing pantomimes produced some magical beneficial effect or provided, as mime did, an amusing, distorted image of human absurdity. The mimes were a popular art, even if their performances were never really popular in the sense of gathering large audiences; they depended on the occasional and often meager generosity of street spectators, who regarded them as humble representatives of what was most "common" about human beings. The appeal of mime lay in its "organic" relation to a "common" set of enduring comic archetypes, the performance of which could always make spectators feel superior to much more imperfect incarnations of human identity. Mime depended on the market for such archetypes, even though the market was not large or prestigious or capable of asserting any serious "influence" over its audience. This independence of mime from an ideological rationale allowed it to survive, often in a rudimentary or even impoverished form, through many centuries and in different cultural contexts, so that remnants of its identity

could reappear, for example, as *commedia dell'arte* or the Turkish *karagöz* puppet theater or the comedies of Goldoni (Reich I 1903: 648-680). The pantomime, however, depended for its existence upon a world-view that was unique to an aristocracy or imperial ruling class. The appeal of pantomime lay in its power to evoke a superior, higher, or at least "uncommon" view of human identity that only a ruling class could provide. Christianity may have played a greater role in dissolving the world view supporting pantomime than in vanquishing pantomime itself, but most likely the ruling class adopted another world view that was more useful to itself in an era of expanding Christianity. Christian theology stresses the idea of authenticity of being, the idea that a human being has a "true" self that is the work of God. The spiritual transfiguration of a human identity and body, which unites a person with God and "eternal life," entails the "revelation" of this authentic or true self. This theology, which, under imperial management, became an ideology, eclipsed the ideology of metamorphosis embodied by pantomime culture, but not because the pantomime failed to adapt to the new ideology, but because emperors, beginning with Justinian, decided that they achieved greater or more "authentic" power if they involved audiences in elaborate court ceremonies rather than seduced them with pantomime performances.

The pantomime aesthetic presents human identity as a transparently theatrical phenomenon. It openly dramatizes the idea that the human body contains within it multiple identities, and some of these identities are even "divine" when pantomimes enact the actions of gods. The performance of these identities requires a sequencing or narrative organization of action that emphasizes the metamorphosis of the performing body from one figure to another, so that all the "characters" are subordinate to a larger, montage image of human transformation. The pantomime is the "story" of a body's movement across several identities until it reaches a final pose of mythic glorification of the performer's capacity for theatrical transformation. The pantomime aesthetic is performer-driven rather than text-driven, because it assumes that voice and indeed language obfuscate perception of the body as the foundation for the theatricality of human identity. Masks are fundamental in establishing metamorphosis as a theatrical phenomenon. What the audience wants to see is, not the "story" of a character, but the theatrical signs attached to a motive for action, how a desire to do something entails the wearing of a mask, a shift in identity. This mode of

performance is highly effective at comparing one identity with another and at comparing one performer with another, which then fosters an intensely competitive attitude toward performance on the part of performers, spectators, and sponsors. Claques and factions are a product of this competitiveness, but so, too, is innovation in performance. The dramatization of competitiveness as a process of metamorphosis functions as an analogy or symbolic representation of the society's understanding of the struggle for power and the construction of empire as theatrical phenomena, as a matter of skillful deployment of masks, the performance of glamourous movements and poses, freedom from textual constraints, and the success of individual bodies (rather than "characters" or imaginary identities) in attracting sponsors, wealth, constituencies, even violent forces. But this mode of performance, this symbolization of how imperial power works, has credibility, authority, and immense appeal only when it comes, as a "gift," from those who have power, from a ruling class. It may be that by the beginning of the sixth century the ruling class believed that this theatrical model of understanding imperial power could not sustain the Empire, but it is also the case that when the pantomimes disappeared, the Empire got smaller and smaller.

The barbarian kingdoms that formed in the collapsing Empire followed a different understanding of how performing bodies articulate a ruling class ideology of what gives identities power. This was the proto-skaldic tradition. The barbarian elites believed that their distinctive languages had given them power to defeat their enemies and establish kingdoms. They believed that words, voices, song possessed magical powers to infuse audiences with the strength to dominate others. The proto-skaldic performer voiced the names of ancestors, recounted the deeds of warriors, and recited the struggles for power that had shaped the "fate" of the tribe. The narrative assumed a genealogical linearity and unity of kinship identity. The body of the proto-skaldic performer might contain multiple voices, but the performer always remained only himself or "true" to himself, the descendent archivist of the tribe, who "remembered" others rather than embodied them. The proto-skald performed without a mask, and his voice immobilized his body in an effort to focus attention on the referents of words, thus affirming the pantomime presumption that speech and voice veil or obscure the reality of the body. The warrior ethos of the barbarians limited their understanding of power as something measured in relation to

the strength of individual bodies. In the battlefield, however, the strength of an individual body is so often insufficient to overcome the arbitrary or unanticipated conditions that bring injury or death. Perhaps this is why the barbarians distrusted the body as a sign of power in performance and placed so much weight on words, on referents, on imaginary identities or "spirits" who were not really "present." Nevertheless, the barbarian distrust of bodily theatricality was congruent with the Christian belief that the body is a thing to transcend, that attachment to the body is a sign of weakness or sinfulness.

Pantomime fell into oblivion because the historical record of its achievement vanished, was inaccessible to peoples who did not know Latin or Greek, or was largely controlled by a clergy with no incentive to remember this "Satanic" art. The Church made a strenuous effort to get Christians to forget theater of any sort, although dance, even of a religious nature and in spite of numerous Church proscriptions against it, assumed many new and often bizarre forms that may have assumed a vaguely pantomimic manifestation, such as the Dance of Death processions (see Backman 1952, especially 154-161). Ancient Greek drama disappeared from consciousness for centuries, and during this long slumber all but a tiny portion of it was lost. But the forgetfulness of societies is due more to political than religious reasons. The Romans, and even the Greeks themselves, had forgotten Greek drama as a thing for the stage long before the beginning of the Empire, and it's more than probable that no one who lived at any time during the Empire ever saw a performance of any Greek play that has survived to this day. Roman drama for the stage during the imperial era has completely and irrevocably disappeared, but actually it scarcely even existed, because although the Romans nurtured a deep fascination with theater and invested enormous resources in providing theatrical entertainments, they simply did not believe that the writing of plays produced satisfying theatrical performances. Even after the fall of the Empire, it took several centuries for the concept of drama to achieve credibility as a basis for theatrical performance. Since the Renaissance, however, and the rediscovery of ancient drama, Western civilization has believed that carefully constructed texts provide the strongest justification for watching theatrical performances and even performances in other media, such as dance, television, radio, film, and video games, for which directors and choreographers are often considered the "authors." In

performance, texts tend to subordinate actors to "characters" imagined by the author, so that the spectator, theoretically, "sees" the character rather than the actor. But for the spectator to see the character, the character needs to be situated within a unified narrative context in which the spectator will not confuse the actor with other characters in the narrative or suppose that the performance is about the relation or difference between the actor and the character or suppose that the narrative is about the difference between one performance and another. The text regulates the power of the actor, so that, theoretically, neither the character nor the narrative are dependent on the actor to establish their value, which should always be greater than that of the performance or "spectacle," as asserted by Aristotle, in *The Poetics*, even though when he wrote this treatise (ca. 335 BCE), text-driven theater as he prescribed it was already in serious decline.

In his hierarchy of values in dramatic art, Aristotle subordinated character to narrative or "plot," because actions beyond the control of any character determine the identity or outcome of the character. A character does not change so much, if at all, so much as the situation in which the character finds himself or herself. The situation, given by the plot, by the actions of others beyond the control of a character, changes the condition of the character but not the character himself. Sophocles's *Oedipus* (429 BCE) exemplifies the Aristotelian theory in a tragic vein: without knowing it, a good and great man has done the wrong thing for a good reason, and so have other characters in the drama, but all of these "good" actions have led to an unfortunate outcome for Oedipus and the city for which he was once king. Oedipus was king, and then, because he discovered that he had killed his father and married his mother, he blinded himself and went into a lonely, wandering exile. The character's situation changes drastically, but he himself does not.

In the realm of ancient tragedy, the "learning," upon which a "change" of character usually depends, always comes too late to avert an unfortunate outcome or "fall." Pantomime, however, aligned itself with an altogether different concept of "tragic" action. What the Romans apparently expected in the way of tragic action from pantomime was something "serious" (not funny), an emotionally intense scene, with a mythological origin. The pantomime performed different characters, and these characters changed from pose to movement to pose, and from, say, ebullience to rage, without changing in relation to any larger, external action other than the

pantomime's decision to embody them. If the pantomime performed Oedipus, he would only perform a moment out of many possible ones in the whole, epic story of Oedipus—say the moment at which Oedipus appears after having blinded himself. The point of the scene, then, or the performance as a whole, was not to show why Oedipus blinded himself or what he may have "learned" that motivated his unfortunate condition; the pantomime showed how a blind man moves, using the pyrrhic step, and still appears as a king, even if he has lost his throne. The character has not changed, but in this context, the character only exists to reveal the power of a particular kind of action, a physical movement, that is larger or "greater" than any character or body that performs it. The pantomime could add or omit, reconfigure or revise the different characters in his or her repertoire, so that the narrative organization of the characters, the "plot" of the performance, was dynamic, adaptable to different performance environments. The pantomime detached a character from one narrative context, the mythic story, and placed it in another narrative context, the story of the pantomime's metamorphosis, how different characters live within a single body, and thus how even a humble body may move like a king. But this was possible only to the extent that the spectator was as aware of the actor as of the character and saw both almost simultaneously. The pantomime aesthetic appealed to people across different classes and eras because it transparently connected the concept of metamorphosis, as a theatrical phenomenon, to a power or freedom to release identities from the contexts that created them rather than (as with Aristotle) to the power of contexts or stable, carefully constructed "plots" to determine identities. In this respect, the pantomimes linked identities to actions in a very physical sense rather than to the referents of actions that occur in a time and place that is not actually present, which inevitably happens when the performer uses speech to tell a story. The "tragic" dimension to the pantomime aesthetic and indeed to the imperial ideology of metamorphosis ultimately lay in the inescapable comparison of one identity to another through performance, which engaged or "agitated" audiences to the extent that it inspired and escalated competition between identities, actions, performances, so that the outcome of performance, the outcome of metamorphosis was victory or defeat, a winner and a loser—something quite "serious" was at stake. And in the absence of any clear or even feasible standard for evaluating this mode of performance, the seriousness of the

pantomime aesthetic and the whole ideology of metamorphosis entailed the formation of claques and factions, power struggles, which in turn harbored a greater capacity for social disruption than perhaps any other theatrical aesthetic has been able to achieve. A kind of violence and even a provocation to violence seems inherent to this aesthetic, which presents human identity as divided within itself, in conflict with itself: human identity is itself in a state of schism.

Western civilization has subsequently, overwhelmingly favored performance narrative strategies that unify actor and character by submerging the actor within the character, so that the performance focuses entirely on the character imagined by an author, and not on the construction of the character, this "other identity" within the actor, by the actor. Christianity has perhaps exerted a significant influence on performance narrative through the idea that a character may change in a major way or initiate actions that produce an outcome in alignment with the character's desires. This was not an idea that either Aristotle or the ancient dramatists took seriously, at least in relation to tragedy. But the concept of conversion was central to Christian theology of personal transformation and redemption. It breeds the notion of characters as moral emblems: a good character becomes bad or a bad character becomes good, which is not a classically tragic mode, because in a tragedy, actions beyond the control of a character change the situation of a character but not the character herself. The seven plays of Hrosvitha (ca. 935-1002) provide a good example of the Christianization of characters in a performance text. The plays of Terence (185-159 BCE) inspired her to write in dramatic form, although it is not clear why she chose this form to tell her stories when she also wrote similar stories in verse and when it seems that absolutely no one else had even written a play since Seneca nearly a thousand years earlier. In her short plays, probably written around 975-980, characters convert to Christianity after leading sinful or errant lives (*Gallicanus*, *Callimachus*) or they repent their sinful lives to embrace holiness (*Abraham*, *Paphnutius*) or they remain utterly steadfast in their Christian faith in spite of great pressures to abandon it, including prison, horrible tortures, and the death of loved ones, so that the Christian authority of a character proves stronger than any situation the character faces (*Dulcitius*, *Sapientia*) (Forse 2002: 62-65). The compactness of the dialogue, the zippy pace of the action, and the variety of scenic contexts suggest that Hrosvitha was aware of the

practicalities of theatrical performance and of dramatic structure that engage audiences rather than readers. Even scenes such as Sapienta's discourse on numbers when asked the age of her daughters and the discussion of music in *Paphnutius*, which veer toward Platonic dialogue, can achieve a comic effect when performed in a theatrical manner. Forse (2002: 65-66) proposes that Hrosvitha wrote the plays as a contribution to the ecclesiastical reform movement of the late tenth century. Hrosvitha, he says, intended the texts to be read aloud by students learning Latin as well as "elements of decorum and civility within ecclesiastical, royal, and aristocratic circles." The plays, however, possess an aesthetic complexity that implies a larger sense of purpose than classroom exercises or pedagogic goals. Hrosvitha probably knew very little about the ancient pantomime culture, if she knew anything at all, but with her aristocratic heritage and close connection to the court of Otto II (955-983), she was familiar with the skaldic aesthetic that dominated the Teutonic taste for performance. Skaldic entertainments were probably what Bishops Luitprand of Cremona and Ratherius of Verona had in mind when they condemned clergy for enjoying "profane games and performances" (Reid 1991: 161; Butler 1960: 4). That Hrosvitha set all of her plays in the heyday of the Roman Empire may well have some connection to Otto's attempts to invade Italy and to restore the Roman Empire under a German dynasty: she wanted to model relations between emperors and women in a supportive way that would allow strong, Christian, female voices to be *heard* and appreciated as influential in the fate of empire. That is why she chose to write in a dramatic-theatrical form as opposed to the skaldic form, where the male warrior voice controlled all the characters in the narrative. The audience for the plays, then, was something other and larger than students in a classroom. Hrosvitha may have written the plays as a series of entertainments for the edification of aristocratic patrons of the abbey at Gandersheim, where she lived. It is even possible that she staged the plays in different rooms of the abbey or a similar large building. The scenic variety of the plays suggests that scenes moved to different rooms and audiences moved accordingly. *Dulcitius*, for example, contains a scene in which three women, imprisoned for their Christianity by Diocletian's governor Dulcitius, watch from their cell as Dulcitius, possessed by Satan and thinking he is making love to the women, kisses pots and pans in a kitchen (Roswitha 1923: 38-39). This scene gives the impression that the author had a specific performance site in mind

when she wrote it, such as a pantry attached to a kitchen in the abbey. The performers would have been nuns or young women studying at the abbey, which means that women would have played male roles. In her prefaces to the plays, Hrosvitha makes no mention of their performance, but by writing prefaces, she obviously anticipated an audience, of "learned and virtuous men," that was somehow already aware of her dramatic work, because, "impelled by your kindly interest," she agreed to submit her work to them, albeit full of doubt and humility about its quality (Roswitha 1923: xxviii, xxx). With their almost complete reliance on voice and dialogue to construct action, the plays would seem not to offer much in the way of opportunities for physical movement in performance. Each play contains numerous, often quite brief, scenes in different settings, but each scene projects a tableau-like quality, a sense of characters speaking from poses assumed in unique perfprmances spaces, although occasionally characters do refer to the performance of physical actions, such as in *Abraham*, where Abraham says, "Come nearer, Mary, and give me a kiss," to which Mary responds, "I will take your head in my arms and stroke your neck"; later, the characters say things like, "Sit down and I will take off your shoes" and "Oh, Mary, why do you turn your face away and stare at the ground?" and "You go first, dearest father, like the good shepherd leading the lost lamb that has been found. The lamb will follow in your steps" (Roswitha 1923: 83, 85, 88). The author retains much of the Gothic belief that when bodies move much during performance it is because demonic spirits have possessed them, like Callimachus in the kitchen, although in her last play, *Sapientia*, Hrosvitha does introduce actions that would be quite bold in performance: "Then fling this rebellious girl into the boiling liquid." [...] "I will leap into it joyfully of my own accord [...] I am swimming merrily in the boiling pitch" (Roswitha 1923: 146). Other fantastic speech-actions ensue. The plays of Hrosvitha reveal an enigmatic transitional phase in the evolution of theatrical consciousness in Western civilization. She wanted the voices of strong, chaste women to be heard in a way that they could not if she relied on the otherwise highly constricting predominate modes of narrative performance in her time: the skaldic entertainment, the tiny, emergent liturgical drama of the *Quem quaeritis*, or the elaborate imperial ceremonials modeled by the Byzantines. In her mind, a Christian mode of theatrical performance emphasized voice and word at the expense of "demonic" bodily expression. Yet in *Sapientia*, it is evident that she

struggled against the temptation to make her chaste characters move with a power that diminished or even subverted the authority of (at least male) voice and word and perhaps even the narrative itself, which of course was a major reason the Church had condemned the Roman pantomime. But Hrosvitha's Christian plays inaugurate a long, unfinished era in which it is incredibly difficult for people to construct theatrical actions without speech or dancing.

The Return of Pantomime



An image of the dumb show scene from the film of Shakespeare's Hamlet *(1948), directed by Laurence Olivier.*

The Shift from Oblivion to Paris

The English Experiment with Dumb Shows

Christian-medieval beliefs regarding relations between voice, body, and narrative in performance assured that knowledge of the pantomime aesthetic remained in deep obscurity for many centuries. The Renaissance and the invention of the printing press expanded ideas about the body in performance inspired by ancient texts and art, but knowledge of pantomime played a negligible role in the restoration of proscenium theater culture. Even Lucian's *On Dancing* was scarcely known in theater circles until the late seventeenth century (Hall 2008: 365-366). When ballet began in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, in Italy, princes and choreographers built elaborate court dances on ancient mythological themes from the framework of medieval patterns of aristocratic social dance and ceremonial movements with music (Strong 1973: 23-25). In the latter half of the sixteenth century, Catherine de Medici (1519-1589), in Paris, fostered the development of the *ballet de cour* as a way to enhance the prestige of the Valois dynasty, but from its beginning, with Balthasar de Beaujoyeulx's *Ballet de Polonais*, in 1573, ballet derived from a specific movement vocabulary ("positions") under the command of a choreographer, whose task was to show how the harmonious movement of bodies resulted from following a rational system of action sanctioned by royal authority.

In the early seventeenth century, in England, the royal court, especially during the reigns of James I (1566-1625) and Charles I (1600-1649), sponsored elaborately choreographed masques, spectacular political allegories, several supervised by the architect Inigo Jones (1573-1652), which sometimes integrated aristocratic spectators with performers hired by the king (Orgel 1975: 60-83; Strong 1973: 213-243). These, however, were not ballets, because the British court was never able to establish a unified way of moving for the many performers in this type of political entertainment. Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611), staged for James I, contains a brief pantomime performed by "several strange Shapes, bringing in a banquet; they dance about it with gentle actions of salutation; and, inviting the King, & c. to eat, they depart" (III, iii). *Hamlet* (1599-1602) contains an even more

complex pantomime ("dumb-show") in which five performers wordlessly enact the murder of a king by a poisoner and the "wooing of the Queen with gifts" (III, ii; 1982: 296):

> *Enter a King and a Queen; the Queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers: she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns; finds the King dead, and makes passionate action. The Poisoner, with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner wooes the Queen with gifts: she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love.*

In discussing this scene, Harold Jenkins observes that dumb shows in Shakespeare's time were "common enough" and that it is "easy [...] enough to exaggerate the singularity" of such scenes, but he focuses on describing the manifold scholarly controversies surrounding Shakespeare's puzzling motive for inserting the dumb show. He concludes that evidence of the text allows for no greater motive than to allow the actor playing King Claudius to appear "inscrutable" in response to the pantomime depicting the King's murder of Hamlet's father (Shakespeare 1982: 501-505). But to say that dumb shows were "common enough" implies a theatrical convention or tradition more familiar to Shakespeare than to anyone studying dramatic texts from his time, for dumb shows are rare indeed in the plays of Shakespeare's contemporaries. Forty years before Shakespeare wrote Hamlet, mysterious dumb show scenes preceded each act of the very dark five-act tragedy *Gorboduc* (1561), by Thomas Norton (1532-1584) and Thomas Sackville (1536-1608), with each dumb show enacting in pantomime the actions occurring in the ensuing act burdened, to say the least, with huge speeches. Consider, for example, the pantomime beginning Act II:

> *First, the Musicke of Cornettes began to playe, during which came in upon the stage a King accompanied with a nombre of his nobilitie and gentlemen. And after he had placed him self in a chaire of estate prepared for him, there came and kneled before him a grave and aged*

> *gentelman and offred up a cuppe unto him of wyne in a glasse, which the King refused. After him commes a brave and lustie yong gentleman and presents the King with a cup of gold filled with poyson, which the King accepted, and drinking the same, immediately fell downe dead upon the stage, and so was carried thence away by his Lordes and gentelmen, and then the Musicke ceases. Hereby was signified that as glasse by nature holdeth no poyson, but is clere and may easely be seen through, ne boweth by any arte: so a faithful counsellour holdeth no treason, but is plain and open, ne yeldeth to any undiscrete affection, but giveth wholesome counsell, which the yll advised Prince refuseth. The delightful gold filled with poison betokeneth flattery, which under fair seeming of pleasant words beareth deadly poyson, which destroyed the Prince that receyveth it. As befell in the two brethren Ferrex and Porrex, who, refusing the holsome advise of grave court counsellours, credited these yong Paracites, and brought to them selves death and destruction therby* (Norton 1883: 29-30).

In his monograph on *Gorboduc*, Homer Watt discussed in some detail the dumb show scenes, which "are the most striking native element in the tragedy." Like other commentators on the play, Watt contends that the verbose tragedies of Seneca were the model for Norton and Sackville's play, which "is so Senecan as to be absolutely without action," "interesting only to a learned and courtly audience." The dumb shows exist to satisfy an "English" craving for "some action on the stage" and to highlight the "moral lesson" of the play, although if anything it is actually the other way around: the dumb shows present enigmatic, "inscrutable" actions that require an entire act of tedious, moralizing speeches to explain. Watt rejects the idea that the dumb shows derive from Italian *intermedii* pantomimes that supposedly took place during the performance of *commedia dell'arte* comedies in Italian court theaters. These *intermedii* are perhaps similar to the French *divertissements*—small dance pantomimes separating acts in a play or opera and, unlike in *Gorboduc*, mostly irrelevant to the play or opera. According to Watt, Norton and Sackville, who never visited Italy, were innovative in linking pantomimic scenes to tragedy, and he accepts that Norton and Sackville invented the dumb show for English tragic drama. But he also asserts that the authors adapted a tradition of allegorical pantomimes that appeared in court masques or civic pageants, although the

only evidence he presents of such pantomimes comes from descriptions of Queen Elizabeth's coronation procession. He implies the existence of an undocumented tradition of allegorical pantomime that may have descended from medieval times (Watt 1910: 78-82). Dumb show scenes also appear in another English drama, the revenge tragedy *Locrine*, written between 1585 and 1591 and published anonymously in 1595, though once ascribed to Shakespeare. Here an allegorical pantomime featuring mythological or animal characters precedes each act, for example, preceding the second act:

> *Enter Ate as before. After a little lightning and thundering, let there come forth this show:--Perseus and Andromeda, hand in hand, and Cepheus also, with swords and targets. Then let there come out of an other door, Phineus, all black in armour, with Aethiopians after him, driving in Perseus, and having taken away Andromeda, let them depart, Ate remaining* (II, I; *Locrine* 1734: 14).

Ate, "a goddess of revenge," then gives a little speech explaining the significance of the pantomimed actions, as she does after every dumb show, although she does not play a role in the drama itself, which concerns Trojans and Scythians in Britain. Act III: "Enter Ate as before. The dumb show. A Crocodile sitting on a river's rank, and a little Snake stinging it. Then let both of them fall into the water" (*Locrine* 1734: 27). The final, fifth act dumb show is just as peculiar as the rest: "Enter Ate as before. Jason, leading Creon's daughter. Medea, following, hath a garland in her hand, and putting it on Creon's daughter's head, setteth it on fire, and then, killing Jason and her, departeth" (47). The pantomimes function as capsuled allegorical analogies of the ensuing, speech-driven dramatic action, unlike in *Gorboduc* or *Hamlet*, where the dumb shows function as premonitions or enigmatic intimations of actions in the play otherwise "explained" by speech. In the notes to their own 1778 edition of *Locrine*, Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) and George Steevens (1736-1800) quote Bishop Thomas Percy's (1729-1811) remark about the play: "This tragedy is in the old turgid pedantick style of the academick pieces of that time, which were composed by the students to be acted in their colleges, on solemn occasions. It has not the most remote resemblance to Shakespeare's manner" (Johnson 1780: 728). From this perspective, the "tradition" of dumb shows refers to a practice of schools inserting pantomimes into tragic dramas to achieve

pedagogical goals in relation to the schoolboys who performed the plays. Even so, how this practice emerged remains quite obscure, as does further evidence of dumb shows in tragic dramas. Regardless of their mystifying origin, the dumb show scenes in *Gorboduc*, *Locrine*, and *Hamlet* disclose a vivid pantomimic imagination in relation to tragic themes that had almost no knowledge of Roman pantomime. Elizabethan dramatists apparently did not grasp the Roman concept of pantomime even from ancient sources that were available to them (cf., Mehl 2011). In *The Roman Actor* (1626), a dark play based on Suetonius's gossip about an affair between Paris and Domitia, the wife of the Emperor Domitian, Philip Massinger (1583-1640) believed that Paris was an actor of tragic plays rather than a pantomime; nevertheless, the play, which assumes an audience quite learned in Roman history and culture, does capture well a turbulent imperial environment in which tempestuous theatrical personalities intersected erotic and political sentiments, with violent consequences. Paris explains why the greatness of the Roman Empire depends more on theater than on philosophers:

> *if, to inflame*
> *The noble youth with an ambitious heat*
> *T' endure the frosts of danger, nay, of death,*
> *To be thought worthy the triumphal wreath*
> *By glorious undertakings, may deserve*
> *Reward, or favour, from the commonwealth;*
> *Actors may put in for as large a share*
> *As all the sects of the philosophers:*
> *They with cold precepts (perhaps seldom read)*
> *Deliver, what an honourable thing*
> *The active virtue is: but does that fire*
> *The blood, or swell the veins with emulation,*
> *To be both good and great, equal to that*
> *Which is presented in our theaters?* (I, iii; Massinger 1813: 345-346)

But the English dramatists loved too much the sound and power of their language to invest further in their obvious talent for constructing speechless actions in a tragic mood, and it would be a long while after *The Tempest* before they returned to a "serious" idea of pantomime.

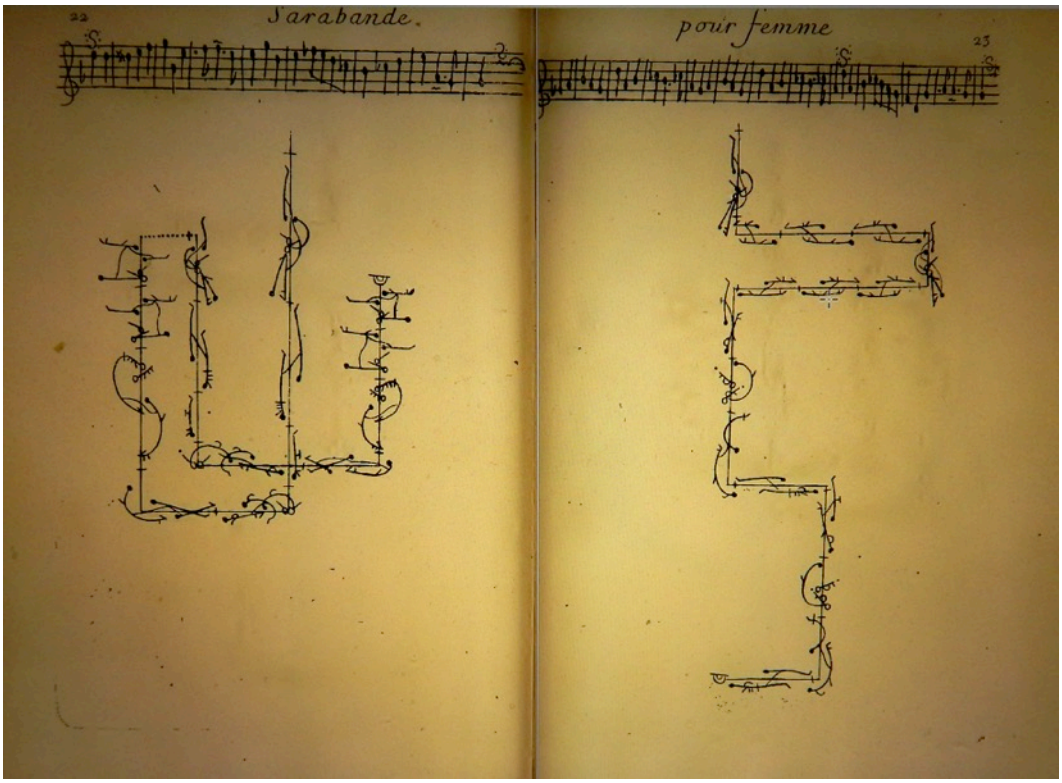


Figure 58: Diagram from Feuillet's *Choreographie ou l'art de'crire la dance* (1701) showing the steps and movements of a sarabande for female dancer in relation to specific musical notation. Fueillet (1701).

Pantomime in the Shadow of Ballet

In Italy (Venice), ballet evolved in relation to opera, which began to include choreographed dances as interludes in the early seventeenth century and then by 1644 as a device for advancing the operatic plot itself, derived from ancient mythological themes (Hall 2008: 365-366). The Italians tended to see ballet as something to be integrated into a larger narrative framework dominated by singing, whereas the ancient pantomime subordinated the singing voice to the movement of the dancer. It's not clear if they adopted this approach because they were unaware of the ancient pantomime aesthetic or because they believed their own time required a different relation between dance and voice than the Roman model offered. In France, under Louis XIV (reigned 1643-1715), ballet became an autonomous art that could tell a fairly elaborate story entirely in movement. French ballet showed a great fondness for themes taken from ancient mythology and history. But the French insisted that all movement conform

to a system of positions, gestures, and kinetic tropes that was always larger or more powerful than any dancer or choreographer's imagination in the sense that one could not make a ballet without using only the elements defining the system [Figure 58]. Ancient Roman pantomime never followed any unified or standardized system of movement other than the pyrrhic step. The French architects of ballet in the seventeenth century do not indicate any awareness of ancient pantomime. Ballet evolved in France, and then elsewhere in Europe, independently of the Roman model of narrative dancing and has made no attempt ever to become anything like it. This is not to say that ballet did not develop pantomimic movements, only that in ballet movements were "pantomimic" insofar as they conformed to an authorized, balletic definition of pantomime that had nothing to do with pantomime in the original meaning of the word.

Yet it was the French who brought the term "pantomime" from the shadows of history and oblivion. In 1682, Claude-Francois Menestrier (1631-1705), a scholar with a prodigious range of interests, published *Des Ballets anciens et modernes selon les règles du theater,* which includes numerous references to ancient pantomime as a danced performance of "fables" dealing with the theme of "metamorphosis" (Menestrier 1682: 42). While he cited ancient texts, including Lucian, and inscriptions to explain Roman pantomime, he saw pantomime in the image of the ballet of his time: "The ancients gave the name of pantomimes to dancers of ballets," and their name—as imitator of all--comes from their ability to imitate more than human actions (136). Menestrier did not discuss the pantomime movement aesthetic, other than to quote Lucian about pantomimes "expressing passions through the movement of the arms," nor did he examine the performance contexts for pantomime, although he did claim that the Greeks invented ballet as an accompaniment to the singing of Homeric epics (172, 296-297). He avoided any reference to the manifold moral ambiguities associated with ancient pantomime, because for him ballet always "conforms to good morals" and presents "nothing indecent" (146). Instead, he identified the themes or "passions" danced by pantomimes, for the important thing was that pantomimes depicted through movement passions, multiple identities, and conditions of metamorphosis. Without signifying anything other than itself, dance lost all moral power, for dances that "express beauty without representing anything" are "disgusting" (301). It is evident that Menestrier regarded ballet as any kind of dance sponsored

by a state or royal government, and such governments sponsor dances that reveal "the mysteries hidden within Nature"—or the order or "harmony" of things that is otherwise invisible to the spectator (41). In his mind, the invisible order of things achieved optimum representation through geometric organizations of movement, and his book, curiously, includes several pages of schematic diagrams of geometric relations between dancers for a 1667 court dance celebrating a marriage in Parma to show how ballet "in our time" differs from that of the ancients (178-187). Menestrier conflated pantomime, ancient Greek dancing, and ballet, because his purpose was to bestow the authority of ancient knowledge and practice upon French efforts to establish ballet as a cultural priority and a powerful emblem of national seriousness in the arts. In pursuing this goal, he wound up, perhaps inadvertently, redefining pantomime much more broadly than the Romans did: it means telling a story through movement alone. Since Menestrier, this is the definition that most people have applied when using the word, for most people use the word without any awareness of the original Roman meaning.

The formation of French ballet was responsible for the redefinition of pantomime, but the managers of French ballet culture were not eager to embrace pantomime, at least as defined in this new, broad manner. French ballet masters and their sponsors felt a distinction between ballet and pantomime was necessary to establish the authority of ballet. It was not that ballet did not include pantomime scenes, but rather that ballet used pantomime within its own movement language. Pantomime in a ballet conformed to the gestural signs designated for it by the general system of movement defining ballet, and ballet defined itself as a kind of language-calculus that followed specific rules for moving the body and for bodies to move in relation to each other. Ballet achieved authority, "legitimacy," and royal status to the extent that it was a language that could be standardized, regulated, assigned corporeal-spatial classifications, and therefore recombined systematically. If ballet was a language, then it could be "inscribed"—that is, notated or schematized. Menestrier in 1682 had described ballet as a kind of geometrical organization of movement. In 1700, Raoul-Auger Feuillet (1653-1709) published *Choréographie, ou l'art de d'écrire la danse*, which notated, with both words and diagrams, hundreds of positions, steps, thrusts, turns, "demonstrative signs," and their "mutations" used in ballets performed at the Paris Opera and approved by

Louis XIV himself [Figure 58]. The book, which had numerous editions, showed how "characters" in a ballet were the product of particular combinations of signs and their mutations, and its clarity and scope of presentation allowed it to dominate thinking about choreographed balletic movement throughout the eighteenth century. The Opera subsequently issued an annual edition of notations that expanded the vocabulary of movements acceptable in ballet. "The publication of these dances was intimately associated with the status and popularity of dancing at the court of Louis XIV" (Goff 1995: 206). But publication of the dances was also fundamental in transforming ballet from a court into a public entertainment, which meant that the Opera, as a "legitimate" theater, was (since 1689) now a major institution worthy of subsidies paid for by all citizens of the kingdom. The notation and publication of French opera ballets greatly strengthened the authority of ballet to define the optimum representation of characters and subject matter in dance and establish a unified movement aesthetic by which choreographers and audiences could measure the skills of dancers and the value of individual ballets. Feuillet's book did not contain a single use of the word pantomime, and indeed the myriad diagrams in the book convey the impression that the beautiful movement of bodies depends on principles which are highly abstract, geometric, and mathematical—quite technical but learnable through repetition. Eventually, in 1760, the ballet master Jean-Georges Noverre (1727-1810) published his also hugely popular *Lettres sur la danse*, in which he complained that opera ballets were cold and remote from the "passions" that animated the body, and he repeatedly referred to pantomime as "warmer, truer, and more intelligible" than the official ballets, even though "the art of pantomime in our day is probably more limited than it was in the reign of Augustus"; ballet, he asserted, "must become Pantomime in all gestures and speak to the soul through the eyes" (Noverre 1760: 18, 20, 31). He did not include a single diagram or image in the entire book.

But Noverre's enthusiasm for pantomime was possible because of the peculiar circumstances under which pantomime operated in tension with the "legitimate" theaters of Paris. In 1697, Louis XIV expelled the Comedie Italienne from Paris, after the company had enjoyed royal support since at least middle of the seventeenth century. An ostensible reason for the expulsion was that the troupe had prepared a show that made fun of the king's wife, Madame de Maintenon (1635-1719). The company, housed in the

Hôtel de Bourgogne, had specialized in *commedia dell' arte* improvisations in Italian, but to maintain its competitiveness in relation to the newly established Comédie-Française and the unregulated popular entertainments that took place in what the French called the Théâtre de la Foire, the company had formed partnerships with French dramatists to produce French language plays that featured the perennial characters of these entertainments, including Pierrot, who seems to have made his first appearance by that name in 1673 (Duchartre 1929: 102, 261).



Figure 59: Painting of the *foire* St. Laurent, Paris (1767) by an unidentified artist. Photo: Public domain.

However, the motive for expelling the Italian company was more complex than the issue of Madame de Maintenon's reputation. The Comédie-Française, founded in 1680 as the state theater of France, feared competition from the Italians would destroy it if the Italians succeeded in their efforts to perform their repertoire in French. But the theater also feared competition from theatrical groups that performed plays in foreign languages. Louis XIV therefore issued a law, also in 1697, that forbade any kind of dialogue in performances produced in the Théâtre de la Foire or the production there of any written text for the theater (Campardon I 1877,

xviii-xix). Up until this time and long afterward, the Théâtre de la Foire in Paris consisted of theatrical productions appearing irregularly at primarily two sites in Paris: Saint Germain and Saint-Laurent [Figure 59]. Shows took place outdoors or under canopies or on makeshift stages and attracted bystanders visiting the "fairs" or marketplaces set up at these sites. These theatrical companies had no official status, no subsidies, and for the most part no corporate benefactors or investors; they survived off the generosity of bystanders. Different wandering companies performed at different times of the year, and sometimes they competed directly with each other in the same open public space. In addition to *commedia dell'arte* entertainments, these fair sites might feature marionette shows, tightrope walking, juggling, acrobats, or any productions of plays in a foreign language or by a foreign company. The *foire* theater companies responded to the royal ban on dialogue in clever ways, such as characters speaking or singing to the audience instead of each other or speaking only monologues or, as in Roman pantomime, having a narrator speak "for" the characters on stage. But a major consequence was the development of pantomimic action to tell stories, although most of the stories derived from the old *commedia* scenarios and their characters. The pantomime Alard (or Allard) had performed in things called pantomimes at the St. Germain *foire* at least since 1697, when he performed as Arlequin in a version of *Scaramouche* (*Memoires* I 1743: 4). His troupe also performed in London around 1700. In his book, *The History of the Mimes and Pantomimes* (1728), the English ballet master John Weaver remarked that in Alard's London performances, the vestiges of Roman pantomime had "sunk and degenerated into Pleasantry and ludicrous Representations of *Harlequin, Scaramouch, Columbine, Pierot*, etc" (Weaver 1728: 3). By 1707, however, an erudite German theorist of dance, Johann Pasch (1661-1709), in an enormous mess of a book intended, evidently, for both dance teachers and skeptical Protestants, had reached the conclusion that pantomime, as the French practiced it through the character of Harlequin, was entering ballet as a comic dimension, which, although quite remote from the tragic or "serious" idea of pantomime favored in ancient times, was nevertheless capable of provoking complicated ("bizarr") dramatic emotions (Pasch 1707: 61; Winter 1974: 46). The scenario, of unknown authorship, for a 1710 pantomime, *Arlequin et Scaramouche*, performed at the *foire* St. Laurent, gives some idea of how pantomime operated in this environment that restricted the

characters from speaking, except through song. The following passage (Act I, Scenes iii and iv) from the three-act scenario gives an indication how language functions in relation to *foire* pantomimic action.

> ***SCENE III***
> *Colombine appears at the window & goes to retrieve the dog from his hut. Arlequin salutes his mistress, & seeing the Doctor leave the house: he starts to dance with Scaramouche; this is followed by a lazzi of giving a letter to Colombine.*
> ***SCENE IV.***
> *A troupe of male and female grape pickers comes and offers some [grapes] to the Doctor. Arlequin & Scaramouche engorge themselves. The Doctor opens a large purse and distributes money to the grape-pickers. Arlequin & Scaramouche intervene, so that they receive all the shares of their comrades and then they leave.* (*Arlequin* 1711: 9)

As written, the pantomimic action appears incoherent, confusing, and perhaps even unintelligible, although the scenario consistently maintains this vein of absurdity. Some scenes include brief songs, almost ditties, performed by different characters, but a performance of the entire scenario probably lasted at best about a half-hour. There is no plot as such, but rather a series of scenes featuring different characters in the ensemble who perform different kinds of amusing physical actions in different settings and even different disguises: no matter how absurd the situation or the action, the characters remain implacably fixed in their identities, with Arlequin always in love with Colombine, the wife of the foolish Doctor. The language describing the actions is vague, "unregulated," in the Roman sense of pantomime, even though French pantomime utterly lacked the montage principle of "metamorphosis" to establish the relation between one scene and the next. The actions in the two little scenes are "unregulated" because they can be interpreted in manifold ways of moving the body, and for this reason they cannot be dance or at any rate ballet. Within the hierarchy of French cultural milieux, dominated by royal institutions, including the ballet, the term "pantomime," though accepted as a Roman invention, nevertheless meant above all unregulated movement of the body to tell a story, and unregulated movement was by implication comic—it told stories

that were incoherent, not "logical," ludicrously absurd. But while French pantomime did not regulate the movements of the performers, as ballet did with the kind of notational precision described by Feuillet, these unregulated movements seemed confined to a narrow set of archetypal, ridiculous characters who remained eternally incapable of any action that could bring them to a "higher" level of being or at least lift them out of an otherwise permanent state of absurdity, stupidity, or grotesquerie.

However, even this narrow, deformed idea of pantomime constituted a threat to the state theater institutions, which complained to the king for years that the law of 1697 did not go far enough to limit competition from the *foire* theaters. In 1719, the Comédie-Française, along with the Opera, finally succeeded in getting a law issued that forbade all performances in the *foires*, with the exception of marionette troupes and tightrope walkers (Campardon I 1877: xxi). This law significantly reduced the glut of crude or debased theater performances that the Comédie-Française believed diminished public enthusiasm for theater in general. Some companies that were actually French had registered as foreign to avoid aspects of the 1697 law. But the 1719 law had the effect of elevating the *foire* entertainments as they shifted to the newly established Opera-Comique, because the public itself was apparently sympathetic to the law and felt the *foires* had become oversaturated with mediocre and careless theatrical entertainments, which often included nasty parodies of Opera ballet intermezzi. In the 1720s, French pantomime therefore became more sophisticated, developing a thing called the "ballet pantomime" or what the Italians soon perfected under the term "ballo pantomimo."

But if the French were critical of foreign troupes for degrading the *foire* theater culture, foreigners were critical of the French for exporting their own degradations of *foire* theatrical entertainment. In England, the dance scholar and ballet master, John Weaver (1673-1760) thought that French pantomime as he had seen it in London failed to be anything more than buffoonish skits, although he was deeply appreciative of French ballet, having translated, among other French dance works, Feuillet's dance notation treatise as *Orchesography* (1706) (Goff 1995: 209). In his mind, French pantomime, as performed in the *foires*, had betrayed the imperial aesthetic of ancient pantomime because it lacked seriousness of purpose. Pantomime and ballet, he reasoned, could benefit from a closer association with each other, which meant that pantomime had to move away from

comic themes and ballet had to move away from a subordinate relation to opera. Ballet in Paris was an adjunct to the Opera, and the political-administrative structure of the Opera imposed on ballet an incidental relation to the larger operatic narrative, so that ballets functioned only as entr'actes, interludes, intermezzi, or divertissements. The French had not developed ballet as an autonomous art form, despite the efforts of Menestrier and Feuillet to move ballet in that direction. Under its first artistic director, the composer and choreographer Jean-Baptist Lully (1632-1687), the Opera, from 1673-1683, demonstrated seriousness of purpose through the genre known as *tragédie lyrique*, which followed many rules that he prescribed. The ballet interludes for these lyric tragedies were "serious" insofar as they contributed a ceremonial gravity and splendor to the operatic enterprise. The dancers often wore masks and extravagant costumes, and many of their movements derived from the court ballets involving aristocratic guests that Lully had choreographed (frequently with Moliere) for Louis XIV before the establishment of the Opera (Cowart 2008: 18-33; Buford 2001: 71-74). Under the monopoly over state musical entertainments granted him by the King in 1672, Lully exerted almost total, absolute control over the Académie Royale de Musique, but this power was possible only if he subordinated ballet to opera. With the court ballets, such as *Ballet Royal de la Nuit* (1653), Lully created long, spectacular, allegorical dances that presented different, picturesque scenes, moods, and ensembles without telling any story; these, however, were occasional affairs, connected to a calendar of court social events. If, with the establishment of the Académie Royale de Musique, ballet became independent of opera, then ballet would require its own its own considerable resources, its own theater, and its own season, which would compete for the time of audiences and the energies of Lully, who was expected to compose operas every year as well as stage them. This situation would entail the appointment of a separate artistic director and staff, who would then compete with the opera for resources, setting up a perpetual power struggle within the Académie. Lully made many enemies, partly because of his ruthlessness in dealing with rivals, partly because of his role in getting the Comedienne Italienne expelled, and partly because of his flamboyant homosexuality, which offended the pious Madame de Maintenon and her austere cabal within the royal circle, who had their own protégés within the Opera. Under pressure from her, the King reluctantly fired him in 1687. And yet for decades

afterward, because of the political complexity of the Académie administration, ballet in Paris remained subordinate to the opera in the intermezzi format established by Lully.

In England, Weaver had to work within a different socio-political environment. The state did not subsidize theatrical entertainments; instead, the king issued "patents" or licences to commercial theaters, and these theaters competed with each other for public audiences. Unlicenced or "unregulated" theaters simply did not exist, except as private entertainments in the homes of wealthy persons. Because the English theater operated outside of the state opera politics that prevailed in France and Italy, Weaver supposed that England was in a better position to resurrect the ancient art of pantomime by experimenting with "representations of entire stories, carried on by various motions, action, and dumb show" (Weaver 1728: 4). He had in mind a kind of ballet that emphasized acting over virtuoso movement technique: "But should we form our Notions of these [ancient] pantomimes from the Dancing we have among us, we should imagine an Actor rather described here than a Dancer. And indeed the whole Course of the Praise is given them for the Excellence of their Imitation of Manners and Passions, and not from their Agility, their fine Steps, and their Risings" (1728: 27). He also felt that neither ballet nor pantomime benefited from the use of *commedia* characters, although he himself occasionally produced and performed in "grotesque"or "burlesque" entertainments that featured these characters. In 1717, Weaver produced for the Drury Lane theater *The Loves of Mars and Venus, A Dramatick Entertainment of Dancing Attempted in Imitation of the Pantomimes of the Ancient Greeks and Romans*, generally acknowledged as the first ballet to tell "an entire story." However, the ballet, if indeed it was one, was on the same program as a performance of Beaumont and Fletcher's five-act play *The Maid's Tragedy* (1611), so Weaver did not create anything resembling a monumental dance work. It was, nevertheless, a "serious" work, with music specially composed for it by Henry Symonds (Weaver 1728: 55-56). Following the overture, Mars and his entourage of warriors entered performing a pyrrhic dance. Venus then appeared in her dressing room, accompanied by a "symphony of flutes." The third scene featured Vulcan, performed by Weaver himself, forging a metal net with which the Cyclops and his slaves will ensnare Mars and Venus. After "feverish activity," Mars and Venus engaged in a dance dialogue, "strength against softness."

Suddenly, the Cyclops and the slaves enveloped Mars and Venus in the net and entangled them. "There was only a single set of variations for the finale." The piece included a dance in which Venus attempted to repulse Vulcan, which Weaver claimed was "altogether of the Pantomimic kind," with Venus using fourteen separate gestures to signify her repulsion. He explained how certain "passions" or emotions involved particular gestures. To signify anger, for example, the left hand should be "struck suddenly by the right and sometimes against the Breast." Admiration (of Vulcan for Venus): signified "by the raising up of the right Hand, the Palm turn'd upwards, the Fingers clos'd; and in one Motion the Wrist turn'd round and Fingers spread; the Body reclining, and Eyes fix'd on the Object." Contempt (of Venus for Vulcan): signified by "scornful Smiles; forbidding Looks; tossing of the Head, filliping of the Fingers; and avoiding the Object" (Weaver 1717: 23). The piece was not a ballet insofar as Weaver devised movements for the actors that did not follow the geometrical positions and kinetic tropes prescribed by the French. But he tried to "regulate" the pantomimic action by imposing his own semiotic gestural system, so that he produced an idiosyncratic sort of ballet pantomime.

The Loves of Mars and Venus provoked considerable excitement in London, but its impact was ambiguous. John Rich (1692-1761), the director of the rival Lincoln's Inn Fields Theater, staged a parody of Weaver's show, *Mars and Venus; Or, The Mouse Trap*. In 1718, Weaver produced at Drury Lane a second "Dramatick Entertainment in Dancing, after the manner of the ancient Pantomimes," *Orpheus and Euridice*, which was longer and perhaps even more serious than his previous effort. But audiences were not large enough to sustain his seriousness of purpose. He attempted to elevate pantomime by developing a gestural language that encompassed a larger range of emotional signification than could be found in either ballet or the *commedia* derived pantomime (Weaver 1721: 144). But he lived in an era that was deeply ambivalent about the communicative value of bodies independent of language and speech. The French assumed that a "higher" level of purely bodily signification entailed elaborate "regulation" of movement. While the English found such regulation stifling or pretentious, they nevertheless tended to believe that bodily significations unframed by speech invariably produced a comic effect. Rich, who was barely literate, was a formidable competitor for the Drury Lane Theater because he exploited this prejudice by presenting pantomimes that abandoned any

gestural code that was not buffoonish in the extreme. These shows, always featuring the stock *commedia* types, specialized in physical gags, pratfalls, and clownish stunts, with he himself, under the name Lun, playing Harlequin numerous times. A 1717 show at Lincoln's Inn Fields featured for the first time the term "harlequinade," which subsequently became an English synonymn for pantomime. Rich's pantomimes attracted large audiences, and also much criticism in the press for their shameless depiction of a ludicrously debased humanity that supposedly crippled the ability of London theater to stage works of more ambitious dramatic imagination. He himself realized that his limited, acrobatic approach to pantomime was not sufficient to sustain the interest of large audiences. But he also grasped that a more elevated gestural language, as Weaver proposed, was possible only by abandoning the *commedia* archetypes, which entailed taking huge commercial risks that neither Lincoln's Inn Fields or Drury Lane could afford. Moreover, the harlequinades in both theaters functioned as preludes or "after-pieces" to written comedies and dramas, in which the display of verbal skills was the chief attraction. These after-pieces, which lasted only about twenty minutes, sometimes contained two parts, a "serious" first half and then a comic parody of the serious part. It is, however, difficult to ascertain what was serious about the first part; it was probably just a set up for comic bits in the second part. But Rich's pantomime aesthetic depended above all on visual and scenic effects, sight gags, "tricks," elaborate stage machinery, and outlandish costumes: he developed the distinct Harlequin image of a tight body suit checkered with the colors yellow (fire/jealousy), blue (truth/air), black (invisibility/ water) and red (love/earth), "and it was a convention that Harlequin, in striking his attitudes, should always point to one or other of these colors" (Wilson 1935: 58-59). Rich's Harlequin always carried a kind of bat or paddle that enabled him to perform magical transformations of objects or people, such as leaping over houses or converting humans into animals. Pantomime scenes would include dragons, serpents, and other mechanical monsters, as well as more mundane tricks, such as a table rising and forming a canopy. In *The Necromancer and Dr. Faustus* (1723), "Rich's idea was primarily to amalgate the scenic splendors and mythological tone of the masque (which still lingered on the boards) with the schoolboy antics of the Harlequinade" (Wilson 1935: 59; Lawrence 1886: 545). Until the middle of the century, the two theaters were in almost savage competition with each other, and

competition escalated primarily through the the deployment of increasingly spectacular pantomimes, even though these remained "after-pieces." Neither theater could maintain its patent by producing only pantomimes, but neither theater could stay in business by producing only regular plays. In his delightful autobiography (1740), Colly Cibber (1671-1757), the actor-manager of the Drury Lane Theater, explained how "childish Pantomimes first came to take so gross a Possession of the Stage":

> *I have upon several occasions already observ'd, that when one Company is too hard for another, the lower in Reputation has always been forced to exhibit some new-fangled Foppery to draw the Multitude after them: Of these Expedients, Singing and Dancing had formerly been the most effectual; but, at the Time I am speaking of, our English Musick had been so discountenanced since the Taste of Italian Operas prevail'd, that it was to no purpose to pretend to it. Dancing therefore was now the only Weight in the opposite Scale, and as the New Theater sometimes found their Account in it, it could not be safe for us wholly to neglect it. To give even Dancing therefore some Improvement, and to make it something more than Motion without Meaning, the Fable of Mars and Venus was form'd into a connected Presentation of Dances in Character, wherein the Passions were so happily expressed, and the whole Story so intelligibly told by a mute Narration of Gesture only, that even thinking Spectators allow'd it both a pleasing and a rational Entertainment; though, at the same time, from our Distrust of its Reception, we durst not venture to decorate it with any extraordinary Expence of Scenes or Habits; but upon the Success of this Attempt it was rightly concluded, that if a visible Expence in both were added to something of the same Nature, it could not fail of drawing the Town proportionably after it. From this original Hint then (but every way unequal to it) sprung forth that Succession of monstrous Medlies that have so long infested the Stage, and which arose upon one another alternately, at both Houses outvying in Expence, like contending Bribes on both sides at an Election, to secure a Majority of the Multitude. But so it is, Truth may complain and Merit murmur with what Justice it may, the Few will never be a Match for the Many, unless Authority should think fit to interpose and put down these Poetical Drams, these Gin-shops of the*

> *Stage, that intoxicate its Auditors and dishonour their Understanding with a Levity for which I want a Name* (Cibber II 1756: 50-51).

Pantomimes made Rich wealthy, and in 1733, he built a new theater, Covent Garden, where his productions were somewhat more refined, though no less spectacular. Drury Lane tried to brand itself as providing a higher level of entertainment (Shakespeare), but both theaters struggled to control the spiraling costs of their competing pantomimes and the resentment of actors in the regular plays. In 1747, the actor David Garrick (1717-1779) became manager of the Drury Lane Theater and remained so until 1776. Despite his disdain for pantomime, he recognized that success in the genre was an economic necessity, although competing against Rich proved a monumental, long-term task. At first he tried to control public appetite for pantomime by launching new pantomimes around Christmas in the hope that audiences would prefer pantomimes as "special," seasonal entertainments rather than as a constant feature of every theatrical performance. Then, on December 26, 1750, he presented *Queen Mab, Harlequin*, by the comic actor Henry Woodward (1714-1777), with music by Charles Burney (1726-1814), a work so spectacular and enthusiastically received that Rich momentarily perceived a major threat to Covent Garden's competitveness. At last, in 1759, Garrick wrote his own, very successful Christmas pantomime, *Harlequin's Invasion*, except that it mostly wasn't: it was a comic play featuring numerous whimsical, cartoonish characters who banter with each other while foiling Monsieur Harlequin's ludicrous effort to invade England with "fairies, hags, genii, and hobgoblins." This was apparently the first time that Harlequin spoke, and while he didn't speak nearly as much as other characters, neither did he or any of the other characters engage in any pantomime. Indeed, the only vaguely pantomimic action in this three-act cartoon show consisted of a dance performed by "children in Pantomime characters" in the first act, and then at the end, when "Shakespear Rises: Harlequin Sinks"--various Shakespearean characters danced with the Three Graces and "several Fairies and Genii" (Garrick 1759). John O'Brien (2004: 228) suggests that *Harlequin's Invasion* was actually an "anti-pantomime" insofar as it was a propagandistic effort to destroy pantomime with the spoken word and enfold its comic function within the patriotic language of Shakespeare, although Pedicord and Bergman observe that Garrick simply didn't have

much, if any, pantomimic talent in his company (Garrick I 1980: 405). Garrick wanted to make the display of verbal skill the dominant motive for theatrical entertainment, and pantomime, as perfected by the patent theaters, undermined the authority of the voice to attract spectators. As an actor, Garrick had achieved unprecedented fame through the use of his voice and through his passionate devotion to Shakespeare, which by 1760 had contributed heavily to the establishment of Shakespeare as the paragon of the English language and even the soul of England itself. Garrick revolutionized acting by developing a naturalistic style of performance. In both serious and comic roles, he relied on subtleties of inflection, rhythm, and dynamics of his voice to construct a vast range of characters on the stage who seemed "alive" to a uniquely intimate degree. His physical gestures were similarly restrained yet perceptive, so that it seemed as if the words and movements issued "naturally" from the characters rather than inflated them. Before Garrick, a declamatory style of acting prevailed, in which actors tended to impress audiences with a sonorous, oratorical projection of words, with a virtuosity of elocution, verbal adroitness, and brilliance of "wit" or "temperament" supposedly defining the character. Performers often spoke from or in poses. The declamatory style emerged as a way to impose respectability on the theater in response to heavy condemnation of it by middle class moralists, most notably Jeremy Collier (1650-1726), whose famous "jeremiad" in 1698 against the immorality of the theater had compelled the culture surrounding the stage to move in a new direction more sensitive to middle class than aristocratic taste. But while the imbecilities and crude physicality of pantomimes for decades provoked pervasive contempt from the London press and literary worlds, it is understandable why audiences may not have found drama on the stage as compelling as pantomime. Grandeur of speech becomes oppressive when it inhibits freedom of movement and action, which is invariably the case when embellished and ornate pronunciation becomes the central value in the display of verbal skill. In his 1728 guide to the "reigning diversions" of London, *The Touch-Stone*, James Ralph (1705-1762) facetiously proposed that writers of "wit" could benefit from the study of pantomime, with its "silent Rhetorick," as a way to achieve greater and more poetic economy of mimesis instead of the "tedious" fetishization of words that had overtaken the stage and literature (Ralph 1973: 104-108; Domingo 2009: 52-57). But the spectacular conflict in the English theater between linguistic and

pantomimic performance was the consequence of a larger situation. After many centuries of Christian obsession with the authority of the Word to define the world, the eighteenth century opened up the possibility that the body might be as powerful a sign of human identity as language, that the body's movement could communicate many things for which language was inadequate. The French explored this possibility through ballet and through the *foire* pantomimes. But they also grasped that when bodies perform with a measure of artistry that does not depend on speech or even a text, such performances can create a mistrust of language, a sense that people use words to conceal, constrain, or deceive identities, to set up a veil or barrier between motive and action, or at any rate to transmit significations that separated identity from body. The French state therefore sanctioned ballet as a national project and then defined it as a severe regulation of the body according to abstract geometrical principles of "harmony" and carefully inscribed rules, while allowing pantomime, as an unregulated movement of the body without words, to thrive only in a comic mode, as an extravagantly absurd anarchy. The English, however, were deeply suspicious of ballet and the French preoccupation with "rules," and indeed, they continued to regard ballet as a "foreign" art until well into the twentieth century. But they embraced the pantomime as the French had fashioned it in response to the 1697 royal decree, and then, led by Rich, proceeded to Anglicize it as the "harlequinade," which linked wordless movement not only to the anarchistic imbecility of its narratives, but to "magical" transformations provided by elaborate scenic technology, and to a cartoonish vision of the "legitimacy" bestowed upon the theater by the royal patents. The English had long forgotten the obscure and tragic "dumb show" idea that Shakespeare had included in *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*, preceded by the dumb show experiments in *Gorboduc* and *Locrine*. But authors embedded these fascinating, tragic dumb show scenes within a vast mass of speech almost as a way to amplify the authority of the voice to represent more accurately what the scenes depicted perhaps too ambiguously. These haunting dumb show scenes remained obscure curiosities, and never became (anymore than Weaver) a point of departure for a more serious approach to pantomime than the later awareness of the ancient pantomime actually produced. The English were too invested in the belief that language is the dominant source of identity to allow pantomime to signify anything

other than the fantastically absurd chaos that ensues when words and voice disappear from human actions.

French Pantomime Adapts to State Power

In France, meanwhile, pantomime evolved, as usual, in relation to the politics of monarchial absolutism. In the waning days of Louis XIV's reign, the *foire* theaters began to organize an effort to institutionalize their productions, so that they could operate throughout the year instead of only for brief periods in the fall or spring and thus achieve greater protection from their marginalization by the state-run theaters. This collaboration began at the end of 1714 and resulted in the formation of the Opera-Comique, which probably occurred in large part because the Opera was willing to accommodate some of the *foire* requests in exchange for the alleviation of large debts it had incurred. The King granted the *foire* group a "monopoly" on certain theatrical entertainments that was somewhat similar to the "patent" or licence sanctioned theaters received from the king in England, which is to say that the *foire* companies received the "privilege" of performing in a conventional theater without receiving any subsidy. But the establishment of the Opera-Comique, initially in the Hotel de Bourgogne, did not go smoothly for a variety of reasons, only some of which were financial, and years passed before there was any clarity about what role this theater should play in French cultural life, for the *foire* theaters did not disappear with the creation of the Opera-Comique. In 1719, the King issued a decree that forbade all performances in the *foire* districts, except for marionette shows and rope dancing. The decree supposedly prevented the *foire* theaters from competing with the Opera-Comique as well as with the Opera and the Comédie-Française. But enforcement of the law was apparently erratic, because, by 1721, the *foire* theaters had resumed staging productions in their traditional districts (St. Germain and St Laurent), although *foire* companies, including the Hotel de Bourgogne, tended to schedule their performances throughout the year so that they did not compete against each other on the same days, a feat requiring an extraordinarily sophisticated level of collaboration (Cesar.org.uk 2016). This situation was opposite to that which prevailed in ancient Rome or in eighteenth century England, where the public encouraged head-to-head competition between pantomimes.

The French pantomime operated within this highly controlled yet imprecisely defined zone of theater culture lacking any official status. As mentioned earlier, pantomime in France emerged and evolved in response to the French government's determination to control, through its own state theaters, the transmission of the "official" French language, speech, and voice, so that a function of the state theater was to establish how French should be spoken, sung, and even written. The idea of a "standard" or idealized form of speaking French was central to the government's vision of a unified French identity. The *foire* theaters trafficked in dialects and "foreign" modes of speaking, and, moreover, as a demotic form of entertainment, they attracted audiences in large part because of their ability to appeal to audience resentments toward official pronouncements and to audience pleasure in the lampooning of "pretentious" figures and aspects of state institutions. From the royal and state perspective, language achieved its most "serious" or idealized voicing through tragedy, which, during the first half of the eighteenth century, almost invariably dealt with figures of state and themes of struggles for power. But to prevent comic language in the theater from undermining or degrading the "serious" language of tragedy, the state reserved comic dialogue exclusively for its own theaters, the Comédie-Française and the Opera, and thus, through the decree of 1697, forbade the *foire* theaters from using in performance anything but fragments or scraps of spoken or sung language. The lack of access to "serious" language meant that *foire* performances appeared almost entirely in a comic mode. But the *foire* theater companies overwhelmingly understood comic performance in relation to the *commedia* archetypes imported from Italy. It is difficult to grasp why the *foire* artists throughout the century relied so relentlessly on Arlequin, Colombine, Pierrot, and other buffoons from the *commedia* roster to set up almost every comic situation. To say that audiences "liked" the characters simply displaces the question: why was the *foire* public incapable of appreciating comic performance outside of the *commedia* framework? The answer is probably somewhat similar to why the English became devoted to pantomimic *commedia* archetypes. Unlike the English, the French believed that movements of the body could communicate "serious" sentiments and ideas without speech or voice to frame them, but only through ballet, a rigid, prescribed regulation of bodily movement. Otherwise wordless actions resulted in an amusingly absurd "scene." But the enduring insistence on *commedia* archetypes to

inhabit this scene suggests that the goal of wordless actions was to preserve stability of identity. Despite the persistently fantastic absurdity of the scenes they inhabited, Arlequin, Colombine, Pierrot, and their fellow archetypes thrived—they never changed, they never became other than the grotesque specimens of humanity that are the inevitable result of "unregulated," wordless movements. The *commedia* framework was effective not just in Paris, but in Brussels, Milan, London, Hamburg, or wherever the *foire* companies traveled. Actors often became identified with a particular character, such as Arlequin, for much of their careers, reinforcing the idea in public consciousness that the characters are "eternal" emblems, not of humanity, but of the stability of a social order that functions to preserve unity of identity. No matter how chaotic or arbitrary their environment, the *commedia* characters remained resilient, unperturbed, fixed, their stupidity incapable of destroying them. Such a benign world-view, so heavily infused with the Christian theme of "authenticity" of identity, could hardly cause alarm for the chief guardian of the social order, the government itself. But it was an ideological framework for pantomimic performance that was opposite the imperial aesthetic of the Roman pantomime, which emphasized the "metamorphosis" or instability of human identity and allowed for a far more volatile relation between pantomimic performance and social order.

French pantomime became trapped within the *commedia* format, just as ballet became trapped within the Opera hierarchy. Indeed, pantomime evolved as a kind of counter-ballet, if not exactly an anti-ballet. By the early 1720s, many *foire* shows consisted of parodies of operas, ballets, and tragedies performed in the state theaters (*Dictionnaire des theaters de Paris* II 1756: 662), and it was through these parodies that pantomime was somewhat able to break out of the *commedia* framework. The dramatist Alain-René Lesage (1668-1747) was significant in developing the pantomime culture of the *foires*. His comic play *Turcaret* (1708), which satirized the corruption of moneylenders and borrowers, was a great success at the Comédie-Française in 1709, but lobbyists for the banking industry persuaded the theater (or its actors) to withdraw the work after seven performances (Lesage 1905: viii). Disgusted, Lesage thereafter wrote for the *foire* theater companies. For several years, he wrote short comic plays, such as *Le Monde rendverse* (1718), which, despite their heavy dependence on dialogue, somehow evaded the ban on dialogue in *foire* performances; this

probably caused them to be published in Amsterdam rather than in Paris (Lesage 1731 IV; 1733 II). Lesage worked within the *commedia* framework insofar as Pierrot, Columbine, Scaramouche, and especially Arlequin are recurrent characters and at least one or the other always seems to find a place in any of the author's pieces. But he greatly widened the range of comic characters in his pieces, so that usually no more than two *commedia* types appeared within a cast of uniquely individuated comic characters. But the ban nevertheless shaped most of his pieces. In 1713, the *foire* in St. Germain produced his *Arlequin, Roi de Serendib*, a three-act vaudevillian "piece" that interspersed pantomimic scenes with scraps of songs ("airs") without actually using any dialogue. The pantomimic scenes only describe broad actions, without reference to gestural inflection or performance instructions, as for example this from the end of Act One, Scene One:

> *The thieves take the barrel, smashing Arlequin into it, and go after recovering the funds. Arlequin, seeing no hope of salvation, cries, shouts, rolling in the barrel. There comes a hungry Wolf, who seeks the pasture. He will smell the barrel; and when there senses the flesh inside. He makes every effort to break the lid. While this goes on, Arlequin passes his hand through the hole in the plug, and catches the tail of the Wolf, who, before seeing the hand, is afraid and wants to abscond; but pulls the barrel, his tail remaining in the hands of Arlequin, so that for a moment the barrel is divided into two. The Wolf flees to one side, Arlequin to the other.*
> *Theater changes scene, and shows the capital of the island.*
> *The Mezzetin appears, dressed as a high priestess, the idol worshipped there. Pierrot comes as confidente and makes reflections on customs of the island, and the state of their business. "Airs" by the Mezzetin and Pierrot follow.* (Lesage 1810: 8-9)

It may seem that writing such a scene is fairly simple, but a somewhat coherent, visual structuring of wordless, physical actions over three acts, or even one act, is actually quite difficult, easier to "see," perhaps, as a comic strip than as a text. Yet pantomime performers could make quite a bit out of this collection of words, they could find manifold ways of performing each action humorously. The text awakens opportunities for physical movements without prescribing them, nor does it build actions around an

assumed vocabulary for performing them, as in a ballet scenario. Lesage showed that pantomime could attract major literary talent, even though, aside from the bland lyrics to the brief airs, pantomime concealed rather than revealed literary talent. It took a literary mind to produce skillfully constructed pantomime narratives—thinking in terms of *actions*, rather than gestures or movements, requires a kind of syntactic visual imagination that performers seldom possess, and even many literary talents, including dramatists, lack it, although pantomime never seems to become ambitious without the infusion of an external literary intelligence that is self-consciously aware of actions that do not need speech to connect them to each other, one thing after another.

Even so, Lesage and his fellow scenarists for the *foires,* "protected by persons of distinction," continued to insert dialogue passages in their "pieces," which in turn continued to irritate the state theaters and even the shadowy organizers of the Opera-Comique (Chauveron 1906: 74). He even satirized the effort to "silence" the *foire* shows in his allegorical one act "piece," *Les funérailles de la foire* (1718), in which the Opera, the Comédie-Française, the Italian Comedy, and the Opera-Comique preside over the death and burial of "the Foire," an "extravagance" which excited Paris too much when in reality "it is beautiful to die of the boredom" provided by the "good" theaters (Lesage 1733: 177). The 1719 law, which forbade all shows in the *foires* except marionette "pieces" and rope dancing, apparently benefited the Opera-Comique more than the state theaters. Some *foire* companies wanted to produce shows that featured grander elements of spectacle than were possible in the open-air performance spaces of the *foire* districts: they needed a proscenium theater (Hotel de Bourgogne) that could handle complex scene changing machinery. Like the English, the French increased their focus on pantomime as they became more involved with spectacle. But as the Opera-Comique developed, and the *foire* aesthetic along with it, a kind of music theater emerged that accommodated an elaborate nomenclature of forms which had no place in the state theaters: spectacle-pantomime, parodie-pantomime, divertissement-pantomime, pantomime-pastorale, tragédie-burlesque, tragi-comédie, pantomime italienne, and other hybrid names for music hall entertainments that combined singing, pantomime, and scenic spectacle, as listed in the volumes of the *Dictionnaire des théâtres de Paris*. Out of this messy profusion of "unofficial" theatrical forms came the thing called "ballet

pantomime," which perhaps had a larger impact or wider currency as a term than the other genres invented by the *foire* producers in the 1720s.

The first use of the term was apparently in August 1729 to describe a short piece, *Noce Angloise*, which followed a one act by Lesage and a *Spectacles malades* at the Opera-Comique (*Dictionnaire des Théâtres* 1756 II: 200). The composer Michel Corrette (1707-1795) used the term to describe a small work, *L'Ages*, for which he wrote the music and which the Opera-Comique performed in 1733. Subsequently the Opera-Comique produced the ballet pantomimes *Pygmalion* (1734), *L'Estaminette Flamande* (1735), *L'Ecole de Mars et le Triomphe de Venus* (1736), and *L'Art et la Nature* (1737), so that the term seems originally to have designated a peculiar kind of "serious" performance produced at the Opera-Comique. Ballet pantomimes were an occasional rather than regular feature of *foire* programs, and many of them, featuring one or more *commedia* characters, were brief parodies of Opera ballet interludes, so that for several years "ballet pantomime" seemed to signify a parody of something danced at the Opera, although not all pantomime parodies took this name. In 1738, however, the Comediens Italiens presented in the Hotel de Bourgogne *Les Filets de Vulcain*, by the Italian actor and theorist of acting Antonio (Antoine) Riccoboni (1707-1772), with music by Adolfe Blaise (1712-1772). Riccoboni had in 1734 produced *Pygmalion*, a kind of "afterpiece" ballet pantomime, with the Comediens Italiens (*Dictionnaire des Théâtres* 1756 IV: 307). The scenario for *Les Filets de Vulcain* derives from the same mythic material as Weaver's "serious" pantomime of *The Loves of Mars and Venus* presented in London twenty years before. But Riccoboni's production created a more erotic atmosphere, with more actions describing the mutual affection between Mars and Venus, and more elaborate spectacle: "Then one sees Olympus, the gods and goddesses on clouds, each with their attributes. All the divinities descend to earth. [. . .] the goddesses regard Venus with indignation; the gods in contrast take care for her" (*Dictionnaire des Théâtres* 1756 II: 577). Riccoboni included more characters in his piece than Weaver in his, and most importantly, he, like Weaver, included no *commedia* archetypes, although unlike Weaver, Riccoboni avoided actions or "bits" designed for comic effect. Riccoboni's pantomime was a suave erotic drama, in which the adulterous love between Mars and Venus can only be resolved through the direct intervention of divine powers. Riccoboni, who "understands perfectly the art of the pantomimes," himself performed the part of Vulcan, and

although the reviewer for the *Mercure de France* shows some uncertainty about calling the performers dancers, he does refer to the piece as a ballet (*Dictionnaire des Théâtres* 1756 II: 575-578).

In 1750, Riccoboni published a book on "the art of the theater," in which he explained his attitude toward movement on the stage. He placed great emphasis on the weight and speed of a gesture rather than on the geometric relation of a movement to the body. But his most important point was that movements should occur "naturally," rather than as components of a beautiful image, which meant that one could not improve one's performance by studying it in a mirror. One must link movements to the expression of emotions, and these movements come from the performer's unique relation to particular emotions rather than to an image of himself or to an institutionalized code of performance or even to the emotions defining a character. He divides all emotions into two general categories: tender and forceful. Within these two categories, the physical signification of emotion evolves out of a fundamental struggle for dominance between the weight and speed of gestures. He believed that movements on stage could be simpler, stronger, more elegant, and more natural than "customarily" performed. But he also grasped that relations between movements are relations between emotions; one emotion develops out of another, just as all emotions develop out of the two basic categories of emotion—no emotion is discrete or autonomous. As he remarks mysteriously: "[T]enderness is almost never in the theater a single movement, and it is ordinarily accompanied by some other gesture that characterizes the situation and serves to guide the actor in the manner by which he is moved" (Riccoboni 1750: 48). The book makes frequent reference to the performance of tragic material—unusual, indeed, for an author who spent most of career with the Italian Comedy Company—but it is also clear that the whole point of the book is to move "the art of theater," both tragic and comic, away from "customary" modes of performance and toward a more emotionally powerful kind of representation that arises out of movements which find no place in either the ballet or the conventional pantomime.

Les Filets de Vulcain probably had greater impact on theater outside of the *foire* culture than in it. In late 1738, Riccoboni produced a second ballet pantomime at the Opera-Comique, *Orphee*, which was even more "serious" and perhaps more spectacular than *Les Filets de Vulcain*, featuring

a larger ensemble and a wider range of emotions (*Dictionnaire des Théâtres* IV 1756: 44-47). In 1739, the Opera-Comique stage Boizard de Pontau's *Diane et Endymion*, another ballet pantomime based on a mythic theme devoid of any *commedia* characters (*Dictionnaire des Théâtres* 1756 II: 305). Then in 1740, Riccoboni produced another large ballet pantomime, *Les Nocturnes Rendezvous*, this time for the Theater Italien, which had become an adjunct of the Opera-Comique (*Dictionnaire des Théâtres* IV 1756: 425-426). Despite the apparent enthusiasm for these "serious" manifestations of ballet pantomime, the Opera-Comique faced difficulties in developing any more "serious," non-*commedia* constructions of ballet pantomime. Part of the problem was that such productions required a larger orchestra, and the Opera-Comique had to lure musicians away from the Opera, further exacerbating tensions between the two institutions. Audiences for ballet pantomimes seemed to associate the term with spectacular scenic effects and large ensembles, which entailed financing schemes that may have caused resentment among *foire* troupes with less ambitious agendas, for the producers of "serious" ballet pantomimes sought to attract new audiences rather than to please traditional *foire* audiences. But the biggest obstacle to the Opera-Comique's ballet pantomime project was the Opera. The administrators of the Opera saw the "serious" ballet pantomime as a major threat: the Opera-Comique was trying to invade the domain of "seriousness" by attaching ballet to pantomime and thereby avoiding the rules governing seriousness (that is, a higher quality of aesthetic experience) in the state theaters. In 1742, the Opera succeeded in shutting down the Opera-Comique altogether for a decade. During this period, the *foire* theater culture suffered a "complete eclipse," producing trash "unworthy of the name artwork" (Soubies 1887: 17-20). The Opera apparently considered the ballet pantomime as kind of corruption or appropriation of the *ballet héroïque*, a genre the Opera launched with Colin de Blamont's *Les Fêtes grecques et romaines* (1723). The *ballet héroïque* was actually a large-scale operatic work of a "serious," allegorical nature. It usually featured, in addition to a prologue, three or four acts related to each other by a theme rather than by characters or a single plot. *Les Indes galantes* (1735), for example, presented in each act a different exotic setting, different characters, and a different expression of sexual love in a remote, despotic land: Turkey, Inca Peru, Persia, and an unidentified land of "savages." Dances functioned as interludes within and between the acts, but

most of the *ballet héroïque* was sung. The Opera enlisted the composer Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) to create *ballets héroïques* beginning with *Les Indes galantes* and following with *Les fêtes d'Hébé, ou Les talens lyriques* (1739), *La Temple de la Gloire* (1745), *Les fêtes de l'Hymen et de l'Amour, ou Les dieux d'Egypte* (1747), and *Les surprises de l'Amour* (1748). The ballet interludes in these pieces displayed a grandeur the *foire* companies could never emulate, only parody, but they were largely devoid of pantomimic movement. By 1740, however, the ballet pantomime did more than offer a movement aesthetic that operated outside of the rule-based, step-focused movement aesthetic of ballet. Ballet pantomime demonstrated a capacity to develop "serious" themes entirely through movement, and this capacity amplified awareness of the incapacity of the Opera ballet to produce "serious" dances independently of opera. In a sense, pantomimic movement—especially the ballet pantomime—exerted a strain on the political-administrative structure of the Opera, a pressure to allow ballet to become an autonomous art with its own agenda. The government found it more expedient to suppress the Opera-Comique than to deal with the political-economic complexities of establishing a separate ballet institution.

But the ballet pantomime did not disappear. Following the suppression of the Opera-Comique, the Foire St. Laurent produced the ballet pantomime *Les Quatre coins* (1746), and then in 1747, the Foire St. Germain produced *Les Fêtes du Bois de Boulogne*, with a libretto by Valois d'Orville (1713-1780), who was notable at the time for his parodies of ballets in operas by Rameau, with whom he nevertheless collaborated on the opera *Platée* (1745). These, of course, were not "serious" productions. Meanwhile, however, the Franco-Dutch choreographer Jean-Baptiste-Francois Dehesse (1705-1779) had entered the circle surrounding Madame de Pompadour (1721-1764), who had installed a little theater at Versailles, Les Petites Appartements, where she was herself an occasional performer. Dehesse staged there several ballet pantomimes: *Les Chasseurs et les petits vendangeurs* (1746), *Bûcherons ou le Médecin de village* (1748), *L'Operateur chinois* (1748), *Le Pedant* (1748), and *Les Savoyards ou les Marmottes* (1749) (Jullien 1874: 24, 46, 53, 74). Although these pieces, which soon migrated to public theaters under the auspices of the Comédie-Italienne, probably do not qualify as "serious" manifestations of the genre; nevertheless, with the exception of *Le Pedant*, which features Pierrot, they did not rely on *commedia* archetypes and briefly presented amusing scenes involving

workers or peasants in pastoral settings (*Histoire anecdotique* V 1769: 482-490). In 1753, however, Dehesse staged at the Italian Theater the ballet *Acis et Galatée*, and it was not a parody of Lully's 1686 opera of the same name, which the Opera had revived shortly before; it was, according to the Parfaict brothers, "a Tragedie Pantomime" that "could not fail to make a fortune" (*Dictionnaire des Théâtres* VII 1756: 343). Dehesse used Lully's music without any of the singing, thereby demonstrating that pantomime could tell the same "serious" story without relying on language or the voice to bestow seriousness on the subject matter. By this time, the King had rescinded the ban on the Opera-Comique, which then continued to operate in partnership with the Comédie-Italienne, the major purveyor of ballet pantomimes; Madame de Pompadour was no doubt influential in achieving this situation. But Dehesse shifted his attention to the production of pastoral ballets for the Italian company and did not pursue the idea of "tragic pantomime" that he introduced with *Acis et Galatée*—he was more comfortable with pastoral than with tragic modes of performance, although the *commedia* format was not especially attractive to him.

By the middle of the century, pantomime mania, emanating from Paris, pervaded much of Europe, probably because audiences ubiquitously perceived pantomime as a comic mode of performance. How could they not? Pantomime was everywhere the work of people who saw wordless movement as the product of *commedia* archetypes. Yet the pantomime culture continued to attract artists who sought to bring "seriousness" to the genre. These were, of course, people who were familiar with the history of ancient Roman pantomime rather than people who saw their careers on the *foire* stage determined by royal decrees and the goals of the state theaters. In 1754, Noverre presented his ballet pantomime *Les Fêtes chinoises* at the Opera-Comique, although he probably had developed a version of the piece as early as 1751 in Marseilles or Lyon (*Dictionnaire des Théâtres* VII, 1 1756: 434-435; Kirstein 1970: 111). The show purported to depict scenes of a Chinese festival in spectacular if not altogether accurate detail. There was no story; instead, according to a witness, Boulmieres, the spectator saw a sequence of scenes showing the movements of large ensembles of mandarins and slaves, including "eight rows of dancers who, rising and dipping in succession, imitate fairly well the billows of a stormy sea. All the Chinese, having descended, begin a character march. There are a mandarin, borne in a rich palanquin by six white slaves, whilst two negros draw a

chariot on which a young Chinese woman is seated. They are preceded and followed by a host of Chinese playing various musical instruments" (Kirstein 1970: 111; Monnet 1900: 175-176). The idea, apparently, was to pantomime the movements of an entire society. The costumes and scenery were extravagantly luxurious. But the scale of the ballet pantomime was unprecedented: another witness claimed that as many as ninety persons formed the complete ensemble, and that no one had ever seen so many performers on a Parisian stage. The spectacle made the unprecedented point that pantomimic movement could achieve monumental dimensions and did not depend on conditions of "intimacy," characterization, or familiar cultural milieux to excite audiences or evoke "seriousness." Upon the recommendation of Jean Monnet (1703-1785), the general manager of the Opera-Comique, David Garrick brought Noverre to London to stage *Les Fêtes chinoises* at Drury Lane in 1755; Louis-René Boquet (1717-1814) designed the expensive and opulent costumes and scenery. The show was a disaster. Large, proletarian sectors of the audience, supposedly inflamed with anti-French sentiment, rioted, attacked the scenery, attacked the theater, and attacked the performers as well as upper class spectators who supported the show and sponsored the vogue for *chinoiserie* that was just as strong in London as in Paris. Garrick had to summon the militia to protect him from rioters who besieged his house. These disorders probably arose more in relation to class tensions within the audience than in relation to unified audience hostility toward France, for many in the audience were enthusiastic about the show. The violence recalls the fights between the theater claques of the Roman Empire: rival theaters and newspapers may have sponsored the proletarian agitators in an effort to undermine the authority of the Drury Lane Theater and its aristocratic patrons to control London theater culture (Ou 2008: 34-40). Noverre nevertheless remained in London until 1757 as Garrick's guest, despite the onset of the Seven Years War (1755-1763) between England and France. There, making use of Garrick's large library, he began work on his book, *Lettres sur la danse* (1760), in which he proposed that ballet could achieve greater emotional expression and autonomous power to tell stories by adopting the freer movement of the body found in pantomime (Dahms 2010: 38). From the ballet perspective, or rather, from the official state theater perspective, the riot simply confirmed the suspicion that the wordless, unregulated movement in pantomime agitated audiences, awakened underlying

resentments or discontents within a society, and thus contributed to the instability of that society.

Diderot and Rousseau: How Pantomime Embodies Ideology

However, from another, emerging perspective in Paris, the chief source of conflict within society was not the body but language. Noverre believed that the ballet had become sterile, excessively grandiose and oppressively rigid, and utterly dependent upon the opera and texts to justify its existence. In 1751, however, the philosopher Denis Diderot (1713-1784) had already published his essay *Lettre sur les sourds et muets*, in which he examined the authority of language to define consciousness, reveal emotion, or allow for accurate perception of the body. He contended that pantomime was an attempt to translate language into gesture, but because "it is impossible to translate a poet into another language," pantomimic action was inauthentic or at any rate artificial compared with the authentic gestural semiotics of deaf mutes (Diderot 1916: 164, 216). Perhaps the fascination with pantomime in Paris inspired him. In *Rameau's Nephew* (1761), which remained unpublished until long after his death, Diderot used the term "pantomime" to describe actions that construct social identity as a theatrical phenomenon and therefore establish a fundamental distinction between what might be called the "natural" self and a social self, which embeds the need to be someone else within the awareness that one "needs someone else." These actions are "the different pantomimes of the human species." The dialogue clarifies the idea of human social life as a pantomime through the concept of "positions [...] derived from others":

> *HIM: I move around from one piece of earth to another. I look around me, and I take up my positions, or I amuse myself with positions which I have derived from others. I'm an excellent mimic, as you're going to see.*
> *Then he begins to smile, to imitate a man admiring, begging, obliging. He sets his right foot forward, his left behind, with his back bent over, his head raised, with his gaze looking directly into another person's eyes, his mouth half open, his arms stretched out towards some object. He waits for his orders. He receives them. He dashes off, comes back. He's done the job and is giving an account of it. He attends to*

everything. He picks up what falls down. He puts a pillow or a footstool under someone's feet. He holds a saucer. He goes up to a chair. He opens a door. He closes a window. He pulls the curtains. He observes the master and mistress. He is immobile, his arms hanging down, his legs lined up straight. He listens. He seeks to read what's on their faces. And he continues, "That's my pantomime, almost the same as what flatterers, prostitutes, valets, and beggars do."

The antics of this man, the stories of Abbe Galiani, and the extravagances of Rabelais sometimes force me to profound reflections. There are three stores where I have acquired some ridiculous masks which I put over the faces of most people. I see Pantalon in prelate, a satyr in a judge, a pig or an ostrich in a minister, and a goose in his first deputy. Myself serious in a monk.

ME: But by your count there are lots of beggars in this world, and I don't know anyone who doesn't do some steps in that dance of yours.

HIM: You're right. In the entire kingdom, there's only one man who walks. That's the king. All the rest take up positions.

ME: The king? Isn't there more to it than that? Don't you think that, from time to time, he finds beside him a little foot, a little curl, a little nose which makes him go through a small pantomime? Whoever needs someone else is a beggar and takes up a position. The king takes up a position before his mistress and before God. He goes through the paces of his pantomime. The minister goes through the paces of prostitute, flatterer, valet, or beggar in front of his king. The crowds of ambitious people dance your positions in hundreds of ways, each more vile than the others, in front of the minister. The noble abbe in his bands of office and his long cloak goes at least once a week in front of the agent in charge of the list of benefices. My goodness, what you call the pantomime of beggars is what makes the earth go round. Everyone has his little Hus and his Bertin.

HIM: That's a great consolation.

But while I was speaking, he was imitating in a killingly funny way the positions of the persons I was naming. For example, for the little abbe, he held his hat under his arm and his breviary in his left hand; in his right hand he lifted up the train of his cloak. He came forward, with his head a little inclined towards his shoulders, his eyes lowered, imitating the hypocrite so perfectly that I believed I was looking at the author of

> *the Refutations appearing before the Bishop of Orleans. For the flatterers and for the ambitious he crawled along on his belly--just like Bouret at the Ministry of Finance.* (Diderot 2002: 60-61).

After complimenting Rameau's nephew on his pantomime, Diderot nevertheless remarks: "But there's one creature who can do without pantomime. That's the philosopher who has nothing and who demands nothing." The dialogue indicates a major shift in thinking about pantomime. Diderot uses the term pantomime to refer to more than a mysterious entertainment that reveals the expressive power of the body; pantomime is a system for defining a body's relation to a vortex of power—in this case, the King. For Diderot, pantomime is not a metaphor for a society's control over social identity; it is the way in which a person physically encodes his or her identity within a social order or hierarchy. This physical coding is pantomime because it "derives from others," it is a theatrical performance, it masks the "natural" identity of the performer. Rameau's nephew is merely self-conscious of his pantomimic supplements to the dialogues with his friend; it is an aspect of his self-acknowledged "mediocrity." But Diderot presents himself as a philosopher who lives outside of the pantomimic system controlling social identity and disguising "mediocrity" within his society. By the time he wrote *Rameau's Nephew*, pantomime could no longer claim to be a marginalized popular art that assumed its "silent" form because an elite, royalist ruling class had deprived the common people of a "voice" in their own public theaters, although Madame de Pompadour's role in effecting this change should not be underestimated. Pantomime had become so skillfully integrated into the French entertainment culture, especially through the *commedia* archetypes, that it no longer constituted a "threat" to the state theaters and perhaps was no longer even capable of signifying popular resentment against aristocratic privilege. The expanding pantomime culture functioned as a sign of social stability in much the same way as television sitcoms in the United States today are understood as "mainstream" entertainment. Diderot felt himself in conflict with a society that articulated its "mediocrity," its complacency, its excessive stability through pantomime. Indeed, he had already been imprisoned in 1749 for his critical views of the government, and subsequently sectors within the government and the clergy worked to undermine and then suppress (1759) his work on the monumental

Encyclopédie (1751-1772). And yet it was a French ballet pantomime that provoked considerable civil disorder in London at the Drury Lane Theater in 1754, although the riot of course did not reach the scale of violence that in their day the Roman factions on occasion had perpetrated. While imperial Roman society was perhaps no more tolerant of civil disorder than eighteenth century English or French society, it was certainly more tolerant of internal instability, a situation encouraged by the ideology of "metamorphosis." It may be, then, that Diderot underestimated the capacity of pantomime to "agitate" audiences desirous of changing their "positions" within society, especially if he saw pantomime in the *foire* theaters dominated by the oppressively "eternal" qualities of *commedia* characters. The *Encyclopédie* article on pantomime, written by Louis de Jaucourt (1704-1779) and published in 1765, made scant reference to pantomime of its own time: "This art would probably have much greater difficulty succeeding among the northern nations of Europe than the Romans, whose vivacity is so rich in gestures, which mean almost as much as full sentences. [...] However, we have seen in England, and on the scene of the comic opera in Paris, some of these actors play dumb scenes that everyone could understand. I know that Roger and his brethren must not be compared with pantomimes of Rome; but does the London theater not now own a pantomime that could oppose Pylades and Bathyllus? The famous Garrick is an especially wonderful actor, who performs all kinds of tragic and comic subjects." The article overwhelming cited ancient Roman commentaries on pantomime, but Jaucourt nevertheless inserted a moral tone that aligned well with Diderot's contention that pantomime had an enervating effect on culture: "Rome was too rich, too powerful and too immersed in softness, to become virtuous; the art of pantomime, which was introduced so brilliantly under Augustus, and was one of the causes of the corruption of morals, ends only with the destruction of the empire" (Jaucourt 2017: 11: 829). In his 1773 dialogue essay, *Paradoxe sur le comédien*, Diderot never mentioned pantomime. Yet he applied to the art of acting the same argument about pantomime that he introduced in *Rameau's Nephew*: the actor performs best when he does not feel the emotions he either feels or represents but derives the representation of feeling by carefully observing it in others. The "paradox" of the great actor (such as Garrick) is that in performance he is completely estranged from what he "naturally" feels at the moment and is at the same time completely estranged from the emotions he must represent.

This idea of "self-control," as Diderot calls it, when applied to pantomime, means that movement does not arise spontaneously in performance; movement derives from the "system" of physical signification imposed on the body by the social order. Diderot, however, believed that the "system" was incapable of transforming itself because the collective members of a corrupt society, who unconsciously produced the system in relation to the vortex of power and from whom pantomimes "derived" their physical signification, were too estranged from their "natural" selves and therefore could not envision a more "natural" or greater social order. He did not believe that pantomimes could see outside of the system to produce a physical signification that created a more powerful, more liberated image of the body and the emotions within it. But the ballet pantomime, insofar as it operated outside of the *commedia* format and followed a "serious" direction, at least offered an opportunity to question the idea of a system controlling social identity, physical signification, and the representation of sentiment. The very ambiguity of the term "ballet pantomime" opened up great uncertainty about what "system" was in control of the body or perhaps whether a new system was necessary for a new audience. Despite his prodigious learning, Diderot was nevertheless too dogmatic, too deeply attached to language, to see physical signification as something more than a system "derived from others," as something felt or constructed internally rather than observed.

In his *Discours sur la poesie dramatique* (1758), Diderot proposed that a higher form of theater would emerge through the unity of music, pantomime (gesture), and scenic design (tableau) (Diderot 1771 I: 183). As the dialogue-essay develops, he explains that for this unity to occur, performance spaces must be much larger and scenic décor must become more richly detailed, more naturalistic. His fictional dialogue partner, "Dorval," having observed that "we speak too much in our dramas," argues that silent, pantomimic scenes should alternate with speaking scenes, so that "gesture responds to discourse" (163), and Diderot and Dorval discuss examples of how pantomime might alternate with speech in the bourgeois domestic dramas they feel the stage needs (182-185). Diderot scarcely mentioned the relation of music to pantomime, but he had an acute sense of how silence works to dramatic effect in conjunction with particular bodily movements that unfold as a living "tableau." Indeed, he supposed that when "silence reigns" over the tableau, the spectator is more likely to

perceive how society imposes movement or pantomime on the body, because the whole process of "interpreting" the movement, like the movement itself, "derives from others" (272-273). Yet as an element of a new kind of theater, he favored pantomime over ballet and dance in general, which he described as "measured pantomime." Dance, however, "awaits a genius" who understands this, can lift the art out of its awful artificiality, and reveal the natural movement of the body, for "dance is to pantomime as poetry is to prose, or rather as natural declamation is to song" (251; cf. Rebjekow 1991: 65-67). But to develop this theme would require a deeper understanding of the relation between music and movement than he provided. His friend Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) expanded the philosophical discourse on pantomime by focusing on the unity of music and movement. In 1752, Rousseau achieved considerable success with his one-act opera *Le Devin du village*, about lovers who distrust each other and seek advice from the village soothsayer. The work, given at the Opera, contained a lengthy pantomime scene, although the libretto does not indicate the actions performed: Rousseau thus signified that pantomime required or inspired a different sort of music than ballet or opera. The following year (1753), he participated in the so-called "Querelle des Bouffons" by publishing his *Lettre sur la musique française*, in which he argued that Italian opera was superior to French opera because the Italian language was more melodic than the French language. Melody for Rousseau was central to connecting musical sound to the voice, to the body (Rousseau 1753: 34-40). As the representative of French opera, Rameau created music according to abstract principles of rhythmic and harmonic structure at the expense of melody. These principles conformed to "universal" laws of physics or "language" that operated outside of the body, outside of the "heart" and independently of what was inside of the body. Melody was the natural expression of feeling, of emotional movement within the body. Rhythmic and harmonic structures regulated the movement of the body; particular time signatures, tempi, chords, and instrumental effects were necessary to synchronize the body with "universal" pressures external to it, as exemplified by the "coldness" of ballet. But melody released feeling from within the body, and it is feeling that moves the body "naturally" rather than in relation to an external pulse or harmonic configuration (Rousseau 1753: 64-78). This point is significant for pantomime in that melody inspires the movement of the body but the

bodily movement does not become synchronized with the melody. The melody articulates a feeling, and the feeling awakens a movement that is unique to the moment rather than prescribed by a score or text or rule. It's not clear if Rousseau actually implemented this way of thinking in *Le Devin du village*, although the music is quite tuneful while the harmony and instrumentation are rather clumsy. But perhaps the implication of Rousseau's thinking is clearer if we consider an action performed in pantomime: Pierrot approaches Columbine, who sits under a tree reading a letter and does not notice him. A melody, played on any instrument or sung, can apply to both characters. But each character may feel a different emotion. For example: Columbine responds with voluptuous pleasure to the letter from one of her admirers, while Pierrot approaches her with great apprehension, fear of being rejected by her. The actions may be performed differently by different performers or even differently by the same performers on different occasions. Columbine may depict her pleasure with a great exhalation or an intense shiver of delight. Pierrot may move toward her in a surreptious manner, almost on tip toes or he may swagger toward her and then abruptly stop and walk backward in a hunched, diminished manner. The performers do not move their bodies in synchrony with the notes of the melody or even with the rhythm of the melody. They move according to how the melody stirs the character's feeling within them. The performers therefore determine the movement, not a choreographer or a score or any kind of acoustic-geometrical relation between music and physical signification. Music for pantomime, as Rousseau understood it, is therefore intensely melodic or rather, it requires powerful melodies that stand alone, so to speak, when detached from complex harmonic edifices and elaborate sonic structures that conceal a fundamental emptiness of feeling. Rousseau's thinking about music may seem closer to the ancient Roman pantomime than the French obsession with ballet and heavily regulated movement allowed. However, the Romans tended to think of music as a counterpoint to the movement of the pantomime: music, usually sung, followed the movement rather than motivated it; melodies were much more elaborate and mellismatic, functioning as commentaries or responses to the actions of the pantomime. But Rousseau's ambition was not to recover ancient Roman pantomime. His main objective was to show how the unity of melody and gesture was the path to revealing a more "natural" representation of feeling. As a result, he made music much more

integral to pantomime performance. But both he and Diderot were actually at odds with the ancient Roman idea of pantomime, because, in their focus on revealing a repressed, "natural" expression of human identity, they remained completely oblivious to the Roman concept of metamorphosis--the idea that human identity is unstable and assumes multiple manifestations. Indeed, Rousseau developed a hostile attitude toward theater, which, like all the arts, was the product of a civilization that transformed natural beings into artificial identities, who inevitably become fixated on representations rather than on reality, which for him means living in a more equitable society or community. Or rather, as Tracy Strong (1997) contends: "Rousseau does not so much want to keep theater out of life, but to experience life as theater." That is, the relation between melody, feeling, and movement does not remain confined to the stage or to the enactment of scenes and characters; it is a central element in the performance of everyone's daily life in a more just or natural formation of society.

Pantomime against Ballet

The philosophical discourses on ballet, pantomime, and music in the theater introduced by Diderot, Rousseau, and Noverre amplified uncertainty about the relation between ballet and pantomime and about the nature of the thing called "ballet pantomime." Ballet historians tend to treat the ballet pantomime as a transitional genre that led to the creation of the *ballet d'action* and the establishment of ballet as an autonomous art, independent of opera and pantomime. However, the ballet pantomime continued long after the *ballet d'action* had become the defining feature of autonomous ballet. The *ballet d'action* was the genre by which ballet claimed authority to tell its own stories or construct narratives that were unique to the aesthetic principles that defined ballet as an art. That is, a *ballet d'action* told some kind of story using the movement vocabulary, the "positions" and steps, that belonged only to ballet. The choreographer, using the movement vocabulary, determined the movements of all bodies in the ballet; whereas in pantomime, movement ostensibly came from the "heart" of the performer, who used a highly personal, distinctive gestural vocabulary that was nevertheless transparent enough to communicate ideas and sentiments to audiences who "read" physical significations in an equally intuitive manner, if not necessarily in the way the performer intended.

From the perspective of conventional ballet history, the *ballet d'action* emerged as a strategy for controlling the term "ballet." The *foire* theaters, like Hollywood much later, tended to apply the term "ballet" rather promiscuously, to refer, at first, to parodies of state theater ballets, and then to refer to performances, even "serious" ones, that featured dancing, like the ballet pantomime. The real purpose behind the struggle to establish ballet as an autonomous art was to demonstrate the authority of state institutions (theaters and schools) to regulate and standardize bodily movement in relation to an idealized image of the body that could only be achieved or performed through an elaborate, rigorous education involving a complex infrastructure of personnel, resources, social networks, curricula, and bureaucratic oversight. This goal entailed the use of narratives that supported the system for regulating bodily movement; more precisely, ballet was above all about the beauty of steps and positions, which meant that the narrative served the dance rather than dance served the narrative. As interludes or intermezzi within opera productions throughout Europe, ballets rarely had any connection with the opera narrative (Hansell 2005: 18-19). This situation encouraged the whole ballet mentality to believe that the approved steps and positions, combined with lavish costumes, were interesting in themselves and did not achieve any greater meaning by representing distinctive characters, particular emotions, or anything outside of the stage itself.

Pantomime and ballet pantomime implied a nebulous resistance to the institutionalized regulation and idealization of bodily movement promoted by ballet culture, with its emphasis on the exclusivity of the academic education needed to succeed in the art or even to appreciate it. Ballet pantomime was appealing precisely because the definition of it was unclear. When in Paris Noverre began in the 1760s to introduce "heroic ballets" that incorporated pantomime as a way to invest movement with emotion, he apparently alternated moments of dancing with moments of pantomimic movement, in which performers walked rather than danced. According to Friedrich Melchior Grimm (1723-1807), a prodigious commentator on theatrical affairs in Paris, "one walks in [Noverre's ballets] more than one dances. One sees in them much less of steps and symmetrical dances than of gestures and groups. [. . .] In the ballets of Noverre dance and measured walking are very distinct; one dances only in the great movements of passion, in decisive moments [. . .]. This transition

from measured walking to dance and from dance to measured walking is as necessary in this spectacle as the transition from recitative to aria and from aria to recitative is in opera, but dancing for the sake of dancing cannot occur except when the danced drama is over" (Hansell 2005: 27; Grimm 1829 VI: 300). But Grimm was generally sympathetic to Noverre's efforts to produce "serious" ballet pantomimes, although in discussing a 1779 revival of Noverre's *Médée* (1763) he observed that the pantomime scenes unfolded so rapidly that it was sometimes difficult to appreciate their significance without consulting the program. That was "the extreme difficulty and the most beautiful triumph" of pantomime: to compress physical actions into "a grand and magnificent tableau" that nevertheless occurred so quickly. By contrast, dance sections presumably allowed for easier attention to spectacle because of the repetition of steps and movements (Grimm 1880 XII: 368). In pantomime, movement was continuously changing from one idea to the next, one sentiment to the next, and the performer preferred to change a movement or gesture to make a point rather than to repeat it. However, Noverre's approach to ballet pantomime did not inspire as much enthusiasm in Paris as the Opera expected, and he soon focused, with no greater success, on ideas of heroic ballet that remained within the conventional ballet movement vocabulary, preferring even to forget what was perhaps his most distinctive achievement as a choreographer, *Les Fêtes chinoises*.

Meanwhile, much of the innovative thinking about ballet pantomime took place outside of France, chiefly through the Italian concept of *ballo pantomimo*, the term the Italians gave to the thing that Weaver and Riccoboni had introduced (Fabbricatore 2014: 24-25). In Italy, opera houses resembled the English scene in adopting a commercial dimension, with aristocratic sponsors or investors and sideline enterprises, such as gambling, so that an opera house was also sometimes a casino or social club, a phenomenon which probably contributed to some of the French hostility toward Italian opera. As in French opera, Italian opera included ballets that hardly ever had any connection with the opera narrative, but the ballets were often as long as the opera itself (Hansell 2005: 24). French ballet, however, tended to keep dancers' feet close to the surface of the stage to create a smooth, gliding, often undulant movement, while the Italian ballet favored leaping, sprinting movements ("caprioles") that produced an "aerial" effect and made much wider use of hands and arms to

signify emotions or motivations. The Italians, unlike Noverre, integrated pantomimic movement with dance, especially in the genre known as *grotteschi*, which by the middle of the eighteenth century was more of a fantastical than comical dance supplemented by spectacular scenic transformations inspired by ancient mythic themes (Hansell 2005: 20-21). Ballet throughout Europe generally adopted the same system of steps and positions, and the Italians used the French terms to identify the different positions, even if they used the system for different choreographic goals (Hammond 2005: 111, 149). But in Italy, as in France, controversy reigned over the use of pantomimic movement to construct "serious" theatrical works. The most famous *grotteschi* performer and choreographer and the author of an influential 1779 treatise on ballet technique, Genarro Magri (ca. 1735-1785), continually quarreled with ballet practioners and theorists, including Noverre, over how to represent "passions," identities, and ideas through movement. Magri advocated for versatility of performance skills in dancers and diversification of themes and "passions" that movement could represent; he therefore saw the ballet pantomime as an opportunity to achieve these objectives, and in Vienna, Naples, and elsewhere in Italy, his approach to performer education, which stressed a "violent" tension between "extensions" and "containments" of the body, shaped not only the *grotteschi* aesthetic but the *ballo pantomimo*, which offered opportunities for *grotteschi* dancers that conventional ballet was unwilling to provide (cf. Magri 1779 I: 93; Tomko 2005: 159-160). While Magri favored the development of larger and more complex dance productions, he always saw ballet companies as components of opera houses, even if the ballets had nothing to do with the operas. Economic practicalities probably motivated this viewpoint, but he also saw the "Pantomimo ballato" as having descended from the ancient Roman pantomime, which accompanied action with singing (Magri 1779: 9).

By 1760, it was clear that the future of the ballet pantomime was in the hands of ballet companies attached to opera houses rather than with the *foire* theater companies that had invented the genre. It was also clear that Italianate sensibilities were guiding the development of the ballet pantomime. The ballet companies warmed to the ballet pantomime possibly because ballet audiences were impatient with the populist conservatism of the *foire* productions, with their interminable devotion to the *commedia* format. But ballet audiences were probably also impatient

with ballet productions that merely glorified the elegant, acrobatic display of steps and positions. For ballet to achieve higher (autonomous) status as an art, it had to develop a seductive and long form capacity to represent "passions" and "serious" themes, a variety of emotional relations between bodies, and the movement vocabulary of steps and positions had very limited power to do that. Indeed, the books on ballet technique, such as Magri's, that proliferated in the latter half of the eighteenth century tended to focus obsessively on identifying the correct execution of steps and positions without explaining how to combine movements to construct characters or to represent anything or even how to move in relation to other bodies. Pantomime provided a way to expand the narrative-emotional charm of ballet, at least until ballet was able to build its movement vocabulary to make every representational movement "pure dance." But ballet companies could not embrace pantomime without transforming it. This meant releasing pantomime from the *commedia* format, so that audiences could see pantomime as something other and greater than what the *foire* theaters had made of it. The Italianate perspective, which nevertheless had many partisans in Paris, entailed considerable skepticism toward the French inclination for strict classifications, clear distinctions between pantomime and dance, which were fundamental in preserving the concept of "pure dance" or dance as an end in itself, with no need to represent anything other than the geometrical grandeur of bodies in movement. As Philippe Gumpenhuber (ca. 1706-1770) observed in relation to a performance at the Vienna Kärntnertortheater in 1759, the scene, choreographed by Vincenzo Turchi, presented "pantomimes, which are done while dancing," as opposed to Noverre's alternation of pantomime and ballet sequences (Gumpenhuber 2005: 312). The ballet pantomime amplified the scale of pantomimic action. Ballet companies in Italy and at the Kärntnertortheater usually consisted of twelve to fourteen persons, whereas *commedia*-oriented pantomimes in the *foire* theaters rarely involved more than three or four persons on stage at the same time and mostly involved only one or two figures at once. The ballet companies had to make use of many more performers to justify their existence and to support a larger field of action than *commedia* ensembles found profitable. In 1758, Franz Hilverding (1710-1768), a choreographer at the imperial Kärntnertortheater in Vienna, staged the ballet pantomime *Le Turc Généreux*, which updated a section of Rameau's *ballet héroïque, Les Indus galantes* (1735), apparently

without any of the singing. The artist Bernardo Belloto (1721-1780) produced a beautiful, widely circulated engraving of a scene from this ballet pantomime [Figure 60].



Figure 60: Painting by Bernardo Belloto (Canaletto) of a scene from the ballet pantomime *Le Turc Généreux* (1758), directed by Franz Hilverding in Vienna. Photo: British Museum.

The picture shows sixteen performers on the stage, at least twenty-three musicians in the orchestra pit, and a scenic environment of great opulence. The engraving, which is the most detailed evidence available for this production, may be questionable in its accuracy, but it is nevertheless clear that ballet pantomime had become a large-scale venture and that the artist chose to represent pantomimic rather than balletic movements. Each of the sixteen figures on the stage adopts an individual gesture, including the five European women on the left, the seven Turkish men on the right, and the four figures, two men and two women in the center of the stage, which includes the Turk raising his dagger, a woman trying to restrain him, another woman on her knees imploring him and at the same time

extending a protective arm to the man on his knees to her right, who is the target of the Turk's dagger. It is a delightfully complex scene, because it presents a divided community on stage, yet all the members of the community individuate themselves through their gestures and movements. Pantomime could show a group or social world as a convergence of teeming, vibrant individuals, whereas ballet consistently saw group identity, whether energetic or subdued, as best represented through uniformity of movement, all members in step and synchronous with musical cues. The ballet director does not choreograph pantomimic movement like this but elicits it through various verbal and visual appeals to the performers' sense of what gestures are appropriate responses to a particular dramatic moment. The performers are expected to find their own unique emotional connection to the moment and thus their own unique gestures. But a skillful, exciting group pantomime is probably more difficult to achieve than getting a group of performers to follow the same steps and move in synchrony to musical cues.

Gumpenhuber's synopses of brief but sometimes spectacular ballet pantomimes produced by Italian choreographers in the Vienna Kärntnertortheater in 1759 suggest that much of the pantomiming involved groups enacting scenes of village or country life, such as a wigmaking workshop, a fish market, a fruit harvest, a fair, a harbor promenade, or a cabaret. A couple of ballet pantomimes depict exotic scenes involving pirates or Turks. These are cheerful or "jolly" pieces, as Gumpenhuber calls them, but it is clear that the "pantomimes, which are done while dancing," function to provide opportunities for dances, including solos, *pas de deux*, and the group dances that invariably begin and conclude the pieces (Gumpenhuber 2005: 312-319). Pantomime here created an atmosphere of diffuse communal energy that dance then harnessed into a unified, disciplined sentiment. Such *grotteschi* demonstrated that pantomimic dancing could provide "jolly," convivial entertainments that referred to the actual world outside the theater and had no need to rely on the buffoonish, self-contained antics of the *commedia* format. But *Le Turc Généreux* attempted a much more "serious" or complex use of pantomime to construct group actions and to narrate relations between figures on the stage. Hilverding revealed the potential of the ballet pantomime to operate on an even more "serious" level than what Weaver, Riccoboni, or Noverre

had achieved insofar as he worked with a large staff of Italians who showed enthusiasm for the genre.

Vienna and *Semiramis*: Pantomime Turns Serious

When Hilverding accepted an invitation to direct ballet activities in St. Petersburg, his assistant, Gasparo Angiolini (1731-1803) succeeded him as ballet director in Vienna. Angiolini pursued an ambitious vision for ballet pantomime. In 1761, he collaborated with the librettist Ranieri de'Calzabigi (1714-1795) and the composer Christoph Willibad Gluck (1714-1787) on the ballet pantomime *Don Juan* for the Kärntnertortheater. This production, adapted from Moliere's 1665 play, although it had a few comic moments, attempted a much more "serious" mood than *Les Fêtes chinoises* or *The Loves of Mars and Venus*, with the final scene set in a cemetery and Don Juan entering hell accompanied by churning strings and ominous, intoning trombones. Initially about twenty minutes in length and then expanded to about thirty-five minutes, the piece attracted much attention for its seriousness and its innovative determination to subordinate dancing to the demands of dramatic intensity. Angiolini claimed that tragic ballets had preceded him, in Stuttgart, but *Don Juan* was significant insofar as the piece was clearly built around the characters of the story rather than around the dancers in the imperial company (Angiolini 2015: 34). It also followed Hilverding's model of taking a speech/voice oriented text and proving that the same story could be told more economically with only instrumental music and "gestures."Angiolini, Calzabigi, and Gluck "reformed" the ballet by eliminating irrelevant *divertissements*, reducing the kinetic "embellishment," and concentrating pantomimic gestures within dance positions or movements, so that the arms and hands communicated ideas or sentiments instead of fluttering, undulating or rising decorously. The trio of collaborators followed up this triumph with the even more successful opera *Orfeo e Euridice* (1762), which includes the famous "Dance of the Blessed Spirits," wherein dancing advanced the narrative rather than functioned as a *divertissement*. Angiolini, Calzabigi, and Gluck became involved in other projects that did not bring them together, but in 1765, they collaborated again on what was their most "serious" production of a ballet pantomime: *Semiramis*, adapted from the 1748 tragedy of Voltaire, although Gluck had already written an opera about Semiramis, also in 1748, with a libretto by Metastasio. The ballet pantomime could not be more

serious: the Babylonian queen Semiramis, having murdered her husband, plots to marry her own son and establish an empire with a new sexual and moral framework, although actually neither she nor her son are aware that their passion for each other is incestuous; the revelation of incestuous desire motivates the son to kill his mother. The piece was only about a half hour long and Gluck's music was intensely austere, almost entirely in a minor key, with very short, darkly colored scenes (Gluck 1993: CD 2); such music was "what can only be called the beginnings of a new aesthetic, in which ordinary musical beauty becomes subordinate to a greater purpose: dramatic passion" (Heartz 1995: 215). Angiolini's pantomimic choreography emphasized the beautiful performance of "simple" physical actions with tragic import rather than the execution of steps or synchronized movements. His approach becomes clearer when looking at the language of his scenario for *Semiramis*. For example, these words describing a section of the second act when the Queen must declare a new husband:

> *Ninias [the son] enters, followed by soldiers. He carries to the feet of Semiramis the trophies of victory and the spoils of his defeated enemies. One sees that the Queen focuses on him. She would even declare him at that instant her inclination; but remorse is felt in her soul. But Semiramis finally chooses him; he bows down to her; she points out, and addresses the high priest and orders him to perform the ceremony. Oroés refuses because he does not believe that this marriage may be acceptable to the gods: after repeated refusals, the Queen issues a sign of contempt that makes heard what will be obeyed by Others. She leads Ninias to the altar; but suddenly the sky darkens, thunder rumbles, the simulacrum of Belus, and the Altar are struck by lightning; terror seizes all minds, and the temple remains empty in a moment* (Angiolini 2015: 55).

All of these actions occur within a few minutes; no action motivates the performance of a dance, yet all physical action works on driving the narrative forward, one "simple" action spurs another, with a tremendous compression of emotions into "actions" or "gestures," as Angiolini describes them; an emotion here does not cause a character to dance, rather, an emotion causes a physical action in one body that causes a responding emotion and physical action in another body, so that actions or gestures by

different bodies are in a kind of dialogue with each other or linked to each other, without, however, requiring any embellishment of movement to signify that the narrative exists above all to display such embellishment, to show steps and positions, a dance.

Semiramis was probably the closest thing to ancient Roman pantomime that the eighteenth century produced. It had a tragic theme; scenes were brief, and all performance elements built to an intense dramatic climax. Gluck wrote only enough music to "cover" the execution of the actions; he did not write music that allowed performers to fill time executing steps and movements that did not cause other performers to respond. Physical signification relied heavily on the hands, facial expressions ("mask"), and the upper body. Angiolini treated the corps de ballet like a Greek chorus, divided between the female entourage of the Queen, the soldiers of Ninius, and the priests. Angiolini even used something like supertitles to reinforce or clarify the emotional atmosphere at three moments, for example: "a hand traces before her on the wall of the cabinet this verse: 'My son, avenge me: tremble, perfidious wife" (Angiolini 2015: 54). This effect was similar to the use of the *interpellator* in the ancient pantomime. Angiolini was quite familiar with Lucian and other writers on the ancient pantomime and drama, and he explicitly acknowledged his desire to recover the ancient approach to pantomime. He even went so far as to assert that "the dance of our day has degenerated to the point of no longer seeming more than the art of making capers and antics, jumping or running in step, or at most of comporting the body or walking with grace without losing balance, displaying soft arms and quaint, elegant attitudes. Our schools do not teach us anything; and this follows us in what we produce in the theaters, where one shows the vigor of a jiggle for a few minutes with strength, and lightness. These are our Columns of Hercules [...] this miserable meandering [*baladinage*]" (Angiolini 2015: 39-40). Furthermore, Angiolini and his collaborators had demonstrated that pantomime was capable of achieving a somber, monumental grandeur unique to their own time. *Semiramis* greatly expanded the range and complexity of pantomime to represent emotions and provoke them in the spectator. It depicted lust, violent ambition, remorse, vengeance, and contradictory expressions of love while provoking "horror, pity, terror" in the spectator, while depicting such disturbing "passions" with elegance, majesty, grace and delicacy (Angiolini 2015: 67-68). As Fabbricatore

observes, with *Semiramis*, Angiolini had moved the ballet pantomime far beyond the balletic inclination to provoke astonishment and admiration for physical virtuosity. In doing so, he also moved the aesthetic appreciation of human movement away from compliance with "universal," idealizing laws of beauty linked to the regulation of the body through balletic steps and positions and toward a much more subjective and even "revolutionary" idea of kinetic beauty as an "emancipation" of feeling, a "poesie," that amplifies individual differences and thus undermines the illusion of social unity (Fabbricatore 2012: 13). In this respect, too, *Semiramis* was close to the ancient Roman pantomime, which so often excited audiences because it exposed "factions" within them.

However, *Semiramis* has the reputation of having been a failure (Homans 2010: 88-89; Heartz 1995: 211-213). The piece was supposed to celebrate the wedding of Josef II, Archduke of Austria (1741-1790), to Princess Maria Josepha of Bavaria (1739-1767), toward whom the Archduke felt no affection. The Archduke and his entourage walked out on the performance, and the audience responded with stunned silence. It is difficult to understand how Angiolini, Calzabigi, and Gluck could believe that their piece was an appropriate way to celebrate a wedding. But it is possible that for the three of them the desire and power to experiment was greater than the pleasure of accommodating any social or aesthetic protocol. The trio did not foresee especially bad consequences for their experimental impulse, and none resulted. Angiolini was proud of *Semiramis* and regarded it as one of his finest productions. To accompany the 1765 performance, he published his *Dissertation sur les Ballets Pantomimes des Anciens, pour servir de programme au Ballet Pantomime Tragique de Sémiramis*, in which he explained his approach to a new kind of ballet pantomime inspired by the ancient Roman pantomime. The pamphlet probably exerted greater influence over the theater world than the subdued audience response to the performance. In 1773, Angiolini staged another production of *Semiramis* in Venice. The shadowy adventurer Ange Goudar (1708-1791) wrote about this production in considerable detail as part of his propaganda campaign against the ballet pantomime, which he had launched in 1759, with his *Observations Sur Les Trois Derniers Ballets Pantomimes Qui Ont Paru Aux Italiens Aux Francois*. He remarked that in *Semiramis* "the feet do not speak at all," and then he touched upon the argument he introduced in the *Observations*, where he claimed that, "it is a

malady of our ballet masters that they want to make the legs speak, if one may express it thus, and to articulate attitudes: dance is so little equipt to render ideas methodically, that any progress that one gains in this art will always be very imperfect [. . .]" (Goudar 1759: 10). His main complaint was that the pantomimic gestures, though well-performed by Monsieur and Madame Campioni, do not achieve their intended signification if the spectator does not read the program (the *Dissertation*) that accompanies the performance. Pantomimic gesture in itself does not explain that Semiramis and Ninius do not know that they are mother and son. Angiolini's occasional use of supertitles, Goudar implies, merely reinforces the point that gesture is helpless at conveying what a handful of words makes clear. To amplify this point, Goudar focuses on the final scene in which the Shadow of Ninus rises from the tomb and leads Semiramis into the earth. He presents a spoken dialogue between the Shadow and Semiramis, which is an adaptation of Voltaire's original language. In the speech exchanged between Semiramis and her dead husband are manifold thoughts and feelings that pantomimic gesture presumes to represent but cannot or winds up representing something other than intended, with "ridiculous" consequences (Goudar 1777: 88-98). Goudar's critique represents the conservative ballet perspective: dance is a great art because it has no need to represent anything other than itself, other than an idealized humanity achieved by the geometric regulation of the body through "universal," idealizing steps and positions, supplemented by glamorous costumes and scenography. Of course, this perspective is blind to the point of pantomime, which is that gesture is indeed enigmatic and even arbitrary; it is relative to the body that performs it, it is relative to the emotion that motivates it, to the scene, to the person who sees it, to the music, to the possibilities of "metamorphosis" within the performer. The use of supertitles or an accompanying program or "interpellation" simply reinforces this point without, however, diminishing Angiolini's contention that gesture could "say" things that language could not (Angiolini 2015: 49-50). But for many in the ballet culture, this pantomimic way of thinking "seriously" about human movement was now no longer a "low," marginal aesthetic surfacing from the crude aspirations of the *foire* theaters and the acrobatic frivolities of the *grotteschi*—it constituted a major threat to ballet (cf., Fabbricatore 2011).

Semiramis inaugurated a European vogue for "serious" pantomime or *pantomime héroïque*. The trio of collaborators went on to enjoy bountiful careers. Gluck and Angiolini collaborated on a couple of other tragic ballet pantomimes, *Ifigenia in Aulide* (1765) and *Alessandro* (1766), about which virtually nothing is known. When Hilverding became embroiled in a scandal in St. Petersburg, Angiolini replaced him, and Hilverding returned to Vienna. Until 1773, Angiolini was busy in St. Petersburg and Moscow staging both tragic and pastoral ballet pantomimes. Then he worked in Venice and Milan before returning to Vienna (1774) to collaborate with Gluck again on the tragic ballet *Orphelin de la Chine*, another adaptation of Voltaire and another work about which nothing is known. He was in St. Petersburg again from 1776-1778 producing tragic ballet pantomimes, then in Venice, Turin, and Verona, before settling for a while at La Scala in Milan, where he produced yet more tragic and heroic pantomimes, including, among many others, *La morte di Cleopatra* (1780), *Attila* (1781), *Alzira, ossia gli americani* (1782), and *Teseo in Creta* (1782), about which one must locate extremely rare sources that Stefania Onesti has been able to identify but unable to consult on behalf of her monumental dissertation on Italian ballet pantomime (Onesti 2014 II: 764-765). From 1783-1786, he was again in St. Petersburg, where he mostly taught. By 1789, he was back at La Scala to revive some of his older works and introduce new ballets and ballet pantomimes: *Fedra* (1789), *Sargine* (1790), and *Amore e Psiche* (1789), which was an adaption of the pantomime scene in Apuleius (Tozzi 1972: 158-167). The career of Angiolini thus indicates an expanding international audience for "serious" ballet pantomime, although he was not at all averse to devising comic ballet pantomimes.

While working at the Regio Ducal Theater in Milan in 1773, Angiolini shared choreographic duties with Noverre, whose approach to ballet pantomime struck him as damaging to the genre. He therefore published his *Lettere di Gasparo Angiolini a Monsieur Noverre sopra Ballo Pantomimi* (1773), in which he asserted that Noverre had initiated a conflict in ballet pantomime between French and Italian factions, so to speak. He accused Noverre of arrogance in devaluing the pioneering contributions to the ballet pantomime by Hilverding and the Viennese court culture, which had saved pantomime from the "barbarism and indecency" of the *commedia* aesthetic, and in underestimating the power of Italians to create greatness in the arts (Angiolini 1773: 10-40; 110-111). Angiolini argued that the ballet pantomime is

a form of poetry rather than drama, and Noverre failed to grasp this distinction by constructing excessively convoluted, protracted narratives that failed to achieve the elegant "simplicity" of movement necessary to produce seriousness in pantomime. Curiously, echoing Goudar, he complained that Noverre relied too much on accompanying programs to bestow coherence on his pantomime ballets, although Angiolini himself continuously relied on programs (Angiolini 1773: 25-39; Tozzi 1972: 166-168). He contended that Noverre lacked sufficient musical skill to construct ballet pantomimes, for the choreographer should also be a composer, as was Angiolini himself (Angiolini 1773: 47-51; 91-93). Even though Angiolini's fame derived from his development of the serious ballet pantomime, he complained that Noverre treated the genre as superior to all other forms of ballet, whereas both choreographers and dancers should move with equal ease and mastery from one genre to another (Angiolini 1773: 101-102). Noverre responded by publishing his own pamphlet in which he described Angiolini as a resentful, malignant figure, whose critique was worthy only of a condescending sneer, although he did insist that the movement "language" of pantomime could not expand or grow more complex without written progams accompanying the performance. In any case, he appealed to audiences to decide whose approach to ballet pantomime was best (Noverre 1774: 11-13, 18-19). A pamphlet war between Noverre and Angiolini supporters then ensued, and Kathleen Hansell has given an excellent account of it (Hansell 2002: 229-235; cf. Carones 1987: 42-54). She suggests that ultimately Noverre lost the contest, because he, unlike Angiolini, was unable to integrate dance (steps), ballet (geometric configuration), and pantomime (gesture). He became deeply disillusioned by pantomime, because he assumed that "pantomime unaided is so obscure, it needs something akin to [a presumed] declamatory text of ancient Roman spectacles: the explicative scenario [. . .] Noverre and his followers had not recognized the creative prospects of Italian mime *in* dance" (Hansell 2002: 240). But the pamphlet war also revealed that the struggle for control over the identity and aesthetics of the serious ballet pantomime had become a basis for intensifying cultural differences over the expressive power of the body.

Noverre, however, remains a cherished figure in ballet histories. Even if his ballet pantomimes were tediously long, incoherent, and ruinously expensive, they eventually succeeded in detaching the Paris

Opera ballet company from the Opera and establishing the autonomy of ballet through the *ballet d'action*. Moreover, Noverre repudiated his enthusiasm for pantomime and ended up embracing the enduring conservative philosophy that ballet was above all about the beauty of the steps and positions. Angiolini, on the other hand, never advocated for ballet companies to operate independently of operas. He cultivated an interdisciplinary aesthetic. He wanted the ballet pantomime to achieve its own intense, compressed moment of seriousness in relation to other theatrical experiences brought together on the same program, and in this respect, too, his thinking was similar to the ancient Roman pantomimes. Angiolini's influence in his own time was greater than might be supposed from the ballet and theater histories of the last century. Part of the problem is that, aside from *Don Juan* and *Semiramis*, documentation relating to his many other ballet pantomime productions is lacking. But, as Hansell has observed, another part of the problem is that for many of his productions Angiolini himself composed the music, and his music, relentlessly mechanical and uninspired in itself, was far more conservative than his choreographic imagination: his "rudimentary musical language [...] consigned the majority of his works to oblivion" (2002: 231). Music in pantomime accompanies the gesture, like soundtrack music; it does not motivate movement or provide a reason for gesture or dance, as in ballet. Pantomime music should be aligned with a particular emotion rather than with the movement, even if the movement signifies a different emotion. But Angiolini was not able to convey nearly as strong an emotional response to life through music as he was able to do through movement. An implication of this situation, then, is that ballet pantomime thrives in a vibrant atmosphere of collaboration between highly talented artists rather than in relation to a single, unifying artistic intelligence like a choreographer, director, composer, or librettist. Gluck's dark music for *Don Juan* and *Semiramis* bestowed a unique beauty on Angiolini's pantomimic organization of movement that allowed those pieces to resonate powerfully across Europe. But Calzabigi's taut, tense scenarios also inspired dramatic clarity of gesture, as he himself implied when he complained that Gluck should not get all the credit for the success of his reformist operas (Prod'homme 1917: 265-266). Yet each member in the trio of collaborators was individually so successful that he was able to pursue numerous opportunities that did not include both of the others. While Angiolini went

to St. Petersburg, Gluck went to Paris, where he triumphed, especially with libretti by Calzabigi, who was prodigiously busy in Italy and Vienna in addition to his projects with Gluck. In Paris, Gluck's efforts to integrate ballets into his operas met with resistance from the Opera ballet corps, and he sometimes had to add dance scenes to accommodate the dancers and their *claques*, who certainly caused problems for Noverre as well. The ballet pantomime achieved power and appeal as a sign of "reform," innovation; the genre seemed important insofar as it created an aura of instability in the theater culture, as opposed to ballet, which treasured the absolute stability of its aristocratically conceived "universal" rules of movement. The message of reform and innovation never seemed stronger than when the trio of collaborators produced *Semiramis* for a completely inappropriate occasion—they made the point that together they could do whatever they wanted, and they wanted to "reform" the conditions under which their artistic talents could operate at their most serious level. The collaborations of this trio of artists made the ballet pantomime seem an opportunity for daring aesthetic adventure, and this nimbus of daring sustained hope and enthusiasm for the genre long after the trio had run out of occasions to collaborate.

Angiolini's ballet pantomimes showed at least that some large audiences wanted something more or other than ballet to reveal the "serious" or "heroic" expressive power of human movement. Yet ballet companies were expected to accommodate this emerging audience appetite, and it was as if ballet pantomime was unable to establish its own institutional identity without ballet having a controlling partnership in it. Ballet needed the ballet pantomime to develop the *ballet d'action* and emancipation from opera. Ballet pantomime needed the ballet to pursue the experiment in large-scale pantomimic action, which was necessary in expanding the appreciation and transformation of social identities. But as long as ballet companies were responsible for producing ballet pantomimes, they were inclined to make the genre conform to ballet's aesthetic system. Performances of ballet pantomimes lack good documentation, particularly in relation to movement. However, August Ferrere, a choreographer who apparently never worked as such in Paris, compiled in Valenciennes a workbook of four short ballet pantomimes he produced probably for a company touring in northeastern France and Belgium. He dated the manuscript 1782, so presumably the pieces were contemporary with that

time. These are "light-hearted" pieces that depict village scenes, except for *Le Peintre amoureux de son modèle*, which has a vaguely urban setting and is a very loose, very abreviated adaption of a 1757 comic opera of the same name by Egidio Duni. Ferrere inscribed many details for each of the ballet pantomimes: musical notations, tempi, keys, instrumentation, and durations; number of performers; and descriptions of actions to be performed within each section of the piece. For the movements of the performers, Ferrere provided Feuillet notations of dance steps, floor patterns for group movements, and sometimes little sketches of figures and their gestures. The manuscript is the most detailed description of any dance or pantomimic works in the eighteenth century. Carol G. Marsh and Rebecca Harris-Warrick have published a lengthy analysis of the manuscript. They point out that the pantomimic sections of the pieces are not consistently distinct from the dance sections. Sometimes pantomime occurs within a dance or while dancing, sometimes a performer pantomimes while another dances, and sometimes a section of a scene contains only pantomime, creating a "fluidity of movements," although the manuscript refers generally to pantomimic action without describing gestures (Marsh 2005: 263). A video reconstruction by the Divertimenty Company of scenes from *Le Peintre amoureux de son modèle* demonstrates the effectiveness of the manuscript in prescribing this oscillation between pantomimic and dance movement (Divertimenty 2014). While the manuscript gives a vivid idea of how these small, cheerful ballet pantomimes worked in performance, the extent to which Ferrere's approach to the genre was typical or conventional remains unclear without corrobrating evidence. Even so, the manuscript indicates that Ferrere displayed a fairly conventional choreographic imagination. Marsh and Harris-Warrick fixate on identifying all the steps for the dances, they identify the types of dances, and they describe the relation of the dances to the action of the scenario. They also analyze the geometric floor plans for the group dances and the relation of the music to the movement (2005: 243-275; cf., Jablonka 2012). Indeed, the obsession with dance steps and configurations makes it difficult to grasp the narrative action, let alone the "meaning" of it all. But that is perhaps the point. What the analysis of the manuscript makes clear is that Ferrere tries to turn as much of the action into dance as possible. He resolves all conflicts with dance; he ends all scenes with dance; if he begins a scene with a pantomime, he soon begins a

dance; otherwise, he begins his scenes with dances; every scene contains more than one dance, and occasionally dances seem irrelevant to the ostensible narrative. The music (by an unknown and unremarkable composer, possibly Ferrere himself) structures all the action in the pieces, and Ferrere even describes the relations between steps and notes. One gains a strong impression of dance and music circumscribing pantomimic action, as if pantomime interrupts an insistently "harmonizing" desire or perhaps imperative to dance. The manuscript creates an aesthetic framework in which it is very difficult for the expressive power of pantomime to expand. From a ballet perspective, it is no doubt not surprising that a ballet company would construct this relation between dance and pantomimic action. What is peculiar is the motive within European culture to encourage a "serious" appreciation of pantomimic art and at the same time to situate pantomime within an institutional apparatus that does not allow pantomime to increase its power to control perception or understanding of the body's expressivity, in spite of the era's obvious preoccupation with how the body "says" things that cut through or across the different languages which breed conflict within the culture and define the "foreignness" of it.

Pantomime Provokes Theoretical Disputes

The belief that pantomime needs to be "contained" within another art to reveal its proper value arises from deep uncertainty about the relation between gesture and signification. By the 1770s, pantomime was as much a part of opera as it was of ballet's efforts to establish the *ballet d'action* (cf. Buch 2008: 146-148). André Grétry (1741-1813) composed numerous comic operas into which he often inserted pantomime scenes, presumably because audiences delighted in seeing actions performed without speech or singing yet were not dances (Law 2010: 255-267). These pantomime scenes were usually three to five minutes long, and a peculiar feature of the few that have been recorded, especially *Céphale et Procris* (1773), a *ballet héroïque*, is their frequent tempo and key changes, indicating that the music follows the action rather than drives it. In his memoirs, Grétry explained why he considered pantomime "dangerous." He believed that pantomime contributed to the "decadence" of the Roman Empire, because it was incapable of embodying complex ideas. "Yes, pantomime is adequate to say what is easy to understand, in order to repeat through gestures what we have already said to ourselves with words. But try to set an original subject

as pantomime, and you will see whether it will be explained, and whether anything will equal the impatience of the spectators" (Grétry 1829 III: 153-154, 156; Law 2010: 268). Pantomime is "dangerous" because it conceals its limitations behind "magical spectacles"—that is, visual effects or "illusions" that "do not nourish the other genres" (Grétry 1829 III: 157). Grétry insinuates that pantomime says things that can be said much more effectively and efficiently through words and music, although he describes music as a "pantomime" of words, for "the rules of language or musical discourse are the same as those for ordinary speech," and gestures are a pantomime of the words they accompany. Without musical accompaniment, pantomime and dance are "ridiculous" (Grétry 1829 III: 279). Music bestows meaning upon pantomime because music embeds "ideas" within configurations of "tones"; while music can thrive on its own, pantomime without words or music is unintelligible. Pantomime cannot develop ideas or insights with any complexity that compares with the work of Corneille, Racine, Voltaire, Gluck, or Rousseau (Grétry 1829 III: 156-157). Grétry saw pantomime as translations of words into gestures, and the body was simply incapable of constructing a physical vocabulary that could accommodate the power of language and speech to encode morality, philosophy, and "the splendors of empire" (Grétry 1829 III: 156). Thus, at best, pantomime should have no more than three to five minutes within an opera or ballet. Grétry did not see that, without words or without any correspondence to words, gesture became enigmatic, a sign whose meaning was "arbitrary," because it was something imposed upon the sign by the spectator, by an intense subjectivity. Pantomime made transparent what the body "says" when language (or dance) did not situate it within a system for regulating meaning. Hedy Law puts a generous spin on Grétry's not especially lucid distaste for pantomime:

> *Grétry's struggles with pantomime remind us again that the dangers of pantomime are inextricably entwined with its charm. Repeatedly, eighteenth-century composers were beguiled by physical gestures. They were spurred to plumb the abyss of muteness for meanings. Just when they fathomed how music and gesture could be used interdependently to heighten intelligibility, they discovered the unforeseen potential of muteness for attracting, generating, producing original meanings, or escaping preconceived ideas of legibility. In this*

> *way, eighteenth century pantomime became crucial to the invention of new social meanings, new narrative structures, and prompted new ways of watching and of listening, and legitimating the quest for extra-musical meanings in music* (Law 2010: 268).

Law connects Grétry's attitude toward pantomime to Michel-Paul-Guy de Chabanon's "fear" of gesture, as revealed in his *Observations sur la musique, et principalement sur la métaphysique de l'art* (1779), in which he adopted a view of gesture that was almost completely opposite of Grétry's. A composer and author of literary works, Chabanon (1730-1792) proposed that, "the study of gesture is precisely the inverse of the operations that led to the establishment of language [*langue*]." Gesture is a different kind of "language" [*langage*] and "the truth of this language is something frightening: it says what words do not say." He theorized that in the formation of language (*langue*), gestures and shouts transformed into words; then humans have "undone what we did then": gestures began "substituting" for words, and then they began to "compensate" for words (Chabanon 1779: 89). The Greeks and Latins, he reflected, had a "larger" concept of music and dance than those two words possess in French: "this was the art of gesture and pantomime; an art so powerful in its means, so energetic in its expression, that it overcame the same art of speech that had helped gesture; a superiority that we cannot conceive" (Chabanon 1779: 84). Chabanon believed that the ancient Roman emphasis on education in oratory spawned "the art of pantomime," a kind of counterpoint to speech. By "admitting to gestures for irony, for contempt, for ailments of the soul, and for metaphysical states, one creates a language [*langue*] for the eyes as there is one for the ears. This *ocular* language, less clear than the other in several of its parts, [is] more expressive than everything that makes for natural institution: the gesture of fury says infinitely more than the word 'fury'" (Chabanon 1779: 86-87). But Chabanon also acknowledged that the ancient pantomimic action was "vague and indeterminate," subject to mysterious contradiction. For example, when Hylas, a student of Pylades, appeared as Agamemnon, his audience criticized him because he had made Agamemnon a tall man rather than a great man (Chabanon 1779: 87-88). Moreover, with the Romans, pantomimic gesture was so vivid because it appeared "without even the help of the face," as the performer wore a mask (Chabanon 1779: 84-85). The "talent for pantomime," he concluded,

"belongs more to actors and their art than to dancers," although he acknowledged that in serious ballet pantomime, such as Noverre's *Médée*, performers could produce pantomimic action that "even the greatest actors would have difficulty surpassing" (Chabanon 1779: 90). Chabanon supposed that pantomime was a "language" for signifying and provoking emotions rather than ideas, and that was what made it both "frightening" and exciting. When detached from words, pantomimic gesture produced signs that were difficult to interpret: one can only respond to these signs emotionally, without assistance from the "meanings" that language embeds in words. These emotional responses make the spectator feel alone, suffused with uncertainty about what the signs mean, and released from the shared or systemic, societal sense of meaning that language exists to create.

Though they held opposing attitudes toward pantomime, Grétry and Chabanon discussed pantomime from the perspective of men whose primary work was the composition of music. Chabanon regarded pantomime as a visual or "ocular" phenomenon. It is therefore worthwhile to examine ideas about pantomime from a visual artist, the distinguished engraver Charles-Nicholas Cochin (1715-1790), who published his *Pantomime dramatique, ou Essai sur un nouveau genre de spectacle* in 1779. Cochin observed that Italian operas, in spite of fine libretti, were boring and unintelligible to French audiences. They were boring because they contained long passages of recitative and dialogue in which characters explained the story in which they were situated, producing arid scenes that lacked either musical or poetic interest. He therefore proposed that pantomimic action replace these recitatives and dialogues with the idea that a "magnificence of tableaux" might "obviate disgust for lengthy dialogues scenes in an idiom that one ignores." He consulted with an unnamed academic, who raised nine objections to his idea, such as the "peculiarity" of a character acting silently and then suddenly starting to sing an aria; passions "sing" rather than gesture; recitatives "prepare" the listener for arias; the shift from "silence" to song was too abrupt and "violent" (Cochin 1779: 3-7). But these and other objections did not justify the boredom that resulted from accommodating them. Therefore, to demonstrate how pantomime would replace recitatives, Cochin used the example of the libretto for *Demophon* (1731), by the prolific and enormously successful librettist Pietro Metastasio (1698-1782), which was the basis for 73 "serious" operas in the eighteenth century, including one by Gluck (1743).

Metastasio's libretto offered an extravagantly contrived variation on the Oedipal theme of committing sins without knowing it. The King of Thrace, Demophon, has received the message of an oracle, which says he can protect his kingdom from catastrophe through the immolation sacrifice of a virgin woman not of royal blood chosen through a lottery. Dirce, the daughter of Demophon's chief adviser, Mathusias, is not exempt from the lottery, although she is secretly married to Timanthes, the first son of Demophon and has a son by him. Demophon plans for Timanthes to marry the Phrygian Princess Creusa, whom Cherinthus, Demophon's other son, loves. All these characters are ignorant of each other's desires, while at the same time they struggle to comply with the authority of the King to enforce the law that benefits the kingdom as a whole. Eventually a letter turns up written long ago by Demophon's dead wife; this document indicates that Dirce and Timanthes are actually brother and sister. This news spares Dirce a fiery death, but threatens to cause havoc within the royal family. Then a second letter from the dead mother is discovered, and it explains that Timanthes is not actually the son of Demophon and that the mother switched babies at birth. Thus, all ends happily: Timanthes and Dirce can remain married, Creusa can marry the new first son Cherinthus, and the kingdom can avoid the need for the immolation sacrifice (Metastasio 1766; Metastasio 1767: 237-349).

The plot is laboriously convoluted in its attempt to heighten the conflict between patriarchal, royal authority and the claims of sexual desire, and Metastasio's flowery, verbose, and overwrought language only confirms Cochin's assertion that so much storytelling talk is boring. But Cochin's solution was not to replace all the language with pantomime, for the text supports an opera, many opportunities for singing. Pantomime appears only intermittently to dramatize physically sections of exposition; it does not function to shorten the performance but to clarify the mythic and political context of the action. Nevertheless, in his revision of Metastasio's text, Cochin cut sections of speech or paraphrased them in more economical language. Whereas Metastasio prefaces his libretto with an elaborate explanation of the oracle and the power over Thrace associated with it, Cochin replaces the erudite preamble about "this obscure oracle" with a grandiose pantomime that integrates gesture, movement, writing, and voice. As the overture "paints a frightening storm," a chorus of priests approaches the sancturary of Apollo; Demothon, his court, and a "multitude

of young girls and other spectators" follows and they all prostrate themselves before the statue of the god. Clouds descend, thunder peals, and flaming script appears with the words:

By order of Apollo
A beautiful virgin
He wishes on this altar
Her blood be spilled
Each year on this day.

Then follows thunder and alarm within the throng. Luminous clouds emerge out of which a voice speaks cryptically: "The anger of the sky will subside when the innocent usurper of the kingdom knows himself." The priests raise the "urn of fate"; the virgins tremble with fear. One of the virgins, Dirce, approaches the priests and asks that she be exempt from the sacrifice, and the priests do not oppose her. Matusio, a high official, seeks also to exempt Dirce, whom he believes to be his own daughter. He presses the issue, Demothon becomes irritated and orders that the guards to seize Dirce. The throng sinks before the king, who departs in a mood between anger and pity. The throng follows and "the ceremony is suspended," by which is meant, apparently, that the "pantomime recedes deep into the stage" to create the impression that "they speak without having been heard." From the front row of the audience, "three interlocutors" appear and "declaim simply" the rules and procedures for selecting the sacrificial virgin by a name plucked randomly from the urn (Cochin 1779: 11-13). None of these actions or words appear anywhere in Metastasio's text. But after the opening pantomime, Cochin allows the scenario to unfold pretty much as Metastasio wrote it, scene by scene, albeit with fewer words than Metastasio employed and in three acts rather than five. Cochin occasionally adds visual details, such as when Timanthes makes his entrance with his soldiers bearing trophies, draperies, scepters, crowns, and wreaths acquired from their victories against enemies. However, the second and third acts each contain a pantomime. At the end of Scene VIII in Act Two, Cochin calls for another large ensemble pantomime in the temple of Apollo, when the priests, along with the guards and a female entourage prepare Dirce for sacrifice; the priests perform libations and bring the vases to catch the blood. Timanthes appears with his own guard, holds off the temple

guardians, and absconds with Dirce (Cochin 1779: 44). The third act begins with a pantomime set in an apartment of the royal palace. Members of the royal entourage surround the miserable Demothon, who "often displays successive movements of pity and anger." Royal officials and women of rank petition the king to release Dirce and Timanthes. The king is moved but determined to reject their appeals. Creusa supplicates, causing Demothon to reflect. Then Cherinthus presents Dirce and her son Olinthus. The child embraces the knees of the king, who resists the emotion he feels but embraces the child and signals that all are pardoned. Cherinthus leaves to bring the news to his brother, Timanthes. The king retires to the interior of the palace, followed by his entourage amidst great joy. But to "render this scene more intelligible," Cochin brings back the three interlocutors, who, as in the first act pantomime, provide something like spoken captions or intertitles for the actions and feelings represented pantomimically. In this respect, Cochin follows the example of the *interpellator* in ancient Roman pantomime, although the action as Cochin describes it probably does not require even this level of assistance from language.

Cochin was unique in proposing to expand pantomime within opera rather than restrain it. This expansion comes at the expense of language or, more precisely, at the expense of text, because the expansion of pantomime entails a compression of the text as a whole rather than an addition to it. Most likely, this trade off of text for pantomime would strengthen the dramatic power of the narrative. Cochin never intended for pantomime to replace language altogether; rather, he saw pantomime as compelling language, at least on stage, to become more economical, more elemental. As a visual artist, he *saw* actions and emotions as physical movements instead of as things evoked through poetic linguistic tropes or through musical devices. Indeed, Cochin could have applied his pantomimization strategy to the entire text and told the story of Demothon effectively by having the performers pantomime actions and sentiments captioned by the three interlocutors; the piece would then be even shorter, much shorter. But Cochin saw pantomime as an integrative art that made other arts, like singing, orchestral music, declamation, or scenic effects, appear stronger, more dramatic. But by being integrative, pantomime was also disruptive to the institutional organization of the arts. Diderot wrote a review of Cochin's *Pantomime dramatique* in 1779. He viewed Cochin's project as a contribution to efforts, such as Philidor's tragic, Viking opera *Ernelinde*

(1769), to adopt the melodic, song-oriented Italian style of opera over the "monotonous and timid," dance and recitative-infested French model favored by conservative aristocrats and their claques at the Opera. Cochin, he observes, understands how "cries and gestures touch" the spectator more than speech, and "silence broken by lonely interjections" of pain or joy produces "great effects" (Diderot 1875 VIII: 459). Cochin's scheme is impressive in its construction of ensemble pantomime scenes that possess a "truly picturesque disposition" (Diderot 1875 VIII: 463). But the main thing is that pantomime serves to make the narrative "clear, terse, and interesting," whereas many beautiful verses often make only bad (dull) scenes. Friedrich Grimm also reviewed Cochin's project, but he was more skeptical than Diderot, with whose review he was familiar. He sympathized with Cochin's desire to relieve opera spectators of the boredom caused by "dreary, barbarous or monotonous" recitatives, but he felt that pantomime as Cochin imagined it was not practical. It was too difficult for performers to sing, act, and move with equal excellence. Cochin's approach was too visual. Grimm implied that the solution to boredom in the opera lay not with visual artists, writers, or choreographers, but with composers: opera had to engage the audience through the ear, by which he seems to have meant the presence of strong, seductive melodies (Grimm 1880 XII: 317-318). He did not acknowledge what was evident to Cochin and Diderot: though Metastasio's libretto had already been set to music by almost innumerable composers, none of them had succeeded in making the telling of the story interesting. Music might make fine arias and interludes, but the value of performing the narrative depended on dramatizing the relation between idea, feeling, action, and movement. Pantomime might have its own limitations in representing ideas, but it also showed up the limitations of music and language to create "interest" in the performance of human actions and sentiments framed within a narrative.

It is doubtful that Cochin's proposal had any impact on the performance of pantomime in opera or elsewhere, but not because his thinking was inappropriate for opera. It was just inconvenient for opera companies, because, as Grimm implied, it blurred distinctions between singers, actors, and dancers. Pantomime didn't seem to need the opera as a platform for its expansion, as long as the theater world assumed that ballet pantomime was the genre in which pantomime achieved its most "serious" expression. Partisans of ballet and opera, and the institutions that

supported those arts, were content to let pantomime serve other arts rather than itself. For Cochin, Diderot, Rousseau, and Grimm, pantomime was a phenomenon that operated outside of the aesthetic realms defining dance, opera, drama, and even theater. But others contributed to this discourse on pantomime as an art that could "belong" with other arts but not necessarily. The prolific dramatist Louis-Sébastien Mercier (1740-1814) considered pantomime to be like a "sketch" for a painting that he, as the spectator, completed in his mind: "when an actor [. . .] has fire and there is truth in his gestures, I imagine in my spirit the most beautiful words in the world, in verse, in prose, however I wish" (Peters 2000: 299; Goodden 1986: 94; cf., Robert 2015). However, Mercier's immense output as a dramatist did not include any attempt at pantomime. Like many dramatists of his time, he believed that theater should "educate" the spectator, and education tended to mean moral instruction. Without words and speech to frame them, human actions and gestures appeared detached from moral values, perhaps even amoral. Performances that were "sketches" bestowed too much freedom on spectators to imagine "however they wish" the meanings of gestures when the goal of performance was to get spectators to learn the "correct" meaning of human actions provided by the moral authority of a text that followed the "correct" rules of composition.

Another dramatist, Jean-Francois Marmontel (1723-1799), developed this moral perspective on pantomime with some fervor in comments he wrote between 1756 and 1787 mostly as supplementary entries for the *Encyclopédie*. During the quite vehement conflicts between the "Gluckists" and "Piccinniists"—a conflict he helped to foment, Marmontel opposed the reforms Gluck had introduced to the opera and favored the much more conservative reforms advocated by Niccolo Piccinni (1728-1800), with whom he collaborated on several libretti that evoked the era of Lully and Quinault. His own era, he believed, was less accomplished artistically than that of Corneille, Racine, and Moliere. Public fascination with pantomime was proof of this decadence. The problem with pantomime, he explained, is that it is an entirely visual experience. "The eyes introduce only sensations; the ears transmit thoughts. For the most picturesque and restless passions are not always those that elicit the most beautiful movements, the finest gradations, the most interesting developments, the most sublime traits." Eloquence was central to Marmontel's aesthetic judgment:

> *A single gesture and facial expression may express without equivocation the coarse movement of jealousy, spite, fury; but the gradations of mood, of reflection, of retort, of contrast, of passions stirring, in a word, this analysis of the human heart, which makes for the inimitable beauty of roles like Dido, Ariadne, Phaedra, Hermione, etc., all this, I say, is not made for the eyes; and yet in that is the sublimity and purity of* action. *If one reduces it to pantomime, it is nothing more than commonplace. To the eyes, the Phaedra of Racine will be the same as that of Pradon; it will be even worse; it will be the Phaedra of this or that spectator, who, in explaining the silent play of the actress, imposes his morals, his sentiments, and his language [...] Pantomime is a canvas that each spectator fills in with his own thoughts* (Marmontel 1819 IV: 76-77).

Pantomime signified a failure of literary skill through an abundance of beautiful movements and tableaux (77). Marmontel acknowledged that pantomime could "move" the spectator, but it could not provide a moral compass for the emotions it awakened detached from ideas, from language. He even asserted that pantomime produces a "force and warmth" that no language can equal and that is more "vehement" than "eloquence itself," for "passion alone is its guide," and passions do not instruct or "correct" illusions. Eloquence in the theater requires the unity of speech and gesture, and this unity must always come at the expense of beautiful, seductive movements of the body. That is because an "actor who speaks or sings with pantomimic gestures seems to us exaggerated to extravagance." Marmontel occasionally blurred the distinction between dance and pantomime in his zeal to expose the corrupting effect of visual beauty on the stage, but he did see pantomime as the most powerful and "dangerous" invention of theater. Pantomime, he claimed, destroyed comedy and tragedy as literary forms in the Roman Empire. "The Romans were not a people sensible, like the Greeks, to the pleasures of the spirit and the soul [...] Pantomime gave to actors a previously unknown beauty to the body" that dissolved the authority of the voice and the word to perfect the mind and soul of the spectator. "Roman idolatry and Roman idolization of pantomime were a cult of beauty," which destroyed "taste" and from which no one learned anything. Pantomime was like a "strong liqueur" that clouded the mind pleasantly without in any way strengthening it, and for that reason it

"corrupted the morals of Rome." Thus, "a wise government will take care to protect its people from the dominant taste of the Romans for pantomime, and will favor spectacles where reason clarifies and where feeling purifies and ennobles" (Marmontel 1819 IV: 821-827). Nevertheless, despite his almost violent distaste for pantomime, Marmontel made a very haunting observation about it: "An actor is continually the copyist of the poet; the pantomime is original: the one serves the sentiment and thought of another; the pantomime is his own book and abandons himself to the movements of his soul. It therefore must be that between the action of the actor and that of the pantomime is the difference and the distance between slavery and liberty" (823).

Theoretical discourse on pantomime was not entirely French. In Germany, the dramatist and professor, Johann Jakob Engel (1741-1802), published an enormous tract, *Ideen zu einer Mimik* (1785), in which he made many remarks on pantomime, none of which shared any of Marmontel's moral concerns about the art. Instead, Engel focused on pantomime as a semiotic enigma. Like Marmontel, he contended that the meaning of gestures was "arbitrary" when they were detached from language or speech. This uncertainty of meaning was because gestural significations did not constitute a language in themselves or a component of a spoken language. Emotions spark human movements that have no inherent meaning, presumably because it is not advantageous for emotions to be altogether transparent, although Engel does not really theorize why gestures produce so much ambiguity of signification (Engel 1786 II: 38). Only in a closed society, he asserted, do gestures conform to a code that makes them "understandable" to members of the society. As evidence for this assertion, he cited an Iroquois tribe's war dance pantomime and a Sicilian society's system for communicating with hand movements: members of the tribe or society understand the communications, but outsiders remain utterly baffled (Engel 1786 II: 25-26; 66-68). That is why the ancient Roman pantomime is "completely lost" and irretrievable: the ancient pantomime was "understandable" because it emerged out of a common fund of myths that somehow produced a common gestural code, although Engel did not explain how this happened (Engel 1786 II: 31). Nor did he explain why pantomime was so popular in his own time when its significations were mostly obscure or unintelligible. But, like Marmontel, he acknowledged that pantomime engaged audiences because it allowed spectators to impose

their own meanings on gestures (Engel 1786 II: 44-46). Engel's book wanders often into philosophical abstractions, which, he claims, pantomime is incapable of constructing, and he does not analyze any pantomime pieces that he had actually seen performed. However, the purpose of the book was to show the importance of gesture in relation to speech on the stage: heightened attention to gesture would make acting more lifelike. Actors could learn from pantomime even if the performance of stage plays required less extravagant gestures than in pantomime, for speech always restrains gesture. "In the complete representation of character through the whole mixing and conflicting proportioning of inclinations and powers, in the development of the often very fine play of passions, of concealed drives and movement motives [...] therein can pantomime have very strong appeal: what the mind (*Geist*) loses, the senses may gain" (Engel 1786 II: 53). Yet Engel never developed this idea, although occasionally he introduced examples of gesture taken from theatrical performances in ancient Rome, in Paris, or in Hamburg that he never saw.

What he did see, however, was the image of gesture. His book was innovative in its use of so many pictures to support his theoretical points. The prodigious number of dance books published during the eighteenth century, when they included illustrations, almost invariably depicted geometric diagrams or schematic, idealized figures assuming positions. Engel used 59 illustrations taken from "life" and occasionally from theater. The illustrations are effective in presenting both male and female figures of different ages performing gestures that provoke an emotional response in the viewer without communicating any clear meaning—that is, the gesture, the sign, triggers some kind of vague feeling in the viewer without signifying anything [Figure 61]. Engel includes a wide range of gesturing figures to show the breadth of the emotional spectrum encompassed by generally simple or "natural" gestures. Sometimes he compares similar poses to each other to demonstrate how subtle variations in a basic gesture alter the emotional ambiance of the body as a whole: for example, he contrasts both arms extended forward with both arms raised and then both arms lowered. One cannot say what any of these gestures "mean," yet they each indicate a different emotional state, even if the viewer can't find the words to describe them. Only five other illustrations depict two persons, and of these, four show different variations of the same two-person relation between a person reading a book and her listener. Engel never considered

the impact of gestures in succession or in combination. But his whole project amassed around "ideas" to make actors and spectators more conscious of how gestures strengthened or undermined the power of words and their "meanings." He did not really grasp that people enjoyed seeing pantomimes because they wanted to see what the body "meant" when it wasn't regulated by words or by the "rules" or crypto-language of dance. He didn't perceive that uncertainty of the body's meaning and the pantomime's movements, so apparently in tension with the Enlightenment goal of semantic transparency, was part of the intensifying spirit of emancipation embedded within the Enlightenment project.



Figure 61: Illustrations from Johann Jakob Engel's *Ideen zu einer Mimik, Erster Theil* (1785), showing gestures that provoke emotional responses without signifying anything in particular.

Meanwhile, in Paris, as the Revolution began to unfold, Francois de l'Aulnaye (1739-1830) completed the first dissertation related to the ancient Roman pantomime, *De la Saltation théatrale, ou, Recherches sur l'origine, les progrès, & les effets de la pantomime chez les anciens* (1790). Much of the work consisted of an annotated compilation of ancient references to dance,

pantomime, details of theater history related to Roman pantomime, and brief synopses of each emperor's attitude toward pantomime, followed by almost a hundred pages of notes and original Latin texts. The obscure origins of pantomime in Greece or in a very remote primeval time preoccupied Aulnaye. It feels as if he was disappointed that pantomime did not have much of a life or history before the advent of the Roman Empire and he needed, perhaps in a time of intense anti-monarchial sentiment, to associate the art with a more distinguished, mysterious heritage than that of the warlike and imperial Romans, who nevertheless brought the art to a "perfection" previously inconceivable (Aulnaye 1790: 2). Aulnaye included nine watercolor plates of ancient artworks, but these depicted mimes or non-pantomimic dancers, except for one plate showing pantomime masks and another of engravings purporting to show a sculpted pantomime's head and a sculpted pantomime scene, copied from "the cabinet of the Duc d'Orleans" [Figure 62].



Figure 62: Illustrations (Plate II, 1 and 2) purporting to show ancient tragic pantomime based on artifacts, from Francois de l'Aulnaye's 1790 dissertation on ancient pantomime.

But the strength of the dissertation is in its situating of pantomime within a broad, cross cultural, interdisciplinary historical context. Pantomime moved across manifold temporal, cultural, disciplinary, linguistic, economic, and political boundaries. More than any other society, the Roman Empire cultivated to "perfection" this power of pantomime. In perhaps the most interesting section of the dissertation, Aulnaye explains how all the arts intersect through pantomime. He compiles short paragraphs that connect pantomime to dance, music, acting, masking, fashion, sculpture, painting, rhetorical gesture, and even architecture (Aulnaye 1790: 11-17; 78). He never claims that pantomime "translates" words into gestures or has any codified correlate with language or literature. Rather, "the art of gesture is an ocular music." Pantomime is similar to language insofar as it is a kind of bodily or gestural "poetry" (*poésie*); "it is an art of dreaming, which, by a magical power, transports us into the milieu it describes." He then attempts to explain why language is inadequate to the goal of pantomime to create a *poésie* of sensations that "excite the soul": "we have introduced rhyme into our verse, and this Gothic invention, without any compensation, gives us hard shackles, attests always, in spite of our vain rationalizations, how little our language is suited to *Poesie*" (Aulnaye 1790: 16-17). Otherwise, except for a reference to Noverre, Aulnaye made no connection of pantomime to his own pantomime-saturated time. Yet this was the one text of the century that presented pantomime as an art unregulated by music, dance, language, or any other art while being an appropriation of all the arts.

Pantomime Outside the *Commedia* Model

Throughout the 1780s, pantomime had begun to resist its "containment" within the ballet pantomime and within the *commedia* format of the *foires*, which in the early 1770s faced renewed circumscriptions and suppressions from the government at the behest of the Opera and the Comédie-Française. With the growth of the "serious" ballet pantomime after *Don Juan* and *Semiramis*, the *commedia* pantomime gradually shifted focus away from Arlequin to the somewhat more melancholy, pathetic Pierrot figure. Neverthess, even before the Revolution, significant innovations in both the scale and content of pantomime performance came from people seeking to build large audiences through

stirring, rapidly moving spectacles that connected spectators to grand historical events and the movements of society as a whole. Nicolas-Médard Audinot (1732-1801), a founder of the 1250-seat Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique in 1769, was a pioneer in the early 1780s in the development of the *pantomime héroïque* and the pantomime Romanesque—three act pantomimes on historical or fantastical themes, with orchestral accompaniment, performed by actors, including children, rather than dancers. Audinot started his career in theater working with marionettes, which perhaps encouraged him to assume the function of a director at a time when the concept of the stage director scarcely existed (Faul 2013: 65-75; Mason 1912: 4-11). Until well into the nineteenth century, the production of stage plays generally unfolded around the ambitions and priorities of leading actors or, as at the Comédie-Française, of *doyens* and their hierarchical committee decisionmaking. Plays rigidly followed "rules" of composition that seldom allowed more than three persons on stage at the same time and consisted almost entirely of dialogue or monologues that severely restrained the movement of actors and compelled them to conform to the gestural codes or tropes aligned with the rules governing a particular type of scene. Choreographers handled the wordless movement of dancers in ballets, but they tended to focus almost entirely on the assignment of steps, positions, and geometric patterns; they didn't really direct action in the sense of bringing some emotional quality out of the actors that was not prescribed, encoded, prescribed or regulated by a text or movement "system." In collaboration with Jean Mussot, known otherwise as Arnould (1734-1795), Audinot expanded the pantomime beyond the small scale, *commedia* productions of the *foires*. The three-act pantomime required not only a more complex visual-kinetic imagination, but a grander subject matter to sustain the attention of audiences. *Dorothée* (1782) is a good example of this new kind of pantomime. In a Milanese "salon," Dorothée and a couple of women work at embroidering scarves while a governess instructs her son. An army courier arrives bringing a beautiful portrait of "his master," which "she receives with transport." The mayor arrives and tries to seduce Dorothée, who repulses his advances. He then orders her arrest for subversive activities. Act two shows Dorothée brought to prison and chained to a stone bench; her jailer displays signs of affection for her. But the mayor appears with Dorothée's son and offers her and her son a happy life if she accedes to his desires. When she refuses, he condemns her

to death. In the final act, set in a "public place," preparations are underway to burn Dorothée at the stake. General Dunois and his troops arrive, and he shows indignation at the savage behavior of the guards. Violence flares between the troops and the guards, and the troops kill the chief of the guards. Trémóuille, the husband of Dorothée, arrives and snatches her from the stake. The mayor appears and, enraged, draws his sword against Trémóuille. But Trémóuille and his entourage hurl the mayor into the flames. "Dorothée recovers from her fainting and opens her eyes to contemplate a husband she adores." *Fête générale. Fin de la pantomime*.

Much of his audience was supposedly illiterate, but Audinot nevertheless found it helpful to insert placards or supertitles (as at the beginning of the third act of *Dorothée*) to explain actions that had occurred off stage or "during the interval." Though he himself felt little inclination to publish his pantomime scenarios, the scenario for *Dorothée* remained the basic model for published pantomime scenarios for many decades. Indifferent to literary merit, it only described one action after another, so that an entire story taking place in different locales could be understood without a single word spoken, without any spoken or written explanation of who the characters are, without any confusion about which characters are good and which bad, without any reference to a didactic or elevating purpose, and without any suggestion of comic moments. It is like reading a play consisting entirely of stage directions, with everything usually revealed through dialogue or monologues compressed into physical actions that need no explanation. For example, this paragraph that concludes the first act:

> *Archers appear; they have their warrants for Dorothée, who, with almost no strength to the look, expresses her despair by sighs, moans and sobs, to which they respond with hard and menacing gestures. Dorothée stands protectively before her women, adjusts herself, and demands to see and embrace her child, which the barbarians mercilessly refuse. Finally, they lead her off more dead than alive* (Audinot 1782: 15).

But Arnould and Audinot had bigger ambitions for pantomime than the crude melodrama of *Dorothée*. In 1786, Arnould produced *L'Héroïne américaine*, a three-act pantomime based on the then well-known story of

Inkle and Jarika, which was already the subject of a popular play, *La Jeune Indienne,* by Chamfort first produced in 1764, although Arnould claimed that he had been inspired by an account of the story in Raynals's *Histoire des deux Indes* (1770). On a forested Caribbean island, the English officer Inkle leads toward the sea a squad of soldiers who guard several chained Native American women. A group of Indians ("savages") attack them. The Indian maiden Jarika helps Inkle to escape. She hides him in a grotto, where they grow romantically attached to each other. Eventually she guides Inkle to an English captain whose ship has dropped anchor in the distance. The captain becomes enamored of Jarika, and he offers to buy her from Inkle. At first, Inkle "hesitates," but then agrees to the captain's offer when he doubles the price. (This part of the plot is closer to the original Inkle and Yarico story recounted in Richard Ligon's *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes* (1657) than to the sentimental version Chamfort developed in which the English officer and the Indian girl end up married.) The captain has Jarika shackled and orders an attack on the Indians. The Indians, however, strike back and drive the captain back to his ship after capturing Inkle. The Indians are ready to burn Inkle at the stake, but their Chief does not wish to engage in atrocities. Jarika discovers that her heart is with the Chief. Inkle pleads for her forgiveness, but "she vows an eternal hatred toward him and his nation." The Chief banishes Inkle from the island, and the tribe celebrates the union of Jarika and the Chief.

The scenario contains many more actions and scenic effects than this elementary synopsis indicates, including more battles between the Indians and the English, cannon shots fired from the anchored ship, and Jarika deceiving her own people to protect Inkle. Here Arnould does not introduce any supertitles. The performer playing Jarika must signify entirely through movement an array of intense emotions: sexual desire, tenderness, eagerness, shock, despair, fury, hatred, and yet desire again and joy. Arnould organizes the scenarios into brief, fast-paced paragraphs, so that reading it is like watching a silent film without intertitles. With *L'Héroïne américaine*, Arnould got pantomime to embody overt political perspectives: the emphasis on Jarika's point of view urged the spectator to adopt an anti-slavery, anti-British attitude and to see female sexual desire in relation to a conflict between a colonial, "civilizing" force and a native, "savage" primitivity. Indeed, the political aspect of the scenario puts it in sharp contrast to the popular 1787 opera, *Inkle and Yarico*, produced in London by

George Colman (1762-1836), which concluded with the Englishman marrying the Indian girl, presented no scenes of violence between Indians and English colonialists, and included only one other Indian character, the comic female Wowski. In 1792, the French theatrical entrepreneur Alexandre Placide (1750-1812), formerly "the first rope dancer to the King of France," brought his company to New York City, where they performed Arnould's pantomime under the title *The Indian Heroine*, "which was frequently repeated all over the United States, sometimes under the title of *The American Heroine*, during the next quarter of a century" (Moore 1961: 7, 13). Colman's opera also enjoyed some success in several cities of the new United States between 1794 and 1797, but it's not clear if Placide or audiences saw any competitive opportunity in the contradictory constructions of the tale (Seilhamer 1891: 410-411). A March 1792 performance of Arnould's pantomime in London, prior to a July revival of Colman's opera, was, however, "very ill-received" (Oulton II 1796: 102; Hogan 1968: 1465). In addition to numerous *commedia* pantomimes and tightrope acts, Placide, in 1792, introduced American audiences to *Dorothée* and another Arnould pantomime, *Le Maréchal des Logis* (1783) (Moore 1961: 11-12). Vanessa Boulaire (2013: 227) observes that *L'Héroïne américaine* was one of the first theatrical works to represent a sexually attractive "woman of her nationality" as the focus of dramatic interest.

Anould, meanwhile, embarked on an even bigger project, the four-act pantomime *La Mort du Capitaine Cook* (1788). With this production, Arnould introduced the concept of the documentary, historical-ethnographic pantomime, although he was not the first to use Captain Cook's adventures as a subject for pantomime. In 1785, the Irish dramatist John O'Keefe (1747-1833) collaborated with the scenic artist Philip de Loutherbourg (1740-1812) on *Omai, or, A Trip round the World*, a Christmas pantomime presented at the Covent Garden Theater in London. This show did not include Cook as a character; instead, the story developed mostly around the character of Omai, a Polynesian, who came to London with Cook in 1773 and returned to Huahine with Cook in 1777. *Omai* purported to present spectacular scenes of Polynesian tribal ceremony and the exotic landscape of Kamchatka, but anthropological accuracy was hardly a priority, for, as usual with the Christmas pantomime in London, O'Keefe fashioned a kind of vaudeville pageant with numerous songs, choruses, and recitatives, as well as a constant stream of comic "bits"; Harlequin and

Colombine appear as servants and consume more stage time than Omai or anyone else (See Carr 2014: 39-42). Arnould composed a genuinely tragic pantomime that attempted to depict life on Hawaii ("O-Why-e") as reported in Cook's journals. He broadened the range of pantomimic expression. The whole first act sets up a conflict between two Hawaiian chiefs, Oki and Etoé for the affections of the King's daughter, Emaï, who loves Oki. The tribe prepares for the wedding of Oki and Emaï with the gathering of flowers and ritual performances by the "savages," who, "half-nude," wear plumes and beads and other accessories identified as "Hawaiian" (Arnould 1788: 9). The music, by Jean Baptiste Rochefort (1746-1819), used some music ascribed to "primitive" people (Carr 2014: 43). However, Etoé does not relinquish his desire to possess Emaï, and during the ceremony he attacks Oki, who overpowers Etoé just as Cook's ship begins to fire its cannons. In the second act, in which Cook and the English first appear, Cook trades with the Islanders, exchanging Western utensils for Island foods, including a mirror that Emaï receives. Island women pair up with English sailors and marines. But Etoé attempts to rape Emaï while she gazes in the mirror. Cook arrives and assures Emaï and Oki that he will protect them. Etoé gathers his followers, and launches an attack on the King's troop; Cook's marines attack Etoé's forces—Arnould likes battle scenes in which one side drives the other into retreat, and then the other side counter-attacks to reclaim the scene and then loses it again only to reclaim it, so that it is not immediately clear which side is stronger or will prevail. When Cook's men finally triumph, he urges mercy for Etoé, but Etoé is incapable of overcoming his "savage" inpulses: he grabs a knife and stabs Cook in the back, then the marines kill him. Most of the fourth act consists of a monumental funeral procession involving the English and Islanders toward a huge volcanic mountain; the mourners carry various gifts to the mountains, including fruits, large sculptures of heads, and roasted pigs. The drumming of the marines gives way to the drumming of the Islanders. The Island priest taps the earth with his staff and inaugurates a solemn dance of the Islanders, which concludes with a final salut from the cannons of the English ship.

With *Le Mort du Capitaine Cook*, Arnould greatly expanded the scope and scale of pantomime. He saw the future of pantomime as dependent on an international approach. Successful pantomimes did not need to have a French subject or even French characters to please a French

audience. “Serious” pantomime could take on historical subjects and incorporate ethnographic details and did not need to introduce comic effects, and in this respect, pantomime was capable of handling themes conventionally associated with neoclassical tragedy, without depending on ballet performers or choreographers to organize the action. In effect, he showed that pantomime would develop to a “higher level” through actors rather than dancers. His scenarios required actors to display much greater complexity in the physical signification of a wider range of emotions than was expected of dancers, singers, or actors of stage plays. Yet his cinematic style of rapid succession of actions and scenes assured that the emotional impact of the performance derived from the skillful structuring of visual elements rather than from characterization or from the showcasing of acting virtuosity. Pantomime could greatly compress otherwise elaborate narratives into fairly brief periods of time; the four-act *Le Mort du Capitaine Cook* probably took about forty minutes to perform. This efficiency allowed a *foire* theater like the Ambigu-Comique to produce more shows of greater variety than text-oriented works that invariably required more rehearsal time, especially to remember lines and find the proper “voice” for the characters. To compete with the official literary theaters, the *foire* theaters had to produce new shows more rapidly and present programs that packed more variety. It was not necessary for the *foires* to rely on the *pantomime dialoguée* (scroll texts, supertitles, airs) to “explain” the action to the audience. Arnould also perfected the “soundtrack” approach to musical accompaniment and even sound effects, like cannon shots and thunder, which meant deciding the action then finding music that supported the mood of the action rather then dictated it. With these advantages, pantomime could cross national, linguistic, class, and cultural boundaries more easily than literary theater, opera, and even ballet, for Arnould’s Cook pantomime achieved huge success in London, Dublin, Canada, and the United States (Worrall 2007: 140-146). Mason (1912: 16) contended that, “Arnould prepared the way for the greatest of the melodramatists, Pixerecourt [...] He was the first author on the Boulevard to discover what were the requirements of a popular drama.” Pantomime may well have opened up possibilities for melodrama after the Revolution, but melodramatists, including Pixerecourt, never really grasped the implications or possibilities of pantomime as Arnould envisioned it. They seemed to assume that pantomime would be even better or more emotional

with the addition of spoken words, voices that would strengthen the appeal of characters. But Arnould saw that pantomime's emotional power did not depend on strong characterizations but on vivid, stirring, kinetic images of bodies moved to action by fundamental moral, sexual, or political motives. He envisioned a completely visual-sonic theater in which the performance of bodies "explains" everything and creates a different kind of narrative than opera, vaudeville, ballet, or conventional theater. In this respect, he was probably more modern than his successors and anticipated many modernists who perceived that language, speech, constrain perception of the body and inhibit understanding of identity as an image rather than as a referent of language. He anticipated the image-saturated cinematic consciousness of twentieth and twenty-first century modes of representation. Arnould saw pantomime as an art evolving independently of the repressive laws in France that created it, which made him close to the Roman pantomime mentality but also capable of moving pantomime in a direction that neither the Romans nor his own time nor even perhaps our own time ever imagined. Through his innovations, pantomime embodied the spirit of the Revolution that, however, in the end, spawned the rather reactionary melodrama.

Pantomime scenarios allowed for variations, improvisations, elaborations, or revisions of the gestural vocabulary in performance, so that the narrative either brought a measure of instability to the performance or the performance brought a measure of instability to the narrative. For example, in 1788, the choreographer Jean Dauberval (1742-1806), a student of Noverre, staged Audinot's *Dorothée* in Bordeaux, with a soundtrack compiled from the music of various composers, preceded by a "pantomime prologue," *D'Orleans sauvé*, set in the time of Joan of Arc and an updating of Audinot's pantomime *Des preux chevaliers* (1782). For both pantomimes Dauberval added characters and manifold supernumeraries, including, in *D'Orleans sauvé*, Joan of Arc, who does not appear in Audinot's *Des preux chevaliers*, although the narratives remained basically the same. Each pantomime involved a different cast, so the program was a huge production requiring the participation of well over a hundred performers, most of whom were probably amateurs, although not all, for Dauberval's wife played Dorothée, and in Bordeaux the following year (1789) played the lead role in Dauberval's most famous ballet, *La Fille mal gardée*. Dauberval explicitly invited audiences to compare his work with Audinot's: "I desire

that the audience, in comparing my tableaux with those of Mr. Audinot, approves the augmentations that I thought my duty to make, these being changes which seemed to me essential" (Dauberval 1788: 4). Without changing the stories at all, Dauberval, in every paragraph corresponding to Audinot, introduced "augmentations" in the performance of the stories that revealed the distinctive imprint of a *directorial* rather than literary sensibility. Compare Audinot with Dauberval in the scene (paragraph) from *Dorothée* in which the Page visits Dorothée to deliver the portrait of her husband.

Audinot Version (1782: 14)

A Page comes from the army, brings to Dorothée a letter that he has difficulty retrieving. Finally, he gives it to Dorothée who opens it with excitement on the bed with an action that designates what it contains. The Page then gives her a case that contains the portrait of his Master. She receives it with transport, kisses and shows it to the other women who admire the resemblance.

Dauberval Version (1788: 20-21)

One hears a knocking at the door; Dorothée hides her son: one ignores in Milan that she has the happiness to be a mother; one ignores that Trimouille is her husband. The noise increases, Dorothée fears that it is her uncle, the Viceroy [the Mayor in Audinot], who bothers her with his affections. Armante [the male tutor, unnamed and female in Audinot] opens the door.

This is the page of Trimouille. Dorothée advances eagerly toward him: her women surround her, he seeks the letter, which he retrieves with difficulty; finally he gives it. Dorothée opens it with excitement and reads it with emotion, indicates the declarations of love that it contains. While Dorothée is so deliciously occupied, the women refresh themselves with the Page. Benjamin [the child] reappears, he already wants to play with him; but the Page is too distracted to notice, and Benjamin maliciously goes on tiptoes to read the letter his mother holds. The end of this letter announces a box that contains the portrait of her beloved Trimouille. She requests it of the Page. The wretched Page isn't sure where it is. Painful impatience of Dorothée, reproachful stares of Armante and the women…. Finally the Page feels the box in his belt and gives it to Dorothée. She seizes it transported with sweet emotion, almost as if the original were before her, seized all of her senses; she opens the box, covers the portrait with kisses, shows it to the women, who admire the resemblance. Watching, Benjamin deftly slips between the arms of Dorothée and kisses the portrait of the author of his days, and leans his pretty head to receive his mother.

Whether all these details added by Dauberval were really "essential" to the performance is perhaps less important than the idea that such details were the essence of performance. Audinot's scenario provided opportunities for various performative and visual "bits" that came from the director of the scene, and Dauberval wanted his readers to "see" what his unique vision of the story brought to the performance. On the eve of the Revolution, pantomime had evolved to a level of performance complexity that compelled the viewer to evaluate the experience according to theatrical rather than narrative or even acting values. Pantomimic action was now effective insofar as the director coordinated it with distinctive use of costume, music, scenography, and props, such as books, letters, boxes, portraits, scarf embroidery, swords, mirrors, plates of food, money, keys, torches, or flags. The dance world has always showed a deep aversion to the use of props, which seem to hinder the virtuoso glorification of the dancer's body and movement, a bias that constrained the development of the ballet pantomime. But for pantomimes and their directors, props opened up possibilities for inventive movement. However, the comparison of the scenario passages obviously indicates that including the details of the performance means adding more words to the description of it, even though no one in the scene ever says anything. These are the words spoken "behind the scenes," in the director's mind, in preparing the scene for performance. In this respect, then, pantomime was no more free of language than the enthusiastic Angiolini or the skeptical Marmontel assumed. Yet as a reading experience and as an approximation of the swift, "cinematic" style of performance that Audinot and Arnould developed, Audinot's spare scenario seems more satisfying, because of the focus on the actions motivating performance rather than on the performance of the actions.

As serious pantomime expanded its scale and subject matter, it became a favored form of theatrical entertainment in France, because of its innovative spirit, because of the controversy it provoked, and because of the growing uncertainty of its political and class affiliations. The state ban on dialogue in non-state theaters had created an appetite for a mode of performance that by 1789 seemed to regard speech, singing, and even dancing as obstacles to theatrical pleasure. But with escalating innovation came increasing instability of the genre. Through the ballet pantomime, the government attempted to "contain" pantomime within the ballet companies

and subordinate it to ballet. The *foire* theaters, however, understanding the need to move beyond the *commedia* format and guided by the ambitions of Audinot and Arnould, saw the future of pantomime in relation to actors rather than dancers; from the 1780s onward, then, pantomime and ballet pantomime diverged to the point of belonging to almost entirely separate artistic worlds, even if some figures, like Dauberval, occasionally inhabited both worlds, and even if pantomimes still occasionally included dances, songs ("airs"), and projected texts. As pantomime became more "serious," it attracted more diverse theatrical talents and more theatrical innovation, which created a broader, more diverse audience for it. This diversity deepened uncertainty about how to define or "regulate" the genre, which then precipitated further uncertainty about how to define the political or class affiliations of the genre. In June 1778, the King watched at Marly *Programe de la Pucelle d'Orléans*, a "grand spectacle" and *pantomime héroïque*, which celebrated the victory by Joan of Arc's army over the English at Orléans. The published scenario does not identify an author for it, yet considerable organizational skill was nevertheless necessary to produce this huge piece, which involved large battle scenes, the appearance of various historical figures and their minions, as well as spectacular scenes of civic agitation. The singing of a great many brief airs interrupts the flow of pantomimic action and produces the curious perception of a turbulent historical event, of the seething movement of bodies, simultaneously provoked and restrained by lyrical voices. The *Programe* was probably a government project designed to awaken patriotic feeling and to connect the King and his government to a great historical moment that involved the participation of citizens, male and female, across different sectors of society. A second performance of the piece took place on January 2, 1786, at the theater in Rouen, perhaps to prepare the public there for the visit of the King a few months later. Of course, since the days of Madame de Pompadour, the royal court had shown greater enthusiasm for pantomime than the state theaters. But with the *Programe*, the government made innovative use of pantomime for grandiose propaganda.

A different approach to propaganda pantomime was *Julia, ou la Vestale*, the performance of which took place at the newly established Théâtre des Variétés in the Palais Royal on June 16, 1786, perhaps in conjunction with the King's visit to Rouen. Again, the published version of the scenario does not indicate an author nor even a list of the cast

members, although a note at the end of the text assures the reader that two different officials had approved the publication and performance of the three-act pantomime in January 1786. Lecomte (1908: 136) simply notes: "Succes de mise en scène." The story is set in ancient Rome, before the imperial era, when the Romans are at war with the Gauls. Rome has selected Julia to take vows to become a Vestal Virgin, even though she loves Camille, an officer involved in the campaign against the Gauls. After she takes the vows, however, she and Camille have a secret rendezvous. But the priests learn of the love affair and condemn Julia to death for violating the sacred vows that protect Rome. Camille manages to gain access to the vault in which the priests have imprisoned Julia, but Julia does not want to flee with him if it means that he must abandon his duties as an officer, especially at the moment when the Gauls have launched an invasion of Rome. But she persuades him to go fight and leave her to "rest alone." Most of the third act consists of a spectacular battle between the Romans and the Gauls, including fighting before a gate, on walls, and across a bridge. Finally the Romans prevail; the priests, priestesses, and Vestals appear and greet Camille as their savior. The only reward he will accept is the release of Julia, conveyed through one of four scroll texts in the performance: "Revoke her arrest; the gods will be saved" (*Julia* 1786: 29). The citizens realize that Julia is as much the savior of Rome as Camille, and so she and Camille receive laurel wreaths. The piece concludes with a triumphal march. It is an interesting piece for several reasons, not least of which is the idea of patriotic feeling awakened by the spectacle of the Gauls suffering defeat. *Julia* appears to have been a government project, but the political goal of the performance remains obscure: along with the Joan of Arc pantomime, *Julia* may have been designed to show how women can protect the state in unexpected but powerful ways. But unlike the *Programe*, *Julia* contains no songs and moves with the cinematic rapidity of an Arnould production, although in the first act a group of children perform a "little ballet" (*Julia* 1786: 5). The dramatic structure is peculiar. The first act is monumental: Julia takes the vows before the sacred flame while surrounded by priests, priestesses, and Vestals, with such impressive moments as when the Great Priestess takes Julia's hand and leads her to the statue of the "goddess" before which they kneel as the flame grows. The third act is even more grandiose, with the great battle and masses of Roman citizens. Yet the entire second act is quite intimate, featuring only Julia and then Camille in

the vault. Even more peculiar is the inscription of meditative feelings that the actress must signify through pantomimic movement. For example, Julia, alone in the vault:

> *The image of her lover mixed with dark ideas agitates her. What is Camille doing? Where may he be? Ah! Why could she not perceive his eyes in the crowd of spectators of her execution; they would penetrate the walls of the tomb. But he will not survive Julia. But until his last breath, he blames her for the terrible fate that his love was preparing him* (*Julia* 1786: 17).

That an actress could convey these and various other "thoughts" in Julia's mind without relying on supertitles or songs suggests that by the mid-1780s, pantomime performance could achieve a level of sophistication that would be extraordinary in any era.

Pantomime and the Revolution

On January 13, 1791, the National Assembly of France abolished the "privileges" assigned to state theaters and ended state censorship of the theater. According to the law, "Any citizen may construct a public theater and produce any kind of genre, making prior to the establishment of the theater a declaration of intent to the municipal authorities." Theatrical "entrepreneurs" must allow municipal authorities to inspect theaters, but municipal authorities could not stop or defend the production of any piece (Tissier 1992: 25; Beaucé 2011: 79). The effect of this law was an enormous expansion of theater culture in Paris. The number of theaters in the city rose from 14, in 1789, to 35, in 1793. By 1796, Paris had at least 50 theaters (Kennedy 1996: 3). Lagrave (1972: 195) estimated that in 1750, about 12.6% of the Paris population attended the theater at least occasionally or about 63,000 persons out of a city population of about 500,000. When the Revolution erupted, the population of the city remained the same. It is difficult, however, to believe that the same percentage of the population could sustain 35 theaters, especially when all theaters now operated commercially. To attract audiences and compete with each other, theaters had to maintain large support staffs and casts to provide the production values (scenery, music, advertising, overhead) that would sell enough seats to cover costs. Emmet Kennedy tabulated 90,000 performances during the

Revolutionary period: "No entertainment of this magnitude exists for any previous period in French history" (1996: 3). Such a prodigious increase in theatrical production could not have happened without a substantial increase over the pre-Revolutionary period in the percentage of Parisians who attended the theater at least occasionally. But the degree of increase remains unclear, in part because it is not possible at the moment to calculate the distribution of audiences across theaters, genres, performances, or productions. Presumably most spectators attended different kinds of performances, depending on mood or occasion. Theaters therefore tended to produce a variety of shows, although some theaters did specialize—the Académie de Musique produced operas and ballets, the Theater de Republique focused heavily on new plays, for example. Melodrama arose as a way to combine genres—pathos, comic moments, music, spectacle, even occasionally dance—and thus attract audiences across "mood," class, and rule-bound categories of aesthetic experience; melodrama followed formulas built around conventional devices or tropes rather than rules that preserved distinctions between one genre and another. The idea that the commercialization of the theater resulted in audiences that were largely illiterate or uneducated or unruly denizens of a "boulevard du crime" requires evidence that no one has yet presented with sufficient credibility. After the law of 1791, theater in Paris became like television in our own time: a commonplace or "popular" media activity enjoyed by increasing numbers of people from different sectors of life. What is particularly surprising is that the law eliminating the conditions that created pantomime did not put an end to pantomime. Although the new theaters became filled with the sound of voices and no one in Paris even considered excess speech an affliction of the stage, pantomime continued to attract audiences and, compared with the pre-1791 period, when pantomime, particularly in the *commedia* format, was ubiquitous in the *foire* domain, may even have drawn larger audiences or at least a niche audience that was sturdy enough to sustain the genre. Different theaters in Paris produced pantomimes, but no theater seemed to specialize in it until the Franconi brothers opened the Cirque Olympique in 1807, followed by the Théâtre des Funambules in 1816, although a theatrical entrepreneuer named Saint-Edme in 1798 had corresponded with a state minister about "nationalizing the pantomime" and establishing a theater devoted exclusively to "republican works" of pantomime (Welschinger 1880: 33-36;

84). Even so, after 1791, pantomime became a marginal or occasional entertainment, never a central feature of Parisian theater culture. The Revolution brought an end to the century of pantomime, the most abundant era of pantomime history since the Roman Empire, perhaps because the Revolution scarcely produced a revolutionary change in pantomime aesthetics.

Adele de Sacy, a three-act pantomime by Charles Gaullard-Desaudray (1740-1832) from 1793, performed by students at the Théâtre du Lycée des Arts in the Palais Royal, resembles *Dorothée* in subject matter and structure. Set in the Middle Ages, the narrative focuses on Adele and her daughter Caroline, who hide in a cave in a mountain near Montcenis. They have fled there after the murder of Adele's troubadour parents by Armand, who has seized the family chateau. Armand desires to possess Adele, who awaits the return of her husband Godefroi and her brother Sacy from Palestine, where they have been fighting in a Crusade. Othello, the nephew of Godefroi, brings her a letter from her husband that announces his imment arrival. Caroline reveals her attraction to Othello. But when Godefroi and Sacy arrive, a hungry lion appears; Godefroi attempts to pursue it, but Caroline becomes lost in the mountain. The lion comes back to menace a village festival, but Godefroi and his troops arrive to kill the beast. Then Othello appears and announces that Armand and his army approach. Storm. Armand's army swarms down from the mountain and abducts Adele and Caroline. The last act takes place in the chateau, where Adele resists the attentions of Armand, but then agrees to his terms to protect her daughter. Godefroi and his troops attack the chateau and force Armand to accept peace terms. But he can't be trusted; his troops reverse the situation. Then the army of Othello and Sacy attacks; they hurl firebombs and a huge fire consumes the chateau and the village. Othello saves Godefroi from Armand's sword, while Sacy releases Adele and Caroline. "Godefroi is reunited with his dear Adele," and Caroline pairs with Othello: Celebration within the village, triumphal march (Gaullard-Desaudray 1793).

The appearance of a lion, however enacted, and the use of firebombs to create a burning chateau presented a spectacle never previously seen in pantomime. Just as interesting is the character of Othello. In *Dorothée*, the Page was a minor character; in *Adele*, the Page (Othello) moves from the periphery of the narrative to the chief heroic figure, displacing the husband

as the savior and creating in the spectator greater uncertainty about which male figure to trust in defeating an evil competitor. *L'Esprit des journaux françois et étrangere* published a lengthy and enthusiastic review of *Adele*. The unidentified author observed that ancient Roman pantomime relied entirely on gestures, delivered with a "high degree of perfection," to produce "extraordinary sensations and effects." The "modern" pantomime, he contended, seeks to "surpass" the Romans or at least equal them by connecting human movement to painting, architecture, scenic technology ("méchanique") and "above all music" to discover a mode of representation "not found among the ancients." "Our pantomimes are therefore galleries of tableaux that present to the eyes, by the disposition of the personages and with the aid of gestures, the principle points of a noble or voluptuous action, a terrible or touching action, an action that perhaps looks different under a different face." "A pantomime is therefore like a painting or drawing"; it presents "nuances of feeling" that are underneath or outside "the language the characters might say in the situation" in which they find themselves. *Adele de Sacy* is "a large drawing" with strong characters and "manifold interesting situations" performed effectively in a space as unfavorable as a theater school. The reviewer, however, found unbelievable the notion of a lion inhabiting the environs of Montcenis. Then, in the second act, Adele appears in a very brilliant costume, even though a lion may have devoured her still missing daughter. With Armand pursuing her, when has she had time to consider her toilette? The need for "verisimilitude" requires the sacrifice of the second costume; the first costume is more interesting because it keeps the viewer focused, "without cessation," on the character's misfortunes. Finally, the battle scene might be more effective if the troops guarding the castle hurled down heavy stones and tar on the assailants, as was done in medieval times. In short, the whole pantomime would be stronger with greater historical, biological, and psychological accuracy ("Théâtre du Lycée des Arts" 1793: 347-354).

Criticism of *Adele de Sacy* of a different sort came from "sans culottes" carrying out the "surveillance" of public institutions promoted by the Committee on Public Safety. These revolutionaries denounced the pantomime because in it the viewer could see a close parallel to Marie Antoinette and her son, who were under arrest and very soon to die, and the pantomime might awaken divisive sympathy for them. The administrators of the Lycée des Arts appeared before a tribunal to defend

the "public utility" of their theater and school. The administrators invited the tribunal to a special closed performance of *Adele* and, in the interest of "public tranquility," suspended all public performances pending a decision by the police and the court. The school won its case in court (Estree 1913: 90-91). But the motives for denouncing the pantomime may have arisen from more than a suspicion of royalist sentiment embedded in the characters. The author of *Adele*, Gaullard-Desaudray, a metals engineer, founded the Lycée, in 1792, because he "felt that scientists and craftsmen should be in closer contact than they were before the Revolution." He had submitted proposals to the National Assembly and Convention to form a national organization of scientists and craftsmen to register inventions and issue grants to inventors. But these proposals failed to gain support. He then became a member of a Bureau set up to support inventors, and when this agency was unable to accomplish what he envisioned, he established the school, which would integrate the arts and sciences on behalf of practical applications (Smeaton 1955: 309-310). It may be, then, that the lion, the brilliant dress, and the firebombs in *Adele* functioned as opportunities for the students to solve particular technological problems. The pantomime embodied a seductive educational philosophy that operated independently of the state educational program. Gaullard-Desaudray, who brought knowledge of the Birmingham steelmaking process to France, had received, in 1790, a "bonus" of 15,000 livres from the Revolutionary government, which annulled the pension he had already received under the monarchy for this contribution (*Proces-Verbal* 1792: 57). In his efforts to establish a national organization of scientists and bureau of inventions, Gaullard-Desaudray faced a formidable opponent in the Baron Claude-Urbain Servières (1755-1804), who was head of the Société des inventions et découvertes and, in 1792, accused Gaullard-Desaudry, head of the competing Société du Point central, of "immorality," envy, and jealousy in his efforts to discredit him, Servières, the aristocrat who "democratized" his name as "Reth," with accusations of dissembling and prevarication (Demeulenaere-Douyère 2008: 70-71). Gaullard-Desaudry prevailed in the conflict, so it may also be that a resentful faction of scientists or politicians affiliated with Servières organized the denunciation of *Adele* to undermine Gaullard-Desaudry's growing influence within the Revolutionary government. Thus, as in ancient Rome, the political ramifications of

pantomime during the Revolution reverberated well beyond the narrative content of pantomime performance.

But *Adele de Sacy* was a peculiar, exceptional, even bizarre example of pantomime performance during the Revolution, although a revival of it took place in Bordeaux in 1798 (Tourneux III 1900: 865). For several years (1791-1796), pantomime performances occurred rarely, according to program listings for all the new theaters that emerged after the law of 1791. Supporters of the Revolution appear not to have regarded pantomime in itself as a threat to the Revolution or as an emblem of aristocratic privilege; the various citizens' committees charged with managing the Revolution never developed a coherent program or policy in regard to the organization of theater culture as a whole. Moreover, the public seemed preoccupied with hearing a multitude of voices in the new theaters: dramatists and theatrical entrepreneurs devoted their energies to speechifying the stage. Confusion and uncertainty about what a theater of the Revolution should embody in the way of aesthetics, institutions, and politics gave space for a good deal of improvisation in the sphere of pantomime as well as other theatrical genres. But audience tastes were hardly as radical as their politics. Pantomime performances almost disappeared completely between 1792 and 1796, even though most of what appeared in the theaters was work from the pre-Revolutionary period or work that emulated pre-Revolutionary aesthetics. The idea of using pantomime as propaganda for the Revolution never progressed beyond a couple of attempts by civic groups to celebrate the victory of French forces against the Austrians at Lille, in 1792: *Le Siége de Lille* performed in Lyon a couple of months after the battle and then again in Toulouse (1793), and *Le bombardement de Lille*, performed in Paris, outdoors, in the Champ de la Réunion, 1793; the Lille battle was also the theme of several stage plays (Gonon 1844: 202; Lefebvre 1890: 40). In 1794, the Gaité theater in Paris produced a program of pieces that included a one-act pantomime, *Le tombeau de Nostradamus*, a revival of a scenario that premiered, before a royal audience, in 1787 and was a "silent" adaptation of a 1714 one-act comic opera by Lesage and featured Arlequin interacting with "machines" (Aulard 1898: 103). More ambitious perhaps was a three-act pantomime, *L'Enlèvement ou la Caverne dans les Pyrénées*, "by a citizen" (apparently Cuvelier), which appeared in 1792 at the Théâtre des Variétés in the Palais Royal, where *Adele* was performed, and then enjoyed forty-five more performances up to 1798. Relentlessly action-packed, this show

depicted the struggle between two men, Don Carlo and Don Pedro, to win the affections of an orphan girl, Rosina, who loves only Don Carlo. When brigands ("Miquelets"), led by Barbamo, kidnap Don Carlo and Rosina, the action shifts to a cave in the Pyrenees, where Barbamo has imprisoned the pair, while plotting to gain treasure deposited in Rosina's chateau. Much of the second and third acts consist of combats between Barbamo and Don Carlo, Barbamo and Don Pedro, and Don Carlo and Don Pedro, although, after various reverses in Barbamo's favor, Don Carlo saves Don Pedro, and then Don Pedro and his troops save Don Carlo and Rosina. "Rosina falls to her knees before her guardian [Don Pedro]; he raises her and unites her with the one she loves and who saved her life [Don Carlo]" (*L'Enlèvement* 1792: 21). So ends the pantomime. The action featured the use of pistols and carbines as well as swords, but, aside from the startling reversals of fortune experienced by the characters, what is interesting about the scenario is the conflict between two good men, although the sinister Barbamo is probably the most engrossing character. The idea of conflicting forms of goodness or, as with the character of Don Pedro, of goodness that appears only after being seen as not so good or even evil somewhat resembles the Roman preoccupation with metamorphosis. But strong characterization is less important in pantomime than fluidity of identity—indeed, the problem with the *commedia* format was that the characterizations were so strong (fixed) that the characters kept performing the same actions, the same stories over and over again. As the anonymous reviewer of *Adele* pointed out, spectators of "modern" pantomime do not so much as identify with characters as they identify with a scene, with a "painting," with what may be called a cinematic image: one sees oneself within a situation, within an image of action, just as, in Roman imperial times, the spectator did not identify with Clytemnestra or Ajax but with the phenomenon of metamorphosis as embodied by the performer, with the concept of "another" identity within oneself.

Despite the paucity of attention to pantomime during the Revolution, entrepreneurial associates of Jean-Guillaume-Antoine Cuvelier (1766-1824), the presumed author of *L'Enlèvement*, embarked in 1794 on a scheme to establish in Paris a "théâtre de la pantomime nationale" on the Ile de la Cité. However, producing other kinds of theater instead, they soon changed the name of the place to Le Théâtre de la Cité-Variétés. Then, on September 10, 1794, the theater produced Cuvelier's three-act "military

pantomime" *Les Royalistes de la Vendée*. Cuvelier had served as an adjutant-major in the campaign to suppress the Vendée insurrection, although he himself had worried for a while that his own aristocratic heritage would bring him under the scrutiny of the Committee on Public Safety. The scenario for *Les Royalistes de la Vendée* was a variation on that for *L'Enlèvement*, with Royalist forces functioning like the brigands in the latter piece. At a village in the Vendée, Royalist marauders disrupt the festivities celebrating the betrothal of the Republican hero Leon and Rose. Led by "the Capucin," the Royalist gang abducts Leon and Rose after murdering her father and then chaining the lovers in a dungeon. The Royalist general Rudemont attempts in vain to convert them to the Royalist cause; the Capucin offers her lover's freedom if Rose submits to his sexual advances, but she refuses. She manages to escape with the help of a disguised Republican, Romain. In the countryside, she runs into Romain, and they hide while the Royalists prepare to burn Leon in a great bonfire. The Republican forces appear, and Rose leaps over the bonfire to save Leon. When Rudemont attacks her, she draws her pistol and compels him to surrender. But the Capucin grabs her; Leon seizes him as Romain kills Rudemont. The Capucin escapes as the Republicans celebrate their victory, but he falls from a tree into a river (see *L'Esprit des journaux françois et étrangere*, September 1794, 266-268; Foster 1998: 180-182). In this piece, Cuvelier introduces a more aggressive female central character than in previous heroic pantomimes: Rose physically battles the Capucin, uses a pistol smuggled to her by Romain to make her escape from prison, kills a Royalist soldier, saves her lover Leon from burning, and captures Rudemont. She is willing to sacrifice her lover to defend the Reublic, and, at the end, it is not altogether clear if she is closer to Leon than Romain. As Susan Leigh Foster remarks: "As a woman fighting side by side with all other republicans, Rose signaled the preeminence of citizenship over gender [...] and marked the realization, however brief, of utopian conceptions of gender equality" (1998: 182). In addition to the cannon shots, numerous combats, fire effects, and reversals, *Les Royalists* contained, in the second act, a powerful pantomimic scene in which Rose and Leon, chained to the walls of the dungeon, struggle to touch each other, but can't quite manage it, a startlingly graphic image of sexual frustration. The pantomime achieved 25 performances, not especially impressive compared with 75 for *Dorothée* (since 1782), the 59 for *Le Mort du Capetain Cook*

(since 1788), or the 311 for Arnould's hugely successful pantomime, *La Forêt-Noire* (1791) but sufficient for the management of Le Théâtre de la Cité-Variétés to produce another three-act Cuvelier pantomime, *La Damoisel et la Bergerette, ou la Femme vindicative* (1795) (Kennedy 1996: 96-97, 132). In this work, Cuvelier amplified the theme of female aggressiveness by building the action around the conflict between two women. Ravenstein loves Caroline, with whom he has a son, Love. The Princess of Witermgk loves Ravenstein, who is indifferent to her. Enraged by her failure to inspire his affection, the Princess indicates to her brother, the Elector of Witermgk, that, "a simple shepherdess may not have a son and that she [Caroline] has become mad." Such is the excuse for the obligatory abduction scene. The Elector orders the arrest of Caroline. Cuvelier's fascination with prison scenes continues, in the second act, with Caroline incarcerated in a madhouse run by an abbess. The scene requires the pantomiming of different inmates suffering from various delusions: a Roman emperor, Don Quixote, village fiddlers imagining themselves as Orpheus, an Asian princess—they perform their ballet, "for it is dances, minuets, that nourish their passion" (Cuvelier 1795: 8). Ravenstein enters the madhouse dressed as a woman, whom the abbess takes for a "pretty girl" and kisses his forehead, as do all the other nuns. The disguise enables Caroline to escape, not without difficulties, as the Princess appears unexpectedly and again threatens Caroline's son, Love. Transvestism recurs in the third act, when Caroline appears disguised as a man. The piece is apparently set in the past a couple of centuries ago, for the final act involves a scene shift from a tavern to a "carousel" for a jousting tournament that involved the use of actual horses requiring "skilled riders." Apparently the carousel functioned like a revolving platform that enabled the horses to encounter each other while remaining in place, similar to a treadmill. Hidden by his visor-helmet, Ravenstein faces the Elector and defeats him. He then raises the visor and denounces—spoken words--the Elector's cruelty and perfidy. The furious Elector responds—spoken words--by threatening Love with death. They fight; Ravenstein again disarms the Elector, motivating the Princess to attack Ravenstein with her sword. But Caroline intervenes and fights with the Princess, while a battle ensues between Ravenstein's forces and the Elector's. Caroline kills the Princess, Ravenstein kills the Elector, and the village celebrates the defeat of the aristocratic tyrants, with the horses executing "cadences." Despite all of these remarkable narrative and

pantomimic innovations on behalf of the Revolutionary spirit, a reviewer for the *Journal des spectacles* remained unimpressed: "The problem with pantomimes, in general, is that they lack development and resemble each other: they nearly always take place in prisons, towers, chateaux, with attacks and combats. It is difficult to imagine anything new, and that is the reproach that one may make against this new production by Cuvelier [...]. [*Le Damoisel*] offers interest, without doubt, but one finds here nothing very new" (*L'Esprit des journaux* 1795: 291). But Cuvelier's greatest work in pantomime was yet to come, under the Empire, when pantomime achieved a much grander imaginative scope than during the Revolution. And yet the Revolution did open up possibilities for pantomimic action that were previously unimaginable.

Pantomime may not have benefited much from the Revolution to the extent that revolutionaries considered pantomime as a "popular" art associated with the *foires* or with the "reform" of a state institution, the Opera. The ballet pantomime, however, prospered during the Revolution, probably at the expense of the ballet itself, which had largely depended on the support of aristocratic *claques*. In the 1789-1790 season for the Paris Opera, 14% of the works performed were ballet pantomimes, as opposed to 9% for ballet, 3% for ballet héroïque, and 74% for various genres of sung music theater. For the 1790-1791 season ballet pantomime defined 17% of works performed, while ballet declined to 2% and ballet héroïque rose to 6%. The following year, 1791-1792, the Opera moved toward simplifying the range of genres it accommodated: "lyric tragedies" defined 43% of the works performed, but 31% of works were ballet pantomimes, while ballet and ballet héroïque lingered at 4% and 3% respectively. For the 1792-1793 season, ballet pantomime claimed 24% of works performed and ballet héroïque 4%, while ballet completely disappeared, as the Opera began experimenting with new genres like the "Scene patriotique." More new genres appeared the following year, 1793-1794, such as "Tableau historique" (7%), "Fait historique" (1%), and "Ballet anacreontique" (1%), but ballet pantomime retained a 19% share and ballet héroïque a 6% share. However, in the period April to August 1794, the Opera plunged into a maelstrom of genre redefinition and invention, as ballet and ballet pantomime disappeared completely, ballet héroïque claimed a 7% share, opera an 11% share, and lyric tragedy a 12% share, while the new revolutionary genres consumed almost 70% of works performed, with something called the

"Sans-culottide dramatique" achieving a 26% share (Darlow 2012: 209-211). While these Opera statistics are not especially helpful in explaining the impact of the Revolution on pantomime in general, they do suggest that the Revolution discovered innovative uses for ballet pantomime, if sometimes under new names, such as "Tableau historique" and "Fait historique."

By the time of the Revolution, the ballet pantomime was almost entirely the work of ballet companies attached to opera houses, following the model of the Opera in Paris, for the *foire* theaters, which had invented the genre, and the new commercial theaters no longer saw any potential in it, although they occasionally they did produce works, like *Le Damoisel*, that contained little "ballets" of a crude, popular character, as if reversing the fate of pantomime within the ballet companies that wished to "contain" the unruly but appealing genre. The success of the ballet pantomime during the Revolution and its persistence well after it was due to Pierre-Gabriel Gardel (1758-1840), the ballet master and chief choreographer for the Paris Opera ballet, who had assumed this position in 1787 and maintained it until 1827. His brother, Maximilien (1741-1787) was the previous ballet master at the Opera; his father, Claude (?-1774) had been ballet master in Württemberg, Mannheim, and Nancy; his sister, Agathe, was a dancer at the Opera and so was his wife, Marie Boubert (1770-1833). Because of the tightly knit conditions that made his career possible, Gardel saw ballet as a closed world, populated by people who lived almost completely within their own self-regulated environment. He was, however, politically astute. Even before the Revolution, he advocated for the *ballet d'action* that would detach the ballet from the opera. When the Revolution erupted, he succeeded admirably in protecting the ballet from accusations of being an aristocratic extravagance. He openly embraced Republican political ideals, even though, as an administrator, he systematically worked to make the ballet company an utterly sequestered domain impervious to external influences, and, indeed, during the Revolution, the Paris Opera ballet became a separate administrative unit. He choreographed mass spectacles (*Fêtes*) celebrating Revolutionary achievements and occasions. His ballet pantomimes, always "serious" in mood, focused on the neo-classical themes and tropes favored by leaders of the Revolution, whereas the pantomime tended to focus on contemporary, medieval, or "Gothic" themes and tropes. Along with Noverre, he realized that ballet would become an autonomous art only if it produced evening length pieces, managed large-scale

narratives. Ballet historians often credit Gardel with instituting the idea that the chief theme of ballet is dance itself: narrative provided opportunities for dances, was subordinate to dance, rather than the other way around. More precisely, narrative provided opportunites to glorify dancers' bodies and their virtuosity of movement, whereas pantomimes never thought of narratives as opportunities to display their virtuosity of gesture, for in pantomime, economy of movement always carries higher value than the embellishment of it. In ballet, virtuoso dancing in a sense "redeems" narrative, bestows a glamor on an "obligation" to tell something, whereas pantomime integrates narrative into the body—it "embodies" narrative, it embeds movement and telling within each other, even if it doesn't "explain" anything the way words are meant to do. Gardel found it very difficult to construct large-scale ballets without pantomime. But he sought to regulate and even limit pantomime within the ballet by codifying the movement of different pantomimic scenes, so that dancers could perform them systematically, according to techniques taught in the ballet studio. He was not an especially imaginative choreographer, and within the closed world over which he presided, innovation was mostly an inconvenient reminder of a world outside of the glamorous sanctuary. He built ballets around dancers rather than characters, and he built dances out of the virtuoso turns, leaps, swivels, flutterings, and fancy footwork that his dancers perfected. Ballet could thus make stars out of dancers and perhaps could not survive at all without stars, whereas pantomime produced stars, if at all, only incidentally or in any case, only when, well into the nineteenth century, the stage fetishized the lonely, melancholy figure of Pierrot and the performer played no one but Pierrot. Pantomime producers attracted audiences, not with stars, but with innovative spectacle and emotional stories. Gardel was a suave administrator. With the Revolution, he saw that the ballet attracted audiences because of its grand spectacle of female beauty rather than because of its aristocratic luxuriousness. He filled the stage with female bodies while reducing, even to zero, the presence of male bodies, and all the stars were women. He accommodated the "fashion for antiquity and simple costumes, which allowed him to undress his nymphs without seeming to compromise their modesty" (Homans 2010: 251) By the early nineteenth century, ballet had become an intensely "feminine" art managed by male choreographers, male sponsors of ballerinas, and male journalists. Men had little incentive to enter the profession, and indeed, "by

the 1830s male dancers were being reviled as disgraceful and effeminate creatures" (Homans 2010: 294). Pantomime, however, gave opportunities for the display of male bodily movement without the stigma of "effeminacy." As a result of Gardel's long control of the Opera ballet, pantomime within the ballet pantomime became completely separate from pantomime presented as such, became, increasingly, a distracting decorative effect, so that by the middle of the nineteenth century, lovers of ballet could rejoice that the art could dispense altogether with the need for any pantomime at all.

Throughout his career, Gardel remained devoted to neoclassical themes and iconography. His style and approach to his mythic material scarcely evolved from *Psyche* (1790) and *Le Jugement de Paris* (1793) to *Achille a Scyros* (1812) and perhaps his last major work of choreography, *Proserpine* (1818). Nearly all of his works take place in a charming, idyllic, idealized, mythic world, in which ethereal human figures float and glide through glamorous glades, salons, and palaces far removed from the prisons, "combats," pyres, passionate embraces, maternal anxieties, violent crowds, props (letters, sewing!), money transactions, storms, pistols and swords bestowed upon pantomime characters. Nymphs and goddesses inhabited this enchanting world, not women; male figures appear as exotic, utterly unique visions, allegorical emblems of masculinity, not men. In the published scenarios for his ballet pantomimes, it is difficult to distinguish the pantomime scenes from the dance scenes, which raises the question: What is the difference between the language of balletic imagination and pantomimic action? Here, for example, is Act III, Scene 8, from *Le Jugement de Paris*, typical of any passage from any scenario by Gardel, wherein it is not clear if the language describes pantomime or dance:

> *It is Pallas who approaches the timid shepherd [Paris] with a proud air; seeing his anxiety, she reassures him and offers him strength and courage; she paints his glory in all its beauty; and to raise his spirit, she makes warriors appear [apparently performed by female dancers], who dispute by force of arms, over the olive branch, the flattering prize assigned to him and his valor. Paris seems not very sensible to the charms of glory, and his air is that of indifference; the goddess appears furious; she wants to paint her wrath, when sweet and voluptuous*

> *sounds announce the impatience of Venus: Pallas moves away promising to avenge well this insult* (Gardel 1793: 15).

Here is a passage, of similar size, from the second act, set in the madhouse, from Cuvelier's *Le Damoisel*; unlike Arnould, Cuvelier does not break his acts into separate scenes:

> *The lovers are dismayed. Ravenstein wants to release his beloved [from the cage]. He files away at a bar. He shakes with multiple tremors: Caroline helps as much as her strength may permit. Suddenly a sharp noise resounds: the* angelus *of the morning bells. Le Damoisel [Ravenstein] stops, petrified with fear. Caroline collapses in a faint. Already he perceives a light: it is the lantern of the abbess, who, accompanied by a tower guard and two jailers, makes her rounds. Ravenstein looks at the moment to be surprised, but he knows how to evade them and moves to the opposite side [of the jailroom]. The abbess approaches the cage, sees Caroline overwhelmed on her stool, reaches the cell bars, and sees nothing [to disturb her]. She leaves* (Cuvelier 1799: 10-11).

From a linguistic or literary perspective, it may seem as if the same person wrote both passages and that each author's use of words is the same to describe the actions the characters perform. The passages do not seem different in relation to narrative construction, the sequencing of physical actions, although, in performance, Gardel's piece probably runs twice as long as Cuvelier's, because the "actions," as dance, involve the protraction and repetition of movements. Perhaps a theory of verb use or of the relation between verbs and nouns could clarify the difference in attitude toward language between balletic and pantomimic scenarists in the two passages. But such a theory, requiring evidence from a much larger database than these passages to be credible, does not yet exist, and I lack the qualifications to construct one. Otherwise, it is only the referents of the signs (words) that create the differences between the two scenes, not the signifying practices of the writers. Both authors omit altogether from their scenarios the language they use to describe *how* the dancers or actors should perform the inscribed actions. For Gardel, such language describes the steps, positions, and patterns the dancers should assume to perform each action

constructing the narrative, with an emphasis on highlighting movements that are worth seeing regardless of their value in communicating more narrative information (thus, the repetitions and protractions of movements). For Cuvelier, such language describes the emotions that the pantomimists translate into movements, describes the emotional relation of bodies to spaces, objects, and to each other. But this language emerges only after the scenarios have been imagined; it is not the language that constructs the narratives. Theoretically, then, actors and dancers should be able to to perform either scene according to their distinct modes of movement, because fundamental differences in attitude toward language are not what separate pantomime from dance, and in any case are not what lead to differences in the imagining of wordless bodily performance. In reality, however, it is easy to imagine pantomimes performing both scenes and very difficult to imagine dancers performing Cuvelier's scene. It is not that dancers are somehow incapable of performing within the set of referents inscribed by Cuvelier—it is that they never *imagine* themselves within such a set. Ballet dancers do not imagine themselves in prison, carrying lanterns, filing cell bars, or writhing in chains, because in their minds dance in itself is a condition of freedom that doesn't exist if the body must represent a state of bondage or an older woman must carry a lantern or a person must file the bars of a cell, even though it is quite possible to represent these actions through choreographed rather than pantomimed movement and even though ballet entails the severe regulation of bodily movement. In the minds of dancers, dance ceases to exist when it represents something other than itself, with all of the repetitions, protractions, and extensions of limbs defining the "system" defining dance. In the minds of pantomimes, however, the condition of freedom has nothing to do with any particular mode of movement or with the age of the performer or with the extent to which the body is attached to any objects. Freedom for the pantomime lies in the ability of movement to represent something other than itself or the body that performs it. A state of bondage is simply another opportunity to show how movement achieves aesthetic value. In the ballet, dance continually sought to "emancipate" itself—from the opera, from pantomime, from representation itself and thus increasingly closed itself off from that which did not accommodate the concept of freedom nourished by its system of movement; whereas pantomime "emancipated" itself to the extent that it expanded its domain

of representation and claimed more of what words, music, and the visual arts claimed for themselves. It was therefore not differing attitudes toward words, narration, or even the body that separated pantomime from the ballet pantomime so intensely and irrevocably at the time of the Revolution; it was opposed attitudes toward representation and perhaps even toward the Christian belief in the "authenticity" of signs.



Figure 63: Monumental scenic designs by Alessandro Sanquirico for Salvatore Viganò's production of *Psammi* (1817). Photos: New York Public Library, Victoria and Albert Museum.

Salvatore Viganò

Outside of France, the Revolution had a different impact on the relation between ballet and pantomime in the form of the *coreodramma* developed by the Italian choreographer Salvatore Viganò (1769-1821), although the term itself was the invention of his adoring biographer, Carlo Ritorni (1786-1860). A very cultured and wealthy man, Viganò, a nephew of the composer Luigi Boccherini and a brilliant student of Dauberval, achieved stardom as a dancer in Venice and Vienna before becoming the ballet director at La Scala in Milan in 1811. Viganò felt that French ballet, under the heavy influence of Gardel and Revolutionary politics, had become too purified and emotionally stunted as a result of curtailing the pantomimic elements. However, the alternative to French ballet that Viganò proposed, the *coreodramma*, was slow to develop after he made his first attempt at it in Vienna with *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus* (1801), for which Beethoven composed the music (Thayer I 1967: 271-272). The *coreodramma* created a monumental, tragic grandeur that was

unprecedented in ballet or pantomime. In 1804, Viganò produced in Milan *Coriolano*, his first translation of Shakespeare into the new synthesis of ballet and pantomime, but this work and his subsequent four *coreodrammi*, produced, over a period of a dozen years, responses for which documentation beyond plot synopses is lacking but which nevertheless allowed Viganò to keep experimenting with the new technique (See Ritorni 1838: 81-127; Prunières 1921: 74-80). Then, in 1817, he produced *Mirra*, an adaptation of Vittorio Alfieri's 1789 tragedy about father-daughter incest. He followed this success with further triumphs: *Psammi* (1817), *Otello* (1818), *La Vestale* (1818), *I Titani* (1819), *La Spada di Kenneth* (1819), among others. In these works, Viganò perfected the blending of balletic and pantomimic movement by linking all movements to rhythmic structures in the accompanying music. At the same time, he greatly expanded the movement vocabulary of ballet by introducing many "expressive gestures" that derived from the study of artworks and the iconography of emotions. Audiences could follow the action of rather complicated tragic narratives without the need of programs or intertitles: "every moment of the action ought to be performed on stage, in order to avoid complex references to facts and events that happened somewhere else; even the relationships between various characters and their psychological nuances were rendered by mime movements" (Poesio 1998: 5). Viganò's choreodramatic approach created a highly economical movement style that allowed him to compress many narrative details into precise gestural tropes. His performers dance-mimed intense narratives, yet only in a few instances did they actually perform dances, and often these were adaptations of folk dances, like the *furlana*. Commentators marveled that his *Otello* was more powerful than Rossini's opera and even stage versions of Shakespeare's play. He made Desdemona the focus of action and amplified the role of Iago's girlfriend, Emilia, which somehow made the piece even darker and more mysterious than audiences apparently expected of the original text while at the same time being a much shorter theatrical experience: the published scenario for this great tragic performance was only seven pages long (Viganò 1818: 5-12; Potter 2002: 63-64). He devised choreodramatic "monologues" and "duologues" that replaced the traditional ballet solos and *pas de deux*, and these operated in counterpoint with huge choral ensembles that did not move in unison; rather, each member of the chorus had her own, unique set of rhythmically patterned gestures, so that the chorus moved as if it were a

great, panoramic spume or gathering hurricane of individuated bodies, "the ever changing configurations of the corps de ballet" (Hansell 2002: 270). As the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley explained in a letter to a friend, Viganò's productions "are wholly unlike anything represented on our stage, being a combination of a great number of figures grouped with the most picturesque and even poetical effect, and perpetually changing with motions the most harmoniously interwoven and contrasted with great effect" (Dowden II 1886: 201). *Coreodramma* entailed sumptuous production values at La Scala exceeding those of any other theater in Europe at the time. Working with the great architect Alessandro Sanquirico (1777-1849), Viganò set the action in scenery filled with spectacular architectural details and the powerful application of new lighting technologies (Hansell 2002: 269-270) [Figures 63-64].



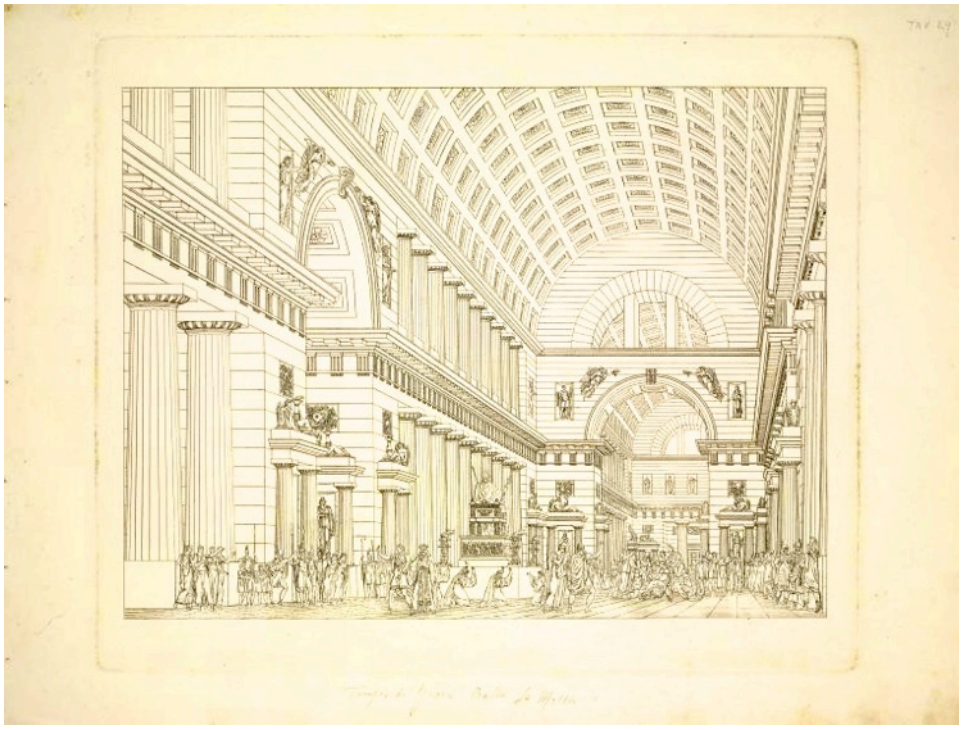


Figure 64: Monumental scenic designs by Alessandro Sanquirico for Salvatore Viganò's production of *La Vestale* (1818). Photo: Gallica (Bibliotheque nationale de France).

The grandeur of production arose from the layering and interweaving of manifold gestural, musical, and visual details requiring considerable preparation and rehearsal time. No one was more "serious" about pantomimic movement than Viganò. His themes were epic. *Psammi*, set in Pharoanic Egypt, deals with a conspiracy against a king, with scenes set in a vast palace and within a pyramid and huge choral movement scenes (particularly the "funeral march of Egyptian character" opening the fourth act) that, as in other Viganò productions, captivated the spectator as much as any of the major characters of the story (Ritorni 1838: 151-154). *La Vestale* opens, Ritorni reports, as "a scene of astonishing breadth suddenly appears, of all new construction, of marvelous richness due to the many objects that fill it. It is divided in two parts. Behind and outside of the common scene [...] and on the lower-level you notice the Roman circus of oval shape, [...] full of obelisks and statues, that forced the running chariots to turn around the periphery. The bleachers and the galleries are full of consuls, senators, of all the Roman dignitaries, and general spectators of the struggle already begun between the athletes, during which the trumpets announce that the

chariot race must follow" (Ritorni 1838: 199-200; Ertz 2010: 353-364). The Irish novelist Lady Morgan (1781-1859) rapturously describes the scene in the fifth act when Julia, the Vestal, is about to be buried alive and wherein subtle details are physical expression harmonize with memorable visual and musical details:

> *She stands at the altar in the midst of a vast and gloomy edifice, whose ponderous columns appear to be of granite and porphyry. The lateral ailes and pillared vistas of the mysterious fabric are seen stretching into the depth and obscurity of a distant perspective. The pale light of the altar-fire gleams upon the face of the Vestal, as she watches it; she stands deeply absorbed in thought, and in her countenance the most passionate abstraction is perfectly expressed; while the music which symphonizes to her reverie, seems a part of her own sensations. Suddenly bursting into the conviction of her fatal secret, she exhibits all the struggles between nature and grace, passion and reason [...]* (Morgan 1821 I: 170).

With a libretto only five pages long but containing five acts, *La Spada di Kenneth*, a more melodramatic work set in archaic Scotland, featured a Druid playing a harp to invoke "invisible" Spirits conjured up by an off stage chorus as the heroine, Elizabeth, bearing a torch, follows her into across a fog-shrouded cliff and down into a grotto, a feat requiring extraordinary coordination of pantomimic movement, music, and theatrical machinery (Viganò, *La Spada* 1819: 11). A vast, Gothic gloom engulfs the action, as in the grotto scene opening the third act:

> *Meanwhile, the Druids show themselves preoccupied in their mysterious studies; one of them comes over with the news of public consternation at the duel of Bruzio and Baliolo. Their surprise is augmented with the arrival of Elizabeth heself, who is brought by the servant descending from the cliffs into the cave, and manifests to the Druids her resolution to conquer the sword of Kenneth guarded by them. Useless to distract her are all their grievances, useless the terrible ones, and gloomy voices, rising from the grave to frighten her. The Druids therefore give her the key to the iron door of the sepulcher, and while Elisabeth is about to open it, with all her strength, part of*

> *the walls themselves collapse, and reveal the receptacle, where the bust of the buried ancestor Kenneth is distinguished in the midst of the flames with the fatal, contested sword* (Viganò *La Spada* 1819: 11).

In *I Titani*, Viganò attempted to show, allegorically, how love arises within a prehistoric, primordial world suffused with terrifying myths and chaotic aberrations of nature and is the basis for a humane society, the foundation of civilization. Aside from the human characters, the piece featured numerous allegorical characters: Calamity, the Fates, the Fates, Sleep, Death, Nemesis, Fraud, Discord, Lasciviousness, and Old Age, in addition to "four huge Giants, with many Titani higher and lower, with the Cyclops, and all the Children of the Night." The pantomime of the enormous Giants was the achievement of elaborate theatrical machinery (Ritorni 1838: 249-251). The five-act scenario, to the extent that one can derive a coherent understanding of it from the fifteen-page libretto, which Ritorno largely copies into his book, depicts the vast chaos and psychological darkness created by the quarreling of the allegorical figures and the efforts of the primeval human family to bring zones of peace and light to the violent cosmos. The theme of human identity transformed from primitive to civilized had appeared already in *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus*, but in 1813, Viganò returned to the Prometheus myth with greater resources and a more powerful organization of the material. Mary Ann Smart provides an excellent description of the "re-imagining" which took up six acts in six different settings "without concern for the unities":

> *He represents the chaos of the pre-rational human world much more vividly, embodying it in not just the two humans that Prometheus created out of clay (as in 1801) but in a frightening mass of savage, ungovernable humanity. The language used to characterize the primitive humans is also much more raw – the children in 1813 are described successively as "savages," as "automata," and as inferior even to animals. Both ballets are structured as a series of oppositions between chaos and reason (or attempts to instill reason); but the Milanese version proliferates these alternations, depicting the civilizing of the humans in a series of small increments, each interspersed with alarming (and theatrically compelling) outbursts of savagery [...] the later ballet grants greater autonomy to Prometheus*

> *and the creatures themselves in reaching maturity. The power of music is also a central theme in the Milanese ballet; but here the primitive humans are able to respond to music only after they have received the initial civilizing impulse from their exposure to fire. And while the 1801 ballet concludes with a celebration of the completed education of the human children by the Muses, the 1813 spectacle places the wedding of the now-civilized children of Prometheus earlier and devotes its final act to the torture of Prometheus on Mount Caucasus, his rescue by Hercules, and his pardon by Jupiter.* (Smart 2013: 212).

In the 1813 version, Viganò used only some of Beethoven's original music, which he supplemented with music by the Austrian Joseph Weigl (1766-1846). In subsequent productions, Viganò compiled music from different sources; *La Vestale* involved works from seven different composers, including Viganò himself. Matilda Ertz describes in considerable detail Viganò's selection of musical pieces, structures, and harmonies in *La Vestale* to produce strong emotional contrasts from one scene to the next (2010: 365-409). Viganò greatly expanded the ballet orchestra to take advantage of emotional effects achieved through instrumentation. Smart explains how Viganò's arrangements of Beethoven's music in conjunction with that of other composers (Haydn, Weigl) in *Prometeo* provoked stormy emotional controversy over an Italian appropriation of "Northern" music to construct "an arcane language that encoded secrets of universal history" (2013: 226-230). She quotes the response of an Italian who wrote an enthusiastic little book about the *Prometeo* production:

> *Today's generation want greater things. They want to be violently moved, ravished – . . . I cried tears of consolation as I watched, and the day seemed long as I awaited the evening, which would allow me to look again upon this spectacle. Imagine all possible beauties gathered in a single tableau, or, better put, a continuous series of marvels* (Smart 2013: 227; Ferrario 1813: 10)

But the important point is that Viganò subordinated music to a unique, grandiose vision of movement on the stage in stark contrast to the French inclination to use music to standardize movement and build self-contained

dances at the expense of narrative and emotional power. Viganò explored a Wagnerian concept of "music drama" without the voice instead of without dance. The great French author Stendhal (1783-1842), in his *Life of Rossini* (1824), referred repeatedly to Viganò's "genius" and "masterpieces," which created "the Golden Age of Milan" that ended when the powerful choreographer died. Anna Brownell Jameson (1794-1860) wrote rapturously of her encounter with Viganò's *Didone* (1821):

> *I thought the* Didone Abbandonata *left us nothing to regret. The immense size of the stage, the splendid scenery, the classical propriety and magnificence of the dresses, the fine music, and the exquisite acting (for there is very little dancing), all conspired to render it enchanting. The celebrated cavern scene in the fourth book of Virgil, is rather too closely copied in a most inimitable pas de deux; so closely, indeed, that I was considerably alarmed pour les bienséances; but little Ascanius, who is asleep in a corner (Heaven knows how he came there), wakes at the critical moment, and the impending catastrophe is averted. Such a scene, however beautiful, would not, I think, be endured on the English stage. I observed that when it began, the curtains in front of the boxes were withdrawn, the whole audience, who seemed to be expecting it, was hushed; the deepest silence, the most delighted attention prevailed during its performance [...] All [Viganò's] ballets are celebrated for their classical beauty and interest. This man, though but a dancing-master, must have had the soul of a painter, a musician, and a poet in one. He must have been a perfect master of design, grouping, contrast, picturesque, and scenic effect. He must have had the most exquisite feeling for musical expression, to adapt it so admirably to his purposes; and those gestures and movements with which he has so gracefully combined it, and which address themselves but too powerfully to the senses and the imagination—what are they, but the very "poetry of motion," la poésie mise en action, rendering words a superfluous and feeble medium in comparison?* (Jameson 1826: 51-52)

Another visitor to Milan, the Swiss James Galiffe (1776-1853), also remarked with fervor: "The ballet was the most magnificent, and the most truly classical that I ever saw; not even the theater of Paris could exhibit any

thing comparable to Viganò's 'Psammi, King of Egypt;' and the London newspapers, accustomed to blazon forth the eclat of the indifferent performances at their opera in the Hay-market, would have been puzzled to find terms for the expression of the enthusiasm excited by this pantomime. [...] Every scene presented such admirable groups, in the ancient Egyptian style, with such wonderful correctness and precision in the details, as to evince a no less profound study of costume, than elegance of taste in the choice of the subject" (Gallife II 1820: 445). Jacqueline Mulhallen gives a wonderfully detailed explanation of how the intensely stirring performances of *Otello* and *La Spada di Kenneth*, seen two and three times each, in Florence and Venice as well as in Milan in 1819 deepened Shelley's ambitions as a dramatist (2014: 508-513; 2010: 153-159). *La Spada di Kenneth*, Shelley wrote, is "the most splendid spectacle I ever saw [. . .] The manner in which language is translated into gesture [. . .] the unaffected self possession of each of the actors, even to the children, made this choral drama more impressive than I should have conceived possible" (Mulhallen 2010: 153); and, as Mulhallen observes, Shelley's spectacular dramatic poem "*Prometheus Unbound* [1820] can be seen as a response to the visual and aural stimuli of the scenes in *La Spada* combined with a reading of Aeschylus's play and the experience of reports and prints of Viganò's *Prometeo*," which Shelley could not have seen in performance (2010: 159). At any rate, Viganò's choreodramatic aesthetic made a powerful impact on spectators from different national and cultural backgrounds because it seemed like a revelation, a new and exciting path in theatrical production. He had his detractors, including Rossini, whose music Viganò used for effects the composer had never imagined, and they complained that his work was not even dance, although Viganò labeled all of his works "ballets" (See Petracchi 1818: no page numbers). Much of the criticism directed against Viganò assumed a political character. His ballets were a self-conscious challenge to French definition of the art and to French influence over European culture in the aftermath of the Revolution and the Empire, and for that reason provoked highly partisan responses. But the political dimension to his art has resonated well beyond his own time. He envisioned a new way of doing ballet freed from the "tyranny" of the French ballet's obsession with dances built out of steps and positions. His works appealed to audiences that did not live entirely in the closed, exclusive world of ballet. Writing from a ballet perspective deeply attached to the

French system, Jennifer Homans (2010: 650) makes the misleading statement that Viganò's ballets were "lacking what audiences elsewhere most appreciated: *divertissements*. Viganó's choreodrama was thus a local taste—Milanese rather than Italian." The *coreodramma* did not disappear because it lacked audiences either within or without Milan. Viganò's productions required vast resources, financed in large part, according to Stendhal, by the profits from the gambling casino operated by La Scala; when the Austrians reclaimed Milan in 1815 they forbade gambling (Stendhal 1957: 435). Moreover, the productions required great amounts of rehearsal time, because all of the movements within each of these grandiose dramas were not only unique to each character, each *person*, in the always large cast but unique to the narrative. He also had a brilliant ballerina, Antonia Pallerini (1790-1870), the dominant female figure in nearly all of his Milanese productions, who was exceptionally open to an entirely different approach to ballet stardom and perhaps for that reason enjoyed an unusually long career on stage. The stress of working on such an ambitious scale probably precipitated Viganò's sudden, premature death from cadiac arrest. Viganò did not establish a school that would standardize his technique into system—pantomime, after all, is unregulated movement. And he never theorized or published his thinking about *coreodramma*, and so most of the power of his art emanated from the shadowy depths of his singular charismatic artistic personality. Viganò represented a moment when ballet and pantomime, with the other arts, could move in a new and profoundly stirring direction. He was a great artist. He was big enough and mysterious enough for all that his own time offered, but too big, too "excessive" for all the time that has come after him. For over a century after his death, the memory of his spectacular productions completely smothered any alternative idea of pantomime in Italy, which clung to the *ballo pantomimo* controlled by opera houses. Even the *commedia* companies remained devoted to voice-driven performance. Viganò brought an unprecedented level of tragic grandeur to pantomime and an equally unprecedented complexity of corporeal movement that was unimaginable in ballet. No one since the Renaissance was more consistently and prodigiously "serious" about pantomime than Viganò, and no one awakened such powerful emotional responses to pantomime as him. He made pantomime a revelation, a transformational experience. He enlarged Hilverding's idea that pantomime could best represent the kinetic dynamics

of groups, crowds, or social sectors, within diverse historical periods, without creating unison, monolithic blocks of humanity: each member of the huge ensemble, every supernumerary, had to develop a distinctive identity within the signifying practice defining the group to which the performer was assigned (cf., Poesio 1998: 5). His narratives focused on mythic themes (*Prometeo*, *I Titani*) or remote historical subjects (*Coriolano*, *Psammi*, *Mirra*, *Kenneth di Spada*, *Giovanna d'Arco*), yet the physicality of the action gave the narratives a vivid immediacy, especially because Viganò linked the performance of an action to the signification and provocation of a contrasting or complicating emotion. His five-act libretti moved swiftly in performance and consumed much less time than conventional full-length ballets or operas, because he conceived of narratives as compilations of actions rather than compilations of performer skills. In *Giovanna d'Arco* (1821, performed 1826, in Naples), Joan of Arc continually shifts from moods of valiant elation to depression and abject unhappiness, as all around her misunderstand her heroic actions in defense of France, while the other characters, including her English adversaries, similarly shift their emotions in response to her indifference toward their largely pragmatic motives. He convoluted his narratives with mysterious, quasi-supernatural effects, but these remained subordinate to a spectacular vision of a tarnished, vulnerable humanity guided by dark "spirits" or allegorized powers that assume human forms and issue from human bodies, perhaps most extravagantly in *I Titani* (Act III):

> *It is Bread that is guided by Love, followed by Fauni and Sileni descending from the alpine hills to release mortals from killing, bringing with them rustic waves [of wheat] to teach the yielding of the land that can only yield more through art and labor. While Bread teaches Hyperion and his children agriculture, Love now encourages one and now others to patiently undergo the inconveniences of this new state of nature. Bread after having accomplished this charitable act towards the miserable mortals, returns in the woods accompanied by them with infinite expressions of gratitude. [...] Hyperion remains alone, thoughtful and sorrowful about the present calamity; but turning a look of horror on the infernal gifts of the traitors and barbarian brothers, flinches and trembles to see that from the fatally*

> *overturned copper vase a sanguine mood overflows, predicting new and more serious misfortunes* (Viganò *I Titani*: 16).

For Viganò, pantomime offered a completely unique, powerful, and hauntingly grandiose kinetic fresco of humanity metamorphing, changing in response to "fate," self-consciously creating history. The startling emotional intensity of his productions made it seem possible that pantomime could displace ballet and opera as the "grandest" manifestation of European theatrical culture. He brought pantomime to a point where it could change the course of European theater. He died, however, before he could document his methods and productions sufficiently for others to follow the path he envisioned. As Fabrizio Frasnedi has remarked, "Ballet for Viganò did not have a history, not as *ballet d'action*, not as a tradition of tragic pantomimic gesture, nor as a strategy of ensemble [*montaggio*]. Action and passion are, for [his *ballo*], almost indistinguishable terms. There is no action if it does not give rise to passion [...] (Frasnedi 1984: 323). That is, Viganò linked action (rather than movement) to a uniquely motivating emotion, so that action and passion abandoned any regulating, institutionalized system of signification designed to define them and imposed upon bodies. But of course, ballet and opera companies had little incentive to appropriate his vision, regardless of how fascinated audiences were with his productions. As institutions, the ballet and opera companies functioned to protect mediocre imaginations and talents by subscribing to standards, rules, conventions, traditions, and academic systems designed to assure "quality" or "artistry" in performance from one season to the next: they sought a stability of operation that did not depend on the arbitrary distribution of powerful artstic genius. Ritorno called Viganò's productions "coreodrammas," because they unfolded outside of the conventional ballet system of rules, positions, steps, and corporeal idealizations, although Viganò always called his pieces ballets, for he saw himself as redefining ballet. Occasionally Ritorno refers to a small section of a Viganò piece as a "danza," but most of the action he describes as "pantomimo." But to achieve pantomime as Viganò envisioned it required an extraordinary directorial and managerial imagination, a mind of tremendous intellect and a personality of immense charisma. Viganò developed pantomimic action in relation to a monumental organization of performance variables: scenic architecture, lighting, music, props, costumes, and grandiose theatrical

effects, such as a woman pushing open a huge iron gate surrounded by turbulent women holding torches. Pantomime synthesized all these production elements into an enormous emotional storm, a somber, tragic *Gesamtkunstwerk*. But *coreodramma* requires access to production resources that ballet and opera companies could not expect their government providers to accommodate, unless, like La Scala, they operated their own casinos, which, even if governments had approved them, would have required managerial talents as rare as Viganò's. For these reasons, ballet and theater histories have underestimated Viganò's importance, the power of his theatrical imagination to undermine a complacent belief in an assumed inherent value for ballet and perhaps even opera as opera houses defined them through their elaborate systems for regulating bodily action. In 1984, Viganò was finally the subject of an academic conference in the Reggio Emilia that resulted in the publication of a hefty book of essays on him (Raimondi 1984). But, as Poesi (1998: 4) has observed, the conference and the book were the work of literature and music historians, not dance or theater historians, and he accurately complained that these scholars did not say much more about Viganò than Ritorno had already said. In 2014, José Sasportes and Patrizia Veroli organized in Venice a conference on Viganò dominated by dance historians, who did indeed look beyond Ritorno for evidence of Viganò's significance as a choreographer. Another large book emerged (Sasportes 2017). But while these scholars provide interesting details about Viganò's life and method of production, they also reveal an inclination to place him "in context," to see him as a figure evolving out of various unique historical circumstances that are obviously not irrelevant. The probem with Viganò, however, is that he actively challenged whatever "context" in which others wished to place him. That is what it means to create art that is genuinely "revolutionary." Viganò's productions were far more revolutionary in their approach to theater than anything staged in Paris during the Revolution or the Empire or during the many ensuing decades of talk-infested theater, romantic ballet, operatic inflation, and Pierrot.

Pantomimic Melodrama

Meanwhile, in France, the Revolution, constantly afflicted with monumental internal conflicts and a formidable array of hostile foreign powers, required vast, unprecedented experiments in governance to prevent

the project from collapsing altogether, and these unfolded under the complicated political system called the Directory (1796-1799), whose very complexity of organization created instabilities that no single political faction could manage successfully yet which nevertheless assured that the concentration of political power favored those who created instability rather than resisted it. The spectacular confusions, corruptions, and conspiracies spawned by the Directory provided a huge stimulus for making melodrama the dominant form of theatrical entertainment in Paris and then elsewhere for decades to come. Melodrama transformed Parisian theater into a major industrial engine of the economy. Charles Nodier (1780-1844) astutely claimed that melodrama, with its inclination toward absolute moral clarity in the construction of dramatic action, functioned like a religious experience "in the absence of a truly moral religion," like Christianity, which the Revolution had completely undermined, "for Christianity no longer existed, if it had ever existed" (Pixerécourt 1841: viii). Melodrama achieved such a potent hold over enormous and diverse audiences that other forms of theater, even comedy, seemed like incidental, perhaps even anomalous, features of theater culture. The genre and its most successful author, Guilbert Pixerecourt (1773-1844), have therefore long attracted intense scholarly attention, most notably from Ginisty (1910), Mason (1912), Hartog (1913), Lacey (1928), Rahill (1967), Heilman (1968), Brooks (1976), and Waeber (2005). However, with melodrama absorbing so much theatrical energy and imagination and appropriating so many other genres, including pantomimic effects, it is not altogether self-evident how pantomime not only survived but even prospered under the Empire, although on a much smaller scale than the melodrama. Indeed, without Cuvelier and his close association with the Théâtre de la Cité-Variétés and the Théâtre de la Gaîté, pantomime might have disappeared completely, except, perhaps, for whatever remnants of the *commedia* format that managed to persist, however shabbily, long enough to enable the famous Duburau to construct the iconic, "poetic" Pierrot figure in the 1820s. In his introduction to an anthology of Pixerecourt's melodramas, Nodier offered some insight into why audiences might prefer pantomime over melodrama as he explained why the language of melodrama was so popular and yet so corrupt:

> *The education of the people coming out of the revolution was like no other human education. It was made in sections, in the clubs, in the galleries of the Convention, where the French language had undergone an ordeal that threatened to be fatal. Speech had been in peril along with the whole society. They spoke falsely; it was the distinctive character of the epoch. Expressions of that time were matched to the empty and disjointed exaggeration of ideas. Logical orders of thought had given way to a hollow phraselogy, mere sonority, whose impact had become a habit and a need for the public ear. There was a universal mold, useful as a platform, in the bureaucracy, the Cabinet, the press, where the oratorical period infallibly took its form; it was a banal kind of language which was sentenced to receive an imprint [value] before entering circulation, and then fall as a currency in the popular trade. Good writers were not allowed to be surprised by the invasion of this artificial verbiage, whose duration could only be ephemeral, but good writers compose for posterity, and only concern themselves with that* (Nodier 1841: x-xi).

Nodier contended that this corruption or hyper-inflation of language under the Revolution and the Directory opened up an opportunity, which Pixerecourt exploited, to produce voices that spoke within a kind of linguistic domain bearing the deflated signs of what one might call a popular (Nodier calls it "epochal") codification of "sincerity" or "authenticity." But Nodier also observed that melodrama produced its own kind of "hyperbolic" language to signify the release of the voice from the tyranny or "falseness" imposed on speech outside the theater (1841: xiii). Pantomime appealed to audiences that were distrustful, not only of the extravagant philosophical and political language of the "epoch," but of the pretensions within melodrama to a mode of speaking that was somehow more sincere or innocent than the society allowed in real life. While the plots of pantomimes often resembled those of melodramas, the point of pantomime was to show the extent to which the moral clarity of narrative and dramatic action was an entirely visual phenomenon, as if speech itself was inescapably the sign of "falseness" imposed upon the body and its movements. Pantomime purported to show how the body alone could articulate moral values through a gestural performance that was closer to nature or some deeper condition of moral truth than was possible as soon

as the body, through the voice, entered into an alliance with society or "the epoch" by becoming infiltrated with language. It may seem, then, that pantomime under the Empire had moved, theoretically, far away from the "old" perspectives of Marmontel, Diderot, Cochin, Gretry, Aulnaye, and even Angiolini and Arnould, who understood that human movement lacked any inherent moral value without a spoken or inscribed attachment to language. But Empire pantomime did not actually repudiate the eighteenth century philosophies of the art; rather, it existed to support the perception that language was not necessary, perhaps even irrelevant, to the embodiment or performance of moral qualities.

Jean-Guillaume-Antoine Cuvelier (1766-1824) was the dominant author of pantomimes during the Directory, the Empire, and the early years of Bourbon Restoration, but he did not confine himself to this genre. He wrote numerous melodramas, comedies, and musicals for the Théâtre de la Cité-Variétés, the Théâtre de là Gaité, the Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique and the Cirque Olympique, all of which shared a consortium of investors, including the Franconi circus family. These theaters did not produce only pantomimes, and actors in pantomimes also performed in melodramas, comedies, and light operas. Cuvelier sometimes collaborated with Jean-Baptiste-Augustin Hapdé (1777-1839) on the authorship of pantomimes, although Hapdé composed several on his own, as did Henri Franconi (1779-1849), who specialized in pieces involving animals. Several of the pieces called pantomimes produced by these authors nevertheless contain speeches or spoken dialogues, but none of them contain nearly as much verbosity, tedious expository talk, voicing of sentiments, or speechifying of motives, moral views, or personal history as one inevitably encounters in melodrama. These authors produced slightly more pantomimes than they published, and sometimes publication of the scenarios appeared a few years after the original performance. The point of publication is somewhat obscure, because none of the published scenarios appears to have been performed anywhere but in the Parisian theaters that originally produced them, and even these theaters seldom revived them. The scenarios document the theatrical imagination of their authors; they demonstrate how the authors exploited dramatic and theatrical effects to attract diverse audiences and sustain the sponsoring theaters as powerful commercial enterprises. They are not interesting because of the stories they tell, but because of their skillful compilation of "show business" tropes for which the

narratives provide a logic for their display, although the stories are by no means irrelevant in relation to their coding of moral and political values.

Pantomimes under the Empire and Restoration contained three acts, and almost all of them were "serious" in tone. Yet none ever approached the ambitions and level of artistry achieved by Viganò. Historical themes in exotic settings were standard and provided excellent opportunities for unusual costumes and spectacular scenery; a pantomime with even a scene set in contemporary Paris was perhaps unthinkable. For example: Cuvelier's *Saint-Hubert, ou le cerf miraculeux* (1814), takes place in 688 CE, in the Ardennes forest; his *Les Hommes de la nature et les homes policés* (1801) is set in the New World among Native Americans ("savauges"); *La femme magnanime* (1812) recounts historical events in Rochelle in 1628; *L'Enfant du Malheur, ou les amans muets* (1817) takes place in Persia "in the time of Caliph Haroun al Raschild"; *Les Tentations, ou tout les diables* (1800) is set "in Hell, in the deserts of the Thébaïde, and in a temple of Nature" in an ancient time "before the reign of emperors of the Orient"; *Le Mort de Kleber* (1819) unfolds in Egypt following Napoleon's invasion in 1799; for *La fille Hussard* (1798), "the scene is Germany, near Belgrade"; *Le renégat, ou la belle georgienne* (1817), set in Palestine in 1191, features Ethiopians, eunuchs, and various Arabic figures in addition to a heroine from Georgia and Crusaders; *Le Main de fer, ou l'épouse criminelle* (1810) occurs in fifteenth century Dalmatia. Production values were grand: each act entailed a scene change, and often scenes changed within acts. Many scenes take place in the gardens or apartments of palaces, in rural landscapes, forests, deserts, mountains, arbors, or groves. Prison scenes, when called for, apparently belong only in the second act, although scenes of bondage may occur in the third act. But Cuvelier does not describe settings in much detail. For example, for the first act of *La fille hussard* (1798), set in Germany, "the theater represents a forest; to the left, one sees a little house" (Cuvelier *La fille* 1798: 3). The scene for the second act exemplifies one of his longer instructions for the scenographer: "The theater represents the park of the chateau of Baron Traumandorf, in which the count and his daughter were received. The back of the theater allows one to see the inside of the fortifications surmounted by an old tower; a guard paces on a platform" (Cuvelier *La fille* 1798: 9). Scenes often nevertheless required compex lighting effects to represent dawn, twilight or subterranean grottos: "the twilight of the evening begins to obscure the countryside" (Cuvelier *Saint-*

Hubert 1814: 8). Equestrian and military pantomimes included not only the performance of horses, but also of elephants, as in *La Lanterne de Diogene* (1808), of a wolf, as in *Saint-Hubert*, of deer, as also in *Saint-Hubert* and in Franconi's *Genevieve* (1812). *Le Mort de Kleber* opens with two Arabs "arriving on a camel drawn by a slave" (Cuvelier *La Mort* 1820: 5). The Cirque Olympique was usually responsible for performing the pieces involving animals, because it had a large stage attached to its arena (McCormick 1993: 29). But this theater also produced works that involved no animals, such as *Le coffre de fer* (1818), apparently in violation of the theater's licence, which forbade the production of any dramatic works, including pantomimes or performances involving acting instead of acrobatics. But under the Empire and Restoration, the Cirque Olympique produced shows of such patriotic grandiosity that the government probably found greater benefit to itself by ignoring the law rather than enforcing it. The great majority of pantomimes contained a large number of characters, sometimes as many as twenty-three, requiring separate, named actors, supplemented by plentiful supernumeraries representing crowds, armies, entourages, and such things as "peasants" or "jugglers" or "troupes of Croations" or "ladies of the court." Occasionally a piece included a small child as a character; *Saint-Hubert* requires two, Lilirose, age three or four, and Theobert, age five or six, this role performed by a Monsieur Blin, who the following year, 1815, played a three year old in *Genevieve*, although he had played a similarly aged child in the 1812 production of *La Femme magnanime*. While the actors remained attached to theaters rather than to authors, Cuvelier, Hapdé, and Franconi clearly wrote parts for specific actors, even if their styles of narrative construction remained consistent across theaters. A variety of composers created or arranged music for the pantomimes, including Othon Vanderbroeck (1758-1832), Alexandre Piccini (1779-1850), and Charles Foignet (1750-1823), among others. Scenarios named scene designers (Isidore, Justin Leys, Moenck) only occasionally and identified those responsible for the *mise-en-scène* even more rarely, mostly when the author himself was the director, but the Belgian choreographer known as Eugène Hus (1758-1823) received credit as early as 1805 for directing *Le Gnome*, a "pantomime-magico-buffounne" composed by Cuvelier's wife, Flore. These persons may seem deeply obscure, but Cuvelier and the other scenarists probably had them more in mind when writing the scenarios than the characters the scenarios propose to be performed. This

way of thinking about the "inspiration" for the scenarios was probably fundamental in constructing a pantomimic performance aesthetic that was consistently alluring and powerful insofar as it created an image of humanity that was phantasmal rather than vivid.

While the pantomimes constantly take place in a historical milieu, the characters themselves have virtually no past: their qualities or personalities are never more than what they display when they first appear and are seldom subject to modification or evolution as a result of interactions within the environment. Ostensibly this lack of a past that formed the character results from the absence of language, which is so helpful in referring to events off stage or previous to the action on stage that explain the character's qualities or motives. However, pantomime could create "backgrounds" for characters through a different approach to the organization of narrative action on stage. The French preferred to observe as closely as possible the classical unities of time, place, and action, with the optimum time span for the action on stage occurring within twenty-four hours, which generally requires speech for characters to explain motives for action that were formed well before the time in which the story begins: If a character seeks vengeance for a cruelty inflicted on him as a child, then someone on stage must use speech to explain the influence of the past upon the present motives of the character, because gestural signification alone is too imprecise to create a clear distinction between present and past tense, between what happens now on stage and what happened before anything that appears on stage. But when pantomime moves away from the unities and represents larger expanses of time, it could encompass a more complex conception of character, so that a brief pantomimic scene showing, for example, a rich boy's tormenting of a poor boy for his failure to impress a girl could lead to further brief scenes showing how, over time, an early cruelty has defined the character of a man determined to seek vengeance against an entire social class. Such a pantomime does not need to be any longer than the three-act, forty-minute shows devised by Cuvelier. Indeed, Cuvelier even experimented with this sort of montage encompassing of large stretches of time in *La Lantern de Diogene* (1807), which depicts Diogenes, carrying his lamp in search of an "honest man," encountering Alexander the Great, the Emperor Augustus, and the Emperor Charlemagne, before casting his light upon the greatest of all honest men: Napoleon Bonaparte. But this sort of narrative structure was

entirely unique within the pantomime culture of the time. French pantomime scenarists remained devoted to the idea that character and motive arise out of a situation that requires no history to explain them. The obsession with compressing the unity of time, place, and action carried with it a conservative attitude toward human identity: situations change rapidly, but characters scarcely change, if at all. In this respect, despite unprecedented resources at its disposal and despite the unprecedented social fluidity of its time, French pantomime remained remote from the imperial Roman idea of metamorphosis and the fundamental instability of human identity.

To use the 1895 terminology of Georges Polti, the most common "dramatic situation" in French pantomimes of this era is a conflict of sexual passions, in which character A loves character B, who loves character C, who also loves character B; character A therefore resorts to the abduction of character B, which leads to the rescue of character B by character C and the restoration of the loving relation between B and C that prevailed at the beginning of the piece. This dramatic situation was of course a convention of "serious" pantomime well before Cuvelier exploited it, but he and other scenarists developed interesting variations on it. In *La Main de fer* (1810), for example, one of the longest of all pantomimes, the Dalmatian Duchess of Spalatro has conspired with her palace security officer, Vardowiki, to murder her husband, "the man with the iron hand" (which was the result of a war wound), because she loves his nephew, Stephanos, who, however, loves Angolina, the daughter of the Duke's closest associate, Bonelli, and his wife, Alexa, a promiment member of the Duchess's court. The Duchess attempts to imprison both Stephanos and Angolina when they resist her demands, and she devises a scene in which she orders Bonelli, disguised as one of her conspirators, to insert a burning iron rod into the eyes of his own daughter, but father and daughter manage to deceive their enemies into thinking this torture has actually taken place. Disguises are a useful trope for Cuvelier in extricating good people from bad situations. He suavely constructs a scene in which Alexa assists the Duchess in her treachery to protect her daughter Angolina. In the ruins of an ancient mansion, the Duchess, "the ferocious Regilde," becomes engulfed by the flames of a fire she has set to trap her enemies, and in the fire she sees approaching her a warrior. She draws her sword against him, but the figure transforms into "the horrible skeleton" of the Man with the Iron Hand. This figure, bearing

the name of the pantomime, has appeared only once previously, in the second act, when the Duchess has a dream in which she sees her dead husband, as a shadow, accompanied by demons, "monsters with human faces," who warn, through an intertitle, that before the day is over she will die. Cuvelier acknowledged that he borrowed ideas from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (Cuvelier *La Main de fer* 1810: 30). *Saint-Hubert* opens with an audacious scene: Hubert, the Merovingian Duke of Acquitaine, in the presence of his wife, Fleuribane and their two small children, expresses his "violent love" for Hildefrede, Countess of Louvain. While initially skeptical, Hildefrede finds herself attracted to Hubert and then possessive of him, demanding of him that he make sacrifices as proof of his love. These include his initiation into a wild Druid ceremony, in which, under the spell of an enchantress, he renounces Fleuribane. Hildefrede arranges to have Fleuribane framed for the murder of her own father, Dagobert, whom she, Hildefrede, has engineered through poisoning. In the third act, Hubert and Hildefrede go hunting on horseback, with Hildefrede accompanied by her entourage of "Amazons," also on horses. Suddenly a violent storm fills the landscape. A "monstrous wolf" enters the scene, causing great "disorder," as it chases Fleuribane, now a starving fugitive in the forest with her children, and various village women before scattering the hunters. Hildefrede falls from her horse and manages to recover when the wolf returns and chases her until they both fall into a pit to catch wild animals. The shadow of Dagobert appears before Hubert and vocally proclaims Fleuribane's innocence. Then a deer, "a miraculous animal," appears, "advancing on a group of clouds," with "the sign of a new law, brilliant and luminous." The deer reveals a Christian altar, from which emerges a swan with a gold key tied around its neck by a fire-red ribbon. A "mysterious voice" instructs Hubert to take the key to save his wife and receive the blessing of God. Hubert is deeply repentant, and Fleuribane forgives him, so that the piece concludes with the reunited family on their knees, along with the rest of the huge cast, arms raised toward God, "celestial signs in the clouds." With this image, "the bloody cult of the Druids is abolished in the Ardennes and France is no longer idolatrous." The complexity of physical action in this act, with so much going on almost at the same time, suggests how the Cirque Olympique could connect action on its rather large stage to action in the arena, and then create an image at the end whereby, one assumes, the entire cast, on its knees in the arena, extends its arms toward the sign of

God in the clouds projected from the stage. *Les hommes de la nature et les hommes polices* (1801), set on an island in the New World, begins with different Native Americans, "savages," offering the Indian maiden Hea various gifts, such as crocodile and tiger skins, to win her hand, with Ohi her choice, when a storm arises, causing a ship on the horizon to sink. The Indians save one survivor, the aptly named Badman, the Governor. Hea seems momentarily attracted to Badman, who is aware of her attraction and nourishes it. Cannon fire announces the approach of another English ship coming to the aid of Badman. The captain of the ship arrives and also shows an interest in Hea, but defers to the Governor, which provokes the jealousy of Ohi and precipitates a conflict between the Native Americans and the English marines. Badman abducts Hea and imprisons her on the ship. In his palace, the Governor lives a luxurious, "perfumed" life with the atmosphere of a seraglio. But as an experiment, he allows Hea to wander about alone in a glamorous room, which allows a peculiar scene to develop: Hea discovers her image in a large mirror for the first time and begins to smile at herself. She also uncovers jewels and Western garments and admires herself wearing them. Women from the seraglio, *bayadères*, enter and instruct her on how to dress in the Western style. Seeing her dressed as a European, Ohi, captured trying to rescue Hea, is amazed and angered, but Badman invites him to adopt a European military uniform and instruction in military arts, which he accepts. Ohi, however, soon realizes that Hea dislikes Badman, even if she is fond of European fashion. Badman does not trust Ohi and has him imprisoned in a dungeon, but Hea develops a plan, involving the jewels for bribery, to free him, which leads to a battle between the Indians and the English, with the Governor triumphant. He orders the execution of Hea and Ohi, but the storm is not over. Lightning strikes Badman and kills him, scattering the English forces. "A luminous cloud develops and brings the two spirits to earth. Ohi and Hea sink to their knees." In this pantomime, the central characters perhaps experience a greater measure of change than one usually finds in these works insofar as Hea and Ohi apparently remain clothed in European garments at the end, and, by sinking to their knees before the "luminous cloud," they assume a vaguely Christian pose, although reference to Christian symbols is elsewhere absent.

These are only three variations of the triangular dramatic situation based on sexual conflicts between characters A, B and C. The dramatic

situation seems capable of yielding evernew possibilities for narrative invention. But while this dramatic situation functioned as the foundation for manifold narratives that motivated the performance of the picturesque and often astonishing physical actions that attracted audiences, one cannot overlook the impact of this convenient ordering of dramatic imagination in compromising the power of pantomimic performance, let alone insight into sexual identity or sexual relations. Pantomime narratives serve to uphold utterly conventional ideas of sexuality. Characters never change sexual partners happily. A true and good love is always reciprocated, always given at the beginning of the piece, and, if threatened, restored by the end of the piece. A character whose attraction to another character is unreciprocated is invariably evil and doomed. Powerful, ambitious female characters are demonic, cruel, and insatiably demanding, while "good" female characters, though capable of heroic sacrifices, clever ruses, and amplified signs of resistance, demonstrate their innocence by being in some way imprisoned and the object of unwanted desires. Good male characters, while sometimes deceived or misguided, invariably display martial qualities through combat, although they are not always victorious. *L'héroïne suisse, ou Amour et courage* (1798), however, deviates somewhat from this template: Esther, the daughter of a former French officer living in Switzerland, is the object of the Swiss governor's unwanted desire. Frustrated by her disdain for him, the Governor imprisons her, her father, Franker, and her lover, Armand. But she devises an escape, and then returns, in the third act, dressed as a Swiss soldier, to protect her father and boyfriend, bringing with her an insurgent army of peasants. She kills the Governor; Armand and Franker are throughout powerless and function like the innocent, unjustly imprisoned women of later pantomimes. On the level of narrative, it does seem that pantomime became less interesting the further it operated after the Revolution. But Cuvelier did not always stick to the triangular dramatic situation of sexual conflict. In *Le Mort de Kleber* (1808), a young French officer, Jules, saves his mother, Georgette, from abuse by three Arabs, but Jules himself is attracted to an Arab girl, Samea, who reciprocates his desire, although Georgette tells him that Samea is "not for him." Samea lives with Kadilla, her grandmother, and Ziska, an Ethiopian slave girl, all of whom are enthusiastic about the leadership of Jean-Baptiste Kleber (1753-1800), the commander of the French army in Egypt following Napoleon's departure for France in 1799. These three women believe that Kleber will make Egypt a

colony of France and as a result Egypt will "enjoy the benefits of civilization and the arts," a new era of freedom that will bring an end to "wicked harems and dismal prisons."[3] Yet Kadilla becomes unwittingly the instrument of Kleber's murder. Much of the pantomime consists of scenes depicting Kleber's humanitarian qualities, his generosity toward the poor, his concern for the wounded, his tolerant attitude toward the Arabs and even his Mameluke adversaries. He is, moreover, a brilliant general, a skillful negotiater, and a wise administrator. The scenes with Kleber contrast with the scenes of a group of Muslim fanatics, who believe that Kleber's liberalism will undermine "true faith" in God. These men recruit a young religious student, Soleyman, to precipitate their plan to overthrow the French. The imam, Seid, and Soleyman approach Kadilla and ask her if Soleyman, who claims to be traveling on personal business related to his father, can spend the night in her Cairo home because French troops now occupy the nearby mosque. Kadilla respectfully agrees to accommodate the imam. When night falls, Seid informs Soleyman of Kleber's presence on a terrace at a table with other officers. As Kleber walks along the terrace, Solyeman stabs him and the engineer who accompanies him. The death-cry of the general ignites pandemonium, cannon fire, fusillades, as the Janissaries commence their insurrection. The French, however, prevail and "massacre" all the insurgents. Jules, having discovered Soleyman hiding in a cistern, battles Seid and then arrests Soleyman. The pantomime ends with the gruesome executions of Seid and Soleyman, who has his right arm burned off before the both of them die slowly as the curtain falls. Cuvelier included a note, one of several bestowing academic dignity on the text, describing how calmly Soleyman accepted his death, crying out when burned that this punishment was not part of the sentence. *Le Mort de Kleber* is perhaps closer to tragedy than any other scenario Cuvelier composed. In some scenes, he relied heavily on dialogue to reveal the political sentiments of the Arab women, the humanitarian qualities of Kleber, and the conspiratorial framework of the Muslim insurgents. As Cuvelier notes, some of Kleber's lines were actually quotations ascribed to

[3] Cuvelier was a founder of the Sophisian order in Paris, a branch of the Freemasons that performed in secret supposedly ancient Egyptian rituals retrieved from oblivion by Napoleon's archeological projects in Egypt. Cuvelier recruited numerous theater people to the order (Spieth 2007: 118, 143).

the general ("Treason needs the shadows of night; true courage reveals itself in broad daylight"), and to some extent *Le Mort de Kleber* revived the idea of the documentary pantomime introduced by *Le Mort de Capitaine Cook*. The pantomime was also unusual in combining so much dialogue of a political, philosophical, and diplomatic nature with scenes of men, French and Arab, on horseback and even one scene with Seid and Soleyman on a camel. It is doubtful, though, that Cuvelier used as much dialogue as he did because he did not trust pantomime to signify the ideas constructed with the words. Rather, the effect is of words being powerless to overcome the profound cultural conflict they articulate. Only force, superiority of physical action, resolves this conflict, because force itself presumably carries within it a moral dimension that language may make transparent but not victorious.

In 1812, Cuvelier returned to the theme of conflict between Muslims and Christians with *Le renégat, ou La belle géorgienne*, which he revised for its revival in 1817, when he published the scenario (Spieth 2007: 118, 143). It's not clear what changes Cuvelier made in the piece after five years; most likely the changes accommodated performance possibilities offered by the newly constructed Cirque Olympique. The story divides focus between two characters. Aldina is a Georgian woman sold into slavery and has become a member of Saladin's harem in Palestine in the year 1191. As a "Circassian beauty," she represents for Saladin the apex of womanly beauty. But she also awakens the desires of Saint-Amand, a French Templar Crusader and Humfrey, a former Crusader who has become an associate of Saladin in his fight against the Christians, who plan to attack the seraglio and free the women in the harem. Saladin appears as a humane figure, who releases Aldina and allows her to return to Georgia after she intercedes on behalf of Saint-Amand, who has most reluctantly killed Saladin's brother after the young man willfully failed to acknowledge the Frenchman's superior combat skills. Saint-Amand, however, remains imprisoned, and Aldina, in collaboration with a eunuch, develops a scheme to free the Templar, whom she loves. Saladin leaves for Egypt and appoints Humfrey the Emir of Palestine. Humfrey discovers the escape attempt and imprisons Aldina and Saint-Amand. The last half of the third act takes place in an ancient Roman "amphitheater-circus," where Humfrey, perched on his Emir throne above the arena, plans to have wild beasts devour Aldina and Saint-Amand. But Conrad, King of Jerusalem, appears with a great army, launching a huge battle between the Christians and the Saracens, which culminates with the

burning of the seraglio palace and the release of the wild animals, who end up devouring Humfrey instead of Aldina and Saint-Amand. The piece is more emphatic than the *Le Mort de Kleber* in making female identity and freedom the basis for conflict between Islam and Christianity. Picturesque details abound: the sumptuous seraglio, odalisques, a suggestion of lesbianism among the odalisques, "black" eunuchs, "white" eunuchs, "mute" eunuchs, Ethiopians, Arabs and "Saracens," a harem ballet, Aldina's Georgian costume, a view of Jerusalem, veiled women, "European ladies" accompanying Conrad's army of resplendent Crusaders, as well as scenes of Arabs and Crusaders on horseback (the scenario is not clear if any "European ladies" also appear on horseback). Yet this pantomime is less interesting aesthetically than *Le Mort de Kleber*. Cuvelier incorporates much more dialogue, perhaps because he did not see how physical action alone could make transparent Humfrey's treachery or Saladin's humanness. He also included some songs sung by the "old Ethiopian women." But when Cuvelier writes dialogue or any kind of speech, he becomes verbose and crude, as is more than evident in his melodramas. The piece makes no serious reference to religious or ideological differences between Islam and Christianity: the Crusade seems entirely a project to abolish harems and to affirm European men as more desireable to women than Muslim men. The spectacle contains plenty of combat in all three acts, but this violence lacks the imperial sense of purpose and anti-imperialist insurrectional ambition that brings *Le Mort de Kleber* to such a dark, bloody conclusion. *Le renégat* suggests that by 1817 the "serious," Empire-style pantomime had itself become imprisoned within an exhausted narrative structure built around the show business dramatic situation of "saving" innocent women from corrupt male or female aristocrats. This mode of pantomime could not advance without coming up with better reasons for telling stories that engaged audiences with coherent opportunities for extravagant "action" and spectacle. If it could not advance, then, as will become evident, this mode would disappear.

Cuvelier himself seems to have recognized that the genre needed to move to a new level of seriousness and artistic ambition, which may account for why he turned his attention to pantomimic adaptations of Shakespearean plays, first with *Macbeth ou Les sorcières de la forêt* (1817) and then with *Le more de Venise: ou Othello* (1818), both produced at the Cirque Olympique. *Macbeth* unfolds in four acts instead of three. The

storm-laden first act consists largely of dialogue, most of it spoken by the three witches, while the last three acts are almost entirely without speech. In a lengthy footnote, Cuvelier explains that he has eliminated the figure of Lady Macbeth because he finds it implausible that Macbeth would commit his crimes to satisfy the ambitions of his wife: it must be his own ambition that is responsible for killing Duncan; moreover, he observes, only one historical source available to Shakespeare makes reference to the "complicity" of Lady Macbeth. Cuvelier's witch dialogue is not a translation or even a paraphrase of Shakespeare's, but it is much more economical and mysterious than dialogue that appears elsewhere in his work. Too rational to believe in supernatural beings, he treats the witches as allegorical figures, agents of prophecy, who articulate Macbeth's insatiable ambition ("Ambition devours his soul"), while Macbeth remains completely silent as they address him with their portents. The figure of Destiny appears, bearing a large book in which is inscribed Macbeth's future, although only two of the three witches ever speak. In the second act, Cuvelier introduces Idamia, daughter of Duncan, to whom Macbeth proposes marriage in an elaborate dumb-show celebrating Macbeth's victory over the Norwegians and his appointment as Thane of Cawdor, a scene that is amazing in the amount of political, ceremonial, sexual, and personal information that the performers must convey entirely through pantomimic action. Idamia remains ambivalent toward Macbeth. In this vast scene, Cuvelier includes another female character, Comalla, a gardener in Duncan's castle, who develops a mutual affection for Hietar, son of Duncan's steward, but although these two characters assist in Macbeth's downfall, Cuvelier does not make much of their romance. Instead of Lady Macbeth, Cuvelier constructs Seyton (Satan), his deputy and partner in crime. The drugging of the guards and the murder of Duncan unfold in pantomime, as does the discovery of the murder by Malcolm, Banquo, and Idamia, Macbeth's feigned shock, and the suspicion directed toward him by Malcolm, Rosse, Banquo, Macduffe, Menteth, Lenox, and Idamia. In the third act, Seyton and his troops pursue Banquo, Malcolm, Rosse, and Lennox on the heath before Macbeth's castle, where Seyton kills Banquo and captures Malcolm, but the others escape. The scene changes to a garden before a "huge Gothic gallery with a stairway"; statues of Ossian and Fingal adorn the garden. Comalla tries to comfort the sorrowing Idamia, when an "old bard" appears and requests of Comalla that a troupe of bards, led by Hietar, be allowed to pay homage to

the statue of Ossian. The old bard plays the harp while Princess Idamia watches "with the aspect of a prophetess." The old man approaches Idamia, opens his robe, and reveals the senior of the three witches. This witch conducts Idamia to the statue of Fingal, on the pedestal of which are engraved in fire the words: "Macbeth is the assassin." Macbeth then appears to pursue his idea of a union with Idamia, but Idamia shows him the inscription, which provokes his ire and feigned bafflement. The witch shows Macbeth the murder dagger, then flies off mounted on a dragon. Unperturbed, as if what had transpired was merely a hallucination, Macbeth proceeds with the ceremony of having himself crowned as king, but Idamia and Comalla leave "coldly." The coronation banquet unfolds in the garden, with the bards singing for a large crowd of soldiers and servants, followed by a ballet. Seyton invites Macbeth's officers to a "richly serviced table," and Macbeth descends from his throne to join them. But thunder and lightning explode, and the shadow of Duncan arises, terrifying Macbeth. With the fourth act, Cuvelier returns to more familiar territory with a prison scene in which Hietar, his father, Palm, and Comalla, collaborate with Idamia to free Malcolm from his tower cell by disguising Idamia and arranging for Idamia to take Malcolm's place in the cell. Macbeth appears, becomes, of course, furious at Malcolm's escape, and orders the arrest of the collaborators. In the forest, Macbeth and Seyton, with their guards, capture Malcolm, but then flames burst from a rock, revealing the three witches. They release a serpent that attaches to Macbeth's chest—he screams, and he and his men scatter into the forest while Malcolm sinks in gratitude before the witches, who present him with a horn by which he may call his supporters. Inside a huge military tent, Macbeth suffers intensifying anxiety, a sense of "falling into an abyss." The three witches visit him and taunt him by conjuring up, through a dark cloud, the phantasmal image of Duncan; they then disappear, and Macbeth "searches to divine whether what he has seen is a dream or reality." But Seyton and Angus arrive with war banners, ready to attack Malcolm's army. The final scene is the battle, with Birnam Wood, aflame, advancing toward Macbeth's forces and led on horseback by Malcolm, Lennox, Rosse, and Macduffe. The three witches appear on an "elevation" overlooking the scene, and the senior witch announces that "the reign of crime is over." A great battle ensues with Macbeth's castle becoming engulfed in flames. Malcolm delivers a blow that causes Macbeth to fall from his horse to his

death. Macduffe battles Seyton and strikes a mortal blow. Macbeth's forces surrender. Idamia, all officers, and "the people" gather around Malcolm on his horse, a white steed given to him by the witches, and salute him as the "legitimate sovereign."

The piece is exceptionally demanding and even astounding as a pantomimic performance, especially in the monumental second act. But it is doubtful that Cuvelier brought a higher level of seriousness to pantomime by replacing Lady Macbeth with Idamia. His obsession with dramatizing the innocence of women was probably central to Empire-style pantomime's failure to escape its narrative prison. He was afraid of a morally ambiguous female character, because he apparently assumed that such a character would upset the moral clarity of the performance as a whole. Lady Macbeth is a demonic figure, but she also has a conscience that ultimately destroys her. The witches in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* are sinister, amoral creatures, who prophesize but do not assist the "good" characters or the bad. For Shakespeare, ambition, the achievement of power, entails a great struggle with conscience, even if a position of power is a destiny, ordained by mysterious forces beyond human understanding. The lack of moral clarity in the signs of destiny or prophecy allowed Shakespeare to create a far more violent drama of ambition than Cuvelier dared to imagine with basically the same set of signs. Shakespeare has the "innocent" woman in his play, Macduff's wife, killed off by Macbeth's hit men; Cuvelier doesn't even provide Macduffe with a wife, for Idamia, Comalla, and the witches already suffuse the pantomime with the female innocence that brings moral clarity to the world. He contrasts the wifeless Macbeth with all the other wifeless male characters, suggesting that Macbeth's "illegitimate" quest for power somehow arises out of his partnership with Seyton, although Cuvelier doesn't really develop this idea with sufficient seriousness, perhaps because he did not understand how to do it. In 1813, Cuvelier's sometime professional partner, Hapdé, had produced, at the Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin, a version of Macbeth, *Les visions de Macbeth, ou, les sorcières d'Écosse: mélodrame en trois actes, a grand spectacle*, as "Tableaux in the genre of Servandoni," which the police shut down, even though the police had approved production in 1812. Later in 1813, Hapdé submitted the piece as a melodrama for production at the Théâtre de la Gaîte, but the committee there refused to approve its production, because it was too expensive to stage a play with such a "somber" mood (Hapdé 1817: vi). In

1816, Hapdé again submitted to the police the same manuscript approved in 1812, but again was unsuccessful in obtaining approval for performance. Cuvelier's pantomime *Macbeth* enjoyed much success at the Cirque Olympique in 1812 and obviously did not suffer suppression when the theater revived the piece in 1817. In a lengthy introduction to his melodrama, Hapdé explains why the work has not been performed. He acknowledges Cuvelier's *Macbeth*, "disquised as a pantomime," but contends that he informed the Cirque Olympique of his own project, which would not cause the Cirque any anxiety. Much of Hapdé's introduction focuses on the politics and administrative problems of Parisian commercial theater, which is so obsessed with containing costs that it is difficult to produce anything that succeeds. What "ruins" theaters, or theater administrations, is a lack of seriousness and ambition. *Macbeth* is about an ambitious man. But Hapdé's Macbeth is "a victim of destiny," controlled by supernatural powers, like Oedipus (Hapdé 1817: vi-vii). Macbeth is therefore a drama of how great ambition becomes engulfed by great "remorse." But it is not difficult to see why Cuvelier's *Macbeth* achieved success and Hapdé's did not. Hapdé's version contains plenty of expensively spectacular scenes, but it also contains a great deal of speech, in prose, as if the theme of remorse requires extensive explanation, an abundant amount of voicing, because pantomimic action is incapable of signifying the deepest measure of guilt, conscience being a voice, not a body, although Hapdé nevertheless includes a pantomimic scene (Act II, Scene vii) in which the labeled, allegorical figure of Remorse, "a species of infernal spirit with long claws," rises from the floor in Duncan's room to grab Macbeth, as "the shadow of Duncan escapes the room and places Macbeth between shadow and Remorse." This Macbeth not only has a wife, Fredegonde, but a small son, Edward, though Fredegonde is more of a supportive than an ambitious wife: she seeks above all to protect her husband from his enemies and regards the prophecy of his kingship as a divine command rather than a motive for action. The witches, however, inform Fredegonde that she can protect her husband from Malcolm's forces only by sacrificing Edward, and they will not accept the sacrifice of her own life instead. The melodrama ends as Fredegonde, after placing her child in the arms of a witch, sinks with Macbeth into an abyss of fire, while the Spirit of Scotland, Malcolm, the Bards, and the shadow of Duncan appear in an "amphitheater of clouds," before which soldiers and citizens prostrate themselves. With this scenario,

in which his dialogue is on a much higher level than any dialogue Cuvelier wrote, Hapdé tried to move to a more serious level of boulevard performance that did not depend on telling a story of imperiled female innocence. But he discovered that telling a story involving a deeply "remorseful" woman required a lot of talk and a lot of spectacular scenic effects, which, nevertheless, the Théâtre de la Gaîte considered too expensive in relation to such a "somber" representation of marital devotion. Hapdé's difficulties in getting his *Macbeth* produced perhaps indicate why Cuvelier decided not to give Macbeth or any other character a wife and to fall back on the popular trope of the innocent female (Idamia) threatened by the desires of a dangerously powerful man. It wasn't that Cuvelier lacked imagination or courage to move pantomime to a higher level of artistry, which Viganò was achieving at the same time; it was that his society remained too hungry for narratives of endangered female innocence to accommodate other narrative frameworks or female characters who embodied the moral ambiguities embedded in struggles for power and elevated status.

It is therefore not altogether surprising that Cuvelier's next Shakespearean pantomime was an adaptation of *Othello*, the tragic story of a husband's failure to believe in his wife's innocence. The three-act scenario, however, is quite difficult to obtain. Michelle Cheyne has read the scenario because she believes that seeing the Cirque Olympique production of it in 1818 in part inspired Balzac to write his own, unsuccessful melodramatic version of the story, *Le Nègre* (1822). Using passages of dialogue and pantomimic dream sequences, Cuvelier was able "to expand rather than simplify the intrigue to normalize the interracial couple" by "developing backstories" for Othello, Desdemona, and other characters (Cheyne 2013: 87). Desdemona, for example, became attracted to the Moor, "the wild African," because of his "perilous voyages to Africa" and particularly because he rescued her from a fire while she witnessed a ceremony in the Doge's palace: "a heroic rescue is the true source of this white woman's love for a man of a different race" (Cheyne 2013: 87-88). Cuvelier deviates from Shakespeare by introducing the figure of Aviano, Desdemona's brother, with whom she is close, although Othello is unaware of him. Iago exploits this relationship when he "intercepts a message from Aviano criticizing his sister for her marriage and for her liberty while he is prisoner and unable to wed the mother of his child." Iago obtains the

handkerchief that Desdemona uses to staunch the blood from a wound inflicted on Aviano; the handkerchief was a gift to Desdemona from Othello, but Iago presents it to Othello as if Aviano had received it as a gift from Desdemona (Cheyne 2013: 93-94). These seem like major deviations from Shakespeare's original telling. But in 1819, an anonymous reader of the London *Theatrical Inquistor* reported to the editor on the Cirque Olympique production: "This Pantomime has completely succeeded [...] If Mr. Cuvelier had made his hero speak, I do not think he would have followed the plan of the English tragedy so closely as he has done. Numerous and striking situations, terrible and extraordinary incidents rapidly succeeding each other, have ensured to this production a brilliant success, amongst a people who are not eminent for reflexion." The writer goes on to say that pantomime is preferable to melodrama, because "it addresses itself only to the eye, and, at least offers no violence to the understanding" (*Theatrical Inquistor* March 1819: 192). It would seem that of course pantomime, French or otherwise, would regard Shakespeare's narrative frameworks as more valuable than his language, which obviously is the basis for his greatness. But in making pantomimes of tales told by Shakespeare, Cuvelier attempted to show how pantomimic action, gestural performance, could achieve a semantic, poetic, and intellectual power that approached the level of seriousness and distinction that Shakespeare achieved through voiced language. For Cuvelier, moving pantomime to a "higher level" meant finding more "serious" narrative frameworks in which to reveal—and contain—the pantomimic virtuosity of his performers. But this strategy made him less bold, less ambitious, and less of an artist than Viganò, who saw that pantomime was at its most "serious" when it developed a new movement aesthetic that overwhelmed the power of established narrative structures to contain it and compelled the creation of new modes of narration unique unto itself.

Perhaps, however, the most successful of the pantomimic adaptations of Shakespeare was the three-act *Hamlet* devised by the French dancer and choreographer Louis Henry (1784-1836) for the Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin in 1816. The great French actor François Joseph Talma (1763-1826) had produced a French language version of Shakespeare's text a few months earlier (October 1815) at the Académie Royale de Musique, a "profound" performance, "among the most beautiful in a long time" (*Journal de Paris* 20 Octobre 1815: 3-4). Henry's piece was also successful—in Paris

and beyond. He toured with his *Hamlet*, in which he performed the role of Hamlet; a German translation of the scenario appeared in 1817 after Henry led a performance of it at the Kärnthnerthortheater in Vienna, although the German translation describes the piece as a "five-act ballet," not a three-act pantomime, and contains five scene changes, not three. Yet the translation is quite close to the original and the music, by Count Robert de Gallenberg (1783-1839), was the same, even if the actors, except for Henry, were different. In Paris, Henry used actors from the Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin, including, in the role of Gertrude, Marie Quériau, who, "as a mime," enjoyed a "European reputation" (d'Argé 1823: 502), but also a large corps of dancers. In Vienna, Henry employed Austrian and Neapolitan dancers, including his own wife, who performed the role of Gertrude, but apparently not as large a ballet corps as in Paris. Some ballet historians refer to the work as a ballet, although the term "ballet" at the Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin and in German-speaking lands did not mean quite the same thing as it did in the "official" ballet culture of the Paris Opera. Yet in neither Paris nor Vienna did anyone consider calling the work a ballet pantomime, still a popular genre throughout Europe. Henry produced dances for the Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin and choreographed a prodigious number of ballets in Naples at the Teatro San Carlos, but because he clearly identified his works as pantomimes, ballets, or ballet pantomimes, the distinction between his *Hamlet* as a "pantomime tragique" in Paris and as a ballet in Vienna is puzzling, and may have more to do with audience expectations than with performance aesthetics, so that in Vienna "ballet" competed more effectively with official Parisian authority over the term (see also Sheidley 1993: 56-60). In both the French and German versions of the scenario, the action unfolds pantomimically. One action follows another in rapid succession, with each action adding to the construction of the narrative and introducing complexities of emotion, motive, and relations, sometimes deceptive, between characters. Act III, Scene 2 even contains dialogue between Hamlet and Gertrude when Hamlet accuses his mother and Claudius of his father's murder. But the pantomimic action from scene to scene is remarkably vivid, concise, and intense. Here, for example, is Act I, Scene 4:

> *Ophelia, daughter of the latter [Claudius], appears. Hamlet, in his approach, reveals a feeling so violent that Gertrude perceives that he is madly in love.*
> *Considering his desire, she asks if the princess has captured his heart. Hamlet avows the passion he has conceived for Ophelia, who, despite the blush that covers her face, suggests that she returns the feelings of her lover. Gertrude, stirred by his wishes, proposes to Claudius to unite them. The latter, concealing his rage, pretends to consent* (Henry 1816: 7).

To convey these actions swiftly yet convincingly, without clumsy exaggeration or danced repetitiveness, requires considerable performative and directorial sophistication. Much of the piece is a chamber drama involving only four characters (Hamlet, Claudius, Gertrude, and Ophelia), with Norceste (Laertes) appearing occasionally to receive and execute Hamlet's "secret orders." The large ballet corps performs in the two *fêtes* that celebrate the coronations of Claudius (Act I, Scene 6) and then Hamlet (Act II, Scene 9). The conclusion of the piece is significantly different from Shakespeare's original telling. In a subterranean tribunal, Hamlet appears before the Senate, accused by Claudius of conspiracy against the state. To save her son, Gertrude confesses to the crimes committed by herself and Claudius, but Claudius persuades the Senate that she is merely acting out of motherly protectiveness. The Senate condemns Hamlet to death. Ophelia then appears to affirm Hamlet's innocence. But when the Senate appears unmoved, she draws a dagger from her breast and stabs Claudius to death. A blast of lightning strikes the scene and the subterranean chamber becomes engulfed by a darkness out of which arises the apparition of Hamlet's father, who signifies the real assassins and Hamlet's innocence. Gertrude falls dead, as the apparition raises the crown to Hamlet. While few would propose that this ending offers the depth of tragedy with which Shakespeare concluded his *Hamlet*, Henry's version does possess a weight or gravity of feeling, a gripping austerity or solemnity of mood, that Cuvelier, with his heavy reliance on grandiose spectacle, never achieves. The piece evokes as no other pantomime of the time the old, ominous dumb shows that Shakespeare himself knew and used in *Hamlet*.

The Shakespearean pantomimes may have brought the genre to a new level of seriousness, but this new level of seriousness did not secure a

sturdy future for the large-scale dramatic pantomime that had evolved over the seventy years since Angiolini and Audinot had introduced it. By 1821, Viganò was dead, Cuvelier focused on melodrama until his death in 1824, and Henry had decided that his future lay in ballet, chiefly in Naples. Continually frustrated in his dealings wth the boulevard theaters, Hapdé had by then largely retreated from moving to a "higher level" of production or from producing any new theater works, his last resonant writing being a moving account of the military hospitals he supervised under Napoleon, *Les Sépulcres de la Grande Armée* (1814). Perhaps his most interesting pantomime was the four-act *L'Enlèvement d'Hélène et le fameux cheval de Troyes* (1811), an almost unimaginably vast spectacle requiring a gigantic cast--Helen, Paris Menelaus, Ulysses, Philoctetes, Pyrrhus, Achilles, Agamemnon, Laokoon, Priam, Hector, Penthesilea, Andromaque, many gods, Amazons, Trojans, Greeks, to mention but a few—and one monumental scene after the next to support the story of a woman rescued from her "abduction" at an enormous cost. In 1814, Hapdé published a pamphlet, *De l'Anarchie théâtrale*, in which he argued that Parisian theater culture had sunk into a self-destructive chaos because theatrical genres had become so confused and disordered, with theaters producing too many shows that included too many incongruous performance elements in a doomed effort to be serious and excessively indulgent toward audiences at the same time. To curtail this aesthetic and economic "anarchy," Hapdé proposed that the government set up a system or an administrative unit that defined all theatrical genres, established rules for their production, and advanced laws regulating theaters according to the genres assigned to them. A sympathetic reviewer for the *Journal de Paris* blamed the anarchy on the melodrama, a creation of the Revolution, which destroyed all genres by absorbing them. But he recommended an "active surveillance" of the theaters, because the melodrama was more the creation of its audience than of persons possessing any refinement of taste. Hapdé's proposal was actually too tame, but the reviewer's was sarcastic: a count or baron should be present in each theater, accompanied by soldiers with bayonets. At gunpoint, audiences would receive orders to whistle at protected, powerful men and untalented actresses, "as was done before" [the Revolution]. "And it would also be nice to restore those wise provisions" in which a young girl, seduced by gold or the "vilest ministers of pleasure" was "exempt from the holiest authority" as soon as the pensionaires of the Académie Royale de

Musique were enrolled (*Journal de Paris* 30 September 1815: 3-4). But this convoluted jesting nevertheless constructs a useful insight: the reviewer implies that theater audiences had become deeply, rigidly, perhaps even inescapably fixated on the melodramatic narrative in which an heroic figure (usually male) rescues an innocent victim (usually female) from a predatory but (usually) not alluring character. Only by force, "at gunpoint," would audiences endure any modification or abandonment of this narrative structure. This assertion may seem exaggerated, but consider variations of the "dramatic situation" that seriously alter the emotional texture of the narrative structure: a heroic figure fails to save an innocent person from a predatory character (the classic tragic structure). Or: a heroic figure saves a person who is really not innocent or changes from innocent to evil (predatory). Or: the person who saves an innocent character is not innocent or not consistently heroic. Or: a predatory figure becomes more alluring to the innocent person than the heroic figure and perhaps only God can "save" the innocent person, as in the late medieval Dutch miracle play *Marike van Nijmegen* (ca. 1499) (Coigneau 2002: 148-149). Or: the heroic figure must save a predatory figure from an innocent person who has become predatory. Or: as the reviewer for the *Journal of Paris* suggested, the narrative contains no innocent person; a young girl has to overcome repressive moral scruples and "good" people to save herself from a dismal existence. These alternative narrative structures were not more difficult to construct than the dominant model of the heroic rescue of innocence. Rather, they were more difficult to imagine, because any alternative to the dominant model would bring about the collapse or at least a deep uncertainty of the morality projected through the model. Indeed, the dominant or default narrative model of the heroic rescue of innocence was so powerful that it functioned almost like a religion engulfing theater audiences, who by no means consisted merely of dull, pious illiterates.

The reasons for the rather abrupt end of the Empire style pantomime in the early 1820s are peculiar because they arose out of a peculiar set of conditions. The spectacle pantomimes did not disappear because audiences had grown tired of them or because audiences sought a "higher level" of pantomime than producers supplied or because other entertainments had somehow rendered pantomime obsolete or uncompetitive. On the contrary: well before 1820, the Cirque Olympique was the only venue in Paris supplying spectacle pantomimes, though not only these, and this huge

theater, operating between April and October, continuously attracted larger audiences per performance than probably any other theater in the city. Pantomime did not benefit greatly from attentive theater criticism, although the heavy censorship of the era severely limited the capacity of the press to introduce moral, aesthetic, or political ideas that did not receive approval from the government. A royalist and then a Bonapartist, Jean Louis Geoffroy (1743-1814), was a pioneer of the *feuilleton* for the *Journal des débats* and a kind of public spokesman for imperial France (Bara 2008: 166-167). He was a conservative who believed that the greatness of French theater manifested itself through the use of the French language, especially as Racine and Corneille had revealed its expressive power. He nevertheless acknowledged that pantomime is "often more eloquent than speech," even if "we are not really as passionate about pantomime as it had once become for the Greeks and Romans" (Geoffroy, *Cours* V 1820: 127). He wrote long, enthusiastic reviews of the ballet pantomimes produced by Gardel, for the Opera ballet company, and by Gardel's chief rival, Jean-Louis Aumer (1774-1833) for the Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin, especially the latter's hugely ambitious and luxurious *Cléopâtre, reine d'Égypte* (1808), whose impressive and tragic third act, "it is best to remember is not a ballet but a pantomime; for the ancient Romans, far from forbidding the tragic in pantomime, made all the Greek tragedies into pantomimes" (Geoffroy, *Cours* V 1820: 139). Geoffroy, like Marmontel, was always doubtful that ballet or pantomime could represent ideas or philosophical perspectives. Yet in his long review of *Cléopâtre*, his own description of what he saw shows that the piece was quite effective in representing through physical action a fairly complex relationship between political and sexual power even as he claims that pantomime is incapable of doing it:

> *The world divided between two masters, one a bad warrior, but a good politician; another a good captain, but a slave to his passions; fortune and victory siding with reason and caution, leaving valor lost to debauchery, the complete toy of a coquette: these are objects that pantomime cannot attain; but as the artifices of a new Armide seduce a warrior, the whole arsenal of the coquetry becomes more attractive, the loves, the games, the smiles, the zephyrs, the nymphs, the orgies of Bacchus, the intoxication joy, love and wine, none of this gets better in the character of an opera* (Geoffroy, *Cours* V 1820: 135).

Aumer even complicated the narrative by introducing the character of Octavia, the sister of Octavian and the wife of Anthony, to put Anthony not only between Cleopatra and Octavian, but between Cleopatra and Octavia, while putting Octavia between Anthony and Octavian, as well as between Anthony and Cleopatra. Anthony "turns to his wife with tender looks; but his eye is inflamed at the sight of his mistress: pity pleads for Octavia, love decides for Cleopatra" (Geoffroy, *Cours* V 1820: 136). Geoffroy displayed, however, an even more ambivalent attitude toward pure pantomime, although most of what he reviewed as "pantomime" were ballet pantomimes produced at Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin. He was generous in his praise of the astonishing skill of pantomime performers at incarnating complex characters entirely through movement, especially female actors, such as Madame Quériâu, a "vulgar" dancer, but a brilliant actress, who (in 1806), while "very distinguished in comic pantomime," had (in *Jenny, ou le marriage secret*) "come to surpass herself in tragic pantomime: it is difficult to carry theatrical expression any further or to paint with greater energy the passions of the soul through the movements of the body and the face" (425). He saw pantomime as an art of performers and even gave advice on pantomime performance: "if [a pantomime] would be truly moving, he will be sober in his performance; he will not fatigue so much with convulsive movements. Nothing announces a cold actor better than the exaggeration of play [*jeu*]" (428). But Geoffroy was never insightful about the narratives he described in detail, nor did he have much at all to say about the significance of pantomime for his time other than occasionally to contrast it with the Romans. His reviews of shows at the Cirque Olympique were much shorter than his reviews of the ballet pantomimes of Gardel and Aumer; these focused on the use of picturesque effects and trained wild animals, although he surmised that the Romans probably surpassed contemporary Paris in the production of such entertainments. Still, "the elephant at the Cirque is remarkable for his docility; at least he is a curiosity of nature, brought in to attract the attention of reasonable people as much as any curiosity of art" (439). Even so, Geoffroy was almost the only critic writing about this rich period of pantomime history, in great contrast to all the pre-Revolutionary philosophical discourse on pantomime. When he died in 1814, press commentary on pantomime became very scarce, at best not much more

than occasional announcements of pantomime performances. While the absence of an external published discourse on pantomime did not seem to harm attendance at pantomime performances, it failed to exert any pressure on pantomime culture to move beyond the borders of audience expectations. Such pressure had to issue from within pantomime culture. But unlike in the Roman pantomime culture, this pressure within the Parisian pantomime culture was not the result of competition between pantomimes or pantomime companies, for the political environment under Bonaparte and then under the Bourbons was hostile to competition as a strategy for revising and raising audience expectations. The distinction between pantomime and ballet pantomime, though at times muddled in practice, served, like the scheduling of performances, to inhibit competition between companies for audiences of the same category of entertainment.

The Empire style spectacle pantomime came to an abrupt end because those who created it no longer had anything to offer in the genre. Despite Geoffroy's focus on pantomime performers, the spectacle pantomime was the medium of scenarists and directors, not performers. The huge casts for spectacle pantomimes show that many actors possessed skill in pantomimic performance. Except for Henri Franconi, however, none of this prodigious pantomimic talent manifested any ability to construct pantomimic narratives. Only a few persons could actually think out pantomimic action as a "serious" narrative that could attract audiences. Of these few, Cuvelier dominated so powerfully that the others found it extremely difficult to imagine narratives outside of the narrative paradigm or model that he established. To imagine three serious, coherent acts of pantomimic action involving numerous characters and seductive scenic effects is a very rare talent, even if it never achieves the visionary artistic grandeur of Viganò. It was so much easier to tell a melodramatic story with dialogue and monologues. It was also less costly: large-scale pantomimic action required much more preparation and rehearsal time. Melodramas may not have attracted larger audiences than pantomimes, but they probably produced greater profits. To justify the costs, creative as well as financial, of producing spectacle pantomimes, scenarists had to move the "serious" pantomime to a "higher level." But it was clear that a higher level did not require an enhancement of pantomimic performance skill or of scenic splendor. From the perspective of Cuvelier, who was the controlling spirit of the spectacle pantomime, a higher level meant innovation in the

narrative organization of pantomimic action. The turn to Shakespeare was an effort to invest the spectacle pantomime with a deeper level of seriousness, but Cuvelier's unwillingness to abandon the heroic rescue of innocence model of narrative structure showed that he had reached the limit of his imagination in constructing a narrative that he believed would attract audiences large enough to pay for its performance. To work on a smaller scale, as Henry had with his *Hamlet*, was apparently not a sustainable option. Though Henry's production for the Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin appears to have enjoyed considerable success even outside of Paris, he seems to have decided that he could achieve just as much success with less creative toil by producing ballets and ballet pantomimes. In any case, at the Cirque Olympique, which by 1820 was the sole producer of spectacle pantomimes, the huge performance space was not conducive to small-scale productions; without grandeur and grandiosity of production, the theater had no audience. In the 1820s, the Franconis realized that audiences no longer required melodramatic stories and morality to justify their pleasure in spectacle. A new narrative model was more profitable: a program of circus acts that built tension and excitement through the astute juxtaposition of discrete acrobatic and scenic stunts rather than through a unified narrative that had to accommodate the constraints imposed upon "stories" by the tediously narrow morality of the era. But viewed from the twenty-first century, the Empire style pantomime appears as an incredible accomplishment, unimaginable in our own time, not because our own time lacks the resources but because our own time lacks confidence in unregulated bodily signification to sustain audience attention on such a large narrative scale. Cuvelier's era could not move pantomime beyond the narrative paradigm he perfected, but our own era suffers great difficulty even in building large narratives entirely out of bodily movements that are not dances, not a bunch of steps, positions, and movement tropes imposed upon the body to prevent narrative from urging the body to override systems designed to regulate it and keep it from attempting stories that are "too difficult" to tell.

Non-French (Female) Experiments in Pantomime

Outside of imperial France, a peculiar type of pantomime, designated at the time as "attitudes," deserves attention for bringing "seriousness" to a small-scale mode of pantomimic performance that was

entirely the creation of female performers. Kirsten Gram Holmström has written extensively about the "attitudes" phenomenon in her 1967 book *Monodrama, Attitudes, Tableaux Vivants*. Here the intent is to situate the performance of attitudes within the larger context of pantomime history. The inventor of the attitude was an English woman, Emma Hamilton (1765-1815). Born into very humble circumstances, she adopted different names and "roles" as a way to advance up the English social hierarchy. By the time she was a teenager, she was a popular entertainer at stag parties given by aristocratic men. Through her connections with these men, she became, around 1783, a model for the artist George Romney (1734-1802), who painted numerous famous portraits of her posing as mythic figures. Romney's portraits enabled her to gain admission into the upper levels of London society. She became the mistress and eventually the wife of Sir William Hamilton, the British ambassador to Naples. At his sumptuous Neapolitan villa, Emma and William hosted lavish diplomatic parties. In 1787, Emma Hamilton began performing attitudes. These were always salon entertainments, never for public audiences and never with any commercial motive. Originally, the attitudes or "mimoplastic art" consisted of twelve poses of mythic figures inspired by paintings or statues. Hamilton then introduced dancelike movements as transitions from one pose to the next, although it is not clear to what extent, if any, music accompanied her performances. Within the salon environment, "Lady Hamilton appeared as if in an arena, in the ordinary lighting of the room, with the spectators gathered around her. [...] Her only properties consisted of two or three cashmere shawls and occasionally she held some object such as an urn, a lyre or a tambourine" (Holmström 1967: 114-115). According to William Hamilton, an attitude was the image of an emotion, and Emma's purpose was to introduce "a new genre on the borderline between pictorial art and theater [...] an attempt to widen the boundaries of pictorial art" (140). But she was close to the Roman pantomime aesthetic in the idea of performance as movement from one pose to the next, one emotion to the next, and one character to the next. Her performances attracted the enthusiastic attention of prominent literary and fine arts personalities, such as Goethe, in Naples (1787) and the painter Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun (1755-1842) for whom Hamilton modeled in 1790. In 1791, a German artist, Friedrich Rehberg (1758-1835), did a series of twelve engravings depicting the attitudes Hamilton performed; an Italian artist Tommaso [Thomas]

Piroli (1754-1824) copied them, and the Piroli engravings provide perhaps the best view of how the performance worked as a sequence, even though they "do not succeed in conveying the special artistic atmosphere of the attitudes, which arose from an intensive instant of immobility carrying with it the seed of a lightning-swift movement" (120) [Figure 65]. The Rehberg-Piroli drawings depict twelve character poses: Sibylle, Maria Magdalena, Lonely Dreamer in Love, Sophinisbe, Amyone, the Muse of Dance Art (Terpsichore), Hygiene, Nymph, Priestess, Cleopatra, Holy Rosa, Niobe; but apparently her most remarkable character was Medea, not depicted by Rehberg-Piroli. Hamilton performed the attitudes in London (1791), again in Naples (1792), and as late as 1800 in Dresden. Hamilton moved from sitting to standing to sitting again to standing to reclining to dancing to kneeling, and so forth, and she performed a different emotion with each pose, so that, for example, each of her three sitting poses conveyed a different idea of the relation between sitting and feeling (brooding, wistful, forlorn). Hamilton was a serious performer, but she had "no direct successors" (140). Rather, the appeal of her performance lay in its social exclusivity: she embodied the aristocratic fantasy of bringing to life idealized neoclassical images of mythic women, of dissolving the distinction between model and subject, between life and and art.



Figure 65: Drawings of "attitudes" performed by Emma Hamilton by Tommaso Piroli, based on the original drawings by Friedrich Rehberg (1794). Top: Niobe. Bottom: Cleopatra. Photos: Royal Museum Greenwich.

A different approach to mimoplastic performance came from Ida Brun (1792-1857). She was born into one of the wealthiest families in Denmark. Her mother, Frederike (1765-1835), an ambitious poet and author of books describing her travels in Europe, befriended many of the major Danish and German literary figures. As a small child, Ida displayed a precocious artistic talent that Frederike encouraged obsessively within the highly cultivated milieu to which she provided access through her influential salon. In 1824, she published a memoir, addressed directly to Ida, though dedicated to her friend Madame de Staël (1766-1817), that described her daughter's "aesthetic education" in an effort to discredit the belief within her milieu that she, Frederike, had damaged her daughter by using her performances to advance her own ambitions as a cultural broker, for "throughout her life, [Ida] remained childish and immature," despite being so often in the presence of some of the greatest minds in Europe (Holmström 1967: 162). Frederike explained how Ida, at the age of five, revealed her gift for pantomime when, during a *soirée* in Copenhagen, the composer "Weise [...] improvised wonderfully on our piano; then you broke out for the first time into pantomime, extemporizing beautiful and noble positions appropriate to the extemporized music, in which at the same time there also appeared pictures from the antique that had impressed themselves on the young soul" (Brun 1824: 75). Early on, Frederike kept Ida from attending theater performances, because she was afraid that Ida would become "perverted into a dancer" (Brun 1824: 74). At the age of nine, however, Ida had begun pantomiming scenes from Sophocles's *Electra* for her mother's salon audiences, and she consistently showed a "preference for the highly tragic, in pantomime as well as in song" (Brun 1824: 88). Ida's knowledge of tragic characters came from salon readings of the classic texts and from images seen in books and museums. Frederike seems to have drawn inspiration from Hamilton's performance of attitudes, but she apparently never actually saw Hamilton perform. Ida combined pantomime with singing (such as Gluck and Cimarosa arias) in a manner that remains obscure, for Frederike claims that Ida's performances were largely improvised, though she wore costumes and used props specifically designed for her characters. In 1802, she performed at the Roman home of the artist Angelica Kauffmann, whose rapturous response indicated to Frederike that it was time to organize her life around the scheduling of Ida's salon performances. Ida performed before numerous major cultural figures in

Europe, including Madame de Staël, Goethe, Canova, the Humboldts, and Adam Oehlenschläger, among many others. She posed for the great Danish neoclassical sculptor Bertil Thorvaldsen in 1809, and then, in 1811, for the great Danish neoclassical painter Johan Ludvig Lund. Yet a clear picture of her performances remains elusive. Between 1805 and 1810, Christian Heinrich Kniep (1755-1825) did a series of fine drawings of her performing, although it is difficult to see how the images relate to each other as a performance [Figure 66]. But the narrative organization of her pantomimes receives muddled treatment from those who wrote about her, including her mother.



Figure 66: Drawing of Ida Brun by Christian Heinrich Kniep (1805-1810). Photo: Bakkehusmuseet, Copenhagen.

In *De'l'Allemagne* (1813), Madame de Staël wrote lushly but cryptically about Ida's performances:

> *Her dancing is just a succession of ephemeral masterpieces, which one longs to fix for ever; and Ida's mother has conceived in her thoughts everything which her child expresses by her movements. Madame Brun's poems reveal a thousand beauties in art and nature which our careless glances have not discovered. I have seen Ida, while still a child, represent Althaea about to burn the torch on which the life of her son Meleager depends; she expressed, without a word, the grief, the mental strife, the terrible resolution of a mother. No doubt her animated looks served to make us understand what was passing in her heart, but the art of varying her gestures, and draping herself artistically in the purple mantle which she wore, produced at least as much effect as her countenance. She frequently remained a long time in the same attitude, and each time no painter could have invented anything better than the picture which she improvised* (Plon 1874: 39; De Staël 1852: 377-378).

Frederike describes one of Ida's performances, from 1804, somewhat more mysteriously:

> *I had read to you the whole of the Psyche of Apuleius out of Lucian; from old pictorial representations you had called these into the life of marble; and on a beautiful afternoon in September, at the moment when Weise was there, the darkened room in which I lay was opened; the sofa was brought before the door leading into the salon, which was fantastically and mysteriously decorated with shrubbery; a lawn altar and other necessary properties—and you appeared on the altar costumed as Venus, before you a group of maidens sacrificing incense (from the other small room opposite were heard Weise's accompanying chords), and there you alone carried through the entire cycle of the legend in light joy, deep sorrow and frightful truth—while your expressive gesture made the absent seem present, and the beloved god or frightful goddess seemed in your poses, expressions and looks, as fleeting but longed for or as fear-awakening* (Brun 1824: 84).

In 1805, Ida performed for Madame de Staël in Geneva a scene called *Canephores* (*The Choephori*), with a "dark bedroom, onto which my salon

opened, as background: You, veiled, on the pedestal, the light falling on you sideways from above; soft, animating music, and after the animation, the Canephores distributing gifts." And then Ida was Althea, the mother of Meleager: "The dark room in the background opened with a feeble illumination, and the slain brothers appeared on the right side on a large couch; while I had intended something different, Madame de Staël had reserved for herself the preparation of the torch with which Althea touches off the fire that is supposed to burn the fateful funeral pyre and, in it, the life of the son" (Brun 1824: 86). The idea of a twelve-year old girl performing Venus, a grieving mother, or Electra is a bit strange, but perhaps the impact of her performances was not entirely as Karen Klitgaard Povlsen has described it when she writes: "Ida was the nineteenth-century ideal of woman *par excellence*: white marble, graceful, and silent; the muse, ready to receive masculinity's fantasies about the feminine" (Povlsen 2011: Paragraph 20). As Frederike observes, the improvisatory nature of the performance allowed Madame de Staël to intervene in the Althea performance and shape it, which precipitated some tension between the two women. Madame de Staël blurred the distinction between mothering and directing. For Frederike, the tragic pantomimes were a way of making an art out of mothering, of making a daughter into a work of art, of making motherhood and daughterhood a revelation of superior "aesthetic development." Holmström (1967: 240) refers to "a divine endowment within a sectarian project," by which she means that Frederike saw Ida's "genius" as something God had provided as the basis for releasing her own maternal genius. But others seem to recognize this "genius." In 1806, the literary theorist and historian August Schlegel (1767-1845) dedicated a poem to Ida Brun. In a short preface to the poem, he asserted:

> *This designation "of ideal Dance" is, however, not a completely accurate term of her talent, because in our best performing dances there is still too much empty meaning that merely demonstrates physical dexterity. Mlle. Brun does not limit herself merely to plastic mimicry or to the art of and beautifully painterly positions, for which some women for several years have acquired universal admiration. She puts dramatic coherence into her representations, and enfolds within each different degrees of feeling and passion, their shifts and transitions. But it is not at the same time mere pantomime, instead all*

> *her movements find the music, that is, they relate to merely natural gestures as the soaring of the voice in song to common speech* (Schlegel 1846: 254).

In the poem itself, he gives some idea of the sequence of figures Ida performed:

> *Take the bow and the arrow,*
> *And, as Diana, lose*
> *Proud courage in the grove.*
> *You will be scared of Aegis,*
> *With the helmet covering your forehead,*
> *You will be Jove's daughter.*
> *Scattering roses, you are Aurore;*
> *Bearing the basket, Kanephore,*
> *In the splendor of the festival procession.*
> *You pour from the sacrificial bowl;*
> *Now veil yourself, Vestal,*
> *Guarding the eternal hearth.*
> *Let your hair fly, Bacchante;*
> *Gird yourself, and as Atalante*
> *Are victorious in your lilting race.*
> *Soon, only a chorus of Muses*
> *Swells the virginal bosom,*
> *An abundance of enchantment.*
> *You, Althaea, I saw with a shudder,*
> *After a long struggle and resistance*
> *The mysterious fire*
> *Fanning into the glow of death*
> *And despairing then bleeding,*
> *Turn the dagger on yourself.* (Schlegel 1846: 256)

Schlegel's poem indicates altogether ten different mythic figures in Ida's pantomime repertoire, which "she dresses with the highest grace, and which she never abandons, even when expressing tragic passions with the most shocking boldness and depth" (Schlegel 1846: 254). Ida performed other characters that Schlegel does not mention: Andromache, Athena,

Venus. But he does convey the sense that the pantomimes were as much a poetic as a pictorial phenomenon, a kind of beautiful action that no image could capture. It was also a fragile phenomenon. Ida's health was not robust, and as she approached the end of her adolescence, she became moody, ambivalent about performing, and it was as if the poetic allure of her pantomimes depended on her ability to incarnate a mysterious convergence of great, tragic womanhood within a childish or immature girl's body. She stopped performing in 1810 or 1811. Frederike insinuated that Ida's pantomimes came to an end because of the stir created by the solo pantomimes of Henriette Hendel-Schütz, who performed in public: "In the late autumn of 1812, Henriette Händel Schütz fell down upon us like a meteor, unexpected, unforeseen"; moreover, it was Madame de Staël, writing from Finland, who proclaimed Hendel-Schütz as a "very remarkable picturesque and dramatic talent" (Brun 1824: 95-96). By performing solo pantomimes in public for money, Hendel-Schütz attracted the scrutiny of critics and commentators in the press. Frederike probably felt that such scrutiny could only jeopardize the mother-daughter aesthetic project she had guided within the refined, insulated, aristocratic salon culture over which she presided.

Henriette Hendel-Schütz (1772-1849) pursued yet another approach to solo tragic pantomime outside of France during the Napoleonic era. She was born in Saxony into a theatrical family and made her first appearance on the stage at the age of two. From an early age, she studied, in Gotha, Breslau, and Berlin, acting, ballet, Italian pantomime, painting, sculpture, and music under highly respected teachers, including Johann Engel, Georg Benda, Johan Georg Pforr, Wilhelm Iffland, Johann Gottfried Schadow, and August Schlegel. Even as a teenager, she had a busy career in the theater playing secondary roles in operas and plays at provincial theaters until 1796, when she began a ten-year career at the Berlin National Theater directed by Wilhelm Iffland. She married a tenor when she was sixteen, but the couple divorced in 1797, when she married again. But the second marriage, to a physician, ended in 1805, when she married another physician, named Hendel, who died a few weeks later while treating typhus patients at a military hospital. Her efforts to lead a quiet bourgeois domestic life with two children suddenly seemed unrealizable and she returned to the theater. While studying painting under Johann Georg Pforr in Frankfurt around 1795, she became aware of the Rehberg-Piroli drawings of Lady Hamilton's

attitudes performances, which impressed her so much that "it was pantomime and the plastic body pose that, for an entire decade, she tried, in silence, in her innermost being to fathom with the utmost diligence" (*Erinnerungen* 1870: 7-8). In Halle, she made the acquaintance of the philosophy professor Karl Julius Schütz (1779-1844), who introduced her to the Dresden archeologist Karl Böttiger (1760-1835), a figure of considerable influence with many influential friends in the cultural sphere. Böttiger was at the time perhaps the preeminent German scholar of ancient theater, having published treatises on ancient tragic masks in 1799 and 1801. He was also a controversial theater critic, who, in 1795, had published in the *Journal des Luxus und die Mode* a long critique of the Rehberg drawings of Lady Hamilton; in 1796, he published a book describing the evolution of actor-manager Wilhelm Iffland's acting style, including occasional pantomimic gestures (bodily movements). Then in 1802, he published an essay describing how the myth of Ariadne and Bacchus might be performed as a pantomime "according to Xenophon," with some reference to Lucian (Böttiger 1802: 9-20). With the assistance of Schütz and Böttiger, Henriette immersed herself in the imagery and aesthetics of ancient tragic performance and thus "discovered her genius" (Zernin 1870: 10). She married Schütz, who became her partner in the performance of solo tragic pantomimes that came even closer to the Roman model than either Hamilton or Brun. Hendel-Schütz gave her first pantomime performance in Frankfurt in 1808, and she continued her solo performances until 1817, appearing in various German cities and then in Finland, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Amsterdam, St. Petersburg, and Paris, although French audiences in 1813 were much less enthusiastic about her "representations" than her German, Dutch, and Scandinavian audiences. The anonymously edited *Erinnerungen* (1870: 38) contended that her performances "combined ancient and modern plasticity." Her movements "were not copies of real statues or paintings but self-invented situations" that often had as much a literary as a pictorial inspiration. Moreover, she developed different historical styles of movement; the Zernin edition identifies an ancient (which sometimes included Egyptian motifs), an Italian (Renaissance), and an "old German" style of performance, which together form a "poetic-dramatic mime." In the ancient style, she presented, around 1809, Isis, Carayatid, Ariadne, Cassandra, and Odalisque. The Italian style consisted entirely of scenes from the Bible, depicting the Madonna in relation to

several events from Christ's life and crucifixion. The old German style presented scenes of "Mary," rather than of the Madonna, in what was presumably a Protestant enactment of the Annunciation and the Transfiguration of Christ's mother. Hendel-Schütz used musical accompaniment, and some of her movements were dancelike, but the nature of the music remains unclear. The Ziernen edition explains that the Dresden composer Friedrich Kaufmann (1785-1866) devised an "acoustical cabinet" to accompany the pantomimes, and the "harmonichords" produced by this cabinet induced a reverent mood in the spectator. Apparently the harmonichords were similar to the four-voice male acapella cathedral choirs in Berlin and Düsseldorf (*Erinnerungen* 1870: 50-51), but these "sweet-melting sounds" came from a machine that produced trumpet tones and melodies automatically, although Kaufmann did not introduce the acoustical cabinet until 1810 at the earliest (Wolf 2011: 29-66). For some scenes, the accompaniment also included literary passages spoken by Professor Schütz, who resigned his position at Halle University to tour with his wife. Another thing that was unique to Hendel-Schütz's performance aesthetic was the lack of poses: she was never a statue or "frozen" into an image, as was the case with the Romans and with Hamilton and Brun. Even when she was still or in a state of repose, what struck the viewer was sense of her being continuously "alive" and never "framed" or "frozen" into a picture, although commentators tended to compare what they saw in performance to famous artworks by such artists as Raphael, Corregio, Canova, or Dürer. Indeed, when Joseph Nicholas Perroux (1771-1849) published in 1809 his 26 "pantomimic positions" of Hendel-Schütz, he depicted her in stilted poses rather than in pantomimic action, as if pantomimic action could not be represented as anything other than a finality of action, a "position" by which a gesture immobilized the body of the performer and turned her into a figure in a frieze, an effect somewhat contradicted by the two-line poetic captions [Figure 67]. However, commentators of her performances suggest that she evoked paintings rather than imitated them (*Erinnerungen* 1870: 50). She performed on a stage rather than in a salon, but she didn't rely much on scenery to create a pictorial context for the action. According to the memoirs,

> *She gave [a performance] on a small stage, with a performance space enclosed by walls on three sides covered with black or gray cloth and*

> *the required painting wavering in background. Out of disdain for all ordinary surprise effects she never used a curtain, before which indeed the clumsiest person could easily adopt a tolerable attitude, but she went constantly close to the eyes of the audience, without strange props or a mirror being necessary, from one representation to the other. In these transitions she revealed most notably her peculiar talent in the quickest play of gestures and drapery and her extraordinary ease, agility and assurance in the assembly of both the main figures and the surrounding groups. At the same time, she developed the resolution of an attitude and the formation of another attitude again into most diverse positions, which, although quite unintentional, for many connoisseurs were almost as picturesque and ideal as the attitudes themselves* (52).

It is not clear from this passage what the difference is between a position, which seems to refer to the character, and an attitude, which seems to refer to the emotion signified, but the emphasis is on "the play of gestures" and the rapid metamorphosis of the performer from one figure to the next, without many theatrical effects—she makes imaginative use of garments and shawls and keeps close to the audience, as if to separate herself from a theatrical frame.

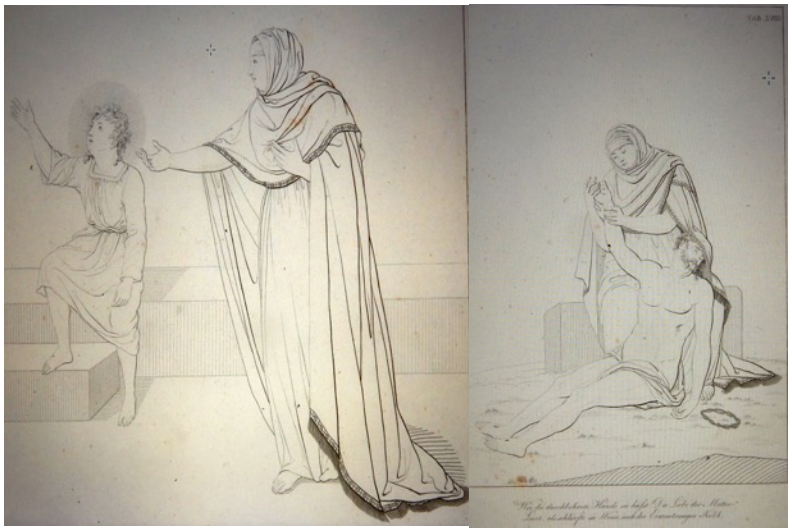


Figure 67: Drawings by Joseph Nicholas Perroux depicting "pantomimic positions" performed by Henriette Hendel-Schütz (1809). Photo: from Perroux (1809: Plates VII, XII, XVIII).

She also refused to use light from above that would put her in a circle of illumination into which she had to remain during the performance. Instead, she used an Argand lamp set at the side of the stage that allowed her to move about freely while casting strong, dramatic shadows, a "beautifully painterly" chiaroscuro effect that is completely absent from Perroux's drawings (53). A Dresden artist claimed that she could perform eighteen positions within six minutes, and each position could produce an "irreproachable painting" (51). The stage performances were undoubtedly much longer, but this comment indicates Hendel-Schütz's considerable skill in contracting, expanding or reconfiguring the narrative organization of the "positions" through her movements rather than through an external structure of scenic panels into which she placed herself, even if her commentators continually refer to her "painterly" effects or "living pictures." What they stress is the visual dimension to performance, which becomes diminished or veiled with the use speech, music, or even dance when it conceals the body within its own "positions" and steps. Hendel-Schütz added characters to her repertoire, but apparently at the expense of the religious figures that were part of her original set of solo pantomimes, for the newer figures came largely from classical mythology: Psyche, Galathea, Niobe, Agrippina, Medea, and a "Sphinx position," "which has already caused so much scandal [. . .] for here she succeeds in symbolizing the transition from animal symbolism to the new anthropomorphism" (46). But perhaps one of her most difficult characters was the Penthesilea she introduced in Berlin 1811. This "position" was actually Scene 23 from the vast tragic drama *Penthesilea* (1808) by Heinrich von Kleist (1777-1811). The blank verse play depicts the entirely female Amazon society ruled by Queen Penthesilea, who leads an attack on the Greeks and captures Achilles, with whom she falls in love against the Amazonian law forbidding affection between males and females or the presence of males within Amazonian society; when Achilles seems not to grasp the seriousness of Penthesilea's love for him, she becomes insane with rage and kills him savagely. In Scene 23, she realizes that the monstrous violence of her emotions was not a terrible dream but an inescapable reality: she dies, unable either to fulfill her love or to uphold the Amazonian law. Kleist never found a theater to produce his great play, which had its first performance only in 1876, but the published text created excitement within intellectual circles and some

controversy because of its violence and strange sexuality (Sembdner 1969: 205-213). Hendel-Schütz's pantomimic performance of Scene 23 ran into difficulties. Professor Schütz prefaced the pantomime with a brief discussion of the play, and then he read the scene while his wife pantomimed it, but commentators found Schütz's efforts "boring" and "unsatisfying": "That the Amazon Queen has committed murder, has been afflicted with the curse from the priestesses, and then has purified herself; that she sees the corpse of the murdered man before her and beside him, soulless and lifeless, sinks down, one saw afterwards better than one had previously heard it" (*Vossische Zeitung*, 25. 4. 1811, Nr. 50). A reviewer for the *Berlinische Nachtrichten* also complained that "such a long continuous pantomime like this always remains somewhat unclear, because of the many conditions that it requires; and the presentation was as little satisfactory as that of Blandine, it goes too far into the Dramatic." This reviewer felt that other scenes in the well-attended performance, particularly the religious ones (Hagar, Ishmael, Magdalena), were far superior because they had a pictorial rather than literary inspiration: "The Egyptian figures appeared now in a yellow veil, and then Isis arose slowly from her seat, which was yet a kind of transition from the Sphinx. [...] The groups from today's Niobe were especially beautiful; impressive were the positions of the mother, because her long veil, spread over her beloved children, was tense in its progressive movement and raised the tenderest of children up to the implacable gods; this physical strength revealed what a powerful nature lives in this woman" (*Spenersche Zeitung*, 25. 4. 1811, Nr. 50). Nevertheless, the Penthesilea scene further indicates the exceptional scope of Hendel-Schütz's willingness to innovate in pantomimic performance and to intensify the degree of "seriousness" applied to the art. She was thirty-five years old when she embarked on the pantomimic project and thus demonstrated that beauty and inventiveness in solo tragic pantomime did not depend entirely on a girlish or a youthful body. In 1815, Professor Schütz published *Blumenlese aus dem Stammbuch der deutschen mimischen Künstlerin Frau Henriette Hendel-Schütz*, which consisted of tributes to her acting and pantomime skills from numerous, major German intellectuals, artists, and theater personalities. But her devotion to pantomime was soon to end. In 1812, her stepdaughter Thekla, and her own two children, Axel and Sappho, had accompanied her on the European tour and performed in some scenes. Thekla was apparently a prodigy, who

displayed a great gift for pantomime as well as other arts, and her mother saw her as one who could succeed and surpass her in the art. But when the family reached Cologne in 1813, Thekla died of scarlet fever (*Erinnerungen* 1870: 14-15). By 1815, Hendel-Schütz had become a widely admired and even beloved figure of German culture, but she was not able to inspire anyone to become her successor in the art of solo tragic pantomime. As she entered her mid-forties, she decided she needed to lead a quieter life. Much of the tragic feeling in her performances probably stemmed from her inability to achieve the healthy domestic life she craved: through four marriages, she became the mother of sixteen children, but only three of her children outlived her. Her marriage suffered much strain because of her husband's gambling addiction, and eventually they separated in 1824. In 1818, she returned to Halle, where her husband received a new appointment at the university and where she maintained a close relationship with her father-in-law from her previous marriage; he provided her with a home after the split from Professor Schütz. For a couple of years, she acted in plays at the Halle Theater, and then she retired completely from the theater. When she stopped performing the solo tragic pantomimes, the genre disappeared, supplanted by altogether less serious ideas about pantomime.

The lack of successors to the solo female tragic pantomime pioneered by Hamilton, Brun, and Hendel-Schütz remains puzzling. Holmström claims that the genre was "entirely dependent on [an] intellectual coterie," and, in the case of Hamilton and Brun, "practiced above all by amateurs as an amusing ingredient of social life." She further remarks: "It is striking that it was only in Germany that the genres were taken seriously. This is probably due to the fact that the professional theater was not yet so firmly established there as it was in France and England," where performers were "not aristocratic amateurs but practicing scholars and artists" (1967: 239). But this assertion is not entirely accurate. German professional theater during the Napoleonic era was actually fairly extensive, with an abundance of court theaters. The "Sturm und Drang" period (ca. 1770-1785), led largely by dramatists, did much to reveal the potential of theater to become a significant cultural, economic, and political institution within German culture. Neither France nor England produced a dramatist as powerful or imaginative in the medium as Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805). Even in the realm of popular theater, the popularity throughout Europe of the melodramatist August von Kotzebue (1761-1819) perhaps exceeded even

that of Pixerecourt. In the realm of theatrical performance, such figures as the actor-manager Wilhelm Iffland (1759-1814), the architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781-1841), and, of course, Goethe bestowed considerable prestige on the professionalization of theater culture. The solo tragic pantomimes possibly appealed to the German intellectual "coterie" because they were a non-French form of neo-classicism. It was a form of pantomime that did not originate from Paris or possess the attributes of the grandiose French pantomime perfected by Cuvelier. It was a serious form of pantomime that did not rely on the overly familiar figures of the *commedia* style of pantomime that infested provincial German theaters with its childishness. With the end of the Napoleonic era, perhaps neoclassical iconography ceased to inspire women (or men) to bring it to life through pantomimic performance. The solo tragic pantomime presented too lonely an image of humanity for a new era increasingly stirred by the ambitions of Romanticism, with its glorification of "unrepressed" voices and exhilarating poetic language. Whatever the reason, the solo tragic pantomime, as an alternative to the grandiose ensemble pantomimes in Paris and Milan, was not able to last even as long as them, and they were largely gone by 1820.

The Rise and Fall of Pierrot



Figure 68: August Bouquet's portrait of Jean-Gaspard Deburau (1830), the defining, archetypal image of Pierrot. Photo: Gallica, Bibliotheque nationale de France (public domain).

Pantomime in the Romantic Era

As a vestige of a neoclassical aesthetic sensibility, pantomime struggled to find a place in the Romantic era. After 1820, with the Cirque Olympique moving more forthrightly and exclusively into the circus business, pantomime in Paris largely confined itself to the Théâtre des Funambules. Since 1816, this theater specialized in programs that included, besides pantomimes, acrobats, clowns, trained animals (dogs in costumes), and rope dancers, including the famous Madame Saqui (1786-1866), a tightrope dancer, who performed, wearing an elaborate costume, on a rope that held her on a steep incline, which she "descended [...] in a veritable delirium of improvisations" (Ginisty 1907: 80). The pantomimes were almost entirely in the *commedia* format and remained devoted to comic conventions that were already ancient. The audience at the Funambules, which seated 776, was apparently largely proletarian, accustomed to eating and drinking while watching the show, and eager to relax within a "mephitic atmosphere" (Baugé 1995: 9; Janin 1881: 15; cf., Nye 2016). The theater possessed excellent machinery for scene changes, but it did not enjoy any prestige and its entertainments never displayed the seriousness, scale, or opulence of the spectacles produced at the Cirque Olympique. Nevertheless, the famous boulevard actor Frederick Lemaitre (1800-1876) began his career there in 1818. But perhaps the biggest star associated with the Funambules was the pantomime Jean-Gaspard Deburau (1796-1846), although the resentful Madame Saqui was not altogether helpful in making room for his stardom. His ascent to stardom was, however, quite peculiar, for while he was indeed very popular with his audience at the Funambules, his stardom owed as much if not more to another audience than those who were regular patrons of the Funambules. He was born in Bohemia to a French soldier and a servant woman. His father turned the family into an itinerant troupe of acrobats that wandered around Europe until they eventually reached Paris in 1816. The Funambules engaged the family as acrobats, but Deburau did not make his debut as a performer before 1819 and possibly much later, for he "alone in this glorious family, without a first name, without even a name, was always the most obscure, the least appreciated, and the most unfortunate artist of the French Empire" (Janin 1881: 41). He performed at first a highly acrobatic pantomime in which comic gags resulted from extravagant leaps, combats, and stunts with props. It seems that from the beginning of his performance career he played

Pierrot and no other role, while other actors in this theater did not have such a fixed relation to the characters they played (cf. Pericaud 1897: 498ff.). Unlike Cuvelier, Deburau did not publish scenarios of his pantomimes, presumably because either his performance depended heavily upon improvisation or it changed from one performance to the next. Yet he did work from scenarios. Isabelle Baugé has published the oldest scenario in which Deburau performed Pierrot, *Le Bœuf enragé* (1827), composed by Charles Nodier, who wrote under the name of Laurent and never wished to be identified as the author of any pantomime scenarios (Baugé 1995: 95-100). The scenario adopts the narrative chaos typical of the *commedia* format, with twelve scenes and each scene lasting about a minute. It is ostensibly about a proposed marriage contract between Boissec and Cassandre's daughter Colombine, of whom Arlequin, Cassandre's gardener, is enamored. Arlequin and Colombine run off together, accompanied by Pierrot, Cassandre's valet. Each scene consists of an excuse for Pierrot or Arlequin to engage in clownish antics. In scene 8, for example, Pierrot and Arlequin, thirsty after fleeing their enemies, stop at a wine shop, which transforms into a pharmacy: the pair consume drugs instead of wine and become delirious. An explosion ensues, followed by the procession to slaughter of an ox, who, "visibly hostile to the idea of becoming a pot of stew," crashes through Cassandre's porcelain boutique, thereby incarnating the *bœuf enragé*. The piece ends with the allegorical figure of Love and the three witches who accompany him compelling Cassandre to allow the marriage of Arlequin and Colombine; Pierrot leads the couple to the "temple de l'hyménée" (Baugé 1995: 99-100; Pericaud 1897: 69-73). Pierrot, Arlequin, Cassandre, and Colombine appear over and over again in the Funambules pantomimes, like a group of old friends whose company the audience may enjoy on any performance evening, although occasionally the characters appear under different names: Colombine as Isabelle, Pierrot as Jacquot or Bazile, Cassandre as Pandolph (Pericaud 1897: 119). In the scenario manuscripts examined by Pericaud, Pierrot never appears alone and is largely a secondary character, a sidekick. He has no romantic attachments, except perhaps for the one-scene *La Baleine* (1833), in which Pierrot, despondent because Colombine has no interest in him, allows himself to be swallowed up by a whale and spends the entire scene amusing himself with the debris of a shipwreck in the belly of the monster (Pericaud 1897: 135). In nearly all the available pieces, Pierrot and his pal Arlequin

stumble into various absurd miscommunications with characters, animals, and objects. Deburau constructed Pierrot as an adroit clown whose friendship with Arlequin or other male characters creates anarchy wherever they go. His Pierrot demonstrated how a character lacking talent, skill, education, intelligence, wealth, status, power, ambition, good taste, and moral sense could nevertheless bumble rather thoughtlessly through the absurdity of life and still end up happy. Audiences at the Funambules probably found this message consoling, perhaps even encouraging, even if it is contrary to what anyone then or now would regard as "respectable." Yet in 1832, when Jules Janin (1804-1874), the ambitious drama critic for the *Journal des Debats*, published his biography of Deburau, he described the actor, as Pierrot, in a lavishly romantic manner:

> *This is a man of much thought, much study, many hopes, much suffering; this is the actor of the people, the friend of the people, gossip, gourmand,* flâneur*, fop impassive, revolutionary, as is the people. When Deburau found his cool and silent sarcasm, that established his superiority, his inexhaustible sarcasm, of which he is so prodigious! Deburau found everything at once a comedy. […] Gilles [Pierrot] is the people, Gilles, by turns joyful, sad, sick, healthy, beating, beaten, musician, poet, silly, always poor, like the people. It is the people that Deburau represents in all his dramas; he knows the sentiments of the people: he knows what makes them laugh, what they enjoy, what gets him angry; he knows what the people admire, what they love; that which he is. Hey, people, beat your wife, drink up, caress your child, make debts, pay debts, marry your girl, make fun of your doctor, your confessor, respect your police commissioner; cry when you want, and cry well; then, make yourself pleasant, gracious, the smooth talker; the pretty boy, the man of good fortune […]* (Janin 1881: 69, 75)

Hardly anything Janin ascribes to Deburau's Pierrot appears in the available scenarios or in any accounts of the Funambules. But Janin avoids discussing scenarios in relation to Deburau's performance, although he devotes several pages to listing all the props in the Funambules. He prints one scenario, *Ma Mere l'Oye, ou Arlequin et le Oeuf d'Or* (1829), in which Pierrot and Arlequin, sometimes using disguises, engage in chaotic

interactions with various people in the countryside, in a village, in a hotel, in a store, and finally in a forest, where they encounter Mother Goose (Janin 1881: 131-153). When Pierrot dances or plays music, he creates "confusion" or a "*mêlée*." Janin, however, does not use anything from this scenario to explain Deburau's performance nor, indeed, does he describe Deburau's performance technique, stylistic variations, or contrast to other pantomimes. He presents Deburau/Pierrot as a figure entirely detached from the narratives and ensembles in which he appears. Even as a biography of the actor, the book lacks attention to details and peculiarities of the actor's personality, habits of working, and relations to others, and the text reads more like a publicity dossier. What interests Janin is the *image* of Pierrot that he, Janin, a prolific writer of fiction, has conjured up for an audience that was most likely never in attendance at the Théâtre des Funambules. That was perhaps the point of printing the scenario: to contrast the Pierrot on stage with the Pierrot that Janin had made out of the low comedy character. But even the image of Pierrot that Janin builds with words is rather vague and mostly rhetorical: "[…] these gilded lounges, these maids in silk aprons, these great ladies in carriages, our pretty little world, at war, political, sentimental, graceful above all, ah, yes, have no fear! Deburau has never seen a salon; he argues that the maids do not exist, the comic types are effaced, the financier, politician, warrior, poet, all look alike, they all have the same figure and the same costume; from which he concludes that comedy of the past is no longer possible in this leveled society, and asks permission to do as he pleases" (Janin 1881: 74). But the 1832 edition of Janin's biography contained an engraving of the famous 1830 portrait of Deburau by the artist Auguste Bouquet (1810-1846) [Figure 68]. This is a highly romantic image, showing the unique Deburau/Pierrot as a kind of alien figure, with his eerie white face, wide white sleeves, wide white pantaloons, and black skullcap. The pose does not reveal the huge white buttons that were also a distinctive feature of the costume. Janin's rhetoric should be read with this image in mind to grasp its full impact, although Deburau's costume was actually a variation on the "white Pierrot" costume that had been traditional within the *commedia* format since before the time Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684-1721) had painted his own famous "Gilles" around 1719 [Figure 69]. But unlike Watteau's painting, Bouquet's image depicted a mysteriously transformed human being, and Janin's text seeks to construct Deburau/Pierrot as a transformative figure in Parisian culture,

even if this image of Pierrot was not really the Pierrot that audiences saw in the Funambules.



Figure 69: Antoine Watteau's 1719 portrait of Gilles (Pierrot) in the Louvre, Paris. Photo: Public domain.

The point was that he was an emblem of human transformation, and Janin transformed him into something other than what even Deburau had made him, so much so that Deburau complained to George Sand that Janin's portrait of him "was not the art, not the idea that I have; it is not serious, and the Deburau of M. Janin is not me" (Sand 1893: 104). But the transformative effect of the Bouquet portrait perhaps achieves its clearest dramatization in another image by Bouquet, his engraving "Self-Portait as Transvestite" (1831), deposited in the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco [Figure 70]. The young artist appears in a dark dress, with a thick belt

tightly squeezing his waist and a dark scarf tightly wound around his neck. He holds his palette while gazing at the viewer; behind him, resting on the easel, is the portrait of Deburau/Pierrot, suggesting that the Pierrot image has transformed the sexual identity of the artist.



Figure 70: August Bouquet's "Self-Portrait as Transvestite" (1831) with his famous Pierrot image behind him, deposited in the San Francisco Museum of Fine Arts.

But what was Janin's motive in making Deburau/Pierrot something other than what he was in reality? Robert Storey has written extensively on the mythologizing of Pierrot by literary figures of the time: Janin, Gautier, Banville, Sand, Baudelaire, Champfleury. He argues, using a psychoanalytical framework, that pantomime is a "regressive" art. "The pantomime, the melodrama, the circus *entrée* were all spectacles expressive

of fantasy and wish, of a most potently infantile kind" (Storey 1985: xiv). He builds upon an assertion put forth by Jean Starobinski in his 1970 book *Portrait de l'artiste en saltimbanque*: "for the modern artist[s]," pantomime "will appear like the reflections of a lost world; they will live in a space of recollection; they will bear the mark of a passion for a return. These will be creatures of regressive desire [...]" (Storey 1985: xiv; Starobinski 1970: 25). Storey then produces abundant evidence to show that the pantomime in the Funambules was quite different from the way literary figures have portrayed it, that pantomime assumed different forms, that Deburau played different characters besides Pierrot, that Deburau's Pierrot varied in relation to different types of pantomime, and that other scholars are wrong in claiming that pantomime scenarios in the *commedia* format were monotonously similar. Yet despite all of this variety, differentiation, and complexity within the genre and within the Funambules, the literary enthusiasts of pantomime focused their energies on conjuring up a Pierrot that represented their "regressive desire" more accurately than the reality of the stage. For Storey, this determination to allow imagination to triumph over the inadequacy of reality is the essence of literary Romanticism, which, he contends, eventually destroyed pantomime, even if it created the enduringly romantic image of Pierrot (Storey 1985: 6-20; Storey 1978: 94-110).

In Storey's estimation, the "regressive desire" guiding the mythmaking minds of the literary figures arises from a profound disillusionment with the cultural institutions of their time. He quotes Janin, who claims that "there is no longer any Theater-Francais; there is only the Funambules"; and because comedy is "in its Decadence," it is necessary to write a History of Art that is "squalid, filthy, beggarly, drunken, exciting, a squalid, filthy, beggarly, and drunken Pit; since Deburau has become the King of this world, let us celebrate Deburau the King of this world" (Storey 1985: 5; Janin 1881: 5-7). Janin even compares himself and his era to Gibbon and the "effeminate decadence" of the late Roman Empire (Janin 1881: 207-210). But Storey also quotes from the biography of Deburau by Tristan Rémy, who observed that much of the Pierrot mythmaking occurred at the end of the nineteenth century by writers who accepted Janin's assertion of a "Boulevard that had lost all of its romantic turbulence at the time of Deburau's emergence from obscurity": "The legend of the perpetual fair that reign[ed] on the Boulevard du Temple, with its shouts of joy, its careless

ambiance, the blissful crowd before the acrobats' carpet, the merrymaking of festivals and carnival-time, the masterfully painted descriptions, the brilliantly colored frescoes—all of this exist[ed] only in the imagination of historians at the end of the nineteenth century who talk[ed] about the beginning of that century as today one recalls 1900 and la Belle Epoque" (Storey 1985: 6; Rémy 1954: 68); Edward Nye (2015) also stresses the distance between the romantic image ascribed to Deburau/Pierrot by literary figures and the realities of the commercial theater that sustained Deburau as a star performer. Perhaps by 1830, French culture appeared "moribund" (Janin's word) to some French romantics when compared with the grand adventures of the Revolution and the Empire. But Janin does not present any evidence that the Comédie-Française, the Opera, the ballet, or any other Parisian cultural institution had somehow declined, nor does Storey. Neither author refers to the pantomimes of Cuvelier or to any pantomimic art other than that belonging to the *commedia* format—for Storey, these are "outside my ken" (1985: xv), even though the ballet pantomime remained immensely popular, with the Aumer/Scribe/Halevy *Manon Lescaut* enjoying great success in 1830. Marian Smith (2000) has described in considerable lively detail the richness and inventiveness of Parisian opera and ballet in the 1830s. Stirring events also befell the Parisian mainstream theater of 1830, with the flamboyant historical-romantic dramas of Eugene Scribe, Alexander Dumas, and Victor Hugo. One might also mention that the music of Berlioz and the art of Daumier, Corot, and Delacroix were major features of Parisian culture in 1830, the year that brought the July Revolution and a humiliating defeat for the reactionary ultra-royalists, who, under Charles X, had sought to restore archaic aristocratic privileges at the expense of middle class entitlements. Thus, Janin's claim that the "there is only the Funambules" and only "squalid" art in his time is absurd and not altogether compatible with the concept of a "regressive desire" for a less "effeminate" community or culture.

Janin was twenty-eight years old when he published his biography of Deburau. His position as the drama critic for the *Journal des Debats* was already a remarkable achievement. He was born into a poor family in Saint-Étienne, but the generosity of his great aunt enabled him to receive a good university education. He was ambitious without having a clear idea of how to fulfill it other than that he had to go to Paris to discover his path. He never had any vocational affinity for journalism, and he obtained his

position on the *Journal des Debats* in an almost comically incidental manner. But he grasped that the media built audiences by creating news as much as they reported it: newspapers had to foster controvery, introduce provocations, and initiate trends. For Janin, the distinction between being a drama critic and a publicist or promoter was irrelevant. Saint-Beuve accused him of overpraising those who curried his favor, and actors and dramatists invariably cultivated his friendship and even paid for it, so that he was able to live much more luxuriously than his drama critic's salary or his many novels allowed ("The History of a Critic" 1876: 831). He wrote a prodigious number of prefaces to works of other authors, and apparently he "never forgot or forgave a wound inflicted upon his vanity" (825). He understood how to capture the attention of readers by sharing his seemingly bold discovery of pleasures that had been ignored, discarded, marginalized, or underestimated. Deburau was a useful example of a pleasure many of his readers would never have discovered on their own or through other media, precisely because the Funambules never pretended to be anything other than entertainment for people who lived in deep obscurity. In his position as drama critic, Janin saw that he could wield the power to create careers and define reputations: transforming the obscure clown Deburau into a star was proof of this power. In this sense, the Deburau biography was as much an act of romantic imagination as Victor Hugo's *Hernani* (1830). By 1833, the biography was in its third edition. As a result of its publication, Deburau received an invitation in October of 1832 to perform at the prestigious Palais Royal, where the audience consisted primarily of persons from the upper levels of society. The reception, however, "was polite but cold," and Deburau never again performed anywhere else but the Funambules (Huguonet 1889: 93). Deburau nevertheless became a star, although his stardom always remained bound up with the Pierrot character. While Storey argues that Deburau experimented with different Pierrots, the actor did not alter the image of the character and the "quiet" or "still" approach to the character's movement that Janin praised (Storey 1985: 14). When the Funambules began performing pantomimes with dialogues, Deburau kept Pierrot completely silent. Indeed, Deburau may have deeply regretted having allowed his identity to become inseparable from that of Pierrot. On April 18, 1836, Deburau went walking with his new wife. A seventeen-year old apprentice, Florent Vielin, a passionate fan of Pierrot, recognized the actor

and began to taunt him, as if Pierrot instead of Deburau was on the street: he called Pierrot a "dummy" and his wife "Pierrot's whore." Deburau ignored him, but eventually his rage overwhelmed him, and he turned on the boy, using his cane to strike him on the head. The boy died the next day. Deburau was arrested for murder, but the court was sympathetic and acquitted him, although Deburau himself appears to have experienced profound remorse (Holmes 2000: 84-86). On stage and in the scenarios, Pierrot often engaged in cruel, violent behavior, with an oblivious aplomb that amplified the comic effect—he was an "expert in humiliations, in bizarre mutilations, in acts of castrating terror" (Storey 1985: 29). But the murder of Vielin showed that the *image* of Pierrot was much bigger than any theater that presented him. The murder showed the power of the image to consume both the performer and the spectator and reveal a destructive, malevolent dimension in both and in the romantic literary imagination that mythlogized the alien, poetic Pierrot, "the friend of the people."

The image of Pierrot constructed by Deburau, Janin, and the French romantic literary imagination lived a different life than the one created for him in the Funambules scenarios. Neither Deburau nor Nodier cared to publish the scenarios, for in the scenarios, Pierrot inhabited an incoherent, absurd, and stupid world, not a poetic one. More precisely, the poetry on stage was largely the result of startling scenographic effects. For example, in Scene 3 of *Ma Mère l'Oie*, Pierrot, in the countryside, knocks on the door of a house to inquire the whereabouts of Arlequin and Colombine. As soon as he knocks, the house grows huge, the door opens, and an enormous woman appears. Pierrot asks if she has seen Arlequin and Colombine; she says, No, and tells him to go home. The house then shrinks to normal size, and the surprised Pierrot decides to knock again. This time the house becomes very small, and a tiny woman answers the door. She invites him in; he inserts his hand into the house, pulls out a flute and sheet music, and "plays a comic air with the orchestra." Suddenly the flute transforms into a grill and the sheet music into a lamb chop, as the house resumes its normal size (Pericaud 1897: 138-139). The scenario strings together a series of "magical," comic scenic effects that depend much more on stage machinery than on peculiar qualities of the characters or even on unique qualities of the performer. The scenarios remind one of the fantasy short films made by Georges Méliès between 1896 and 1906 in which comic effects result from optical "tricks" that produce fantastic transformations of objects and

people: one remembers the tricks rather than the characters or the actors. It was to his advantage as an actor for Deburau to detach Pierrot from the scenarios and create for him a poetic aura built around his "white" appearance and quiet, calm manner of movement. This Pierrot lived in the imagination of viewers rather than on the stage or in the scenarios; he did not depend on elaborate machinery to enchant his audience. Deburau assumed that Pierrot belonged to him, not to the Funambules theater or to any authors. He could assume that because by 1827 no other Pierrots appeared in Parisian theaters, no other actor played him. Janin, however, claimed that Pierrot belonged to "the people"; Deburau was simply the surviving embodiment of a poetic image formed long ago by the French national psyche. But the Pierrot that Janin invoked was not really the Pierrot of the old *foires* (that Pierrot still lived in Nodier's scenarios). Rather, the Pierrot he conjured up was like a resource: an image available to manifold narratives, performers, artists, authors, and viewers. But the act of transforming Pierrot from a stage clown into a poetic image resource was the work of an author, not an actor—it was the work of words consumed by numerous readers who could "see" Pierrot without ever attending the Funambules. Or: readers would go to the Funambules expecting to see the Pierrot that Janin invoked. This Pierrot belonged to the romantic literary imagination and affirmed the authority of the romantic sensibility to imagine the world rather than to see it. Deburau grasped this, from his perspective, regrettable implication of Janin's biography when he discovered that audiences did not see Pierrot as a character he played but as a persona that consumed his identity and perhaps could invade any identity almost like a disease. Deburau's relation to Pierrot contrasts well with Frederick Lemaitre's relation to Robert Macaire, a character introduced in the melodrama *l'Auberge des Adrets* (1823) by Benjamin Antier, Jean-Armand Lacoste, and Alexandre Chaponnier. In the play, Macaire, along with his partner Bertrand, is a fugitive convict who mascarades as a respectable bourgeois visitor of an inn and gains the trust of a family by solving a domestic problem while plotting crimes against them. Lemaitre transformed this rather shadowy, subsidiary character into a charming rogue, a genial swindler, a grandiose and egotistical imposter, whose efforts to help people always hide a sinister motive. Lemaitre made the character immensely popular without making the play popular, much to Chaponnier's distaste. The character assumed a life outside of the theater, as an

emblematic "benefactor of humanity" in numerous guises—lawyer, physician, journalist, philanthropist, and so forth—who secretly plotted embezzlements, robberies, and corrupt financial schemes. Robert Macaire became a "type without author," a "transmedial" and "transgeneric" figure, who into the twentieth century appeared in several plays, novels, and films; Daumier produced in 1836-1838 a famous series of illustrations showing Macaire promoting himself in various Parisian settings (Therenty 2010: 29-30; cf., Carrique 2012) [Figure 71]. Other actors than Lemaitre played Macaire in the theater—*Le fille de Robert Macaire* (1835), *Robert Macaire en Belgique* (1837)—and Daumier made Macaire a popular cartoon figure in the press, although other artists also depicted him. In 1834, Lemaitre rewrote the 1823 play, greatly enlarging the part of Macaire and allowing him and Bertrand to escape with his criminal treasure rather than dying repentantly, which compelled the government to ban the play the following year. This action against an immensely popular production only succeeded in making Lemaitre and Macaire even more popular. In Gautier's estimation, "*Robert Macaire* was the great triumph of revolutionary art which followed the July Revolution" because of the "sharp, desperate attack it makes on the order of society," although he probably meant the character that Lemaitre performed rather than the play itself (Sennet 1977: 204). For James Rousseau, Macaire was simply the "child of the century; he is the incarnation of our positive epoch, egotisical, avaricious, a liar, a braggart, and, as we say, he is perfectly in place—essentially a joker" (Rousseau 1842: 5). But no matter how widely Robert Macaire became dispersed in various media, he always remained the invention of Frederick Lemaitre rather than of any author or artist; he shaped the representation of the character in other media, with his signature sardonic laugh, his loquacious rumbling voice, his myriad improvised inflections, and his relaxed, pontificating, controlling gestures. Macaire belonged to Lemaitre in a way that Pierrot did not belong to Deburau, perhaps because Lemaitre was as much in revolt against the literary imagination as Macaire symbolized the subversion of institutionalized controls over frauds such as himself. He was against the inscription of identity, against the inscriptions imposed on identity by institutions—theater, banks, the government, the law. Deburau created an image of Pierrot that others could appropriate to a degree that was far removed from what he was on stage. That's because Deburau/Pierrot was not in revolt against language or inscription; he was merely bereft of words

and assumed it was to his benefit to allow others to inscribe him. The refusal to publish the scenarios covered up this lack.



Figure 71: Engraving of Robert Macaire (left) in a restaurant by Honoré Daumier, published as No. 19 in 1836 in the series *Caricaturana*. Photo: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

But Deburau lived in a time in which the romantic literary imagination showed little interest in the details, the processes, the execution, and the realities of performance. The romantics focused on the impact of performance, the feelings it evoked, the images it inspired, and the significance or emblematic status that could be attached to it. The romantic discourse on pantomime followed a different path than the pantomime discourse of the eighteenth century *philosophes*, with their obsessive attention to the moral, ethical, aesthetic, and existential issues arising from bodily communication without words and without a "system" for regulating the movement of the body. But when Deburau was famous, pantomime had become a "minor" art and scarcely the cultural mania it was

in the previous century. Pantomime had become a minor art because Pierrot had become the main thing that was left of it. As a minor or marginalized art, pantomime was vulnerable to efforts to ascribe an exaggerated splendor to it. But exaggeration is necessary to establish the authority of imagination in relation to realities that can otherwise suffocate enthusiasm for the material world. So the next step in the romanticization of Pierrot was to invent a Pierrot that neither Deburau nor any other actor actually embodied. This Théophile Gautier (1811-1872) did in an extraordinary essay published in the September 1842 issue of *Revue de Paris*, "Shakspeare [sic] aux Funambules." Here he proposed that the spirit of Shakespeare survived in the Théâtre des Funambules. He recalled the "beautiful time, the time of *Le Bœuf enragè* [...] and *Ma Mère l'Oie*," although his reminiscence focused, not on the performers or performances, but on the audience of the Funambules, for "here is a public, and not all those bored gloves, more or less yellow, all worn *feuilletonistes*, outraged, bored, these canopies of Helder street occupied only with their cosmetics and their bouquets; - A public in jackets, blouses, shirts, shirtless often, with bare arms, the cap on the ear, but naive like a child to whom the tale of Bluebeard gives way simply to the poet's fiction (yes, the poet), accepting any condition to be amused; a true public comprehending the fantasy with a wonderful facility" (Gautier 1842: 60). He worries that the renovation of the Funambules has destroyed the golden aura of the theater. But then the smell of the varnish provokes his fantasy of a fantasy audience and inspires him to inscribe his own Pierrot fantasy, a scenario that no has ever seen on the stage.

The scene is a street "absolutely like in a piece by Molière." Down this street walks a despondent Pierrot—"he is sad, a melancholy secret devours his soul." He has no money; his master Cassandre pays him with kicks instead of wages. He is, moreover, enamored of a duchess, who descends from a carriage to enter a church, the Opera, "we know not where." He "fears that his charming physique has deteriorated, and "bitter thoughts" plague him as he ponders how he can appear with the duchess when he has no clothes to match the "mysterious Eden" in which the duchess lives. A clothes merchant then appears transporting "more or less wrinkled duds." He carries a cast off National Guard sword under his arm. Pierrot pulls the sword out without the merchant noticing. But instead of returning the sword into its sheath, he plunges it into the merchant, killing

him. Pierrot selects the finest clothes the merchant possessed and pushes the body down a cellar. However, the shadow of the clothes merchant rises out of the cellar and calls in a cavernous voice: "Seller of clothes! [*Marrrchand d'habits!*]" Pierrot battles the shadow with a log; finally he strikes it and knocks it back into the cellar. He mocks the shadow by speaking the phrase "Seller of clothes!" Pierrot at home puts on his new costume: Cossak pants, an apple-green coat, and, "to hide his criminal pallor," he dons black whiskers and rouge cheeks to look "most charming and triumphant." When Pierrot appears in the milieu of the duchess, he struts about as a lion of the boulevards, "full of composure, dignity, and propriety." As he lounges in an armchair, burning with love for the duchess, he hears the "dying whisper of the sacramental phrase: 'Seller of clothes!'" The ghost of the merchant rises up, but Pierrot cannot suppress it. He tries to escape the shadow by dancing wildly, but then he becomes overheated and wants some ice cream. He struggles between "gluttony and cowardice," but gluttony triumphs. He eats the ice cream, which turns into fireworks in his mouth, and he swallows the spoon. Nevertheless, Pierrot manages to gain the affections of the duchess, and, "to the shame of morality and human nature," he is a happy person. "But, alas, nothing collapses as quickly as prosperity," for "his love for the duchess does not prevent him from maintaining some dancers of the Opera." He has to sell the clothes he stole. In a new scene, Pierrot encounters the spectre of the clothes merchant on the street, who calls out in his macabre voice: "Seller of clothes!" Pierrot approaches him and offers to sell the clothes. The merchant replies that the clothes are very worn and offers only thirty sols. Pierrot calls the merchant a thief, but soon agrees to the sale. But the merchant refuses to pay, saying that the clothes are his anyway. Furious, Pierrot attacks the merchant, pulls the sword from his chest, strikes the phantom repeatedly, and maintains possession of the clothes. Still lacking money, Pierrot approaches Cassandre with a tale of woe: he presents himself as a victim of Barbary pirates, who have cut out his tongue, blinded him, and cut off his arms, so that he walks around like a penguin. The incredibly stupid Cassandre gives him money for each ailment. Pierrot, however, wants all of Cassandre's money and inserts his hidden arm into Cassandre's pocket. Cassandre accuses Pierrot of stealing arms and threatens to bring him to the police. But Pierrot has the money and apparently runs off, for suddenly Pierrot leads the procession to celebrate

his marriage to the duchess. The shadow of the clothes merchant rises up from the prompter's box on the stage and calls out: "Seller of clothes!" Pierrot tries to suppress the phantom by sitting on the prompter's box. Astonished by this action, the bride comes to take him by the hand, for the phantom is visible only to Pierrot. The spectre rises up again and embraces Pierrot and the two engage in an "infernal waltz," whereby the sword planted into the clothes merchant penetrates the chest of Pierrot, so that both "victim and murderer are skewered by the same iron, like two beetles pierced by the same needle." The pair dances wildly as a fire engulfs them. The bride vanishes, the entourage gasps in pain as the curtain falls (Gautier 1842: 61-65).

Gautier's Pierrot fantasy depicts a humanity totally defined by fantastic stupidity and avarice; it seems much closer to the *commedia* pantomimes of Lesage's time than to anything one would actually see in the Funambules. Pierrot is violent, vicious, devoid of moral sense, and without any unique talent or ability. But no one else is the story is anything but profoundly stupid. Gautier absurdly claims that his fantasy Pierrot is comparable to the dumb-show characters in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* merely because Banquo's ghost inspired the shadow of the merchant. Indeed, Gautier's own commentary on his scenario seems like a fantasy insofar as he ascribes meanings to it that the scenes he imagines do not support: "Does not Pierrot walking down the street in his white shirt, his white pants, and his white flour face flush with vague desires symbolize the human soul, still innocent and white, tormented with infinite aspirations toward higher regions?" (Gautier 1842: 65). From the very beginning, Pierrot's "whiteness" symbolizes, if anything, the obvious mask by which humanity conceals its immeasurable stupidity and corruption. Pierrot's love for the cretinous duchess—the "higher regions"—never achieves any focus and is merely incidental to his far more protracted encounters with characters for whom he feels at best no affection at all. But Gautier's essay resonated more strongly with his audience than anything Deburau/Pierrot did on stage. The Funambules realized this and in October of 1842 commissioned a scenario entitled *Marrrchand d'habits!*, the authorship of which remains unknown, although Storey contends that is the work of a Funambules administrator, Antoine-Emmanuel Cot d'Ordan (Baugé 1995: 18-19; Storey 1985; 117-118). This scenario, consisting of five very brief *tableaux*, is only about two pages long, and reads like a highly truncated outline of Gautier's comparatively

lengthy text: the author retains only a few of Gautier's comic gags, eliminates Gautier's comments on Pierrot's criminal state of mind, and, in the first scene, introduces the duchess as an acquaintance of Cassandre. The text reduces Pierrot to a homicidal clown, without even Gautier's sense of a demonic struggle to defeat conscience: the ghost merely seems like an annoying pop-up or fly that causes Pierrot to act clumsily. But there is no evidence that Deburau or anyone else actually performed this scenario. The realization of the text on stage, however, was irrelevant in relation to Gautier's essay, for the main impact of the essay was to transform Pierrot from a theatrical to a literary figure. A literary Pierrot was "serious" insofar as his audience wanted something more of him than did the audience at the Funambules—they wanted a more complex Pierrot, the so-called "tragic" Pierrot, a figure of Shakespearean resonance. But this tragic Pierrot lived more on the page than on the stage, not because Deburau or his successors were incapable of developing a tragic pantomimic style, but because the theater audience for pantomime, confined now entirely to the Funambules, saw pantomime as an antidote to seriousness and tragic feeling. The slowly decaying ballet pantomime, though far more luxurious and "disciplined," appealed to an audience that was no less parochial in its idea of speechless entertainment than the audience for the Funambules. In this cultural milieu, pantomime on a grand scale was completely unthinkable and not even remembered. Gautier's Pierrot made pantomime synonymous with a Pierrot who lived outside of the *commedia* format, who lived outside of the theater, who lived independently of Cassandre and Colombine. He was a "melancholy" or "tragic" figure because, in his bizarre "whiteness," he was solitary, alone, and without voice. But in his aloneness, he differed significantly from the solo pantomimes of ancient Rome in that his identity completely consumed the pantomime performer and did not permit any other identities to inhabit the body of the performer. Pierrot represented the antithesis of the metamorphosis of identity that the Roman pantomimes embodied. For the literary romantics, Pierrot signified the silent, solitary, melancholy body possessed of a single, unchanging identity—the "invincible Pierrot," as Banville described him in *Odes funambulesques* (1857) (Banville 1873: 106). But this image of the silent, solitary, melancholy Pierrot soon came to define pantomime itself, at least in continental Europe, insofar as it eclipsed any other idea of pantomime. A similar phenomenon had already taken place in England, where, since the

1760s, pantomime had become largely, perhaps even exclusively, incorporated into a Christmas vaudeville spectacle designed primarily for children. But there, the figure of Harlequin, not Pierrot, succeeded in completely defining the performance of pantomime. To understand how figures descended from mime came to dominate perception of pantomime entails the construction of a complex historical-theoretical framework that involves exploring what might be called ideological relations between words and bodily performance.

Gautier's essay inspired literary authors to write their own pantomime scenarios of a more "serious" nature than those inscribed by the anonymous scenarists of the Funambules. The most significant of these literary authors as far as scenarios that were actually performed was the art critic Jules Champfleury (1821-1889), who, in addition to his prolific commentaries on art, wrote numerous novels and studies on a variety of subjects, including porcelain, cats, caricature, Balzac, and Richard Wagner. But Champfleury never wanted his authorship of pantomimes disclosed, even though it was no secret that he wrote them. Explicitly inspired by Gautier's essay, he wrote his first pantomime scenario for the Funambules in 1846, soon after the death of Deburau in June of that year and four years after Gautier published his essay, and wrote five more between then and 1849 (Champfleury 1859: 9). After Janin published his biography of Deburau, the actor had no interest in collaborating with anyone who did not have a long and close association with the Funambules. The Pierrot that Champfleury created lived on the Funambules stage through Deburau's protégé Paul Legrand. The death of Deburau occasioned in Paris an outburst of pompous mourning, which Champfleury himself described with grandiose words of hommage (Pericaud 1897: 287-288). For the ambitious, young, romantic literary authors in Paris, Deburau's death conveniently signified the end of an epoch or perhaps more precisely indicated a grand opportunity, for Deburau's death supposedly also implied the death of Pierrot, and the death of Pierrot entailed the death of pantomime itself, for, as Pericaud, remarked, "Pierrot alone had made pantomime live" (Pericaud 1897: 291). Gerard de Nerval wondered, "Is the pantomime itself dead after [Deburau], like tragedy after Talma?" (298). Well, not really. The Funambules continued almost immediately to produce pantomimes among other light entertainments, and in these pantomimes, Pierrot remained the dominant character, played by Charles Deburau or Paul Legrand. But as

Pericaud noted with the production of Champfleury's *Pierrot, valet de la mort*, in September 1846, "We have arrived at an epoch of positive transition in the pantomime" (297). Yet Champfleury's relation to the Funambules was not altogether positive, for, in addition to disputes over compensation for his work and quarrels over the performance of his scenarios, "this author, so impulsive, so visionary, was not loved by the mimes precisely because of his originality" (336).

The Funambules presented *Pierrot, valet de la mort* in September 1846, although Champfleury had originally written his scenario to feature Arlequin. But the mystical writings of Swedenborg had urged him to pursue a more "spiritual" path through Pierrot. A spiritual dimension, though, is hard to discern, for much of the piece consists of "cascades," which occur when two or more characters strike each other in different buffoonish ways or with different objects without resolution until the scene changes. In a village, Pierrot, Arlequin, and Polchinelle each seek to marry Colombine, the daughter of Cassandre, who proposes that his daughter marry the best swimmer among the three. But they all wind up in a cascade, "*effroi général*." In a room, Pierrot pines for Colombine on a bed. She shows up to comfort him, but Arlequin and Polchinelle soon follow, and Colombine decides to run away with Arlequin. A doctor arrives to treat the "abysmal" Pierrot, who swallows medicines, including leeches, but has no money to pay the doctor. Pierrot therefore falls dead on his bed. Death then appears and, in a fairly lengthy speech, tells Pierrot that he can come back to life if he becomes Death's valet; in this position, Pierrot can dispose of his rivals and marry Colombine. Skeletons bring in drinks; Pierrot takes up his violin and the skeletons dance. In a forest, Colombine and Pierrot dance. A fairy appears and speaks to them, saying that she loves youth, beauty, and love, which means that she favors Pierrot over Arlequin. But she can save the couple only after they are married. Cassandre enters to separate the couple and count his money. He believes that Pierrot is dead and does not want his daughter to marry a "skeleton." Arlequin and Polchinelle show up to enjoy the picnic Pierrot and Colombine have arranged. Another cascade ensues involving "combats" between all four men, and Arlequin abducts Colombine. Arlequin takes Colombine to a mill that also contains a bakery. Pierrot appears and asks for a cake, which Colombine brings to him. When he starts to caress her, Arlequin intervenes. Cassandre, and Polchinelle also enter, and yet another cascade ensues, as a windmill blade hoists

Polichinelle, and Arlequin and Colombine escape again. The fairy reappears and leads everyone to a palace, where girls dance around Pierrot, Cassandre, and Polchinelle. Pierrot turns his attention to these girls. But suddenly a tree splits open and releases the dark voice of Death, who reminds Pierrot that to win Colombine, he was supposed to deliver Arlequin and Polchinelle. Now Death must take Pierrot. A "grand combat" or cascade ensues, as Pierrot attacks Arlequin, who clobbers Pierrot. Cassandre and Polchinelle attempt to help Pierrot, and Arlequin finds himself battling the three, until the Voice of Death announces: "Pierrot, you fight for a bad cause." The characters cease fighting, the dancing girls return, and Polchinelle dances. But Death comes back to retrieve the scythe he has left beside the tree. Polchinelle grabs it and strikes Death, who falls dead. Everbody's happy: Colombine and Arlequin are together, Cassandre has what he wants for his daughter, Polchinelle dances around the corpse of Death, and Pierrot plays the violin (Baugé 1995: 31-38).

Even with a large imagination for performance possibilities, it is hard to see how this scenario offers a deeper understanding of Pierrot, pantomime, "poetic" atmosphere, or the world than was already present in the history of *commedia* format pantomime. Pierrot is no more important than Arlequin, Polchinelle, or Cassandre, and, as usual, he shows greater interest in eating than in Colombine. The scenes function to provide scenographic stunts. Champfleury presents Death as a voice rather than as something embodied and given pantomimic form. Perhaps his idea is that voice or language carry with them the aura or intimation of death; pantomime makes transparent the struggle of the body to defeat the voice, death, identity without a body. But one could just as easily say that the *commedia* format pantomime was always about the immortality of the characters: their spectacular stupidity, their unflattering depiction of humanity just never dies, survives the decay of epochs and eras, because their imbecilic obliviousness results from the lack of any consciousness created through language. But the most remarkable thing is that after the death of Deburau, which supposedly was synonymous with the death of Pierrot, neither Champfleury nor the Funambules could imagine any pantomime without the *commedia* format, without Pierrot. Even so, *Pierrot, valet de la mort* was "only a small success" (Pericaud 1897: 300). Though he was generally enthusiastic about the piece, Nerval felt that Pierrot's relation to Death required better management, for Pierrot's "return to virtue is too

abrupt and lacking in motivation"; in the theater, the *danse macabre* of the third scene did not match "the thought of the poet." The most striking thing from Nerval's perspective was the idea of Pierrot defeating Death by playing his violin, although the scenario does not at all contain this idea (Pericaud 1897: 298-299).

Two weeks after the debut of *Pierrot, valet de la mort*, Champfleury submitted a new scenario, *Pierrot pendu*, which was much more successful. From then on, he wrote one new scenario every year until 1849. His scenarios were innovative, he claimed, because they introduced the idea of a "bourgeois pantomime" (Champfleury 1859: 91, 116, 207, 210). Pantomime was bourgeois insofar as it no longer parodied the tastes of the aristocracy or made fun of "higher aspirations"; rather, bourgeois pantomime made fun of bourgeois aspirations to a "good marriage," financial security, fine eating, and propriety. As an art critic, Champfleury became famous for championing the realism of Courbet and Manet, which might lead one to suppose that his bourgeois pantomimes invested Pierrot with a realism that was previously absent. Yet in remaining committed to the *commedia* format, bourgeois pantomime became more realistic only because the narrative, the sequence of actions, became more logical. In *Pierrot pendu* (12 scenes), Pierrot sneakily steals various items from Arlequin, Cassandre, Polchinelle, a captain, a notary, and a merchant. Cascades ensue as a result of various deceptions perpetrated by Pierrot. A voice announces after each theft: *Pierrot, tu sera pendu!* ("Pierrot, you will be hanged!"), which is how the characters know that Pierrot is the thief. Arrested and put on trial, he denies all accusations, even when the police reveal that he has all the stolen items. The judge sentences Pierrot to be hanged, but allows him to enjoy a last meal. He then ascends the gallows, accompanied by demonic phantoms, who remind him of his crimes; he trembles in terror. But a fairy appears to tell him that all was a dream, a warning against criminal behavior: Arlequin's marriage to Colombine may proceed (Baugé 1995: 39-52). Gautier wrote a lengthy review of Champfleury's "magnificent pantomime." But much of the review consisted of his poetic-philosophical ruminations on the archetypal significance of Pierrot, "pale, haunted, clothed in pallid clothes, always hungry and always beaten, the ancient slave, the modern proletarian, the pariah, the passive and disinherited being who assists, sullen and sly, in the orgies and follies of his masters" (Gautier 1859: 24). When he describes what he actually saw in the theater,

he sees much that is not in the scenario. Pierrot's thefts are efforts to prevent Polchinelle from marrying the ugly Polchinelle; Colombine's attic is an "asylum of innocence and happiness," and it is as if Gautier is rewriting Champfleury's scenario with more poetic language. Where Champfleury simply writes: "Pierrot trembles in the midst of the flames," Gautier writes: "Everything is over - for the body at least; - as for the soul, it is something else! A genie appears and carries away the trembling psyche of the deceased Pierrot into the depths of a semi-Christian hell, half pagan, all red with flame and all black with smoke. There, the tribulations of the unfortunate one begin again: claws grab him; the wings of demons clutch his face, and he is plagued by a variety of torments that would weary Dante" (Gautier 1859: 33). While the performance no doubt contained details and qualities not found in the scenario, it is evident that Gautier prefers to see Pierrot as more of a poetic, metaphoric figure of tarnished human innocence than as a hapless, failed exemplar of bourgeois morality. But in *Pierrot marquis* (1847), which eliminates Arlequin altogether, Champfleury's idea of a bourgeois pantomime appears even more transparent. Here, among other antics, Pierrot attempts to swindle Polchinelle out of his inheritance by lethally changing the therapies ordered by the doctor for the ailing Polchinelle Sr., such as exchanging a small syringe for a huge one, and changing the old man's will. Believing himself wealthy, Pierrot "dresses magnificently" and in a "rich salon" encounters a Professor in black, who claims that Pierrot can heal his boredom by playing tragic roles. Pierrot responds with comic gestures to the Professor's spoken references to French tragic drama. At the end, of course, Pierrot ends up poor and "sad" in the mill with which the piece begins. However, a fairy appears and tells him to be happy, for "fortune does not make happiness." "You are of the people, Pierrot, and remain with them. The people are poor but content with their humble fate" (Baugé 1995: 53-65). But the piece produced a less enthusiastic response from Gautier, who acknowledged that Champfleury was "reforming" pantomime and making it more "Protestant" by constructing the action more logically (Pierrot, for example, is white because of all the flour in the mill). "Authority and tradition no longer exist [...] Farewell naive formulas, Byzantine barbarities, impossible hues [...] Here Pierrot reaches fortune in an entirely civilized way, by an assumption of will accompanied by fraud, substitution of persons, and other aggravating circumstances. Perfectly within the jurisdiction of the courts: the

inheritance thus does not consist of fantastic wealth: tanks filled with pieces of gold, heaps of carbuncles, cassettes of diamonds, but of good big bags of coins, authentic bank notes, as is appropriate in this prosaic period ours" (Gautier 1859: 151). Champfleury takes away from Pierrot a "solemn and mysterious physiognomy" that in the old, "Catholic" pantomime formed the basis of a "profound and inexplicable attraction" in the spectator, although, again, it is difficult to escape the sense that Gautier has ascribed a far more mysterious Pierrot to the past than he or anyone else ever actually saw in the theater (Gautier 1859: 150-151).

But Champfleury's desire to "reform" pantomime with logical actions did not preclude his enthusiasm for the fantastic and absurd in a way that anticipates surrealism: the logic of the unconscious and the dream. In *La reine des carrots* (1848), a "pantomime fantastique en 12 tableaux," he created perhaps his most ambitious scenario, even though, again, he dispensed altogether with the character of Arlequin. In this piece, Pierrot actually works as a gardener for Cassandre, battling insects and snails while trying to harvest vegetables for daily meals. Exhausted by his labors, he takes a nap and dreams that the Queen of Carrots appears to him. She accuses him of making "martyrs" of her subjects and incites the carrots to revolt against him. Colombine and Cassandre also appear and complain that lunch is not ready because Pierrot sleeps. Pierrot is divided between serving Cassandre and accommodating the Queen and her "weeping" carrots. Polchinelle complicates matters when he strikes an alliance with the Queen and begins wearing carrots as ornaments as part of a strategy to obstruct Pierrot's desire to marry Colombine. Combats ensue, with Pierrot saving Colombine from Polchinelle by killing a magistrate, who had intervened to suppress the revolt of the carrots. Other vegetables become involved in the turmoil, and the Queen enters into an alliance with the Royalty of Fruits, within which a sorceress has transported Colombine. The Queen is jealous of Pierrot's affection for Colombine. He enters the Queen's boudoir, but when he displays for her Colombine's bridal hair, she admits defeat and throws her crown into the cooking pot. Pierrot and Colombine marry and bring the fantastic dream to an end (Baugé 1995: 67-80). *La reine des carrots* was quite successful, but Champfleury, who had been unable to attend rehearsals, was furious about the production, because "nothing was left of his own idea in the piece" (Champfleury 1859: 194; Levillain 1943: 207). The old-fashioned thinking of his collaborators so exasperated him

that he vowed not to write anything for the Funambules again. The theater nevertheless persuaded him to write another scenario, *Les trois filles a Cassandre* (1849), in which Pierrot struggles to escape from his marriage to a shrew. As usual, though, the actors and the director undermined him and discarded many of his inventive comic effects (Levillain 1943: 210-211). He then gave up writing any more scenarios until 1865, when he wrote *Le pantomime de l'advocat* for the Théâtre des Fantaisies parisiennes, the Funambules having closed in 1862.

Champfleury deserves attention, because he was alone among all the literary romantics in attempting to bring a romantic idea of pantomime to the stage before the 1880s. His scenarios were much more ambitious, inventive, and "modern" than those devised by the often anonymous house writers for the Funambules. But it is doubtful that his efforts brought a greater degree of "seriousness" to pantomime, especially when directors and performers deliberately sabotaged so much of what might be regarded in the scenarios as serious at least in the way of innovation. Along with the other romantic writers, he remained utterly trapped within the idea that pantomime was Pierrot and did not exist outside of the *commedia* format. He could not escape this idea, because the Funambules, as the only theater providing pantomime entertainment, remained even more deeply entrenched within the idea, which seemed to have achieved such perfection through Deburau, the mythic "man of the people" glorified by the romantics themselves. But to say that the Funambules could not escape the Pierrot/*commedia* paradigm is to say that it remained the prisoner of its audience, an oppressed proletarian crowd, who commanded the respect of higher classes only when it tenaciously claimed ownership of cultural forms that those higher classes did not regard as serious. George Sand described this audience as "an intelligent, active, mocking race of individuals, their faces prematurely bereft of the freshness of youth as a result of overwork or enforced idleness, equally devastating evils for the young. Physically frail, too pale or too feverish, they reflected the effects of unhealthful climate, mephitic living conditions, privations and hardships. They were at the same time weakly and strong, frivolous and serious," but possessed of "a feverish energy, a habit of enduring suffering, a mocking insouciance" (Levillain 1943: 148). It was, however, an audience that achieved its greatest sense of power through its capacity to mock the world and its pretensions to seriousness. This pleasure in mockery meant that no matter how deeply the

audience appreciated the art of Deburau, it could never allow pantomime to become anything other than a clown show, for Deburau/Pierrot himself was the perfect incarnation of an identity defined by a "silent," imperturbable, inescapable, and unkillable mockery of the world. Champfleury's scenarios seem like tiny, incidental contributions to pantomime culture when compared with the great mass of scenarios produced for the Funambules by Charles Charton, Cot d'Ordan, Eugène Grangé, Alexandre Guyon, Charles Bridault, Deburau himself, and numerous anonymous house authors; nearly all of these works disappeared with the dissolution of the Funambules in 1862. Pericaud and Levillain (1943: 93-117) have discussed the few scenarios that have survived. These show the vast gulf between the "bourgeois logic" of Champfleury's scenarios and the anti-logic of the many Funambules scenarios that Champfleury felt stifled the potential of pantomimic art. Typical of these works is *Arcadius, ou Pierrot chez les indiennes* (1852), a pantomime in eleven scenes, by Charles Charton (1806-1867), who spent nearly fifty years of his life in the Funambules, for which he wrote and directed at least 150 pantomimes. He detested Champfleury's scenarios and built his own scenarios around the presumption that Pierrot could exist only by denying any reality outside of the Funambules. Adèle Levillain regards *Arcadius* as Charton's "masterpiece" (1943: 96). But it is a masterpiece of childish fantasy set in "America at the time of Christopher Columbus." Here Indians live in a huge, golden German Gothic palace and go by names such as Rolao, Zauqui and Zaoqua, while some of the Indians, including Congo, are evidently "Negros." The Indians also maintain an "Asian garden" with a statue of the god Atlas; one scene takes place at an "African site," and another takes place on a mountain overlooking the Caspian Sea. Arcadius, leader of the Indians, desires Cora, daughter of the Indian chief Rolao, but her affections lie with Fernando, the captain of a Spanish expedition. Fernando is enthusiastic about union with Cora, but Arcadius imprisons Fernando and Rolau in another vast Gothic palace, where "ferocious savages" prepare to eat them. The prisoners escape, but Aracadius abducts Cora, depositing her in a "lugubrious cavern." The Spaniards attack, an "abominable mêlée" ensues. As Fernando's valet, Pierrot does not have a prominent part in the piece, but he does get chased by a bear and he does free Cora and pushes the black servants of Aracadius into the Caspian Sea, "where they drown." When the dying Arcadius attempts a final stab at Fernando, "the spiritual Pierrot" intervenes and

snatches the weapon. Cora and Fernando stand united (Charton 1852: 1-8). Geographical, historical, and cultural absurdities abound here as they do in all of Charton's extant pieces. But pantomime, he claimed, followed it own logic of possibility, for "In pantomime everything must be silent. The audience has only eyes and no ears" (Pericaud 1897: 364; Levillain 1943: 96). But even this statement is absurd, because *Arcadius* contains large amounts of dialogue, as, indeed, did nearly all the pantomimes presented at the Funambules, although Pierrot is among several characters who never says a word. Champfleury was unique in striving to expand the "silence" of pantomime beyond the exclusively silent Pierrot that Deburau had created. But as Champfleury discovered, the more "silent" (speechless) pantomime became, the more difficult it was to produce, for without any dialogue at all, pantomime required a much larger directorial imagination and a lot more rehearsal time than was available at a shabby theater like the Funambules performing at least two shows a day.

Given the realities of production and audience at the Funambules and the deep bias there favoring the mocking of "higher aspirations," it is understandable that the literary romantics would prefer an imaginary Pierrot created out of their own words to the Pierrot they actually saw on the stage. But the romantics had credibility within their own class, if not necessarily within the proletariat, insofar as they constructed the impression that their "poetic" image of Pierrot emerged organically from what they referred to ostensibly as "the people," from the very audience that resisted the transformation of Pierrot into a figure who could also belong to a "higher" class. The romantics achieved power to the extent that their writings created or became national monuments; making Pierrot another symbol of the nation was a strategy that gave greater fluidity to the concept of "the people" than the audience inhabiting the Funambules and thus "redeemed" that audience and its devotion to inanity. Pierrot and pantomime could survive the intensifying decadence of the Funambules in the 1840s only by capturing the imagination of a different audience, an audience of readers. But the death of Deburau galvanized the romantic rehabilitation of Pierrot in bizarre ways. For example, upon the death of Deburau, the song writer Eugène Grangé (1810-1886), the author of numerous scenarios for the Funambules as well as a prodigious number of plays for other theaters, composed a memorial song, "Deburau and Talma, a dialogue of death about the living," in which Deburau updates Talma on the

current state of France, to which Talma replies: "So I was in profound error /When I dreamed of former glories/ [...] it crumbles this old world" (Pericaud 1897: 300-301). The owner of the Funambules, Billion, forbade the singing of the song in the theater, for he did not see how glorifying the dead actor would motivate people to see living ones. Commemorating Deburau through voice rather than through pantomime was an obvious irony. But Grangé was unwilling to claim authorship for any of the scenarios he wrote for the Funambules because, as he said when he became a member of the Legion of Honor, "If I had signed my Funambules pieces I should have had to wait ten years longer to obtain this [this red ribbon]" (Levillain 1943: 91).

With the *Odes funambulesques* (1854), by Théodore de Banville (1823-1891), Pierrot had become an archetype of bourgeois poetic consciousness. Banville describes Pierrot as "my friend," and he includes a kind of scenario that opens with the death of "a bourgeois." The dead bourgeois discovers that he is in a theater that "is not the Théâtre-Français." Pierrot appears, and the bourgeois, greatly delighted, remarks that the pantomime looks "quite beautiful for an antique overwhelmed with obsolescence." In response to the bourgeois' questions, Pierrot makes only movements. The muse of the Funambules is "Madness"; the theater is more marvelous than anything built by Louis XIV; much as he respects great literature, he does not perform tragedy or drama. Instead, he parodies actors of these genres. When the bourgeois takes out his snuffbox, Pierrot parodies that as well. The bourgeois concludes that, "No one has ever understood you as well as I do, due to the style of your pantomime, sublime and touching at once." Nevertheless, the bourgeois wants to meet someone with whom he can speak "in simple prose [...] simple poesie." So Pierrot introduces him to a young and pretty elf or fairy. From then on, the piece unfolds in rhymed verse as the bourgeois encounters other archetypes of the Funambules, including a clown, who, in verse, evokes Arlequin, Colombine, Polchinelle, Cassandre, and Pierrot, "the greatest of all, calm as a Roman,/The most spiritual, the most truly human,/Formidable, and always greater than his fortune,/My dear friend Pierrot, the cousin of the moon!" (Banville 1854: 113-129). The point of the piece is that Pierrot and pantomime have become enshrined in bourgeois consciousness because they embody a harmless image of happiness achieved through a simple, undemanding "poesie." But they are also dead, emblems of a benign Death conjured up by a complacent bourgeois consciousness.

A far less benign image of the bourgeois conflation of Pierrot with Death appears in *Le Spleen de Paris* (1869) by Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867), who wrote the small prose poems that make up the book in the 1850s. In "Le vieux saltambique," the author describes his visit to a fairground, where he witnesses a great "plebian jubilee," a huge crowd excited by astonishing feats of physical prowess. Utterly ignored by the crowd is a decrepit, solitary, forgotten acrobat, "mute and motionless," a figure of "absolute wretchedness." The "unforgettable look he cast over the crowd and the lights" causes the author, suddenly filled with sorrow, to see himself in the place of the acrobat, "the old writer," who has been forgotten by his readers, debased in the end by "the public's ingratitude" (Baudelaire 1997: 27-30; Baudelaire 1919: 66-68; Baudelaire 1917: 37-41). With "Une mort héroïque" the identification of pantomime with Death is even stronger, partly because Baudelaire prefers to imagine his deathly Pierrot rather than report what he has actually seen. This prose poem reads like a fable. In a small German principality, the pantomime Fancioulle, seeking a "serious" purpose for his life, participates in a conspiracy against the despotic Prince who rules the country, even though the buffoon is the favorite actor of the Prince and "almost like one of the Prince's friends." The conspiracy fails; Fancioulle and the conspirators face death. However, the Prince, a demonic aesthete and an "altogether insatiable voluptuary," circulates the rumor that he will pardon the conspirators if Fancioulle performs one of his famous pantomimes for the court and the conspirators. The performance reaches the summit of pantomimic art, an amazing "intoxication of Art," which creates "a paradise that shuts out all thought of death and destruction." The Prince is also spellbound, yet intensely jealous of the pantomime's emotional grip on the audience. He sends a child to deliver a mysterious message to Fancioulle, but the pantomime, "awakened from his dream," releases a great hiss and falls dead on the stage. The conspirators are executed that night. Subsequent court mimes never achieved the "miraculous talent of Fancioulle" or such high "favor" (Baudelaire 1970: 54-57; Baudelaire 1917: 87-94). The fable suggests, somewhat allegorically, that the idea of Art as an "intoxication" to "veil the terrors of the abyss," Death, is an illusion, for Art in reality is the most beautiful or "intoxicating" intimation of Death. Pantomime at the highest level of performance provides the most transparent revelation of Death mascarading as Art. But

this was a more "serious" idea of pantomime than anyone performing it could imagine.

No romantic author was more "serious" about pantomime than Baudelaire, even if he had no interest in writing pantomime scenarios or seeing pantomimes performed. He did not think highly of French pantomime or of the Pierrot that "the late-lamented Deburau had accustomed us—that figure pale as the moon, mysterious as silence, supple and mute as the serpent, long and straight as a gibbet." He preferred instead "the English Pierrot" he had seen in Paris in his youth, because this Pierrot was darker, more violent, and more destructive in his buffoonery, far more grotesque. In his essay on "the essence of laughter" (1855) Baudelaire claimed that laughter is the release of a "satanic" pressure within the body. Laughter is always a response to grotesque phenomena, which is "the absolute comic," such as when, after being guillotined, the decapitated body of Pierrot rises up and displays his own head, as if his body could admire it, before stuffing it in his pocket. The grotesque is the degradation of an ideal: laughter therefore signifies a pleasure in degradation and asserts the superiority of the laugher over the grotesque thing that provokes laughter, for "the comic can only be absolute in relation to fallen humanity." "Pantomime is the refinement, the quintessence of comedy; it is the pure comic element purged and concentrated" (Baudelaire 1972: 153-154). But Baudelaire's theory applies effectively in relation to "the English Pierrot" and the imaginary Fancioulle, not in relation to pantomime in the Funambules in the 1850s, which, from Baudelaire's perspective, had long ceased to contain any "serious" dimension. French pantomime had declined, he implied, because it had filtered out the "degradation" that gave it any seriousness (or cause for laughter) and become the bland, "poetic" image of "my friend Pierrot" or "the invincible Pierrot," as Banville called him, a figure of charming, benign deathliness, free of degradation.

The cohort of romantic authors and artists that dominated Parisian cultural life in the 1850s included the innovative photographer Gaspard-Félix Tournachon, known as Nadar (1820-1910), who was also a journalist, novelist, caricaturist, and aerialist. Nadar took vivid portraits of the romantic authors and artists in the cohort: Gautier, Nerval, Banville, Baudelaire, Champfleury, Courbet, Sand, Berlioz, Delacroix, Manet, and Daumier, among many others. These portraits were significant in connecting romanticism to the new technology, to a "modern" mode of

image making. He photographed his subjects without the artifice and formal complexity of conventional portraiture, yet the images often project a stirring poetic vibrancy. Nadar interacted with his subjects to get them to reveal some alluring quality that draws the viewer into the image, thus bestowing on it the subjectivity that the romantics valued so highly. In 1854, Nadar photographed the son of Baptiste Deburau, Charles Deburau, who had assumed the role of Pierrot at the Funambules. For these portraits, Deburau wore his Pierrot costume: the long, white, collarless tunic with huge buttons, the billowy white pants, and the black skullcap, as well as the white face. In all of the dozen portraits, he stood before a dark screen and assumed rather quiet poses embodying qualities associated with Pierrot: "Pierrot Laughing," Pierrot Listening," "Pierrot with Medicine," "Pierrot with Fruit," and so forth. One photograph shows Pierrot standing next to a camera on a tripod with his hand resting on plate frame while his eyes gaze downward at something other than what the camera would see, as if to suggest that the archaic Pierrot is as comfortable with photo technology as he is with a basket of fruit (Hambourg 1995: 224-227) [Figure 72].



Figure 72: "Pierrot photographe" (1854), photo by Nadar of Charles Deburau. From Hambourg (1995).



Figure 73: "Pierrot laughing" (1855) photo portrait of Paul Legrand by Nadar. Photo: from Hambourg (1995).

Hamon (1999: 37-40) ascribes multiple ambiguities to this photograph, not least of which was the misleading involvement of Nadar's brother, Adrien, in the making of the series, but the main peculiarity is that the viewer sees Pierrot taking the photograph, not Deburau. In 1855, Nadar took a few portraits of Paul Legrand, who at that time was Charles Deburau's chief rival in the role of Pierrot. In these images, Legrand wears essentially the same costume as Deburau, and, as in the Deburau/Pierrot photographs, he stands before a dark screen, although Nadar did shoot one image of Pierrot sitting in a kind of studio garden terrace having a picnic meal. Legrand's Pierrot seems somewhat gentler, older, and sweeter than Deburau's, and less mysterious [Figure 73]. But again, these are portraits of Pierrot, not of Legrand. The Nadar Pierrot portraits effectively demonstrate that in the nineteenth century the figure of Pierrot overwhelmed the identity of

anyone who incarnated him. Whoever played Pierrot with any success never played anyone else and could not play Pierrot without suppressing any identity outside of the character. It is as if Pierrot has no charm or even credibility as a character if he is merely one role among many that an actor performs. Pierrot takes over the actor, dominates him, and leaves no hunger within the actor to reveal any other identity, even his own. By the middle of the nineteenth century, pantomime in France had become entirely identified with the *image* of Pierrot. That is to say, pantomime was about movements of the body that were beautiful and enchanting because they created only one strange, inescapable identity for the body: Pierrot, a figure presumed to be "ironic, mocking, detached [...] an enigmatic, marginal man whose vitality and autonomy prove his superior sensibility" (Hambourg 1995: 224). This mid-century Pierrot completely eclipsed the Roman idea of pantomime as the embodiment of an ideology of metamorphosis and the belief that the body contains many identities (cf., Knowles 2015).

While the image of Pierrot expanded in popularity for the rest of the nineteenth century, the performance of pantomime in the theater continued its long, inexorable decline, becoming an increasingly marginal art perfected by and dominated by a handful of men attached to small theaters that found their niche in preserving the belief that Pierrot was a national treasure. To say, though, that pantomime survived as long as it did because of the Pierrot image promoted by the romantics is feasible only by acknowledging that the nineteenth century was completely oblivious to any idea of pantomime outside of Pierrot. Even within the *commedia* format into which nineteenth century culture had imprisoned pantomime, it was inconceivable that any other *commedia* figure could rival Pierrot as a pantomimic image of "invincible humanity." No Colombine, no Polchinelle, no Arlequin could emerge to challenge the supremacy of Pierrot as a symbol of pantomime, for the "silence" of Pierrot was the invention of Deburau and it retained its beauty or credibility only if it belonged to Pierrot and no one else. Those who played the other *commedia* figures submitted to this silence with the deepest obscurity; most of these actors had other roles to play. Within the culture, the purpose of pantomime was to affirm and reinforce the authority of an implied archaic archetype of the "silence" of the body, of the limits of the body to signify anything without words, without careful regulation through an elaborate system of signification, as in ballet, which by 1860 was itself in serious decline,

awaiting, from Russia, in the 1870s, a far less complacent attitude toward ballet to restore romantic energy to an art too easily captivated by formal rigidity. Those seeking careers in bodily performance found larger opportunities at the various circuses that blossomed in Paris in the 1840s in the wake of the Cirque Olympique's abandonment of pantomime in the 1820s. But the circus only reinforced the assumption that it was not a site for the production of narratives that bestowed "seriousness" or some high aesthetic value on bodily performance; it was merely a site for the display of bodily virtuosity, spectacles of technical proficiency.

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, all the memorable stage Pierrots descended from Deburau's Pierrot, beginning with Deburau's son, Charles, as if these Pierrots exemplified a kind of royal pedigree, although such a pedigree did not prevent either pantomime or Pierrot from drifting into deeper decadence and frailty. Deburau planned for his son to have a life outside of the theater, because he believed that a life in the theater was unhealthy. But Charles Deburau (1829-1873) became intensely enamored of his father's artistry, which he studied with fanatical zeal; upon his father's premature death, Charles felt dynastically destined to perpetuate the Pierrot mystique. He was only nineteen when he played Pierrot in *La reine des carrots* (1848). He brought an elegant, supple, "physiognomic finesse" to the role (Huguonet 1889: 102). But he remained attached to his father's conception of Pierrot as a carefree, irresponsible, anarchic spirit whose greatest pleasure was eating and drinking. His movements and "silence" were his father's made youthfully fresh. However, the audience, while respectful of Charles' "Catholic tradition" of pantomime, as Gautier called it, was also open to a new idea of Pierrot. The owner of the Funambules since 1843, Charles-Louis Billion, saw a grand commercial opportunity in setting up a rivalry between Charles and the ambitious Paul Legrand (1816-1898), who had studied the elder Deburau's Pierrot for six years at the theater and had assumed the role immediately following Deburau's death. Billion was masterful in extracting profit from the theater without increasing much, if at all, investment in higher production values to attract audiences. A rivalry between Deburau and Legrand would, he surmised, attract spectators more effectively and more cheaply than paying a single star a higher salary or spending more to achieve higher quality spectacle. But for the rivalry to work, Legrand had to come up with a different kind of Pierrot. He was not as handsome or suave

as Charles Deburau; he had a short stature, a "soft" physiognomy, and a homely face, and he avoided performing the acrobatic stunts at which the Deburaus excelled. His fame therefore rested upon his construction of an "emotional" Pierrot, the sad, melancholy, poignant Pierrot perpetually thwarted in his efforts to love a woman. He wrote numerous scenarios to consolidate his conception of the character—"[Pierrot] leaves the stage the prey of a violent despair"—and he made astute choices of music to support the emotional scope of the movement (Larcher 1887: xxi, 41). Legrand's emotionalism, his willingness to show Pierrot weeping or in scenes of solitude, intimated, especially for the literary-minded after 1880, the idea of a Pierrot capable of "tragic" pathos or at least the dark moods ("pantomime noir") that literary audiences associated with a worthwhile degree of "seriousness," which in the 1880s implied an alignment with the Symbolist attraction to "decadence." But unlike the rivalry between Bathyllus and Pylades in the early Roman Empire, the rivalry between Deburau and Legrand did not lead to a glamorous era for pantomime. Legrand felt compromised by Deburau's influence at the Funambules, while Deburau grew disenchanted with Billion's reluctance to invest in the scenic upgrades necessary to sustain audience interest in the elaborate *féerie* pantomimes that best displayed his Pierrot. The Parisian audience for pantomime was actually not large enough to sustain even one Pierrot, let alone two. In 1853, Legrand moved to the nearby and opulently renovated Folies-Nouvelles, which sought to attract a more upscale audience than the Funambules. But at the Folies-Nouvelles, Legrand had to share much of the year with the many light operas and "spectacle concerts" produced at the theater. Even with Legrand gone from the Funambules, Charles Deburau found that his audience was not large enough to keep him in Paris, despite a series of unfortunate efforts to establish himself independently of the Funambules. Unlike his father, who never left Paris once he settled there, Charles toured France extensively beginning in 1857; for ten months he was in Egypt (1860-1861). In 1865, he attempted a triumphal return to Paris with the help of Champfleury's scenario *Le pantomime de l'avocat*. By this time, Champfleury had become a director of the Fantaisies-Parisiennes theater, but neither Champfleury's scenario nor Deburau's artistry was enough to keep Pierrot on the stage: pantomime disappeared altogether from that theater, and Deburau was soon touring again all over France, even though the provincial theaters lacked the scenographic technology for the "tricks"

that made his performances in Paris so distinctive. Marseille and Bordeaux proved especially appreciative of his "traditional" Pierrot. Nevertheless, as with his father, his health was never robust, and the stress of touring, of infusing new life into Pierrot, brought him to an early death in Bordeaux in 1873 (Huguonet 1889: 108-120). Legrand, meanwhile, lingered in Paris until the end of the 1850s, when the new owner decided that pantomime failed to attract audiences large enough to be profitable. He, too, began touring: Rio de Janeiro (1861-1863), Cairo (1870, 1871), and some reliable years in Bordeaux (1864-1870). By the time of his departure from Paris, his Pierrot seemed "old," a kind of relic from a faded era, when people associated romanticism with youthful directions in culture, although part of the appeal of Legrand's Pierrot was that he captured a sense of the character being "too old" for his feelings toward women and for the absurdity of his existence. He tried to turn Pierrot into the "good, devout, honest servant" of Cassandre, an "amiable" rather than demonic Pierrot, but when he returned to Paris for the final two decades of his career (1871-1888), he found his audience consisted for awhile of patrons of a café-cabaret and then ended his career performing for children at the Théâtre-Vivienne (Huguonet 1889: 134-137).

Legrand's Pierrot resonated more strongly than Deburau's in the arts media of Paris, but his Pierrot had no descendants on the stage, perhaps because Legrand did not see the Pierrot of the future as providing anyone with a career in the theater. Deburau, however, found a disciple in Louis Rouffe (1849-1885), a native of Marseille who studied under Deburau in Bordeaux. Rouffe's career unfolded almost entirely in Marseille; he never performed in Paris, and hardly any evidence of his approach to Pierrot remains, although Huguonet (1889: 172) contends that he sought to apply innovative ideas that Champfleury had struggled to introduce decades earlier and grew closer to Legrand than Deburau would have approved. He apparently allowed Pierrot to discard his white costume on occasion and assume costumes particular to the situation in which he found himself. But Rouffe was not strong enough to create a new Pierrot, and he died even more prematurely than Deburau. His most important achievement was probably his student, the Corsican Séverin Cafferra, known as Séverin (1863-1930), who claimed that he applied a "gestural language" that Rouffe had devised; each word supposedly had its own gesture, and from these gestures one created "pantomimic phrases" (Séverin 1929: 38-44). "Under his shaved,

flour face, all white, [Séverin] expresses, in turn, the different types which are agitated, palpitated, and stirring in the present society. He is the dandy, the snob in *Pierrot Don Juan*; Pescarp, the rogue, the apache in *Conscience*, the gallant and heroic soldier in *Pousse caillou*; the poet, the dreamer in *Chand' d'habits*; the hallucinating madman in *Pierrot, assassin de sa femme*" (Claris 1903: 327). In 1890, Séverin went to Paris to see *L'Enfant prodigue*, a three-act pantomime by Michel Carré (1865-1945) and André Wormser (1851-1926), which had, unexpectedly, inspired considerable enthusiasm in the city under the auspices of the recently formed Cercle Funambulesque, a society dedicated to "modernizing" pantomime. The performance deeply impressed Séverin, who saw in it the necessity of creating a modern idea of Pierrot, and he resolved the following year to transfer his career to Paris. He collaborated with the El Dorado Theater to produce a short ensemble pantomime, which was successful enough to remain on the program for three months. His mother's illness, however, compelled him to return to Marseille and the Alcazar Theater. It was not until 1896 that he returned to Paris to perform at private salons arranged by the Provençal critic Paul Arène (1843-1896), who had written a favorable review of Séverin's performances in Marseille. He met the novelist Emile Zola, then he met Legrand, who observed that Séverin represented a "warm," Mediterranean approach to pantomime and Pierrot. But the person he most impressed at the salons was the Parnassian poet and novelist Catulle Mendes (1841-1909), who decided to write a pantomime especially for Séverin, *'Chand d'habits*, an adaptation of the Gautier/d'Otan *Marchand d'habits*. The piece was a hit; after two weeks at the Théâtre-Salon, it transferred to the Folies Bergère, where it ran for 150 performances (Levillain 1943: 395). Even a foreign reviewer could write: "And Severin himself is never prolix. His gestures are definite, simple, and free from the mere suspicion of restlessness. Though he can dance with the maddest of them, though he can make love with an ardour which is childlike and pathetic, he never over steps the bounds of reticence, and there is an ingenuous dignity even in his discomfiture. His face, moreover, is the true Pierrot's face; and his features are as expressive as possible on this side of distortion. To see him is to realise the ancient charm of pantomime, and to marvel once more at the decay of a beautiful art" ("Pantomime in Paris" 1897: 386). From this point on, Séverin remained in Paris, where the consensus soon emerged that he was "the last of the great Pierrots." He extended his career deep into the 1920s, but the peak of

his fame was in the years 1896-1912. In 1908, through an adaptation of his scenario *Conscience*, he introduced his Pierrot to international silent film audiences. In New York, distributors regarded it as a "powerful" "art" film (under the title *Incriminating Evidence*), because of its "gruesome" story of a man falsely accused of murder and only his friend, Pierrot, can save him, once he stops blackmailing the murderer and yields to his conscience (*Film Index* 4/6 1909: 8). "The marvelous ability of Severin is given a prominent position and to witness his power in gesture and still more able facial expression is a revelation" (*Film Index* 4/5 1909: 4). At the time of the film's New York release in February 1909, Séverin had been and continued performing the stage version in several cities of the United States to considerable acclaim: "There is no actor but could profit by witnessing the play. It would be interesting to see what an American company would be able to do with it. It is to be feared that the net result would be amateurish, to say the least" (*Variety*, January 1909: 17; *Los Angeles Herald*, 36/136, 14 February 1909: 54).

Pantomime Noire: The Cercle Funambulesque

Although *L'Enfant prodigue* had a transformative effect upon him, Séverin was skeptical of the efforts to modernize pantomime by the Cercle Funambulesque. For example, he disliked that Carré had given Pierrot a mother and father, even though the story very much depends on Pierrot, as the prodigal son, having parents. Pierrot, he believed, should be utterly alone in the world, without family or friends (Séverin 1929: 169). His own idea of modernization moved in a different direction: he introduced recurrent characters outside of the *commedia* format, such as the dancer and eventual film star Musidora (1889-1957); he perfected a gestural economy built around an elegant vocabulary of hand movements—a feature of the Mediterranean style of pantomime, which was "warm" because of its restrained realism; and he favored realism in his scenarios, such as *Conscience*, in which Pierrot grapples with a profound moral crisis and avoids engaging in extravagantly absurd stunts. He was imaginative at expanding the expressive power of the face, especially the eyes. Catulle Mendes shared Séverin's reluctance to embrace the Cercle Funambulesque, whose productions, outside of *L'Enfant prodigue*, suffered, they believed, from amateurism, a lack of sufficient training in pantomimic art, and an excessive emphasis on literary attitudes toward pantomime. But Mendes

and Séverin had less interest in reviving some "traditional," romantic-era idea of Pierrot than their adaptation of *'Chand d'habits* might suggest. Rather, they wanted to free Pierrot from the supposedly Symbolist affectations they believed the Cercle Funambulesque had imposed upon him; they wanted to develop a Pierrot who thrived in the materialistic and often socially conscious aesthetic of realism. Séverin's approach to Pierrot gained popularity at about the same time that the Cercle Funambulesque was reaching its end. But the Cercle was significant in raising expectations of pantomime at a time when the conventional theater culture showed little inclination even to produce pantomime. The Cercle "officially" operated from 1888 to 1898, and the membership included many prominent writers and artists in Paris, including among others: Champfleury, Joris-Karl Huysmans, Jules Lemaitre, Jules Massenet, Leon Hennique, Jean Richepin, Eugene Larcher, Felix Galipaux, Jules Chéret, and Paul Huguonet. However, the ideas that formed and animated the society had received their impetus in the early 1880s from a co-founder of the society, the writer Paul Margueritte (1860-1918). Ostensibly, both Margueritte and the Cercle aimed to achieve contradictory goals: to create a modern pantomime aesthetic and to restore pantomime to what it was in the eighteenth century and the time of the *foires* (Huguonet 1889: 238). In reality, a muddled idea of modernity triumphed inadvertently over a languid idea of traditional pantomime. A peculiar achievement of Margueritte's program was that it treated Pierrot as a role among many that an actor could play rather than as an identity that supersedes all others assumed by the actor.

In 1883, Alexandre Guyon and Jean Richepin produced, as part of a program that included other scenes, recitations, and musical interludes, Richepin's scenario *Pierrot assassin* at the large Trocadero Theater with an orchestra of thirty musicians. In Richepin's three-scene scenario, never published, Colombine persuades Pierrot to murder the widow of Cassandre to obtain her bag of money; he kills the widow and Colombine tries to pin the crime on the widow's bodyguard Flamberge. At Colombine's house, the ghost of the widow appears as the couple eats dinner; Colombine and Pierrot try to escape, but Flamberge and the police arrive to arrest them. In the final scene, a doctor declares that Pierrot is insane. He tries again to escape, but the gendarmes capture him. He is furious with Colombine, and succumbs to the "final crisis of despair: he at last knows what his love for a woman is worth. He is cured" (Huguonet 1889: 149-152). The scenario

exemplifies the trend in the 1880s onward toward depicting the dark, criminal Pierrot, the so-called "pantomime noir." But the production was also innovative in that Guyon and Richepin persuaded the famous actresses Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923) and Gabrielle Réjane (1856-1920) to play Pierrot and Colombine. For Bernhardt, playing Pierrot was merely a kind of experiment, an opportunity to demonstrate another facet of her acting skill; she apparently worked with Legrand in developing her pantomimic skill, although Ariane Martinez (2008: 118) doubts that the audience even knew she played the part, and she contends the production was a "fiasco," partly because the Trocadero was much too big for pantomimic performance. The show therefore did not continue there or anywhere else, never enjoyed a revival, and Richepin never published his scenario, although it must be said that the performance was a benefit for an institute for the blind. But Nadar made photographs of Bernhardt and Réjane in their costumes, and these, with their bizarre erotic quality, kept the memory of the innovative event alive, for here the actresses are clearly performing something poetic for the camera that was perhaps not visible in the theater. The crossdressing element also included Alexandre Guyon (1830-1905), who played the role of Cassandre's widow. Guyon had himself on occasion played Pierrot, but more often performed as Arlequin, and for much of his career he wrote pantomime scenarios for the Funambules and other theaters. Since 1880, he had been working with the Trocadero, the Funambules having disappeared altogether in 1862 to accommodate Baron Hausmann's expansion of the Parisian boulevards. He, like Richepin, Bernhardt, and Réjane, regarded the *commedia* style pantomime as a kind of playful laboratory in which to explore strange aspects of acting rather than as a submission to a revered tradition. This attitude, which pervaded the Cercle, probably contributed to the perception that the efforts to modernize Pierrot arose from impulses that were dilettantish, amateurish, or decadent.

Whatever its defects, the Bernhardt-Richepin production at the Trocadero succeeded in stimulating efforts to imagine Pierrot as an emblem of modernity. Most of these efforts came from people who were outside of the pantomime culture and, in many cases, had only an occasional involvement with theater: literary men who also wrote novels, journalism, historical works, poetry. A few were major artists, like Adolphe Willette (1857-1926) and Jules Chéret (1836-1932), whose many posters and illustrations in journals did much to promote a modern image of Pierrot.

These images depicted Pierrot as an energetic, pleasure-loving Parisian, not as an idle, carefree village buffoon; Willette sometimes even showed Pierrot wearing a black rather than white costume. Pierrot's image promoted manifold non-theatrical events and products, and in 1888, Willette launched an illustrated magazine called *Le Pierrot*, although Pierrot's image appeared only intermittently. Poets wrote macabre, melancholy, and even morbid poems about Pierrot: Paul Verlaine, "Pierrot" (1869), "Pantomime" (1882) and "Pierrot gamin" (1886); Achille Melandri, *Les Pierrots* (1885), with illustrations by Willette; Jules Laforgue, *Les Complaintes* (1885)—"Complainte de Lord Pierrot"—and *L'Imitation de Notre-Dame la Lune* (1885); Albert Giraud, *Pierrot lunaire* (1884), which, in German translation (1892) became the basis for Arnold Schoenberg's famous, expressionistic song cycle of 1912, as well as several other song cycles by German and Austrian composers in the early years of the twentieth century. The silent, speechless figure of Pierrot awakened in these poets a dark, pessimistic, desolate voice, as if modernity entailed a confrontation with the failure of love to overcome a fundamental estrangement from the world. In 1881, Leon Hennique (1850-1935) and Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848-1907) published the pantomime scenario *Pierrot sceptique*, which included illustrations by Chéret, who depicted Pierrot wearing a black costume. The pantomime has never been performed, although the actions in it do not seem any more "unperformable" than those in scenarios for the Funambules. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the scenario is its violence. Pierrot's wife has died, which is the reason he wears black, and most of the action consists of his efforts to avoid paying those who provide funeral services, such as a tailor, a hairdresser, an undertaker, and a marble headstone carver, while he becomes involved with a female mannequin-like character, La Sidonie, who comes to life in the hairdresser's shop and with whom he has a grotesque dinner scene. He doesn't mind trying to kill everyone he meets, and the piece ends with all the stores and his apartment going up in flames as he escapes with La Sidonie. But for Hennique and Huysmans, the deluxe publication of the text was the performance, the interplay of typography, illustration, page space, and paper texture. The book was about the "impossibility" of performing a modern Pierrot outside of a suave, aesthetically designed text. Hennique pursued this idea of an anti-theatrical, Book Pierrot in "pantomimes" that were not published until 1903, *La Redemption de Pierrot*, with illustrations by Louis Morin, and *La Songe*

d'une nuit d'hiver, with illustrations by Chéret. These seem like decorative short stories, packaged as exquisite little books, most of which are told through spoken dialogue, not physical actions, including Pierrot himself. In *La Redemption*, Pierrot abandons his evil habits and becomes a kind of holy figure as a result of his erotic desire for a statue of the Virgin Mary, with whom he engages in spoken dialogue about his sinfulness in attempting to rob the church where the statue resides. Such was the decadent mind: demonstrating a love or fascination for a theatrical character meant putting him in a precious little book rather than on stage; it meant imagining a Pierrot for readers intoxicated by exotic libraries rather than for spectators agitated by raucous theaters. But the desire to "give voice" to Pierrot or to describe him through the voice, through poetry, song, opera, or purely instrumental musical pieces, spread beyond France, especially in the early twentieth century, as a result of the decadent fetishizing of Pierrot, even if many of these works could claim no affinity with the decadents. Brinkmann (1997: 163-166) identifies at least fifty "musical Pierrots" composed in Europe and the United States between 1873 and 1926, the great majority of these appearing between 1899 and 1915. A 1917 anthology, *Mon ami Pierrot*, contains seventy-five poems about Pierrot, most of which were the work of American authors. One of the more peculiar of works of the decadent eighties was the ballet pantomime *Pierrot macabre* (1886) authored by the Belgian poet Theodore Hannon (1851-1916) and the Belgian-Italian composer Pietro Lanciani (1857-1912). The piece was actually performed in Brussels at La Monnaie with a fairly large orchestra; Paul Legrand was supposed to play Pierrot, but had other commitments, so Joseph Hansen (1842-1907), formerly ballet master at La Monnaie, played Pierrot and did the choreography, for which he received praise from the *La Guide Musical* (23, 12, 25 March 1886: 92). While mourning the sudden death of Colombine, Pierrot encounters a seductive fairy, Laetitia, who distracts him from his sorrow. After an almost expressionistically "somnolent" funeral cortege, Pierrot dances with spiders and spectres before finding himself in Laetitia's voluptuous garden. But then Colombine comes to life after experiencing what was actually a profound "lethargy" only to discover that Pierrot's focus is now Laetitia. She therefore takes up with a pair of "Polchinelles," which drives Pierrot to despair and then to his death. But a kiss from Colombine, recommended by Laetitia, revives him, and he falls into Colombine's arms. *Pierrot macabre* contains numerous striking images, perhaps because the

entire scenario is written in rhymed verse and in different rhyme schemes, none of which can be experienced through the performance of the piece, but which nevertheless produce in the reader a memorable and genuinely macabre sense of movement among the many characters and perhaps in any performance of the piece as well (cf. Mayeur 2009).

Paul Margueritte developed another innovative way of defining the relation between scenario language and bodily movement in actual pantomimic performance. The son of a distinguished general and a nephew of the poet Stéphane Mallarmé, Margueritte was able to indulge a youthful enthusiasm for amateur theatricals in a precocious manner. For a couple of summers in the 1870s, he operated a theater in Valvins, a suburb of Paris, where he put on Pierrot pantomimes and serious plays with his friends and citizens of the town. Romantic authors inspired him: Gautier, Banville, Poe, Hoffmann, and these decided his conception of an "ultra-romantic" and "very modern Pierrot," "a refined Pierrot, neurotic, cruel and ingenuous, combining all contrasts, a veritable psychic Proteus, a little sadistic, willingly drunk, and perfectly wicked" (Margueritte 1910: 11-13, 15). This modern Pierrot appeared in the scenario *Pierrot assassin de sa femme*, written in 1881. The first performance took place either in Valvins in the early eighties or at a *soirée* given by Alphonse Daudet in 1886, with Margueritte playing Pierrot, and then subsequent performances took place "here and there," including André Antoine's Théâtre Libre in 1888, when, Margueritte says, Antoine played the undertaker, although this role scarcely exists in the text (Margueritte 1910: 17; Margueritte 1925: 22-26). The piece is really a silent monologue of physical gesture. In a barren room, Pierrot contemplates the corpse of his wife, Colombine, whose body lies on a bed. He drinks cognac and gazes at a portrait of Colombine. He reflects on the process of committing the crime. He killed her because she stole from him, drank his best wine, beat him, and cheated on him. But he wasn't sure how to kill her—most methods seemed too violent and messy. While massaging his foot, he decided to tickle her to death. The murder scene then occurs as kind of flashback. Colombine, whom Pierrot has bound and gagged, awakens from her sleep and cries out almost orgasmically ("twists in a frightful gaiety"), and then suddenly she dies from the excitement. The flashback over, Pierrot resumes drinking and studying the smiling portrait of Colombine, but the alcohol only agitates him and he becomes filled with fear and desire for the woman in the picture. "The music wanders." He

becomes drowsy and decides to go to bed. The room becomes dark, so that "nothing can be distinguished but a white and vague Pierrot" holding a candle. But the bed bearing the corpse starts to glow red, "like a huge lantern," and then the portrait exudes a strange light: "first the frame glows, phosphorescent [. . .] and then Colombine [in the portrait] lights up: her laugh bursts red and white." Pierrot responds indignantly, tries to be brave in facing the luminous phantom. But the sound of Colombine's laughter as she was being tickled to death intensifies, causing Pierrot to twist into convulsions. He falls dead before the portrait (Margueritte 1882; 1910: 99-105). The piece is remarkable for its representation of Pierrot's psychic-emotional turbulence, a state of trauma. But what is even more remarkable is that Margueritte shifts into first person voice to describe actions meant to be performed silently, for, as he reminds the reader, "Pierrot is *mute*." He describes Pierrot's "thoughts" as if the character is talking to himself, and these thoughts appear in a larger font than the actions that only describe scenic and physical actions. For example:

> *Colombine, my charming wife, the Colombine in the portrait, was sleeping. She slept there in the big bed: I killed her. Why ? ... Ah, there you go! She stole my gold; drank my best wine; beat me, and harshly; as for my brow, she furrowed it.*
> *Cuckold, yes, she did that to me, and to the point, but what does that matter? I killed her; because I liked it, what is there to say? To kill her, Yes ... it smiles at me. But how did I do it?*

The author describes the state of the murder's mind through the voice of the murderer, which the spectator never hears; instead, the pantomimist must choose gestures and movements that "translate" the monologic voice into its physical equivalent. Margueritte undoubtedly developed his own set of gestures for performing the "voice," but the point of the voice is to indicate that the performer must come up with his own gestural "translation" of it, that different bodies "understand" the voice in ways that cannot be inscribed or imposed upon the body through a transcending choreography that is supposedly understandable across variable physiognomies. But he also insisted that selecting the appropriate accompanying music was "indispensable" to completing the pantomimic action and was perhaps even more important than the scenario language in

constructing the physical gesture, which, in the case of *Pierrot assassin de sa femme*, was the work of Paul Vidal (1863-1931), a figure well-connected to almost all the composers of the Paris musical world during the Symbolist era: "The music is in pantomime a sticky garment and fluid, which is reflected even in the décor and reaches, by invisible extensions, the most tenuous states of mind in the spectator-listener" (Margueritte 1925: 158-159). Yet discussion of the text as a literary object has overwhelmed discussion of Margueritte's innovative approach to pantomime performance. The Symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898), a friend of Margueritte, wrote a cryptic mini-essay, "Mimique," about the piece, in which he deliberately made unclear whether he was responding to the performance or to the text, although he does conclude the little prose poem by remarking that "between the sheets [pages of text] and the gaze reigns a still silence, the condition and delight of reading," which apparently is different from the "silence within an afternoon of music" that is the performance. But he also mentions "the unpublished reappearance of Pierrot or the poignant and elegant mime Paul Margueritte. [. . .] the face and gestures of the white phantom [are] like a page not yet written [. . .] The scene [i.e., 'the artifice of a notation of feelings'] illustrates only the idea, not an actual action, in a hymen (from which the Dream proceeds), vicious but sacred, between desire and accomplishment, perpetration and remembrance: here ahead, remembering, the future, the past, under a false appearance of the present. Thus operates the Mime [...]" (Mallarmé 1897: 187). Mallarmé's text may seem almost fantastically obscure in explicating anything about pantomime, but Margueritte found the poet's response very helpful in advancing his own ambition to create a modern pantomimic aesthetic, for the poet's enigmatic language conferred an intense aura of mystery on the phenomenon of pantomime that strengthened the "seriousness" with which Margueritte's elite cultural network applied to the art (Margueritte 1925: 28). In 1969, the Parisian literary journal *Tel Quel* sponsored a "Double Session" ("Double séance") featuring two presentations on literary ontology by the philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), which the journal published across two issues in 1970 (Hill 2007: 33-34). In the First Session, Derrida provided an enormous analysis of Mallarmé's tiny text in relation to Margueritte's scenario, in which he claimed that it was "irrelevant" whether "Mimique" was a response to a performance or to the scenario, for the performance could not exist without

the scenario, and in any case, "we," like Mallarmé, can "see" the text whereas "we" cannot see the performance. Derrida's point is that what literature "is," what establishes literature as a "presence," is the interplay of signifiers constituting the text rather than anything performed on a stage that the text compels the reader to "see" or what Mallarmé calls "the false appearance of a present." But this assertion allows Derrida (and Mallarmé) to suppose that "it is prescribed [. . .] to the Mime that he not let anything be prescribed to him but his own writing, that he not reproduce by imitation any action or any speech. [. . .]The Mime ought only to write himself on the white page he is; he must *himself* inscribe *himself* through gestures and plays of facial expression" (Derrida 1981: 148). Pantomimic action is therefore a "hieroglyphic inscription" that lies outside the power of language to "translate," "for the Mime is not subject to the authority of any book" (144-145). While construing the "white phantom" of Pierrot as "the white page" on which the performer inscribes a "hieroglyphic" message is, for Mallarmé and Derrida, a useful metaphor to define literary "presence," the metaphor assumes that the whole of pantomime is synonymous with the "whiteness" of Pierrot, which makes pantomimic action a separate kind of "writing" that cannot be deciphered linguistically, an argument Marmontel made back in the eighteenth century. Recall, however, that the argument against Marmontel was not that pantomimic action was indecipherable or untranslatable, but that it amplified the subjectivity of the spectator, who, without access to any sort of understandable language of gesture, assigned a meaning to the "hieroglyph" that was more likely unique than shared. But by consolidating all of pantomime within the figure of Pierrot (even in 1969!), the French had actually found a way to reduce or confine pantomimic action within a realm of bodily "inscription" that served to eliminate differences between spectators in reading the gestures. In this sense, Pierrot was and remains a national cultural project to preserve the authority of language—and specifically writing—to restrain subjectivity and unify the Subject, as the deconstructionists call the "presence" of the reader, with some kind of ideological structure operating to make the body understandable rather than a divisive source of misunderstanding. It is difficult otherwise to explain why French civilization has invested so much energy in cultivating Pierrot (cf., Jamain 2001).

But the French cultural investment in Pierrot becomes inescapably entangled in a pervasive mood of "decadence" that preceded rather than resulted from the disastrous Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 and the vacant years of pantomime in the 1870s. By the time of *Pierrot, assassin de sa femme*, pantomime was no longer in any sense a popular art; it was a "taste," a refined pleasure, cultivated by connoissseurs who were members of a cultural elite dominated by literary ambitions, as Margueritte acknowledged when he recalled his nostalgic meeting with the withered Paul Legrand (Margueritte 1925: 34-35). From a literary perspective, however, pantomime could be taken "seriously," as a manifestation of modernity, only if Pierrot became a dark figure, immersed in crime, and driven by perverse impulses more aligned with psychiatric disorders than with anarchic nonsense. But making Pierrot dark meant giving him a troubled erotic life with Colombine that the Pierrot of bygone days would gladly have sacrificed in favor of yet another fine meal. The sexual intimacy ascribed to Pierrot motivated encounters with death: he became a murderer, he tried to kill himself, he died anyway and repeatedly, which, because formerly he was so "innocent" in his bizarre whiteness, made pantomime "decadent" at the same the Parnassians revived it as a cult art. Pantomime (Pierrot) within the Parnassian-Symbolist milieu became a kind of luxurious, but peripheral, research project within a larger aesthetic program, a thing that was useful in showing what else one did as an artist. The pantomime performances of the Cercle Funambulesque occurred only occasionally, mostly in salons and sometimes in a small theater, where the atmosphere was as much social as it was artistic. Margueritte wrote many novels, verse plays, memoirs and historical works, but he wrote (with the writer of song lyrics Fernand Bessier [1858-1936]) only one further pantomime of any significance, *Colombine pardonnée* (1888), in which, again, he played Pierrot and his friend Paul Vidal composed the music, although the person who played Colombine remains unidentified (possibly Félicia Mallet). Again he used the device of spoken dialogue to describe the thoughts of the characters that the actors translated into entirely pantomimic action. But this time, Colombine is very much alive and has her own thoughts in dialogue with Pierrot's. This piece is startling for its almost pornographic depiction of the sadomasochistic relationship between Pierrot and Colombine. Pierrot throws Colombine out of his house because of her infidelity, but he still kisses objects of hers that she has left behind,

although the cuckoo clock reminds him that he is a cuckold. While he sleeps, Colombine returns, covered with snow, but when she removes her coat, she appears in a diaphanous tunic under which she is nude. She starts drinking and eating. Pierrot wakes, and they begin their sadomasochistic interplay. She begs forgiveness, dances lasciviously for him, urges him to kiss her and recognize that he has already forgiven her. Pierrot attacks her, attempts to rape her, and she cries out. She demands that he ask forgiveness on his knees, and when he does prostrate himself, she puts her foot on his neck. When the cuckoo clock strikes again, he seizes her as if to strangle her. But she is haughty and unafraid; she dismisses him with a smile and goes to bed behind the curtain. Alone, Pierrot sees the knife stuck in the bread and then his own image in the mirror, which causes him to laugh. "The knife attracts him! Without turning, with his arm stretched back, he seizes it and brandishes it, shining, sharp, terrible." When Pierrot disappears behind the curtain, the spectator hears "a cry to make the hair stand up" and then "an eternity of silence" before Pierrot opens the curtain to reveal Colombine dead, with the knife plunged into her heart. Then he closes the curtain, "with his finger lifted to his mouth," as if to tell the spectator to keep what was seen a secret (Margueritte 1910: 115-122). In his rather lengthy review of the performance at the Théâtre Libre for the *Journal des débats*, the prominent literary critic Jules Lemaitre (1853-1914), a member of the Cercle, praised Margueritte's innovative spirit, his creation of a "tragic and neuropathic" Pierrot. He considered the piece as the equal of contemporary literary works by Alphonse Daudet, Paul Bourget, and Edmond de Goncourt that dealt with morbid psychology; indeed, the piece "contained the entire substance of all these works [and] thirty centuries of literature and human experience," because "it is nonetheless true that the more serious disadvantages of written or spoken theater disappear in pantomime. [...] The psychology of a pantomime always seems credible, because it is ourselves who create it in proportion, for pantomime is of all dramatic genres that to which the spectator collaborates most" (Lemaitre 1889: 347-350). But in spite of such an encouraging response, Margueritte never followed up with another pantomime scenario of similar innovation or intensity.

The Cercle was not unified in its approach to the modernization of pantomime. On the same program as *Colombine pardonnée* was the one-act pantomime *L'Amour de l'Art*, by Raoul de Najac (1856-1915), who played

Arlequin. In this piece, Pierrot displays his love of stealing by swindling Arlequin in a dice game and then stealing objects from various people he encounters, including the police who come to arrest him for theft. For Pierrot, stealing is an "art" that he "loves" for its own sake as a proof of his superior intelligence. Pierrot here is much closer to the Pierrot of Deburau's time, and Lemaitre acknowledged that he "enjoyed it less laboriously than the tragic fantasy of Paul Margueritte. At least the characters were old acquaintances; and there was, in the pleasure they gave me, more security: I confess the timidity of my mind" (Lemaitre 1889: 355). Najac was nostalgic for the "old pantomime" of earlier decades, and he was at odds with the crypto-Wagnerians who dominated the Cercle and sought to modernize pantomime by making Pierrot tragic. In 1888, he published *Les exploits d'une Arlequin*, a transcription of his conversations with François Fredon, a pantomime who had operated his own ensemble in the 1850s and presented *commedia* pantomimes in provinicial towns throughout France but never in Paris. Fredon described the many pleasures and adventures of playing Arlequin with a group of performers who enjoyed the itinerant, often improvised fairground life. Najac saw in Fredon's life a healthy integration of pantomime and communal culture, whereas in Paris Pierrot had become a morbid creature, contaminated by a sinister, Teutonic pessimism. His idea for modernizing pantomime was to shift focus from Pierrot to Arlequin, Polchinelle, and other members of the *commedia* ensemble; in his *Petit traité de pantomime* (1887), however, he doubted that elevating Colombine or introducing any new female characters to the *commedia* format would create a more vibrant pantomime culture (Najac 1887: 24). He favored making Arlequin the dominant figure of pantomime, which certainly does not happen in *L'Amour de l'Art* or in *Barbe-Bluette* (1890), in which Arlequin dies in the middle, killed by Colombine. In *Le Retour de Arlequin* (1887), he composed a completely solo performance for Arlequin, but he mostly succeeded in imposing on Arlequin qualities associated with Pierrot's melancholy affection for Colombine (Najac 1887: 36-48). But the Parisian cultural press, which to a large extent was under the control of Cercle members, responded enthusiastically to Najac's pantomime productions (cf. *La Revue d'art dramatique* XIII 1889: 240-241; *La Plume* 15 September 1892: 404-407); the Cercle even produced a three-scene Arlequin pantomime with no Pierrot, *Lysic* (1890), by Eugène Larcher, one of the founding members of the Cercle. After Deburau, though, Arlequin ceased to interest Parisians

as much as Pierrot, and Najac simply lacked the imagination to renovate Arlequin beyond what Fredon had managed to do with the character in the 1850s in provincial France: Arlequin was just too rustic to carry any weight as a figure of modernity. The Cercle focused instead on exploring what was modern (or perverse) in the sexual dimension to Pierrot's character, which entailed making Colombine more complex as a sexual being and central to Pierrot's motives for action, for the idea of a male homosexual Pierrot was obviously unimaginable within the cultural milieu, even if the all-male members of the club did encourage sexual ambiguity. Richepin and Bernhardt had shown that a stronger female presence was necessary to modernize the pantomime. Félicia Mallet (1863–1928) played Pierrot in *L'Enfant prodigue*, the Cercle's most successful production, which established her as a major talent in the Paris theater world; the artist Édouard Vuillard (1868-1940) did several sketches of her in her black Pierrot costume, which emphasized an androgynous look that other artists also wished to capture (Cogeval 2003: 107-109; "Performance, not results" 2014) [Figure 74].

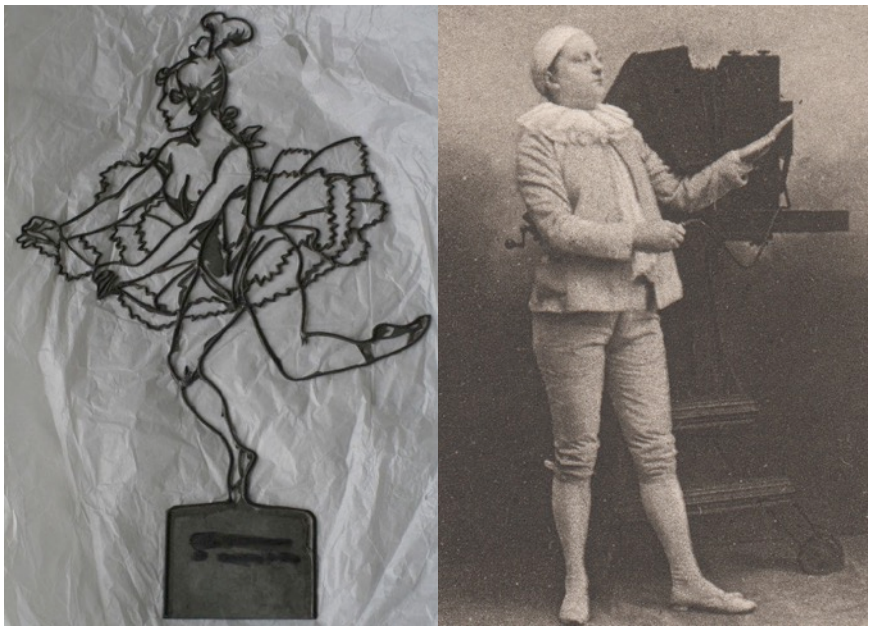


Figure 74: Left: Zinc silhouette of Colombine by Fernand Fau for a marionette pantomime produced at the cabaret Chat noir (1887). Photo: Musées de Châtellerault. Right: Félicia Mallet as Pierrot, a photographer, a photograph taken by Arthur da Cunha, published in the *Bulletin de Photo-Club de Paris*, March 1896.

Another Parisian actress, Jane May, closely emulated Mallet's performance when, in 1891, she brought her own production of *L'Enfant prodigue* to London, at the Prince of Wales Theater; the show, "a little tragedy of a family of fools," greatly impressed reviewers for *The Spectator* and *The Author*, although the reviewer for *The Author* felt that, in spite of May's excellence as a performer, "it is utterly impossible for a woman's figure in man's clothes to look otherwise than anomalous. [...] Pierrot is not a 'jolie jeune garcon,' but a 'gamin maladie,'" a view, however, not shared by the reviewer for *The Spectator* (*The Author* I, 12, 15 April 1891: 323-324; *The Spectator* 4 April 1891: 15). In 1896, May took the production to New York, where she worked with the dancer Isadora Duncan (1878-1927), who played Colombine. In her autobiography (1927), Duncan, who disliked pantomime, described how rehearsals with May were a "martyrdom": "Jane May acted the part of Pierrot, and there was a scene where I was to make love to Pierrot. To three different bars of music I must approach and kiss Pierrot three times on the cheek. At dress rehearsal I did this with such energy that I left my red lips on Pierrot's white cheek. At which Pierrot turned into Jane May, perfectly furious, and boxed my ears" (Duncan 2013: 24-25). But this level of crossdressing and subtle allusion to lesbianism was perhaps the limit of what the Pierrot paradigm could allow in the way of an enhanced female presence in pantomime or of some idea of innovative sexual relations. After her performance as Colombine in *Barbe-Bluette*, Mallet abandoned the Cercle to pursue opportunities as a cabaret singer, dancer, and pantomime outside of the *commedia* format. Indeed, it seems almost incredible that the Cercle was incapable of imagining pantomime without the *commedia* format or even without Pierrot, even though the members were well aware of ancient Roman pantomime if reluctant to acknowledge any idea of pantomime outside of the *commedia* format after the seventeenth century (Huguonet 1889: 11-38).

In the cabaret world, Mallet found a protégé, Georges Wague (1874-1965), whom she educated in pantomimic art and introduced to organizers of cabaret performance. His career began when he collaborated with the songwriter Xavier Privas (1863-1927) to produce "cantomimes" at the *soirées* sponsored by the arts maganzine *La Plume* at the famous Café Procope. Cantomimes were pantomimes of songs sung off stage, so that pantomimic performance entailed moving from one song to the next, one mood to the next; in this respect the cantomime was somewhat similar to ancient

Roman pantomimes. Wague often performed the cantomimes in the conventional white Pierrot costume, and in 1896, he played the father of Pierrot in a production of *L'Enfant prodigue*, a role he reprised in the 1907 film version, the first feature length European film, as well as in a 1916 remake. By the middle of the 1890s, however, Wague had determined that pantomime could not develop in a modern direction as long as it remained fixated on Pierrot. Pantomime, he believed, had to incorporate elements from the other arts. He himself performed in plays, ballets, operas, and eventually in numerous silent films; in 1929, he performed in the first French talking film, *Les Trois Masques*. From Mallet, he learned how to connect movement to emotion, and he rejected Séverin's philosophy of developing a kind of gestural vocabulary or sign language that supposedly translated words or sentences into movements. Pantomime was not the "translation" of emotion into movement; rather, emotions released or propelled movements in different ways depending on the character or situation, so that the pantomime showed emotion in an innovative, unique, and insightful way—"a maximum of feeling with a minimum of gesture" (Wague [1923] in Martinez 2008: 155). Anger, for example, should not always be translated as clenched fists or clenched teeth. Wague stressed facial expression at the expense of broad movements of the hands and arms and "reliance on slow and exaggerated gestures" (Williams 2012: 116; cf. Martinez 2008: 146-155). In 1910, he openly published his thoughts on "La pantomime modern" in the *Paris Journal* (November 19, n.p.), in which he repudiated altogether the Deburau/Pierrot paradigm and asserted that pantomime could only become modern and "human" when it expanded the range and complexity of emotions the body was capable of signifying. From Wague's perspective, breaking away from the *commedia* format and deepening the emotional power of pantomime meant strengthening the presence of women within it. In 1899, he formed a company with his wife, the actress Christiane Mandelys (1873-1957), with whom he performed in numerous cantomimes, pantomimes, and silent films. He worked with numerous female partners in producing small pantomimes with potent emotional, often erotic, intensity: Christine Kerf (1875-1963), Marietta Ricotti, Caroline Otero (1868-1965), Angèle Héraud, Stasia Napierkowska (1891-1945), Ida Rubinstein (1883-1960), and the Danish actress Charlotte Wiehé (1865-1947), who developed her own unique style for combining song and pantomime. The most famous of his partners was Colette (1873-1954),

but apparently he also worked briefly with the early film director Germaine Dulac (1882-1942) on developing a cinematic style of acting that would come close to "life itself" and possess its own "visual rhythm" (Williams 2012: 108-109). But more importantly than his conflict with Séverin over the nature of pantomimic movement, Wague understood that freeing pantomime from the suffocating grip of the *commedia* format and Pierrot meant finding female partners who could expand the emotional power of movement and provide a wider array of tensions between male and female bodies. In the twentieth century, pantomime moved in a "modern" direction in large part because of female performers who were not imprisoned within the Pierrot fantasy that for so long had dominated the French male romantic imagination.

French pantomimes of the Symbolist era that avoided the image of Pierrot have certainly not received much attention. Thanks to the publicity generated by the Cercle, other theaters occasionally experimented with pantomime in the late 1880s and 1890s, including the famous bohemian left bank cabaret Le Chat Noir, which operated from 1881 to 1898 and attracted as customers numerous prominent literary and artistic figures. The cabaret produced only a few small pantomimes over several years: *L'Épopée, pantomime à grand spectacle en 20 tableaux* (1887), by the cartoonist and wordless comic strip artist Caran d'Ache (1858-1909), *Cruelle énigme, pantomime burlesque* (1891), by the satirical artist Fernand Fau (1858-1919), *Pierrot pornographe, pantomime en 6 tableaux* (1894), by the illustrator Louis Morin (1855-1938), and *Le roi débarque, pantomime en 4 tableaux* (1895), also by Morin. These pieces appeared on programs with other experimental performance pieces that combined acting, music, and the display or shadow projection of illustrations by the artists (Maindron 1900: 343-348). Scenarios are difficult to locate. According to Jules Lemaitre's review in *Les Annales politiques et littéraire*, *Cruelle énigme* showed the private lives of people living on four floors of a mansion. On the ground floor, the caretaker caresses his cat and two friends play billiards. On the second floor, a young woman searches for fleas, while a neighbor spies her through a keyhole. On the third floor, a bourgeois family reads a newspaper. Suddenly four clowns descend from the fourth floor and crash through the windows of the other floors. The décor transforms into the roof of the house, where a squadron of police officer pursue the clowns around the chimneys. But the clowns raise a ladder to the moon "and take refuge in

this star dear to poets, lovers and people who are a bit crazy" (Lemaitre 1891a: 40). *Cruelle énigme* was a shadow play in which Fau used silhouette cut outs to represent the characters. Lemaitre appreciated the imagery but complained that the simultaneous actions occurring in three or four floors made it difficult for the viewer to achieve any "unity of impression," creating a pantomime that lacks "precision, variety, flexibility, and speed of movement." Figurines cut out of zinc were "capable of only a small number of gestures and subject to the unavoidable sluggishness of pulling strings." "The Chinese shadow is doomed, either to immobility of the limbs, or to the gesticulation of very simple attitudes and attitudes" (40). But Le Chat Noir continued to produce zinc silhouette pantomimes. *Pierre pornographe* was also a zinc silhouette pantomime, with music by Charles Sivry (1848-1900), who composed numerous songs for the cabaret. In this piece, Morin pokes fun at his reputation as an illustrator of erotic and pornographic scenes. A lecherous judge lusts after Colombine, who is in love with Pierrot, a painter, for whom she models in his studio. Pierrot visits the Jewish ghetto to sell paintings to the dealer Isaac Laquedam (a vein of anti-semitic satire sometimes appeared in the cartoons of Chat Noir artists). With his riches, Pierrot visits a grocer for fancy foods. Isaac displays in the window of his shop Pierrot's painting of Colombine nude. The judge, accompanied by a pair of prudish priests, recognizes Colombine in the painting, and the three of them express alarm at the moral degeneracy of the era. The judge summons the police to seize the painting and arrest Pierrot. Colombine sobs in Pierrot's studio. One of the priests offers her diamonds, but she pushes them away. The judge offers to free Pierrot if she accommodates his sexual desires, but she refuses. "Funereal images" of prosecuted artists and writers appear. Pierre goes on trial, with "prosecution and argument in music," and then "condemnation in music." "Pierrot is doomed! But the great Christ of the background lights up and these words appear: Loi Berenger," which refers to laws passed in 1885 and 1891 sponsored by senator René Bérenger (1830-1915) that emphasized the rehabilitation and integration of persons convicted of crimes rather than their punishment and encouraged leniency toward convicts who demonstrated sufficient capacity to "correct" themselves. In the final scene, Pierrot and Colombine embrace in his studio, which glows with pink light. The stage displays the reformed Pierrot's future, non-pornographic paintings: a wedding, a family walk, and palms of academic glory (Morin 2009) [Figure 74]. But with the

death in 1897 of the inventive "charlatan" Rodolphe Salis (1851-1897), the owner of Le Chat Noir, the cabaret could not survive, and even pantomimes as peculiar though slight as *Cruelle énigme* and *Pierre pornographe* simply disappeared, despite the appearance of new cabarets.

A far more ambitious pantomime, utterly remote from the *commedia* format, was *Néron*, presented at the Hippodrome in February 1891 and recalling the equestrian pantomimes of the Cirque Olympique during the Napoleonic era. The scenario was the work of Paul Milliet (1848-1924), the librettist for famous operas by Massenet, Mascagni, and Cilea, among others. Édouard Lalo (1823-1892) wrote the music for the huge spectacle in three tableaux. Lalo never published the orchestral score, which has been lost, but some parts of it included music he composed for his opera *Fiesque* (1867), based on a play by Schiller (Hale 1918: 1056). The piece depicted three grandiose scenes from the life of the Roman emperor Nero. In the Golden Palace,

> *Agrippina is pursued by the vision of Britannicus wrestling the crown the imperial crown from the brow of the usurper, Nero, her son; Britannicus must die, and she will poison him; the poison is prepared and tried on a slave, who falls dead. Britannicus and Junie arrive, accompanied by their friends; Britannicus is invited to drink; he does so without fear, and dies poisoned. Junie takes refuge with the vestals, to escape from Nero, and is protected by them and by the Christians. Furious, Nero condemns the Christians to be devoured by wild beasts, but before delivering the Christians Nero organizes a fete in his own palace and we see the gladiatorial combats in all their exactitude. The combats finished, the conquerors receive golden palms, the dead are carried away and the Christians make their entrance. Immediately an iron cage, large as the arena, springs up from the earth, the [lion] tamer makes his appearance, goes to the lions' den, sees that the Christians are thrown into this den, from which jump six* [actually twelve] *enormous lions. The tamer then amuses himself with his lions, chasing them about the cage in the wildest manner. This is the first time that Parisians have seen lions liberated in so large a space as the arena of the Hippodrome. After [the lion tamer] drives the lions back into their den the cage descends to give place for the tableau, the burning of Rome [. . .]* (Salvador 1891: 13).

The final tableau showed the burning of Rome and the violent death of Nero, followed by the entry of legions supporting the new emperor, Galba. *Néron* inspired an exceptionally long "review" by Jules Lemaitre in *Les Annales politiques et littéraire*, but he preferred to meditate on the character of the emperor and avoided discussing the production, although he claimed it was a "brilliant pantomime" (Lemaitre 1891b: 281-282). However, the science and technology journal *La Nature* discussed in some detail the innovative mechanics involved in the staging of the second tableau. The Hippodrome engineer Ernest Berthier was responsible for the design of the machines, which included a conveyor belt on which gladiators engaged in combat against a metallic backdrop on which were painted scenes amplifying the sense of being in a Roman amphitheater. At the conclusion of the gladiatorial combat, the painted backdrop ascended upwards and in its place an enormous iron grill rose from the floor and created a huge cage in less than a minute. Trap doors opened and a dozen lions, perched on elevator platforms, leapt onto the stage and attacked effigies of Christians strapped to pillars in the arena. These machines employed a hydraulic piston system linked to an electric engine and levers that allowed a single technician to command all the scenic changes (Mareschal 1891: 411-414). The Hippodrome invested heavily in Roman costumes for over a hundred performers, a chorus, a full-scale orchestra, and extravagant props like a horse-drawn chariot, and during rehearsals, the lions mauled the then-famous German lion-tamer Julius Seeth, who survived the attack and performed his scene (Salvador 1891: 13) [Figure 75]. *Néron* attracted huge audiences and international attention, but the Hippodrome produced no more pantomimes of anywhere near this scale. The cost of producing the show was perhaps too great for whatever profits it yielded. Lemaitre's motive for discussing Nero at length rather than *Néron* probably arose from his ambivalence toward both. The show obviously stirred him, but he disliked the "fashion" of "young writers," who for the past decade had cultivated a more favorable attitude toward Nero than ancient authorities like Tacitus and Suetonius and regarded the Emperor as an aesthete, a dilettante, an intelligent poet, rather than a cruel despot. Perhaps the critic believed that the "voluptuous" spectacular effects of the production diminished too easily the cruelty the scenario ascribed to the Emperor, and he had to remind his readers of a dangerous, corrupting enjoyment in the

show. It is more likely, though, that *Néron* succeeded quite well in dramatizing the alignment of voluptuous aestheticism with monstrous cruelty, and this alignment was far more disturbing than whatever absurd, imbecilic cruelties perpetually befell Pierrot or that he inflicted, for with the Cercle, cruelty was an inescapable feature of his "poetic" personality.

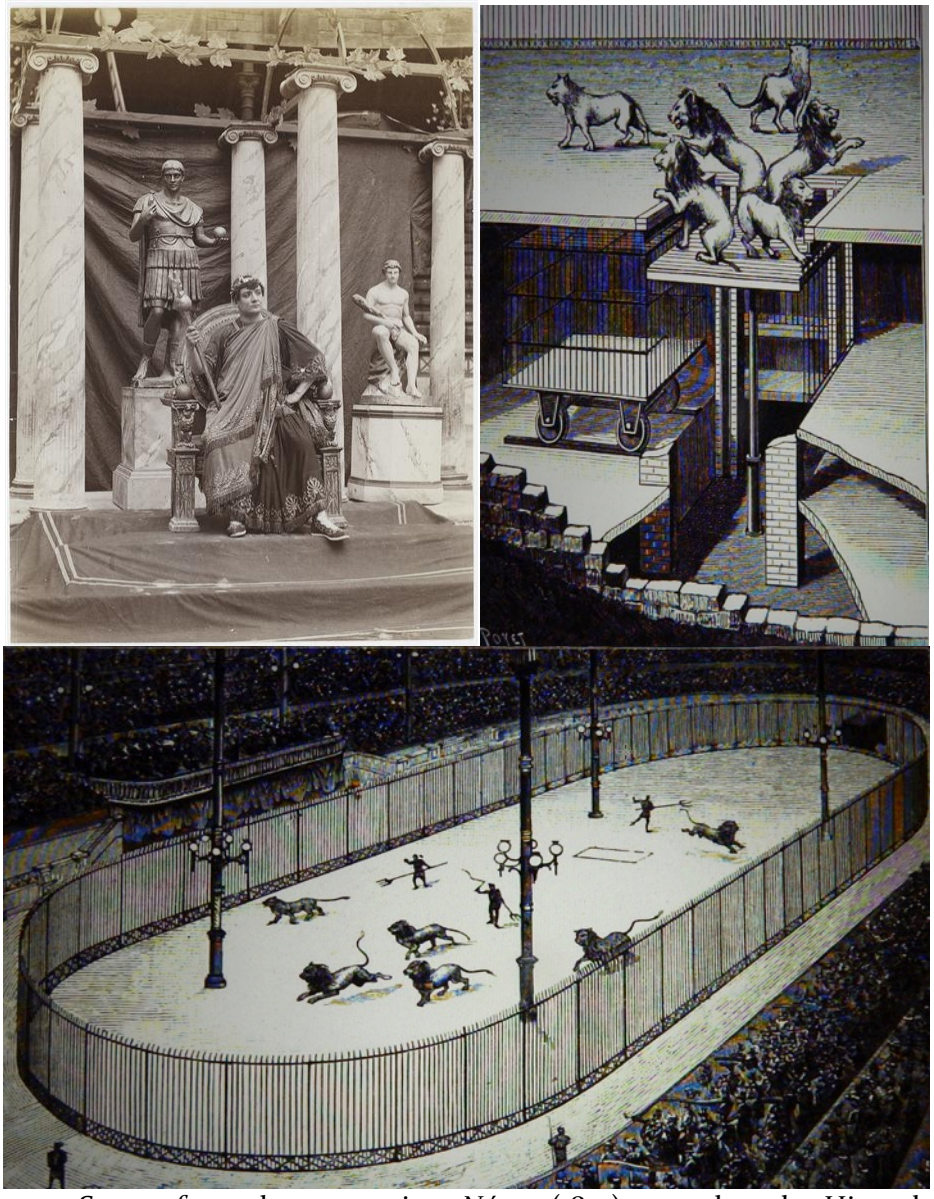


Figure 75: Scenes from the pantomime *Néron* (1891), staged at the Hippodrome, Paris. Top: Photo by Albert Londe of Nero on his throne. Photo: Musée d'Orsay. Below: Scene with lions and mechanical apparatus for bringing the lions on to the arena stage. Photo: Mareschal (1891: 412-413).

The French Pierrot fixation and the Cercle Funambulesque have attracted impressive scholarship since Adele Levillain's 1943 dissertation, *The Evolution of Pantomime in France*, which provides excellent summaries of pantomime scenarios not covered here. She regarded the Cercle as significant for moving pantomime toward realism: "The naive buffoonery and fantasy of the earlier classic pantomime of Deburau's day gave way to mimodramas and comedies of manners, the greater number of which reflected the modern realism, the decadence, pessimism, scepticism and disillusionment of the epoch" (419). Levillain tended to see Pierrot pretty much according to the intentions of his many creators, which led to an absence of insight into the larger cultural pressures that confined pantomime to the figure of Pierrot. Tristan Remy's biographies of Deburau (1954) and Wague (1964) have been valuable for subsequent Pierrot scholars, including Jean Starobinski's *Portrait de l'artiste en saltimbanque* (1970), which treats Pierrot within the concept of "mythological archeology." Starobinski regards Pierrot as an enigmatic icon, so his work is especially valuable for linking Pierrot to the visual arts of modernism. Robert Storey published two books (1978, 1985) on Pierrot. Although he provided many important details related to the performance of Pierrot on Parisian stages, Storey mainly focused on how Pierrot captivated the modernist literary imagination, often through poetic works that have no connection to the stage. He saw pantomime entirely through the figure of Pierrot, which, after all, was his central subject, but this approach did limit his ability to see the history of Pierrot in relation to the larger history of pantomime. Recently Gilles Bonnet concentrates on the literary texts intended for performance in *La pantomime noire 1836-1896* (2014), although the focus is mostly on texts from the period 1880 to 1896. It is largely an exploration of literary rather than pantomimic invention. For the French literary imagination that became preoccupied with pantomime in the 1880s, pantomime was a "spectral" form of performance because it was wordless. As such, "pantomime noire objectifies for the public a distinctive enunciation that is, properly, funereal" (195). Moreover, "pantomime noire brings multiple levels of representation" (142), because it is always about the "repression" of Pierrot and his struggle to reconcile psychic, material, and interpersonal realities beyond the power of language to reconcile. "The art of pantomime noire is profoundly an art of disequilibrium," and is for that reason an anti-rational art that "forces opponents and otherwise antonyms

into dialogue, at least to confront each other, with violence and each time from different angles. From the tragic and the comic, these zigzags of dark grotesquerie are born, or each leaves an imprint in the other, while absenting itself at the sharpest moment of the encounter" (328). Bonnet relies heavily on this sort of highly abstract, philosophical language to explain the significance of pantomime noire, but he does make a convincing case for asserting that Pierrot was a convenient focal point for articulating a "disequilibrium" in French literary imagination, for revealing a crisis of confidence in literary or poetic language rather than a crisis in pantomime and bodily communication.

Arnaud Rykner has edited two valuable scholarly anthologies that consider the international and interdisciplinary dimensions of French pantomime. *Pantomime et théâtre du corps. Le jeu du hors-texte* (2009) gathers together essays on various manifestations or influences of *fin de siècle* French pantomime in countries outside of France (Austria, Spain), in film (Marcel Carné's *Drôle de drame* [1937]), and in contemporary theater (Jean Genet, Samuel Beckett), among other themes. Especially informative are Ingrid Mayeur's essay on Hannon's *Pierrot macabre* and Rykner's piece on "Le 'corps imprononcable' de la pantomime *fin de siècle*: de la defection du verbe à l'absolu de l'image," in which Rykner claims that pantomime confronts the spectator with a body that is "primordial" because it is "unpronounceable" (80). Pantomime, at least as formulated within the Cercle Funambulesque, produces the spectacle of an "illogical" body vulnerable to "epilepsy, ecstasy, and hysteria"—a kind of "dream" body that leads to an "insurrection of representation" and an "impossible theater." Pantomime is thus like a freak show. "Pantomime is monstrous because it shows itself, and nothing more, and that showing itself shows this limit of the *logos* that constitutes the body, our body" (91). Subsequently, Rykner compiled an anthology of essays written entirely by himself, *Corps obscènes: pantomime, tableau vivant et autres images pas sages* (2014), in which he speculates on relations between pantomime and photography, cinema, tableau vivant, and the use of "silent" or still bodies in literary works by Zola and Maeterlinck, although he does not really make clear how anything in the pantomime he discusses creates "obscene bodies." Meanwhile, Ariane Martinez (2008) provides an excellent account of the continuity of French pantomime (Pierrot) within French modernist performance in theater and film through the first half of the twentieth century, connecting the Pierrot

of the "decadent" 1880s to such diverse diverse figures as Jean Cocteau, the futurist Enrico Pampolini, Antonin Artaud, and the actor Jean-Louis Barrault, although she remains focused almost entirely on pantomime in France. A German scholar, Jörg von Brincken (2006), argues that what makes the pantomime scenarios of the Cercle Funambulesque modern is their relation to abstract concepts like the grotesque, the ugly, the uncanny, the horrifying, and the nihilistic, which work to produce a "radical" art that compels the reader/spectator to see comedy as more a "painful" but transforming phenomenon than "normal" constructions of it allow. Brincken's approach is highly theoretical, although he is reluctant to discuss in any theoretical way the relation between language and movement and reluctant even to mention Pierrot, preferring instead to refer to theoretical figures like "the Clown Monster" (271). His approach creates the effect of seeing the pantomime scenarios detached from a performance context and detached from a clearly delineated historical context, so that they seem like specimens demonstrating a general "pathology of the modern" (244). But while Pierrot is obviously an important cultural icon, the modern scholarly concentration on Pierrot to the exclusion of any other kind of pantomime suggests that even since World War II, intellectual discourse on pantomime remains locked into a late nineteenth century French assumption that pantomime is no bigger than Pierrot.

Perhaps the most interesting essay in Rykner's *Corps obscènes* deals with *Le Mort* by the Belgian writer Camille Lemonnier (1844-1913), "the Belgian Zola" (2014: 55-67). This was first an 1882 novel set in rural Belgium about a pair of brothers who murder a colleague to gain the lottery money he won. The brothers bury the body, but the body nevertheless keeps revealing itself, both physically and in a spectral way, causing violent, tragic conflict between the brothers, Balt and Bast, which leads them both to Death. In 1891, Lemonnier (with the American mime Paul Martinetti [?-1924]) adapted the novel as a three-act pantomime and then as a three-act "mimodrame," with music by Léon Du Bois (1859-1935), and then, in 1892, as a five-act tragedy, which, in 1903, he revised as a three-act tragedy. The pantomime, a "farce tragique," received its premiere at the Alcazar Theater in Brussels in 1894, while the five-act tragic drama, under the title *Les Mains*, premiered at the Nouveau Théâtre, Brussels, in 1899; the three-act tragedy, under the title *Le Mort*, apparently had its first performance, in Brussels, in 1903 (56). Though Lemonnier regarded the pantomime as a

parody of his novel, it is a quite somber affair, in which the author occasionally employs the interior dialogue pioneered by Margueritte to describe pantomimic actions that depict the brothers descending into a hellish psychic realm in which the image of Death grows overpowering: "Balt and Bast look at each other. Balt thinks: 'This money will go to me. An old peasant like me does not marry a beautiful girl without grabbing something.'" (Lemonnier 1894b: 4). But the extent to which the *mimodrame* is really a pantomime is not clear, because the scenario includes so much speech in quotation marks to describe emotions that the author should inscribe as physical actions. The piece is unusual for being a serious pantomime that has no connection with Pierrot or the *commedia* format, and it was also unusual for the Martinettis (four family members appeared in the production), who were well known in the United States and England for their clown-stunt form of pantomime (Leavitt 1912: 111). But the most striking thing about the piece is its naturalism and the effort to make pantomime achieve documentary accuracy in representing scenic effects: "The storm subsides. The dawn gradually clears the sky. One hears the angelic tolling of the village bells," while nevertheless introducing numerous Symbolist effects that intensify the seriousness of the piece—"Thus is the simple tale distorted into the supernatural perspective indigenous to Flemish poets" (Grossvogel 1961: 211): "Balt observes the pit. His hands move as they did after the crime, for murder has remained in them and will not leave them"; "Terrified, the two brothers recognize Death. A terrible jostling ensues. Slinking from behind the tapestry, Balt pursues the specter. The tapestry falls onto the notary. Bast, meanwhile, trying to avoid the fall of the tapestry, makes the old man fall. General panic. Suddenly the two brothers realize that Death has disappeared and that in his stead in the pit is the clerk of the notary. This new turn of Death disturbs them; they find themselves face to face with the Irremediable. Meanwhile, the miller boy runs towards Karina. She throws herself in his arms. He persuades her to follow him." (Lemonnier 1894b: 5, 11). With *Le Mort*, Lemonnier struggled to find the proper literary form to articulate his story. He moved to a pantomime version, perhaps because he wanted to make the "simple tale" more mysterious by letting the music "speak" instead of words, as if, in performance, the spectator were watching the novel unfold instead of reading it "in silence." In the *mimodrame* version, every line in the scenario corresponds to a musical cue and bar in Du Bois' score

(1894a). But Lemmonier did not believe in his own capacity to describe physical action or in Du Bois' musical intuition to connect motivating emotion to physical action, so he twice more revised the story as a tragic drama. He never attempted another pantomime, although in 1922, a Paris edition of the pantomime scenario appeared with expressionist woodcuts by Paul Baudier (1881-1964), transforming pantomime into a "dark," visual reading experience, the "hieroglyphic" book that was such a motivating goal of Symbolist involvement with pantomime.

After Lemonnier, however, pantomime in Belgium seems to have had no theatrical life until Marcel Hoste (1912-1977) established in 1952 his Sabbatini Pantomime Theater in Ghent, inspired by the French mime Marcel Marceau, whom Hoste met in Paris. Hoste's father was a theater photographer, and previous to his engagement with pantomime, Hoste had devoted his energies to painting, drawing, and the production of marionette and hand puppet plays. In 1959, he established a Mime Academy, while the Sabbatini Pantomime Theater became involved in productions that combined mime with puppetry. In 1964, he staged *Höre Israel* in Paderborn, Germany, and later the same year, with Maria Van Heirbeeck, he staged for the Flanders Festival in Ghent *Patent 2003*, a love story that used an electronic music accompaniment supervised by Louis De Meester (1904-1987) (Vyazemskaya 2017; Lanckrock 1971). The Pierrot archetype fashioned by Marceau moved Hoste into pantomime, and he never entirely escaped the archetype, but with *Höre Israel* and *Patent 2003*, he, like Lemonnier, realized, toward the end of his performance career, that a distinctly "Flemish" pantomime did not include Pierrot. But perhaps for many decades after the 1890s, *Néron* had shown how costly it was to imagine pantomime without Pierrot. In a sense, then, resistance to Pierrot within a culture was an absence of pantomime.

In any event, between 1820 and 1890, pantomime was altogether absent from many continental theaters outside of France, if it did not persist in the lingering remants of the decaying *ballo pantomimo* in Italy and in Denmark, where the choreographer August Bournonville (1805-1879) maintained a suave, charming, imperturbably ebullient style of ballet pantomime into the 1860s. The pantomime situation in German-speaking lands was peculiar. In 1749, a young schoolteacher, Johann Christian Strodtmann (1717-1756), published *Abhandlung von den Pantomimen*, a quite erudite essay on the ancient Roman pantomime that skillfully compiled all

the literary sources on the subject and critiqued them. Engel published his widely read *Ideen zu einer Mimik* in 1785. Yet when Henriette Hendel-Schütz performed her somber pantomimes in Berlin in 1811, commentators regarded them as utterly strange, innovative phenomena without precedent in Germany and indeed without descendents. Then in 1838, the Brockhaus Encyclopedia published two very long entries on "pantomimic art," suggesting the importance with which the Brockhaus editors (and the educated elite) regarded the subject. The first, by the philologist and historian Carl Grysar (1801-1856), covered in considerable detail the ancient Roman pantomime, including many references to presumed performance techniques, impersonated characters, performers, and commentators. The entry was a revised, much more refined, and less arcane treatment of the theme than a long article on Roman pantomime that Grysar had published in 1834. He then returned to the arcane, scholarly format in 1854 with an even longer essay: the most comprehensive treatise in German on "Der römische Mimus" until Hermann Reich published *Der Mimus* in 1903; Reich rightly criticized him for confusing mimes with pantomimes, which Grysar did not do in his encyclopedia entry. The second encyclopedia entry covered "new pantomimic art" and was the work of the theologian-composer and music theorist Gottfried Wilhelm Fink (1783-1846). But Fink's prolix entry was entirely theoretical. Probably he had never seen a pantomime performance when he wrote the entry. Except for a one reference to Henriette Hendel-Schütz, he did not mention any pantomime performance, performer, or creator of pantomimes for the whole period following the Roman Empire. He did not mention Pierrot or Harlequin or any other pantomime character, except for the title role in Auber's opera *La muette de Portici* (1828). Despite his expertise in music, Fink's discussion of the relation between music and pantomime was perfunctory and nebulous: "The interpenetraion of music and pantomime is necessary for completing the enchantment" (498). He ignores altogether any exploration of the relation between pantomimic action and scenic elements, narrative structures, or entrepreneurial initatives. Instead, he writes at length about pantomime from a murky philosophical perspective, as if pantomime were a hypothetical construct, something the mind had to build according to a logic or an argument that existed outside of any empirical evidence, for his main thesis was that the pantomimic movement of the body must reveal the "soul" within the body:

> *The livelier the soul itself is in the matter [of pantomime], the more loyally and truly it shapes [the action], carries it into itself, the more forcefully the expressions and gestures will bring the action to life [. . .]. Therefore the less the soul is absent, the fuller it is in the action, and the more vivacious and profound it grips [the matter, the action] and penetrates it, the more powerful, the more accurate and the more definite, the more true and beautiful [the soul] emerges through looks and expressions without art [. . .] as the spiritual victory of the inner life in truth and appropriate beauty. [. . .] The chief laws thus remain here, as in all life, a pair of simple commandments: Make the Spirit faithful and true as much as possible in the noble, manifold pursuit of perfection, with an inclination for good. Be always with all the power of your being in the thing to which you have surrendered, and fill youself with [the soul] as if it can only exist in the moment of action. [. . .] To be sure, the whole body is the organ of the soul [. . .]* (496).

This foggy, convoluted language provides an intimation of the expressionist subjectivity that Germans brought to pantomime in the next century. More importantly, though, Fink's entry is a laborious effort to explain how something that is absent from his culture, pantomime, should exist within the culture: it is a *potential* art. His purpose is to identify good reasons why the culture can benefit from pantomime, and these reasons exist beyond the splendid precedent set by the Romans and beyond any empirical evidence of pantomime as any other culture practices it. The reasons are moral, arising from the Christian concept of the soul. In effect, the "new pantomimic art" did not exist, because no one in Germany had adequately theorized it, no one there grasped its virtue, no one understood how pantomimic action distinctly revealed a profound "inner" being, the soul, a thing otherwise invisible and unspeakable.

Gilburnia (1856)

Even stranger was the pantomime scenario *Gilburnia*, "completed among the flying fish of the Gulf of Bengal" in 1856 by an Italian, Raffaello Carboni (1817-1875), but not published in Rome until 1872. An Australian-Italian scholar, Tony Pagliaro, discovered the text in Rome and published (1993) a facsimile of it as well as a translation and detailed annotation of it.

Born into modest circumstances in Urbino, Carboni studied philosophy at Urbino University without graduating. In the 1840s, he became embroiled in legal difficulties resulting from his involvement in a conspiracy against the papal government of Urbino and from a charge of sexual harrassment. He fled to London, where he worked as an interpreter for Italian exiles. News of gold discoveries in Australia motivated him to travel there in 1852 and seek his fortune as a gold prospector. Gold mining proved to be a hugely unhappy experience. He became involved in the 1854 Eureka Rebellion, in which miners revolted against the colonial government's corrupt attempt to require miners to purchase licenses before they could prospect. After government troops massacred miners at the Eureka Stockade in Ballarat, Victoria, Carboni was among those arrested and put on trial. The jury acquitted him and all other "conspirators," which led to numerous political reforms in Australia. In 1855, Carboni published in English in Ballarat his book *The Eureka Stockade*, which is the only eyewitness account of the rebellion and the work for which Carboni is best remembered. But Carboni decided a literary career suited him better than gold prospecting, and he returned to Italy, composing *Gilburnia* while making the long journey home. Unlike other miners, Carboni was curious about the Aborigines and evidently spent time interacting with them, possibly even living with them (Carboni [Pagliaro] 1993: vii, xviii-xxi).

In eight scenes, *Gilburnia* depicts conflict between an indigenous tribe, the Tarrang, and white miners. The action takes place in Tarrangower, a mining site about a hundred miles north of Melbourne. The opening scene presents the idyllic life of the Tarrang in a documentary manner and introduces Gilburnia, daughter of the tribal elder, a "distinguished creature in gleaming skin, without blouse, dress or sandals" (8). Members of the tribe hunt down a kangaroo with a pack of dogs. Gilburnia "trembles with joy as she waits" for the hunters to return with the kill that honors her. The hunter she loves, Rang, drops the kangaroo before her, but a rival, Boom, contests the assertion that Rang killed the animal. According to tribal convention, Rang and Boom must fight with boomerangs to determine who killed the kangaroo and who will marry Gilburnia. However, when Boom defeats Rang, Gilburnia spurns him and "already despises the law of the tribe." Boom seizes Gilburnia and attempts to "tame" her by tying her to a gum tree. Led by Gruno, a gang of white gold miners bearing guns approaches. Their drunken gunfire scatters the

Tarrang. Gruno seizes Gilburnia and takes her to his camp. There another miner contests Gruno's claim to Gilburnia, which leads to a violent fight, which Gruno wins. He washes himself in preparation for raping Gilburnia. The scene changes to the Tarrang, who plot to attack the miners and free Gilburnia. Fleeing the miners, Boom disappears into the forest, but loses his footing on a cliff and falls to his death; the tribe performs a perfunctory funeral ceremony, then marches off to attack the miners, leaving the elder behind. Gilburnia appears and explains how she slipped away from Gruno's tent during the fight. "Where is Rang?" she wonders, but her father warns that her lover has gone to fight the miners. The Tarrang burn down the miners' camp at night and set the forest on fire. The warriors decide to rest in the moonlight beside a pool. But the enraged miners attack them and scatter them. Gruno discovers the elder and demands that he reveal where Gilburnia is hiding. When the elder refuses, Gruno prepares to lynch him. Rang appears and kills Gruno with his club, which, a flashback reveals, Gilburnia had put into his hand. A miner shoots Rang in the arm; troopers arrive and arrest him and all the other Tarrang fighters. The scene shifts to a courthouse in the morning, where the Protector of Natives presides over a tribunal of the accused Tarrang. The miners tell lies about Gruno "saving" the "black girl" from ritual sacrifice; the Tarrang had kidnapped her. The Tarrang want her to testify, but the miners claim she died in the forest. But she appears and testifies. The Protector, however, "only finds the fetters, not the victim.

> *Gilburnia, leaving him with the chains, transferred the scene to the bush. Permitting the tribe to kiss her breasts in homage she then intones the Moon goddess's May song. She then sought out the sarsaparilla violets and bound with sage the garland her father placed upon her again. He proclaimed her queen of Tarrango. She took her seat beside the lagoon and clearly Rang is her destined bridegroom. […] He has no other wish if she beside him… And… therefore the pantomime finishes* (32).

Except it doesn't. The author remarks that it is his "duty to explain" how the Tarrang escaped the whites. In the court, the Protector ignores Gilburnia's testimony, the all-white male jury unanimously votes guilty, and the Protector sentences all the Tarrang fighters to death. A "violent hurricane

explodes" and "destroys the court." "Everything disappears!" The scenario concludes with an Old Testament quotation: "So the evil will fly and be scattered, like leaves in thrall to the autumn wind" (Carboni 1993: 1-33).

As a pantomime, *Gilburnia* is remarkable for more than its unusual subject matter. For one thing, Carboni wrote the scenario in rhymed verse, to create the effect (for the reader at least) of an epic poetic tale. He also included an "Antarctic vocabulary" of terms used in the text that are unique to the Australian milieu. Carboni wanted pantomime to create a sort of anthropological documentary on the environment and culture of the Tarrang that was far more innovative than earlier docu-pantomimes like Arnould's Captain Cook project or Cuvelier's *Le mort de Kleber*. In the opening scene, the stage must evoke through scenic effects the dynamics and challenges of the landscape: "On the plain there are no navigable rivers, but dry creek beds most the year. [. . .] Oh, God, what a hardship! Are the gates of heaven broken then, if the current is so terrible in the channel that devours it? [. . .] The ants are furious when touched and the tongue of the horse fly burns. [. . .] Since the forest is the realm of parrots of every language, colour, form and beak, May is a ceaseless Babel. [...] The pasture is empty, immense, idle. It has no fruit, vegetable or single plant to satisfy the wanderer's hunger" (6-7). The pantomime must show general cultural attributes of the Tarrang across different times of the year: "When the full moon in the month has come, the savages from all about gather near the pool for their festivities. [...] The entire tribe will pay homage to the goddess, singing and dancing their May song together. [. . .] In the dog days of February, absorbed in sweet idleness, the black remains in his shelter under trees. [. . .] Setting out for the mountain the savage already is scaling the bark of the gum trees and strangling the possum in its lair" (7-8). The ethnographic montage of scenes from the life of the tribe as a whole concludes with the igniting of a fire behind which stands Gilburnia: "In the light she re-adorns herself. A sarsaparilla necklace of double bells meets with her approval." But Carboni also includes an ethno-montage of the miner culture: "He who does not gaze into the depths of dark eyes oppressed by gold fever can have no idea of *how it intoxicates*. [. . .] *One man* sweating pours water on the earth that he has dug out and carried to the waterhole to wash. Elsewhere 'another' squanders his gold. [. . .] A *fourth* coughs up blood in his attempts. He's out of luck, just like Aesop's dog. Trying to cross the river with meat in his mouth. The bread he has

eaten has cost its weight in gold. [. . .] In the springtime of his fortune, a *fifth*, working on the vein of gold, considers himself a king as he thinks of the journey back to his homeland. Suddenly the *shaft* collapses with a roar! Alive at two hundred feet or so, he remains in the depths, his greed at an end. The hut of a *sixth* has caught fire. He was asleep from exhaustion and perhaps in his drunkenness didn't notice what had happened. Oh, addiction to liquor! The plague of the gold-fields" (15-17). Carboni envisioned a pantomime capable of cinematic displacements of time and space, including flashbacks, as well as a newsreel type documentation of remote, contesting cultures. But while he introduced audacious, challenging effects, nothing in his scenario was beyond the capacity of imaginative directors, designers, or actors to perform. Pagliaro contends that the pantomime narrative restores the Tarrang characters to the idyllic status quo that began the piece; the violent storm is the "divine justice" that supersedes the corrupt justice of the white miners (xvi). But the bizarre ending in a flashback suggests that the harmonious return to nature and marriage did not really satisfy Carboni, and he wanted to leave his reader or spectator with a violent image of destruction. Gilburnia finds the laws of her own people as oppressive as those of the whites. Men within each culture fight each other for control over a woman, and then the cultures fight each other for control over her. Her desire is not for the man who wins the fight. But her desire does not bring justice; an annihilating hurricane must intervene. Both cultures must "disappear" if her desire is to prevail.

Carboni's motive in writing the pantomime is obscure. Although he published (1859, 1872) a couple of ballet scenarios for insertion into dramatic works, he never wrote another pantomime, and he did not publish *Gilburnia* until seventeen years after he wrote it. Yet in the published texts for his "grand opera ballet" *La Campana della Gancia* (1861) and for his "Roman drama" *La Santola* (1861), the publishers list the "latest version" (1859) of *Gilburnia* as "available." He published several dramas in different genres throughout the 1860s and compiled them into a two-volume anthology (1872-1873) (71). *Gilburnia* has never received a performance, but neither have any of his other dramatic works. The literary and theatrical success he longed for eluded him, despite his friendships with prominent authors, politicians, and aristocrats. He traveled restlessly around Italy and participated in Garibaldi's Risorgimento movement, but his friends seemed not to take him seriously (xxiii; cf. Lorch 1969). His health deteriorated, and

he died in Rome in a charity hospital. Pagliaro claims that Carboni's literary influences were once popular but now forgotten writers and journalists, and he speculates that Carboni's interest in pantomime derived from experience of the *ballo pantomimo*. But Carboni concludes several scenes with explicit reference to pantomime: "The BEAUTY of the pantomime commences"; "Now comes the GOOD of the pantomime": "And the BEST of the pantomime follows," and so forth (15, 20, 24). The scenario makes no reference to music or dance, except for the early ethnographic scene of the tribe dancing to the accompaniment of tapping sticks, "just like violinists," "the forte and the piano, beating the singer's tune, until he's out of breath and accompaniment is vain" (7). But the 1861 publication announcements list *Gilburnia* as a "pantomime for ballet dancers with a symphony." Still, it is indeed difficult to see how a choreographer could treat the scenario as either a ballet or a ballet pantomime, simply because Carboni sees the action unfolding without any reference to correlate musical effects but includes various sound effects, such as parrots squawking in the forest. Carboni chose pantomime as the medium for *Gilburnia* because he wanted to tell a story of sexual conflict, female desire, and male authority that only the speechless actions of "foreign" bodies could perform. The achievement of justice depended on seeing bodies without prejudice, without staking a "claim" to them, and without speaking of them. But to achieve this goal, he had to invent an utterly new kind of pantomime, one that no one had seen nor would. He exhibited a strange, endearing faith in his project, for it is impossible to imagine any theater or any actors of the time willing to represent the Tarrang or even the miners. It is difficult to imagine it even for our own time.

Pantomime and Modernism

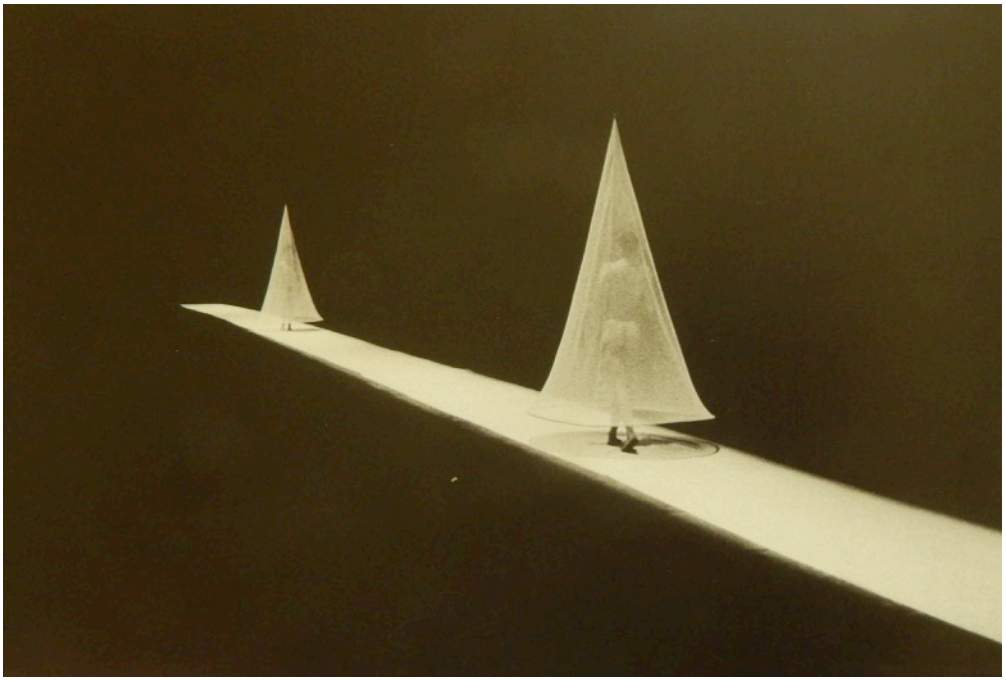


Image of BEWTH performance at Pieterskerk, Leiden (1976), from Schade (2005: 89)

The Technologization of Pantomime



Image from Keltenvisionen, *Scharniertheater, Hannover, 1989, directed by Jean Soubeyran (see Figures 103 and 104).*

Champsaur and Richepin

Wague was not the only man in the Parisian *fin de siècle* pantomime culture who believed that the modernization of pantomime depended on a larger and more innovative attitude toward the representation of women, although it is doubtful that any other man at the time had quite as much impact as he did in this aspect of the culture. Perhaps membership in the Cercle Funambulesque was not helpful in developing this dimension of pantomimic modernism; as long as Cercle members saw pantomime as an opportunity to equate a "crisis" of confidence in language with a crisis in the representation of modern male identity, they were unable to see pantomime outside of Pierrot. But pantomime, even in its "decadent" phase, was still larger than the Cercle. In 1888, the novelist and journalist Félicien Champsaur (1858-1934) published two one-act pantomime scenarios, *Les Éreintés de la vie* and *Lulu*. In the same year, Champsaur arranged for private performances of these pieces at the Cirque Molier; in 1892, *Lulu* received a public performance at the Nouveau Cirque, also operated by the

wealthy horseman and animal trainer Ernest Molier (1844-1933), who wanted to see pantomimes featuring pretty women, and there *Lulu* was successful enough to receive regular performances until 1894. The "clownesse" Lulu made her first appearance in *Les Éreintés de la vie*, an extravagant satire of capitalism completely outside the *commedia* format and featuring, as Molier requested, a parade of many pretty women, in bizarre costumes and sometimes nude, including a fairy, a doctor (Madame Beauty), her female valet, Fortune, and numerous dancers. Lulu appears briefly as a crippled clown seeking the plain water brought by the fairy and sold, by a group of financiers, as an elixir of health and beauty endorsed by Madame Beauty. The piece requires a large cast and many expensive props, including a procession with the Golden Calf at the end, perhaps because Champsaur wrote the work first as a kind of multimedia production in which the text physically interacts with plentiful drawings supplied by Henry Gerbault (1863-1930), who had a long career as an illustrator of humorously erotic women. The pictures function like a pantomimic-cinematic performance of the text, for they interact with the typography rather than, as in a comic strip, contain it, and all of the many characters are introduced on the page with individual illustrations before the reader reaches the text proper. It was a technique that Champsaur had employed in several earlier books. But for the 1888 performance, Champsaur recruited talent from major theaters, including the Opera and the Palais-Royal, with a young theater student, Mademoiselle Menty, playing Lulu. He had previously written ballet scenarios, but he turned to pantomime because he felt it was a more modern art (Champsaur 1892: 402). But modernity, for him, meant a kind of intensely eroticized (feminized) narrative intermediality and self-consciously disconcerting physical movement that was simply unimaginable in the *commedia* format or in ballet. Indeed, the illustrations show a vibrant style of movement that one would never see in a ballet or in the commedia format because it is so individualized and built around peculiarities of character, status, and costume. For example, a group of ballet dancers, in tutus and seeking the health elixir, enter on crutches.

With *Lulu*, the scale of production was much smaller, involving only three characters: Lulu, Arlequin, and the philosopher Schopenhauer. The plot is very simple. The philosopher Schopenhauer, reading a book while walking down the sidewalk, stumbles across a strange object, which he determines is a human heart, even though it is made of stone. Lulu enters,

looking for her heart, pondering how she may have lost it. She finally sees that Schopenhauer has it and is studying it somberly, for "he wants to know what a woman's heart contains." Lulu requests the return of her heart, but he ignores her, even when she implores him; then she becomes enraged, and then horrified as the philosopher begins, with "tools," an autopsy on the heart. She tries to seduce him with kisses and caresses, but he remains disinterested until "curiosity prevails over prudence", and he hands the heart to Lulu, who puts it in her pocket. Arlequin, desolate and bearing a candle, appears, seeking Lulu's heart. As she dashes away, Lulu sees Arlequin and becomes excited. She gives her heart to him, and he places the candle in the hands of the "clown philosopher." Lulu and Arlequin scamper off exchanging kisses, while Schopenhauer is left alone, "having understood nothing of anything in the heart of Lulu." The candle flickers in the moonlight. Like *Les Éreintés de la vie*, the published version of *Lulu* makes strong use of illustrations to visualize the performance of the actions, but the images here do not interact so boldly with the text, even though three artists contributed to the book: Jules Chéret, Henry Gerbault, and Louis Morin, who already by this time enjoyed an esteemed reputation, at least within Molier's circle, for sophisticated pornographic drawings. The three artists depicted Lulu differently. Chéret couldn't make up his mind if Lulu was a red head who wore only a diaphanous yellow slip that did not cover up her naked lower half or if she was a dark figure who wore a yellow tutu that nevertheless left her lower half naked. Morin showed her as a blonde wearing a diaphanous negligee with large, ruffled collar and a little conical hat. But Gerbault produced the image of Lulu that resonated the most strongly: she wears a bluish tutu, black socks, and ballet slippers, although she looks more like an athlete than a dancer; her blonde hair is sculpted in the form of a Phrygian cap.



Figure 76: Lulu as depicted by Henri Gerbault and Louis Morin for the published text of Félicien Champsaur's pantomime *Lulu* (1888).

Despite her bizarre costume, Gerbault has represented her in a much less caricatured way than any other artist or any other character. He did, however, one drawing of her in which she wears a peculiar dark hat from which dangle a pair of small orbs or bells, but otherwise she kneels completely nude on the pavement, while gazing at her heart in her hand, out of which sprouts a question mark. The idea of having three artists depict Lulu, whom Champsaur describes only through the basic actions she performs ("Then, with a finger on her lips, a hand on the empty square of her heart, with a pleased and coquettish air, she throws back her fine head, helmet of blond, to see what frightens her"), serves to reinforce for the reader the sense that even such a vague female figure like Lulu creates substantial instability of perception in men [Figure 76]. The venerable historian of French theater, Arsène Houssaye (1815-1896), contributed a brief preface full of aphorisms—"to understand a woman, it is best to love her." His remarks bestowed a useful prestige on the publication, so that when the scenario achieved its public performance in 1892, it attracted much attention—and apparently displeasure within the Cercle Funambulesque. Paul Huguonet invited Champsaur to write (or more likely defend) Lulu in *La Plume*, which regularly devoted space to the Cercle. Champsaur responded by citing several newspapers that had reviewed the production enthusiastically, and then concluded that, "there is no formula

for the new pantomime," for "it is not prohibited by any law to carry into the pantomime the slinky ones, the beautiful girls, bankers, clownesses, dancers and pigs. Pantomime can express everything" (Champsaur 1892: 402, 405). Rather veiled within Champsaur's article was the implication that he had to "explain" why he had completely abandoned Pierrot in his pantomimes, had introduced characters from outside of the *commedia* repertory, and had made eccentric female characters drive the action. But the reader senses in Champsaur an impatience to say more than that his pantomimes have inspired enthusiastic responses and that if anything new is to happen in pantomime it cannot be because one is forbidden to do some things in it—perhaps a coded reference to the origin of French pantomime in the royal proscription of the *foire* theaters against speech, which led to the assumption within the popular pantomime culture that pantomime achieved some kind of "purity" or power of performance to the extent that it forbade anything outside a basic set of elements (the *commedia* format). The impact of Champsaur's pantomimes is somewhat muddled. He described pantomimic actions in a concise but vivid manner, avoiding altogether the interior dialogue that Margueritte developed to make the pantomimic action a translation of the character's thoughts.

> *Schopenhauer, annoyed, leaves and sits away from her. Lulu follows him. Prayers, anger at not being able to reason with the obstinate scholar, makes her even more troubled. She surrounds him with seductions, dances, bewitching graces, precursory gestures; she whispers in his ear extreme delights, if he will return her heart, her fantasy, her feeling without which she cannot live or love in her reality. By losing her heart, she has lost her kiss* (1888: n.p.).

Whereas Margueritte saw actions coming out of ideas (thoughts), Champsaur saw ideas coming out of actions: the characters search for something outside of themselves, like a heart (love) or an easy healthful tonic, an elixir, whereas Pierrot always remains imprisoned within himself. Champsaur's approach allows him to build a narrative logic around relations between ideas rather than between a familiar set of characters. Nevertheless, Champsaur did not abandon Pierrot. In 1896, he produced another of his illustrated novels, *Pierrot et sa Conscience*, with drawings by August Gorguet (1862-1927), in which Pierrot, awakening from his sleep in a

Montmartre cemetery, reflects on the different women he has loved or encounters on his wandering around Paris, reaching conclusions conventionally ascribed to him: "Joy is indeed lugubrious. We do not find the woman who fulfills the dream, and, like any ideal, we cannot embrace her" (1896: 136).

But Champsaur expanded the imaginative scope of pantomime considerably, especially in *Les Éreintés de la vie*, where it seems as if an entire society moves perversely in relation to a dominating idea, the illusion of an elixir that brings health and beauty to those who otherwise do not receive enough love. Yet perhaps the biggest impact of the Champsaur pantomime aesthetic was the character of Lulu. In 1892, the German dramatist Frank Wedekind (1864-1918) saw *Lulu* in Paris, and the character inspired him to create his own turbulent, amoral, and almost demonic Lulu in the "monster tragedies" *Erdgeist* (1895) and *Die Büchse der Pandora* (1904), which then became the basis for G.W. Pabst's famous silent film *Die Büchse der Pandora* (1929) and Alban Berg's unfinished expressionistic opera *Lulu* (1935), as well as for the very successful, sensationalistic Broadway play *Lulu Belle* (1926), by Charles MacArthur (1895-1956) and Edward Sheldon (1886-1946), which situated a black Lulu in the African American neighborhoods of Harlem, New York. In 1969, Wedekind's wife, Tilly Wedekind (1886-1970), who had played Lulu on stage, published her memoirs, *Lulu: Die Rolle meines Lebens*, in which she described how, in her conjugal life, she inescapably continued to play the role of Lulu, because Frank Wedekind pathologically saw his wife through the character he created in Lulu (Wilson 2010: 79-110; T. Wedekind 1969: 48-52). Through Wedekind (and Lulu), Champsaur may have exerted more influence on pantomime in Germany than in France, for Wedekind, whose influence on expressionism was large, himself experimented early (1894-1897) with pantomime when, in the early twentieth century, the Germans showed a sudden capacity to imagine pantomime without Pierrot (cf., Hilton's introduction to Wedekind 1982: 233).

But in spite of the public enthusiasm heaped on the text and performance of *Lulu* in Paris in 1892, Champsaur wrote no further pantomime scenarios. Perhaps he felt that any evolution or expansion of pantomime as he envisaged it entailed too much self-destructive conflict with an immensely privileged elite (the Cercle) and conventional theater institutions that seemed deeply frightened by a pantomime without Pierrot

or a pantomime in which a bewitching Lulu had replaced Pierrot. Instead, Champsaur published his fascinating multimedia novel *Lulu, roman clownesque* (1900), in which he purported to describe the "the kindness, the cruelty, the caprices, the joys, the sadness, the humiliation and the revolt before the Force of the money, the transformations of mind and heart, of sense and of body" that Lulu's career as a performer provokes (423). The book contains 200 illustrations by 31 artists (330 sleek art deco illustrations by Lucien Jaquelux in the 1929 edition) and an appendix with the author's commentary on his text [Figure 77]. Most of the text consists of descriptions or scenarios of Lulu's performances as a pantomime, dancer, acrobat, rope dancer, trapeze artist, and singer. It is not clear why Champsaur calls her a clown, because her performances are not so much humorous as extravagantly voluptuous stunts, such as a striptease on a trapeze or a pantomime with an enormous pig, Rambo, who brings her various gifts, in spite of her haughty disdain for him, for "the infinite prettiness of woman was exalted in contrast with the brute. Lulu had proved herself an ironic and great philosopher, contemptuous of the love of the male. [...] Between them, they translated the whole hideousness and all the beauty of love" (70). Lulu encounters real historic personages (Baron Rothschild, Edgar Degas) as well as characters from other Champsaur novels; one chapter reprints the entire *Lulu* pantomime scenario, and another scene consists of the gargoyles on the Notre Dame cathedral having a conversation about Lulu's debut in Paris. The book contains the lyrics of songs that Lulu sings or that are sung during her pantomime performances.

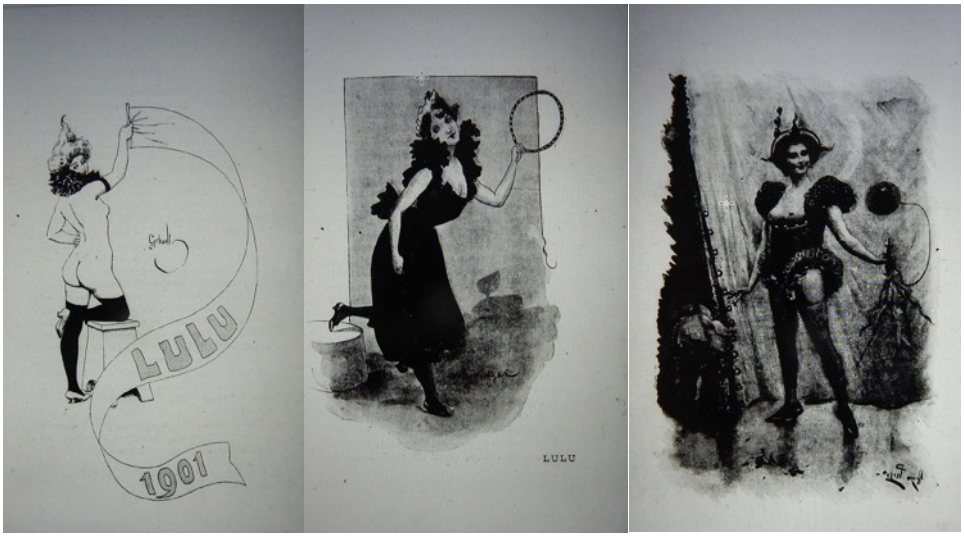




Figure 77: Lulu as imagined by different artists in Félicien Champsaur's *Lulu, roman clownesque* (1900).

The illustrations show her in her many costumes, but in some of the pictures she is nude, and specific chapters deal, in a semi-scholarly fashion, with her image in posters and photographs, which make her the "apotheosis of modernity" (235). Champsaur gives Lulu a personal history: she was born in Rennes to bourgeois parents who paid little attention to her; she was "perverse," she was "strong" and "healthy," she was very athletic, she preferred to live in "solitude," without friends or attachments to anyone, and she decided to become a clown after reading Maurice Sand's *Masques et bouffons* (1860-1862), an enormous treatise on the Italian *commedia* tradition (10-14). But for the great majority of the book Champsaur treats Lulu as a kind of allegorical figure who embodies a male fantasy of a "modern" woman. What makes her modern is her "solitude": she seems much more excited by her own body and how it performs than she is in other bodies, which is why she has "no heart," although that does not prevent her from exciting audiences throughout Europe. She is modern because she is "perverse," driven by a form of masturbatory self-exuberance that leaves her indifferent even to her own desirability, so that the pleasure of watching her perform is the pleasure of watching a woman enjoy herself and no one else, which, however, produces a somewhat misanthropic view of society. She is not the courtesan in Decadent literature nor even the amoral destroyer of men and women in Wedekind's dramas. She embodies

a mythical image of modernity as a solitary self-metamorphosis through pantomimic performances of "clownish" pleasure in the power of her body to excite herself and voyeuristic audiences. In this respect, Champsaur sees her in a way that resembles the Roman imperial view of pantomime as a solo performance demonstrating the power of mythic identities to manifest themselves in the body of the performer and thus establish the "metamorphosis" of the performer as the revelation of a fundamental condition of freedom. The Roman perspective was, of course, "tragic," while Champsaur's modernist perspective is "clownish"—that is to say, sardonic, jaded, deeply ambivalent, if not really comic (cf. Oberhuber 2015; Bazile 2007).

In *Lulu, roman clownesque*, Champsaur envisioned pantomimic modernity as something much more ambitious and complex than the theater world could accommodate. His vision required a novel rather than a scenario not only because he saw "woman" as central to the construction of modernity. A modern perception of "woman" precipitated complicated new relations between bodily performance and images, space, and time that could not be concentrated within a conventional theatrical space (Lulu, like a Roman pantomime, constantly brings her performances to new or unusual spaces). Another prominent writer of the time, Jean Richepin (1849-1926), also turned to the novel to imagine pantomime as no one saw it on the Parisian stage. He was a co-founder of the Cercle Funambulesque, and, as already mentioned, he had collaborated with Sarah Bernhardt, his lover at the time, on the 1883 production of *Pierrot assassin*. In his novel *Braves gens* (1886), he tells the story of the relationship between an inhibited, unconfident composer, Kergouët, and an idealistic, "gullible" actor, Tombre, who seeks to produce a new, "modernist" form of pantomime that will achieve a higher level of artistic power than commercial pressures allow or the compromises that are necessary to build a successful career in the mainstream theater. But the modernist pantomime simply means a "new Pierrot," a "Shadow Pierrot" (*Pierrot-Ombre*), a "sinister, spectral" Pierrot, a Pierrot "in black," but also a Pierrot "without a line in his face and hands all white, but not a cheerful white, no! Pale white. An alcoholic American white, a lugubrious white. Finally, a ghost, but a real ghost [...] a Pierrot who makes one shudder, and think" (Richepin 1886: 60-61). In the "revolutionary" pantomime Tombre has written, *L'Ame de Pierrot*, Colombine, "beautiful and gracious," functions as

Pierrot's "soul," which he seeks to recover, although she "ended up as a sort of personification of Death itself, of that Death that he desired so much, and which was the supreme object of all his love. Not hideous Death; on the contrary, a suave, ideal, winged dancing apparition" (178). As Claude Jamain remarks, for Tombre, pantomime is not about the recovery or triumph of love, but the revelation of "the necessity of death" (2014: paragraph 42). But the actress Tombre selects to play Colombine refuses to play Death. He succeeds instead in facilitating the romance between the shy Kergouët and the student he loves, Madeline. Kergouët and Madeline retreat into obscurity as village musicians, while Tombre joins an "American" (actually French) circus ("The Happy Zig Zags"), where, as a kind of macabre clown-acrobat, he becomes completely unrecognizable as he was in Paris and basically anonymous to the world, even though his performances possess a severe realism, infused as they are with real tears and intense alcoholic suffering. His colleagues die off. He returns as a wreck to Paris, where he dies. But he manages to see Kergouët again and, in a hallucinatory, alcoholic haze, discloses to him his transfiguring faith in his "zig zag" pantomimic aesthetic, in which he embodies "all modern humanity, nervous, martyred, diabolized, paradisal, by that spirit which is God" (477). The "zig zag" aesthetic involves convulsive, contradictory movements, gestures, and glances that arise directly from the body, the "soul," the emotional life of the actor rather than the Pierrot he assumes, so that pantomime becomes an intense autobiographical revelation, even though the actor is unrecognizable or hidden behind various aliases (cf. Forrest 2013). This autobiographical anonymity of pantomime performance is the basis for a redemptive "modernism" in theater, although Kergouët decides that he "must say farewell to the vices of youth" and accept that he is unable or unwilling to surmount the obscurity in which he has buried his talent.

But for Richepin, the "soul of Pierrot" and the "zig zag" aesthetic remained theoretical constructs, figments of a novelistic imagination. Despite his involvement with the Cercle Funambulesque, he contributed no pantomime scenarios to the society and wrote no scenarios after *Pierrot assassin*, which he never published, although he remained busy writing comedies, dramas, and opera libretti. Writing *Braves gens* apparently convinced him that pantomime, ruled by Pierrot, was an aesthetic or embrace of Death. Pantomime was a dead art, even if Pierrot kept coming back to life or escaping execution, as he does in Tombre's *L'Ame de Pierrot*.

It was a dead art precisely because it depended for its survival on the resurrection, reincarnation, or endlessly deferred extinction of a single figure, Pierrot, who superficially represented, his devotees might foolishly claim, an irrepressible "life force." But as Richepin implies in *Braves gens*, Pierrot worship remains embedded within self-destructive addictions, a deluded attachment to something that suppresses or denies the power of the body to move outside of the eternal, "lunar" image of Pierrot. Perhaps for this reason, Richepin conjured up ancient Roman pantomime in his novel *Contes de la décadence romaine* (1898), in which, through a first person voice, he assumed the persona of an aristocratic aesthete in the late Roman Empire, who describes how the public has turned away from the cultivation of beautiful experiences and nourished instead an insatiable taste for the deformed, the monstrous, and the ugly. In the end, "tired of a life where it is no longer possible to satisfy my love for the beautiful," he decides to die Stoically, slitting his wrists in a luxurious bathtub while nude dancers scatter flowers on the mosaic floor. In one chapter, "Le Chrétien," the narrator, who regards Christianity as a foolish preoccupation of the lower classes, recounts a pantomime performance sponsored by his friend, the freedman Phryllas, in the notorious Subure district of Rome. Through the favor of the Emperor, Phryllas had become rich collecting rents from the debauched citizens in his district. But he had an enemy: a Christian who preached against the *lupanars* and vice dens of Subure. With the Emperor's assistance, Phryllas arranged to have the Christian "play the part of Orpheus in a pantomime representing the death of the Thraceian singer torn apart by the Bacchantes, while the roles of the Bacchantes would go to prostitutes of Suburre, those who were the most furious against the Christian ruin of their trade" (Richepin 1898: 200). The performance took place in a private amphitheater with 77 spectators, including the Emperor. The narrator notes that the décor was admirable because there was no décor, for "everything was real, the rocks, the trees, the cliffs, the torrents," "a minutely reconstructed little Thrace." However, his "enthusiasm chilled" in regard to the performance by the Christian, for the "Christian did not in the least evoke the world of Orpheus and resembled more the beasts tamed by the lyre." This Orpheus was small, dirty, ugly, with black skin: "He looked like a cynocephalus from Egypt, like the grimacing monkeys that priests of Isis drag along after them down the street," quite in contrast to "the radiant nakedness of many admirable Orpheus statues to which we have become

accustomed." Because he had refused to play the role, the Christian was compelled to wear a laurel crown that drooped down his face and the lyre was chained to his wrists, "like an instrument of execution." But the Bacchantes were "excellent," full of "mad joy," their fury was "sincere," and they were beautiful, nude, "disheveled, screaming, waving gold-tipped thyrses [...] gleaming, scarlet torches." "A good master of pantomime" would have trained the Christian to flee the Bacchantes and then charm them with his lyre. The whole effect was comic, "like a display of marionettes." The Christian made a "ridiculous speech absolutely devoid of meaning [...] mingling Syriac words with Greek and abominable Latin barbarisms." "Fortunately, the baseness of this show was somewhat redeemed by the horrible beauty of the denouement," when the Bacchants threw themselves upon the Christian and tore him apart, "snatching scraps of flesh from his body," and dismembering his body in a manner that inspired "many of us" to compliment Phryllas for the "pleasure he had given us." Yet the narrator insists that the pantomime would have been much more grandiose and artistic if a real and "beautiful" pantomime had played Orpheus (202-205). Nevertheless, Richepin's representation of ancient Roman pantomime is not much different from his representation of "modern" pantomime in *Braves gens*: the hunger for beauty brings one to Death. Pantomime is most beautiful when it is perfectly "real," a revelation of autobiographical anonymity, when the performer has completely eclipsed the character as the figure one sees in movement but reveals nothing more than his embodiment of Death. The Christian/Orpheus is not much different from Tombre/Pierrot in manifesting the idea that the creation of redemptive art or beauty entails a degradation of the body, the "shadow" of Death. This affinity between the Christian and Tombre implies that the notion of pantomime as an aesthetic of Death long precedes Pierrot and that Pierrot cannot be blamed for what is inherent to pantomime itself. But of course that implication comes from the mind of a French decadent who was incapable of escaping the Shadow of Pierrot—at least as a scenarist of pantomimes. In 1901, Richepin collaborated with the composer Paul Vidal on the ballet scenario *L'Imperatrice*, which premiered at the Théâtre Olympia. Set in Byzantium, the ballet tells the story of a pair of pantomimes, Psellius and Myrrha, who obtain a magic wand from a sorceress. With the wand, the three plan to obtain the treasure the Empress (performed by Caroline Otero) offers to anyone who can cure her of

boredom. The wand enables Psellius and Myrrha to appear before the Byzantine court in luxurious finery and bring with them a kind of perfumed grass, which, when inhaled, awakens an exhilarating pleasure in life, causing the chief eunuch to become enamored of one of the court ladies. Psellius and Myrrha stage for the Empress a pantomime about "the death and resurrection of Adonis." Intoxicated by the perfumed grass, the Empress falls in love with Psellius and tries to replace Myrrha in performing the part of Kypris. Myrrha stabs the Empress, who nevertheless forgives her, "as the dawn rises in gold and purple splendor." Howard Sutton regards the scenario as "characteristic of the author's experiments with fantasy," but, because of "the welter of violence" in the final tableau, "there can be no doubt that it was an artistic error" (1961: 199-200). The scenario continues Richepin's theme of pantomime possessing a unique, deathly power to dissolve distinctions between life and art to create a greater, redemptive beauty. But the piece also stirs up uncertainty about the distinction between ballet and pantomime, especially since he designated *L'Imperatrice* as a ballet rather than as ballet pantomime or at least some kind of innovative intermedial project. It is as if, like an eighteenth century ballet master, he needed the regulated movements of ballet to "contain" the pantomime and prevent pantomimic movement from becoming too lifelike—and thus too contaminated with intimations of the body's mortality. But this was a view of pantomime shaped by the seemingly interminable struggle of the nineteenth century French male literary imagination to "explain" the power of a bizarre male body (Pierrot) to live so long and so carelessly "in silence," without words, without an effective "language" to regulate his motives and actions. In the twentieth century, the silent cinema would develop a pantomimic aesthetic that could tell the story of *L'Imperatrice* without considering at all the need for any balletic movement.

American Women Exert Influence on Pantomime

An approach to pantomimic art outside of the French-dominated fixation on Pierrot and the *commedia* tradition did not begin to reassert itself until the twentieth century. Part of this reassertion was due to women developing a path to body consciousness that was independent of the male-dominated literary and theatrical institutions pervasively invested in upholding a male perspective on female performance. Much of the

development of this modern female body consciousness occurred outside of France. But in relation to pantomime, an important figure in the development was the French pedagogue Francois Delsarte (1811-1871), whose ideas gained an especially receptive female audience in the United States. Disenchanted with the highly codified aesthetics of acting he learned as a music student at the Paris Conservatoire, Delsarte devised his own "system" for acting that bestowed emotional values on gestures and mystically linked movements, gestures, and facial expressions to spiritual moods. As a musician, however, he placed great emphasis on vocal training, the "harmonic" coordination of physical gesture with vocal dynamics and inflections that revealed the moral, mental, and physical well-being or credibility of the performer; in effect, his system prepared students more for oratory or "eloquence" than for acting. He never published his theories, and it was his students who compiled somewhat misty reminiscences of his lectures (cf. Delsarte 1893). One of his students in Paris was the prodigious American theater visionary Steele MacKaye (1842-1894), who, compelled by the Franco-Prussian War to return to America, promoted Delsarte's ideas in New York City through a school he established in the 1870s (Ruyter 1979: 18-21). He himself never published any work about Delsarte's "system," although he was a successful author of plays and proposals for new theater technologies. His pedagogic style appealed mainly to teachers of oratory and eloquence, not to actors. These teachers attracted many female students, who believed that the study of "correct" vocal delivery, poise, posture, and expressive gesture would improve their social mobility and make them more attractive to a higher social class. Some teachers published idiosyncratic manuals on Delsarte's theories of oratory and bodily communication, and while these books hardly provided a unified understanding of his "system," they nevertheless accommodated an expanding vogue for self-improvement linked to a class-conscious self-awareness of the body as a signifier. Such books tended to be at once more rigorous and more philosophical than, for example, Mary Tucker Magill's little book *Pantomimes* (1882), in which the author regards pantomime as a branch of "elocution," a way of showing the body stirred to a distinct, believable movement by the emotions inscribed in a poem, recited by the performer, and apparently accompanied by music. Much of the book consists of illustrations depicting a solitary woman assuming the *poses* ascribed to particular conditions or emotions: Expectation, The Vow,

Affection, Anger, Sorrow, Joy, or Fear [Figure 78]. Magill clearly has in mind an idea of poetic performance in which the performer does not assume a "character," but brings to physical expression an emotion within her that unites her body to the words of a poem. In a sense, the body illustrates a poem the way the pictures in the book illustrate emotions. While the book is much too simple to be credible, it does reveal a fundamental weakness in Delsartean thinking: the failure to connect movements, gestures, and emotions to each other to produce narratives. Teachers like breaking down large structures into discrete, teachable units, but they tend to lack the capacity to theorize how discrete units may be combined to produce large structures.



Figure 78: Illustrations from Mary Magill's *Pantomimes* (1882) showing gestures for signifying Fear, Sorrow, and the Vow.

One of the most popular Delsarte manuals was *Delsarte System of Expression* (1887) by Genevieve Stebbins (1857-1934), a student of MacKaye and a lecturer on the Delsarte system at Boston University. The book largely consists of translations of classroom lectures, demonstrations, and exercises given by Delsarte or recollected by his students. Delsarte advises the student to perform the exercises before a mirror so that she will see how others see her perform the movement (Stebbins 1887: 25). Even though the book captures Delsarte's distinctive voice in the classroom, Stebbins devoted only perfunctory attention to the vocal delivery aspect of Delsarte's system and concentrated on the theme of "aesthetic gymnastics," the training of the body to make "fitful" significations or, more abstractly, "the aesthetic within the semeiotic" (57-58). She inventoried a multitude of exercises covering almost every part of the body that could carry expressive

value, and the student could perform every exercise alone, before a mirror and without the need for any theatrical devices, such as makeup or fashion accessories. Indeed, a feature of Delsarte's system is that it does not require the student to study any performance other than her own; he makes no reference to any actual performances by any actors, orators, or dancers, and he never encourages students to study the performances of others, theatrical or otherwise, even though actors invariably learn more by studying other actors than by doing exercises. But the point of the system was to strengthen the confidence of the student to present her "correct" self to an audience, rather than to present her self as a manifestation of multiple or "other" identities. As a compilation of exercises for regulating bodily movement, the system as Stebbins described it encouraged dancelike rather than histrionic impulses. She did, however, include a special section on the "Grammar of Pantomime," in which she discussed, quite abstractly, the "nine laws that govern the significance of motion in the human body." She explained each law in aphoristic terms, so that, for example, within "The Law of Motion," "Excitement or passion tends to expand gesture; Thought or reflection tends to contract gesture; Love or affection tends to moderate gesture." As for "The Law of Direction," "Lengths are passional; Heights and depths are intellectual; Breadths are volitional" (167-174). Stebbins then shows the application of the laws by imagining a scene in which the student greets a person she loves only to discover that the person does not love her, thus causing her to use her body to signify a wide range of emotions (177-184). The performance of this scene is actually technically complicated, requiring much exercise to perform "correctly," even though the reader perceives the scene as a situation that she may expect to encounter in "real life." In this context, then, pantomime is about the performance of the body in daily life; it is the "correct" bodily manifestation of a morally and intellectually "fitful" personality or "soul." But Stebbins developed her own concept of "harmonic gymnastics," in which she stressed the relation between "dynamic breathing" and the performance of gestures and movements; this relation, though it involved numerous exercises, brought the student into contact with the spiritual or religious dimension of her self, and the exercises bore some similarities to yoga. The exercises called for movements that were beautiful in themselves and had no "semeiotic" significance beyond indicating the performer's healthful pleasure in performing them (Stebbins 1892: 13-25). Stebbins and her school in New

York City, which formed the so-called "New York School of Expression," exerted considerable influence over prominent leaders in medicine, public education, music, Ivy League universities, and high society (the Vanderbilts, J. P. Morgan), and hundreds of her students spread her teachings throughout America (*The Successful American* 1902 V: 105-107). Around 1893, she and her students began wearing chitons or tunics in class to allow freer movement of their bodies and to emulate the "Grecian" beauty of classical statuary, which was the inspiration for various poses. Stebbins and her students produced recitals to demonstrate their skills, and these included solo pantomimes, along with solo poetry recitations, dramatic monologues, solo songs, and statue poses (*Werner's Magazine* January 1901 XXVI: 456). The nature of the solo pantomimes (e.g., "Amazon Drill," "The Nymph") remains unclear. In 1903, she published a small book that included, along with the music score, nine photos of one of her students, Marie MacDonald, performing, "in illustrative poses," a "pantomime," "The Rubaiyat by Omar Khayyam," with MacDonald wearing what was presumably a Persian costume. The book suggests that Stebbins saw solo pantomime as a movement between one pose and the next, and in this respect her pantomime aesthetic resembled that of the ancient Romans. Yet although she began her career as an actress under MacKaye, she herself seems to have lacked the confidence to make pantomime a central goal of her teachings and aesthetic, perhaps because of the failure of Delsartean pedagogy to address relations between movement tropes or gestural "laws" and their combination into narratives that in some measure must take the performer "outside" of herself.

One of Stebbins' most influential students was Bess Mensendieck (1864-1957), a physician, who around 1896 migrated to Vienna, where she established a physical education school for women. The curriculum integrated the Delsarte/Stebbins pedagogy within a larger field of references to medical science, art history, and German philosophy. Mensendieck departed from Stebbins by moving away from the idea that bodily education was about giving the student confidence to appear alone before audiences. Rather, she saw bodily movement as a kind of pantomime of common or daily actions that one must perform regardless of whether anyone was watching these actions. The focus was on the "correct" performance of simple actions that the student (always female) would perform repeatedly throughout life: bending, sitting, lifting, reaching,

walking, stretching, kneeling, squatting, balancing, pivoting, standing up, sitting down, folding, wiping, sweeping, chopping, lying down, rising up, climbing, tossing, or kicking. Over time, the incorrect performance of these actions would cause unnecessary organ stress, spinal and orthopedic injuries, and sometimes nervous disorders. In her book *Körperkultur des Weibes* (1906), she described numerous exercises, based on the simple actions, that strengthened muscles, prevented stress on organs, kept joints flexible, improved blood circulation, preserved the firmness of the spine, and amplified mental-emotional well being. She further explained how the correct, healthy way of performing the simple actions was also the most beautiful way of performing them and the way that the body carried within it access to a deeper awareness of the metaphysical realm explored by German philosophy. The book was enormously successful, enjoying many editions (under the title *Körperkultur der Frau*) until 1923, and enabling its author and some of her students to establish a vast network of "Mensendieck schools" in Germany, The Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, where health institutions still operate using Mensendieck's methods (cf. Halvorsen 2009; Haldorsen 2006). An innovative feature of the book was that it used photography to demonstrate the exercises and the "correct" and "incorrect" performance of selected simple actions. Even more remarkable was the use of a completely nude female model (apparently Mensendieck herself) to perform the actions for the camera. Mensendieck went beyond Delsarte's insistence that the student practice actions before a mirror. She believed that a woman could not improve her body without seeing it, and a woman could not see her body without gazing at her nakedness. The controlling idea is that you cannot really know yourself without seeing yourself naked. But seeing one's body in the mirror is not the same as seeing it in a photograph, for the camera and the photographer see more of the body than the subject allows herself to see. Photography was therefore a part of the exercise regime, and students were expected to photograph as well as be photographed, to see as well as be seen, to see their own bodies by seeing other bodies. Mensendieck's ideas exerted immense influence over thousands of women in the early years of the twentieth century because her work implied that a modern body signified an elevated condition of freedom: the modern body emerged out of a disciplined, self-determined, conjunctive relation of the body to health, science, art, daily life, morality, seeing and being seen, and

bold, naked revelation. Her intention was fundamentally hygienic, with no ambition to prepare students for careers as professional performers. Yet a major consequence of her pedagogy was to inspire many women to pursue careers as solo dancers and to become members of a large female audience that wanted to see women moving alone, on their own, in a new way.

The Delsarte-Stebbins-Mensendieck pedagogy created the educational context that allowed for the formation of modern dance in the early twentieth century. Early modern dance was almost entirely the work of women. The early modern dances were predominantly solo performances, partly because the Delsartean pedagogy focused almost entirely on the development of the individual body, and partly because the "pioneers" of modern dance felt that the desire to perform should not be inhibited by the lack of resources to create on a larger scale. Some famous and certainly inspiring early modern dancers had no connection with the Delsarte-Stebbins-Mensendieck pedagogy: Loie Fuller, Isadora Duncan, Maud Allan, Mata Hari, all of whom received their professional education in the theater or some branch of show business. But the audience for modern female bodily performance was much greater and more diverse than the theater culture or these stars could accommodate. The Delsartean educational lineage was not encumbered with any need to preserve cherished theatrical conventions, and it was free of any desire to uphold the constraining rules and "false" ideals of ballet, which of course considered pantomime a debased or crippling image of itself. Stebbins and Mensendieck introduced larger, more philosophical concepts of pantomime than prevailed in the theater, and these concepts allowed their students to apply, build, or combine movements narratively, into dances that were "modern" because they were "free" (*Freietanz*) of obedience to nineteenth century assumptions about what movements could be considered dance. In effect, this female-oriented pedagogy led to a freer relation between music and speechless movement. The uncertainty about how to construct movement narratives out of the classroom exercises and "simple actions" of daily life led to narratives—dance concerts—that resembled those of the ancient Roman pantomime, even if most dancers had no knowledge of the Roman pantomime.

The epoch of the solo modern dance was the period 1902-1924. Originally solo dancers performed one or two dances within a vaudeville or variety show. For example, the American Loie Fuller (1862-1928), at the

Folies Bergère in Paris (1892-1896), enshrouded herself in a swirling, voluptuous flower-colored, undulating fabrics, and this dance she updated and supplemented with inventive lighting, scenographic, and mirror effects until 1902 (Brandstetter 1989: 17-33; cf. Lista 1994). By contrast, in 1905, the Dutch dancer Mata Hari (1876-1917) created a sensation in Paris with her exotic "Indonesian" dances, in which she wore almost nothing but jewels and a diaphanous skirt; in some salon performances, she wore even less (Waagenaar 1976: 44-47). Exotic dances by white women purporting to embody the luxuriant sensuality of colonized lands appealed to European and American audiences, but Mata Hari brought a somber, erotically charged intensity to her desire to disclose an "other" or "foreign" identity within her solitary self. In partnership with Fuller, Isadora Duncan (1877-1927) in 1902 launched a tour of German cities, where, dressed in a "Grecian" costume, she improvised a series of dances inspired by the music as she heard it. None of these dancers had any connection with pantomime; indeed, Duncan detested pantomime, although Fuller developed an interest in it after starting her Paris school in 1901. But they dramatized the point that to have an audience a solo dancer needed to display a way of moving that was unique to herself and not defined by any standard technical competence. But to do that, the dancer needed to have the whole concert program to herself rather than slots within it. In 1903, the Canadian-American dancer Maud Allan (1873-1956) presented her debut concert in Vienna, a two-hour program of the "orchestric expression in dance of pieces by Bach, Beethoven, Schubert and Schumann, to the accompaniment partly of orchestra and partly of grand piano" (Allan 1908: 80). In each of the dances, she told a little story, requiring her to change costumes and assume a different "character": "Spring Song," "Marche Funebre," and scenes inspired by ancient Greek or Renaissance art. Allan was aware of ancient Roman pantomime, "which at the dawn of the Augustan age had become the mania, the rage of the Roman populace," although she preferred to regard it, ambivalently, as both a refined Greek art and a corrupting influence on dance (16, 19). Nevertheless, she incorporated into her own dances the ancient pantomimic idea of movement between "statuesque poses." In Berlin, where she had studied music under Busoni, she made the acquaintance of the Belgian composer Marcel Remy (?-1907), who had been in Paris a member of the circle around Stéphane Mallarmé. Remy "guided" her in the study of ancient art and "orchestric subjects," and it "was not a

case of rapid achievement," for "nothing was more difficult than to weave harmonious, musical connection between the different poses so that there should be no break, so that there should be nothing to mar the rhythmic sense of continuous harmonious expression" (76). In 1905, she began work on her most famous piece, "The Vision of Salome," which had its premiere in Vienna in early 1906. Allan claimed that the Bible story of Salome inspired her, not the 1891 play by Oscar Wilde or the 1904 opera adaptation of the play by Richard Strauss, both of which provoked considerable controversy and public discussion. It was, however, difficult for audiences of the time not to see more than a coincidence in her choice of material, if for no other reason than that Allan applied a consummately *theatrical* approach to the subject and did not simply construct another "exotic dance" derived from an ancient source. She did not use Strauss's famous "Dance of the Seven Veils" from the opera as her accompaniment, but instead commissioned Remy to compose music especially for her. Indeed, in Allan's scenario for the piece, the dance is fairly brief; most of the piece consists of pantomimic actions that occur after the dance takes place. The actions externalize a psychic condition in which Salome experiences turbulent, contradictory emotions and perceptions, as when, for example, she beholds the head of John the Baptist on a platter:

> *There is a sudden crash. She is horror-stricken! Suddenly a wild desire takes possession of her. Why, ah! why, should her mother have longed for this man's end ? Salome feels a strange longing, compelling her once more to hold in her hands this awful reward of her obedience, and slowly, very slowly, and with ecstasy mingled with dread, she seems to grasp the vision of her prize and lay it on the floor before her. Every fibre of her youthful body is quivering; a sensation hitherto utterly unknown to her is awakened, and her soul longs for comfort* (126).

Salome dances a little bit around the head. But then returns to a pantomimic mode:

> *Now, instead of wanting to conquer, she wants to be conquered, craving the spiritual guidance of the man whose wraith is before her; but it remains silent! No word of comfort, not even a sign! Crazed by the rigid stillness. Salome, seeking an understanding, and knowing not*

> *how to obtain it, presses her warm, vibrating lips to the cold lifeless ones of the Baptist! [...] The Revelation of Something far greater still breaks upon her, and stretching out her trembling arms turns her soul rejoicing towards Salvation. It is gone! Where, oh, where! A sudden wild grief overmasters her, and the fair young Princess, bereft of all her pride, her childish gaiety, and her womanly desire, falls, her hands grasping high above her for her lost redemption, a quivering huddled mass. It is the atonement of her mother's awful sin!* (127).

Salome does not die, as in Wilde and Strauss, and her motive in requesting from Herod the head of John the Baptist has more to do with avenging the forced marriage of Herodias, her mother, to Herod, than with a frustrated erotic attachment the Baptist, although the scenario makes clear her sexual excitement in perpetrating violence against both her stepfather and the religious fanatic. This complicated psychological drama Allan performed in an ornamental "oriental" costume that was only slightly less scanty than the skimpy, jeweled bikinis worn by Mata Hari. Audiences found this intersection of Judeo-Christian conflict, psychological turmoil, brazen eroticism, and complicated pantomimic action fascinating (cf. Malnig 2012: 132-134). With "The Vision of Salome" as the climax of her dance program, Allan toured throughout Germany, Budapest, and Paris with much success. In 1908, she performed the piece in a London music hall to avoid the censorship of plays on Biblical themes. There the piece attracted enormous audiences, and Allan earned a fortune. Even though most of her Salome piece was a pantomime, with her triumph in London Allan established the image of the "foreign," Biblical dancer Salome as the catalyst for the female solo modern dance concert.

However, the problem with Salome as an "other" identity within the performer was that she completely eclipsed all other identities the performer sought to reveal in the program. Allan herself recognized this problem and tried to correct it in her autobiography by contrasting three photo images of her Salome with nine of her in other scenes and settings, yet she was never able to produce another dance-pantomime or program with nearly as much power as her Salome solo. Earlier, in 1905, the mysterious and remarkably innovative dancer Adorée Villany had experimented with a Salome performance in which she combined speech from Wilde's play with dance, nudity, and pantomimic movement. But by

1908, she had abandoned Salome and constructed dance programs in Germany and occasionally elsewhere in Europe that featured her solo nudity in the performance of dances from different cultures and historical eras: The Assyrian Dance, The Dance of Esther, Dance of the Roman Woman, The Old Egyptian Dance, The Old Hebrew Dance, The Old Persian Dance, The Dance of Phryne, The Babylonian Dance, The Pre-Raphaelite Woman, and Death and the Maiden. Because of the nudity, she performed her programs only for private audiences, which did not prevent her from running into legal difficulties in Munich and Paris. She was imaginative about using photography to document her performances, which, along with extensive commentary, she compiled into a huge, opulent, and immensely enjoyable book in 1912. The photography suggests that, despite her claim of being a dancer, her performances were more pantomime than dance and included much posing by which she could display her nudity. She continually revised her programs, so that she replaced or supplemented the mythical-historical scenes with dances of a more abstract character (Dance of Anger, Dance of the Blind, The Seduction) or inspired by contemporary paintings by Stuck or Böcklin [Figure 79]. Yet in spite of her dynamic thinking about solo performance, her influence was limited, largely because her performances were private, for elite, invited audiences: she consistently and ambitiously used her nudity to evaluate her relation to historical, mythical, and abstract forms of "otherness" within her body, which meant that public awareness of her achievements remained confined largely to press reports of her entertaining performances in the courtrooms prosecuting her for doing nude dance programs even "secretly." The image of Salome/Oriental *femme fatale* therefore continued to dominate the concept of solo female dance/pantomime. In November 1907, about six months after Allan's Paris performance of "The Vision of Salome," Loie Fuller staged in Paris, at the Théâtre des Arts, *La Tragédie de Salomé* a one-act "mimodrame," with a libretto by Robert d'Humières (1868-1915) and music by Florent Schmitt (1870-1958).



Figure 79: Adorée Villany, ca. 1910, "Dance of the Bees," from Villany (1912).

This was a grandiose production entailing opulent stage décor, manifold spectacular lighting effects, and a sumptuous orchestral score. Although d'Humières' scenario unfolded as a sequence of distinct dances--the dance of pearls, the dance of the peacock, the dance of serpents, the dance of steel, the dance of silver, and the dance of fear—Fuller was the only body in movement; Herod, Herodias, and the Baptist were simply bystanders of the Princess' performance. Supposedly the show dramatized the huge upheaval of nature caused by Salome's dancing: the act begins with a lurid, "russet-hued" sunset on the terrace of Herod's palace and concludes with a violent, orgiastic, apocalyptic storm, with the sea turning blood-red; then

tempestuous, "sulphurous" clouds poison the sky, lightning shatters the stone pillars, with Salome "swept about by an infernal frenzy" (Hale 1913: 8-10). The production, however, was a fiasco. Fuller, who was forty-five at the time, apparently used the same sort of voluptuous, swirling movements with which she had created the voluptuous, swirling undulations of fabric in her abstract "flower" dances of the 1890s. "Salome was an overly voluptuous temptress who entwined herself in strings of pearls, performed a writhing dance with a six-foot-long artificial snake covered in glittering green scales, and even allowed a brief glimpse of herself naked silhouetted behind a screen." Much of the audience regarded the production as kitsch, and as a result, "it was the last time [Fuller] allowed her body to appear onstage" (Garelick 2007: 93). The character of Salome (and Schmitt's monumental music) completely overwhelmed her. Though she advised Allan on preparing for the London performance of "The Vision of Salome," Fuller failed to understand what Allan already grasped: Salome was more than a dancer; she was in the grip of powerful psycho-emotional states that achieved far more effective physicality through pantomimic rather than danced movement. The mistake was in assuming that Salome was Dance, and that dance defined her, when actually Salome saw dance as subordinate or even incidental to her larger erotic, political, and religious assertions of power.

Blurring of Distinctions between Dance and Pantomime

Modern dancers nevertheless seemed fixated on solving the problem of Salome as an emblem of modernity. In 1908, Ida Rubinstein (1883-1960), heir to a vast fortune in St. Petersburg, collaborated with the great choreographer Mikhail Fokine (1880-1942) to produce a Salome for private performance in St. Petersburg. Rubinstein had traveled to Palestine and Syria to prepare herself for the role, and she had studied music, acting, and dance from distinguished teachers. Though she lacked talent as a dancer, Fokine recognized that she possessed great skill as a performer and that she knew how to move to amplify her seductive, lean, dark beauty. Originally, she wanted to perform Oscar Wilde's play, but the Orthodox Church and the government forbade production of the text and allowed performance of the story only as a pantomime. Leon Bakst did the décor, Alexander Glazunov composed the orchestral music, and Vsevolod Meyerhold was in charge of the *mise-en-scène*. The performance was a triumph; the elite

audience, which included the impresario Sergei Diaghilev, responded with "tumultuous applause"; her nearly complete nudity at the end of the "Dance of the Seven Veils" no doubt gave the spectators an intense feeling of being witness to a very "modern" event (Bentley 2002: 138-140; Coe 2016: 187-202). But Fokine observed her exceptional skill as a pantomime: she was very economical in her movements and applied a restraint to movement that a dancer like Fuller was incapable of exercising. She knew how to make stillness (pose) dramatic by bestowing a precision, discretion, weight, and power to her performance of an action or gesture rather than simply executing a beautiful or difficult movement (Fokine 1961: 245). Rubinstein's willingness to think of Salome as something more than "the essence of dance" allowed her to see her body as containing other glamorous identities that lacked any clear affinity with dance. Diaghilev invited her and Fokine to join the Ballet Russes in Paris to produce an even more lavish spectacle that exploited her gift for speechless drama, *Cléopâtre* (1909), followed by *Sheherazade* (1910). These, too, were triumphs. However, *Le Martyre de saint Sébastien* (1911), a collaboration with Gabriele d'Annunzio and Claude Debussy, provoked much less enthusiasm. It was an enormous spectacle, five acts and six hours, requiring 600 costumes, 150 actors, 350 extras, a chorus, an orchestra, luxurious scene décor (by Bakst), and condemnation from the Catholic Church. In playing the young Christian Sebastian, the homosexual obsession of the Emperor Diocletian, Rubinstein danced, mimed, and spoke, apparently with some difficulty, d'Annunzio's gaudy and prolix verse (Levitz 2012: 425-427, 431; Fleischer 2007: 63-75; Bentley 2002: 150-152). In a letter to Natalie Barney, the artist Romaine Brooks wrote: "The sexual ambiguity of the Saint is only increased in Rubinstein's portrayal of him; she is a masculine female acting as an effeminate man, pursued by a homosexual emperor" (Levitz 2012: 416). But a larger implication can be ascribed to her grandiose productions: to prevent Salome from becoming the Pierrot of modernist female dance and pantomime, Rubinstein saw herself as a kind of funnel for channeling large resources to incarnate different archaic historical figures who were so "big" that they each demanded their own, huge show. For her, modern female identity was an uninhibited expression of *extravagance*, a condition of freedom that entailed an indifference to the expense of achieving it. And yet she was not done with Salome. Indeed, Toni Bentley regards the characters Rubinstein performed as "sisters of Salome" rather than as alternatives to Salome. In

April 1919, as a charity gala, she produced, at the Opera, her own version of *La Tragédie de Salomé*, which the Ballet Russes had already revived twice with the classically trained ballet stars Natalia Trouhanova (1912) and Tamara Karsavina (1913) as Salome. The choreographer, Nicolai Guerra (1865-1942), got her to dance on pointe, and the piece received enough acclaim to remain in the Opera repertory until 1922, when Rubinstein supposedly granted the role to prima ballerina Yvonne Daunt (1899-1962), the first to dance barefoot on the Opera stage. Rubinstein's motive in staging the work may have contained more than her appreciation for Schmitt's luxuriant, powerful music. She had left the Ballet Russes in 1912, ostensibly because Diaghilev believed she was incompetent as a dancer, but perhaps also because he regarded her flamboyant personality and immense wealth as unhealthy distractions. With her own company, she continued to produce large-scale spectacles with famous collaborators. *Antoine et Cléopâtre* (1920), was a vast, six hour realization of André Gide's translation of Shakespeare's play with over an hour of ballet music by Florent Schmitt and sumptuous décor by Bakst, and Rubinstein, as Cleopatra, in a stunning costume, photographs of which, as usual, newspapers and cultural journals around the world were eager to publish. She was *Artemis Troublée* (1922), with music by Paul Paray, then *Istar* (1924), using Vincent d'Indy's music, before hiring Bonislava Nijinska (1890-1972) and later Leonid Massine (1896-1979) to choreograph pieces she had commissioned from major composers (Honegger, Milhaud, Sauget, Ravel, Stravinsky, Auric). In Henri Sauget's *David et Goliath* (1928), she performed the part of David as an androgynous creature, and, as might be expected, she provoked complaints from both Massine and journalists about her lack of skill in performing dance arabesques, *pas de deux*, and elevations (Norton 2004: 125). Leslie Norton adopts an unflattering view of Rubinstein: "the vast majority of her works were dinosaurs, pretentious, old-fashioned, unwieldy, tedious. Rubinstein never got over her infatuation with the *fin de siècle*, and she never ceased to be a spoiled rich girl" (2004: 130).



Figure 80: Top: Ida Rubinstein in the film *La Nave* (1921). Photo: Italian postcard of a film still. Bottom: Georges Wague and Colette in *Aux Bat. d'Af*, Paris, 1911. Photo: Colette sur scene.

She consistently overestimated the capacity of her sleek, tall body to construct dancelike responses to music, although Lynn Garafola offers a more positive assessment: "She chose her roles with extraordinary care, tailoring them to not only what she perceived as her strengths but also to an exalted vision of heroism that she never abandoned." Her female heroes were "autonomous, agents of fate rather than its victims, manipulators of desire rather than its objects" (2005: 161). But she was much better off

performing pantomime, which none of her choreographers, eager to enhance their ambitions in ballet, considered worthy of their talents. Her pantomime skill is evident in the 1921 movie she made of d'Annunzio's 1908 play *La Nave*, directed by d'Annunzio's son, Gabriellino, and Mario Roncoroni, which had already been made into a huge, Wagnerian opera (1918) by Italo Montmezzi. In the enormous film production, set in Venice in 552 CE, Rubinstein plays Basiliola, a sadistic, pagan *femme fatale*, who seeks revenge against the two brothers who mutilated her own brothers in their quest to become masters of the emerging, Christian city [Figure 80]. In one scene she performs a "seductive dance" before a vast crowd, and her awkwardness, her stiffness as a dancer are transparent. Yet elsewhere in the film the restrained pantomimic movement that Fokine felt was her strength creates a performance of memorable intensity, because her languid, deliberate movements possess a compelling authority when accompanied by music she did not hear when she performed them. Her great wealth gave her a body that refused to submit well to music or perhaps to any pressure external to it. Composers submitted music to her, but no amount of "study" could get her body to submit wholly to the music or even to dance. She moved in a disciplined ("restrained"), distinctively dramatic style: she could not escape any suggestion that her body seduced rather than submitted in relation to anything or anyone external to it. For this constant role of the great seductress, it was best if the music followed her or, as when you watch *La Nave* on video and select your own accompanying music, movement and music "fit," even though either is unaware of the other. In a sense, Rubinstein epitomized the image of the great seductress who embodied female modernity in dance, for this "foreign" seductress, no matter how naked she appeared, constantly moved in relation to signifiers of luxuriousness and great wealth. It was the fantasy of the dance world that the seductress voluptuously submits her body to the music, to the choreography, to a system of body regulation, so that something other than her wealth or beauty allows her movements to become art and redemptive. But Rubinstein undermined this fantasy, and in doing so contributed significantly to the collapse of the seductress image driving so much of early modernist dance.

Women coming out of the Delsartean physical education culture contested the "oriental" seductress image and the escalating cost of maintaining it, but it took awhile for them to realize that a new idea of

modern female dance did not depend on finding a new image of female power nor on establishing a reputation for creating a "freer" embodiment of the feminine by taking audiences "outside" of the culture they inhabited. The American dancer Ruth St. Denis (1879-1989) was a student of the Delsartean system, and she credited performances (1892) by Genevieve Stebbins with bringing about "the real birth of my art life" (Shelton 1990: 11-13). She spent her early career as a "skirt dancer" in vaudeville shows and as a showgirl in musicals, while seeking spiritual guidance from esoteric, theosophical, Buddhist, and other exotic sources. She wanted to infuse dance with a spirituality that was lacking in the American theater, but she believed that a spiritual dance was possible only if she also incorporated the orientalism that audiences associated with artistic dancing. Stebbins' notions of "Egyptian" pantomime deeply impressed her, and, applying many of the Delsartean exercises, she rather slowly developed her own idea of an Egyptian dance that eventually (1905) became *Egypta*, "a pantomime without words [...] an epic dance typifying the life of man as revealed by the progress of the Sun in its journey through night and day" (49). As she became more deeply attracted to Eastern philosophies, she revised the piece, so that the twelve hours of Egypta became the five senses of Radha, a Hindu temple maiden, who seeks union with the god Krishna but must overcome the temptations of the senses (51). St. Denis constructed Egypta/Radha as a kind of anti-Salome, a woman who was not a seductress but who nevertheless exuded an erotic aura. Compressing twelve dances into seven was the result of shifting from an intended salon audience to a vaudeville audience. She realized that American audiences favored a "variety" of acts in a show rather than a concentration of resources into the monumental performance of a powerful figure, which anyway would probably entail incarnating a Salome-like seductress. She therefore devised two more dances derived from "serpentine" Delsartean exercises, "The Incense," and "The Cobras," in which she "pantomimed the coiling and hissing of two serpents, her arms gliding and darting in sinister foreplay" (57). *Radha* (1906) consisted of seven dances: each of the five senses had its own dance, followed by "The Delirium of the Senses" and "The Renunciation of the Senses." Each dance applied specific movement tropes fashioned from Delsartean exercises. For a couple of the dances, she made costume changes, which necessitated the presence on stage of a group of "priests," whose minimal movements functioned to sustain audience

attention long enough to complete the costume change. In effect, each of the dances was self-contained and could be detached for performance within some other larger set, and over many years, St. Denis revised or recycled the choreography, the décor, and the music. As Suzanne Shelton explains: "Essentially she employed the tools of the skirt dancer, a smattering of sentimentalized ballet—tippy-toe turns and waltz steps, simple *attitudes* and *dégagés*—embellished with the acrobatic antics of her supple arms and upper back. She combined the steps in brief movement phrases, punctuated by poses. These poses themselves suggested eclectic sources, both oriental icons and popular images of the late Victorian era" (62). *Radha* showed how the experience of each sense contributed to the *metamorphosis* of the character from a carnal to a spiritual being. With the addition of "The Incense" and "The Cobras," St. Denis had a *program* of dances by which she could dramatize the metamorphosis of the dancer herself, the multiplicity of identities within her body. While Villany, at about the same time, developed perhaps a more imaginative and daring idea of the solo modern dance program, her devotion to nudity prevented her dramatization of her metamorphosis from becoming a model that others could emulate. Still, *Radha* had difficulty attracting American audiences. St. Denis had helpful friends in New York high society, who facilitated her introduction to cultural elites in Europe. In 1906, she embarked on a long tour of Europe that lasted until 1909. London audiences responded tepidly, but Parisian audiences were enthusiastic. In Berlin and Vienna, however, she inspired an intense excitement that proved contagious throughout Germany. Count Harry Kessler (1868-1937) introduced St. Denis to major writers like Frank Wedekind, Gerhart Hauptmann, and Hugo von Hofmannsthal, in the hope that at least one of them would compose a pantomime for her. In late 1906, Hofmannsthal (1874-1929), deeply preoccupied at the time with dance and pantomime as cultic and ritual manifestations of subconscious states, had published in the newspaper *Die Zeit* a rapturous and influential review of her debut at the Komische Oper in Berlin. With Kessler's assistance, she and Hofmannsthal collaborated on producing, for the director Max Reinhardt, a twenty-minute Salome piece that would be "primeval and Hebraic in tone," not like Wilde's play, which St. Denis disliked. Her idea was to turn Radha into Salome, with Salome performing a sequence of discrete, increasingly wild dances. But this project soon fell apart, most likely because St. Denis's

concept of the "oriental" female dancer really did not encompass Salome, and she could not imagine a Salome that was much, if at all, different from those that did emerge between 1905 and 1908 (77-78). In Europe, she did, however, construct new dances—"The Yogi" (1908), "The Nautch" (1908)—that enabled her to expand or reconfigure her programs so that audiences might return to see her assume an identity that an earlier program had not included.

The immense success of St. Denis's European tour was a great inspiration for women connected to the German body culture movement, for it established the viability of the solo dance program and the professional potential of Delsartean education. The female solo modern dance program was the closest modernism came to constructing something similar to the ancient Roman pantomime, even if many dancers were not aware of it. The dance program provided a narrative framework by which the solo performer could "metamorphose" from one identity to another, from one "mood" to another, and thus display a range of talents. Many dancers, like Ruth St. Denis, evoked mythic identities inhabiting their bodies, and some showed no hesitation in using pantomimic movements, often compiled from Delsartean exercises and Mensendieckian "simple actions," to construct the "other" identities. Following St. Denis's tour, female solo dance concerts proliferated steadily throughout Germany and then beyond, so that by 1918, such concerts were commonplace in Central and Eastern Europe, The Netherlands, Belgium, Finland, Estonia, and Latvia.

It is not clear who produced the first solo dance program after St. Denis returned to America in 1909. In her memoirs, the Finnish dancer Maggie Gripenberg (1881-1976), a student of Dalcrozian rhythmic gymnastics and greatly inspired by Isadora Duncan's performance in Helsinki (1908), described how in December 1909, she gave her first concert at a high school in Stockholm, with her Swedish Dalcrozian teacher, Anne Behle (1876-1966). The program consisted of eight dances to music by seven different composers. However, the performance was not open to the public, only to friends and relatives (Gripenberg 1952: 57-58), although in November 1910, a Swedish magazine reported on Gripenberg and Behle as representatives of professional "plastic dance" (*Hvar 8 dag* 1910 Vol. 12, No. 6: 84) . It may well be that other dancers in Europe experimented with solo dance programs within a salon or private performance venue. But tracking

the advent of public solo dance programs is probably not a task that one can achieve with complete accuracy. The German dancer Rita Sacchetto (1880-1959) actually preceded St. Denis with a concert in Munich in 1905 in which she used romantic music to accompany her pantomimic resemblance to famous paintings in a manner perhaps similar to the "attitudes" performed by Ida Brun in the early nineteenth century. In 1906, Sacchetto brought this concert to the Galerie Miethke in Vienna. She trained as a ballet dancer, and performed mostly in opera ballet ensembles (*Djamileh*, *Die Stumme von Portici*), but it was evident she was much more of a pantomime than a dancer (Burbank 1909: 190). She performed in several other German cities, including Berlin in December 1908. Then in 1909, Loie Fuller invited her to join her company for performances in New York at the Metropolitan Opera, which, in its "war" against the rival Manhattan Opera, was staging music and dance concerts in programs along with short operas. Her part of the program, which also included an a cappella choir and Mascagni's one-act opera *Cavalleria Rusticana* (1890), consisted of six solo dances accompanied by the Opera orchestra (Met Performance CID: 45470). In May of 1910, she performed *The Intellectual Awakening of Woman* at the recently built New Theatre in Manhattan. Here she used music from Grieg's *Peer Gynt Suite* to dramatize the five "periods of woman's advancement through the ages," culminating in the final "struggle between the woman fighting for her liberty and the conventions which try to crush her"; she somehow put into this last pantomime-dance the fight for suffrage, according to *The New York Times* (May 22, 1910). But this suite was probably part of a program that included another "act," and it's difficult to ascertain if any of her concerts before 1912 were without shared billing. At any rate, by December 1910, she was back in Germany, performing a suite of solo dances at the Oldenburg Grossherzogliches Theater on one half of a program that also featured Suppé's one act operetta *Flotte Bursche* (1863) (Oldenburg Landesbibliothek 1911). Sacchetto had much ahead of her in relation to pantomimic performance, but her solo dance programs, though innovative, appear not to have exerted much influence, perhaps because they were too theatrical and too "painterly" to awaken the confidence of Delsartean women. Meanwhile, the Latvian-born dancer Sent M'ahesa (Elsa von Carlberg [1883-1970]), formerly a university student of Egyptology, presented her first program of "Egyptian" dances in December 1909 in

Munich, although almost nothing is known about the program (Ettlinger 1991 [1910]: 32-34; Matile 2016: 3).



Figure 81: Lilli Green (left) and Margaret Walker as "black Pierrot," in *La Valse*, with Chopin's music, painting by Jacob Merkelbach (1920). Photo: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

In June 1910, the German dancer Gertrud Leistikow (1885-1948) gave a solo program in the Dresden Central Theater of eight dances, *Orchestische Tanzspiele*, titled after music pieces by Grieg, Liszt, and Beethoven (De Boer 2015: 40). Leistikow had been a student at the physical education school of Hede Kallmeyer (1881-1976) in Berlin (De Boer 2015: 36). Kallmeyer had studied under Genevieve Stebbins in New York, but she had also incorporated into her school the teachings of Bess Mensendieck, so that her school also featured *Nacktturnen* (nude gymnastics) (Boutan-Laroze 2011; Spitzy 1914: 310). In October 1910, another Delsartean, the Anglo-Dutch dancer Lili Green (1885-1977) produced a solo dance concert in Amsterdam with her life-long partner Margaret Walker (1886-?) accompanying her on

the piano, supplemented by violin and occasional songs [Figure 81]. She also performed at least one dance with a male dancer, Andreas Pavley (1892-1931). In a long, 22-page article about the concert in *De Beweging* (1910 Jaargang 6, Deel 4: 255-277), Maurits Uyldert (1881-1966) mentioned Pavley only once. He never mentioned St. Denis and described Isadora Duncan as the driving inspiration behind Green's pantomimic aesthetic. But whereas Duncan was a "lyric" dancer, Green was a "dramatic" and "tragic" dancer, whose pantomimic approach did "not diminish her aesthetic" (268). In 1929, Green published *Einführung in das Wesen unserer Gesten und Bewegungen*, perhaps the most satisfying and persuasive of all treatises on the Delsarte system; it is a kind of photographic demonstration of pantomimic movement understood as a semiotic code or "system." In any case, all of these solo dance programs took place independently of each other and most likely without knowledge of each other. They did not emerge from any unified institutional apparatus or even from any shared network of professional associates. It therefore took a strong measure of courage for these women to venture on their own into solo dance programs when there was no central point for the dissemination of this aesthetic.

In the subsequent years, solo dance programs proliferated, primarily in Germany and Central Europe, and even solo dancers from outside of Germany and Austria felt they could not pursue a career without an audience in Germany. By 1923, the number of dancers who had created solo dance programs was extensive: Rita Aurel, Grit Hegesa, Suse Elsler, Lisa Abt, Ruth Schwarzkopf, Annie Lieser, Ilse Freude, Chari Lindis, Solveig Oderwald, Gusi Viola, Lucie Hertel, Erna Bertini, Macka Nordberg, Hannelore Ziegler, Anita Berber, Hilde Schewior, Beatrice Mariagraete, Hilde Sinoniew, Hedwig Nottebohm, Vera Waldheim, Leni Riefenstahl, Edith Bielefeld, Nina Schelemskaja, Gertrud Zimmermann, Laura Oesterreich, Olga Samsylova, Hilda Hager, Stella Kramrisch, Maria Ley, Charlotte Bara, Clotilde von Derp, Niddy Impekoven, Edith von Schrenck, Ella Ilbak, Lavinia Schulz, Mila Cirul, Olga Desmond, Tilly Losch, Lucy Kieselhausen, Ronny Johansson, Elmerice Pärts, Lo Hesse, Joachim von Seewitz, Grit Hegesa, Lisa Kresse, Alexander Sacharoff—among yet others! Only a few of these dancers could produce solo programs for more than a couple of years; some found their way into cabaret revues or simply disappeared. During the peak of the solo dance program era, competition between performers was intense, and to attract audiences, it was necessary

for dancers to possess a distinctive aesthetic that differentiated their performances from those of other otherwise equally attractive dance personalities. Creating such an aesthetic through a program of solo dances was extremely challenging—after all, dancers in our own time and for many decades previously seem incapable of imagining such a program. Some performers favored the inclusion of pantomimic actions into their programs, while others sought to eradicate pantomimic movement altogether to perfect forms of pure dance modeled after the "lyrical" approach of Isadora Duncan, who treated dance as a kinetic response to music or a "music made visible." Often the lyrical approach entailed naming dances after the music that accompanied them; pantomimic pieces tended to take the names of things or persons the performer presumed to represent. However, the range of movements understood as "lyrical" or purely dance was (and perhaps still is) quite limited, and it was very difficult to build an entire program around them without relying on different kinds of music to establish a varied range of "identities" within the dancer. As might be expected, many dancers combined dance and pantomimic action. Yet the idea of constructing programs consisting entirely of pantomimic actions or pantomimic pieces seems not to have occurred to anyone, even though the Delsartean and Mensendieckian training of many dancers probably prepared them better for such programs than for pure dance. However, public consciousness intensely associated dance and lyrical movement of the body with an articulation of "the feminine," whereas pantomime, for so long dominated by the image of Pierrot and his male literary propagandists, remained a "masculine" mode of performance that perhaps was not inviting for women—or compromised their femininity too much. A typical dance program consisted of eight to twelve pieces, accompanied most often by piano music. Different pieces required different costumes, so the pianist would perform a brief interlude to allow the dancer to change costumes. Sometimes a solo dancer paired with another solo dancer to create programs in which pieces alternated between the performers, eliminating the need for the interludes and putting less pressure on each performer to produce as many distinctive pieces as a program with only one solo performer (cf. Toepfer 1997: 207-233; Nikolaus 1922; Brandenburg 1921; Thiess 1920).

A dance program could be reconfigured, shortened, expanded, or renovated (as when different music accompanied an old dance). Consider a

Viennese program from February 1924 by the Baltic German dancer Edith von Schrenck (1891-1971), who had a Dalcrozian education in St. Petersburg. A chamber orchestra accompanied her and performed preludes at the beginning of each half. The first part consisted of "pure" dance pieces, while in the second part Schrenck performed much more pantomimic pieces.

1. Orchestral Prelude (Schubert, *Rosamunde* Overture)
2. Valse Caprice (Rubinstein)
3. Chaconne (Händel)
4. Scherzo (Bach)
5. Polonaise (Bach)
6. Mazurka (Chopin)
7. Temple Dance (Grieg)

Intermission

8. Orchestral Prelude (Bach, Sarabande)
9. Prayer (Grieg)
10. Bound (Chopin)
11. Gothic Song (Scriabin)
12. Page (Schumann)
13. Menuett (Bach)
14 Bajazzo (Schumann)

"Bound" ("Gefesselt") dated from 1919 and depicted a woman struggling to free herself from the chains that bind her. But the piece does not appear in subsequent programs performed in 1924 in Berlin, Bremen, Dortmund, and Stuttgart. "Bajazzo" appears in four out of the five programs, always as the last piece, but in Bremen Schrenck did not perform the piece at all. "Chaconne" appeared second, third, fourth, and ninth in five programs, but not at all in the Bremen performance. The "Menuett" appeared in two of the five programs, "Scherzo" in three, "Page" in two, "Mazurka" in two, "Gothic Song" in two, and "Valse Caprice" in two. Schrenck introduced new or alternative dances in the other programs. These included pieces from a "cycle" called *Vier Jahreszeiten* (*The Four Seasons*) and from a "dance poem in four parts," *Ein Menschenleben (A Human Life)*: "Childhood," "Struggle," "Aloof," "Confession." But in only one of the programs did Schrenck perform either cycle in its entirety. Other pieces: "Wellen" ("Waves") she performed in three programs, and "Marsch" ("March") in two, but "Spuk" ("Spook"), "Erde" ("Earth"), "Schmerz" ("Pain"), and "Last" ("Vice") she performed in only one program (Hübsch-Pfleger 1997: 62-66). It appears,

then, that Schrenck had thirty-five or so dances in her repertoire at any one time, and these could fit into different "slots" within a ten or twelve piece program, although she consistently reserved the more pantomimic pieces for the second half of every program. Other than this difference between dances and "dance poems," the dance programs did not follow a consistent structure or emotional architecture. Each program had its own emotional "mood," dependent probably on a variety of variables: the audience, the city, the accompanist, the stage, and the performer's own feeling toward her material. This way of thinking about the narrative organization of solo performance of scenes is close to the ancient Roman way of constructing a pantomimic narrative out of separate scenes. But whereas the Roman pantomimes employed this narrative strategy on behalf of themes and figures from mythology, the female dance modernists tended to employ the strategy in relation to themes and figures derived from history ("Page," "Gothic Song," "Bajazzo"), ethnology ("Mazurka," "Polonaise"), nature ("Winter," "Waves"), and emotional conditions ("Pain," "Bound," "Aloof").

Occasionally a program became exceptionally imaginative. In 1910, Gertrud Leistikow produced a suite of "historical" *Orchestische Tanzpiele* or "dance plays" on the theme of "women's love and life in the orient." This consisted of eight dances occurring in a "women's harem tent" and then in a temple. Leistikow danced the roles of slaves, brides, harem guards, temple worshippers, mourners, Death, and concluded with a "rapturous" nautch dance. In 1911, she produced *Adonisfeier*, a program of eight more dances connected to the celebration of Adonis, although the dances varied in mood from "lamentation" to "fury," to "blessed shadows," to a grotesque, masked faun. The success of these programs inspired her to expand (1912) the concept of the program to include *Ein byzantinischer Blumengarten*, in which the Byzantine Empress Theodora invites the women of her court to perform dances in her garden that are expressive of the diverse beauties and sorrows of the Empire—the "fiery" Armenian, the "lotus blossom" of ascetic Christian "longing for the Beyond," the "volatile" Alraune, among others. By 1912, Leistikow saw the three programs as components of a single mega-program that would unfold on three successive evenings (Leistikow 1912: 7-9). While the separate programs inspired high praise from reviewers, according to the brochure Leistikow published about the project, it is not clear how well, if at all, she was able to carry out the complete mega-program (De Boer 2015: 43-53). Even so, the ambitiousness of the concept is

stirring. On the other hand, solo programs with less than eight dances tended to appear within a larger framework, like a variety show, that might include singers, a symphony concert, a piano recital, a short opera, or a play. In other words, dancers showed little, if any, inclination to produce solo programs with fewer but longer works. A dance seldom lasted more than ten minutes, with most pieces lasting between four and six minutes, if pieces were as long as the musical works that accompanied them. Some of Anita Berber's pieces were probably longer than ten minutes, because of their rather complex narratives, which followed poetic scenarios that she and her partner, Sebastian Droste, composed in a violently expressionist style. However, a long solo dance was much more difficult to choreograph than a series of short, varied dances, especially if the dance did not tell a story or only attempted evoke a "mood" or abstract condition or phenomena, like "Autumn," or "Longing," or "Rustling Forest." Long solos undoubtedly required more pantomimic action to sustain audience interest in them, but because the dance culture tended to value the performance of beautiful movements over the performance of actions that drive narratives, dancers were perhaps reluctant to conceptualize large pieces that exposed too easily the limited range or vocabulary of acceptably "beautiful" movements for a solitary body on stage.

As solo dancers proliferated after 1913, dance programs had to be increasingly competitive to attract audiences. Displays of acrobatic virtuosity or excellent movement technique were not enough; the solo program had to reveal a distinctive aesthetic, a unique "personality." Sent M'ahesa specialized in "Egyptian" dances, even though others also did Egyptian dances and she herself did non-Egyptian dances. With the Egyptian dances, she did more than wear various Egyptian costumes: she moved within a very confined space, and her movements were angular, stressing verticality and a kind of muscularity and tensile coiling and uncoiling of her torso, and she often performed in profile. Edith von Schrenck also liked performing in a confined space, but she brought a deeply melancholy, even tragic mood to her performances, as if dance were the struggle of the body to break free of invisible pressures or constraints, as in her "Kriegertanz" (1919), with music by Rachmaninoff, in which she depicted a wounded Amazon warrior, with shield, helmet, and dagger, battling enemies who surround her. Before she became more closely aligned with pantomime production and silent film acting, the Viennese Grete

Wiesenthal (1885-1970), a student of ballet and Dalcrozian rhythmic gymnastics, specialized in performing various kinds of waltzes (cf. Brandstetter 2009). The Belgian-Swiss Charlotte Bara (1901-1986), who studied under a disciple of Isadora Duncan, concentrated on dances of an idiosyncratic religious character, a kind of personal Christianity mixed with references to Asian and Egyptian "mysteries," even though she did not use religious music or even identifiably religious costumes. "She never moved with urgency, nor did she move [...] with a plodding sense of burden. When she swung her arms, she conveyed the lilting, pendulum-like motion of a priestess dispensing incense. She moved through a sequence of obviously "pious" categories of bodily signification—prayer, invocation, supplication, meditation, imploration, annunciation, baptism, anointment, sacrificial offering, reverie, lamentation, adoration, resignation, and ascension"; "her sense of movement seemed dominated by the image of procession" (Toepfer 1997: 173-174). Far more profane were the solo dance programs of Anita Berber (1899-1928), a native of Berlin, who studied under Rita Sacchetto while briefly pursuing a career as a fashion model. Berber performed many of her solo programs in nightclubs that encouraged the exploration of lurid, sensational, and even unsavory themes (*Kokain*, *Morphine*)—a lewd *Salome*, a morbid *Astarte*. Varying degrees of nudity featured in her dances, but she was also an inventive designer of iconic costumes, such as for her "Korean Dance" (1919). Her dark subject matter inspired her to produce pantomimic actions rarely, if ever, seen before, as in *Morphine* (1921), in which, according to the Czech choreographer Joe Jencik, after injecting herself with a syringe while sitting in an armchair, "she thrust her body in an incredible arch, like a morbid rainbow." Her movements appeared broken, incomplete, as the drug-induced visions arose before her; finally the drug "stabbed" her, and she contorted into the beautiful arch again and died in the chair (Jenčík 1930: 25-27; Toepfer 1997: 85). In 1919, drawing on scenes from Louis Couperus's novel *De Berg van Licht* (1907), she performed the solo role of the transsexual Emperor Heliogabal, "Exquisite, entirely attired in gold, her metallic body lured the sun, while two Moorish boys effectively manipulated the decor. —Another image. A mask interlude during the Saturnalia, with music by Delibes. A silver mask, including a stylish headdress, was pulled back just a little to reveal the mysterious face under it. Roses, red silks and scarves, pants a la Chanteclair. It is plainly a mask ritual. Serious, very worldly, seductive, imperial, full of

daring contrasts is this dance" (*Elegante Welt,* 8/2, 1919, 5). Much more beloved were the programs of another Berliner, Niddy Impekoven (1904-2002), whose dances projected varieties of a sometimes impish, sometimes doll-like, sometimes angelic, sometimes droll, sometimes exuberant, and sometimes quaint girlish innocence and fragility. "It appeared as if she moved in a hostile, treacherous space in which the slightest false gesture could lead to a mishap, a fall, a desecration [...] no amount of space or freedom could protect the body from its fragility" (Toepfer 1997: 185-186). She performed this innocence in a wide range of costumes derived from different historical eras or from her own fertile sense of fantasy. Her dances from 1918 into the late 1920s told little stories, such as "the life of a flower" or "the imprisoned bird" or the dream of a doll—vignettes, shifting glimpses of a fragile girlish pleasure in trying out new identities (cf. Frentz 1930). But perhaps the most pantomimic of all the solo dancers was the German Grit Hegesa (1891-1972), who, in the years 1917 to 1924, delighted in revealing various "Asian" identities within herself; she conjured up scenes of herself as a Javanese, a Japanese, a Chinese, and a Hindu. Such scenes allowed her to cultivate her taste for luxurious or expressionistic costumes, but she often danced in pants and sometimes impersonated male figures, such as a page, a samurai, a Javanese prince, and Pierrot. She had a taste for melodramatic scenes in which her character, betrayed or bereft of love, dies—kissing, for example, poisoned flower petals—in an atmosphere of opulence. She was unique among solo dancers in using music composed especially for her by the Dutch composer Jaap Kool (1891-1959). The music that Kool composed for her cut across musical genres, for in addition to ambitious symphonic works, he wrote commercial pop tunes, jazz pieces, cabaret arrangements, and experimental "sound works" that employed non-Western instruments and musical values. For Hegesa, he composed works using only gongs or gamelans or glass chimes; other pieces were jazzy or suavely urbane, such as the *Hegesa Tango* (1922), the lilting melody of which derives from the letters of her last name. Yet other pieces were somberly modernist or at any rate supportive of the "tragic" mood Hegesa sought to create (*Wendingen* 1919 2/3: 15–21). The music rose directly out of the scene and the movements of the performer, presumably freeing the performer to make abrupt adjustments in movement or even the tone of a scene. Though she evidently trained in ballet and made use of some ballet positions, her programs received skeptical responses from German dance

critics, who saw too much pantomime in her work, while modernist artists and commentators saw her as emblematic of an exciting new performance scene. Her dance career unfolded at the same time as she pursued a successful career (1917-1922) as an actress in the German film industry, so her performance aesthetic probably appealed much more strongly to audiences who grew up closer to cinematic rather than to ballet or dance entertainments [Figure 82].



Figure 82: Grit Hegesa in 1920, adopting a quasi-Pierrot look with modernist background and intoxicated pose. Photo: Ani Riess.

Much more can be said about the manifold distinctions between solo dance programs and their numerous performers. The point here is simply to indicate the diversity of aesthetic zones available to the women who adopted, as a sign of their modernity, a narrative architecture that closely

resembled the Roman pantomime narrative format. The solo dance program reached the height of its popularity probably around 1923, and then it began to decline precipitously. Competition between so many solo dancers escalated audience expectations; it became harder and harder for dancers to think about movement in ways that were sufficiently innovative or bold to attract audiences seeking some sort of guidance from the arts about how to construct modern identities. Modern dancers sought a more institutionalized environment for their art. Either they wanted positions within official, state, or commercial theaters or they discovered that they could make more money by running schools than by endlessly touring. Solo dance seemed limited in its power to connect the body to larger social themes or to an image of society. The establishment of numerous dance schools in the early 1920s allowed many dancers with choreographic ambitions to build performance ensembles and create choreographed pieces that explored group dynamics and relations between bodies. By 1925, European audiences as a whole had become much more preoccupied than those of the pre-war era with understanding conditions of social unity, disintegration, reformation, and transformation. The concept of a "modern" identity required integration with the concept of a modern society. Solo dance performance could have claimed some territory in this new cultural discourse if it had incorporated a larger range of social identities and social sources of movements. If instead of a constant presentation of mysterious "foreign" or fantasy identities, solo dancers found within themselves the identities or socially observed movements of, say, shopkeepers, mechanics, professors, athletes, scientists, military officers, mothers, office workers, or government officials, then the solo dance program might well have continued to thrive. Indeed, the Germans Valeska Gert (1892-1978) and Julia Marcus (1905-?) did produce (only) comic or satiric solo dances of this type, but they tended to embed their pieces within a cabaret or variety show format. To access, especially in a "serious" way, these other, social identities within themselves, dancers would have to perform movements they believed transgressed the beautiful image of the modern dancer that only movements considered "dance" could create: they would have to perform more pantomimic actions rather than the increasingly abstract and geometric movements that prevailed in group choreography by the late 1920s. But this way of thinking was simply too radical even for the incredibly exciting dance culture of the turbulent Weimar Republic. By

1930, solo dance programs were practically extinct. Niddy Impekoven remained immensely popular, especially after a hugely successful 1928 world tour. With the rise of Nazism, however, she lost interest in performing and in 1934, now very wealthy, she retired to Switzerland for the rest of her long, quiet life. The Estonian Ella Ilbak (1895-1997), who gave her first solo program in Tartu in 1918, continued performing solo programs throughout Europe and even in the Middle East until 1939. Her programs always consisted of eleven or twelve pieces, with her most famous work being *The Flame* (1924), in which, accompanied by Wagner's *Magic Fire Music*, she simulated the sparking, flickering, blazing, and dying out of an ecstatic flame without ever rising from a kneeling position. But other identities in her repertoire included an *Odalisque* (1924), a *Page* (1924), a *Witch* (1924), a Muslim woman (1923), and a sword dancer (1923), although by 1929 her dance style had become less pantomimic or "sculptural," as one reviewer described it, and more a kinetic response or "submission" (as Duncan or Impekoven might say) to different pieces of music: *Valse, Capriccio, Gavotte, Dolce con grazia, Caresse dansée*, and so forth (Ilbak Archive 2018). Yet pieces from the earliest part of her career remained in her programs until 1939, suggesting the remarkable tenacity of particular images of female aloneness on stage to survive social upheavals, historical shifts, and cultural boundaries. But Ilbak was utterly alone in clinging to this Roman-modernist narrative aesthetic. Audiences and performers had long since given up on the solo dance program as a stirring format for exploring the "other" identities within the body. With the collapse of the solo dance program, modernist pantomime separated itself from modern dance and in doing so drifted away from the Roman idea of bodily movement as the "metamorphosis" of a body from one identity to another.

Silent Film Pantomime

Motion picture technology allowed pantomime to operate in a medium other than theater, largely because motion picture technology until the late 1920s lacked the capacity to imprint sound to the image. Actors, screenwriters, and directors could not rely on voices to tell cinematic stories; actors therefore had to develop pantomimic actions to communicate emotions or to define the characters they played. In adapting to the new technology, pantomime became less dependent on the qualities that had defined and shaped it in the theater, and as a result, it acquired a

modernist aspect defined by the new technology, although, as has been remarked earlier, pantomime actually anticipated the silent cinema, such as in the melodramatic scenarios of Audinot and Cuvelier and in the ancient Roman pantomime, where the *interpellator* functioned in a manner similar to the use of intertitles in silent films. While many actors with theatrical backgrounds developed careers in silent films, pantomimic actors from the theater hardly ever ventured into the new medium, and those who did were most likely as much dancers as pantomimes: Grete Wiesenthal, Grit Hegesa, Anita Berber, Rita Sacchetto, Leni Riefenstahl, Anna Pavlova, Stacia Napierkowska, Charlotte Wiehé, Georges Wague, Séverin. It was therefore largely performers without a background in pantomime as it had evolved in the theater who shaped pantomimic styles of acting in silent film, and many performers did not even have a background in theater. Moreover, it was not only the actors who shaped cinematic pantomimic performance. Film is an image medium, not a contrived reality. As such, pantomimic performance on film unfolded as a close relationship between the performing body and camera placement, photographic lighting, editing, and varieties of scenic environment, with many pantomimic scenes taking place in natural or "real" spaces or in specifically designed studio sets that were impossible to reproduce in a theater.

Silent films required pantomimic forms of signification that accommodated the spectator's peculiar relation to the screen image. This relation evolved rapidly as actors and film directors quickly introduced visual devices for intensifying the spectator's engagement with the image. In *Eloquent Gestures* (1992), Roberta Pearson described this evolution in terms of a tension between "histrionic" and "verisimilar" codes of pantomimic signification. Up until 1911-1913, she contends, a histrionic code dominated silent film acting, after which the verisimilar code prevailed. She bases her argument on the evidence of acting in Biograph short films directed between 1908 and 1912 by D.W. Griffith (1875-1948), who spent several years in theatrical touring companies before entering the film production business. The histrionic code refers to a self-consciously theatrical system of gestures, movement conventions, and physical expressions so that the pleasure of theatrical performance resulted from watching performers "ostentatiously playing a role rather than pretending to be another person" (Pearson 1992: 21). To signify a particular emotion, like anger, required the actor to apply the corresponding or "correct"

gesture, such as clenched fists and trembling arms and torso. In applying the histrionic code, the actor adhered to a kind of dictionary of gestures—to which Pearson assigns authorship to Delsarte—to be consulted in relation to the particular emotions the character needed to communicate at a particular moment in the performance. The verisimilar code refers to gestures that are similar to what the character would perform in "reality" as it is understood by the audience or society. Gestures in the verisimilar code are unique to the character, not to the emotion signified. Different characters may signify anger differently, and even the same character may signify anger differently: heavy breathing or a fist slammed against a surface or a violent stare or a lunging at the source of anger. Verisimilar acting entails the accumulation of gestural details that are peculiar to the character constructed by the actor rather than to any discrete set of emotions, and often these details produce ambiguity rather than clarity about the emotions signified (28-32). Pearson associates the histrionic code with "non-psychological" narratives in which the story requires characters to act in prescribed ways for the story to be satisfying; the verisimilar code she associates with "psychological" narratives in which the characters motivate the story and cause things to happen (54). The histrionic code, she contends, finds its strongest application in stage melodrama, while the verisimilar code operates most emphatically in naturalistic performances meant to dissolve distinctions between life and representation. Pearson's explanation of a fundamental shift in pantomimic performance in the early years of silent film is accurate and persuasive. Svend Christiansen introduced similar observations in *Klassisk skuespillkunst* (1975) regarding the presence of old acting conventions in early Danish silent films from 1910-1911 (341-354). However, in the Danish films he saw in what Pearson calls the verisimilar code in the Biograph films remnants of a histrionic code that was much larger and more complex than the histrionic code Pearson associates with the late nineteenth century melodrama. The verisimilar code from his perspective was not an invention of cinema and even long preceded the advent of the melodrama; one might assign it to the "restrained" and subtly detailed performances of pantomimes like Deburau and Séverin, and, indeed, by the 1880s, the theater of realism and naturalism, adopting the verisimilar code, was in ascent and melodrama in the histrionic mode in steep decline. The "shift" around 1912 from the histrionic to the verisimilar code in film was not altogether decisive:

histrionic elements remained in much film acting well into the 1920s, and verisimilar elements appear in conjunction with histrionic elements well before 1908. Georges Méliès's *L'affaire Dreyfus* (1899), though it frames each scene as if the camera is watching a play, contains pantomimic actions performed with a kind of documentary accuracy of detail that is remote from the histrionic mode of performance that otherwise prevails entirely within this director's work. The actors in Edwin S. Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* (1903), shot largely outdoors, perform almost completely in the verisimilar code. Attitudes toward theater defined the tension between histrionic and verisimilar codes in cinema. As long as audiences expected theater to create its own reality independent of the world outside of the theater, then the histrionic code prevailed and audiences evaluated the performances of actors according to how well they mastered the code the society had assigned for the communication of emotions so that the audience would not confuse the emotions of the character with those of the actor. Thus: "Audiences and critics condemned as inadequate those who did not demonstrably act: the pleasure derived not from participating in an illusion but from witnessing a virtuoso performance" (Pearson 1992: 21). In effect, the histrionic code prevents actors from intensifying the emotions of the *audience*, because the purpose of the performance is to stimulate approval of the code, not to stimulate in the spectator the emotions felt by any character or any emotions that arise within the spectator as a result of comparing the simulation of emotion on stage with the signification or experience of that emotion "in reality." The prevalence of the histrionic code in early silent cinema was most likely due to the unwillingness of filmmakers to present scenes of simulated actions that audiences might confuse with photographed, documentary depictions of "real life." Such confusion might lead to destabilizing "misunderstandings" about "real life" itself that could precipitate social disorder. For this reason, in France, the government banned the showing of *L'affaire Dreyfus*, and in 1910, the Danish film *Afgrunden*, with its unprecedentedly naturalistic acting, particularly in a sadomasochistic dance scene, faced censorship problems in several countries, including the United States. But by 1911, it was obvious that audiences much preferred to compare acting to "reality" than to a an insular, self-contained semiotic system designed to clarify emotions that "in reality" could be confused with other emotions.

The histrionic code derived from a system of bodily signification formulated in the pre-cinema theater culture of the mid-nineteenth century, which applied the system most overtly in the performance of melodrama and well before Delsarte's disciples had transmitted his teachings through numerous publications in the latter half of the century. The relation between Delsarte's system and the histrionic code is muddled. Delsarte intended to develop in students the confidence to present themselves to audiences, to address audiences; theatrical acting as such, the pretending to be another identity, was never a goal of his pedagogy. But many persons who became silent film actors studied Delsartean techniques to develop the expressive powers of their bodies. As a result, the temptation may arise to believe that the "technique" of silent film acting is congruent with Delsartean techniques for signifying emotions. Hilary Hart, for example, has examined scenes in Griffith films from 1915, 1919, and 1921 in which the actress Lillian Gish (1893-1992) applies gestures and facial expressions that Hart says copy gestural exercises found in Delsartean manuals: Genevieve Stebbins, *Delsarte System of Expression* (1892) and Marion Lowell, *Harmonic Gymnastics and Pantomimic Expression* (1895). Griffith, according to Suzanne Shelton, required his actresses to attend to attend lessons given by the Denishawn School, founded in 1915 in Hollywood by Ruth St. Denis and her partner Ted Shawn, and where many actresses developed movement skills that supposedly enabled them to "create a language of silent film gesture based solidly on Delsarte" (Shelton 1990: 137). In *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), Gish plays Elsie, a virginal white woman, who is the object of obsession by a mulatto politician, Silas Lynch, played by George Siegmann (1882-1928). Frustrated by Elsie's refusal to accept his proposals, Lynch attacks her. "To express the extremity of the situation Gish draws upon the more emphatic Delsartean performance signs. [...] Gish has tilted her head back and rolled her eyes skyward with the whites showing beneath the iris. Her mouth is open and gagged and her face is largely slack beneath the eyes." These significations closely resemble the instruction in Lowell, "the "head thrown back" expresses the mind "in a passional prostration or despair," and the assertion in Stebbins that "the head thrown back midway between the shoulders" signifies "exaltation, explosion from self as a centre, a lifting to the universal" (Hart 2005: 190; Lowell 1895: 71; Stebbins 1892: 133). Hart sees Gish performing variations on this "head thrown back" gesture in *Broken Blossoms* (1919) and *Orphans of*

the Storm (1921) (191-193). However, the Delsartean manuals do not say that, to signify horror at a sexual assault, the actress should throw the head back and raise the eyes; they simply say that when performing this gesture, people will likely read it as an expression of despair (Lowell) that can also be confused with exaltation (Stebbins). The manuals exist to make students aware of how people are likely to ascribe emotional values to particular gestures. How else or better could an actress signify that the character "has ceased fighting and certainly appears to have abandoned herself to her fate" than through the head thrown back and the body plunging into a kind of deathly passivity? Well, perhaps she could slump her body downward and hang her head heavily so that she appears as a dull, cumbersome weight in the arms of her attacker. But is this a better or more dramatic choice? In other words, the Delsartean manuals may include significations derived as much from observations of "real life" as from a histrionic code unique to the theater or performance for an audience.

Gestures are histrionic because of their intensity, their bigness, and their evident simplicity. Perhaps the most obvious type of histrionic signification is pointing and various types of arm waving, arm folding, arm raising, and arm sweeping: actors, especially on stage, have to make more efficient and expressive use of their arms than people in "real life" if they are to avoid appearing uninteresting. The histrionic code is largely about translating ideas or words into arm and hand signals. "Please, come into my house" may be translated as: hands pressed together ("Please"), a beckoning wave of the left hand toward the respondent ("come"), followed by the right hand placed on the chest ("my"), then a broad sweep of the left arm backwards to indicate a place behind the gesturer ("house"). Much of pantomime in early cinema consists of this kind of gestural signification. The signification of "big" emotions like rage, despair, and joy often involves an exaggerated pressing of the arms and hands into the body to produce a convulsed or upwelling movement of the whole body. These significations are effective when 1) the camera sees the performer's whole body as if seeing it on a theater stage and without any closer view of it; 2) the film story is no more than ten or twelve minutes long and cannot depend on intertitles to explain any character motivation, as in early Biograph shorts, although one finds examples of the style in a rare long film, Ferdinand Zecca's *La vie et la passion de Jesus* (1903); 3) the production time for producing the film is very short (no more than a few days) and actors and

directors do not have the time to develop "detailed" physical significations of character; 4) filmmakers cannot rely on actors from the theater to perform in films, because many theater actors prior to 1908 doubt the "legitimacy" of film for their talents, and so filmmakers recruit actors who can be quickly taught "the code" that allows them to perform various brief scenes before the camera. But even by 1908, acting in the cinema was not consistently histrionic, for many scenes showed people communicating verbally, and the actors actually spoke the conversation, even though the audience never heard their words: the actors mimed conversing rather than translated the words they spoke into physical gestures (cf. Griffith's *The Romance of a Jewess* [1908]). The histrionic code in early cinema is closer to dance than to conventional stage acting of the time, a choreographed artificiality of signification that prevails in the many fantasy and trick photography films dominating the production of fictional stories up to 1908 especially in France, in the films of Georges Méliès (1861-1938), Ferdinand Zecca (1864-1947), and Albert Capellani (1874-1931) (cf. the delightful mixing of histrionic and dance movement in Capellani's *La légende de Polichinelle* [1907]) and continuing grandiosely in Italian historical spectacles like Luigi Magi's *Nero* (1909) and, most peculiarly, Giuseppe de Liguoro's *L'Inferno* (1911), an adaptation of Dante's poem (1317), in which a large number of actors consistently signify in an extravagantly histrionic manner that seems quite remote from Delsartean semiotics and more aligned with a self-conscious effort to produce a "medieval" idea of a dignified nobleman surveying bodies living in eternal torment. As filmmakers moved toward fictional stories set in contemporary times, the histrionic code became more subdued or "economical," due perhaps more to the influence of directors seeking a documentary-like illusion to their storytelling than to the desire of actors to observe actions as they are performed in "real life." The director Allan Dwan (1885-1981), who worked under Griffith, explained: "What fascinated me about Griffith? Well, I think his lack of long gesture, his simplicity, and his use of facial expression. He developed a strange new pantomime. I like pantomime anyway, but I don't like extreme pantomime. [...] Other actors exaggerated to make up for not having words. His players used short little gestures to get over their point—they were much more realistic. And I saw Griffith was expressing vividly a lot of things with very little effort" (Brownlow 1968: 98).

Griffith abandoned the convention of filming the action as if one were seeing it performed on a stage. He brought the camera closer to the actors, so that the actors had to communicate entirely with their faces or upper bodies. Movements had to be small and subtle, not only to fit within the image frame, but to "match" each other when shot from different distances and angles and then edited together. Large or violent gestures had to be performed in relation to a guiding idea of dramatic effect built out of the contrast between small or "detailed" gestures and big, disruptive gestures (strong emotions) that challenged the capacity of the camera to frame them and thus moved the narrative in a different direction. Pantomimic performance included more than the actor's performance; it also included how the camera saw the performer and the interaction between various views of the performer (long shot, mid-shot, close up). As the camera came closer to the performer, the performance became more "intimate," and as the performance became more intimate, it strengthened the spectator's engagement with the image. This technological organization of performance made Delsarte's system an inadequate basis for a "technique" of silent film acting. Delsartean pedagogy always stresses gestures, not actions; it isolates significations of emotions from each other; it does not deal with the handling of props or the performance of tasks; it detaches the body and gesture from any scenic context or specific dramatic situation; it ascribes no significance to physiognomy, class, or personal circumstances in the "correct" performance of gestures; and it achieved perfection through a set of exercises structured in relation to received ideas about how emotions look when performed rather than in relation to any empirical evidence of how people actually signified their feelings or how they respond to images of actors signifying emotions. But the Delsarte system was eminently teachable, and anyone could learn it easily with diligent practice. However, what was useful for teachers and schools was not especially helpful in understanding the aesthetics of motion picture pantomime.

Nevertheless, the idea of a unique technique for silent film acting persisted. In 1901, Charles Aubert (1851-?), a writer and performer of pantomimes in Paris, published *L'Art mimique*, which applied Delsartean techniques specifically to the learning of "the art of pantomime" and "dramatic movements" of the body. In her introduction to the 1927 English translation, Sybil Baker, Director of the Community Center for Public

Schools in the District of Columbia, remarks that, "The moving picture screen may gain much from this treatise with its lavish and illuminating diagrams" (Aubert 1927: x). Aubert did not focus on how to signify particular emotions; rather, he showed how a person may use the body and face to translate specific words or perceptions into gestures and expressions. He discussed gestures in relation to conditions, phrases, verbs ("the life and wealth of pantomime"), adjectives, and sequenced significations: "For the final word, then, let the spectacle of a pantomime be a series of moving pictures which each gesture changes every moment, but not incessantly, for they must contain short moments of immobility when they *hold the pose*" (201). Aubert used 200 facial and body diagrams to illustrate the relation between words or conditions and movements. Under each illustration he described variations that extended the possible meanings of a template positioning of the body. For example, under Figure 33, "To bend the body, assists the expression of:

Timidity.	Dissimulation.
Hypocrisy.	Physical suffering.
Premeditation.	Humility.
Old age.	Remorse.
Self-distrust.	Terror.
Shame.	Apprehension.

The abdomen drawn in intensifies the expressions signified by the bowed body" (46) [Figure 83]. Aubert's book was like a dictionary of facial and bodily movements for performing Parisian pantomime in the 1890s. "To sit, legs apart, chest forward and elbows resting on your knees, gives the picture of a rough person without education" (27). But by 1927, the book was probably more useful to people involved with community theaters than to those seeking to decipher the mysteries of motion picture pantomime. Like Delsarte, Aubert sought to construct a system of bodily signification that integrated speechless performance within a nineteenth century notion of social order, in which the display of emotions had its "correct" place within a larger ideology of self-improvement, whereby a person would perform successfully by following instructions and copying templates. But in 1922, a German actor, Oskar Diehl, published a book on *Mimik im Film* that resembled Aubert's approach with far fewer illustrations and somewhat more complex exercises. Like Aubert, he did not describe or analyze any performances he had seen in film or on the stage. Motion picture

pantomime, however, undermined the whole idea of a system of bodily signification. This freedom from system, which begins with Pearson's verisimilar code, is what made pantomime in the movies modern.

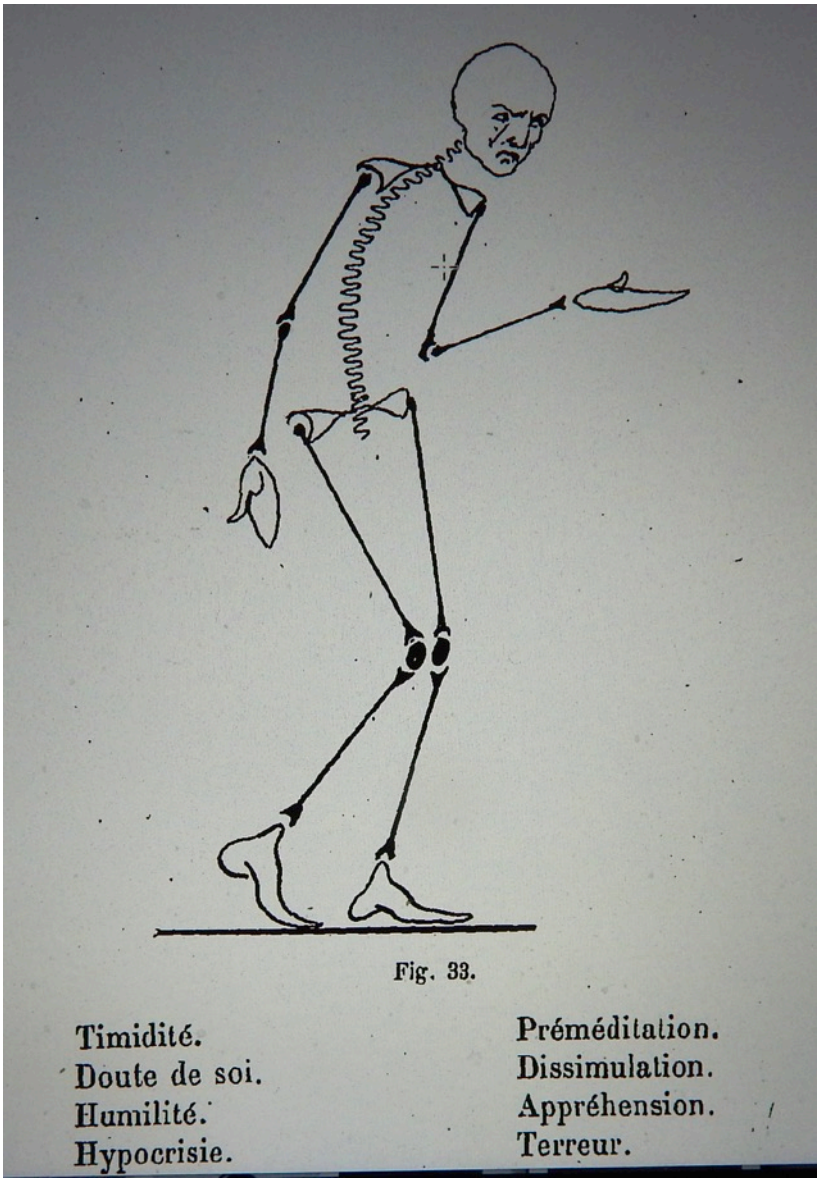


Figure 83: Illustration from Charles Aubert, *L'Art mimique* (1901) showing a gesture that may signify Timidity, Dissimulation, Hypocrisy, Physical suffering, Premeditation, Humility, Old age, Remorse, Self-distrust, Terror, Shame, or Apprehension. From Aubert (1901: 46).

The concept of a technique or system for motion picture pantomime was completely absent from one of the earliest books on the subject, *Motion Picture Acting* (1913), by Frances Agnew (1891-1967), herself an actress and screenwriter. The young author instead identified "qualities" requisite for success as a film actor. These include above all: good health (stamina), appearance, determination and ambition, and a photogenic "personality" (Agnew 1913: 29-33). For the good health that actors need to shoot films daily throughout the year, she recommends a disciplined regime of physical exercise, supplemented with breathing exercises. "Physical self-control paves the way for the assertion of [a dormant] personality" (37). Unlike Delsarte, Agnew never refers to any gestural system for signifying emotions, characters, or ideas. Instead, she suggests what none of the Delsarteans or Aubert ever considered: a person wanting to learn motion picture pantomime should imagine a little story and try to perform all the characters in the story, perhaps the most astute advice yet given following the proliferation of exercise-ridden manuals of Delsartean semiotics (41). She also claims that, "The school of observation is among the best one can attend," by which she means that one should watch often and carefully the performance of actors on the screen. The student actor should try to perform what the actor on the screen has done without copying it, "for in imitation one loses individual touches and personality" (43). The key to success on the screen is the revelation of a unique "personality," a distinctive way of moving and signifying. For Agnew, personality and physical appearance are closely linked, although physical appearance was by no means synonymous with beauty or gracefulness: it was, rather, a "neat, magnetic presence," an awareness of how to display oneself to advantage regardless of physiognomy—one of her examples is the corpulent comic actor John Bunny (1863-1915). In addition, persons seeking to become film actors should familiarize themselves with the film industry: agents, working conditions, salaries, and people who manage film companies. Instead of template images of generic figures performing movements or expressions, Agnew inserted photos of actors, including herself, in studio poses or in scenes from films. Her book avoids altogether the moralizing that pervades the Delsartean treatises, because for her, the study of film acting is not about finding one's place within society; it is about living a life that is separate from the life lived by the rest of society. The film actor Arthur Johnson (1876-1916) espoused a similar view: "Conventional

pantomime was first attempted, but it soon gave way to a less artificial style of acting. To-day we aim to make our efforts as nearly approximate [to] real life as we can using few conventional gestures and absolutely none of the old pantomimic modes of expression" (Lusk 1914: 44).

Filmen dens midler og maal (1919), by the Danish film director Urban Gad (1879-1947), discussed motion picture pantomime from the perspective of a film director. Gad began his film career directing the famous Danish film *Afgrunden* (1910) and a couple of other melodramas in Denmark, but he shot most of his many productions in Germany (1911-1922), including nearly thirty starring his much more famous wife, Asta Nielsen (1881-1972). His book covers the entire process of film production, distribution, and exhibition. In the section on film acting, he, like Agnew, concentrates on qualities of an actor that are unique to performance on the screen. The physical appearance of the actor is decisive in the casting of roles for a film, because the "film apparatus" cannot disguise discrepancies of age and physiognomy between character and actor as the theater can. The director evaluates physical appearances in relation to "types" of characters in stories. However, in regard to the actor's performance of a character, Gad expresses skepticism toward schools and even theatrical training, for film acting is effective, not because of the application of a technique, but because of a keen understanding of the medium (Gad 1919: 151). "A widespread but totally erroneous belief is that the film requires large movements, vivid gestures [and] the use of big movements from the old-fashioned pantomime technique." Film creates an intensely "intimate" art that requires actors to signify with greater restraint than occurs in the theater without succumbing to "bland immobility." Because the tempo of films is faster than in the theater, gestures must be swifter and subtler, and actors must be aware of the signifying power of fingers, eyebrows, lips, and head turns. In conversational scenes, actors must indicate how they listen while another character speaks, even though the audience cannot hear the words, and the ineffectiveness of actors in performing as listeners is apparently a persistent problem for directors. Because film production entails different "takes" of brief scenes, actors and directors can correct mistakes and shape scenes with greater freshness than occurs in the theater, where constant rehearsal and repetition of scenes tends to "lengthen" gestures and produce a more artificial atmosphere. Otherwise, "it is of course impossible to give any general advice on acting," for film does not require any special

technique of pantomimic performance (160). What is important is that the actor, "feel the situation personally. Is he able to empathize with the character and the action in the given moment he performs? Does he glow and rejoice like it was nobody but himself?" The actor must signify "so strongly and personally [...] that he or she must feel as if it were one's own child who was dying, as if it were one's own beloved, which was lost, as if it were one's own future, which was ruined" (155). In other words, the director does not look for the actor to apply a codified signifying practice to the performance of a character; he wants to see gestural choices that are unique to the actor yet persuasive qualities of the character. So: along with Agnew, he implies that motion picture pantomime develops, not in relation to a unified or "universal" mode of signification, but in relation to increasingly individual or "personalized" disclosures of feeling achieved through the convergence of physiognomy, "intimate" awareness of the camera, and an acute sense of the moment of performance (the "take") rather than its repetition.

Two years later, a British book appeared, *How to Become a Film Artiste: The Art of Photoplay Acting* (1921), by Fred Dangerfield, editor of a film magazine, and Norman Howard, a film actor. Like Gad, Dangerfield and Howard present an overview of the film production process, although their description is much less detailed, comprehensive, and thoughtful than Gad's. The authors devote only a few pages to film acting, and, as expected by now, they discuss qualities rather than performance techniques of the actor, offering common sense but hardly insightful remarks: The actor "must possess a vivid imagination [... and] be a master of deportment, a good dancer, be able to swim, dive, ride, fence, box, motor, and do practically everything that comes to his hand." "A pair of dark eyes, full of meaning and expression, are absolutely invaluable. [...] The eyes are everything" and the key to "personality," which "counts more in moving picture work than on the stage" (Dangerfield 1921: 33-34). Film acting is an art of "restrained pantomime" requiring exceptional "thought-concentration." Contradicting Gad, the authors claim, "The action should never be hurried. [...] You must act more slowly in film drama, because the camera absorbs action [...] Your deportment, or the way you move about, must be perfectly easy and natural, free from jerks and ungainly strides" (39-40). While the actor must be able to "depict" a very wide range emotions, the "depicting of the fine shades of expression is extremely

difficult" (43). The authors, however, provide no suggestion about how to "depict" any emotion, nor do they describe how any actor performed a particular emotion on the screen. Perhaps the most interesting section of the book is a collection of statements by film actors and producers from different countries; they present delightful anecdotes about the peculiarities of being a film actor without offering any explanations about film acting as a signifying practice. Motion picture pantomime thus appears as a mysterious, amorphous phenomenon, governed by nebulous concepts like "personality" and seriousness of purpose, without any system, without any network of devices that can be taught, for the system the actor must learn is the system of motion picture production, the mode of industrial production.

In the new Soviet Union, however, the idea of a system for film acting retained some appeal during the era of Constructivism (1921-1929). Beginning in 1922, the theater director Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874-1940) developed a system of "biomechanics" for creating a non-realistic performance aesthetic opposed to the psychological realism that prevailed at the Moscow Art Theater under the direction of Konstantin Stanislavski (1863-1938), who, from 1909, had developed his own system of acting, whereby an actor "became" a character by living "as if" he experienced life as his character experienced it. Biomechanics was a system of physical training that treated the body as if it were a machine from which a director could "engineer" an elaborately athletic performance that was neither danced nor infected with "bourgeois" habits of "natural," stifled movement. It was not a semiotic system in which particular movements signified particular emotions or "attitudes." Rather, it revealed the body as a "construction" of mechanical parts that a director could juxtapose or set in counterpoint to the spoken language of a text and thus create a modernistic, "scientific," and "industrial" form of performance for a wide range of plays. Consisting entirely of exercises ("etudes"), biomechanics was not an end in itself and therefore not a form of pantomime. It aided actors in the construction of stunts and the acrobatic speaking of texts, but, unlike dance or pantomime, it was incapable of sustaining audience interest on its own, even with musical accompaniment, although Meyerhold did film a few exercises (cf. Thomas 2013; Meyerhold 2008).

But the idea of the body as a machine whose parts could be assembled or engineered to produce a performance appealed to Soviet

filmmakers of the 1920s. In accordance with Communist ideology, Soviet filmmakers advocated a "revolutionary" form of cinematic narrative that told the stories of categories, classes, or "types" of people in contrast to the capitalist or bourgeois cinema, with its focus on stories of highly individualized characters or "personalities," epitomized by an industrial cultivation of "star" performers (Pudovkin 1960: 265-268; Eisenstein 1957a: 198-203). In the revolutionary narrative, classes or types of people are in conflict with each other, and an actor plays a character representing an entire class of people, such as the proletarian son, or the ruling class official or the capitalist entrepreneur. To construct the "dialectical" conflict between classes and the characters who represent the classes, filmmakers adopted a "montage" principle for staging action, image composition, and the organization of relations between images. The director Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1948) defined montage as the rhythmic juxtaposition of separate images or "representations" to construct a "complete image" of a theme (Eisenstein 1957b: 69). In *Mother* (1926), for example, the director, Vsevolod Pudovkin (1893-1953), juxtaposes images of river ice breaking up with images of prisoners rioting to construct the perception that the insurrection arises from natural conditions and is synonymous with an upheaval in nature. The director Lev Kuleshov (1899-1970) demonstrated the theory around 1920 when he presented the so-called "Kuleshov effect," whereby he juxtaposed the same image of the film actor Ivan Mosjoukine with the images of a bowl of soup, a woman lying in a coffin, and child playing with a teddy bear, and the audience believed that the actor had changed his expression in response to each image (Sargeant 2000: 6-11). In relation to film acting, montage primarily meant the dialectical editing of manifold shots of the actor to create the perception of a larger point of view or ideological perspective shaping the character's actions. Camera angle, image composition, camera distance, costume, physiognomy, and scenic details, when emphasized by the rapid editing of shots, theoretically carried more emotional weight than any sequencing of gestures by the actor. In effect, the performance of the character owed more to the director and the editor than to the actor. This way of thinking about film acting required only modest pantomimic skill, because all shots were very brief, and actors were largely biomechanical components of a cinematic machinery supposedly controlled more by "history" than even by the director, who was simply the agent through which history transmitted the dialectical tensions

that defined it. With the montage approach, directors like Eisenstein and Pudovkin greatly expanded the range of "types" represented on the screen and were able to present many more scenes involving large numbers of people than tended to occur in the capitalist cinema focused on unique personalities. "Imitating, pretending, playing are unprofitable, since this comes out very poorly on the screen" (Kuleshov 1974: 63; Yampolsky 1996). "The film image of the actor is composed from dozens and hundreds of separate, disintegrated pieces in such a way that sometimes he works at the beginning on something that will later form a part at the end. The film actor is deprived of a consciousness of the uninterrupted development of the action, in his work" (Pudovkin 1960: 137).

But not all subscribers to the montage theory regarded the actor as simply a mechanical component inserted into "single, unifying image that is determined by its component parts" (Eisenstein 1957b: 69). In 1921, in Petrograd, a group of film and theater artists formed a group called the Factory of the Eccentric Actor (FEKS), which published a wild but little read manifesto the following year (Cavendish 2013: 203-205). The work of several authors, the manifesto emulated the loud, telegraphic, violent typography of Futurist proclamations that were a chaotic montage of screaming headlines and frenzied assertions, for:

> **Life Requires Art That Is**
> **HYPERBOLICALLY CRUDE, STUPENDOUS, NERVE-WRACKING OPENLY UTLITARIAN, MECHANICALLY-PRECISE MOMENTARY, RAPID.**
> Otherwise no one will hear, no one will see, no will stop (*Eccentric Manifesto* 1992: 3).

The FEKS group, guided by the directors Grigori Kozintsev (1905-1973) and Leonid Trauberg (1902-1990), sought to create a new kind of intermedial theater that integrated "devices" from music hall, film, circus, cabaret, sporting events, poster art, parades, fairgrounds, and amusement parks into a "synthesis of movements: acrobatic, gymnastic, balletic, bio-mechanic" (*Eccentric Manifesto* 1992: 5). After applying these devices to the production of plays by Gogol and Shakespeare, FEKS transformed into a film studio and school and began producing films, mostly comedies, including, among

others, *The Devil's Wheel* (1926), *The Overcoat* (1926), and *The New Babylon* (1929), all directed by Kozinstev and Trauberg. The FEKS studio developed a pantomimic style of film acting that emphasized the performance of "gags," devices of signification, "eccentric" gesturing, idiosyncratic bits of movement, and peculiar facial expressions. The actor had to learn how to perform these devices in relation to a particular character and in relation to the unique style the director and designers had constructed for the production as a whole, for the devices and the style—"the acclimatization of gags"—that compiled them functioned, to use the term introduced by the literary theorist, screenwriter, and FEKS enthusiast Viktor Shklovsky (1893-1984), to "estrange" the spectator from the norms of signification that prevailed in highly institutionalized performances. FEKS films required sophisticated actors, in contrast to the films of Pudovkin and Eisenstein, even though Kozinstev and Trauberg shared their conviction that advanced cinematic art entailed montage and innovative image composition. The "eccentric" pantomime style is evident in the extant films that Kozinstev and Trauberg directed, perhaps most obviously in *The Overcoat* (1926), an adaptation of Nikolai Gogol's (1809-1852) story from 1842, with a screenplay by the formalist literary scholar Yuri Tynyanov (1894-1943). The story tells of a humble middle-aged civil servant who invests his savings in the purchase of a magnificent overcoat that engulfs him with warmth when he wears it. But when a gang of thieves steals the coat from him and his efforts to recover it fail, he returns to his dismal little apartment and dies. The civil servant encounters many characters, and each actor infuses each character with "eccentric" mannerisms, strange gestural inflections in a walk, a glance, a turn of the head, a lift of the head, a movement of the hand, a sitting posture, or a buttoning of a coat. The actors do not exaggerate their gestures; they make them visible, like an accent. Many of these subtle gestures become visible because of an "accentuation" applied also to costumes, props, lighting, and the powerful, expressionistic cinematography by Andrei Moskvin (1901-1961) (Cavendish 2013: 212-216) [Figure 84]. Andrei Kostrichkin (1901-1973), the actor who played the civil servant, was, amazingly, only twenty-five years old. *The Overcoat* is a dark film, not really a comedy, and only occasionally grotesque, for a tone of pathos, even foreboding, pervades the entire film. It is said that the film was not a success with audiences (Youngblood 1991: 97). As usual in relation to FEKS productions, representatives of Soviet cultural policy criticized the film for

its “formalism” and inadequate construction of a “modern” perspective on the material. With Kozinstev and Trauberg’s *The New Babylon* (1929), a drama set in Paris during the Franco-Prussian War and subsequent Commune, the accusations of formalism became very intense, with much criticism leveled against the “eccentric” music composed by Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975), the stylized pantomime, the tragic resolution, and the expressionist cinematography by Moskvin; the project became the object of much re-editing, mishandling, suppression, and bitter disappointment leading to the dissolution of FEKS. Yet FEKS created a unique *style* of motion picture pantomime; it was not a pantomime technique, but a way of thinking about gesture in film as a bodily “eccentricity” or inflection that arises out of the character’s peculiar circumstances in both the narrative and the performance environment as defined by the image composition.



Figure 84: Film technology during the silent era allowed for a fragmentation of pantomimic performance that emphasized physiognomic peculiarities and the expressive value of small physical actions. Soviet montage theory of the cinematic image connected this fragmentation to a critique of social and class constructions of identity, as in this scene from Kozinstev and Trauberg’s *The Overcoat* (1926).

Internationally, then, motion picture technology freed pantomime from the perception of it imposed by theater, which, to preserve its own hierarchy of performance categories, in the early 1900s continued to subordinate pantomime to the long-decadent image of Pierrot and a heavily institutionalized aesthetic of communication built around the authority of simple, "unambiguous" gestural signification—"the long gesture." Motion picture technology showed the extraordinary expressive power of the body in performing all manner of gestures, actions, and movements, sometimes with almost imperceptible subtlety. Pantomime in the new medium was without any special technique, without system. Each actor and each director had to develop a unique relationship between gesture and the camera; as the medium matured, it could accommodate an immense, ever expanding diversity of pantomimic styles or "personalities," without suffering any internal or external pressure to establish its credibility or appeal by adopting a standardized or unifying code of signification. With silent film, pantomime became a technological performance that was as much about the relation of the body to image technology as it was about the relation of characters to each other in a story. The relation of images to each other determined the "meaning" of pantomimic performance more than the performance of the gesture itself, as Kuleshov observed. The technology created the perception that the body could release a vast profusion of "meanings" and could be interpreted "freely," a situation, of course, that Delsartean semiotics discouraged. Even when theater pantomimes moved into the cinema, they adopted signifying practices that created a new kind of pantomimic performance. Ariane Martinez has analyzed early films featuring Séverin and Charlotte Wiehé, *l'Empreinte ou la main rouge* (1908) and *La Main* (1909). She argues that before the camera these performers made expressive use of the hands in a way that was unique to the medium—theatrical gestures, dancing gestures, speaking gestures, and pictorial gestures—and she concludes that "what today captures attention" is not the clarity or unity of signification but its "plurivocity": "Not the ease of their movements, but their manner of closing and tensing the body; not the individual style of their play, but their ability to play resonantly with all the elements inscribed in the frame field. Far from relying on gestural language to replace speech, the interest of mimic art for cinema was based on the ability of mimes to borrow alternately from the theater (whose reversals lead to visible dynamic postures, from dance

(which eroticizes bodies by dazzling the eye), and from painting (where the balance of forms prevails)" (Martinez 2008b: 145). Elsewhere, however, Martinez discusses Michel Carré's efforts to turn his popular 1890 stage pantomime *L'enfant prodigue* into a film in 1907 and again in 1916. Both films featured Georges Wague, who had played Pere Pierrot in the stage version. The archival material about the stage version shows that both films closely followed the staging, the décor, and gestural qualities "realized by the epoch of the Cercle Funambulesque," with stereotyped movements and rigid postures. These films were among "numerous" filmed adaptions of stage pantomimes involving Pierrot that, especially during the war years, when French film production operated under much constraint and austerity, enjoyed considerable popularity. But by the end of the war, the "excessive mimicry" of these films lost their appeal, as audiences began to expect cinema to provide a new image of humanity (Martinez 2008a: 166-167). Wague, who appeared in many films, contended that film created a new kind of pantomime in which performance for the camera allowed for the "localization" of gesture, which in effect mostly meant the magnification of small gestures of the hand, the eye, the head, the shoulder, and the lips (171). In so many cases, though, this localization occurred in scenes where characters mimed conversation rather than conversed through mime. But a vast amount of pantomimic action in films consisted of characters performing actions that had nothing to do with people in dialogue with each other: ironing a shirt, bathing a child, firing guns, walking down streets, stepping onto and off of trains, opening doors, looking out windows, lighting cigarettes, smelling flowers, and innumerable other seemingly mundane actions given a magnified expressive power by the performer and the camera. Much of film acting was about the performance of actions, in the Mensendieck sense, than the performance of gestures, and the performance of actions often required, for comic or dramatic effect, an exaggeration that the medium did not encourage for the performance of gestures. For example, a man or woman dancing while ironing a shirt might produce a humorous or delightful effect; a more somber or dramatic effect might result when a man or woman stands perfectly still except for the monotonous movement of the arm pushing the iron back and forth and gazes straightaway at something distant and unseen, as if thinking about something far more important than the task at hand. Cinema was not hostile to physical exaggeration; it was hostile to gestural codes that

assumed the spectator understood the "meaning" of particular signs developed for the convenience of audiences in large theater spaces. In 1926, Wague claimed that cinema had killed theatrical pantomime, because of its power to "change scenes" and create the illusion of a much larger or more open space in which bodily performance occurs (175-176). Indeed, after 1920, it feels as if pantomime in the theater has become an irreparably diminished art, flirting with extinction, and utterly incapable of imagining a new aesthetic for itself that might compete with film, even after film had pervasively adopted sound technology by the early 1930s and by the 1940s had become saturated with verbosity and an extravagant addiction to talk.

A common way of thinking about silent film pantomime is to evoke the attributes peculiar to performances of a particular film star and see them as descended from the theatrical heritage of pantomime. Perhaps the most representative example of this way of thinking is the collection of insightful statements by silent film actors, entirely comics, like Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Stan Laurel, Max Linder, and Georges Wague, that appears in Bari Rolfe's book *Mimes on Miming* (1979). Rigorous scholars of pantomime history show a fondness for designating Chaplin a summit of pantomimic art in the cinema (Martinez 2008a: 175 [following Deleuze 1983: 170-171]; Bonnet 2014: 71). In *Star Acting* (1977), Charles Affron describes in immense detail, and with the help of many frame stills, his responses to silent film performances by the dramatic actresses Lillian Gish and Greta Garbo, and he favors the use of a rather metaphorical language to explain the mysterious "raptness" by which these star pantomime actresses hold the spectator, most often through facial expressions. Yet a focus on star performances tends to obscure the large impact of cinematic thinking on pantomime performance. Of course, Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977) created a unique, globally popular film pantomimic style through the character of The Tramp (1914-1931), a vagabond figure rarely seen in close up, because Chaplin, with his music hall background, believed comic effects depended on seeing the whole body. His movements always carried a histrionic quality: delicate, polite, fussy, debonair gestures combined with abrupt swats, kicks, jolts, pivots, or stumbles, along with a carefree yet somewhat march-like strut with his feet pointing away from each other and often one hand behind his back. But as Chaplin himself acknowledged, the idiosyncratic gestures of The Tramp achieved their emotional and comic resonance only because of the costume the actor had devised for the

character: “I wanted everything to be a contradiction: the pants baggy, the coat tight, the hat small and the shoes large [...] I added a small moustache, which, I reasoned, would add age without hiding my expression. I had no idea of the character. But the moment I was dressed, the clothes and the makeup made me feel the person he was” (Chaplin 1964: 145). Perhaps for some commentators on pantomime, Chaplin’s Tramp fulfills a desire for a Pierrot distinctive to the cinema. In contrast, Greta Garbo (1905-1990) perfected a dramatic style of film pantomime that was especially effective when the camera as close to her, even though she consistently played aloof personalities. Her movements were languid, reserved, calculated, poised, and sultry yet withholding until moments when a powerful emotion surged within her, causing her body to shudder, convulse, or gush exuberantly, with the famous arching or tilting of the head. But the vast majority of spectators saw a far greater range of pantomimic performances than any one star could typify as the “summit” or “essence” of silent film acting. The accumulated consumption of cinematic imagery created an idea of pantomimic performance that was much more complex than any one performer could *embody*.

Take, for example, the Japanese film *Crossroads* (*Jujiro*) (1928), directed by Teinosuke Kinugasa (1896-1982), a former actor who had played female roles (*onnagata*) in silent films before Japanese movie studios began hiring women for these roles in 1922. The film was not especially popular in Japan, and the magazine *Kinema Junpo* did not even include it among the ten best Japanese films of 1928, but the film did achieve some success internationally (Matsuda 2003: 183-184; Lewinsky 1995: 56-61). It had no stars even within the Japanese market, but Kinugasa assembled a large group of highly skilled actors, most of whom had no previous experience working in film, although a couple had appeared briefly in Kinugasa’s much more experimental film *A Page of Madness* (1926). The film was a tragic melodrama, set in the eighteenth century, about a poverty-stricken brother and sister who come to a crisis in their relationship as a result of the brother’s debauchery in the Yoshiwara entertainment district of Tokyo; when the brother becomes blinded as a result of a fight with a rival for the favor of a prostitute, the sister must decide whether to save her brother by becoming a prostitute herself or to abandon him altogether. Kinugasa’s story was somewhat darker than many film melodramas produced by Japanese studios, but it was by no means a deeply innovative example of the

genre. What is remarkable about the film is the construction of pantomimic action. The actors perform in a largely verisimilar manner, and the assertion by some viewers that the acting resembles Kabuki is perhaps comprehensible only in relation to the hairstyles and makeup worn by some of the actors.



Figure 85: Expressionist film pantomime in Teinosuke Kinugasa Jujiro (Crossroads) (1928), with Akiko Chihaya as Okiku (the sister) and Junosuke Bando as Rikiya (the brother).

While some actors perform scenes of intense violence, suffering, and despair, they never adopt the intensely histrionic style of Kabuki nor do their movements or gestures seem any less realistic than one might expect of a well-made melodrama produced in Europe or America at that time. But Kinugasa integrates the physical performance of the actors with an array of dramatic visual devices: he tracks toward and away from actors, he tracks with actors and between actors; he uses superimpositions with tracking shots; he uses extreme close ups of faces, hands, objects; he views numerous actions from high angles and from oblique angles; he frames actors in relation to dynamic décor designs, such as lanterns, pinwheels, kimonos, sliding screens, and silhouettes; he uses chiaroscuro, expressionistic lighting throughout; and in his editing of the film, he creates a compelling, rhythmic interweaving of long shots, mid shots, and close ups, so that the viewer always feels that the physical performance of an action carries with it more significance than can be seen at once or from any optimum angle [Figure 85]. European and American films probably influenced Kinugasa's style for *Crossroads* (cf. Lewinsky 1995: 149-153). But that is the point: by 1928, internationally and in relation to conventional narrative genres, film in manifold cultures had transformed pantomime into a complicated performance that required an elaborate visual apparatus to see. Film made spectators wary of their ability to see live performance "fully" and to see the "completeness" of any gesture or movement. Films such as *Crossroads* implied that you don't see movements sufficiently or entirely or accurately when you see them performed live or see them performed without mediation from cinematic technology. This ideology of mediation controlling perception of the body, the seeing of the body, became the insurmountable challenge that sank theatrical pantomime in the twentieth century.

Film Transforms the Partnership of Music and Pantomime

When Japanese theaters screened *Crossroads* in 1928, they may have used Japanese music played on Japanese instruments such as the shamisen, as was common in movie houses throughout the country during the silent film era. In recent years, some revivals of the film have used shamisen music as accompaniment, although when the Japan Society sponsored a showing in New York in 2014, the shamisen music of Yumiko Tanaka was "experimental" and was in the nature of an "improvised soundscape" rather

than any reconstruction of eighteenth century Japanese music or of music contemporary with the film (Japan Society 2014). When the film premiered in Berlin in 1929, the Ufa Palast Theater assembled an orchestra to accompany the film and the ensemble performed Western music. Silent films were silent insofar as they had an unstable relation to the sound that accompanied their exhibition, and this instability also complicated the relation of pantomime to modernism. From the very beginning of motion picture history in the mid-1890s, exhibitors arranged for musical accompaniments to film showings, with the Skladanowsky brothers employing a salon orchestra for screenings of short documentary scenes at the Wintergarten nightclub in Berlin in 1895 (Rügner 1990: 76). Music accompanied films because producers and exhibitors assumed that spectators have great difficulty watching the performance of any human actions detached from sounds—music, noise, or speech—relevant to the performance. Ballets or dance without music or plays without speech are extremely rare, although not without precedent. The German dancer Hilde Strinz (1902-1927), for example, organized in 1925 a group of female dancers to perform entire dance concerts completely devoid of musical accompaniment, for she regarded the ecstasy of dance as a "sleep-like plunge into silence" (Toepfer 1997: 330; Böhme 1928). Overwhelmingly, however, in all the performing arts, silence functions as a very sparingly used dramatic device to amplify or render "suspenseful" a human action or the absence of action; otherwise, spectators who are not deaf pervasively regard silence in performance as unbearable, an unjustifiable suppression of information transmittable through the auditory channel. Pantomime is more comfortable without music than dance, because pantomime uses the logic of physical actions to build narratives and to engage the spectator; whereas dance focuses on movement as a thing worth watching in itself, detached from a larger narrative structure, which is why dancers and choreographers can use the same movement tropes for different narratives or dance pieces. Yet movement has "meaning," an emotional value, only when supplemented by an equally abstract external source: music. In pantomime, music functions to "explain" performance as much as speech in a play or film. It most commonly provides cues to spectators for how they should respond emotionally to images or actions. But even though musicians and composers developed their own systems or conventions for choosing music to accompany film scenes, the film medium itself remained

free of any governing system for connecting music to images. When (1907) some film producers began commissioning composers to write music specifically for their films, they could not expect all theaters showing the films to play the commissioned music. Musicians who had no responsibility for the production of a film nevertheless assumed considerable responsibility for audience responses to the film. Even when films had commissioned scores, the musical accompaniment sometimes achieved a complexity that previously was unimaginable in relation to live performance. For the *Birth of a Nation* (1915), Joseph Carl Breil (1870-1926) composed a symphonic orchestral score in a late nineteenth century style somewhat reminiscent of the music of Edvard Grieg. But Breil supplemented his score with pieces of music by many other classical composers (Weber, Tchaikovsky, Grieg, Bellini, Wagner), as well as with popular songs, hymn tunes, military fanfares and marches, and folk songs (Marks 1997: 200-212). Yet the stylistic visual unity of the film only increased its power to engage the spectator when accompanied by music that lacked stylistic unity. In some theaters, musicians (chiefly pianists) improvised their musical accompaniments, and sometimes musicians performed accompaniments to films they saw for the first time with the spectators. Thus, when films played in different countries or within different cities of the same country or even within different theaters of the same city, the musical accompaniment differed, although film producers sometimes issued cue sheets and recommended musical selections. The search for formulaic relations between music and film image obsessed the motion picture industry from about 1906, when trade journals began discussing the theme with serious regularity in the hope of discovering formulas that would maximize the profitability of films. Indeed, the failure to identify profit-assuring formulas or even coherent theories of relations between film and music allowed a rather immense, international discourse to flourish on the subject, which continues into our own time (cf. Wulff 2013).

One of the most prolific film composers ever was the Italian-German Giuseppe Becce (1877-1973), who began his long film music career in 1913 by compiling his own arrangements of symphonic music by earlier composers for the feature length biographical film *Richard Wagner*, in which he also played Wagner (legal issues prevented the filmmakers from using Wagner's music) (Simeon 1996: 220-222). Among his many activities on behalf of film music, he catalogued, through his journal *Film-Ton-Kunst/Kinomusikblatt*

(1920-1929), new film music from 1919 to 1929 in relation to different categories of dramatic scene, and the same piece of music could be used for entirely different scenes. He paired a generic scene with an emotional category attached to a musical tempo and then to a specific musical example but not to a specific film, such as: "Battle and Disturbance" (Agitato); "Infatuation" (Andante, Largo), although he was hardly the first to think about film music in this way. By 1927, when he and Hans Erdmann published their two-volume *Allgemeines Handbuch der Film-Musik*, which contained over 3000 examples of music for use in relation to theoretical categories of dramatic action rather than in relation to specific film scenes, Becce could assert that there was no such thing as "film music" or music that was innately appropriate to film generally or to any particular film. The composer, the musician, and then the spectator assigned music to a theoretical category of emotion rather than to specific actions seen on the screen, for the actions functioned at best as cues to an emotional category. Composers largely composed music for generic dramatic scenes or "moods," not films, so that different theaters could use their music for different films and thus increase the revenues generated by the scores while providing savings for theaters. Music composed for specific films occurred only occasionally, as with Pizzetti's music for *Cabiria* (1913), Mascagni's for *Rapsodia satanica* (1915), Hindemith's for *Kampf mit dem Berg* (1921), Meisel's for Eisenstein's films, and Huppertz's for *Metropolis* (1927), although Becce wrote scores for a large number of films, including famous works that continue to provoke serious and detailed discussion without ever mentioning his contribution to their significance. In ballet or pantomime on the stage, the performer either followed the music or the music followed the performer, so that movement and music seemed part of the same action, rhythm, and sometimes harmonic or contrapuntal signification—such was the illusion of synchronicity. With silent film, music gave the impression of a power external to the film that imposed an emotional value on the imagery that otherwise was not inherent to the image or to the action depicted. Neither film nor music had any organic connection to each other, and thus could exist independently of each other and could form completely different relations to each other to stir new emotional experiences. Nevertheless, although Becce catalogued a huge amount of new music composed for German films, the great majority of music that accompanied films was not modernist and was to a considerable

extent composed before the advent of motion picture technology. Becce's own music for the radically expressionistic *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919) was much more daring in its harmonies and orchestral effects than almost any other music used in the silent film era, though perhaps it was not as expressionistic as the imagery it accompanied. To say that musical accompaniments followed "conventions" as catalogued by Becce is mostly to say that musicians and audiences accepted nineteenth century and post-romantic assumptions about the relations between musical structures and emotional invocation. Modernist music currents in film accompaniments tended to occur when composers wrote for specific films, if one regards Pizzetti, Mascagni, and Meisel as modernists. Shostakovich faced much criticism for his score to *The New Babylon* (1929) because his sardonic music operated in "dialectical" tension with the imagery rather than conformed to the "tragic" dramatic scene categories that the critics ascribed to the screen narrative. Modernist musical innovation found much greater expression in the theater than in the cinema. It's not clear why this is so. Perhaps film producers and exhibitors regarded modernist musical structures, with their dissonances, unsteady rhythms, and contrapuntal dynamics, as too "confusing" or "distracting" for movie audiences or too complex for musicians to perform.

In any case, musical accompaniment to silent films did not prove to be an auspicious opportunity for modernist musical innovation. But nothing in the imagery of silent films or in the actions performed by actors in the imagery precluded the use of modernist musical structures. This was evident to composers even if it was not evident to film exhibitors. In 1929, the German music publisher Heinrichshofen, which specialized in scores for movies, commissioned the guru of dodecaphonic music theory, Arnold Schoenberg (1872-1951), to compose a piece of movie music, although neither he nor the publisher had any specific film in mind. Schoenberg had briefly, in 1901, worked as a conductor and arranger for a Berlin cabaret, and he had composed music for cabaret and pantomime: *Brettl Lieder* (1901), *Die glückliche Hand* (1913), so he was at least somewhat familiar with musical "conventions" in the theater, even if he was not notable for observing them. Nevertheless, with *Accompaniment to a Cinematographic Scene* (*Begleitmusik zu eine Lichtspielszene*) (1930), he wrote a dodecaphonic orchestral work to meet the generic dramatic scene category of "Menacing Danger, Anxiety, Catastrophe." The music is eerie, tremulous and

glimmering, at times ominous, and continuously shadowy, but it could serve as excellent accompaniment to a great variety of films, including comedies, not just films depicting doom. But although the piece has received numerous concert performances and recordings, apparently no one has used it to accompany the screening of a silent film. The only known use of the music in a movie has been in the static documentary *Introduction to Arnold Schoenberg's Accompaniment to a Cinematic Scene* (1973), by Jean-Marie Straub (b. 1933) and Danièle Huillet (1936-2006), where the music creeps underneath monotone vocal statements by immobile speakers in a film that one might describe as anti-pantomime, anti-gesture, and anti-movement of any sort. The high cultural pretensions of the film indicate a reason why modernist music did not play a larger role in silent film. The cultural institutions invested in advancing modernist ideology had, even before Schoenberg had composed his piece, established a social environment in which a composer of film music could be taken seriously as a modernist only to the extent that filmmakers created a film around the composer's music rather than that filmmakers applied the music to a "dramatic scene" in a film conceived and produced completely independently of the music, even though Schoenberg created the music for precisely this generic application. In other words, the lack of a strong modernist current in the musical accompaniments to film pantomime was not due to a failure of movie audiences to appreciate modernist musical structures, because such audiences had hardly any opportunities to experience these structures. Some kind of snobbery seems implicated in this failure to create opportunities, for it is certainly misguided to assume that modernist music is "too modern" to accompany silent film imagery. Schoenberg's student, Alban Berg (1885-1935), composed turbulent dodecaphonic music to accompany a silent film pantomime montage sequence for his super-modernist opera *Lulu* (1935). Since the immense revival of interest in silent film beginning in the late 1960s, modernist musical accompaniments have found great favor with audiences internationally. The American composer Carl Davis (b. 1936) has been exceptionally successful in bringing a modernist orchestral sound to the accompaniment of numerous silent films released on video and in digital formats. Perhaps the most dramatic example of the change in thinking about the relation between modernist music and silent film pantomime has involved the accompaniments to public screenings of Carl Dreyer's (1889-

1968) famous film *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (1928). Leo Pouget and Victor Alix (1890-1968), composers for the Lutetia Wagram movie house in Paris, composed orchestral music for the film's showing at the theater in 1928. This score, which survives on old recordings, applies the "conventions" for dramatic scenes that defined cinema orchestra music in the late 1920s: the music is rather bland and somewhat operettish. But since at least the 1960s, no one seems to have believed that showings of the tragic film would benefit much, if at all, with Pouget and Alix's original soundtrack. Instead, the film has inspired an astonishing profusion of modernist and postmodernist musical accompaniments from an internationally diverse variety of composers. The Dane Ole Schmidt (1928-2010) composed a powerfully modernist symphonic score to accompany screenings of the film in Denmark in 1983. The Dutch Jo van den Booren (b. 1935) followed him with a symphonic soundtrack in an equally modernist idiom for screenings in The Netherlands in 1985. Since then at least thirty more composers from Lithuania, Estonia, Canada, Denmark, Australia, Spain, England, the United States, and Norway have composed accompaniments to the film, and some composers, such as the Australian Nick Cave (b. 1957), in 1995, and the English "dark wave" electronica duo In The Nursery, in 2008, created accompaniments that fused modernist harmonies and orchestration with influences from rock and experimental electronic music. On the other hand, a British vocal group, the Orlando Consort, in 2015 created an *a capella* soundtrack using only music by French composers of the fifteenth century (Orlando Consort 2015). Thus, a marvelous feature of silent film pantomime is that, however bound it was by the cinematic and performance conventions of its own time, it has been remarkably successful at adapting to the musical conventions and idioms of our own time and in finding perhaps even larger audiences than it enjoyed originally. Silent film pantomime has shown that although much pantomime without music is largely too deficient in information to sustain the attention of audiences more than very briefly, it can nevertheless achieve powerful emotional communication in relation to a vast range of musical accompaniments. But this is not an insight that pantomime in the theater since 1920 has been able to appropriate.

Even before the invention of motion picture technology, the relations between music and pantomime in the theater were pathetically underestimated. While multitudes of writers and composers discussed or

contributed to music accompanying silent film pantomime, hardly anyone bothered to theorize or even comment on music in theatrical pantomime. Raoul de Najac and Séverin believed that music should follow the pantomimic performer and synchronize musical sounds with specific gestures or actions, so that music functioned like sound effects or gestural emphasis. Arthur Pougin (1834-1921), a theater composer, conductor, and music critic in Paris, quoted the dramatist Eugene Woestyn (1813-1861) on this use of music:

> *At first a heavy tremolo of the basses indicates the wrath of Cassandre, which then sparks a nasal arpeggio of the oboe; response, a quick pizzicato of the violins symbolizes the silent laughter of Pierrot; then, on a rising scale, one could see the foot rising, a blow of a bass drum make the shock, and a shrill note of the flute and the violin translates the cry of pain snatched from the victim, while the horns declares the howl of the winner* (Hugounet 1892: 110).

Paul Hugounet published a chatty book on *La Musique et la pantomime* (1892), in which he compiled anecdotal statements about the use of music in pantomime from musicians and composers associated with the Cercle Funambulesque. Reading the book is like listening to a witty conversation in a café. But the contributors do introduce some serious themes. Hugounet observes that most pantomime music consists of an eclectic "salad" of pieces by different composers adapted to the movements and gestures of the actors, rather like what became the practice with silent film. But this approach has limited ability to elevate the pantomime or move it beyond the realm of the vaudeville revue (11). Pantomime has not inspired significant music the way opera has. A short chapter discusses efforts to persuade the popular opera composer Jules Massenet (1842-1912), a member of the Cercle, to compose a pantomime score, since he had already written a children's pantomime, *Le Roman d'Arlequin* (1873) as well as incidental music to plays, such as *Théodora* (1884), which starred Sarah Bernhardt. The contributors believe that pantomime requires a different and more powerful musical accompaniment than has long been the practice in pantomime performance. Piano accompaniment may work effectively with scenes of delicate gesture, but often the piano cannot convey enough emotion. Orchestral music assumes greater importance. For a production of

La Sœur de Pierrot (1892) by the art historian Arsène Alexandre (1859-1937), the Cercle therefore assembled a small orchestra to support the score by the operetta composer Hervé (1825-1892): flute, oboe, clarinet, trumpet, horn, bassoon, trombone, timpani, violins, viola, cello, and double bass (30). Perhaps more impressive, however, was the "heroic and colossal" orchestral score that the great organist Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937) composed in 1890 for a spectacular Joan of Arc pageant-pantomime in the Hippodrome (58-66). Not only should the sheer scale of pantomime music increase, new musical structures are necessary. Several contributors designate the chromatic music of Richard Wagner (1813-1883) as a model for new pantomime music, so that, according to André Wormser, the "symphonic pantomime" becomes the "voice of the actor," it "underlines, develops, and comments," and is "equal to the scenario" (72). Several composers employ the Wagnerian concept of the *leitmotiv* by assigning a unique melody and sometimes an instrument for each character and for particular emotions, for "the leitmotiv will be as expressive as the mask of Deburau himself [...] a translation of the most tender passions and the most terrible" (104). But the use of *leitmotivs* and Wagnerian chromatic harmonies means the end of using music to punctuate gestures and to establish a synchronized rhythmic relation between music and movement, because Wagnerian music produces an emotional commentary on a movement that exists independently of the music—one reason why ballet has been incapable of doing anything with Wagner's music. René de Récy (?-1894), the music critic for the *Revue bleue* and champion of Widor's Wagnerian symphonic composition in the Hippodrome, asserts that "pantomime will be the music drama of the future," if it develops the *leitmotiv* concept for a theater orchestra larger than the one used by Grétry in the eighteenth century, which is what Hervé used for *La Sœur de Pierrot*. For de Récy and J.-C. Croze, a writer for the journal *Art et Critique*, the elevation of pantomime through Wagnerian symphonic accompaniments implies "the destruction of opera" and the emergence of a new form of music drama that has no need of words at all (119-124).

But these prophecies did not come true. French music theater did eventually adopt a Wagnerian aesthetic—with *opera*: Debussy's *Pelléas and Mélisande* (1902), Massenet's *Werther* (1892) and *Sapho* (1897), d'Indy's *Fervaal* (1895), Magnard's *Guercœur* (1901) and *Bérénice* (1909), Dukas' *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* (1907), Chausson's *Le roi Arthus* (1895), and

Charpentier's *Louise* (1900). Despite the efforts of Wormser, Victorin de Joncières (1839-1903), Adolphe David (1842-1897), and Raoul Pugno (1852-1914) to introduce Wagnerian ideas into pantomime accompaniments, French pantomime music completely failed to achieve anything resembling the recognition granted to any of these operas and did almost nothing to change the content of pantomime. Pougin and Camille Bellaigue (1858-1930) virulently opposed the introduction of Wagnerian ideas into pantomime, claiming that the richness of the French theater heritage, including "Pierrot [...] that corner of blue sky above the dark skyline of Paris," precluded the necessity of importing any ideas from Germany (100). But Pierrot was precisely the problem. Only de Récy, Croz, and Widor could imagine a pantomime free of Pierrot and the *commedia* format, while Pougin and Bellaigue sensed that Wagnerian musical ideas, when implemented with passion, required a bigger subject than Pierrot and would render him extinct. Wagnerian musical aesthetics inevitably amplified the idea that pantomime might be something other than Pierrot, something "bigger," and without Pierrot, the French theater, despite the "immense success" of the Widor Joan of Arc production, seemed unable to imagine pantomime with the same level of grandeur achieved through opera (Arc 1894: 929-930). Pierrot was big because he kept pantomime small, and its music very small.

Parisian Pantomime without Pierrot

In Paris, as motion picture technology began to exert a public fascination, efforts to develop pantomime in the theater beyond Pierrot and the *commedia* format remained feeble, if not altogether unthinkable. Georges Wague continued his experiments with female partners, the most notable being perhaps his collaboration with the writer Colette (1873-1954). In her biography of Colette, Patricia Tilburg argues that Wague sought to "democratize" pantomime by externalizing the interior life of ordinary people; he rejected the obscure gestural language of the traditional pantomime culture and instead used "natural movements" that "expressed common emotional truths." He desired to bestow a high artistic status on the music hall and its plebian audiences. While Wague had many defenders, he also had numerous critics, such as the Marseilles mime Bighetti, who complained that Wague's motives were entirely commercial, with his glorification of female partners and scenes of brazen eroticism

(Tilburg 2009: 166-176). The critic Francis Norgelet claimed that Wague was squandering his talents in the music halls and needed "another milieu" to reach a more serious audience and greater recognition as an artist (Tilburg 2009: 172). The program to "modernize" and "democratize" pantomime was about how to find a way to do pantomime without Pierrot, whose "obscure" gestural language appealed more to plebian than to upscale audiences. Nancy Erber asserts that music hall audiences for Wague's productions were not entirely or even mostly plebian, but they *were* looking for liberating aesthetic experiences. Conservative, nationalist critics, upholders of the Pierrot tradition, condemned the "pornographic" content and "degenerate" morality of Wague's pantomimes and other sensationalistic music hall entertainments (Erber 2008: 185, 190-191). In 1905, Colette, along with her aristocratic lover, Mathilde de Morny (1863-1944), began studying with Wague, who the following year invited the two women to join with him and his wife, Christine Kerf, to perform at the Moulin Rouge nightclub. Their first production was *Le Désir, la Chimère et l'Amour* (1906), by Francis de Croisset (1877-1937), in which Colette played a faun who replaces a statue in a "delicious garden." A "gallant world" admires and kisses the statue until one lover abducts her and takes her into the forest. But Colette also performed in plays without Wague, such as Charles Van Leberge's *Pan* (1906), Gustaf Collijn's *La tour de silence* (1909), and plays she wrote herself, such as *Claudine à Paris* (1908-1909). Then she and Wague performed the twenty-minute pantomime *Rêve d'Égypte*, January 3, 1907 at the Moulin Rouge. The police shut down the show after only one performance. In this pantomime, Morny played an Egyptologist who has obtained a mummy, played by Colette. The mummy comes to life, peeling away her bandages, and performs an erotic dance for the scholar, culminating in a long, passionate kiss between the ancient dead woman and her modern excavator. Colette wore "a calf-length gauzy skirt, golden breastplates and a headdress, and bracelets decorated with entwined snakes; her legs, midriff, and feet were bare," while "Mathilde de Morny wore a brown velvet suit, a tie, and mannishly-styled shoes," as she was accustomed to wearing off stage (Erber 2008: 187). But no one in the audience presumed that Morny was impersonating a man, which led the police to prosecute the theater for allowing public display of lesbian passion. Colette, her husband Willy, and the theater had promoted the piece in the press by stressing the intimate friendship off stage between Colette and the aristocratic Morny. Wague and

Colette continued to collaborate only intermittently. *La Chair* (1908) was their greatest success, which they performed in many cities throughout France and in Belgium until the end of 1911. This pantomime depicted the violent relationship between a tempestuous woman, Yulka (Colette), and the smuggler who loves her, Hokartz (Wague). When he discovers Yulka with another man (Christine Kerf), Hokartz beats up his rival and drives him away. He demands an explanation from Yulka, who remains silent. He thinks of tearing apart her clothes to reveal the flesh (*la chair*) that makes him so "savagely enamored" of her. But Yulka turns away from him and leaves him alone. Despair overwhelms him, and, realizing the "impossibility of possessing" her, he kills himself (*Colette sur scène* 2017). Nudity was apparently a feature of the performance, but evidently not any lesbian theme, even though Christine Kerf played the rival lover dressed as a soldier and later (1912) performed an "Assyrian" and a "Montmarte" dance with Colette at the Cercle de l'Union artistique. At the Bat-Ta-Clan Theater, *Aux Bat. d'Af.* (1911) was a pantomimic adaptation of a 1906 melodrama by Aristide Bruant and Arthur Bernède, in which Colette played Poliche, an Algerian girl, who is the object of conflict between a loving but unjustly maligned soldier (Kerf) and a resentful sergeant (Wague), who stabs her to death. In *L'Oiseau de nuit* (1911), she played a mysterious visitor to a Basque farm couple; the husband falls in love with the dark, voluptuous woman, who seeks to invite an accomplice into the household, much to the dismay of the husband. But the wife in a jealous rage kills the ominous "night bird" and restores order to the household. This piece also featured nudity: it was apparently well known that Colette did not wear panties under her tattered dress [Figure 80]. With *La Chatte amoureuse* (1912), a variation on the Pygmalion story, Colette, in a black body suit with a tail, played a cat enlarged by magic to human size, but then she becomes jealous of love between humans, and only a divine lightning bolt can restore the animal to its natural size.

It is difficult to reconcile these pantomimes with Tilburg's claim that Wague "democratized" pantomime, even if he employed more "natural" and less coded movements than the Pierrot performers. The pantomimes he produced with Colette served to bring an "ultra-elegant audience" to the music halls rather than, as Norgelet wished, to bring music hall audiences to a higher level of pantomime and to a more serious theater milieu (Erber 2008: 189). But Wague and Colette were part of a larger transformation of

music hall into an upscale tourist entertainment, of which pantomime was not to become a significant component. By 1912, Wague saw greater opportunities for his art in the silent film, while Colette preferred to concentrate on developing her literary career. Without these two adventurous personalities, French pantomime in the theater seemed incapable of moving beyond Pierrot to achieve a modern identity. They were great friends and continued to confide in each other for many years, but they did not collaborate. Forbidden to explore unusual aspects of sexual desire, such as homosexuality, they built their pantomime aesthetic around stories in which eroticism, nudity, "the flesh" of "strange" women, provoked intense jealousy and undermined the stability of conventional couplehood, and perhaps they themselves did not see how they could move beyond this rather conventional theme or at least develop it with any freshness. The modernity of their relationship to each other and to Christine Kerf and Mathilde de Morny hardly finds a mirror image in the primitive, violent triangle dramas they performed on stage, although one can sense that they nevertheless tried to bring some sort of autobiographical dimension to pantomime through the theme of a woman "impossible to possess." The idea of pantomime emerging directly out of personal experience rather than out of mythic archetypes or popular avatars may have guided Wague's conception of a modern pantomime in the theater. But it was not an idea that gained any strength outside of his own productions, and, in spite of their "daring" use of nudity, even these, as Norgelet contended, made too many concessions to conventional morality to impose a powerful notion of modernity upon audiences otherwise subordinate to that morality. For many years, Wague campaigned to introduce a course in pantomime at the Paris Conservatoire, which was under the direction of the composer Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924), who had implemented numerous reforms to release the venerable institution from the suffocating conservatism that prevailed upon his appointment in 1905. But Fauré was not keen on such a course. Colette lobbied her friends in high places, and in 1914, the socialist minister of education, René Viviani (1863-1925), established the course by decree; in 1915, Wague received appointment as the instructor for the course, although he then struggled to build credibility for it in the face of much opposition from the faculty in the Conservatoire, which after 1922 was under the directorship of the right-wing, virulently anti-modernist composer Henri Rabaud (1873-1949) (Remy 1954: 112-116). Rémy and Tilburg contend that the

faculty disdained the intrusion of music hall aesthetics into the sacred, elite halls of the Conservatoire (Rémy 1954: 107-108; Tilburg 2009: 175). But whether in the music hall or in the state institution of the Conservatoire, French pantomime in the theater after Wague and Colette ceased to be an art associated with modernism until after World War II.

Germanic Pantomime

While Wagnerism failed to leave a significant imprint on French pantomime, in German-speaking lands of the early twentieth century French pantomime encouraged writers for the stage to see pantomime in relation to Wagner's concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* or total work of art, an opportunity for innovation. Vienna became a hub for modernist pantomime until the end of the Habsburg Empire. But even before modernist ambitions invaded pantomime culture, German-speaking lands had long accommodated—some might even prefer to say tolerated—a taste for pantomime built around the *commedia* format, although Germanic pantomimes throughout the nineteenth century focused overwhelmingly on Harlequin rather than on Pierrot, with the roguish figure of Harlequin often adopting the German name of Hanswurst, a grotesque carnival character who was perhaps even older than the Italian Arlecchino (cf. Jürs-Munby 2007; Rommel 1952). In German lands, as in Italy, the *commedia* characters did not always or even mostly appear without speech. Pantomime performances tended to occur in conjunction with marionette plays, *Singspiele*, or *Zauberspiele*, in which audiences delighted as much in "magical" scenic effects as in any display of acting. The idea never took hold of pantomime as a unique art that did not require "containment" within some larger structure of entertainment involving speech or singing. Actors who achieved fame playing Harlequin or Hanswurst, such Joseph Anton Straniztky (1676-1726) and Franz Schuch (1716-1763), were not pantomimes, and no pantomime performer in or from German lands ever achieved anything approaching the fame of the Deburaus, Legrand, Rouffe, or Séverin. In France, pantomime evolved out of the determination of state theaters to diminish competition from popular theaters by depriving the *foire* theaters of speech. In German-speaking lands, literary elites campaigned against the popular Hanswurst theater because they believed that popular theater corrupted public taste and prevented the emergence of a strong, public, state theater capable, by the end of the eighteenth century, of absorbing its prodigious enthusiasm and talent for drama, fuelled to a large extent by awareness of Shakespeare and ancient Greek tragedy among the university-educated class, which was indeed very small. The stage was

crucial in establishing the unifying power of the German language and *voice*, as shaped especially by elevated literary imaginations keen to fashion themselves as aristocratic leaders of culture. In other words, class distinctions probably played a greater role in German lands than in France in the evolution of pantomime culture. By the end of the nineteenth century, theater audiences in German lands, as in England, largely regarded pantomime as an entertainment for childish, naïve spectators, a kind of clown show. But even dance culture lacked distinction in German lands prior to the arrival of Isadora Duncan in 1903.

Hartmut Vollmer proposes that a "crisis of language" within Viennese literary society precipitated a preoccupation with pantomime, for the modernist pantomime in Vienna and elsewhere within the German-speaking world, was largely the work of literary personalities, whose most lauded achievements, however, were not pantomimes. This "crisis of language" was somewhat similar to the crisis of language already ascribed to the French decadents involved with the Cercle Funambulesque, except that the Viennese authors were less inclined to link their crisis of language with a crisis of male identity. Vollmer's thesis is that by the 1890s, sectors of the Viennese literary culture had become deeply disillusioned with naturalism and the use of language to create increasingly precise and detailed descriptions of the sensory world. Language seemed unable to reveal "interior" states of being, "invisible" realms of reality that lay hidden within a psychic domain that the Viennese psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) had begun to theorize through his concept of the unconscious. In the theater, an oppressive fetishization of words and speech prevented any clarifying relation between subject and object. Hugo von Hofmannsthal claimed in an 1895 essay that theater audiences had become weary of talk in the theater: "for as usual words do not build the power of the human but instead the human in the power of the words. Words do not give but instead spin away all life from the speakers" (Vollmer 2011: 26; Hofmannsthal 1979a: 479).

Pierrot in Vienna

In 1888-1890, the Austrian author Hermann Bahr (1863-1934) visited Paris to report on political affairs but instead became captivated by the anti-naturalistic literary activities of the Decadents. He attended performances of the Cercle Funambulesque, including *L'enfant prodigue*, and in 1890 he

published in the journal *Deutschland* a tendentious article on "Pantomime," in which he asserted that pantomime alone of all theatrical forms escaped the accusation of provoking boredom because it avoided any expectation of accommodating a familiar "sense of reality." Pantomime, he wrote, was "not about humans but about Pierrot [... and] its only home, which it never abandons for a moment, is the fantastic." He saw pantomime as a transitional form of theater between the "unbearable" theater of "the old" and a new theater that has "yet to discover itself" (Bahr 1890: 748-749). Bahr then wrote his own Pierrot pantomime, *Die Pantomime vom braven Mann* (1892), which featured several of the standard *commedia* characters but applied them to a "decadent" narrative: Pierrot performs good actions on behalf of his friends Scaramouche, Pantalon, Arlequin, and Colombine, but they all betray him, and each of his good deeds winds up punishing him (Vollmer 2012a: 17-22). After Bahr published it in 1893, the piece appears to have had only one performance, in Dessau, in 1905, with music by one Fritz Ritter. Bahr in 1901 confided to his friend Arthur Schnitzler that he thought the piece was "very, very bad" (Vollmer 2011: 55), and the Austrian poet Richard Schaukal (1874-1942), reviewing, in *Das litterarische Echo* (1902: Vol. 4: 1006), a 1902 anthology containing the pantomime, agreed, sneering that Bahr had created "repulsive-soft non-art," although he himself the same year had published a luxurious volume of verse exquisitely illustrated by Heinrich Vogeler (1872-1942), *Pierrot und Colombine*, which depicted the two characters as glamorously decorative creatures inhabiting an elegant world of lush, refined pleasures. In the same year (1892) that Bahr wrote his pantomime, the Viennese author Richard Beer-Hofmann (1866-1945), wrote an exceptionally long, four-act pantomime, *Pierrot Hypnotiseur*; for reasons that are obscure, Hofmannsthal translated the piece into French, but the author never published any version of the piece, nor has it ever been performed. Yet Beer-Hofmann shared the manuscript with members of his literary circle, which also included Schnitzler and Bahr, and it is likely that Bahr's ideas about pantomime influenced Beer-Hofmann, while Beer-Hofmann's pantomime likely had greater influence over the literary circle (cf. Elstun 1968: 7-8; Vollmer 2011: 78; Wende-Hohenberger 1993: 156). *Pierrot Hypnotiseur* is a more ambitious work than Bahr's insofar as it dramatizes the transformation of Pierrot and Colombine. Pierrot is a scientist who experiments with hypnosis; he loves his much younger maid Colombine, who loves Arlequino. Pantalon and his wife also work for

Pierrot, along with Scaramouche and Smeraldina. To win Colombine's affections, Pierrot hypnotizes her, which causes her to declare her love for him. But she also becomes a kind of robot or puppet: as Pantalon and his wife observe, where she was once lively and exuberant, now she is sedate and withdrawn. A demonic figure, Nochosch, persuades Pierrot to remove the hypnotic spell, which restores Colombine's love for Arlequino, who impregnates her. Act III, scene iv is a remarkably detailed description of the actions the solitary and hopelessly wounded Pierrot performs within the rather complex architecture of his house before apparently committing suicide with the assistance of Nochosch. Pierrot bequeaths his estate to Colombine, who marries Arlequino, but Arlequino, drawn to drink and other women, soon abandons her, she sinks into poverty, and her child dies. Shadowed by the mysterious Nochosch, Pierrot reappears and invites Colombine to dance to street music. He pours her a glass of wine into which he also pours poison. She dies from the poison at the moment he stabs himself to death. The scene then fills with sunlight, the sound of bells, and the manifold blossoming of fruit trees, but Arlequino spoils the pretty scene by stumbling into it drunk (Vollmer 2012a: 23-57). Beer-Hofmann included brief, one-word or one-sentence speech utterances ("Bleib stehen!", "Lass mich, lass mich", "Was tun?" and so forth), and he introduced numerous imaginative musical and scenic effects. But most importantly, he wrote detailed descriptions of *actions* performed by the characters in relation to each other, to props, and to scenic elements, so that the reader/spectator experiences the narrative as a series of emotionally laden actions rather than as a sequence of emotions translated into gestures or as a story told through gestures: "Colombine hurries joyfully to the window and throws money to the street musicians [...] She accepts their thanks and flinches with pleasure. Pierrot approaches her tenderly; Colombine laughs and runs, gathering up her broom, dustpan, and duster, in an arc across the stage and rushes up the spiral staircase. Pierrot wants to follow her, but Scaramouche announces the arrival of three men" (Vollmer 2012a: 28). It is as if the author has written a highly naturalistic but swift-moving play punctuated by blurts of speech, even with the blatantly symbolic figure of Nochosch (cf. Vollmer 2011: 66-77; Scherer 1993: 11-18). The scenario opens up the possibility of pantomime on a scale similar to what Cuvelier achieved. One can see why members of the Viennese literary circle studied the manuscript with enthusiasm, but it is also puzzling as to why the author never

published it or did not return to pantomime until he wrote *Das goldene Pferd* (1922-1930), which he also never published, although this text reads more like a scenario for an epic silent film fairytale (Scherer 1993: 70).

But shyness about embracing pantomime was common to the members of the Viennese literary group. In the same year as the Bahr and Beer-Hofmann Pierrot pantomimes, 1892, the Viennese author Arthur Schnitzler (1862-1931) wrote the first version of his three-act *Der Schleier der Pierette*, which he did not publish until 1910, although he published another pantomime, *Die Verwandlungen des Pierrot* in 1908, by which time he was already famous as a dramatist. Schnitzler used material from the early version of *Der Schleier der Pierrette* in the construction of his grandiose five-act drama *Der Schleier der Beatrice* (1900), set in Bologna in the sixteenth century, with an enormous cast speaking mostly verse for two hundred pages. The play did not inspire an enthusiastic reception, which apparently prompted Schnitzler to reconsider his effectiveness in thinking theatrically (Sabler 2013: 55-58). *Der Schleier der Pierrette*, set in the Biedermeier period, has a larger cast than Beer-Hofmann's pantomime, and uses music and scenery in a less innovative way. Pierrot, an artist, despairs because Pierrette will marry the wealthy Arlecchino. She visits him wearing her bridal dress and veil, and while enjoying a final meal together, they decide to kill themselves by drinking poison. Pierrot swallows, and, in his death convulsion, knocks Pierrette's glass from her hand. The second act unfolds in a hall of Pierrette's family home, where guests celebrate the impending wedding with waltzes and Arlecchino impatiently awaits the arrival of Pierrette. When she appears, she explains that she was in her room, but Arlecchino says she is lying. They start to dance, but Pierrette sees the dead Pierrot before her, holding the veil she left in his room. She rushes away and Arlecchino follows her to Pierrot's room, where he discovers the dead Pierrot, whom he thinks is drunk. He wants Pierrot to watch as Arlecchino forces himself upon Pierrette, but she repulses him. He therefore abandons her, locks in her in the room, while she dances about frantically trying to escape. Then she sinks beside Pierrot and dies next to him, as the bridal celebration guests enter to discover the dead lovers (Vollmer 2012a: 58-73). Schnitzler uses spoken dialogue to clarify motives and emotions, but his spoken sentences are longer and more naturalistic than the expressionist cries in Beer-Hofmann's pantomimes, presumably because only speech could convey the dramatic situation: *Gigolo*: "Mr. Arlecchino is without his

partner, Miss Pierrette is not here. [...] *Mother*: "Pierrette is not here? Oh, yes, I know for sure, she's up in her room, getting dressed, preparing for the journey." More interesting perhaps is Schnitzler's way of inscribing pantomimic actions as if they are dialogic interactions:

> *Arlecchino* grips Pierrette's hand, pulls her forward and remains standing in the center.
>
> *The others* astonished.
>
> *Some* try to move closer.
>
> *Arlecchino* draws her forward.
>
> *Father and Mother* try to get closer.
>
> *Arlecchino* draws her forward.
>
> *Arlecchino and Pierrette* in the middle of the hall.
>
> *The others* at a measured distance.

However, the piece does not overcome the problem that the Viennese critic Paul Goldmann (1865-1935) ascribed to *Der Schleier der Beatrice*: the suicides of Pierrot and Pierrette lack sufficient motivation to be tragic; they are merely pathetic (cf. Goldmann 1905: 112). Devoid of any satiric objective or even humor, the pantomime simply dramatizes the fatal hopelessness of love in a society fixated on the pursuit of wealth and trivial pleasures—waltzes and exquisite buffets, a theme already extensively explored by the naturalists and the decadents in Paris. Nevertheless, it was a theme that continued to appeal to theater audiences of the time. In 1903, Schnitzler began collaborating with the Hungarian composer Ernst von Dohnányi (1877-1903) on music for the pantomime. By 1908, the Austrian director Max Reinhardt expressed interest in staging the pantomime in Berlin, with the idea of casting Gertrud Eysoldt and Grete Wiesenthal as Pierrot and Pierrette. But Reinhardt and Schnitzler quarreled over production of another Schnitzler play, and *Der Schleier der Pierrete*, with Dohnányi's music, opened in Dresden in 1910, under the direction of the Dresden court ballet dancer August Berger (1861-1945), on a double bill with a one-act comic opera, *Versiegelt*, an adaptation by Leo Blech and Richard Batka of an 1829 farce by Ernst Raupach. Reviewers responded quite favorably to the story, the performers, and the music, but the composer-historian Hugo Daffner (1882-1936) recommended that pantomime performers avoid miming conversation if one could not hear the words they supposedly

spoke, although this was already a convention in silent films. The Berger production of *Der Schleier der Pierrette* received invitations to perform in Vienna (1911), London, Copenhagen (1912), Berlin, and Budapest (1913), but performances there did not provoke entirely enthusiastic evaluations according to sources uncovered by Vollmer (2011: 80-86).

Schnitzler's plays already enjoyed considerable success in Russia by 1905 (Heresch 1977: 289-292). In St. Petersburg, Vsevolod Meyerhold directed a production of the pantomime in 1910 under his experimental "Dr. Dapertutto" persona. Meyerhold discarded the Biedermeier context and replaced it with a grotesque atmosphere reminiscent of E.T.A. Hoffmann, in which the waltz party scene became a "bal macabre," a "terrifying scene": "The dances, now fast, now slow, turn into an awful nightmare, with strange Hoffmannesque characters whirling to the time of a huge-headed Kapellmeister, who sits on a high stool and conducts four weird musicians" (Sullivan 1995: 269; Braun 1995: 97-103). His student, Alexander Tairov (1885-1950), staged his own production of *Der Scheleier der Pierrette* at the Free Theater in Moscow in 1913. Tairov collaborated with the choreographer Mikhail Mordkin (1880-1944) on the pantomimic action, and he rejected Meyerhold's grotesque expressionism, preferring instead to evoke a somber, tragic atmosphere, in which the actors were not bizarre caricatures of Meyerhold or the "nihilistic trivialities" of the "petty bourgeois" Schnitzler: they infused the scenario with their own "creative emotion" that elevated merely literary material to a place "where words cannot go." "For in moments of maximal emotional strain, *silence* sets in. [...] The pantomime is a production of such scope, such spiritual revelation that *words die*, and in their stead genuine scenic *action* is born [...]" (Kennedy 2001: 94). Tairov disliked Schnitzler's idea of dialogic gesturing, insisting that the performance of actions carried more emotional value than any gestural language or attempt to construct a dialogue out of gestures (Posner 2009; Vollmer 2011: 87). Alice Koonen (1889-1974), soon to be Tairov's wife, played Pierrette, and was always strongest in tragic roles; so it is quite likely that Tairov shaped his "emotional" concept of the scenario and of pantomime out of his desire to amplify the rather smoldering, melancholic theatrical virtues of the woman he loved—that is, Koonen pushed his approach to pantomime in a new direction. Tairov's production apparently enjoyed an enthusiastic reception, as did Meyerhold's, and both directors staged the pantomime again in 1916, although Meyerhold's revival was somewhat less

happy, due either to the director's decision to abandon the grotesque, Hoffmannesque style of the earlier version or to Sergei Sudeikin's (1882-1946) semi-expressionistic set designs (Sullivan 1995: 271-272). At his own Kamerny Theater in Moscow, Tairov revived his production with costumes designed by Vera Mukhina (1889-1953), which Sullivan (1995: 271) claims were done in a "cubist" style; but a photograph of the production does not confirm this assertion (Posner 2016: 103). Dassia Posner presents evidence of a rather opulent production in a glamorous Biedermeier style, even though the Kamerny struggled to maintain its existence. But the most significant thing about the production was Tairov's approach to pantomime wherein actors suffused movements with emotion by performing actions unique to the moment rather than according to a gestural code. As Tairov explained: "A gesture should have volume to it; it should be three-dimensional, like a sculpture," but actor and director have to "discover" the movement rather than treat it as a translation of the scenario language. The movement has an "interdependent" rather than dependent relation to the scenario, just as the music has an interdependent rather than dependent relation to the movement, for neither the pantomime nor the music is an "illustration" of the scenario (Posner 2016: 97-98). Koonen described Tairov's process of working with her on the final scene of the piece:

> *The door won't give. That's right. You raise your head. Glance at Pierrot. Horror. You freeze. Hold four beats. You hear the change in the rhythm? Rush to the window. Climb onto the windowsill. This is your last hope. A crescendo in the music. You hear it? That is your internal cry. Feel it. Behind your back is the dead Pierrot. Hold on to the frame. With despairing movements. Try to pull it toward you. Your hands as tense as strings. That's right. Good* (Posner 2016: 99).

Commentators on the production remarked on its unusual emotional power, even if not all elements of Tairov's aesthetic worked satisfactorily, and the piece became extraordinarily popular (Posner 2016: 103-105). Tairov revived it again in 1919, and in 1923, the Kamerny Theater visited Berlin with a low-budget version, which also visited Vienna in 1925, where Schniztler saw it and met with Tairov and Koonen, whose "miming and dancing were quite beautiful" (Schnitzler 1995: 257). The Kamerny performed the piece for the last time in Baku in 1930. In 1922, the obscure Russian émigré

company, Kikimora, based in Paris, brought a production of *Der Schleier der Pierrette* to Berlin, where it met with a mixed reception, the chief problem being the performance of the ballerina Sofia Federova (1879-1963) as Pierrette, which, in Elizabeth Anderson's choreography, unfolded too much like a clumsy ballet rather than a pantomime. But reviewers nevertheless noted numerous virtues in the production, especially in regard to Natalia Goncharova's (1881-1962) set and costume designs and to the movements of the performers: "The actors altogether have a grandiose realness, pureness of mime; their movements in walking full of tragedy, in dancing full of smoothness [...] the smoothness of movement found in animals" (Sullivan 1995: 274). The director, Anatoly Chabrov, "an ingenious actor and mime," who played Arlecchino, had also played the role in Tairov's production, and it seems he brought many of Tairov's ideas about emotion-driven pantomime to Paris, and thus for one Berlin spectator "nothing ever impressed itself upon my memory like 'Veil'" (Böhmig 1990: 141-142). However, for Tairov, *Der Schleier der Pierrette* was the starting point for the realization of a larger aesthetic project, the "synthetic theater," which would combine, in an "orchestral rhythm," scenography, lighting, costume, music, dance, opera, operetta, tragedy, harlequinade, gestural poetics, and even circus around a new, heroic concept of the actor as the true "author" of the theatrical experience rather than any literary text (Torda 1980: 490). Within the "synthetic theater," pantomime was only a component. Or rather: "emotional" pantomime was the basis for an expressionistic movement aesthetic that granted the actor greater creative control over speech on the stage, so that speech on the stage came from within the theater rather than from an external literary imagination. In subsequent Tairov productions, actors displayed an intensely rhythmic, "flowing," contrapuntal, and almost gymnastic use of their bodies in the performance of dialogue and the release of their voices. The "capriccio" production of *Princess Brambilla* (1920), an adaptation of Hoffmann's 1820 story, featured a fifteen-minute *commedia* pantomime in the second act, but a great deal of this spectacular "theatrical phantasmagoria" consisted of speech extrapolated or reconfigured from L. Krasovsky's 1915 translation of the German story (Torda 1980: 491; Posner 2016: 113-118). In his adaptation of Racine's *Phaedra* (1922), Tairov set the tragic action within an abstractly geometrical constructivist set design by Alexander Vesnin (1883-1959), supplemented with costume details inspired by Japanese culture, which, on the inclined

stage, made swift, darting movements, as appeared in *Princess Brambilla*, difficult to execute: the action followed a rhythmic "alteration of moves and static poses," in this respect somewhat resembling the ancient Roman pantomime. Tairov and his translator Valery Bryusov (1873-1924) basically rewrote Racine's text to allow the actors to speak a theatrically "archaic" language that, according to one commentator of the time, created the impression of "passing Racine, passing the Sorbonnes and all tombs, you suddenly come face to face with mythos" (Trubotchkin 2002). But Tairov never again directed a production that relied so entirely on pantomimic action as *Der Schleier der Pierrette*, which was, after all, itself littered with fragments of spoken dialogue. Even in the rarely discussed and under-documented *Rosita* (1928), an adaptation of a 1923 Ernst Lubitsch-Mary Pickford silent film historical melodrama, Tairov worked with the writer Andrei Globa (1888-1964) to include spoken dialogue, presumably extrapolated from the film's intertitles; the film itself, about the conflict between a poor street singer and the King of Spain, was an adaptation of an 1872 Massenet opera, but Lubitsch was quite successful in transforming a voice-based story into a visually exciting tale driven by sophisticated pantomimic action. Tairov had launched the project because, as he explained to his company, "melodrama is a revolutionary form of dramaturgy" and a "spectacle [...] accessible to large masses of spectators" (Tairov 1974: 18), but the project apparently misfired as the Soviet regime, inaugurating a "massive censorship regime" in 1928, adopted an increasingly skeptical attitude toward melodrama as a revolutionary expression of the proletariat (cf. Senelick 2014: 292ff.). The regime became fixated on a text-controlled theater. Tairov's idea of a synthetic theater depended on language, speech, voice that came out of the production process, not from a text conceived outside of the theater. The synthetic theater reassigned power over language to directors and actors, a reassignment that compelled the use of speech on the stage. Tairov could not achieve this goal by pursuing a more complex or "complete" aesthetic of pantomime than he did. He could not abandon speech on the stage, not because he didn't trust the body to be sufficient in itself as a source of action, but because he saw theater as the transformation, the re-writing or re-voicing, of a remotely inscribed language. His approach to theater brought him many difficulties with the Soviet regime after 1928, but it is highly doubtful that a greater focus on pantomime would have blunted accusations against him of

"formalism" and excessive "individualism." For Tairov, pantomime was a foreign mode of performance that Russian theater could transform into a uniquely modern Russian art. But despite the popularity of his productions, by 1928, the transformation, through pantomime, of foreign bodies into Russian bodies, so to speak, was not congruent with the Communist Party ideology of an entirely internal revolutionary transformation of a society that contained within it bodily movements and significations unique to its peculiar historical moment and political destiny.

Meanwhile, Schnitzler's dramas *Liebelei* (1895) and *The Affairs of Anatol* (1893) had been turned into silent films by Danish and American film companies in 1914 and 1921 respectively. Although his attitudes toward these film adaptations and toward film itself were always ambivalent, from 1911 he nurtured a desire to write film scenarios, composing his first screenplay in 1913 and another in 1920, neither of which got made into films (Wolf 2006: 116-120). In 1919, an actor and a director from the Vienna Volkstheater approached him about making a movie of *Der Schleier der Pierrette*, but the project remained dormant until 1921, when the Viennese Alliance film company proposed to make a film of the pantomime. Schnitzler wrote—or rather, dictated—the screenplay, but the film was never made (Wolf 2006: 123-125). In the screenplay, Pierrot, Pierrette, and Arlecchino go by the names Hans, Marie, and Melingo, and the story concludes with Marie consciously swallowing the poison from the glass, which Hans does not knock from her hand, creating a suicide rather than a fatal seizure of madness. Schnitzler worked on three more silent film scenarios, one at the invitation of an American film company and another ("Traumnovelle") in collaboration with the Austrian director G.W. Pabst, but none of these got filmed either, although others succeeded in bringing to the screen several of his literary works. It is evident that Schnitzler in his scenarios attempted to think out these narratives cinematically, but he was perhaps more successful at incorporating cinematic thinking into his literary writing, as in *Traumnovelle* (1926) and in *Schleier*, wherein he could probe psychological states that somehow exposed a "crisis" of language: dreams, fantasies, memories. Schnitzler saw pantomime and film as especially suited for representing dream imagery in which people speak but the dreamer does not hear the words or the words are indecipherable. But he also saw dream imagery as a cryptic form of dialogue, which is why he wrote his pantomimes in the form of gestural dialogues and why, too, it was

necessary that the pantomime contain some spoken dialogue (or intertitles) to make the dream comprehensible *as a story* to those who were merely observing the dream and not in it. The technique of gestural dialogue infused with fragments of spoken dialogue was perhaps even more congenial in Schnitzler's only other pantomime, *Die Verwandlungen des Pierrot* (1908). In this piece, entailing a prologue and six scenes, Pierrot constantly appears before a woman, Katharina, who is engaged to another man, Eduard, and she consistently expresses displeasure with his appearances. Pierrot quits his job as a nightclub entertainer, although the daughter of his employer, Anna, is in love with him. Wherever Katharina goes, always in the company of Eduard, her mother, and father, she sees Pierrot, disguised as someone else, as Pierrot in a clown act, as a gentleman in a fairground, as a photographer hired to take Katharina's picture, as a fortuneteller, as a drummer in the Prater amusement park. Katharina becomes so disturbed by these appearances that she attempts to drown herself, but Pierrot shows up and prevents this from happening. Anna and her father enter the scene, and Pierrot attaches himself to her, while Katharina, "smiling bitterly," extends her hand to Eduard. The two pairs move away from each other, but Katharina and Pierrot turn to look at each other. They see each other "at once still full of memory, in tenderness and bitterness—then in a strange, eternal farewell" (Vollmer 2012a: 167-181). Katherine Arens has observed that the pantomime creates great uncertainty about whether Pierrot pursues Katharina or Katharina imagines Pierrot as someone who can take her beyond "her fixed life, and her assumptions." "Do we have a stalker or an obsessed woman?" (Arens 2015: 218-219; cf. Vollmer 2011: 100-110). *Die Verwandlungen des Pierrot* is a sophisticated, subtle, and witty exploration of how desire confuses the distinction between reality and fantasy, and for this reason the text has provoked abundant commentary from literary scholars. The spoken dialogue may seem superfluous and the gestural dialogue overly obligated to a "word drama" concept of action (Vollmer 2011: 106), but Schnitzler does display a gift for elevating pantomimic narration into complex psychological zones. Yet this pantomime lacks a retrievable production history; it is very difficult to locate any evidence of its existence on stage. With its eerie blurring of distinction between reality and fantasy, the scenario perhaps makes too uncertain if the work is tragic or comic for theater artists to feel confident about staging it. Whatever the reason, and in spite of the theatrical success

of *Der Schleier der Pierrette*, Schnitzler wrote no more pantomimes, and with his abandonment of the genre, Pierrot basically disappeared as a figure in Germanic pantomime.

In 1916, the Munich novelist and playwright Lion Feuchtwanger (1884-1958) published a "pantomime in five scenes," *Pierrots Herrentraum*, set in medieval Spain with a much smaller cast than Schnitzler required for either of his pantomimes. His friend, the composer Adolf Hartmann-Trepka (1884-?), wrote music to accompany the performance of the scenario, which seems to have enjoyed only one production, in Munich in 1917. But the piece is only partially a pantomime; much of it consists of spoken monologues, spoken dialogues, and songs interrupted by pantomimic sequences, reinforcing the impression that Feuchtwanger lacked confidence in pantomimic action to drive the narrative (Vollmer 2012a: 245-262). The Munich production failed to impress reviewers, who generally concluded that instead of creating a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, Feuchtwanger had made something that was confused about what it should be, neither pantomime nor drama nor music theater (Vollmer 2011: 165-167). About the same time, Feuchtwanger completed his three-act drama *Jud Süß*, which also saw a Munich production in 1917. The play, a monumentally talky piece, full of aria-like speeches for almost all of the many characters, then received productions in several German cities and in Vienna. But in 1919, he withdrew the play from further performances because he felt dramatic form did not allow him to develop sufficient psychological depth in the characters, and transformed the story into a thick and immensely popular novel in 1922, which convinced him not to write any more for the theater, although he did mentor the young Bertolt Brecht and then collaborated with him, rather quarrelsomely, on a couple of theatrical projects—*Edward II* (1924) and *Hastings* (1927): he lacked compatibility with the modernist (expressionist) use of theatrical speech as a violent, shattered overcoming of a silence controlling what could or should be spoken.

Perhaps Austro-German pantomime could not prosper as long as it tried to produce Pierrots that were more "serious" than the decadent Pierrots constructed by the Parisian Parnassians and Symbolists of the 1890s, even if no one could confuse Germanic Pierrots with French. The Austrian journalist Rudolf Holzer (1875-1965) wrote only one small pantomime, *Marionettentreue* (1899), but, with music by Rudolf Bauer (1869-1925), it managed to enjoy nine performances at the Vienna Opera in

1906-1907. In this decorative, hothouse piece, set in a preposterously elegant Paris and requiring at least twelve performers, Pierrot vacillates between two women, the snobbish, fashion-mad Pierrette and the "rococo shepherdess" Silvette, until he decides he is better off with Silvette. Aside from Holzer's skill at building an amusing or charming, if not really funny, narrative around purely pantomimic action, the piece is peculiar for its odd references to modernity, such as the setting of one scene in a rail station and the presence of an automobile, in a story that feels as if it has been retrieved from the eighteenth century. But *Marionettentreue* did not take Pierrot any further than he had already been with the Parisian Decadents. Pierrot found another Austrian sponsor in Karl von Levetzow (1871-1945), whose entirely speechless *Die beiden Pierrots* (1900) first appeared in 1901 on a program of the newly launched Berlin cabaret Überbrettl, owned by another Austrian, Ernst von Wolzogen (1855-1934). In addition to a fairly large cast, *Die beiden Pierrots* features an amazingly detailed, naturalistic set representing Pierrot's opulent bourgeois studio overlooking the harbor of an Italian city "somewhat like Genoa"; complex lighting instructions assist in dramatizing action that unfolds from mid-afternoon to around midnight, and it is startling to suppose that a cabaret theater would have the resources to produce this forty-minute piece within a variety program consisting of several other pieces. But Levetzow was the new program director, replacing Hanns Heinz Ewers, so he probably made things happen for the production that his authorship alone could not. Pierrot labors alone at his desk on a musical composition, oblivious to his family locked outside. When he starts playing on the piano the music he has composed, his son, "little Pierrot," sneaks behind a door to listen enrapt. He punishes his son harshly for disrupting his reverie, and little Pierrot retreats into the shadows. The rest of the family then invades the studio, three boys dressed as Pierrots and three girls dressed as Pierrettes. Pierrot orders them to get their instruments and form an orchestra, but when he discovers that little Pierrot is missing, he demands that the boy play his violin, but he says he can't. Pierrot's wife brings into the scene her friend, "a blue Mephisto," and Pierrot quickly succeeds in winning an enormous amount of money from the man in a card game, although Mephisto and Pierrot's wife have initiated an amorous relation. When the ecstatic Pierrot leaves to deliver his music manuscript, the family transforms into a demonic tribe, the boys become blue Mephistos and the girls harlequinettes, while the wife becomes a blue-

white Colombinette. They grab "fantastic music instruments" from the wall and create a cacophonous music—"a true pandemonium." The wife and children decide they want to leave with Mephisto on a ship for America to start a new life. But they must steal the great treasure that Pierrot has stored in a chest, where little Pierrot has hidden. But little Pierrot will not leave. The family leaves with all the gold. When Pierrot returns, he ignores little Pierrot's attempts to explain what has happened. Then he becomes aware of the destruction caused by the pandemonium—the family has torn up his musical masterpiece. He realizes that his wife and children have taken all his money and departed for America. Deeply depressed, he contemplates suicide with a revolver. But then he hears the beautiful violin music performed by his son on the terrace. The music releases Pierrot from his despair. Little Pierrot hands his father a hand harp, "like the minnesingers" used, and the two of them, "in a march-like yet lyrical, melancholic manner the two of them step out" into the moonlit city (Vollmer 2012a: 140-149). The piece dramatizes a fundamental incompatibility between artistic creativity and family happiness; Laurence Senelick (1990: 1296) apparently even sees in it a veiled allusion to homosexuality as the artist's alternative to distracting conventional domesticity. Filled with complicated ensemble pantomime and imaginative use of props, *Die beiden Pierrots* requires quite sophisticated actors, musicians, and scenic technicians. Though the "pandemonium" scene is demonic, the piece is not funny or even amusing: an intense, sinister melancholy suffuses every moment and amplifies the sense of a fateful passage into darkness. That the piece should find its audience in a cabaret is therefore a bit surprising. Wolzogen's ambition was to create and control a Berlin cabaret industry that would compete with the cabarets formed in Paris in the 1880s. Berlin audiences, he believed, wanted variety and economical compression of ideas in their entertainments rather than ponderous, expansive dramas that smothered the spectator in elaborate, tiresome talk. At the same time, he claimed he could provide performances that discerning audiences would take seriously as art (Jelavich 1993: 45-46). Hermann Bahr published an encouraging review of Levetzow's pantomime, claiming that Levetzow made a "serious art" of pantomime, an art that was new to the Germans. In *Die beiden Pierrots*, Levetzow bestowed a "Dionysian" element on pantomime, "a shudder of ancient tragedy," which distinguished German pantomime from French models of the art (Bahr

1903: 161-162). But Richard Wendgraf, in *Das litterarische Echo* (1902 Vol. 4: 206), complained that he could not follow the action of the piece and only the final scene had any clarity or emotional weight. Pantomime, he asserted, was the art of "romantic people," the French and the Italians, for whom gestural communication was so pervasive in daily life that they could create from it intelligible physical action. The "German races," however, refrain from gesturing except to signify the "strongest emotions," and thus a German pantomime "must limit itself to the most extreme affects." "*Die beiden Pierrots* brings the death sentence to the project of creating a German pantomime." But the death sentence fell elsewhere. The Überbrettl closed after only a year of operation. Treating investors and performers unscrupulously, Wolzogen attempted to establish a cabaret syndicate in Berlin, but a multitude of competitors out-maneuvered him, and he retired from the business in 1904. Many commentators complained that Wolzogen's shows had not improved Berlin theater culture but had debased it. "The police report of February 9 [1901] noted that the well-educated and culture-hungry clientele which Wolzogen had predicted for his enterprise had failed to materialize [...] 'one does not see members of the upper educated classes and literary circles attending the performances in great numbers'" (Jelavich 1993: 47-48). No one could claim that Levetzow's pantomime wasn't serious or lacking in artistic ambition. But it seems to have demonstrated that pantomime, serious or otherwise, had no place in the Berlin or even German cabaret, for after *Die beiden Pierrots*, pantomime completely disappeared from cabaret and found much more hospitable opportunities in the theater and film.

Levetzow cultivated large ambitions for pantomime, at least at the beginning of the century. In 1902, he published *Pierrots Leben, Leiden und Himmelfahrt*, a huge pantomime in seven big scenes or acts, which he had written in 1899-1900. This work depicted seven facets or episodes of Pierrot's varied life: he desires but loses Colombine to a soldier, who deserts her; he obtains advice from the Woman in the Moon; he becomes involved with an adulterous king (Colombine is his mistress) and queen; he is a farm worker; he is the apprentice and rival of an artist; he shovels snow at the castle and attempts to stir his fellow workers against the king; finally, he decides to accept execution from the king, but the king and his entourage merely mock him and tie him to a sled: he freezes to death, and when Colombine and the king come upon his body, they coldly retreat to the

palace. The Woman in the Moon appears, her dance awakens him, they embrace, and she leads him to a new life on the moon. Pierrot fails to fulfill any of his desires or ambitions. He loves without ever being loved, his talent as an artist is totally rejected, every action he takes is profoundly misunderstood, and he always ends up alone, redeemed only by a creature of his fantasy, the Woman in the Moon. In performance, this pathetic tale requires spectacular scenic resources. In the farm scene, for example, the text indicates that the spectator see on stage pigs, ducks, chickens, a cow ("with full udder"), "dung heaps," and a stork nest with storks. But perhaps the most curious aspect of the piece is the use of rhymed verse to accompany the action. The verse acts as a kind of voiceover to describe emotions, passage of time, and narrative circumstances. In this respect, the poetic language is quite similar to the *interpellator* in ancient Roman pantomime and to Wague's idea of the "cantomime." But with some stanzas, the author indicates line by line the gestures or actions that should accompany the speaking of the line:

> *The Queen has already been conquered internally; She has fled into the corner and awaits Pierrot; but not anymore Queen, only a woman, she seems to be self-contradictory (1, 2), and as Pierrot now goes after her (2), the Queen grips the curtain (3) to slowly slide down (4, 5); Pierrot rushes at her and throws her without understanding the game (6, 7), so that the Queen tears down the curtain. Moonlight falls brightly (8), Pierrot returns with horrified arms. The queen is, with veiled eyes, partly covered by the fallen curtain, sunken expectantly onto the bed.*
> *1 There, but resisting*
> *2 To submit with dignity,*
> *3 She clasps onto the curtain,*
> *4 In order to keep fighting,*
> *5 And then goes down slowly.*
> *6 But Pierrot wants to force her,*
> *7 And he throws himself strongly into serious struggle.*
> *8 - Then the tent collapses,*
> *9 Through the window of which bright moonlight falls.* (Levetzow 1902: 68-69)

But despite the ambition, innovation, and dramatic power of the piece, it seems never to have received a performance either whole or in part. A favorable reviewer in *Das Kunstheater* (1902: 121) lamented the lack of German theaters with the technical resources and acting talent to stage the work. The piece, however, anticipates silent film in its scenic and narrative organization, and it reads like a scenario for a pantomime requiring another, larger medium than one that the public has assigned to it. So the piece is important in showing how pantomimic imagination could reach a tragic dimension only by inventing another medium for it. In effect, *Pierrots Leben* implies either that pantomime needs redefinition or that pantomime of a serious, ambition kind will redefine theater.

Levetzow elaborated at length on this point in a three-part essay, "Zur Renaissance der Pantomime," published in the new cultural journal *Die Schaubühne* in 1905. There he observed that Germans, indoctrinated to believe that pantomime is a form of burlesque, clown show or acrobatic act, had no awareness of pantomime as a powerful, "Dionysian" art invented by the Greeks to create an idealized image of humanity, although he accused the Romans of debasing the art with commercial aims and "Priapism" (Levetzow 1905: 126-128). He proposed that a "Dionysian" Renaissance of pantomime entailed the convergence of three modes of gesture: bodily, scenic, and musical. Bodily gesture was unique to the performer; it was specific to the moment of its performance and in relation to the scenic environment and the music. It was not a translation of words into physical movements according to a gestural code that cultures such as Italy and France have developed and which has resulted in the debased, artistically worthless *commedia* pantomimes (129, 195). But pantomime, he contended, must avoid contemporary settings and references, for it must exist in a symbolic world outside of historical markers, as an "epic" of an abstract level of human experience. The point of pantomime was to reveal ideas located in the body rather than in language, because words were instruments of deception, the material of lies—an intimation of the "movement never lies" statement that Martha Graham ascribed to her father. Movement was "understandable," not as a translation, but as an action or as the expression of "a peculiar inner condition" that does not require speech for its disclosure or which speech discloses inadequately or which speech conceals and instead constructs as a veil of lies (Levetzow 1905: 159-161). Nevertheless, pantomimic narrative has its "origin" in a

"lyrical" imagination, creates "dramatic" authority through the movements of the actor, and achieves the Dionysian fusion of the three gestural modes through the synthesizing figure of the director (129, 196-197). Although Levetzow develops all these points in much detail, the essay conveys the impression that the author has not so much clarified how "Dionysian" pantomime would work as he has articulated a deep disillusionment with an inundation of speech on the stage that has failed to deliver a mysterious, liberating theatrical experience. Levetzow, however, seemed unable to implement the pantomimic Renaissance. In the Viennese journal *Der Merker* (Heft 8, 25 January 1910: 329-339), he published a condensed version of his 1905 essay and a one-act "mimic tragedy," *Die Sphinx*, set in a late medieval Prague, about a fanatically possessive alchemist who hypnotizes his scholarly apprentice (Pierrot); the scholar and the alchemist's wife, Miranda, are in love, but under the spell of "the sphinx," the scholar stabs Miranda to death, and when the scholar realizes what the alchemist has done, he sets fire to the alchemist's laboratory. The piece resembles the kind of proto-expressionistic horror film that Hanns Heinz Ewers might concoct a few years later, but it never achieved performance. Subsequently, Levetzow abandoned pantomime and devoted himself to the writing of plays and libretti.

Expressionist Pantomime

But Levetzow's writings did accurately proclaim a blossoming, if not exactly a Renaissance, of pantomime in the Austro-German theater. What Levetzow did not acknowledge was that the blossoming depended on Austro-German theater abandoning Pierrot and the exhausted French obsession with preserving pantomime within the *commedia* format. The German Frank Wedekind (1864-1918) was perhaps the first to grasp this point. Pantomime, ballet, and circus inspired him when he visited Paris in 1890, and in the mid-1890s, he composed four pantomimes, all with fantastic fairytale or rococo settings, numerous flamboyantly exaggerated characters, and manifold elaborate costumes, props, and musical effects (cf. Vollmer 2011: 176-206). The production scale of these pantomimes easily exceeded that of any of the Cercle Funambulesque productions, but Wedekind, unlike so many of the Austrians, diligently worked at getting his pantomimes performed. The composer Richard Strauss briefly attempted to write music for a couple of Wedekind's pantomimes, but when he lost

interest, Wedekind devised his own musical arrangements (Daub 2016: 274). The most popular of these pantomimes has been *Die Kaiserin von Neufundland* (1897, but composed around 1895), which, containing thirteen major roles that cannot be double cast and a great many smaller roles, requires the resources of a quite large theater company. Didi Zedeus, the royal physician to Filissa, Empress of New Foundland, recommends that she marry to improve her health. She reviews suitors: an adoring poet, Napoleon, a scientist-explorer, but she swoons instantly for Eugen Holthoff, "the strongest man in the world." A long scene involves him lifting increasingly heavy weights and demanding more and more money to lift them, while Filissa and her finance minister extract the money from merchants, workers, and beggars. Filissa becomes so "demonic" with passion for Holthoff that her ministers lock her up in a cage and send her away with the strong man. The final scene unfolds in a dance hall "of the lowest rank." Eugen gambles with the money he has received from Filissa, but he doesn't win. He dances with Laura, but another woman, Hulda, enters and succeeds in seducing him. Filissa appears and signifies her disappointment in the dissipated Holthoff, who ignores her. Laura and Hulda struggle, while Filissa attempts to restore the strong Holthoff by urging him to lift a weight. But Holthoff, in an alcoholic daze, ends up dropping the weight on his foot, while Filissa, profoundly disgusted with him and herself, strangles herself with her own hair (Vollmer 2012a: 74-104; cf. Segel 1987: 168-171; Wedekind 1982: 233-267). It is a comic tale of degradation. The intersection of erotic passion and self-destruction was a theme that Wedekind developed more elaborately and intensely in his Lulu plays. "We have in this pantomime a quite broadly drawn caricature of passionate love, in which erotic satisfaction and the elevation of the comic are treated as equal: balanced weights" (Kutscher 1922: 310-311). It is astonishing that Wedekind was able to tell this story entirely through pantomimic action, much of which derives from the assumption that sexual attraction is a kind of circus contest. The most innovative feature of his aesthetic is the idea of building drama around the conflict between "strong" and "weak" pantomimic actions. Characters bow and kneel, summon and dismiss with hand waves, lift, pull, and restrain, rise proudly or sink impotently, crawl or dance wildly, bite and kiss. Holthoff picks up the poet and dangles him out a window; Laura and Hulda engage in a wrestling match; Filissa carelessly stabs a page to death before she herself is thrown

into a cage; the dance hall owner throws out a drunken sailor and then grovels on the floor for money that Holthoff contemptuously sweeps off the table. Strong and weak actions co-exist in all of the characters: Holthoff may be the strongest man in the world and Filissa the woman with the greatest passion, but both end up utterly powerless and submissive to an overwhelming, self-destructive masochism. With his Wagnerian use of musical effects, Wedekind achieved a complexity of ensemble pantomimic action that almost no one had managed to imagine since the days of Cuvelier and Viganò.

But *Die Kaiserin von Neufundland* found a longer lasting life on stage than any other pantomime from the era. In a truncated form, with music by his song writing partner Hans Richard Weinhöppel (1867-1928) the piece had its premiere in March 1902 at the Munich cabaret Die Elf Scharfrichter, where Wedekind was one of "the eleven executioners" or directors. The production enjoyed numerous performances before moving, in 1903, to the Überbrettl cabaret in Berlin, where, as in Munich, the enterprise was in a state of financial collapse. The Munich Kammerspiele mounted a full-scale production in 1923, with music by Friedrich Hollaender (1896-1976) and Hollaender's wife, Blandine Ebinger (1899-1993), playing the Empress and Carola Neher (1900-1942) playing the male role Count Lea Giba, which inaugurated her preference for playing male roles or performing female roles in male attire. The Raimund Theater in Vienna staged the work in 1924, the Leipzig Stadttheater in 1929. Hans Harbeck (1887-1968) turned Wedekind's scenario into a three-act play in 1926, and Austrian composer Ernst Krenek (1900-1991) wrote an orchestral accompaniment for the scenario in 1927, but the production history for either of these works remains obscure. In 1978, Henning Brauel (b. 1940) composed a much larger orchestral score for a performance of the pantomime at the Bavarian State Opera. Before this, in 1972, the Wroclow Pantomime Theater, under the direction of Henryk Tomaszewski, had produced a version of Wedekind's scenario under the title *The Menagerie of the Empress Phylissa*, although when the company brought the production to New York City in 1976, *New York Times* theater critic Clive Barnes (1927-2008) condemned the show as a boring, sexist "disaster" (*NYT* 24 Feb 1976: 29). The English experimental writer David Gale (b. 1944) turned the Wedekind scenario into a libretto for an extravagantly grotesque BBC television opera, *The Empress* (1994), with avant-gardish music by Orlando Gough (b. 1953) and directed by Jane

Thorburn, but the singing in this production seems superfluous and even a pointless impediment to physical movement.

Despite his obvious, if expensive, gift for pantomimic narrative, Wedekind wrote no more pantomimes after 1895. He instead devoted himself to the writing of talk-besotted plays and occasionally verse and short stories. He never explained why he abandoned pantomime, but it is possible that he felt his pantomimic imagination had become too pornographic for the censorship-plagued theater of his time. One of his early (1892-1893) pantomimes was *Der Mückenprinz*, which was never performed. However, in his novella *Mine-Haha*, written in 1895 but not published until 1903, Wedekind inserted *Der Mückenprinz*, which the female narrator ascribes to "Ademar," whom she meets ten years later when she is twenty-two. The narrator describes her experiences at a mysterious school for "the bodily education of girls." From the age of four, students learn, from strict female instructors, only dancing, pantomime, acrobatics, and singing, with no knowledge of the world outside of the "park" in which the school is located. At the age of eleven or twelve, they perform a pantomime, *Der Mückenprinz*, in which they play adult characters of both sexes, including an old magician and male and female "mosquitos." The action takes place in a fairytale world. Prinz Lenore captures a male and a female dancing mosquito and imprisons them in a cage; these actions qualify him to love and then marry Ada, the daughter of the magician Hächi-Bümbüm. Lenore and Ada perform various erotic actions, kissing, lying together, undressing, and marrying, surrounded by court ladies, pages, and farm girls in glamorous costumes. Lenore then imprisons Ada in the cage and releases a winged mosquito, with whom he begin an erotic relation on the golden bed while also pursuing one of the court ladies. The mosquito pierces Lenore as he sleeps, causing his belly to swell as if he is pregnant, while the caged Ada claps her hands. Lenore summons a physician to deal with his swollen belly, but "nothing comes out" of his body. So Lenore beheads him. Hächi-Bümbüm then appears to release his daughter, but Lenore instead imprisons him in the cage with Ada and the other mosquito. While Lenore surrounds himself with more court ladies, the magician manages to break out of the cage, free his daughter, and turn the mosquito into a human. With a signal, Hächi-Bümbüm summons a swarm of mosquitos, who peck Lenore to death. As the court pages and the farm girls perform a bizarre dance, the magician sends his daughter to bed

with her new child. The girls perform this pantomime before an audience of cheering men who remain invisible to them, and none of the girls has any awareness of an erotic aspect to the performance. After the girls perform the pantomime 200 times, by which time they have become pubescent, the school releases them into the world without further consideration. *Der Mückenprinz* is apparently a kind of allegorical satire that uses the fairytale setting to blur distinctions between childhood and adulthood by treating "innocent" erotic actions as simultaneously pornographic. The piece represents the idea of a pantomime that is "unperformable," not because it asks too much of theater, but because it is performable only within a clandestine, male-controlled moral environment completely isolated from what most people think of as "society." Yet the pantomime in *Mine-Haha* seems to have provoked much more abundant scholarly commentary than any other Wedekind pantomime, only partly because, as an element of a literary text, it is more "accessible" than the actual performance of any Wedekind pantomime. Some commentators suggest that the story and the pantomime form a satire on the "education" or indoctrination of girls to become agile, silent, unknowing, "innocent" performers in male sexual fantasies of power over the opposite sex—that is, "unknowingly," the innocent-pornographic pantomime of sexual domination actually occurs everywhere within "society" (cf. e.g. Kolb 2009: 224-240; Hafemann 2010: 80-85; Gutjahr 2001: 94-97; Boa 1987: 192-195). But with *Der Mückenprinz*, Wedekind probably reached the limit of his pantomimic imagination as circumscribed by the society in which he lived; to sustain his gift for pantomime, he needed to live in a different society where the "silent" perfection of "bodily education" was not, in his mind, synonymous with powerless wordlessness.

The Austro-German abandonment of Pierrot proceeded with Hermann Bahr. *Der liebe Augustin* (1901) was an ambitious, three-act allegorical extravaganza about the legendary Viennese bagpiper Marx Augustin (1643-1685), who struggles to maintain his dignity, generosity, affability, and then his life in a crass, rapacious, plague-ridden Vienna of 1679, where money controls all motives for action and he must negotiate with the devil to find any relief from his miserable poverty (Bahr 1902). The piece, written for the opening of the Jung-Wiener-Theater zum liebe Augustin, a cabaret launched by Felix Salten, apparently suffered a dismal production and has never been performed since, although Bahr tried

unsuccessfully to interest Richard Strauss in composing music to accompany it (Schaller-Presser 2006: 8; Vollmer 2011: 258-260). A cabaret theater probably lacked the resources to stage the scenario. Performance of *Der liebe Augustin* requires a large cast, big crowd scenes, several dances, intricate musical cues, and spectacular scenographic effects, including the on stage transformation of an old female beggar into a formidable male devil. It was apparently a very costly venture to defeat Pierrot. But in adopting the folk figure of Augustin as his protagonist, Bahr, despite having repudiated his Pierrot of the 1892 *Die Pantomime vom braven Mann*, seemed to be seeking a distinctly Viennese Pierrot around which to build a uniquely Austrian pantomime aesthetic. This idea sank into complete oblivion. With *Das schöne Mädchen* (1902), Bahr's approach to pantomime was overtly modern and devoid of folkloric elements. The one-act scenario unfolds in a highly naturalistic manner, and nearly a fifth of the text describes in great detail the lobby of the grand hotel where the action takes place, which includes scenes occuring on a second storey. The protagonist is a tired "beautiful girl" who works as a servant in the hotel. The action depicts the efforts of several male hotel staff and guests to impose their sexual desires on her and her success in eluding them while performing her duties. At the end, as the church bells strike midnight, she takes a deep breath and steps out into the street, with her arms upraised "longingly" as the moon shines on the roof windows (Vollmer 2012a: 150-155). The piece largely shows how different men, from different positions within the hotel lobby, watch the girl and treat her as an object of discreet but persistent surveillance, even though she scarcely seems aware of them except when called upon to perform a routine hotel service. But the piece also places the spectator in the position of being complicit in the surveillance of the hotel lobby, for the male characters do not seem aware of each other as agents of surveillance of the girl. Although Bahr indicates the use of subtle, Wagnerian musical *leitmotivs* to differentiate the male characters, *Das schöne Mädchen* is an exceptionally "quiet" pantomime insofar as all the actions are subdued and without any flamboyance: "The beautiful girl appears in the room of the Englishman, which is on the first floor left of the corridor, fixes the bed and starts to close the window. The Englishman approaches her, taps her on the shoulder, then she turns around, with a questioning look, as he draws from his briefcase a five gulden coin, holds it before her, and when she refuses it, he draws a second, third, and fourth." Vollmer (2011: 262) does not regard

the piece as a "genuine pantomime" because the characters occasionally mime conversation that the spectator cannot hear, as in a silent film. But this assessment underestimates the innovative quality of Bahr's pantomime, for in this piece Bahr widened the definition of pantomimic action. He grasped that the performance of seemingly ordinary actions or chores turned dramatic when they became objects of surveillance; in this respect, his thinking resembled that of Bess Mensendieck. *Das schöne Mädchen* requires a documentary style of pantomimic action to show how surveillance is the basis of sexual harassment and how a "beautiful girl" cannot escape it, whether she is aware of it or not, even if her observers are unaware of it, and even if the spectator *is* aware of it. It is a quite complex and utterly strange piece of theater without requiring the far greater theatrical resources that Wedekind, Schnitzler, or Beer-Hofmann expected for their pantomimes, and far away from the Pierrot model of pantomime, yet it never seems to have received any performance, even though Hugo Felix (1866-1934) composed music for it. The piece was the second in a trilogy of pantomimes, under the title "Existences," that also included *Der liebe Augustin*. The scenario for the third pantomime, *Der Minister* (1903), is extremely difficult to obtain. Vollmer describes the one-act piece as a satiric farce, in which variously caricatured politicians and bureaucrats approach a bored minister with petitions. The action shows that the minister's approval of petitions depends on the success of petitioners in bestowing on him small gifts of hedonistic pleasure, such as cognac and cigars. "It is not the common good that lies in the minister's heart and for which he should bear concern, but his own personal well-being [...]. The satisfaction of bodily pleasures is for him more important than the burdensome, always repetitive offical responsibilities" (Vollmer 2011: 267). But like *Das schöne Mädchen*, *Der Minister* apparently has never been performed, and even its publication has sunk into oblivion. Yet despite its failure to have any impact on theater history, Bahr's trilogy remains important for reinforcing the idea that the "existence" of an Austro-German pantomimic imagination resulted from using material that did not depend on Pierrot and the *commedia* format. After *Der Minister*, however, Bahr wrote no more pantomime scenarios. No doubt his inability to interest cabarets (for which he claimed he wrote his pantomimes) in staging his trilogy contributed to his reluctance to continue working in the genre. But other projects and opportunities persistently

distracted him, and above all he lacked an overriding sense of commitment to pantomime to make a more powerful contribution to the art.

Perhaps the strongest Austrian commitment to pantomime came from Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874-1929), a precocious, aristocratic personality whose mandarin approach to pantomime emerged from a cautious, highly intellectual philosophical framework that actually prevented his commitment from being greater. Unlike other pantomime enthusiasts within the almost entirely Jewish *Jung Wien* group, Hofmannsthal was rigorously skeptical of the capacity of speech and even language to construct semantically or aesthetically significant representations of the world, an attitude he articulated suavely in the famous story "Letter of Lord Chandos" (1902), published in the Berlin newspaper *Der Tag*. The story masquerades as a 1603 letter of the fictional Lord Chandos to the real Francis Bacon, in which he elegantly explains why, after producing works of literary genius, he no longer wishes to write or even say anything, for "the language in which I might be able not only to write but to think is neither Latin nor English, neither Italian nor Spanish, but a language none of whose words is known to me, a language in which inanimate things speak to me and wherein I may one day have to justify myself before an unknown judge" (Hofmannsthal 2008: 79). Literary critics tend to treat the story as a kind of theory or at least an exalted symptom of the Viennese *Sprachkrise* at the beginning of the twentieth century. But Hofmannsthal showed less concern with revealing the limits of language to represent a transfigurative beauty than with the power of language to reach a threshold of a bodily reality that was attainable only through performance. Pantomime, rather than dance, enabled language to reach that threshold insofar as pantomime centered on physical actions, rather than movements, and insofar as pantomime was the bodily interpretation of a written scenario. In his 1911 essay "Über die Pantomime," Hofmannsthal proposed that pantomime retrieved an archaic, repressed image of bodily performance unfiltered or unveiled by language or any gestural vocabulary, as in dance. Hofmannsthal identified in pantomime a "pure gesture" that did not depend on language or a code to communicate the "true personality" of the body and to reveal a religious quality of symbolism (Hofmannsthal 1979a: 502-505). He asserted that pantomimic gestures were unique to the body that performed them, unlike dance, which regulated the movement of the body through steps and positions imposed upon the

performer, although he seems, as in a 1910 letter to the dancer Grete Wiesenthal, to have adopted Mallarmé's idea of pantomimic gesture as an enigmatic "hieroglyph" (Vollmer 2011: 34-35; Hofmannsthal 1979a: 505). On a theoretical level, Hofmannsthal's ideas about pantomime were neither original nor distinctive in articulating a modern philosophy of bodily performance. Vollmer (2011: 34-36) links Hofmannsthal's thinking about pantomime to philosophical ruminations on language, silence, and gesture by heavyweight intellectuals like Friedrich Nietzsche and Wilhelm Wundt, but Hofmannsthal was simply too uncertain in his view of pantomime to produce a theoretical statement that was anything more than a cautious, even shy justification for writing pantomime scenarios. He never stopped writing spoken dramas and opera libretti, and his ventures into pantomime depended more on his collaborations with performers like Grete Wiesenthal than on a governing aesthetic theory of bodily performance.

Inspired by Lucian's essay on pantomime, Hofmannsthal wrote his first pantomime, the one-act *Der Schüler* (1901), for performance at Salten's cabaret Zum lieben Augustin, but the performance never took place there nor at a subsequently scheduled performance, with specially composed music, at Wolzogen's Berlin Überbrettl cabaret in 1902, and Hofmannsthal even withdrew the scenario from publication, although the piece has nevertheless provoked a great deal of scholarly commentary that Vollmer helpfully summarizes in his own lengthy discussion of it (2011: 111-136; cf. Daviau 1968). Originally Hofmannsthal set the piece in the home of a rabbi living in the mystical realm of the sixteenth century Prague ghetto. But in the revised version, he removed all references to Judaism and made the rabbi a master alchemist, "Der Meister," although even without the Jewish references, the piece still retains a peculiarly Jewish atmosphere of supernatural scholasticism. In his gloomy, crypt-like home, Der Meister, immersed in the esoteric speculations of his many arcane books, uses the magical power of a ring on his index finger to command his own shadow and make the shadow his servant, who obediently kisses the master's foot, a very complex scenic effect that perhaps has yet to be achieved in the theater realistically. The Master's daughter, Taube, appears and interrupts the peculiar séance, but the Master's relation to his daughter is also peculiar: he asks her to dance for him, which she refuses to do, and he forbids her to see a man who stirs her affections and never appears. The Master's student desires Taube, but she scorns him, and the Master becomes impatient with

him because he does not understand a passage in one of the arcane books. The student plots with an unsavory character, Strolch, to murder the Master: Strolch will obtain the Master's treasure, and the student will gain the Master's ring. Taube, however, disguises herself as the Master so that she may rendezvous with her boyfriend. Strolch mistakes Taube for the Master and stabs her to death. When the student realizes the fatal mistake, he grabs the dagger and pursues Strolch. When the Master enters, he sees himself sitting at the desk reading his book, his *shadow*, to which he bows and dances around. "The phantom seems immersed in the sacred book, paying no attention to him, and he disappears full of awe into the alcove, leaving behind the silent reader" (Vollmer 2011: 105-115). Hofmannsthal writes some sections of the scenario as dialogue, but it is not clear if the actors actually speak the words or find gestures that convey the sense of the words. But the piece evokes a spectral atmosphere of profound misperception, almost hallucinatory, in which the characters, seeking a condition higher or "beyond" their sequestered world, completely misread each other's intentions, desires, and identities. Even the Master, striving to conjure a self that is obedient to his will, in the end can no longer recognize "himself." The piece also conveys the idea that a life devoted to reading, to deciphering the secrets embedded in writing, creates a phantom "self" within the reader, an "awesome," destructive self-perception, for what is "beyond" the magical writing is only death. Despite anticipating the popular German and Jewish preoccupation, during the era of Expressionism, with Jewish mysticism, particularly with the figure of the golem created by Rabbi Loew in sixteenth century Prague, *Der Schüler* remains unperformed. The technical challenge of the shadow scene is not a sufficient reason for this absence, nor is Hofmannsthal's ambivalence about the Jewish atmosphere. Hofmannsthal feared the piece too closely resembled Beer-Hofmann's *Pierrot Hypnotiseur* and was thus too derivative. As a result, Vollmer traces what he sees as connections between *Der Schüler* and the *commedia* tradition (2011: 111). But these connections only obscure the extent to which the pantomime radically deviates from the tradition; Hofmannsthal's removal of the Jewish references was an attempt to make the piece less radical. This piece, along with so many Austro-German pantomimes, was too radical in its performance aesthetic for the institutionalized theater of the time or subsequently, for that theater culture did not believe in a "crisis of language." On the contrary, the theater world did not believe the society

would take it seriously as a source of great intellectual power without speech, without the utterances of many voices, and without the speaking of far too many words to keep bodies from acting too strangely. Such was the ideology toward which Austro-German pantomime, as a product of a "language crisis," registered skepticism: the pervasive belief that the strength of nationalist feeling depended on "giving voice" in abundant measure to the unique and diverse elements within the language(s) that defined a nation, and that the chief function of theater was to affirm this belief—with an incredible amount of talk on the stage that would have been almost impossible for anyone in the Roman Empire to imagine. Perhaps by eliminating the Jewish references from *Der Schüler*, Hofmannsthal felt he was making pantomime more valuable to the affirmation of nationalist sentiment than to the dissemination of skepticism toward nationalism itself (cf., Gilman 2009: 54-73).

Suffused with uncertainty about the mission of pantomime, Hofmannsthal took his time attempting his next pantomime, *Amor und Psyche*, which he wrote a decade later, in 1910. During that time, he achieved distinction within European literary culture for adapting or rewriting (that is, streamlining) classic dramas by Sophocles and Thomas Otway. He also began his famous collaboration with the composer Richard Strauss (1864-1949) by turning his own version of *Elektra* (1903) into a libretto for Strauss's violently modernist and hugely popular opera (1908). Hofmannsthal's return to pantomime, however, was the result of another collaboration with the dancer Grete Wiesenthal (1885-1970), a prominent figure in the upper reaches of Viennese cultural life who befriended nearly all of the most significant artists, authors, journalists, and musicians in the city (Fiedler 2009: 127-128). A member of the Vienna Opera ballet corps since 1902, she achieved distinction by performing waltzes with her two sisters, but her ambitions carried beyond infusing the cozy, decorous nostalgia of Viennese waltz lyricism with a carefree, uncorseted exuberance. She began performing solo dances in 1908, but she lacked the imagination to construct large narratives through dance or pantomime. The same year, she appeared as the tragic Dwarf while her sister Elsa was the beloved Infantin in a Viennese production of Franz Schreker's ballet-pantomime *Der Geburtstag der Infantin*, based on a story by Oscar Wilde and set in seventeenth century Spain (Steiert 2009: 168-170). Max Reinhardt recruited her for the Berlin production of the extravagant fantasy pantomime

Sumurun in 1910, although he cast her sister Bertha for the role in the film version made the same year. Wiesenthal's elegant, melancholic physical beauty inspired many artists, including Hofmannsthal, who, having first seen her perform in 1907, wrote a letter, then a poem and then a fictional letter to her that captured her attention. He never developed a closer friendship with any other performer, and she referred to him as her "true spiritual dance partner" (Schmid 2009: 151). She motivated his return to pantomime. Yet they collaborated for only about six years, beginning with *Amor und Psyche*. In separate accounts, Hofmannsthal and Wiesenthal described how they composed the scenario in a woodland area near Vienna in the summer of 1910: Wiesenthal danced and Hofmannsthal incorporated what he saw into the text or he gave her words and she interpreted them in pantomime (Schmid 2009: 152-153). In effect, Wiesenthal was also an author of Austrian pantomime insofar as certain pantomimes would not have existed without her participation.

Amor und Psyche unfolds in three brief scenes, all of which take place between a "radiant twilight" and the onset of night in the room of a villa illuminated by mysterious lamps. Amor appears like a veiled statue, "like a god," on an altar. Psyche prepares for his "coming" by painting her face and waiting anxiously, trembling. She approaches the altar with a mixture of excitement and fear. A flame rising from the altar intimates his presence, but he remains invisible to her, and she searches for him, while he glides behind her. She tries to guide him toward the light of the lamp, but Amor warns with his hand not to move into the light, for gods are "never more powerful than when they command, when they forbid." Terrified, she glides back into the shadows, throws her arms around him; they kiss and sink into a slumber. When she soon awakes and finds him still sleeping, she moves, "half unconsciously [...] like a maenad," to bring the lamp closer to him. But when the light touches him, a flame springs up, and he disappears, while she becomes "cramped" with the realization of facing an "infinite punishment." The second scene takes place in an "underworld" of "pale light," neither day nor night, with shadows swirling about her "like worms," although these are simply "the shadow of herself." Psyche dances with these shadows, but it is a "dark torment" against which she struggles, as if she is trying to "throw out a part of herself." She curls herself on the floor "like a caterpillar" while the shadows grow higher. Then she spreads her arms and lies peacefully, "like one exhausted rather than victorious." As Psyche lies

gloriously radiant, "as if made of glass," Amor suddenly appears in a golden light, but seems shocked, even terrified by the frozen Psyche. He tries to revive her with his touch, but when she awakens, she looks at him uncertainly, as if she is not sure who he is. She rises, Amor steps away from her, then engulfs her in his arms. Their arms become like wings that carry them away into "eternity," darkness (Hofmannsthal 1911: 7-14).

Amor und Psyche functions as an abstract of the complicated ancient myth described by Apuleius, not a comprehensive retelling of it, yet as such it perhaps more closely resembles the spirit and style of ancient Roman pantomime than anything else produced by Austro-German culture. Gabriele Brandstetter (2007: 299) claims that in performing the piece Grete Wiesenthal developed a unique "body language" that involved a "binding of movement," a tension between movement and pose, an intoxicated "kinesis" interrupted by a sudden stillness, which implies a further affinity with the ancient Roman model of pantomime performance.



Figure 86: Grete Wiesenthal and Lilly Berger in Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Amor und Psyche*, Berlin, 1911, costumes designed by Erwin Lang. Photo: Becker and Maass, from Wiesenthal (1911: 27).

The piece feels like a pantomime of a woman's sexual fantasy, a masturbatory reverie. The dance with the shadows in the second scene seems like an orgasmic exorcism of an imaginary male who "torments" the dancer. The woman wants to give herself to a man she cannot see, whom she can only imagine: he disappears with every effort to shine a light on him, to reveal him. The idea is that she overcomes her guilt about desiring a

man she imagines rather than a man she knows and finds salvation in the darkness of her psyche. It is a narrative that was utterly unique in theater, and in constructing this narrative, Hofmannsthal and Wiesenthal displayed exceptional imagination in the sequencing of simple, Mensendieck type actions that carried great symbolic resonance in relation to the sultry environment. As with *Der Schüler*, the most complex action is actually the "wormlike" movements of the dancing shadows. Though derived from ancient mythology, *Amor und Psyche* exudes a mood of modernity, a sense of affinity with the emerging Viennese psychoanalytic investigation of psychosexual behavior and release from repression. The performance of the scenario in Berlin in 1911, under Wiesenthal's supervision, further complicated the sexual dimension by having a woman, the Austrian actress Lilly Berger, play the role of Amor. Moreover, Berger wore a tiara, a long, white dress, and a sort of cape resembling translucent wings, a costume designed by Wiesenthal's husband, the artist Erwin Lang (1886-1962) [Figure 86]. These casting and costume choices turn the scenario of Amor's sexual fantasy into a homoerotic fantasy, particularly when one considers that for the second piece on the program, Hofmannsthal's *Das fremde Mädchen*, Wiesenthal found a male actor to perform a male role. However, none of the critics who reviewed the production, for the most part negatively, make even the slightest allusion to this implication, as if homosexuality could be represented as long as no one mentioned it (cf. Vollmer 2011: 332-335). Astoundingly, though, neither Schmid in 2009 nor Vollmer in 2011 in discussing the production make any remark on the peculiarity of the casting and the costume for Amor, as if such peculiarity resulted from the application of some sort of "convention" that needed no explanation, even though the evidence for such a convention does not exist. Even if such a convention existed then, why did it exist and why would Wiesenthal have employed it? This recent "overlooking" of such obvious details is hard to explain. Perhaps Grete Wiesenthal has become such a revered historical figure that any implication of her boldly exploring homosexual fantasy is simply too risky to advance within the institutionalized Austro-German discourse about her. The critics of the production complained about the now lost music by the blind Viennese composer Rudolf Braun (1869-1925) or about Wiesenthal's stylized performance style or mostly about Hofmannsthal's limitations as a pantomime scenarist, although none of the critics could claim much

experience of pantomime. The composer Max Marschalk (1863-1940), not much impressed with Wiesenthal's performance, remarked that her dance with the shadows resembled her "well-known springtime waltzes," yet he contended that the audience applauded the performances rather than the piece (Vollmer 2011: 334). In his correspondence, Hofmannsthal himself, despite some reservations about Wiesenthal's and Berger's performances, apparently found the production satisfactory, if not powerful or stirring; indeed, he saw it as the "beginning of a great success" (Vollmer 2011: 331). But *Amor und Psyche* was not a great success insofar as it had any other performances than Wiesenthal's 1911 production. Of course, hardly any of the few Austro-German pantomimes that actually reached stage had any performance history beyond the first performers who staged them, even though these were and remain among the most imaginative representations of pantomime for the stage in the twentieth century.

Hofmannsthal's *Das fremde Mädchen* was the second piece on the 1911 program. He began work on the seven-page scenario in 1909, but did not complete it until the end of 1910. He collaborated with Wiesenthal on the scenario at the same time they worked on *Amor und Psyche*, according to Wiesenthal (Schmid 2009: 153). The scenario was unusual for Hofmannsthal in that he set the action in an overtly contemporary setting; he gives none of the characters a proper name and inscribes a heavily expressionist atmosphere. In a luxurious restaurant, a young rich man and his girlfriend eat dinner while a gypsy band plays. The man and woman appear bored and detached from the opulent milieu and from each other. A sinister gang enters, led by an old woman and consisting of a hunchback, a one-armed man, a one-eyed man, and an "insolent youth with a cap." The gang approaches the couple and brings with it a shrouded "clump"; when they release the shroud, they reveal a beautiful, lean, but pathetic, "half-grown" girl, who rises from her knees and offers the young man a basket of violets. The young man rises and so does his girlfriend, but he seems petrified by the girl, who draws back as if "pulled by a string." The gang pulls away, "into the darkness," taking with them the girl, covered again with the shroud. The young man gives the old woman a pair of gold coins, but he remains fixated on the girl. In the next scene, the young man and his girlfriend go slumming in a sleazy bar, where they again encounter the grotesque gang. The old woman makes the girl dance for the young man, but the girl soon becomes "weak and pale," so the old woman pulls her

away and pours alcohol into her, after which she lifts her arms longingly and with "incomprehensible innocence." But the old woman pulls the girl behind a curtain that conceals a door in the wall through which the gang, except for the old woman, disappears into the night. The girlfriend remains terrified, as the old woman and an unsavory bar employee gaze at her earrings and bracelets. The young man, however, longs to follow the girl, but, tossing a gold coin to the old woman with the bottle, he follows his girlfriend into the fresh night air of the street. At home (it doesn't matter if it is the young man's home or the girlfriend's), the girlfriend, seeing that the young man remains distant from her, tries to fathom why he has fixated on the beggar girl. She acts toward him tenderly, seductively, although she is also scared of him. He seems to see only his vision of the beggar girl. A soft knock on the door precipitates the entrance of a servant, who announces a visitor: the old woman appears and hobbles toward the young man. She hands him a key, which he realizes opens the door to the beggar girl's room, but he draws a revolver and drives the old woman away. Yet he cannot resist following the old woman, and the girlfriend and the servant understand that he has escaped them. The final scene takes place in an ugly, ruined "corner" of the city, where the old woman knocks on the door of a crumbling tenement, while members of her gang lurk in the windows or shadows. The old woman invites the young man to enter, but he, with the revolver pointing at her, wants the old woman to bring the girl to him. When the beggar girl appears, she freezes when seeing the young man and signals that he should go away. The gang pulls her back inside, but the young man has "lost all caution," and knocks on the door, which half opens. But before he can raise the revolver the gang jumps on him. After several moments of desolate silence, the gang drags him into a grim alley, robbed, bound, and severely beaten. They disappear as dawn begins to emerge. The strange girl comes out of cellar door, on hands and knees, "like a fugitive animal." She approaches the seemingly dead young man, touches him, unbinds him, slowly revives him, and appears more like a woman than a girl. But as he returns to life, she grows weak and pale, then collapses at his feet. She is dead. The street fills with people going to work. They notice the young man beside the dead girl. And when they realize that she is dead, they respond with shock and suspicion toward the young man, who stands against a wall, shaking with an "inner frost," as the people on the street

stare accusingly at him and the girl lies "quietly and beautifully in the middle of the stones and knows nothing more" (Vollmer 2012: 199-204).

While the story is not especially original, Hofmannsthal introduces innovative scenic effects, such as presenting both interior and exterior places of action in the same stage set, so that interior and exterior pressures never appear mutually exclusive. Hofmannsthal also prescribes expressionistic lighting and costuming effects to create a distorted image of modern urban life. In the final scene, for example, a brightly lit street appears beyond the dark, degenerate alley and "corner" where the young man visits the beggar girl's abode; at the same time, the door to the abode opens up to reveal an alluring but sordid world. This combination of interior and exterior places of action within scenes bestows a powerful sense of depth to the pantomimic action. Moreover, Hofmannsthal imagines pantomimic actions in complex ways that go well beyond simply driving the narrative: "Here [the girlfriend] feels how firmly the other sits in his thoughts, and she is tender and more snuggly and takes his hand and gently releases the little piece of string from his hand and lays it somewhere, and he lets it happen, but in his thoughts is nothing but the strange girl; there she stands before him quite alive as if she had come out of the wall and turned to him in passing and moved her arms like a piece of thin but strong thread pulled them from behind." The first scene is especially impressive insofar as the author describes many actions happening almost simultaneously in the restaurant to create a dark, lurid, even depraved emotional environment that the young man and his girlfriend apparently find necessary to sustain their partnership. But the scenario shows that it is an illusion to believe that awareness of an external world, awareness of another social class can strengthen sexual pairing within a class. It is an illusion to believe that one social class can be the salvation of another, because class-defined actions and movements result from an invisible, controlling force, puppet strings pulled by Death, by self-destructive urges. Survival within one class depends on the sacrifice of what is beautiful in another class. In this respect, Hofmannsthal had moved well beyond Bahr's *Das schöne Mädchen* in using pantomime to construct a critique of social class relations, although his perspective could be considered politically conservative insofar as he presents class conflict or inequality as the result of an inscrutable, invasive, inescapable Death-puppeteer rather than a cause of it (cf., Schmid 1991).

At its Berlin performance in 1911 on the same program as *Amor und Psyche*, *Das fremde Mädchen* did not fare any better with the critics, who almost unanimously regarded the whole program as a failure, for which Hofmannsthal was mostly to blame. Wiesenthal, however, apparently did not regard the Berlin critics as reliable judges of her performances or of the scenario. In 1913, while touring in Sweden, she made the acquaintence of the film director Mauritz Stiller (1883-1928) and persuaded him to make a film of *Das fremde Mädchen*, presumably because Hofmannsthal's name added prestige that would help in securing an international audience for the film as part of the "Authorenfilm" strategy for elevating the artistic identity of cinema (Bachmann 2013: 220). The now lost 54-minute film, shot in Stockholm and financed by a consortium of Swedish theaters that bought the rights to the scenario from the Danish film company Nordisk, featured, except for Wiesenthal and the Norwegian Ragnhild Ovenberg (1885-1963) as the girlfriend, a Swedish cast and crew, including the young Gösta Ekman (1890-1938), later to achieve international fame playing the title role in F. W. Murnau's powerful silent film adaptation of *Faust* (1926). Stiller followed Hofmannsthal's scenario very closely and theaters used the music that cabaret composer Hannes Ruch, the pseudonym for Richard Weinhöppel (1867-1928), wrote for the Berlin stage production. In Sweden, where it appeared under the title *Den okända* (*The Unknown*), exhibitors advertised the film as "a dream play." The film seems to have contained only ten intertitles of a largely abstract character, such as: "Life had nothing to offer for the rich, pleasure-satiated man"; "Underworld"; "A beautiful flower grows in the lap of vice"; "Death – Liberation" (cf. Hiebler 2003: 443-454). Comparing photographs of the stage and film versions, Heinz Hiebler (2003: 449) concludes that the film somewhat diminishes Wiesenthal's "presence" by creating more authentic playing spaces and dynamic imagery. Reviewers in Stockholm and Malmö responded to the film negatively, complaining mostly about Wiesenthal's unpersuasive performance; one critic asserted that the film was not up to the standard of foreign productions (Svensk Filmdatabas *Den okända (1913)* Kommentarer 2017). The Swedes sold the film to distributors in Denmark, Germany, Austria, and the United States. In Berlin, reviewers displayed a divided attitude toward the film, with a critic for the *Berliner Börsen-Courier* (5 September 1913, Nr. 415) observing that Hofmannsthal's poetic, mystical scenario had been turned into sentimental "kitsch," and that Wiesenthal's "stylized, rhythmic

art" was completely inappropriate for silent film. But *Kinematographische Rundschau* (3 August 1913, iv) regarded the film as an "art work," the "film of a poet," "a truly poetic work in film," "engrossing from beginning to end," which revealed the "incomparable art" of Wiesenthal. Evidently assuming that Hofmannsthal wrote the scenario for film, the cultural journalist Ludwig Klinenberger (1873-?) proposed that Hofmannsthal had not yet mastered the technique of film drama; although many images "are very beautiful" and Wiesenthal "knows how to bind audiences to her great art," "many scenes are too repetitive and the action does not move forward strongly enough." "The audience for this drama was not satisfied," perhaps because the film required too much "literary education" to appreciate. He urged Hofmannsthal to direct his talent toward representing "paths of life" that benefit from the sound of "his wonderful and famous language." "We prefer to hear him" than "see him dead" on the screen (Kaes 1978: 107-108). In Vienna, the *Neue Freie Presse* (25 January 1914) was similarly enthusiastic: "tense action with interesting figures" well acted especially by Wiesenthal and Ekman. In the United States, *The Moving Picture World* (1913: 869) found the film a bit puzzling: "We do not dare commend it without reserve as a first-class offering for public amusement, because it is obscure even in its story, and though filled with scenes that show remarkable stage-craft and skillful acting, it will not be wholly understood, except by a very few"; even so, "the picture is full of art" and "we have had nothing at all like it [...] those underworld pictures are truly astonishing." Audiences for the film proved large enough for the Berlin film company Deutsche Bioscop to enter into a three-picture contract with the dancer to produce a "Wiesenthal series" of films, of which two were completed, though now lost: *Kadra Sâfa* (1914) and *Erlkönigs Tochter* (1914).

The success of *Das fremde Mädchen* may have strengthened Hofmannsthal's awareness of public and intellectual attraction to pantomime, especially in film, which, in a 1921 essay, he described as "a substitute for dreams" among those people, particularly city workers, for whom language, as "the instrument of a [de-natured] society," was a thing to fear, an apparatus of repression (Hofmannsthal 1955 IV: 46-50). But he was slow to develop actual pantomime projects and found dance projects somewhat easier to start, although even these he found difficult to complete, despite their intriguing themes or premises. In 1911-1912, he started eight ballets or pantomimes that he never completed, including the

pantomime *Der dunkle Bruder*, based on a story from *A Thousand and One Nights*, on which, after seven or eight pages, he was still working in 1928. After the release of the film *Das fremde Mädchen*, however, Hofmannsthal's ventures into pantomime not only declined in number, even as "fragments," but became much more oriented toward exotic fantasy and exquisite historicism and much less preoccupied with the dark undercurrents of erotic desire that pervaded *Der Schüler*, *Amor und Psyche*, and *Das fremde Mädchen*. His pantomimic imagination for the stage became less innovative on both the thematic and scenic levels, while his work in relation to silent film pantomime was more adventurous. Reinhardt's great success with the exotic and mystical pantomimes *Sumurun* (1910) and *Das Mirakel* (1912) could not urge Hofmannsthal to suppose that the future of stage pantomime lay in the expressionist style of *Das fremde Mädchen*, which German filmmakers would develop with such startling artistry and popularity after World War I. Yet Wiesenthal favored somber, tragic pantomime in her first two films for Deutsche Bioscop, made before the outbreak of war; indeed, in *Erlkönigs Tochter* she played a demonic fairy who comes between a man and his fiancée. At any rate, Hofmannsthal collaborated with both Reinhardt and Wiesenthal on his next pantomime, *Die Biene*, on which he began work in 1914, although he seems to have pondered the idea of bees invading human life for quite some time: in an 1896 poem, "Lebenslied," he wrote, "The dark swarm of wild bees/Took hold of his soul." Wiesenthal planned to direct the premiere of the piece in Berlin, but this did not happen, partly because the outbreak of war had upset theatrical production schedules, but also because Wiesenthal wanted more money for her work. Reinhardt and Wiesenthal saw pantomime as a more lucrative international theatrical venture than dance or drama because it did not depend on a commonly understood language or movement vocabulary. They wanted to work on a scale, with orchestral accompaniments, that required the use of opera houses rather than cabaret theaters, yet the subsidized opera houses saw no benefit to themselves in accommodating pantomime productions. To assist Wiesenthal financially, Hofmannsthal allowed her to publish his scenario under her name, and though those familiar with the project understood that Hofmannsthal was the author, it was not until the publication of volume 27 of the *Gesammelte Werk* in 2006 that his name finally became officially attached to the scenario and even to the concept, despite obvious evidence in his

correspondence that he was the guiding hand of the project (cf. Vollmer 2011: 342-345). In thirteen short scenes, *Die Biene* is a kind of fairy tale set in an exotic China of no specific historical location, but it bears some similarity to *Das fremde Mädchen* and *Erlkönigs Tochter*. A scholar works in his library while his wife keeps his children from distracting him. A bee enters the room, and when it nestles in a curtain, it transforms into an enchanting girl, with whom the scholar becomes smitten. The bee-girl appears again in subsequent scenes, urging him away from his wife. In Scene 5, he approaches a tree behind his house, from which he hears the hum of bees echoing from an alluring cavity. He enters and finds himself in a kind of pleasure palace of voluptuous eroticism, presided over by the Queen Bee fairy (Wiesenthal) who has seduced him. Despondent, the wife poisons herself before the enchanted tree. Gradually, however, the scholar becomes estranged from the draining life of the bee harem, and he returns to his home. But his children now see him as a stranger. He returns to the enchanted tree and sets it on fire, and in the flames he sees the ghost of his wife. The bees swarm around him, bringing death to the man who has destroyed their home. The ghost of the wife rises from her coffin to protect him, and the bees disperse onto the flowers that cover the ground. The scholar and his wife become one in death or in some kind of resurrection (it's not clear how this unity occurs) (Wiesenthal 1917). Wiesenthal invited Franz Schreker to compose music for the scenario, but he did not feel he was right for the project, so Hofmannsthal prevailed upon the German opera composer Clemens von Franckenstein (1875-1942), a longtime friend, although Wiesenthal was not happy with the collaboration. With a planned 1915 Berlin production an impractical proposition, Wiesenthal eventually arranged for a production at the Darmstadt Hoftheater in November 1916, which Vollmer (2011: 360) claims was "successful." But commentary on the production is quite difficult to locate, as is commentary on a March 1917 guest performance in Zürich. No one has performed the piece since then, although that can be said about almost all of the Austrian pantomimes, which even then the press and the established theater world regarded as a marginal, experimental fringe of a European literary culture that had great difficulty, despite or perhaps because of the expanding appeal of silent film, in seeing any advantage to speechlessness in a society it wished to define through the word. *Die Biene* presented adultery as a remote, decorative fantasy, a kind of "bewitching" illusion of transcending an otherwise

cavernous separation of refined, erudite, domesticated civilization from the purely sensational, instinctive, and amoral realm of nature. It was hardly a daring approach to the theme, even if the piece called for imaginative scenic effects, such as the transformation of bees into humans and a ghost formed of flames, and it is possible that *Die Biene* did not represent a superior treatment of material that Wiesenthal had already explored in the film of *Erlkönigs Tochter*. One does get the feeling that Hofmannsthal and Wiesenthal have become aware that stage pantomime now has a strong competitor in film pantomime, and that to compete with film, stage pantomime must become "richer" in visual design.

To achieve this richer visual design, Hofmannsthal and Reinhardt worked with a fairytale Chinese setting for what became Hofmannsthal's most popular pantomime scenario, *Die grüne Flöte* (1916), although the process of writing it involved so many collaborators providing input that Hofmannsthal did not want to publish the piece with his name because so many different versions of the text began to circulate (cf. Fiedler 1972). For this three-part scenario, Hofmannsthal amplified fantastic and decorative elements on behalf of a much more conventional story of sexual attraction. In an exotic, "Chinese" kingdom, a river landscape, the Princess Fay Yen is, along with twelve other princesses, the prisoner of the sorceress Ho and her brother, the magician Wu, and these slaves wear gold chains. They perform a dance with a golden net. Ho removes Fay Yen's chains so that she can perform a dance during the tea ceremony. But the distant sound of a flute interrupts the ceremony and causes restlessness among the slaves. The Prince Sing Ling appears, playing a green (jade) flute, but he is on the other side of the river. Fay Yen dances passionately to the music and, on the branch of a tree, stretches her arms out longingly to the Prince. Ho, however, captures her and clamps her in chains again. Sing Ling throws his flute into the river and considers drowning himself, but the river goddess rises up and holds his flute, signifying that she has bestowed some great power on him or his flute. In the morning, Wu shows alarm as Ho recounts in gesture the incident with the flute using a mysterious mirror. A storm gathers. Sing Ling arrives on the river and engages in a battle with Wu, who ensnares him in the net, precipitating the dance of the brother and sister. Sing Ling draws a sword, but Wu transforms into a bird. The Prince then pursues the sorceress, but Wu returns as a dragon. The river goddess then emerges with the green flute, and the music causes the dragon to flee into a

gold grotto, where he bursts into flames. The sorceress then dies and the magical realm "sinks away." Fay turns into a butterfly and the other princesses become bellflowers. Then the sound of the flute awakens the exhausted Prince and restores the butterfly and flowers to their human forms; he and the Princess embrace. The ensemble performs a "joyful round dance" to reinforce the idea that "music defeats evil" (Hofmannsthal 2006: 591-601). Hofmannsthal emphasized decorative details, such as that the scenery should resemble Chinese lacquer ware and that the princesses should wear gold and black costumes. Reinhardt engaged Ernst Stern (1876-1954), his regular scene designer, famous then and later for his brilliant expressionist decors for both stage and film. The music was by Mozart, heavily arranged by Reinhardt's Swedish musical director, Einar Nilson (1881-1964), later a musical director for the Warner Brothers film studio, and a Norwegian, Gyda Christensen (1872-1964), the director of Oslo's National Theater ballet school, did the choreography for the piece, which often was referred to as a "ballet pantomime" because it contained several dances. Her daughter, Lillebil Christensen (1899-1989), performed the part of Princess Yen Fay, and film actress Katta Sterna (1897-1984), a former student of Wiesenthal, played the Prince Sing Ling, wearing a satiny, luxuriously decorated tunic and pants that projected at the very least a highly androgynous image of the character in the manner of the male figure in Wiesenthal's production of *Amor und Psyche*. The film actor and future film director Ernst Lubitsch (1892-1947) played the sorceress, while the Hungarian Ernst Matray (1891-1978) was Wu. As usual with his productions, Reinhardt stressed spectacle through the conjuration of an "enchanting" atmosphere that relied intensely on the complex interplay of sparkling surfaces, gleaming fabrics and colors, shimmering lighting, dreamlike music, and stylized bodily movement, an "optical poetry," according to the dance and music critic Oscar Bie (1864-1938), who even saw "in the international decorations the pulsations of an entirely modern soul" through a "mirror of the eighteenth century" (Vollmer 2011: 375; cf. Herald 1918: 113-120). To precede the thirty-minute production, Hofmannsthal wrote *Die Lästigen*, a one-act adaptation of Moliere's three-act comedy-ballet, *Les Fâcheux* (1661). He intended that marionettes would perform the characters of the play, but this idea proved unworkable. At the Deutsches Schauspielhaus in Berlin in 1916, the show provoked considerable popular and critical approval; Vollmer (2011: 373) contends that *Die grüne Flöte*

offered a "fantastic counter-world" to the "nasty reality" of the war, or, as Bie put it, the show reveled in the "ornamental essence of things, the arabesque of being." Reinhardt took the production on tour, making it the most widely seen of any Hofmannsthal pantomime, although most spectators then did not even know he wrote it. But *Die grüne Flöte* probably enjoyed even greater popularity after the war when, in 1925, Ernst Matray and Katta Sterna, now a romantic couple, revived Reinhardt's production of it for the Salzburg Festival, of which Hofmannsthal was a guiding power, this time with Hofmannsthal's name attached to it and Reinhardt protégé Tilly Losch (1903-1975) playing Princess Fay Yen. The production moved on to Vienna, Berlin, and Prague before the starring cast dispersed to new projects. The Vienna Volksoper obscurely notes that some kind of performance of Hofmannsthal's scenario took place there in 1943, with choreography by Herbert Freund (1903-1988), but most likely it was a version purged of all the "Jewish" elements associated with Reinhardt's sumptuous treatment (*Volksoper Zeitung* 33, 2014: 14). Another production took place at a "Mozart Evening" at the Deutsches Nationaltheater in Weimar in 1964, with choreography by Hermann Rudolph, but otherwise Hofmannsthal's scenario seems remembered above all by what Reinhardt and his collaborators did to it. In 1928, however, the Estonian choreographer Rahel Olbrei (1898-1984) staged *Die grüne Flöte* (*Roheline flööt*) with the ballet corps of the Estonia Theater in Tallinn, although Hofmannsthal seems not to have received any credit for the scenario. Olbrei apparently used expressionistic movement techniques developed by Rudolf Laban (1879-1958) in the choreography for the piece, and she may even have seen the Reinhardt production in Berlin on a possible visit to Germany in 1926. The production, in which a male dancer, Artur Koit (1908-1980), played Prince Sing Ling, inspired generally enthusiastic commentary from the Estonian press, largely because it represented an adventurous and ambitious "turning point" of choreographic imagination for a quite new ballet corps that previously had played only an incidental role in the theater's operetta productions. Some debate emerged about whether Estonian ballet should adopt such an eclectic mix of pantomime, Labanesque movement, and ballet, and in this sense, the piece actually seemed to open up discussion about the future rather than to cultivate opulent nostalgia for a fairytale, rococo past (Einasto 2018: 122-128; *Postimees*, No. 138, 22 May 1928: 4).

For Hofmannsthal, Reinhardt's production of *Die grüne Flöte* indicated that the success of pantomime in attracting large audiences depended much more on directors than on writers. He wrote no more pantomimes for the stage, except for a few brief pantomimic moments in his grandiose allegorical drama *Das salzburger grosse Weltheater* (1922, 1927). Even his interest in dance libretti evaporated after his not especially successful collaboration with Richard Strauss and Count Harry Kessler on the one-act ballet *Josephs Legende* (1914) for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. Only ballet companies have performed this piece despite the immense orchestra the voluptuous score requires and despite the refusal of Strauss or Hofmannsthal to designate the work, based on the Biblical story of Potiphar's wife, as a ballet or pantomime (the role of Potiphar's wife was designated as pantomime and played as such at the Paris premiere by the Russian singer Maria Kuznetsova [1886-1966], who had been a ballerina in Russia). The 1922 production in Vienna, in which the soprano Marie Gutheil-Schoder (1874-1935) pantomimed Potiphar's wife under the direction of choreographer Heinrich Kröller (1880-1930), provoked a remarkable commentary from the socialist music critic David Josef Bach (1874-1947), who speculated that the refusal to identify the piece as ballet or pantomime had to do with preserving the "purity" of Joseph in a work that had "created a richly homosexual situation" and an "abnormal sexual feeling": "At first, women interwoven with each other, veiled, unveiled, continually in deepest lust, then men among themselves, naked, half-naked, and finally boys with their playmate Joseph, who is an exemplary holy dancer." The piece was about male fear of women and as such "shows the theater in its function as the nerve whip of modern society. An angel in silver armor frees Joseph and leads him to the bliss of a womanless existence" (*Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 23. March 1922: 5). The idea that pantomime, as a feminine phenomenon, is the corrupter of the masculine purity achieved through dance may seem odd in relation to the female-dominated history of dance. But in relation to Hofmannsthal's pantomimic preoccupation with dangerously seductive female figures, and in relation to the homoerotic connotations in the casting for the productions of *Die Biene* and *Die grüne Flöte*, the idea perhaps embeds a motive for Hofmannsthal's reluctance to venture further with stage pantomime. Hofmannsthal's last complete ballet-pantomime libretto, the one-act *Achilles auf Skyros* (1914), featured Achilles disguised as a woman among the thirteen daughters of

King Lycomedes so that he may pursue his romance with one of the daughters, the Amazonian Deidamia, and which concludes with him performing a sword dance with Odysseus that releases him from the female garments—the sword dance, "completely disciplined and sacral," "symbol of the mature man, the poetic expression for the feeling of freedom" (Schmid 1991: 252, 255). In Vienna, Egon Wellesz (1885-1974), a resolute modernist closely associated with the Second Viennese School of Music, composed a score for the libretto in 1921 and managed to stage a production of it in Stuttgart in 1926 on a program with his one-act opera *Alkestis* (1924), also based on a libretto by Hofmannsthal (cf. Schmid 1991: 252-255). But this leap into advanced Viennese modernism, probably unjustly neglected like so many of Wellesz's intriguing projects during these years, did nothing to restore Hofmannsthal's willingness to experiment further with stage pantomime. In 1925, Hofmannsthal, Strauss, Reinhardt, Nilson, and Matray formed the Internationale Pantomimen Gesellschaft, but the society collapsed a year later due to financial difficulties, its only significant achievement being sponsorship of the revived *Die grüne Flöte* (Vollmer 2011: 380-381). Indeed, when Hofmannsthal did return to pantomime, his focus was on silent film, with the scenario for *Der Rosenkavalier* (1925) and the sketches for the unmade film about *Daniel Defoe* (1924). But these deserve attention when dealing with the disappearance of literary pantomime in the Austro-German theater of the 1920s.

Max Reinhardt: Pantomimic Grandeur

The Austrian director Max Reinhardt (1873-1943) was responsible for staging the pantomimes that have enjoyed the largest theater audiences since the beginning of the twentieth century. His immense skill as a director brought him great success in every genre he attempted: classical drama (Goethe, Sophocles, Shakespeare, Moliere, Schiller, Lessing), contemporary drama (Ibsen, Hauptmann, Hofmannsthal), tragedy, comedy, opera, and operetta. Within the scope of his many acclaimed productions, pantomime at best constituted only an occasional foray into the more recessed regions of theatrical imagination. Pantomime was never central to his success or his aesthetic; he would have become a great director if he had never turned his attention to pantomime. He wrote no pantomimes, and, unlike the literary fashioners of pantomimes, his pantomimic imagination was not innovative at the narrative level. His great strength as a director lay

in the construction of spectacle, a powerful integration or *Gesamtkunstwerk* of scenery, lighting, costume, music, choric movement, scenic effects (like revolving stages, ramps, and bridges), vocal rhythms, geometrically designed movement and positioning of actors, and contrasting pacing of action. For Reinhardt, pantomime offered an excellent opportunity to demonstrate that direction created a superior theatrical experience, not the speech in a text, not the text, not even the narrative, although subject matter was not irrelevant to achieving this goal.

His first venture into pantomime was *Sumurun* (1910), with a scenario by Friedrich Freksa (1882-1955), eventually a busy Berlin writer in several genres: plays, journalism, popular novels, biography, poetry, crime novels, film scenarios, and science fiction. But in 1909, when he wrote *Sumurun*, Freksa was still pretty much of a dilettante, probing various paths to literary success. *Sumurun* was the only stage pantomime he ever wrote. In nine scenes, the scenario is set in an exotic Arabian land, but it is not so much a fairytale (as asserted by the author: "according to oriental fairytale motifs") as an ethnographic fantasy in which Freksa embeds a complex drama of sexual passions and jealousy. With a torrent of action, the story tells of a "mistress" ("Herrin") Sumurun, who awakens and confounds the desires of four men: a hunchback puppeteer, attracted to "a beautiful slave dancing girl"; a cloth dealer in love with Sumurun, who reciprocates his love; a ruling sheik obsessed with possessing both the dancing girl and Sumurun; and the son of the sheik, also desirous of the dancing girl. In addition, an old woman offers to assist a slave dealer in acquiring a dancing girl for sale to the sheik, which motivates the hunchback against her and the slave dealer, while the clothes dealer, Nur al Din, has a servant woman enamored of him, as does the sheik's son, and the sheik, of course, commands the respect of many subordinates, who frustrate everyone's intentions. To resolve some of these difficulties, Sumurun agrees to become a member of the sheik's harem; the sheik, however, is in bed with the dancing girl, much to Sumurun's dismay, even though she remains drawn to Nur al Din. When the son enters the bedroom and embraces Sumurun, the sheik awakes, stabs his son to death, and prowls his mansion looking for other men. Sumurun tries to dance to prevent the deranged sheik from killing the hunchback or the clothes merchant, but the dance does not calm the sheik, who orders his eunuchs to seize the dancer and prepare her for execution. He draws a dagger against the clothes dealer, but the hunchback

draws his own knife and stabs the sheik. Nur al Din embraces Sumurun, and she realizes she has been released from "a wild dream": "death has moved passed her." The Inspector of the Bazaar appears and sees the dead bodies, while the hunchback, Nur al Din, and the harem women "proceed down the path of flowers, the path of freedom" (Vollmer 2011: 182-195). The scenario requires large resources to produce: the huge cast includes harem women, guards, eunuchs, "a giant negro," and entourages of Sumurun, the sheik, and the Bazaar Inspector, and scenes take place in the bazaar, with a fountain, the entrance to the sheik's palace, the harem, the sheik's boudoir, and the terrace of his palace. Some characters hide in baskets or behind curtains to avoid discoveries that might harm or embarrass them. The crowd scenes are important because the author wants to show how the crowd itself is made up of people who's desires for others within the crowd otherwise remain invisible. Characters signify their desires or lack of them or their conspiratorial motives to each other through gestures, such as waves or nods, readable to each other but not to the rest of the crowd; the implication is that if the desires became transparent, then the hierarchical social order, controlled by the despotic sheik, would be undermined. Freksa presents the crowd as a great web of thwarted or suppressed sexual desires that exists for the very purpose of covering up the failure of love to find, protect, or "capture" its object, a point magnified by the presence of so many unsupportive or unreliable slaves, harem women, eunuchs, and servants. Society here appears as a theatrical illusion, masking desires, feelings of love, that, when revealed or "discovered" publically, lead to a tragic result. Indeed, for the 1912 production of *Sumurun* in New York, Reinhardt had actors emerge or disappear into the audience, a novel effect at the time, to encourage the perception that the fantasy society on stage was not so remote from the "real" audience in the theater (Hartley 1924: 89). Reinhardt saw in the scenario the opportunity to create a grand, internationally appealing spectacle free of the linguistic translation subtleties and historical-geographical specificities imposed by stage realism. When Freksa brought his scenario manuscript or concept to Reinhardt, the director agreed "in five minutes" to accept it and told the author not to bother finishing it; "The piece was never written," according Leopoldine Konstantin (1886-1965), who played the beautiful slave dancer in the New York production, and Reinhardt worked with Freksa to build up the role of the dancer (Dodge 1912: 82; cf. Vollmer 2011: 285-286, which quotes

Wiesenthal saying that she wanted to work with Reinhardt on a pantomime about a pair of lovers, and Freksa, with whom Reinhardt was "enchanted," wanted to work with them). She describes how Reinhardt encouraged the actors to develop their characters, no matter how small in the story, as if the story actually centered on them; the scenic artist worked with the actors, and the composer played music while the actors rehearsed their parts in rather chaotic fashion. But she seems to describe a rehearsal process that occurred after the premiere production in Berlin, in which she had already appeared. Photographs of the 1910 production do not show an especially elaborate scenic environment with most images depicting actors performing on a carpet floor before a curtain. Images of the 1911 London production, which traveled to New York in 1912, show a much more elaborate scenic milieu (*Illustrated London News* 25 February 1911: 263). Apparently, then, the scenario evolved in relation to particular circumstances of production, to the involvement of particular actors and designers, and to Reinhardt's determination to show that the text was subordinate to the production process rather than the thing to which the production process was subordinate. The scenario consequently piles one effect after another, creating an overly busy stage and a rather chaotic, incoherent narrative. The Berlin Kammerspiel cast included many actors who were or became major figures in German theater and film culture: Grete Wiesenthal (Sumurun), Paul Wegener (the sheik), Rudolf Schildkraut (the hunchback), Alexander Moissi (Nur al Din), Leopoldine Konstantin (the slave dancer), Eduard von Winterstein (the sheik's son), Elsa Wiesenthal (Sumurun's servant). Cabaret composer Victor Hollaender (1866-1940) wrote the music, and expressionist designer Ernst Stern (1876-1934) designed the settings. Such an abundance of talented artists, especially actors who had no experience as pantomimes, could easily attract much attention from the public. While reviewers could find the show entertaining and engrossing, none seems to have thought it represented a turning point in pantomime history, despite the claims of Reinhardt disciples like Heinz Herald (1890-1964), who contended that pantomime was the antithesis of Naturalism ("Drama") and thus occupied a realm of performance imagination inaccessible to language ("Sprache"): "Pantomime and drama may not be exchanged with each other. Pantomime would be nothing if it could be made into drama. With pantomimic action, one should not ask, as so often happens: what does that mean? And then expect

an answer in a language that is outside of pantomime. [...] The human gesture can be of an expressive force that under certain circumstances is infinitely greater than that of the word" (Herald 1918: 110). Herald explained that the "dream world" of pantomime is the creation of a directorial rather than literary imagination, because it is an art made out of a director's relation to actors, scenic devices, and music rather than a writer's relation to characters and narrative structures. Maybe so, but critics, the Germanic theater world in general, and perhaps even audiences did not see in *Sumurun* an impending expansion of pantomime in the theater of the future.

In May 1910, Reinhardt directed, for Deutsche Bioskop, the filming of the pantomime in the Deutsches Theater; this film has vanished. He apparently simply filmed the stage version as if the film only documented what a theater spectator saw on the stage, but the casting changed: Bertha Wiesenthal played Sumurun, Victor Arnold was the hunchback, Harry Walden was Nur al Din, Eduard von Winterstein played the sheik instead of the sheik's son, a part performed by Josef Wörz. The film received poor reviews, but not because Reinhardt had changed the cast: the costume colors that made the stage production so vivid were completely lost, the photography was not good, and the imagery featured no close ups or uniquely cinematic views of the action (*Jahrbuch für Photographie und Reproduktionstechnik* 1911: 334; cf. Vollmer 2011: 304-305). But Reinhardt, focused on preparing the international touring production of *Sumurun*, probably had little enthusiasm for making a film that competed against his stage version and may have regarded the film as an advertisement for the tour. The touring production of *Sumurun* opened in London in January 1911, then moved to Budapest. It opened in New York in January 1912, before going to Paris in May. Vienna hosted the production in 1913. During this time, the show played in several German cities, Manchester, and in Boston. In the United States, the payroll for the show was $4,000 per week, an unprecedented amount, which required each performance to bring in at least $1,500 per performance to break even, a goal the production easily exceeded (*Variety* January 16, 1911: 7). The cast changed from city to city: for example, in London, Clotilde von Derp (1892-1974) was Sumurun; in New York Sumurun was Camilla Eibenschütz (1884–1959), but in Paris Maria Carmi (1880-1957) took over the role, all members of Reinhardt's company. A reviewer for *Variety* of the New York production observed that, "The

main fault to be found with the impressive spectacular pantomime is that there are no really great artists in the cast" (January 20, 1911: 18). Spectacle elements dominated viewer impressions of the show; for the New York production, Reinhardt introduced a Kabuki-style *hanamichi*. *Theatre Magazine* devoted numerous pages to the New York production, and in one lengthy article, Gertrude Lynch explained that, "It is sensuous, barbaric and primitive, yet at the same time it is vitally human and, like all other Oriental plays, it is an unconsciously forceful suffrage document for women" (XV, 132, February 1912: 54). The show inspired a popular comic song, "My Sumurun Girl" (1912), by Al Jolson and Louis Hirsch, and a plumbing journal, *Modern Sanitation*, featured an article by the engineer-theater producer Wendell Phillips Dodge about the special bathtub Leopoldine Konstantin used to immerse her body in the "burnt sienna and yellow ochre" cosmetics that achieved the "beautifully mystic copper colored skin of the Oriental" (IX, 1, January 1912: 189-191). In April, *Theatre Magazine* published an article that considered whether the "extraordinary" *Sumurun* "indicated an impending revival of the art of pantomime," but concluded that silent films most likely would satisfy a large public appetite for pantomime more than a revival of a stage art that had faded long ago because of its childishness (XV, 134 1912: 126).

Sumurun came to Warsaw in 1916 with an all-Polish cast under the direction of Reinhardt protégé Ryszard Ordynski (1878-1953), who cast the ingénue Pola Negri (1897-1987) in the role of the dancing girl. When Reinhardt saw the Warsaw production, he cast Negri in the same role for the 1917 revival of his production in Berlin, which also featured the future film star Conrad Veidt (1893-1943) as Nur al Din and Ernst Lubitsch as the hunchback. The recently formed Ufa film company invested heavily in another film version of the scenario, released in 1920, in an effort to establish itself as the leading supplier of films in Germany. The director, Ernst Lubitsch (1892-1947), had worked closely with Reinhardt since 1911, and he had already acted in and directed numerous films for a company that Ufa absorbed towards the end of the war. With his longtime screenwriting partner Hanns Kräly (1884-1950), Lubitsch revised Freksa's scenario to emphasize elements not in the text or in Reinhardt's production. Already a film star, Negri played the dancing girl, while the Swedish ballet dancer Jenny Hasselqvist (1894-1978) was Sumurun. Paul Wegener (1874-1948), also now a film star, played the sheik, and Lubitsch

himself took on the role of the hunchback, as he had in later versions of the stage production, although this was his last performance as an actor. This cast may have enhanced the box office appeal of the film, but it probably brought nothing to the performance of the roles that was not already in the performances on the stage regardless of whichever cast performed them. Before the camera, the acting appears excessively theatrical and further weakened by exaggerated make up. The film uses very few intertitles, and even some of these are unnecessary, though they do not diminish the incoherence of the story, which some American reviewers of the stage production felt was confusing without the synopsis of the action printed in the program. Kräly and Lubitsch expanded the scenario without bestowing greater logic on the action: they added numerous comic bits involving the eunuchs, the servants of Nur al Din, the hunchback and the grotesque procuress who desires him, and between the harem mistress and the harem girls; they put more black people in the bazaar scenes; they created separate interior spaces for the clothes merchant's store, the hunchback's theater company, and the slave dealer's not well-defined place of business. But the film also emphasizes much more than the scenario that the dancing girl has no moral qualms about enjoying sexual relations with both the sheik and his son, and it also presents the harem mistress and the harem girls collaborating to help Sumurun engage in adultery with Nur al Din, details that caused distributors in England and America to make cuts in the film, which there bore the title *One Arabian Night*. The film presents Sumurun, the dancing girl, the harem mistress, and the procuress as brazen, vigorous women, while the harem girls appear as exuberant, choral acolytes of the proto-feminist harem mistress. The film does not end with the hunchback, Nur al Din, and the women marching down "the flower path of freedom"; instead, Nur al Din and Sumurun walk as a pair along an empty city street toward the camera, and the last shot is of the hunchback, alone, strumming his Arab guitar. The film contains shots of large crowd scenes, but these mostly operate as context or background activities. Lubitsch uses close ups and mid-shots to isolate the main characters from the crowd; unlike the stage productions, the film does not show characters communicating clandestinely within the crowd or through the crowd. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the film is the scenic architecture, by Kurt Richter and Ernő Metzner (1892-1953), the huge sets incorporating arabesque designs, archways, trellises, terraces, walls, gates, towers, balconies,

ornamental curtains, the monumental stairway to the sheik's palace, giant doors, and columns, the vast atrium of the harem, and even an enormous floral pattern floor on which Sumurun performs a dance for Nur al Din and the harem girls. Lubitsch's direction is most exciting when placing many people in a long shot to make them seem like kinetic decorative elements within grandiose, looming structures that seem to swallow up humanity. The director shoots these scenes from distinctive angles, and thus shows a kind of monumental, geometrically organized mass movement pantomime that could not possibly occur on stage, although the effect remains far from the power that Griffith had already achieved with mass pantomime and monumental architecture in *Birth of a Nation* (1915) or *Intolerance* (1916). When Lubitsch's camera views the action from a distance and in relation to the monumental architecture, the bodies tend to move less theatrically and more "naturally"; whereas when he places the camera in mid-shot, the actors revert to a theatrical style that indicates the lack of confidence in a mind still dominated by theatrical habits in the pantomime of "natural" movement. Yet occasionally the film introduces an expressionistic pantomimic action that appears innovative to both theater and cinema. For example, when Sumurun visits the shop of the clothes merchant, they sit on a carpet and Nur al Din examines a bracelet around Sumurun's ankle. The beauty of her foot mesmerizes him; then suddenly he plunges toward it and kisses it passionately, while simultaneously a voluptuous shudder, almost orgasmic, overwhelms Sumurun's body.

The huge international success of *Sumurun* encouraged Reinhardt to venture further and bigger with pantomime. He envisioned pantomime functioning as a kind of Wagnerian *Festspiel* that created a mystical, communal encounter with a hidden, atavistic level of reality concealed rather than revealed by modernity. Lacking a gift for writing, he found an excellent partner for this project in his friend and collaborator Karl Vollmoeller (1878-1948), a German poet-dramatist who for a while (1895-1904) belonged to the circle of super-aesthetes gathered around the mystical, aristocratic poet Stefan George. Vollmoeller had translated and adapted ancient Greek dramas that Reinhardt staged, and Reinhardt had produced (1907) Vollmoeller's gloomy historical semi-verse tragedy, *Catherina – Gräfin von Armagnac* (1903), an orgy of burnished word fetishism in a Symbolist vein, which George had sponsored in his cultish but influential arts journal *Blätter für die Kunst*. Moreover, Vollmoeller was

at that time the husband of Maria Carmi, a member of Reinhardt's company since 1909; she performed the role of Sumurun in the Paris production of the show. Not being Austrian or Jewish, Vollmoeller presumably had access to spiritual affinities in alignment with the Wagnerian audience that Reinhardt hoped to attract. Vollmer composed the scenario for the largest and most popular pantomime ever produced in Germany: *Das Mirakel* (1911), although he claimed he had worked on the piece since the late 1890s when he began making a second residence in Venice. He sets the story in Münster, Germany at the end of the fourteenth century. He labels it a "grand pantomime in two acts and an interlude," but the bulk of the action occurs during the interlude.

In a convent on the Rhine, a 100-year old sacristan decides it is time to turn over responsibility for the care of a beloved Madonna statue to the young, beautiful, and intensely pious Megildis. The new sacristan opens the huge doors to the church to allow the entry of a great procession of pilgrims. When the procession passes through the doors, Megildis remains alone to close the doors and extinguish the candles. She hears a strange music; the player appears accompanied by a throng of children. The music urges her to dance. A knight soon appears, and the player makes a signal that indicates his collaborative relation with the knight, who discloses a desire for the nun. The abbess, however, appears and Megildis recovers herself and closes the doors. The abbess orders Megildis to spend the night praying before the statue. Alone, the young nun kneels and prays ardently to the Virgin, but a knocking at the door distracts her; yet somehow she is not strong enough to turn the key. But once it is clear that the nun wishes to escape the convent, the doors open on their own. The knight and musician are waiting for her, gesturing to her of a much more exciting life ahead. She lays her veil, convent habit, and keys at the foot of the Virgin. The knight embraces her, and they depart for a new life together. The statue of the Virgin comes to life and puts on the garments left by the nun. The abbess and the sisters appear and discover that the statue is missing. The sisters surround the Virgin, whom they mistake for Megildis, and assume an accusatory attitude toward her. But the young nun suddenly elevates and hovers above the sisters—the miracle. The young nun descends and joins her sisters in joyful singing and dancing. The interlude then occurs, a sequence of tragic and even sordid scenes. The knight and Megildis, accompanied by the wooden flute player, wander through a forest,

where they encounter a band of hunters, led by the "count of the forest." This gang kills the knight and abducts Megildis, while the musician, left alone with the corpse of the knight, "shows instead of the smiling, faun-like mask of life the mask of death." At the castle banquet of the forest count, Megildis captures the attention of the king's son. The drunken count gambles away his wealth, the nun, and his life to the Prince. Death plays his flute again beside the abandoned corpse. In the bedroom of the Prince, the Musician of Death warns the King of the Prince's disreputable behavior toward the nun. The Prince and his companions engage in a mock wedding ceremony with Megildis, and the King intervenes to protect the nun while angering the Prince, who soon returns with a gang of masked marauders. Death hands the King a dagger to protect himself, and the King plunges the dagger into his attacker. When he removes the mask of the attacker, he discovers he has killed his own son. A crowd breaks in, seizes the stunned Megildis and paralyzed King, and leaves Death alone to play the over the corpse of the Prince. In the marketplace, the mob organizes a trial involving twelve judges with the Musician presiding as the Inquisitor: Megildis faces accusations of witchcraft, and the Inquisitor summons the now insane King as a witness. He falls to his knees before the nun, as if she is a saint. The crowd releases her from the judges and puts her on a white horse. The musician then plays his flute: "The enchantment of the crowd transforms into wild orgasm." Everyone attempts to touch the beautiful woman, which sparks a fight of "all against all." A group of serfs overpowers Megildis and takes her away. In a snow-covered landscape, a caravan of serfs plods past Megildis, who carries a newborn enfant in her arms. The serfs regard her with reproachful gestures. The sound of the convent bells and a distant children's choir stirs the nun and causes the Musician to appear wearing the Mask of Death, followed by the dead woman's lovers: the knight, the count, the Prince, and the King—"then all the others, the nameless ones, who possessed her." Megildis hesitates between the sound of Death and the bells of the convent. But when the portal doors open, the nun resists Death's effort to restrain her, and she enters the convent. The second act then begins. The altar of the Virgin remains empty, with the garments left by the nun on the floor. The nuns enter and kneel before the altar, praying for the return of the Virgin, although the Virgin remains among them. When the nuns disperse to their duties, the Virgin assumes her position on the altar: "her smile becomes unearthly and without movement." One hears a knock

on the door, and the doors open on their own. Megildis enters carrying her child. She sees the garments on the floor. She lays down the child and puts on the garments. She cradles the child, but discovers that it has died. The abbess and nuns, agitated by the sound of bells, return and gaze with astonishment at the reappearance of the Virgin in the altar. Soon, however, the Musician of Death knocks on the door, his "creepy, mocking laughter" reverberating from every direction in which the nuns attempt to flee it. But when Megildis kneels before the altar, the laughter weakens, choral voices strengthen, "thousands" of red roses ascend from the dark clouds. In the final scene, Megildis kneels alone before the Madonna. The morning sun begins to filter through the stained glass rose window. The young nun seems to awaken, as if from a dream. She goes about her duties, then opens the great doors to let in the morning sun (Vollmer 2011: 205-216).

The scenario contains many spectacular visual effects, some of which I have not included in the summary of the story: the opening and closing of the great doors, the astonishing transfigurations of the Virgin on the altar, the movement of choirs and throngs, the knight silhouetted against the dark blue evening sky, the count's grandiose castle, the bleak winter landscape and the snow blowing into the convent, the rain of roses, the rose stained glass window bringing in the morning light. The violence of the market place scene seems reminiscent of Cuvelier's military pantomimes, although it is doubtful that either Vollmoeller or Reinhardt even knew of Cuvelier. Even more imaginative is the use of sound: the tolling of various bells, the knocking on the great doors, the refrains of distant choirs, the singing of a nightingale, thunder, "a tone like a deep sigh echoes through the dark church," the melancholy tunes of the Musician, the howling of wind, and the demonic laughter of Death. In addition, Reinhardt commissioned the eminent Wagnerian Engelbert Humperdinck (1854-1921) to compose incidental music for a large orchestra. Probably most, if not all, the visual and aural effects in the scenario came from Vollmoeller. From Vollmoeller's nine-page scenario, Reinhardt constructed a seventy-page director's book that included an enormous number of scenic, lighting, and costume details not found in the scenario (Sayler 1924: 249-322); indeed, Reinhardt numbered each detail he added to the scenario for a total of 1,196 specific remarks on the performance of actions not always or even mostly indicated in the scenario. The director's book reads almost like the editing structure for a movie. For example, in the third sentence of the fourth scene

of the interlude, the marketplace trial, Vollmoeller writes: "The Musician (Piper), in the guise of a Dominican monk, leads the twelve judges to the tribunal bench. Behind them, between guards and executioners, the accused nun Megildis. The Musician as the Inquisitor, displays the accusation document, but one judge after the other, refuses to break the staff over the accused" (Vollmer 2011: 22-213). Reinhardt adds 250 details before the Musician even appears in this vast scene involving interactions between numerous individuals within the great crowd. Here is how the Musician (Piper) appears:

> *245. At a sign from the chief judge, the rebellious judge is seized and killed at the feet of the Nun.*
> *246. Silence.*
> *247. The head judge gives the document to the judge who is standing on his left.*
> *248. The latter rises slowly, with the shadow still behind him. He takes the paper, stares at the Nun, tears it into bits, rushes like the others to the Nun, lifts his arms eagerly toward her; turns toward the front of the people in order to speak for her. At a signal he is likewise seized by the soldiers. They hold his mouth closed.*
> *249. He gesticulates vehemently but is also killed at the feet of the Nun.*
> *250. The Nun lifts her eyes upwards in unspeakable despair.*
> *251. Louder but still muffled grumblings are heard from all sides and from all ranks.*
> *252. The head judge jumps up, takes the Emperor's crown, which lies on the table in front of him, and sets it with bold and grand gestures on his head.*
> *253. He throws back his hood and reveals the face of the Piper.*
> *254. Deadly silence.*
> *255. He signals energetically to the executioner who stands to the left, then points to the Nun, lifts his staff on high and breaks it violently.*
> *256. Trombones.*
> *257. He lets his hood sink again and seats himself.*
> *258. The bell for the condemned rings.*
> *259. Drums.*
> *260. The hangman's assistants unfetter the Nun.*

> *261. The priest steps forward, reads in a whisper some words from his book, gives her absolution and makes the sign of the cross over.*
> *262. She bends her head low, and is led by the executioner's assistants to the block.*
> *263. The executioner stands at the block and bares the Nun's neck.*
> *264. A muffled but increasing murmuring is heard from all sides.*
> *265. The Nun lays her head on the block.*
> *266. Stillness* (Sayler 1924: 308-309).

None of these actions appear in the scenario, which describes the whole trial scene in about half a page, whereas the director's book devotes fifteen pages to it. Not only does the director's book describe numerous visual and sound effects, it characterizes, even if briefly, numerous individuals within the crowd and assigns emotional gestures to them. The performance also includes much more violence than the scenario, which has the effect of greatly magnifying Death's power over the depicted society. The director's book thus treats the scenario as an inspiration for a huge proliferation of pantomimic action that lives outside of the language that created the story. The language of the director's book is the codification of the decisions the director made as a result of using a different, never transcribed language in his interactions with the actors and designers while working out in rehearsal how to bring the story to life on the stage. It is astonishing how much pantomimic action Reinhardt could envision from the sparse language of Vollmoeller's scenario *before* he used language to advise the actors of what he envisioned. Yet this envisioning does not mean that pantomime arises from a "pre-linguistic" mode of consciousness, as Hofmannsthal, among others, tended to believe. Rather, pantomime allows one to see *actions* that construct a narrative and that one does not really see when the narrative relies on speech for its construction or, as with dance, on movements derived from a choreographic vocabulary. In this way, pantomime is about how language itself frees us from language. *Das Mirakel* is about how this freedom from language leads to salvation, redemption, a transcending of the lure and fear of Death. A miracle is something that doesn't need language to "explain" it, even though it is actually language that creates it.

The production premiered as *The Miracle* at the Olympia Theater in London, December 23, 1911, and the financier of the production, the English

showman Charles B. Cochran (1872-1951), promoted it as a grand upgrade of the traditional, vaudeville English Christmas pantomime. The theater, seating 8,000 spectators, normally staged equestrian spectacles, but the scene designer, Ernst Stern, built, at great cost, a large stage with monumental sets and a long ramp that allowed for the performance of some scenes in the arena (cf. Shewring 1987). Maria Carmi played the Madonna, Max Pallenberg (1877-1934) was the Musician, the ballerina Natacha Trouhanowa (1885-1956) played Megildis, and Douglas Payne (1875-1965), soon to be a silent film actor, was the knight. The English journalist Huntly Carter (1862-1942) published a detailed description and critique of the production, including a breakdown of the £40,000 (almost $200,000 in 1914 or about $4,890,400 in 2017) it cost to run the show over eight weeks. The chorus numbered 500, while the orchestra consisted of 200 musicians; a total of 2,000 performers received payment. Scenic effects entailed enormous engineering operations. For example: "The vast Gothic doors at one end were opened, and a huge mound crested with trees was wheeled in. By means of this and another contrivance the characters were enabled to step from actuality to actuality. The second contrivance was a huge sinking stage placed in the centre of the arena. This platform was made to sink, so that each time it rose it could bring a complete change of environment. By this means the action was carried uninterruptedly from banqueting hall to bed-chamber, to inquisition chamber, and so forth" (Carter 1914: 223-240). Audiences filled the giant theater for all performances, and Cochran claimed to have made a fortune from the show. English reviewers generally professed a highly favorable attitude toward the production, apparently because it evoked so vividly the world of the English medieval mystery and morality plays, even though no one in the Middle Ages ever saw a show of this magnitude or splendor (Carter 1914: 150-153). The production next opened in Vienna in September 1912, with some changes in the casting that invariably occurred with subsequent productions along with various refinements to the director's book, which never achieved any definitive version.

But before Reinhardt opened the show in Vienna, he negotiated the licensing of a film version of the spectacle, and the shooting of this film occurred following the end of the Viennese theatrical run in October. Much of the filming, involving 800 performers and a staggering £20,000 budget, took place in two suburbs of Vienna, the church in the village of

Perchtoldsdorf and the castle in Kreuzenstein. The producer was Joseph Menchen (1878-1940), an American entrepreneur who had become wealthy through the design and sale of electrical theater lighting equipment, including film projectors. Menchen obtained from Reinhardt exclusive rights to film and distribute *The Miracle* as Reinhardt had directed it (*Slough Observer* 26 July 1913: 8). However, in March 1912, the newly formed Continental Kunstfilm company, based in Berlin, financed production of a film, *Das Mirakel*, and promoted it as similar in content to Reinhardt's stage production. The director of this film was a Romanian dancer, Mime Misu (1888-1953), who had begun his film career in Paris. For *Das Mirakel*, he also wrote the screenplay and designed the scenic décor (Wedel 1999: 26-27). Chorin Abbey, outside of Berlin, was the setting for many scenes, but some scenes were apparently shot in the Black Forest. Having interrupted shooting to turn out the first film about the Titanic disaster, *In Nacht und Eis* (1912), Misu finally finished shooting *Das Mirakel* in July 1912, which is when Continental Kunstfilm registered the film for exhibition in Germany. In September, Menchen applied for a license to exhibit *his* production in Germany, but German authorities rejected the application on the grounds that Continental Kunstfilm had "prior right." Menchen then appealed to a court in London to prohibit exhibition of the German film. But the case ran into legal complexities. The lawyer for Continental Kunstfilm argued that Vollmoeller had based his scenario on the drama *Soeur Beatrice* (1901) by the Belgian Symbolist Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949), which Reinhardt had staged in Berlin in 1904. But Maeterlinck could not file a claim against Continental Kunstfilm because he himself had acknowledged that he had based his story on several versions of the tale dating back to the thirteenth century and the Dutch poem *Beatrijs* (c. 1375), derived from an even earlier Latin text in a German compilation of miracle tales from around 1225. Vollmoeller declared that Misu's film copied bodily movements and scenic effects that were unique to the London production of *The Miracle*. The judge overseeing the case ruled that an English court had no jurisdiction over the exhibition of the film outside of the British Isles, but he would allow the showing of Misu's film in Britain if Continental Kunstfilm changed the title to *Sister Beatrice*. Both parties agreed to this solution. Menchen sold the exhibition rights to different distributors in different countries, which meant that these distributors had to assume the costs of legal action against Continental Kunstfilm should that film company

attempt to exhibit its film in their countries. In New York, Continental Kunstfilm opened its film, *The Miracle*, in October 1912, as shooting in Austria on Menchen's film came to an end. The theatrical producer Albert Woods (1870-1951) purchased, for $10,000, the right to exhibit Menchen's film in the United States, and he went to court to prevent the showing of Misu's film, but this action failed because he failed to post $20,000 bond; Woods apparently decided he was not going to fight similar battles in every state in America, although in film trade journals he did launch a protracted advertising war against the "false" German film. Yet the New York Film Company, which handled the U.S. distribution of Misu's film, ran into legal difficulties of a different kind when censors in Chicago and Boston objected to the orgy-banquet scene. German censors raised similar concerns and approved the film, known as *Das Marienwunder: eine alte Legend*, for adult audiences only in 1914. Nevertheless, the film found large audiences in numerous American cities, and some performances, as in Cleveland, entailed full orchestral accompaniments. Meanwhile, Menchen's production opened at the Covent Garden Theatre in London on 21 December 1912, three days after the premiere of *Sister Beatrix* at the Shaftesbury Pavilion. The Covent Garden presentation of the film, accompanied by a large orchestra and choir performing Professor Humperdinck's music, signified the elevation of cinema to a cultural status equivalent to opera, a phenomenon not altogether welcomed by a sector of the Royal Opera's patrons (*Moving Picture Age*, VI, 1, 6 July 1912: 886). But the Covent Garden exhibition made a deep impact on the public: Menchen's film completely overwhelmed competition from Misu's film in England and became enormously successful wherever in the world it was shown.

The legal issues raised by the competing film versions of *The Miracle* revealed a great power of theatrical pantomime to bestow commercial and cultural prestige on cinema. The scale of investment by Menchen in a single film was unprecedented, and it's possible that profits from his film achieved an unsurpassed threshold. With revenue from the film, Menchen was able to purchase a vast estate outside of Paris and build there a large film studio (*The Cinema* 27 August 1913: 70). In the United States, Woods managed to persuade theater owners to charge as much as $1.50 for a ticket when most theaters were reluctant to charge more than twenty cents to enter. The religious subject matter imposed a grandeur on the action, the image, and

the medium. An international public clearly appreciated that no expense had been spared to entertain it. *The Miracle* inaugurated the concept of the high risk, large-scale prestige film, saturated with historical imagery, that offered huge profits from an international rather than domestic market; Italian producers would almost immediately eclipse *The Miracle* in scale of risk and artistry with the production of monumental ancient Roman spectacles like *Quo Vadis* (1913) and *Cabiria* (1914), which precipitated D.W. Griffith's even more artistically advanced Assyrian spectacle *Judith of Bethulia* (1914). *The Miracle* was also an early example of international film co-production: American financing, a German scenario, Austrian locations and technical support, a principal cast of actors from several countries, a French director and lab processing, and an English premiere. But just as important was the legal precedent established by the competition between the two Miracle films. Misu's film has disappeared and it is therefore difficult to compare the two films in relation to the claims made in court by the conflicting parties. In his testimony, Vollmoeller claimed that Misu's film was "a base and degraded version of the famous ancient legend upon which my work was founded. The procession of the Holy Image, the healing of the sick people, the introduction of the eloped Nun and the Evil Spirit, which are all my creation and not contained in any of the same famous legends, are imitated by the film of the defendants" (*The Stage Yearbook* December 1913: 293-294). But Vollmoeller condemned Misu's film as "a base and degraded version of the famous ancient legend" rather than of his own scenario, even if Misu adapted Vollmoeller's scenario, which means that Vollmoeller believed that Misu should have directed his film of the story in a more competent fashion, a claim that was irrelevant from a legal perspective. The implication was that the Menchen production displayed superior direction that should not have to compete for public attention from a "fraudulent," inferior film. Menchen could not contend that Misu had copied scenes from his production, which no one connected with Misu's film could have seen, nor could he contend that Misu had copied scenes from the London stage production, for Misu had filmed the scenario in quite different settings, and in any case, Menchen's film was no closer to the London production in using Austrian locations shot almost entirely outdoors and without any of the numerous, distinctive theatrical effects Reinhardt had introduced in London. Indeed, reviews of Misu's film are very favorable, and the few extant stills of the production suggest that it

might even have been better directed than Menchen's film: "*Sister Beatrix* is certainly worthy of designation as one of the best films of the past year," and detailed description of the film in *The Cinema* indicates that it was a lavish and spectacular production, full of technical sophistication (*Moving Picture Age*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 6 July 1912: 886; *The Cinema* 1 January 1913: 43-45). Lore Giessen played Beatrix and Misu himself took the role of the Evil Spirit (Musician). If the stills accurately document the film imagery, Misu brought the camera closer to the actors than was the case in Menchen's production, and the unknown costume designer was quite imaginative. Reinhardt had almost nothing to do with the authorized film version of *The Miracle*, most likely because the film would contain almost none of the elaborate theatrical effects that made the London production so impressive. Menchen hired as the director of his production Michel Carré, who had already directed numerous, mostly comic films in France, including *L'enfant prodigue* (1907), perhaps the first feature film. Carré filmed the scenario as if the spectator saw the action on a stage; the camera views all the action in long shot, and each scene unfolds within a single shot with no editing within the scene. Many scenes take advantage of Gothic architectural structures. The most successful scenes depict crowds, processions, mass jubilation; these display an almost documentary feel. Misu's handling of the banquet scene was evidently much more lurid. Carré films the scene in long shot with Megildis compelled by the Count's gang to dance on the table at a distance while the Count and the Prince dominate the foreground. His direction was old-fashioned even for 1912. Innovative, however, was the highly refined coloring (rather than tinting) of the images, done in France using a process called Lyricscope that allowed for subtle differentiation of colors and thus an unprecedented degree of painterly realism in the image. Maria Carmi again played the Madonna and Ernst Matray played the Musician, but the completely obscure Florence Winston was Megildis in the only role she is known to have played on the screen and perhaps in any medium. The cast was interchangeable with that of the different stage productions, because the pantomimic action was so generic, embodying stage directions rather than a distinctive style of physical action such as would later become manifest in expressionist performances on stage and in film. Both the stage production and the film of *The Miracle* were triumphs of technological and marketing ingenuity, not of pantomimic imagination. Menchen probably understood that when he went to court against

Continental Kunstfilm: the story of the medieval miracle did not depend for its telling on a unique pantomimic style that could be copyrighted. Misu did not even need to see the London production to tell the ancient story pantomimically with different, possibly more talented actors. Pantomimic action could achieve copyright protection only if it was codified and published and therefore capable of being copied as opposed to being merely imitated. Codification was alien to the most powerful manifestations of pantomime since ancient Roman times, and in any case it was not something that would issue from the literary creators of pantomime scenarios or even from the directors of pantomimes. Pantomimic action showed how a body could not be "owned"—by an author, by a publisher, by a language, by a director, by a choreographer, or even by the performer herself.

Menchen's film production of *The Miracle* attracted enormous audiences in numerous countries throughout 1913 and into 1914, but after that the film fell into great obscurity, hugely superseded by cinematic spectacles of far greater scale and artistry. Reinhardt's stage production had a much longer life. After the Viennese premiere, the production moved, in 1913 and 1914, to Prague, Leipzig, Dresden, Breslau, Cologne, Frankfurt, Karlsruhe, and finally, in April 1914, to the Zirkus Busch in Berlin. Reinhardt revived the production in 1915-1916 at Zirkus Busch in Berlin, then in 1917 took it to Stockholm. He had hoped to bring the show to New York in 1914, but the war intervened. A New York production did not happen until 1924, at the posh Century Theater on Central Park West; the visionary designer Norman Bel Geddes (1893-1958) designed the costumes and the scenery and transformed the theater into a cathedral. The immense success of the show there enabled Reinhardt to launch a touring production that visited numerous American cities for the rest of the 1920s, finishing in Dallas in 1930. But the show was not done in Europe. Touring productions visited the Salzburg Festival (1925), Dortmund (1927), Amsterdam (1927), Budapest (1927), Prague (1927), Vienna (1927), and finally London (1932) (Vollmer 2011: 399). American reviewers greeted the production with fervent enthusiasm (Bauland 1968: 59-60). In Berlin, some reviewers of the 1914 production disclosed a more skeptical attitude: while they acknowledged the brilliance and technical ingenuity of Reinhardt's theatrical effects, they found it difficult to see the show as a serious work of art, hobbled as it was by religious naïveté, sentimentality, and pandering to the stereotypes of

popular consciousness (Vollmer 2011: 403-405). No pantomime has achieved greater success at least in reaching the large, international audience that Reinhardt intended for it. Yet after the 1932 London revival, the show disappeared entirely from theaters and suddenly seemed like a thing that belonged exclusively to an extravagant but utterly irretrievable era. The only revival of the scenario occurred in 2002, when the Pianopianissimo Theater of Munich staged it with three actors and two musicians under the direction of musicologist Peter Pachl (b. 1953). The performance took place on a long table before white sheets onto which were cast colored lights and projections (Pianopianissimo 2002). Presumably the controlling idea here was that the scenario contained a power whose persuasiveness or revelation did not depend on grandiosity of scale and production values. But it is hard not to see here a vastly diminished sense of the miraculous in theater. *Das Mirakel* may have achieved astonishing success—and it was certainly the greatest success of Reinhardt's amazing career—but that success was really not beneficial to pantomime. The show had the effect of imposing on public consciousness and especially on the theater world the idea that pantomime was a large-scale communal project entailing a monumental approach to conceal a fundamental lack of confidence in pantomimic action to sustain audience attention. This effect was similar to Pierrot's success in stifling pantomimic imagination in France. The Austro-German theatrical pantomime was not yet dead in the minds of a few authors, but after *Das Mirakel* came to Berlin in 1914, the pantomimes of these authors remained only on the page and never on the stage. Reinhardt himself was not done with pantomime, for the popular *Die grüne Flöte* (1916), written in 1911, was yet to come. But Reinhardt's subordination of pantomimic action to technology, to grandiose theatrical effects, shut down the pantomimic imagination of those who saw in pantomime a mode of theater in which language did not "own" the body.

Reinhardt and Vollmoeller collaborated on another pantomime at the same time *The Miracle* opened in London, and the piece, *A Venetian Night* (*Eine venezianische Nacht*), opened in London at the Palace Theater in November 1912. But the show almost had no premiere at all. On the day of the scheduled premiere, the Lord Chamberlain, William Mansfield (1855-1921), the censor for the English stage, refused to allow the performance after seeing a rehearsal of the piece. Having no text other than the director's book and no words, the piece had no form in which Mansfield could

preview the show other than a rehearsal. He found the piece morally objectionable, and Reinhardt had to postpone the preview for several days to make the piece suitable for Mansfield's approval. *A Venetian Night* was a costly venture. Reinhardt had spent $25,000 on the project and imported 60 actors from Germany (Christian 1912: 659; Carter 1914: 240-241). The piece did not fare well in London, nor did it receive a happy reception when it opened in Berlin in August 1913 (Vollmer 2011: 411-413). Vollmoeller never published the scenario. Vollmer managed to track down the director's book for the Berlin production, and he describes the scenario in detail (Vollmer 2011: 407-411). As part of a movie deal with Projektions AG Union, Reinhardt made a film of the scenario in 1913 and actually shot it in Venice, for which he was paid 50,000 RM, but according to his son, Gottfried, Reinhardt did not take the project seriously: "He was taking his holidays in Italy at this time and the films were done on the side" (Eyman 2000: 38). The film closely follows the scenario described by Vollmer, except that it contains images of Venetian canals that would not have appeared in the stage production. A scholar, Anselmus (Alfred Abel), arrives in Venice for his vacation. A hustler, Pipistrello (Ernst Matray), offers to guide him around the city in a gondola. He encounters a wedding party: the elegant Marchesina dei Bisgnosi (Maria Carmi) is with her new groom, the corpulent oil dealer Mestre Mangiabene, in tuxedo and top hat. The Marchesina nevertheless directs her seductive gaze to a young military officer (Theodor Rocholl) and tosses him a flower. But the flower lands in Anselmus's hands, and he imagines that the Marchesina has disclosed her desire for him. Pipistrello takes Anselmus to a hotel, where the wedding couple are also staying. An exuberant wedding party is underway, but Anselmus decides to go to bed, while the Marchesina prefers to rendezvous with the officer in her room. Asleep in his bed, Anselmus dreams of the people he has encountered during the day, and in his dream he rises up and follows them out the window. He finds himself entering the Marchesina's room while she flirts with the officer. Mestre knocks on the door, so the Marchesina hides the officer behind the curtain in which Anselmus also hides. A struggle behind the curtain ensues, and somehow Anselmus kills the officer. The bride manages to send Mestre away without him noticing the body, then she insists that Anselmus get rid of the body. Laborius comic scenes follow in which Anselmus and Pipistrello finally dump the body into the sea on a Böcklinesque Isle of the Dead. Yet once they dump the body,

multiple officers spring up and stand dead before them. Anselmus and Pipistrello run away. Back in the hotel, the drunken Mestre continues to party with the staff. He decides it is time to go to bed, but when he comes to his room, he discovers that the Marchesina has locked the door and does not respond to his knocking. The staff persuade him to sleep in Anselmus's room. Mestre collapses on top of the sleeping Anselmus. In the morning, Anselmus awakes in bewilderment to discover Mestre sleeping with him. He packs up and leaves Mestre in the bed. The Marchesina wonders where her husband is; the staff inform her. The final scene shows the Marchesina and Mestre stepping into a gondola with the young officer. The gondola floats down the canal, while Anselmus gazes longingly at the Marchesina, pulls the rose from the book he carried when he arrived in Venice, and drops the flower into the canal. Reinhardt seems uncertain whether he is making a comedy or a more serious contemplation of frustrated desires. The comic scenes involving the hotel staff lack good timing by both the performers and the editing. The camera remains too remote from the characters and without a distinctively cinematic view of the action. Aside from a few melancholy shots of the gondola in the Venice canals, the most interesting feature of the film is the extravagantly histrionic performance by Maria Carmi. A great many of her gestures of alarm, pleading, and seduction appear absurdly exaggerated, but she performs them with such voluptuous elasticity, taking advantage of her sleek, elongated body, that the viewer may think she has wandered into this triviality from a wilder and much more experimental film aesthetic. The boldest thing in the scenario is the amoral attitude toward adultery that so disturbed the Lord Chamberlain, "a certain facile sensuousness about most things that come from Berlin which cannot be described as riskiness, but indicates a perfectly different standard from that of either Paris or London" (Christian 1912: 659). Reviewers in the German film press adopted a more favorable attitude toward the film than theater critics toward the Berlin stage production (Filmportal.de *Venezianische Nacht* Materialien/Kritik 2017). But the film did not resonate with the public, and since then it has been regarded as evidence of Reinhardt's almost inexplicable lack of seriousness toward the film medium. His other film for Projektions AG Union, the beach comedy *Die Insel der Seligen* (1913), was even worse, an amateurish romp with friends from his company, but the screenplay, by Reinhardt's friend, the dramaturge, novelist, and journalist Arthur Kahane (1872-1932), was never

the scenario for a stage pantomime and was the only thing that Kahane wrote for the screen (cf. Hanisch 1993: 22-23). The famous film historian Lotte Eisner (1896-1983) claimed that Reinhardt exerted a major influence on the great German expressionist films of the 1920s, but this influence stemmed largely from Reinhardt's use of chiaroscuro lighting: "He had always been fond of clothing shapes in warm light spilling from innumerable invisible sources, of rounding, melting and hollowing his surface with velvety shadows" (Eisner 1969: 47-48). It's not clear why his directorial talent never went anywhere in film, although he was typical of many theater directors (his American counterpart, David Belasco [1853-1931], was another) who never succeed in transitioning to film: he lived too much of his life in the theater to see much of life outside of it or to see life as anything other than what a director can make happen on a stage. Film was alien to Reinhardt because it was a technology of the image, not a technology of spatial design. A technology of the image magnified and separated pantomimic action from its spatial environment, whereas the technology of spatial design allowed the director to enfold mediocre or interchangeable pantomimic action within a grander control over life on the stage rather than over the illusion of "another life" on the screen.

Varieties of the Austro-German Pantomimic Imagination

Nearly a decade later, in 1921, Vollmoeller wrote another pantomime scenario in collaboration with the Dutch composer Jaap Kool, *Die Schiessbude*, but this piece deserves attention later, in the discussion of German experiments with the curious genre of the "dance pantomime" in the 1920s. Here a group of Austro-German pantomimes deserves attention because they reveal the adventurous scope of Germanic pantomimic imagination, even if they received hardly any attention in their time, let alone any realization in the theater. Paul Scheerbart (1863-1915), a German author of visionary and utopian fantasies and experimental narratives, composed a two-act "astral pantomime," *Kometentanz* (1902), a kind of science fiction pantomime of astonishing wildness. The piece is difficult to summarize, because it contains a great mass of actions following a logic that is outside of any "earthly" idea of narrative driven by characters whose motives unfold within specific conventions, laws, rules, a society, a "world" that determines the extent to which their motives "make sense" (cf. Vollmer 2011: 222-241). Members of an earthly kingdom find themselves in an astral

realm (not a spaceship!). These include a King and his entourage, his two Queens, a Maid, an Executioner, a Magician, a Poet, a Merry Person, among many others. These characters interact with each other without regard to earthly status, need, or consequence. They pursue no erotic desires, no hunger for wealth or possessions, and no desire even to control their circumstances. In the astral realm, their actions are the result of cosmic forces over which they have no control and which no language, not even that of the scenario, can explain. Stars, planets, meteors, comets, and the moon move across or into the astral realm and cause humans to become still or to dance or to perform cryptic actions, but these human actions seem also capable of causing perturbations in the planetary movements. Humans embody the planets, the comets, the sun, and the moon. Scheerbart describes in detail the types of music and even the kinds of instruments that accompany the scenes—"the music of the spheres"—and the sounds of nightingales intermittently join the soundtrack. The movement of spheres causes peculiar dances involving interactions between humans and astral bodies: The Horoscope Minuet, The Maid's Waltz, the Dance of the Three Great Comets, the Dance of the Three Great Comets and the Seven Little Stars, The Moon Curls Bacchanal. A large globe appears in the middle of the "stage" or however this thing is staged, but it is not clear if this globe represents Earth; various characters touch, ascend, or hide behind it; the Maid and the two Queens dance upon it, although not together. The action flows bizarrely and kaleidoscopically, but not destructively or chaotically. For example:

> *A great comet appears in the heavens.*
> *And the stars of heaven stand still.*
> *The women flee with bright cries at the sight of the comets approaching; the men attempt to soothe the women.*
> *The King leans forward on his heavenly globe.*
> *Meanwhile the comets swoop down and appear at the rear of the stage.*
> *Everyone stands in fear and dismay like pillars with open mouths.*
> *The Magician appeases their minds by guiding his peacock feathers over the heads of the terrified.*
> *The comet comes forward and bows before the King, who with difficulty recovers his poise.*

The poet stands up, bows before the comets and rattles his chains.
The two other comets come behind one another, like the first, to the front of the stage, and the greeting occurs exactly like the previous one.
The music of the spheres sounds very mild, submissive and soft.
The men and women have gradually relaxed, the Magician indicates to the Servant, to spread out left and right colorful blankets on the tiles.
And the women lie down on the blankets.
The men place themselves behind the women.
[…]
The music of the spheres assumes a dance melody.
And the comets dance.

Scheerbart describes numerous lighting and color effects. "Of the other Harem ladies, each has a dress of a special color; the dresses reach to the knee and are garnished with gold and silver stars and spheres […] All the women have on their backs gold or silver moon sickles with masks like wings and except for the Queens no makeup and dark colored stockings." In a scene called "The Insane," the action entails this scenic effect: "The new shifting stars no longer have a ball form; they have the form of giant diamonds and many-sided phosphorescent crystal bodies—some consist of unformed tube structures that shimmer like soap bubbles and resemble polyps, others seem like frozen flames […]." In the Moon Gavotte, the Maid steps onto the globe and summons seven female Pierrots, all in white with gold ornaments ("golden moon hats"), and the Pierrots dance a gavotte with seven Ladies in Blue, although each Lady wears a different blue dress "and not like the Maid's blue dress." In the Horoscope Minuet, the seven Pierrots become five planets, the sun, and the moon ("The Venus-Pierrot has very blond hair that reaches to her knees, a star on her forehead, and a mirror in each hand)" (Scheerbart 1977: 7-34; Vollmer 2012a: 116-139). *Kometentanz* presents a narrative structure that does not follow the logic of humans living on Earth; it follows the logic of a cosmic *design* that only pantomime can simulate, because language cannot explain it. Dance is something that takes hold of both human and astral bodies as a result of enormous cosmic movements whose source is unintelligible and spectacularly enigmatic. The piece ends with the moon rising and all the humans and the comets receding deep into space. The curtain falls as the music grows softer and

more distant: “And the voice of the nightingale sounds from far, far away.” As with many of his small, experimental plays, Scheerbart probably never expected his pantomime to achieve actual performance. The piece requires large resources, an inordinately ambitious director, and tremendously imaginative designers, as well as a very adventurous audience, and it is difficult to see how any theater with the resources to produce the show then or even now would risk such a large investment in a cosmic pantomime of Wagnerian scale utterly free of any intimation of a moral order to the universe, any sense of doom, any idea of redemption or salvation, or even any suggestion of universal absurdity. It is a fascinating image of freedom in which human bodies, having no need of speech, become cosmic forms, like comets, no greater and no lesser than stars, meteors, and planets. Nevertheless, in 1900, Scheerbart sent a draft of his scenario to Richard Strauss, who agreed to compose music for it as a ballet. The ballet master in Berlin rejected Strauss’s proposed ballet because the piece was “not serious.” Strauss then asked Gustav Mahler to consider the piece for performance at the Vienna Opera. Mahler agreed contingent upon review of the scenario in relation to the cost, which apparently turned out to be more than Mahler could afford. Strauss only sketched some of the music, then abandoned it, while Scheerbart never sought another collaborator (Heisler 2009: 17-18). But *Kometentanz* finally did receive a performance, in 2014, at the FullDome Festival held in the Zeiss Planetarium in Jena, Germany. The director of this project was an instructor at the Bauhaus Weimar University, Micky Remann (b. 1951), a multimedia artist, pioneer of the underwater “Liquid Sound” performance technology, and the author of a master’s thesis on Scheerbart, in which he argued that Scheerbart represented a “pre-psychedelic” approach to the “architectural-literary avant-garde” (Remann 2007). Remann assembled a large crew of technicians in video, lighting, editing, animation, mixing, and an ensemble of actors and dancers from the university. Ludger Nowak composed the electronic music soundtrack. The production made extensive use of the planetarium’s lighting and projection capabilities. However, according to the available imagery and not good videos of the production, Remann was not successful in developing the pantomimic aspect of the piece. The comets and planets consisted of video faces projected onto the dome-screen. Much of the human action took place on a small, elevated circular stage that did not permit interesting movement, especially with more than

two people on it. The globe was much too small to accommodate all the actions Scheerbart assigns in relation to it. The choreography was interesting only to the extent that dancers wore or brandished lights in darkness. The actors appeared incapable of signifying anything more than awe or wonder at the cosmic imagery, even though Scheerbart doesn't indicate anywhere that the humans express wonder at the cosmic spectacles engulfing them. The production was not really an "astral pantomime," but a light show whose purpose was to display the multimedia pleasures offered by technology and the skills of multimedia technicians, whereas Scheerbart's scenario, though its cosmic scenes do require inventive scenic technology and costuming, does not even suggest that the characters, human or otherwise, rely on any technology to pursue their interactions. This production of *Kometentanz* signified a considerable lack of confidence in the movement of human bodies to become celestial bodies as strange and fantastic as the movements of stars and spheroids conjured up by digital technologies.

Scheerbart himself showed little interest in developing his pantomimic imagination after *Kometentanz*, although he continued to write many small plays and theoretical pieces about theater. In 1904, he published *Sophie*, a two-page "marriage pantomime with music and dance," which quite remarkably describes through spare pantomimic actions the façade of a bourgeois marriage wherein, at the behest of her parents, a woman reluctantly marries a man who becomes violently jealous of her affection for a mutual friend. She steps between the duelers, who stab her, causing her to become catatonic. The duelers embrace; the husband wanders off with the maid; the friend has no money to pay the doctor, so the parents arrive and wearily pay the bill. Scheerbart says he wrote the piece to show that pantomime was just as effective, just as emotionally engaging, and much more efficient than bourgeois marital dramas that tell the same kinds of stories using many, many words (Vollmer 2012a: 160-161). In 1909, Scheerbart wrote a very brief piece for *Das Theater*, "Riesenpantomime mit Fesselballons," in which he describes a visit to a garden party given by Prince Saburoff in Finland. Part of the entertainment consists of a pantomime, "Goliath and His Wife," in which these characters appear as gigantic balloons fastened to an enormous, two-story table; Goliath handles a table knife that is three meters long. Goliath swats his wife with a three-foot spoon, but she merely laughs with a great roar. After

consuming "immense tankards of wine," they perform a farcical minuet. The author suggests that the couple perform a pantomime entirely in the air, "but nobody paid any attention" to him (Scheerbart 1977: 123-124). Gabriele Brandstetter (2015: 325) contends that in this piece Scheerbart parodies Futurist aero-ballets, but it also uncannily anticipates the gigantic, popular puppet spectacles, starting in 1993, of the Theatre Royal de Luxe of Nantes. But Scheerbart's mind was too happily busy hurriedly jotting down fantastic utopian visions to bother with the practicalities of bringing any of them to life, even on the stage.

The deep, gigantic shadows cast by Goethe and Wagner over Germanic culture perhaps inspired the monumentality that infected much of the Austro-German pantomimic imagination. Reinhardt and Scheerbart were contrasting manifestations of this belief that pantomime remained hopelessly obscure unless it operated on a vast, "cosmic" scale. The largest and longest pantomime scenario ever written is *Lucifer* (1899) by the German poet Richard Dehmel (1863-1920). The text runs over 120 pages and would require an enormous number of performers if anyone ever produced it. *Lucifer* is a monumental ode translated into the prose describing an immense theatrical celebration performed as pantomime and dance. The piece is devoid of conflict, dramatic action. Rather, each scene functions as a panel in a huge panorama glorifying Lucifer's dominion on Earth. He encounters no opponent. Always resplendent, he mostly just summons and commands legions of followers: doctors, priests, witches, soldiers, workers, artists, pagans, Christians, bacchantes, scientists, teachers, knights, police officers, nuns, slaves, children, scholars, parents, among others. Various animals and mythic creatures appear to assist and celebrate Lucifer: apes, bats, owls, butterflies, angels, fauns, "amorettes," a black sheep, and an actual donkey. Lucifer's immediate court consists of the "seeming blind old man" Saturn, the black-winged boy Thanatos, the white-winged boy Amor, a Mother with Child, and Lucifer's voluptuous partner Venus. The action takes place in "eternal Rome," but the action mostly consists of elaborate, often torch-brandishing processions by the various categories of followers, their orgiastic dances, and their cryptic, ritual interactions with Lucifer and his officers. Dehmel describes in fanatically naturalistic detail spectacular, glamorous scenic, lighting, costume, and sound effects, and he occasionally accompanies the text with diagrams of the stage that include coded instructions for the application of different effects. The smallest visual

effects consume his attention with even greater obsession than they would for Reinhardt: "The youths are dressed in sulfur yellow and have violet-colored hair, the girls are dressed in orange-red with dark cherry hair; they all wear tea-rose wreaths. The clothes of the young men leave one leg naked to the knee, and the other to the calf, so that they may leave open the center of the lower edge of the sandals reaching to the middle of the under thigh; the girls' sandals, not yet fully visible, enclose at the ankles" (Dehmel 1899: 10). Dehmel describes scenic and physical actions in similar, maniacal but tediously repetitive detail to create as vivid an image as possible of a paradisiacal society in which manifold sectors of humanity bond together ecstatically through their adoration of Lucifer. A few scenes conclude with adult or children's mixed choirs singing brief hymns praising Lucifer and Venus as divine figures of Light and Love. However, the piece seems like an elegant pornographic fantasy of a libidinous society in which all bodies are beautiful and bond ecstatically with each other without anyone having to say a word. In 1896, Dehmel had already achieved notoriety as a result of his battle with state censors over the inclusion of his allegedly pornographic poem "Venus Consolatrix" in the collection of poems *Weib und Welt*. *Lucifer* is an allegorical glorification or counter-cultural testament of a mythic, utopian social order in which the redemption of humanity depends on the unifying, erotic-ecstatic power of otherwise suppressed, condemned, and forbidden divinities of Light and Love. The Wagnerian ambition of the piece urged Dehmel to ask Richard Strauss to write the accompanying music, but Strauss thought the scenario was too complex to stage. Dehmel took the project to Gustav Mahler, Eugene d'Albert, and even to Siegfried Wagner (in hope of a production at Bayreuth), but they all passed on the opportunity (Vollmer 2011: 208-209). Reviewers tended to welcome the published book of the scenario as the intimation of a new, elevated, super-aesthetic form of theater, but by 1926, his biographer, the Berlin critic Julius Bab, concluded that the work was a "pedantic" mess, "completely uncreative, completely unoriginal" in its use of dance and physical action and without any "organizational power" (Bab 1926: 229-230; Vollmer 2011: 219-220). Vollmer is the only one to write about the piece with any seriousness since then, but even he accepts that the *Lucifer* "monstrosity" fails completely as theater and is noteworthy only as "an interesting attempt at a non-verbal sensualization of art" (Vollmer 2011: 207-221, esp. 221).

Dehmel's excessive, even fanatical faith in words to describe his vision was fatal to any pantomimic incarnation in this or another world.

But when pantomime writers avoided extravagant experimentation or fantasy and followed a modest, feasible, and even conservative aesthetic, their scenarios risked almost as much obscurity in the theater as Scheerbart's or Dehmel's. The Austrian writer Max Mell (1882-1971) was perhaps the most conservative, politically and aesthetically, of all the Austro-German pantomime scenarists. He wrote a pair of pantomime scenarios for Grete Wiesenthal, who seems to have made friends with every artist in Vienna at that time. Wiesenthal was the motive for writing the scenarios; her early (1907) concerts with her sisters had rapturously enchanted Mell (Linhardt 2009: 55-56). It may be that Mell's mentor and friend, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, assisted in connecting Mell to Wiesenthal. In June 1907, Wiesenthal collaborated with Secession artists Koloman Moser, Alfred Roller, and Josef Hoffmann to produce a summer garden festival in a park in the Meidling district of Vienna, and with the involvement of numerous students from the Kunstbewerbeschule, where Moser, Roller, and Hoffmann taught, she staged an outdoor performance of Mell's pantomime, *Die Tänzerin und die Marionette*, with music by Rudolf Braun and decors by the Wiener Werkstätte designer Josef Wimmer (1882-1961) (Wiesenthal 1919: 207-209). The scenario sets the action in a vaguely medieval milieu. A young King enters an undefined space arm-in-arm with the Dancer, whom he kisses and fondles, although she responds reproachfully. The sound of a shepherd's flute causes her to pause, as if suddenly plunged into a dream. But the King breaks the spell and ushers her before his ministers. She acts in an informal, casual manner that disconcerts the court. She takes the King's scepter to perform a dance, but returns it to him when finished with her piece, which "expresses awe of the King without devotion." She wants the King's cloak, and he gives it to her. At the same time, a crowd of citizens and children has gathered around the clownish figure of Hanswurst, who entertains the group with a marionette. The King becomes entranced by the marionette and asks the clown what he wants for it. After evaluating the court ladies and then the neglected Dancer, Hanswurst decides he wants the Dancer. The King agrees to exchange the Dancer for the marionette, which causes the Dancer to despair. When the King wanders away with his new toy and his court, Hanswurst starts drinking rowdily with the townsfolk. But then the sound

of the shepherd's flute disturbs the party; the four country girls begin dancing and the Dancer stands "radiantly" expectant. When the Shepherd appears, he and the Dancer become immediately and physically drawn to each other. Hanswurst becomes enraged and accuses her of disloyalty to him and the King. But the Shepherd tosses him aside and walks away with the Dancer. The country girls and the townspeople console the furious Hanswurst. The King returns with the marionette and prods the clown to explain why he is depressed. When Hanswurst declares that love has devastated him, he and the King weep together. A gang of peasant men returns with the Shepherd and the Dancer. Hanswurst wants the Shepherd beheaded; the King grants the request, but the Dancer intervenes, asserts that he must kill her as well. The King will free the Shepherd if she will return to him—she might even become ennobled: he orders her release. But she demands that he give her the marionette. He agrees. But as soon as she has the marionette in hand, she leaps onto the drinking table and performs "haughty and scornful movements" indicating her scorn for the "dumbfounded gathering" of citizens (Vollmer 2012: 162-166).

Die Tänzerin und die Marionette strives for a genial, folkloric mood. The piece manifests Mell's inclination, more pronounced in later, stronger works, like the gripping novelette *Barbara Naders Viehstand* (1914) and the astonishingly popular religious drama *Das Apostelspiel* (1923), to show the power of marginalized, humble female figures to cause a spiritual crisis or upheaval within a community. The pantomime avoids the religiosity of Mell's later work, but here the Dancer appears as a foreign or alien figure whose sexuality allows her to ignore behavioral codes associated with different social classes, although her own desires focus on another "outsider," the Shepherd with his mysterious flute. The Dancer competes for male desire with the marionette, a robotic body controlled entirely by male desire. The ending is startling in that the Dancer does not wind up pairing with the King, the clown, or the Shepherd, but with the marionette. Yet as the partner of the marionette, she actually mocks the society that equates her with the robotic body, because she appears in control of both the real and simulated objects of male desire. Vollmer complains that Mell displays a weak pantomimic imagination insofar as he asks actors to mime spoken utterances that can't be heard rather than inscribes physical actions that communicate instead of the unheard utterances (Vollmer 2011: 278-279). For example, when the King signals for the guards to behead the

Shepherd, the Dancer intervenes and "explains: only over my dead body!" But Mell more likely intends these words as a kind of shorthand to describe a physical action corresponding to the idiomatically phrased sentiment that is left to the actor to formulate, such as thrusting her chest toward the blade of execution. Schnitzler used a similar kind of shorthand in *Die Verwandlungen des Pierrot*. In this respect, the actors are not themselves marionettes manipulated by the scenario or the author. But Vollmer is correct when he asserts that Mell remained "bound to a narrative and dramatic" way of thinking that did not move pantomimic action in an innovative or adventurous way. The scenario reads like an archaic, folkloric tale in the present tense and without dialogue. The ending may feel modern, but Mell does not introduce a particularly modern way of seeing medieval action: modernity simply and abruptly brings the folkloric world to an end. Yet photographs of the 1907 garden festival production that Vollmer has published show that Wimmer's costumes for the large cast were quite imaginative and "medieval" or "folkloric" in an *art nouveau* way that made the characters appear to be members of an old society that was at the same time strange and beautiful. Wiesenthal, for example, wore white shoes with heels and a white peasant dress, from the waist of which streamed dark, thin lines, as if veins or spider strands flowed through the fabric from Wiesenthal's abdomen. Her husband at the time, the artist Erwin Lang (1885-1961), who played the Shepherd, later did a famous woodcut of Wiesenthal dancing in the dress, though he greatly multiplied the number of black "veins" pouring from her abdomen. Available commentary on the performance describes a poetic, dreamlike atmosphere, a stylized aestheticism that comes more from the design and from Wiesenthal's "extraordinary performance" than from the scenario, although none of the commentaries provides any details regarding the pantomimic action (Vollmer 2011: 277-278). It is evident that Wiesenthal and her numerous collaborators invested a good amount of money and time in the production of a scenario that had only three performances and has never since received another production. Perhaps the startling ending of the scenario makes the piece too modern for folklore-honoring audiences, for whom a pantomime in which a woman prefers a marionette-robot to any human member of the folkloric community probably seems perverse, if not insulting. Revival of the scenario on the stage therefore most likely depends upon a charismatic woman like Wiesenthal to drive it and suffuse the

production with modernist scenic-performance elements that amplify rather than evade gendered tensions between performance and text.

The following summer, in 1908, Wiesenthal collaborated again with Mell on a pantomime, *Der silberne Schleier*, which she performed at the garden theater in Meidling, Vienna, with music by Carl Lafite (1872-1944) and directed by the Werkstätte painter and graphic designer Bertold Löffler (1874-1960), who also designed the scenery. The scenario has never been published nor has a manuscript of it ever surfaced. Rudolf Huber-Wiesenthal (1884-1983), the husband of Elsa Wiesenthal, gave a brief description of the performance for his 1934 book about the Wiesenthal sisters. The two-part story told of three female elves, and while these three dance in the moonlight, one of them has a silver veil stolen from her by a male human. She becomes the instrument of his power and turns into a woman. She encounters a seductive poet and becomes a mother (Huber-Wiesenthal 1934: 157). In a program note, Mell says that the action takes place five years later. Her child helps her overcome life's sorrows, "the ruthlessness of an unloving relative, the unfriendly impatience of her husband, the imprudence of her seducer." But the poet, a "messenger from the unearthly," brings light to her life, brings the silver veil, which is only a great longing that allows her to overcome the hostility of daily life. Her child covers her with the silver veil of longing (Vollmer 2011: 281). Huber-Wisesenthal believed that "the production belongs to the strongest performances ever given by the Wiesenthal sisters." Elsa played the elf-woman, Grete was the young poet, and Erwin Lang performed the role of the veil-snatcher. "Unforgettable for me is the moment in which [Elsa], in silent sorrow, lays her child to bed, upright and simple in movement and all the more gripping." Grete, as the young, seductive poet, gave such a deeply touching performance of "bright wistfulness that magically invoked the feeling of an entire world, the [waltz] world of [Joseph] Lanner's Vienna" [Vienna in the 1830s] (Huber-Wiesenthal 1934: 157). A reviewer for *Bühne und Welt* (1908 X, II: 919), discussing this pantomime along with *Die Tänzerin und die Marionette* and *Der Geburtstag der Infantin*, which Wiesenthal had presented on separate days in the garden theater, remarked that "These young Viennese girls, with their pretty, big, and wise eyes, are able to make credible all the scales of the emotional life. They dance poems. As they float, move, sway their hips, that is mimed grace, the poetry of dance." But the reviewer believed that the Wiesenthal concert performances

of Lanner waltzes were superior to their pantomime productions, which suggests some kind of opaque and unfortunately unexamined tension between pantomiming nostalgia or longing for a vanished era using contemporary music and dancing the nostalgia with the music of that era. Mell never wrote another pantomime, and *Der silberne Schleier* never had another performance. For the theater he wanted to write works that were overtly religious, intensely Catholic, and performable by amateur communities. Pantomime for him was inimical to that goal. Religious communication requires the Word, a voice, as do amateur actors, who always find speech such a relief from anxiety about what to do with their bodies in performance. *Das Apostelspiel* (1923) became one of the most successful plays in European theater history, in part because of so many amateur productions, and it remains fairly popular. Pantomime for Mell represented a wayward path, a repression of faith in Catholicism.

Whereas Mell did not believe that pantomime could reconcile modernity with Catholicism, Reinhardt, with *Das Mirakel*, soon showed that this was possible to the extent that the reconciliation depended on the "miraculous" use of scenic technology in relation to an otherwise non-modernistic, interchangeable pantomimic performance meant to signify, if anything, the "eternally human" conditions of bodily action. However, the most modernistic treatment of religious themes in any pantomime came from the German art historian Carl Einstein (1885-1940), with his *Nuronihar* (1913). As a communist and anarchist sympathizer, his perspective on religion was by no means that of a believer. Vollmer contends, after surveying Paul Raabe's vast, 18-volume *Index Expressionismus* (1972), that *Nuronihar* is the only expressionist literary pantomime ever published: in an expressionist mode, pantomime favored film (Vollmer 2011: 432-433). Proto-expressionist effects appeared in earlier pantomimes, such as Scheerbart's *Kometentanz* and Hofmannsthal's *Der Schüler*, but Vollmer seems to mean that self-consciously expressionist authors avoided pantomime, even though in drama especially they experimented with a highly abbreviated, "telegraphic" language to construct "rich, unusually poetic metaphors for the unsayable, pre- and extra-linguistic" visions of profound estrangement "between subject and object worlds" (432). Yet expressionist writers tended to be skeptical of religious feeling as a domain of experience "beyond words" or as a path to the realm of the unsayable. Einstein was Jewish, but Judaic theology was not a subject on which he

cared to write. In *Nuronihar*, religious themes, the conflict between Islam and Christianity, provided a metaphor or analogy for exploring the power dynamics of erotic desire. Einstein dedicated his pantomime to the Franco-Polish dancer Stacia Napierkowska (1886-1945), who began her career as a dancer for the Paris Opera and music halls before appearing, from 1908, as an actor and dancer in numerous French and Italian silent films. In 1910, she performed an exotic dance before the king in Louis Feuillade's film *Le Festin de Bathazar*, which was a reprise of a dance she performed in Andre Capellani's film *Salome* (1908) (Shepherd 2013: 102; cf. "Stacia Napierkowska on film" 2016). In 1911, she created in Paris a three-part piece, *Pas de l'Abeille*, a "dance of the bee," and then had poses from it photographed and published in a magazine called *The Sketch*. The piece took place in an Arabian desert oasis, where a captive and bound Moroccan princess begs her sheik captor to release her; he agrees if she will dance for him, which she does by performing a dance of the bee: A girl picking flowers discovers a bee in her dress and writhes and wriggles to free it, discarding some clothing in the process. The sheik makes love to her but refuses to restore her freedom. She seizes a sword and stabs him to death, but realizes she can only be free in death. She then performs a "dance of fire," in which death engulfs her upon an "altar of fire" (Brandstetter 2015: 172-174). Between 1912 and 1913, Napierkowska toured with the piece, including New York City, where her "Arab pantomime," there titled *The Captive*, encountered a failed effort by the city administration to prosecute her for indecency; Ruth St. Denis joined her in the vaudeville program (*New York Times* April 27, 1913: C5; Slide 2012: 120). In 1911, Einstein published an open letter to Napierkowska in the journal *Die Gegenwart*, in which he described her movements in a manner very similar to those of the dancer Nuronihar; a French translation of the letter appeared in the January 1912 issue of the Parisian journal *La Phalange*, but it is not known if he actually knew her. She was clearly the model for the character Nuronihar, and Einstein sought the assistance of the theater producer Jacques Rouché (1862-1957), soon to be the director of the Opera, to bring his pantomime to the stage with Napierkowska in the title role. The pantomime itself first appeared in French translation in *La Phalange* a month before the German version appeared in the October 1913 edition of the radical expressionist journal *Die Aktion* (Meffre 2002: 47). But the idea of a Parisian production never materialized, and *Nuonihar* has never been performed anywhere. To some

extent, then, the piece represents expressionistically the turbulent erotic feelings that Napierkowska awakened in the author.

But a second inspiration was the fantastic novel *Vathek* (1786) by the English super-aesthete William Beckford (1760-1844); Einstein published in *Die Aktion* in 1913, under the pseudonym Sabine Ree, a review of Franz Blei's 1907 translation of the novel, which he described as a "book of inexhaustible desire [...] concluding with infernal boredom and desperate banality," "a work of stylized rationality that is alien to the organic" and comparable to works by Mallarme, Baudelaire, and Flaubert (Weisstein 1973: 94; *Die Aktion* 1913: 300). The novel chronicles the adventures of a caliph, Vathek, who encounters a grotesque man bearing swords containing undecipherable inscriptions. As a result of the encounter, Vathek repudiates Islam and begins, with the help of his mother, an extravagant quest to acquire supernatural powers that will give him godlike control over life. This project ends in disaster, as Vathek commits numerous crimes and sins to achieve his goal. He and those with whom he has colluded end up in the domain of Eblis, which is the eternal fire of hell. At one point in his journey to the source of supernatural power, Vathek visits a mountain kingdom populated by dwarves and ruled by the emir Fakreddin, whose beautiful daughter Nouronihar has an intense romantic relationship with her cousin, the beautiful, androgynous Gulchenrouz: "when Gulchenrouz appeared in the dress of his cousin, he seemed to be more feminine than even herself" (Beckford 1966: 155). But Vathek eventually seduces her, and she becomes his partner in his degeneration, while Gulchenrouz "passed whole ages in undisturbed tranquility" (194). The caliph's success in achieving supernatural powers depends on his contract with the grotesque man who brought him the swords and who becomes the monstrous, demonic Giaour, a derogatory term for "infidel."

Einstein borrowed much from Vathek, including these characters, but his pantomime placed the focus on Nuronihar and made the female dancer a source of supernatural disturbance. He somewhat follows the three-part structure of Napierkowska's *Pas de l'Abeille*. The action unfolds in an "unnatural," desolate landscape that includes a grassy hill, a great abyss or ravine, and a large red tent inhabited by Vateck. Einstein pays close attention to color effects: Vateck wears a green cloak, his eunuch an orange tunic; his guards wear yellow cloaks and carry blue shields. Nuronihar wears a peacock blue costume. "Vateck's movements indicate that he has

never experienced any resistance, a word or look from him indicates unimpeded actions." Nuronihar is "completely preoccupied with her own body" and responds to everything she sees with "rhythmic movements"; dancing makes her "forget her environment," yet she "would do nothing that causes her shame." No one in the pantomime performs with either mimicking or "realistic gestures," and Nuronihar provokes the "rhythmization" or "rhythmic excitement" of all others in the piece and even of the scenic environment. In the first part of the pantomime, Vateck remains motionless as he watches a dance performed by a muezzin and two Koran students in sky-blue, purple, and sea-green garments—a "classical" dance, "like a stupid sylph dance." The caliph and his attendants respond with pantomimic gestures and commands. As the dance becomes more frenetic, Nuronihar appears on top of the hill, watches the dance, then rather shyly begins dancing herself. Her dance disrupts the dance of the Koran students, who become both excited and frightened by Nuronihar. It is a long and complicated dance, and Einstein describes in great detail various movements, responses, and emotions circulating within the performance space, such as: "The dance is in the pantomime the only permitted representation of passion, which cannot be externalized in fragmentary gestures or even facial expressions. The head stays quiet and does not steer the whole body. Nuronihar uses the ornamental advantages of the hill curve, which gives the utmost movement, but Vateck is always calm, though excited, without mimic or tenor gestures. His green coat burns more and more of passion, Nuronihar interests only physically, the folds of her dress order and clarify the movements." One of the Koran students, dancing wildly toward Nuronihar, falls into the abyss. Nuronihar's movements keep changing, "the aria after the recitative," but Vateck remains still as he watches her body become increasingly "free and lascivious": she does not dance for the caliph, she dances to display the power of her body over others. She dances to the edge of the abyss, then suddenly disappears behind the hill. Vateck finally moves, grabbing a sword and lunging toward the hill. But Nuronihar has vanished. Vateck and his eunuch stand together astounded, then soundlessly leave the stage, with his court retinue lying prostrate on the ground. The second part occurs at night in the same place. A white cloud hovers over the abyss as two stargazers appear, "armed" with immense telescopes, which they swing while dancing. Nuronihar joins them in the dance, although her movements are dreamier

and more seductive. As she dances toward the abyss, she casts a great shadow over the white cloud. The dancing awakens the "dark and huge" Giaur from the abyss; he holds a large crystal ball that possesses all the qualities of a constellation. Nuronihar becomes enraptured by the "immense jewel," tries to embrace it, and the constellation within it transforms her: the young girl disappears and she becomes a "frightfully demanding woman, [...] and from now on the caliph has to deal with a woman who is greater than he is." The glowing jewel hovers above and around Nuronihar in the arms of the Giaur, who never leaves the abyss. As Nuronihar dances more wildly, the jewel rises higher, and she seeks to become engulfed by the radiance of the sphere. The stargazers indicate they have discovered a new constellation; the laughter and thunder of the Giaur draws the constellation into the abyss, as Nuronihar's shadow grows longer. An intense brightness overwhelms the scene. Nuronihar sleeps on the edge of the abyss, while the stargazers "comically" attempt to imitate her dancing shadow. But then they run off to announce the new constellation. Gulchencruz, described by Einstein as an "elegant, helpless insect," then appears with "two female playmates," looking for Nuronihar. They dance in a manner similar to the early movements of Nuronihar, but "sadder, more torn, and fearful." When Gulchenkruz discovers Nuronihar, he becomes both stormy and delicate in his effort to embrace her, but Nuronihar mocks the trio's gamboling with "caricatured movements," and he then acts likes a scolded puppy. Vateck appears, and with a gesture scatters the trio; he grabs Nuronihar, and they stride "in a corresponding dance rhythm" across the landscape. The third and final part takes place at twilight, in Vateck's tent, illuminated by a warm, subdued, colored light. Vateck remains largely in the shadows, but Nuronihar moves in and out of the glow in a ghostly manner. As night deepens, the tent gradually disappears, replaced by an immense cathedral, the dimensions of which far exceed the capacity of the performance space to contain all of it—this is a gigantic architectural magnification of the crystalline jewel in the previous scene; it glitters with a multitude of reflecting surfaces and "light panes." The light drives Nuronihar to "ever more passionate unfolding of her powers"; she strives for the "maximum intensification of her entire erotic capacity," which exceeds all "human constraints." Her ecstatic dancing awakens the caliph, and he tries to restrain her, but he is no match for her. The huge Giaur lies on the steps of the cathedral, accompanied by guards with "long, dark shields."

Vateck studies her from the shadows until he hears a powerful horn signal, which urges him to perform a sword dance in competition with Nuronihar, who responds by performing a dance-striptease, but she performs the dance "without coquetry," as if she were alone and completely enraptured by her own body. He drags her into the tent, where her dance becomes even more lascivious yet oblivious. The Giaur glows in the background as pillars of light encircle Nuronihar and swell to form a great ball that vanquishes the tent. Nuronihar dances on the steps of the cathedral before the Giaur, who blocks the entrance to Eblis, the dark hell beyond him. Vateck, blinded, struggles to restrain Nuronihar, but she resists, draws his sword, and stabs him to death. He falls into the arms of the Giaur, while she leaps over them to reach the "always glowing star." She succeeds in "touching the circle of light, which pours over her and encloses her." She burns within in it consumed by an "entirely ecstatic, torturous dance" (Vollmer 2012a: 217-227; *Die Aktion* 1913: 1006-1017).

The scenario makes seemingly exorbitant demands on scenic technology to produce spectacular visual effects. But none of these effects was beyond the talents of imaginative scenic designers even in the nineteenth century; they're just expensive. Presumably, in Einstein's mind at least, the physically exhausting role of Nuronihar was within reach of Stacia Napierkowska's talents, although she excelled much more in film pantomime than in dance. It is the violent expressionism of the piece that has condemned it to remain a startling literary curiosity rather than a visionary performance. Unlike Beckford's novel, *Nuronihar* does not deal with an arrogant, criminal quest for supernatural powers. The spectacular scenic effects do not function to simulate the presence of "magic" or unearthly intimations of secret, inhuman knowledge. Rather, the expressionistic scenic and dance-pantomimic effects represent, allegorically or metaphorically, a male sexual-religious world-view. The uninhibited female dancer brings about the destruction of the caliph, the representative of measureless male power sanctified by Islam. Dance releases Nuronihar from any attachment to men; it drives her to a masturbatory reveling in her own body and its power to destroy all desire for anything other than the "infidel" radiance of a light that causes her to "burn" with pleasure or "passion" for her own being. Dance urges her to become a blazing "star" in the vast firmament that otherwise remains hidden in the afternoon blue sky above the desert. Vateck embodies a static, immobile idea of power that

"moves" only to restrain others from falling into the abyss of the infidel, the Giaur. While the monstrous Giaur does not embody qualities specific to any "other" religion, the use of the cathedral imagery links him to Christianity, which, in the scenario's understanding of Islam, is the "portal" to Eblis, a hell of infinite and absolute darkness. But though she dances at the edge of the abyss, Nuronihar does not fall into it, as do the caliph and the Koran students. Spatially and psychologically, she seems to dance between the caliph and the Giaur, but while the Giaur seduces and excites her with the glowing jewel-sphere, her dancing transfigures her into a fiery cosmic being that no religion, no maleness can possess. Nuronihar embodies the idea of power as transformation and metamorphosis, the discovery of a new star, a new light, a new "passion," a new realm of ecstasy, a new way of moving from life into death. The pantomime is not so much a critique of Islam or Christianity as it is a critique of male anxiety regarding the female body. Religions function as immense projections of that anxiety. With *Nuronihar*, pantomime reaches an astonishingly sophisticated level of philosophical discourse that would achieve its greatest authority through wordless performance. It is difficult to imagine any philosophical, theological or even sexual discourse being any "deeper" or perhaps more controversial than a well-produced performance of this violent, cosmic conflict between male pantomime (the commanding gesture) and female dance (the ecstatic movement), although a performance now would probably provoke greater controversy than when Einstein wrote the scenario (cf. Vollmer 2011: 432-446). But as with other Austro-German pantomime authors, the writing of a powerful pantomime scenario seemed to exhaust his imagination in the medium, and he never wrote another one. It is as if Einstein saw pantomime as a way to compress into a single, orgasmic, and final crescendo of insight the relation of the body to sexuality, after which pantomime had done all that it existed to do and did not need to do anything more. But that is the limitation of a writer dominated by the anxiety that motivated him to write his pantomime. Writing *Nuronihar* probably did not end his anxiety, which might explain further why he felt no desire to write another pantomime: it didn't free to him to see the body in relation to another theme, to a new insight.

Einstein's extravagant expressionism and aggressive modernism may have seemed too esoteric for many audiences, but it is not correct to assume that a more popular or "audience-friendly" approach to pantomime

would have created a more welcoming attitude toward the art on the part of the established theater culture of Western Europe. A few months after Einstein published *Nuronihar*, the Austrian journalist and dramatist Felix Salten (1869-1945) published his pantomime in four scenes, *Das lockende Licht* (1914). As an editor for various journals and newspapers in Vienna and Berlin, Salten developed a keen interest in popular or "trivial" forms of culture, which he attempted to integrate into his ambition to build a career as a serious literary author. Like the other Austrian pantomime writers, he belonged to the Jung Wien circle of Jewish writers. By 1914, he had published numerous volumes of short stories, plays, and reportage, although his most enduring effort from that time was the grossly pornographic novel *Josephine Mutzenbacher* (1906), which he never publically acknowledged writing. In 1923, he published his most famous book, the globally beloved *Bambi*, the story of a deer's life in a vast Alpine forest. *Josephine Mutzenbacher* was the most radical thing Salten ever wrote, and even that became more popular than anyone imagined, due perhaps to repeated attempts by governments to suppress or proscribe it. But while he always kept in mind a feuilleton audience's theory of entertainment, his spirit was fundamentally modern, and his single pantomime, in trying to accommodate a "popular" audience, introduced modest (non-radical) innovations that, however, did not succeed in making the piece popular. *Das lockende Licht* reads like a film scenario and probably would have seemed more daring and popular as a film in 1914 than as a stage production, in large part because the scenic environment for the action requires naturalism. Indeed, in 1913, Salten began writing screenplays, which he continued to do until the 1930s. The story, compressed into four scenes, is melodramatic, full of pathos, yet neither sentimental nor cynical. In a Viennese tenement, the young Susanne lives with her brutal, alcoholic father, who steals money from her to pay for liquor and compels her to dance in public accompanied by a hurdy-gurdy. Salten dramatizes these details by showing the father waking up with a severe hangover, searching for a drink, finding his bottle empty, searching through Susanne's clothes for some money, discovering that she doesn't have enough to pay for quenching his thirst, looking for something of hers to pawn, and then leaving the apartment in disgust when he finds nothing of sufficient value. Susanne wakes up refreshed and inspired by the sparkling morning. She washes, dresses, discovers her father's tampering

with her clothes, and looks around for something to eat. Her neighbor, the violinist Theodor, knocks, and Susanne, dancing to the door, lets him in. He gives her a violin lesson, and dances while he plays. It is clear that he is deeply in love with her, while she seems hesitant in her fondness for him. Throughout the piece, Salten occasionally inserts brief pieces of spoken dialogue, somewhat in the manner of silent film intertitles, to construct relations between characters. The father returns suddenly and demands that Susanne go to the park and dance. In the park, crowded with different types of people, the father prods the resistant Susanne to dance on the park stage. At the same time, the impresario Philibert wrangles with the dancer Gobsy, who refuses to dance anymore because she plans to marry the man who accompanies her, Count Willi, who can make her a countess and buy her fine clothes. She tears up her contract with Philibert. The father finally gets Susanne to begin her dance, while he cranks the hurdy-gurdy; children gather around the pair. Philibert sees an opportunity. He gives the astonished Susanne a gold piece, which succeeds in getting the father to leave in search of drink. She decides to go off with Philibert. She sees Theodor, but does not acknowledge him. The father returns, wondering what has happened to Susanne, but when he discovers the money left for him on the hurdy-gurdy, he becomes proud, glad, and relaxed. Theodor, overwhelmed with indecision, is not sure whether to follow the father or follow Susanne. The third scene unfolds in an "elegant" nightclub. The conductor welcomes Theodor as a new member of the orchestra. The impresario gathers together the performers for "The Comedy of Aphrodite" as patrons enter the club. Gobsy and the Count appear, and Gobsy announces that she will not dance; she will marry the Count. The audience would prefer to see her dance, but the impresario announces he has something better. The father shows up, wearing gloves, an overcoat, and a top hat; he announces himself to the impresario, who finds him a seat, where he starts drinking. The curtain parts, the orchestra plays, the nightclub darkens, and a spotlight reveals a bizarre scene: Susanne re-enacts her life as a street dancer accompanied by an old man playing a hurdy-gurdy who prods her to dance. Her real father weeps, but then she disappears behind the curtain as the spotlight dims. Theodor rises from the orchestra and moves to the stage, where he encounters the father, who mocks him. Theodor wants to pursue Susanne, but the impresario and the conductor compel him to return to the orchestra. The scene becomes dark

again for the performance of "The Comedy of Aphrodite." This consists mostly of dialogue: Aphrodite, played by Susanne, dismisses the concern of her husband Hephaistos that she has been unfaithful, but he departs unconvinced. Her son Eros, played by a child, explains that he has been busy shooting arrows of love. Ares appears and swells Aphrodite's heart. As Eros weaves around the pair, Aphrodite peels away her clothing until she becomes "nearly naked." She and Ares dance a minuet. Theodor rises from his seat and enters the stage, disrupting the action with his "gestures of tragic jealousy." While Eros and Ares leave the stage in confusion or dismay, the audience thinks it is watching a good clown act, as Theodor reproaches Susanne and declares his love for her. But Susanne responds scornfully: she has had "enough of your violin"; she wants an audience, success, wealth. She begins dancing, "full of longing, full of lust," into the audience, which swarms around her, while Theodor, from the stage, watches her disappear from his life. The final scene occurs decades later. Late in the summer evening in a country restaurant, young people waltz to violin music played by the white-haired Theodor. When he finishes playing, the young people gather around him to praise his music, and he sips from all of their drinks. Girls huddle around him, but he dismisses them as false and disloyal. But they insist he play another tune for them. A beggar woman enters, stirred by the violin music: Susanne, utterly exhausted and hungry. The restaurant manager shows compassion, guides her to a seat, instructs a waitress to bring some food, and says she can stay until morning. He begins closing up the restaurant and invites Theodor to stay overnight, but Theodor wants to return to the city, and he asks the beggar woman if she wants to return to the city with him. "Then, with a large gesture, she recognizes him, becomes overwhelmed with dizziness, wants to return to her seat and sinks onto the floor in front of it." The alarmed Theodor studies her face and, as if seeing Death, pulls back horrified. He recognizes her with an astonished: "You!" She reaches out to him, but he wraps his cloak around himself as if to leave her. But, kneeling, she asks him to forgive her. Theodor raises her and leads her to a couch, where she shivers and he covers her with his cloak. She lifts his violin, kisses it, and asks him to play it. But he says it is "too late, too late. Everything is over!" She wants to explain, but he says: "Quiet! Quiet! I know everything." He takes the violin from her and plays a bit. Then they simply sit together, without holding hands, gazing at the morning light streaming through the restaurant window and revealing the city in the

distance. A child appears and, with upraised arms, dancing lightly toward the rising sun (Vollmer 2012a: 228-244).

Salten excels at describing pantomimic actions filled with emotion. The actions are simple, familiar, and naturalistic; their emotional weight derives from their peculiar concatenation within a naturalistically presented milieu and the narrative that issues "naturally" from that milieu. For example, when Susanne enters the restaurant: "At some tables, someone gives her a coin; at some she is impatiently dismissed. She bears it quietly; she is used to nothing else. She falters. The violin playing grips her, as if she knows it. She takes a couple of feeble steps; lifts a pained face and feels: where are the times when I, too, was happy. The manager notices her, wants to send her away" (Vollmer 2012a: 242). These actions are moving when performed "naturalistically"—that is, when performed with restraint, as if the body resists some pressure within itself to release a greater feeling than the environment "allows." *Das lockende Licht* is pantomime in a naturalistic mode. The carefully described settings for the tenement apartment, the park, the nightclub, and the restaurant prescribe both the narrative and the pantomimic action. The environment overwhelms the main characters, who are too weak or too deprived to overcome given circumstances; they act out of necessity rather than out of desire. The environment is an inescapable fate that prevents love from redeeming or transforming it. But the pantomime is not a critique of the society that inhabits the environment, for it presumes, in melodramatic fashion, that a tragic relation to the environment, to the world, results from a helpless succumbing to a pathological hunger—for drink, for money, or for the love or possession of another. This type of melodramatic naturalism was "popular" especially in pre-war Europe to a degree that audiences today seem reluctant to acknowledge, even though performances in this style, particularly in some Scandinavian, German, and Russian silent films, remain persuasive and moving dramatizations of a fundamental understanding that life is inescapably sad, a crushing failure of love to release people from the deprivation into which they were born. But Salten's pantomime was not popular. The piece had a single production, in February 1914 at the Dresden Opera, with music composed by the Russian Wladimir Metzl (1882-1938), a cousin of Salten's wife Ottilie who had attracted attention for his large-scale symphonic works. Frida Hess (1886-1972), a star dancer in the Dresden Opera ballet corps, played Susanne, while Waldemar

Staegemann (1879-1958), a baritone in the opera company was Theodor and Josef Pauli (1867-1928), a tenor in the company, took the role of the father. The Dresden ballet master Jan Trojanowski directed the show. Reviewers in Dresden and Berlin praised the production for its "radiant" performances, its "warm-blooded" music, and the emotional, "dreamlike" logic of the narrative, which seemed to open up a "new direction" for pantomime, although they observed that the production resembled a film performance (Vollmer 2011: 452-454). But *Das lockende Licht* never had another production and Salten did not write another pantomime. The piece requires large resources to achieve the appropriate naturalistic scenic environment, which includes many supernumeraries for the park, nightclub, and restaurant scenes. Only a large, well-funded repertory theater, such as the Dresden Opera, could produce the work with the attention to commanding environmental details required by the scenario. A film production of the scenario was much more likely to recover the costs of creating the familiar, "natural" world that doomed Theodor, Susanne, and her father. Consequently, Salten channeled his distinctive pantomimic imagination into the writing (and occasionally the directing) of scenarios for silent films. None of the silent films he wrote seem to have survived, so it is difficult to know how his approach to pantomime evolved in the medium. However, in 2016, a print of "the last and perhaps most beautiful Austrian silent film" turned up in France. This was *Die kleine Veronika* (aka *Unschuld*) (1930), based on a 1902 novel of the same name by Salten and directed by the mysterious Robert Land (1887-1942), with a screenplay by the prolific Austrian screenwriter Max Jungk (1872-1937). The story bears much similarity with *Das lockende Licht*: "Veronika is a girl from a small mountain village in Tyrol. Since her parents are poor, her aunt pays for her Confirmation and invites her to the vibrant city of Vienna. What no one knows is that the aunt is working in a brothel. For the innocent young girl, the dodgy ambience and the customers turn out to be a great danger" (Film Archiv Austria 2017). The aristocratic Hungarian actress Käthe von Nagy (1904-1973) played Veronika. The film has elicited much praise for its naturalistic settings in Tyrol and Vienna and for the sophistication of its pantomimic acting. But the story of an innocent girl's corruption by the big city has always seemed "natural" to the popular imagination and often brings out its best qualities.

The few Austro-German pantomimes in Vollmer's anthology that followed *Das lockende Licht* bear the imprint of silent film aesthetics. None of them possess the emotional depth or imaginative scope of Salten's scenario, and each was by a different author who never wrote a second scenario. Still, in their modest ways, these scenarios expanded the scope of the German pantomimic imagination even as it waned. In 1917, the German dramatist Carl Hauptmann (1858-1921) wrote *Pantomime*, a brief, four-scene scenario for the Berlin actor Fritz Ebers (1884-1941), who never performed it, and Hauptmann waited until 1922 to publish it in the Stuttgart socialist journal *Die neue Zeit*. He claimed that seeing Parisian pantomimes in 1907 inspired him to write his own (Vollmer 2011: 454). But the piece takes its subject matter from Silesian mythology, namely the figure of Rübezahl, a gnomic spirit, a kind of trickster, who inhabits the Silesian mountains and is responsible for storms, fogs, and other natural disturbances as well as tricks on people who insult him or harm poor people. In the boudoir of a castle in the Silesian mountains, a Duchess, attended to by a hairdresser, displays her boredom with her audience of sycophantic military officers. A knight then tells her about a mountain spirit, and she announces her desire to meet the spirit. In the following scene, the knight returns with the Trickster (Rübezahl), who brings a "deep, anxious silence" to the castle. He tells the Duchess that if he had known he was to meet her, he would have come sooner. "But the knight requested me very badly and crudely." She invites him to show her his latest farces, but he says he cannot perform them without the help of people around her. The knight plays the mayor of a small mountain village; the maid plays Ethel, the wife of the Trickster. Rübezahl plays a poor farmer, dragging a harvest sack, panting, with a crooked back, weak eyes, and hunger. His wife enters, weeping. She explains that the mayor is pursuing her amorously. The mayor then appears with his subordinates; he puts his arm around the waist of the wife, while the subordinates drag away the helpless farmer, as the mayor's laugh resonates across the mountains. In the final scene, the anguished farmer counts the days he has not eaten. The laughter of the mayor echoes through the mountains; he appears, snapping a whip, while the farmer, hiding, suddenly, in the form of a wolf, pounces on the mayor, a scene that impresses the Duchess and her companions. The wolf/Rübezahl disappears behind a pillar. But the knight, "he who had robbed so many poor tradesmen, lies strangled on the floor." The audience cowers, stunned.

Wind and laughter shudder through the castle park, "the judgmental voice of the mountain spirit" (Vollmer 2012a: 263-266). Vollmer regards the scenario as an example of Bahr's assertion that "the home of pantomime is the phantasmal," achieved here through the dissolution of borders between fiction and reality, theater and life, a dissolution that is fatal. "The unconditional confrontation with irrational action pushes the audience into speechlessness [Sprachlosigkeit]" (Vollmer 2011: 456-457, 459). Hauptmann had already published a collection of Rübezahl short stories in *Rübezahlbuch* (1915), a leisurely, picaresque exploration, in nine "adventures," of the manifold facets of the mountain spirit's simultaneously demonic and benevolent character. Apparently Hauptmann wrote the pantomime scenario because he wanted to compress a Rübezahl adventure into a performable scene, a theatrical form, that revealed more convincingly than any literary narrative the power of myth to collapse the difference between the imaginary and the real. The piece implies that the achievement of social justice entails a mystical disturbance of nature, which can only be understood through the "fatal" intersection of social, theatrical, and mythic roles. Yet the scenario resembles watching a film largely because the mystical dimension is much more credible if the scenic environment, which includes a view of the Silesian mountains through the windows of the duchess's boudoir, displays detailed realism rather than expressionistic subjectivity. But the cost of producing realistic scenery for such a brief scenario is too high to justify production of the piece. A film production seems much more feasible, where an economy of scale allows the recovery of high production costs through multiple reproductions of the same performance. A film, however, would undermine the "fatal intersection" of theater and reality in the scenario and reinforce the perception that the mystical basis of social justice is an illusion, a matter of a seductive image. Nevertheless, the scenario exposes the economics of pantomime in relation to the aesthetic tension between naturalistic performance and terse, expressionistic actions. An Austro-German literary imagination freed pantomime from the moribund, stagnant Pierrot paradigm promoted by a decadent theatrical tradition, but the cost of materializing this imagination through performance was exorbitant and explains why, during World War I, pantomimic imagination migrated to film. Pantomimic imagination could not develop or expand without access to a new technology (film) that could establish the authority of naturalistic physical actions in naturalistic

settings without the irrecoverable cost imposed by theater. But Hauptmann himself explained the migration of pantomimic imagination differently in an essay on "Film und Theater" he wrote for *Die neue Schaubühne* in 1919. Here he explained that film was not yet an art because, for commercial reasons, it copied theater and thus produced a stunted, immature form of performance. Film would become a unique art when it built its aesthetic around a "primal realm [Urbereich] of gesture," in which bodily significations function for the creators of films the way musical tones function for composers and musicians or colors for painters. The gestures of humans will then become integrated with the gestures of plants, animals, stars, rocks, even houses and furniture, for "the realm of gestures is cosmic" and requires a way of seeing that is beyond the capacities of other arts (Hauptmann 1923: 11-20). But while he was exuberantly enthusiastic about the possibilities of what he obviously envisioned as an expressionistic cinema, Hauptmann did not live long enough to make any films, although in 1923, the Berlin studio Decla-Bioscop produced a film version of Hauptmann's tragic chamber play *Die Austreibung* (1905), directed by F.W. Murnau (1888-1931) and involving numerous other illustrious figures of German expressionist cinema. This, too, was a story set in the Silesian mountains, but without a mystical dimension, dealing with the family of a woodsman, Steyer, whose second wife deceives him into thinking her lover, a hunter, is amorously involved with Steyer's daughter; the piece ends with Steyer's murder of the hunter and the destruction of the Steyer family. The film is "lost," so it is difficult to say how Murnau and his actors transformed Hauptmann's quite talky drama into pantomimic action. In a small preface to the published play, Hauptmann contends that his drama is a set of "rhythms," for "rhythm is the secret division of all our living actions," controlled by breath, the heartbeat, which is also always the intimation of death. He therefore writes the proto-expressionist dialogue of the play as a peculiar rhythmic concatenation of words, part prose, part verse, part pauses (cf. Seeliger 1905: 320). In his essay on film and theater, Hauptmann returns to the idea of speech as a matter of rhythm, breath, and heartbeat to distinguish theater, which is an "art of words," from film, which is an art of gesture analogous to tones or colors of the psyche. Here Hauptmann intimated that speech and pantomime did not need to function exclusively from each other but that, in film, they could co-exist, like rhythm and tonality in music (by way of example, he refers to the compositions of Max

Reger), and in *Pantomime* he did include some brief moments of dialogue, although by no means enough to clarify the aesthetic relation between speech and pantomime. Still, even if "speech" in silent films meant intertitles, Hauptmann seemed to see in film much greater potential to complement the "rhythms and gestures of the soul" than was possible in the theater.

Somewhat less convoluted in its relation to cinema is the *Galante Pantomime* (1918) published by the journalist Arthur Sakheim (1889-1931) in *Der Freihafen*, the journal of the Hamburg Kammerspiele, where Sakheim worked at the time as a dramaturge. This pantomime, set in Würzburg on a summer day during the rococo period, unfolds in a single scene. The action takes place in the chateau of the Baroness Isabella, which attempts to emulate in many, many scenic details the decorative features of Parisian fashion, including a small library filled with French novels. The Baroness is a naïve provincial who struggles against boredom by immersing herself in the romantic fantasies of French novelists. Her husband, the Baron, devotes himself to hunting and cares nothing about her craving for romantic excitement. While he is away hunting, a traveler, Count Hubert, whose carriage has experienced a mishap, comes to the chateau and the Baroness allows him to stay the night while the carriage undergoes repairs. She realizes that he is a man of great sophistication and refinement returning from Paris, and she is eager to impress him with her knowledge of French culture, even though he makes gestures that indicate he regards her condescendingly as hopelessly provincial. They eat dinner, she shows him her French library, they dance, she is joyful, and then suddenly the clock strikes twelve, and the Baroness realizes, with a great sigh, that the time has come for her to go to bed. They separate graciously, he to his room upstairs and she to her bedroom in the ground floor alcove. The maid Nanette tucks her in bed and gives her a French novel to read by candlelight, while in his room the Count, assisted by his servant Dominique, prepares for bed, with Dominique leaving a copy of the scandalous novel *Liaisons dangereuses* for the Count's nighttime reading. But neither the Baroness nor the Count can sleep. The Baroness churns in bed, a "mixture of restless sensuality and platonic purity." The Count cannot stay in bed; he paces his room, amazed that such a modestly charming, superficially sophisticated woman can inflame him so passionately, so lustfully. He struggles to overcome his desires, but then decides to approach her room, despite the looming

presence of portraits depicting the Baron and Baroness. When he rings the door entering the "shimmering alcove" to the main playing space, she startles, as if awakened from a dream. He sinks to her feet, reaches up to her, and divulges his passion for her. Confused, alarmed, and angered, she strikes him, and he collapses into unconsciousness, perhaps even death. Stunned, she summons Nanette, who takes command of the situation: they carry the Count to the Baroness's bed, where Nanette shows her how to coax him back to consciousness. When he recovers consciousness, he zealously kisses the Baroness's hands, bringing to her a "new expansion of knowledge and of pleasure," while Nanette leaves the alcove "with a coquettish bow." A morning rooster crows. The Baron returns from his hunting trip; full of energy and oblivious to Nanette, he heads for the alcove. But the "mephistophically amused" Nanette intercepts him and indicates that the Baroness still sleeps. The Baron then turns his attention to Nanette, wraps his arm around her waist. She accepts his attentions, partly to protect her mistress and largely out of "undiminished joy in the thing itself," the joke, the impish game. The Baron kisses her "cheerfully, crudely, and extravagantly," and they leave contentedly as the rooster crows again (Vollmer 2012a: 267-273). Like the Baroness herself, the charm of the scenario is greater than the superficiality of its narrative. Sakheim makes imaginative use of simultaneous actions occurring in separate rooms and on separate floors. More significantly, his sense of pantomimic action is delightfully lucid in that he describes actions that give momentum to the narrative, reveal character, indicate markers of socio-historical identity, and carry comic-emotional weight. For example:

> *[The Count] puts on a new, select coat, fixes his hair before the dressing table mirror, dusts off his shoes and stockings, and finally richly douses himself with perfume. While this happens, Nanette performs her assignment. The Baroness is gladly surprised, commands the maid to cover the table. Nanette does it. The Baroness adopts the attitude of a concierge toward the impious library, sinks into an armchair, adjusts herself to an austere mood, and composes her hair and profile in the mirror. (This last happens while the Count upstairs straightens his hair.) As the Count perfumes himself, the Baroness sprays lavender water. Then she settles into the armchair at the*

> *window in as relaxed a pose as possible and reads, so to speak* (Vollmer 2012a: 269).

The writing gives the feeling of watching an elegant silent film comedy, with a variety of small, naturalistic actions strung together to create a mood of expectation, a sense of desires emerging in separate spaces and about to converge. The delicate attention to surfaces makes the piece seem far from turbulent expressionist subjectivity. Yet a modernist spirit suffuses the piece in that it skillfully dramatizes how the "natural" (cine-documentary) performance of commonplace domestic actions both conceals and reveals large, repressed, even subversive (adulterous) desires. The rococo milieu amplifies the surface charms of an idealized domestic sphere and reinforces the impression that history is an illusion hiding repressed desires. But it is not evident that the Hamburg Kammerspiele saw the scenario in this way when it staged the work in March 1920 on a double bill with Wilhelm von Scholz's "grotesque" marionette play *Doppelkopf* (1918), a truly bizarre piece in rhymed verse about a theater troupe or freak show whose members possess various physical "abnormalities." The Kammerspiele staged *Galante Pantomime* as a dance, not a pantomime, with choreography by the Hamburg modern dancer Laura Oesterreich (1889-1975), who played Count Hubert. Jutta von Collande, the leader of the radical Hamburg dance ensemble Münchner Tanzgruppe, played the Baroness, while dancer Frieda Holst performed the role of Nanette. Yet another woman, the actress Else Kündiger, played the husband and apparently was the only performer who presented her role in pantomime. Orchestral music composed and conducted by the Austrian Arnold Winternitz (1872-1938) accompanied the performance. For reviewers in the Hamburg press, the music was perhaps the strongest element of the production: making a dance of the scenario trivialized the piece or at least obscured the thematic and emotional qualities of the narrative. Vollmer asserts that the production was an example of artists having no idea how to organize pantomimic performance (Vollmer 2011: 468-471). It may be that the theater supported a dance version of the scenario because it did not have the money to invest in the elegant scenic environment required to create the refined domestic "surface" in which the characters should perform their cine-documentary actions. A pantomime approach with an all-female cast most likely would have exposed a homosexual dimension to the *performers* that a dance

approach occluded. A subsequent Hamburg performance of the scenario by the Münchner Tanzgruppe in February 1921 attracted criticism from Wilhelm Ehlers in *Allgemeine Künstler-Zeitung* (10, 6, March 15, 1921: 11), who complained that dance completely smothered the point of the scenario. For the 1921 performance, under the direction of the expressionist artist Andreas Scheller, Collande played the Count and the dancer Gertrud Falke (1890-1984) the Baroness, while another dancer, Elsbeth Baack, was the Baron, Anita Nessen was Nanette, and Grete Jung was Dominique (Polchinelle) (Fischer 1923: 255). The productions of *Galante Pantomime* may have served as opportunities for Collande to wrest control of the Tanzgruppe from its male founders, Scheller and Paul Etbauer (1892-1975), and form a completely female ensemble in which she could more freely develop her daring and even wild choreographic ideas (cf. Toepfer 1997: 238-240). A Hamburg journalist, Paul Wittko (1866-1958), claimed that the Kammerspiele production showed how music had greater importance in pantomime than in opera, for music and pantomime gave each other greater power than words or voices, and pantomime allowed the composer to compose more freely and expressively than in opera (Vollmer 2011: 469). Despite the failure of the productions to think pantomimically, audiences apparently responded favorably, which may have diluted Sakheim's desire to continue in the medium. In 1920, he published his pamphlet *Expressionismus, Futurismus, Aktivismus*, wherein he proclaimed that Futurism and Expressionism spawned "activism," which involved the transformation of "an egocentric time of tragic-grotesque high culture," "the erotic-aesthetic Self," into a "labor-intense, socialistic love, into a venomous, pain-tested redemption of fellow humans" (Sakheim 1920: 12-13). The back of the pamphlet announced an impending publication by Sakheim, *Patmos und Kythera*, which, in addition to numerous expressionistic poems, would include three pantomime scenarios: *Galante Pantomime*, *Der Prinz und die drei Orangen*, and *Monna Caterina Connio*. However, when *Patmos und Kythera* appeared, in 1920 (before the advertisement for it in the pamphlet!), it contained only poems; the other two pantomimes never achieved any publication at all. He continued to write plays, but pantomime was no longer part of the "activism" that motivated him to write.

From Vollmer's perspective, the Austro-German literary pantomime ends in complete obscurity with Countess Louisemarie Schönborn's *Der*

weisse Papagei, which appeared in her privately printed little book *Jussun der Holzkopf* (1921). Hardly anything is known about the author. Vollmer does not even discuss her or her pantomime in his monumental treatise on the scenarios in his anthology. *Der weisse Papagei* has never received a performance, and Schönborn never published anything else. In addition to several prose fairy tales, the book contained 16 fanciful watercolor illustrations by the equally obscure Eleonore in Bayern. Perhaps the aristocratic women saw the book as a gift to their friends. Whatever the ambition behind the book, *Der weisse Papagei* retains until the end the belief of the Austro-German literary imagination that writing a pantomime is an act of modernist innovation. The piece takes place in a fantasyland of the "Orient," but with reference to "geishas." The action takes place between sunset and sunrise on a summer night in a lush garden with the sea in the background and yellow birds on the tree branches. Jim, the Stranger, sleeps at a table under a laburnum bush. A roguish figure in a kimono, Ruko, appears, studies Jim, sips his tea, and then disappears behind a magnolia tree, which is the signal for a group of juvenile geishas to enter bearing lamps. One of them, Cuva, a "sad, melancholy" girl, shows an attraction to Jim, even though she cannot see his face. A white parrot follows her everywhere. Her companions want to wake Jim, but Cuva deters them. She gathers flowers strewn across the stage and lies down under a lilac bush, where she, too, falls asleep. A cloud appears on the horizon, precipitating Jim's dream, which intersects with Cuva's dream and reminiscence: in the clown Jim she sees Prince Murko, her childhood love, whom her father has forbidden her to see; her father insists that she marry Kuru, a wealthy ship's captain. A white light falls on the sleepers. In the background, the geishas enact the childhood romance of Murko and Cuva; Murko then transforms into the harlequin Jim and the geishas become harlequins, as Jim's dream prevails. A "chaos of fools" ensues, with Jim playing a violin, but when the music turns "serious and sad," he throws his instrument away and becomes overwhelmed with "horrible world sorrow." The harlequins gather around Jim and the geishas dance around Cuva. With their fanning and tickling, the geishas and harlequins awaken the sleeping pair. Neither Cuva nor Jim is sure that what they see is a dream or reality. While the parrot squawks, Jim falls to his knees before Cuva and kisses her hands "ecstatically." Cuva sees in him Prince Murko, to whom she bows deeply while at the same time holding back in terror of loving someone

forbidden: Jim, "standing like a beggar," reminds her of his clown hat and shell shoes. As Jim embraces her, Ruko peers from the bushes and disappears. Kuru's ship appears on the horizon. Ruko waves Kuru onto the scene, pointing to the lovers. Kuru fires an arrow that kills the parrot. The harlequins attack Kuru with chutes and pebbles, while the geishas sprinkle flowers on the dead parrot and make garlands for the lovers. The sun rises, casting gold rays, but Cuva stills feels pursued by a phantom. Ruko bounces into the scene with a silk robe for Jim and a necklace for Cuva. The harlequins and the geishas gather together and bow before Prince Murko. The orchestra makes bird sounds (Vollmer 2012a: 274-278).

The piece abounds in decorative details and contains numerous music cues that continually shift the mood from sweet to melancholic. Neither a comic nor a tragic tone prevails; the difference between dream and reality is unclear, and one reads as if watching a color film of exquisite watercolor figures in an exotic locale. Perhaps the piece dramatizes the fantasy of a woman to whom men appear as strangers, utterly foreign creatures: it is difficult to tell if a man is a clown or a prince, for he is both. Yet Cuva's father prefers that she marry a sailor rather than a prince, so the prince may simply be someone she has imagined since childhood. Jim, "the stranger," is an inert, passive figure, asleep when he attracts Cuva, who does not even see his face and does not want her geisha friends to wake him. Ruko is a sort of comic figure who somehow causes things to happen to Jim: the appearance of the geishas and harlequins, the arrival of Kuru, the presentation of the silk robe and necklace. Kuru kills the parrot instead of Jim, as if the pet parrot had greater power over Cuva than any man, but the harlequins easily chase away Kuru. Presumably, however, the silk robe and the necklace are gifts from Kuru, as if these allow him to atone for the death of the parrot. The piece is a decorative dream in which a man never becomes more than a "phantom" who can replace a parrot as a young woman's pet. Here for the first time pantomime and music collaborate to envision a female subjectivity in which maleness is an alluring phenomenon but utterly strange, "orientally" alien, and beyond the reach of any spoken word. Female subjectivity works to allow this "strange" maleness to fit into a remote, decorative land or dream world of its own making. The Austro-German literary pantomime era may end obscurely, but it ends with what had been missing from the pantomimic literary imagination for centuries: a

pantomimic scenario by a woman, a published relation between a text and wordless performance controlled entirely by a woman.

Literary Pantomime and German Silent Film

By 1920, pantomimic imagination worldwide had become overwhelmingly invested in film, although not entirely. But well before then, figures within German expressionist literary culture had disclosed a keen interest in writing film scenarios without showing any inclination to write pantomime scenarios for the stage. This was evident in 1913 with the publication of *Das Kinobuch*, edited by the literary journalist Kurt Pinthus (1886-1975). This anthology contained fifteen film scenarios by mostly young authors affiliated with the rising expressionist movement, including, among others, Albert Ehrenstein, Max Brod, Else Lasker-Schüler, Paul Zech, Julia Jolowitz, Elsa Asenijeff, and Pinthus himself. Not one of the scenarios reached the screen, although a couple of the authors, Heinrich Lautensack and Walter Hasenclever, did find work as screenwriters because of their success in writing for the theater. In his introduction to the 1963 edition of the book, Pinthus says that he wanted a collection of texts that was "entertaining" and yet "serious" at a time when the literary world regarded film with deep suspicion and condescension. The idea for the book came to him after he and some of his literary friends saw in Dessau a film adaptation of Otto Pietsch's novel *Das Abenteuer der Lady Glane* (1912): Presumably the literary world and the public would take film more seriously if ambitious literary minds wrote for the medium. The anthology represented a mix of film genres: comedy, melodrama, historical drama, fantasy, and some of the scenarios might well have made intriguing movies in 1914. But the scenarios do not read as film scripts, although a few adopt the theatrical convention of breaking up the narrative into scenes. The scenarios do not, however, function to create "filmed pantomimes," which Franz Blei, in his afterword, described as merely a "weak surrogate" for theatrical pantomime (Pinthus 1983: 149). Most of the scenarios read like short stories or sketches in present tense, as if the mind of the reader were a motion picture screen onto which the author's language projected the narrative. The writers seem to believe that better stories will make better movies, and although they grasp that film allows for a wider range of scenic locales than the theater and occasionally unique visual effects, they nevertheless see the film medium as subordinate to the narrative. Only Ludwig Rubiner's *Der*

Aufruhr directly addresses the pantomimic dimension in film performance. Otherwise, the authors, none of whom ever wrote a stage pantomime, do not do what appeals to pantomime scenarists: establish a *peculiar* semiotic relation between the body of the performer and space, music, color, light, or scenic details. For example, in *Die Orchideenbraut*, by Elsa Asenijeff (1870-1941), the protagonist, a widowed countess, has a divided personality. In public and for much of the story, she feels no erotic desires, no inclination to do anything but humanitarian deeds. But then, perverse urges overwhelm her; she wears a mask and visits a sinister nightclub, where she dances pornographically and ecstatically. Her inability to reconcile these conflicting aspects of her personality leads to her death (Pinthus 1983: 59-69). Asenijeff describes numerous actions and gestures performed by the countess, but these only construct the idea of a divided character; they don't construct the sense of a divided body or of the performance of any gesture shaped by the conflict between elegant asceticism and orgiastic sensuality. Even by 1913, film made acute this distinction between character-narrative and body-performance, and the distinction assured that control over pantomime passed before 1920 from literary minds to directors, performers, and composers. The radically leftwing expressionist Ludwig Rubiner (1881-1920) designated his scenario as a "pantomime for the cinema." In its depiction of a revolt by workers, chamber women, servants, criminals, cripples, and prostitutes against a wealthy factory owner, the scenario anticipates the montage theory of film performance developed in the mid-1920s. The text describes the intensifying storm of violence wreaked by the furious, oppressed members of the crowd, who destroy the factory owner's castle and burn down the city before troops arrive and begin shooting down the rioters. The mistress of the factory owner, the Beloved, becomes romantically involved with the factory owner's son, and in the end the son stabs the father to death, while an officer shoots the son to death; the Beloved then offers herself to the Officer. The agitated "movements" of the Hunchback inflame the rioters, but the seductive image of the Beloved also inspires them to unrestrained acts of destruction; she anticipates the incendiary Robot-Maria figure in the monumental science fiction film *Metropolis* (1927) (Pinthus 1983: 105-113). The scenario describes manifold actions performed by manifold persons to create an image of a society completely out of control:

> *From all sides, cripples, beggars, thugs. The whores come with new men from the street. Wild dance of the women with cripples. The women rip their clothing to shreds. The Hunchback seizes a torch, lights its explosively, and swings it as an attack signal. The thugs have knives in their hands and thrust them at the men coming with the girls. They strike them down, plunder them. The bodies are thrown down a hole in the middle of the street, into the deep* (Pinthus 1983: 109).

For Rubiner, a "pantomime for the cinema" meant a fragmentation of narrative into a montage of specific pantomimic actions performed by different bodies, as if each sentence of the scenario constituted a "shot" on the screen. He saw film as the medium for the large-scale pantomimic movement of a society in which all persons became expressionistic abstractions representing large categories of identity—the Hunchback, the Beloved, the Son, the Officer, the Rich One, and so forth. He also saw a society's movement toward freedom as inherently violent, but not only in relation to physical action: the pantomimic action was the basis for a violent fragmentation of narrative into a montage in which all of these abstractions interacted destructively, because the language of narrative construction becomes "free" only by destroying narrative coherence itself as well as the idea of society being "governed" by some narrative rationale for its unity. In this respect, Rubiner's thinking about cinematic pantomime was far in advance of anyone else in the anthology or indeed of anyone in the film industry of the time. He understood more deeply than anyone else that "pantomime for the cinema" would profoundly disrupt the society that consumed it (cf. Vollmer 2011: 494-497).

With *Das Kinobuch*, the Austro-German literary imagination bestowed an attitude of seriousness toward cinema that encouraged people otherwise deeply suspicious of popular culture to pay closer attention to the medium as an artistic phenomenon. But the book probably had no influence at all on the film industry, and it certainly did not inspire greater confidence in the literary imagination to develop, deepen, or expand pantomimic performance for either the stage or the cinema. On the contrary, the book appeared at the peak moment (1913-1914) when the literary imagination seemed most enthralled with the "drama of silence"; within Pinthus's expressionistically-oriented literary circle, film, rather than

the stage, offered greater "freedom" for the pantomimic imagination. But this was an illusion: the book had no follow up, no movement of nearly all the authors into the film industry, not even a subsequent anthology of imaginary film scenarios that might function as a critique of the cinematic imagination or an exploration of recessed or repressed aspects of it. Like so many of the authors of Austro-German pantomime, the *Kinobuch* contributors had one, maybe two ideas for film scenarios, and then had no more. A curious class distinction constrained or drained the literary imagination in relation to pantomime. In 1921, the popular novelist Arthur Landsberger (1876-1933), himself a writer and director of films, observed that many people in the cultural media around 1913 believed that films would be better if those who wrote them were authors "like Bierbaum, Hartleben, Scheerbarth, Wedekind, Hauptmann, Eulenberg, and Björnson"—that is, writers esteemed by an audience seeking art that elevated it above popular taste (Keiner 1988: 5). Landsberger wrote in celebration of the fiftieth birthday of Hanns Heinz Ewers (1871-1943), a popular writer of horror and fantasy stories, who had been involved with cabaret productions and written enthusiastically about film as early as 1907 (Keiner 1988: 156-161). In 1913-1914, Ewers wrote screenplays for nine films before embarking on another of his travels to South America, which, at the outbreak of the war, led him to the United States, where, in 1918, the American government incarcerated him until 1921 because of his activities as a German agent (Keiner 1988: 103-104). His most famous screenplay was for *Der Student von Prag* (1913), a diabolical doppelgänger tale regarded as the first German film to achieve recognition as a work of art. Ewers distilled in his writing a German inclination to believe that pantomimic action exerted greater power over audiences when performed by bodies that were strange, bizarre, uncanny, malformed, supernatural, perverse, homoerotic, grotesque, or phantasmal. Film magnified the beauties and anxieties of physiognomic strangeness or aberration: the stories come from the bodies rather than happen to them. This belief implied that pantomime did not really belong to the literary imagination; Ewers himself never published any of his scenarios, and not until 1985 did his script for *Der Student von Prag* achieve publication in Helmut Diederich's scholarly monograph on the film.

Yet the first published film scenario, at least in the German language, was *Die Pest. Ein Film* (1920, but apparently written in 1918-1919), by Walter Hasenclever (1890-1940), who had already achieved much success

with his expressionist dramas for the stage. The scenario never became an actual film, and it's not clear if he regarded the work as "complete" only when materialized as an actual film. The "film" depicts the end of the world in the year 2000. The world is a "paradise," filled with peaceful people everywhere celebrating civilization, industry, technology, the arts, and racial harmony. But a red star rises in the night. A plague breaks out on a rat-infested ship in the Indian Ocean. When the ship reaches a European city, the rats and the plague spread, killing pleasure-loving people in the theater, a village fair, the stock exchange, the university. A banker finances research on an antidote, but the scientist leading the research group dies of the infection before the vaccine can be formulated. A dancer in an Indian dress appears intermittently, apparently immune to the disease. Desolation pervades the entire world. The banker and some of his friends gather in a castle, but the rats show up, too. Still, the banker's party continues, with everyone masked. But the dancer dances naked. Fires set by suffering plague victims get out of control. A masked figure enters the castle room, dances with the dancer, then removes his mask to reveal himself as Death. Fire consumes the castle. Edgar Allan Poe's story "The Masque of the Red Death" (1842) seems like an obvious inspiration for *Die Pest*, but the *Kinobuch* film scenario *Die Seuche*, by the physician-writer Philipp Keller (1891-1973), may have stirred Hasenclever. *Die Pest* also resembles Rubiner's *Der Aufruhr* in its application of an expressionistic montage technique to produce a uniquely cinematic narrative. Hasenclever divides the action into a prelude, five acts and 152 scenes, but even these scenes contain further shots. The author employs a "telegraphic" expressionist language, in which short phrases or single words signify individual "shots" in the film. For example:

52. Scene
Newspaper article:
300 People in Yesterday's Performance Are Suddenly Taken Ill
Road. Variety theater poster. People gather around it.
53. Scene
Granary. Grain moves. Rats.
54. Scene
Railway station. Dancer rides in the car. Ticket. Train.
55. Scene

First Class section. Dancer with traveler. Train leaves. Dancer stands up, opens small suitcase. A gentleman helps her. The dress is visible. Dancer takes book, reads. The gentleman touches his forehead, falls into the pillows. Excitement. Dancer pulls emergency brake. Train stops. Gentleman is carried away.

56. Scene
The Minister's office
Minister at the work table. Servant enters. Telegram.
Minister opens:

Unexplained Death of 700 People in the Port City (Hasenclever 1920: 26-27)

The characters have no personal names; they are expressionist abstractions of socio-anthropological categories of identity: the Dancer, the Banker, the Child, the Inventor, the Slender Lady, the Pastor, the Servant, the Daughter, the Captain, and so forth. Some characters recur, such as the Dancer, the Banker, the Student, and the Beloved. The figure of Death appears in several scenes as a chauffeur, taxi driver, a locomotive driver, an animal dealer, a bread distributor, and a surgeon, and this trope suffuses the scenario with an eerie, medieval dumb-show effect within all the imagery of modern technology and refined civilization. Hasenclever regularly inserts one-word close-up "shots" of body parts, such as hands, faces, plague-flecked throats or breasts, which sometimes juxtapose with one-word close-up "shots" of objects like a serum vial, a wine bottle, pieces of bread, a dress floating in a river. The scenario describes the spread of the epidemic by cross-cutting from different "scenes" within the port city, the capital city, and the countryside, all of which are generic and require only a word or two to designate physical context: "Theater," "Cathedral," "Train Station," "Laboratory," "University," "Village," and so forth. These expressionistic devices support Ewers's belief that physiognomic peculiarities and distinctions drive pantomimic performance in film. The generic or abstract "simplification" of identities in the expressionist aesthetic perhaps implies that performers do not need to display much or even any skill or virtuosity in the performance of physical actions. But it does mean that the performers must have the "right" bodies to perform the actions. Reinhardt constructed pantomimic performances in which actors were interchangeable; different actors could play the same or different roles

without seriously changing the production. With the expressionistic film aesthetic, bodily performance relies intensely on the unique casting of bodies that can produce a strange, captivating image. But Hasenclever's scenario makes such vivid use of "telegraphic" language that one feels in reading it that one is watching the film in a theater, as opposed to watching a story projected onto a screen in one's mind. It is a kind of estrangement effect; the reader sees "film" as a piecing together of isolated word/images on a page/screen: the story is there, but it is the pieces that one sees, an experience perhaps complete enough that it was not necessary to make an actual film from the scenario. For this reason, though, its relation to both film and literature was ambiguous, even troubling. German-language reviewers of *Die Pest* felt Hasenclever had betrayed both theater and literature with his cinematic experiment, especially the influential theater critic Bernhard Diebold (1886-1945), who regarded the piece as a literary deformity (Diebold 2012: 54-57). In France and the United States, the scenario inspired quite enthusiastic commentary: "*The Pest* is a tragic work which is not without a certain philosophical import, and in which the rhythm is [...] quite grandiloquent" (*Current Opinion* Vol. 69, 1920: 691-692). But the German response to the scenario, for which Hasenclever "never forgave his critics," had the effect of severely weakening his desire to experiment in literature, theater, or film, and his subsequent work for the stage became much more conventional (Spreizer 1999: 149). He became a screenwriter late in 1928, when he adapted his popular stage comedy *Ein besserer Herr* (1927) into a film (1928), followed by a couple more films, including German-language dialogue for the Greta Garbo film *Anna Christie* (1930). He collaborated with the journalist and screenwriter Harry Kahn (1883-1970) on a couple of screenplays that were never published or filmed (Hasenclever 1963: 515; Kasties 1994: 284-285). In 1929, he explained that with *Die Pest*, he realized that cinematic and theatrical actions have nothing to do with each other; Russian film achieved ten years later the kind of film performance he envisioned in 1918 (Hasenclever 1963: 30). He also realized that he was not the only one who had underestimated his achievement. But perhaps the problem was that he linked the montage fragmentation and estrangement of pantomimic action to an apocalyptic ending rather than to an ecstatic beginning.

By 1921, the Austro-German literary imagination had exhausted its capacity to produce any major innovation in pantomime and almost ceased

entirely to create any pantomime scenarios at all. Revived productions of Reinhardt's *Das Mirakel* were immensely popular yet failed to inspire any enthusiasm for pantomime within either the Austro-German literary world or the Austro-German theater world. The only authors who wrote any pantomime scenarios during the 1920s were Richard Beer-Hofmann and Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s, Beer-Hofmann worked on a single pantomime scenario, *Das goldene Pferd*, which he never published in its entirety, perhaps never even finished and which has never been performed or filmed. But this work deserves discussion after we have finished with the decade in which he struggled to complete it. During the 1920s, Hofmannsthal focused his attention to pantomimic art on the writing of film scenarios. In 1923, in need of money, he nurtured the idea of transforming his libretto for the hugely successful Richard Strauss opera *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911) into a film. He succeeded in getting the Pan film company in Vienna to offer him a contract for the rights to the libretto, and Pan secured the services of the German film director Robert Wiene (1873-1938), who had directed the famous expressionist film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919). Strauss's cooperation was somehow necessary for the film version, and Hofmannsthal persuaded the composer to allow his music to accompany the film. Strauss not only arranged orchestral music from the opera; he also composed some new music and included music from his Couperin Suite (1923). Hofmannsthal worked on various drafts of the film scenario in 1924-1925 and submitted the text to Pan in mid-1925. Wiene and the Austrian actor-screenwriter Ludwig Nerz (1866-1938) subsequently rewrote the entire scenario so that little remained of Hofmannsthal's text but the basic structure of the libretto, although Hofmannsthal received credit for the screenplay and Wiene apparently did not mind if the press referred to Hofmannsthal as the author of the film (Jung 1994: 79; Jung 1999: 125). Set in the eighteenth century, the scenario describes actions that mostly occur in the suburban castle of the Marschallin, Princess of Werdenberg. The narrative deals with the comic-elegiac amorous adventures of three couples as well as the boorish, libertine behavior of the Marschallin's cousin, Baron Ochs, the fiancé of the rich bourgeois Sophie. However, upon seeing him at a country party, Sophie falls in love with the young Count Octavian, the Marschallin's lover and the man, "the cavalier of the rose," the Marschallin designates to bestow the silver rose on Sophie to symbolize her impending marriage to Baron Ochs. All ends well at a huge

garden party when the masked couples collaborate to embarrass the Baron by having Octavian masquerade as a woman whom the Baron attempts to seduce; then the Marschall returns from battle and thinks, correctly, that his wife is deceiving him with Octavian, but when they draw swords the masked woman between them is actually Sophie, and the Marschall and Marschallin become a romantic pair along with Octavian and Sophie, and another couple, Annina and Valzacchi. The ending is quite different from the opera in which the Marschall never appears and the melancholy Marschallin realizes that she is alone and perhaps too old for the love she desires, although in his scenario Hofmannsthal does introduce the Marschall in scenes that Wiene never used (Hofmannsthal 2006: 205-242).

The opera is a satire on tropes of eighteenth century "refinement" and worldliness, and so, too, is the film. But as presented in the 2006 edition of his *Sämtliche Werke*, Hofmannsthal's film scenario is very difficult to read, and it is easy to see why Wiene and Pan felt that another script was necessary. Hofmannsthal made the already complex plot of the opera libretto even more complicated by introducing a prequel scene and scenes that depicted moods, dreams, or memories of the characters. The text and its variants suggest that Hofmannsthal struggled to "see" the story in a uniquely cinematic way. But he winds up describing detailed images—too many of them—and favoring images of moods, poses, characterizations. He does not see the story emerging from a set of visually constructed actions; rather, the story is something embedded in pictorial detail. He described the process of writing the scenario as similar to writing a novel, a literary form, however, in which he never achieved success (Hofmannsthal 2006: 852). By contrast, Hasenclever's word/image technique in *Die Pest* creates an intensely vivid, gripping effect narratively, cinematically, and pantomimically. Hofmannsthal could envision pantomimic action economically and powerfully in the theater, where the only image containing action was the stage; indeed, the opera contains a brief pantomime scene in the third act. But he had great difficulty seeing bodily action in relation to multiple perspectives and dynamic spatial configurations. Wiene's skillful direction shows what Hofmannsthal did not "see" in his scenario. The director uses the camera to reveal manifold physical relations between people and spatial relations between people and their environment; the camera does not simply watch actions—it constructs them, so that the viewer feels the physical actions cannot be contained

within a single, complete image like a stage. It is the sense of physical actions driving the image and the camera that is missing from Hofmannsthal's scenario, which focuses on describing characters through images resembling "portraits" of them. A delightful result of Wiene's direction is the pantomimic performance driving the cinematic action. The director and his actors developed a performance style that emulates eighteenth century gestural aesthetics: it is artificial, mannered, and calculated without being exaggerated or ostentatiously theatrical, so that it seems as if the viewer watches a cine-documentary performance of numerous actions that were "natural" in another century but not in ours, an effect that one cannot derive at all from Hofmannsthal's scenario. For example, in one scene, Baron Ochs (Michael Bohnen) intrudes upon the Marschallin (Huguette Duflos) while she enjoys a tryst with Octavian (Jaque Catelain). She hides Octavian behind a curtain, before the Baron makes his entrance making an elaborate bow, kissing her hand, smelling her arm, and kissing her hand again, while she glances over her shoulder to see if Octavian remains properly hidden. She and the Baron sit at a little table, where he proceeds, pressing his hands on the table and smiling, to seek her approval to marry a commoner. A little black boy, Mahomet (unidentified actor), dressed in livery and an elaborate turban, enters carrying a tray with coffee. The boy bows to the Marschallin and then to the Baron before walking backward to the door, while the Marschallin looks over her shoulder to be sure that her lover remains hidden. The Baron genially pours the coffee and offers sugar. The camera views (in iris focus) this table scene as if seen from Octavian's point of view behind the curtain. Later in the film, the Marschallin, sits alone on a couch in her cavernous drawing room and sadly reflects that Octavian's affections lie with Sophie and that she, the Princess, has become too old to sustain the desires of a man like Octavian. She sits poised and still, and then she sinks into unconsciousness on the couch. Mahomet opens the door and quietly approaches the Marschallin. Seeing that she is unconscious, he quietly walks backward to the door in the same manner that he did in the coffee scene, as if he must perform the proper way of exiting, even if no one is looking. But the boy's back stepping exits serve to emphasize, amusingly yet poignantly, the polite receding of male youthfulness from the Princess. These are small scenes and details in a lavish film, none of which appear in Hofmannsthal's scenario, but they do show how film allowed directors and actors to take control of pantomimic

performance in the 1920s. *Der Rosenkavalier* was a spectacular production, with large crowd scenes, many scenes with horses, a brief but huge battle scene (with the Marschall presiding over it on horseback), a sumptuous garden party masque, elaborate costumes, and monumental sets designed by the great theatrical designer Alfred Roller (1864-1935), who had designed the opera premiere, and a few scenes, such as the Marschallin clandestinely observing Octavian and Sophie (Elly Felicie Berger) together in a shadowy garden employ the expressionistic chiaroscuro technique that Wiene employed so memorably in *Caligari*. At the very least, this elegant film demonstrated that Hofmannsthal's story did not depend on voices to achieve a "completeness" as satisfying as the opera's [Figure 87]. In January 1926, the film had its official premiere in Dresden, at the opera house, where the opera had premiered. Strauss conducted the large orchestra. Reviewers were impressed, but some complained that Strauss stopped the projection many times to allow the music to catch up to the appropriate scenes. A week later, for the Berlin premiere, the film composer Willy Schmidt-Gentner (1894-1964) conducted his own arrangement of Strauss's music, which he expertly synchronized with the film imagery. Reviewers throughout Germany and Austria praised the production almost extravagantly, greatly pleased that it was no longer a symphonic work with visual accompaniment, but a brilliant film with fine musical accompaniment—not a result that Strauss appreciated; in April, he conducted the London premiere, which also inspired high praise (Hofmannsthal 2006: 869-873; Jung 1994: 82). Plans to bring the film to the United States came to an end with the advent of synchronized sound technology in 1927, which led to the collapse of Pan. *Der Rosenkavalier* subsequently disappeared until 1958, when a research team managed by the Austrian theater historian Josef Gregor (1888-1960), director of the Austrian Film Archive, located the only known copy of the film in Prague, although the print contains only about 75 minutes of the original two-hour film. Since 1961, the film has been shown internationally numerous times with Strauss's music (and sometimes not) and occasioned an almost grandiose mood of celebration (Jung 1994: 86-87). But while the coupling of Strauss and Hofmannsthal underpinned the justifiable motive for celebration, the movie is excellent because of Wiene.



Figure 87: Scene from Robert Wiene's 1925 cinematic adaptation of the opera *Der Rosenkavalier,* by Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hofmannsthal. The Feldmarschall (Paul Hartmann) faces a delicate but persuasive challenge from his wife, the Marschallin (Huguette Duflos); Sophie (Elly Felicie Berger) and Octavian (Jaque Catelain) benefit from her intervention.

In private, Hofmannsthal expressed disappointment with the film version of *Der Rosenkavalier* (Hiebler 2003: 499). But much of his disappointment resulted from the realization that the success of the film did not lead to further opportunities for him to develop a career in the film industry. He saw film as a lucrative source of revenue. But unlike in the period 1901-1914, when he experimented with numerous pantomime and ballet projects for the stage that he never completed (cf. Hofmannsthal 2006: 129-177), after 1920, Hofmannsthal, having abandoned stage pantomime and ballet altogether, focused his pantomimic imagination, such as it was by then, exclusively on three film scenarios, including *Der Rosenkavalier*. The first of these scenarios, written in 1921-1922, was a biographical drama about the life of the English writer Daniel Defoe (1660-1731). However, Hofmannsthal could not interest film companies in making a film out of the scenario (Hofmannsthal 2006: 837). The text reads like a short story-encyclopedia article on Defoe; the author compiles numerous facts about Defoe's life and intersperses these with language describing characters' moods, motives, or moral dilemmas without visual or pantomimic specificity: "But he had little time to dream, because his

business required his entire self" (Hofmannsthal 2006: 191). Such language, like the language of an encyclopedia article, will generate vague images in the mind of a reader, but Hofmannsthal seems to think that is all a film scenario has to do. He doesn't see the life of Defoe unfolding scenically, as a sequence of carefully constructed images that compel the viewer to *see* Defoe and the world in a uniquely cinematic or pantomimic way. He just sees film as somehow recording Defoe's life in an "objective," encyclopedic manner. Defoe's biography makes a good story of a man divided by commercial, literary, political, and even conjugal ambitions that compelled him to intersect vigorously with all levels of his society. Yet his most famous achievement, the novel *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), the second most translated work in history (behind the Bible), deals with a man utterly cut off from all forms of society. But Hofmannsthal does not dramatize or visualize any of this conflict or irony. He merely describes Defoe going from one hectic activity to another, perhaps because he was not sure of the relationship between Defoe's spectacular, controversial successes as an author and the equally spectacular failures of Defoe's grandiose business ventures. Defoe offered Hofmannsthal the opportunity to explore a pet theme of tensions between great literary fame and the accumulation of huge financial debts or even the tension between honest writing and dishonest business practices. But Hofmannsthal can't find images or physical actions to articulate these themes.

Still, even after his disappointments with the Defoe and *Rosenkavalier* projects, he persisted in pursuing cinematic success with his scenario for a film starring Lillian Gish. The Gish project resulted from Hofmannsthal's friendship with Max Reinhardt, who had directed impressive productions of several dramas by Hofmannsthal. Reinhardt had hoped to star Gish in his American production of *The Miracle* in 1923, and when Hollywood considered making a movie of Reinhardt's production, the director again considered Gish. But newspaper mogul William Randolph Hearst (1863-1951) wanted his girlfriend Marion Davies to star in the production and offered $100,000 to cast her. Reinhardt therefore demanded $150,000, which put an end to the project. United Artists CEO Joseph Schenck (1878-1961) nevertheless wanted a project with Gish and Reinhardt and agreed to sponsor her trip to Germany to develop a film scripted by Hofmannsthal—until he read a draft of the scenario, which urged him to withdraw support for the project. But Gish went to Europe anyway, in May

1928, and there she was a guest of Reinhardt at his mansion Leopoldskron, near Salzburg, where they worked with Hofmannsthal on the scenario, even though Gish knew no German and Reinhardt no English; presumably Hofmannsthal, who was fluent in English, facilitated communication between the director and the actress, who was amazingly deferential, almost worshipful toward Reinhardt (Affron 2002: 236-238). The scenario had shifting titles, *The Stigmata* and *The Miracle Woman*, as Hofmannsthal produced different drafts, all published in the *Sämtliche Werke* (Hofmannsthal 2006: 243-258). But the drafts are more like prose summaries of the story than film scripts, although Hofmannsthal provides more concrete images and actions than in previous scenarios. Across its different versions, the basic story, set in a rural region near St. Florian, tells of two sisters from a poverty-stricken family. One sister marries an affluent, middle-aged forester or landowner; the other sister, Resi, experiences visions in response to holy statues and icons that mark her body ("stigmata"). These visions and the stigmata awaken hostility toward her from the villagers, while a young farmhand, Jakob, comes to her defense. For her protection, her family sends her to her sister. Resi falls wildly in love with Jakob, but Jakob's affection is for Resi's sister (never named in any version). When Jakob, a thief, plans the murder of the brutal landowner-tavern owner, Resi intercedes and urges Jakob to run away with her sister. But Jakob, obsessed with revenge for the injustices inflicted by the landowner on him, Resi, and her sister, murders the landowner anyway. Resi and her sister are arrested as accessories to the crime. At the trial and in prison, Resi experiences more ecstatic visions and stigmata. She sees that Jakob is like Judas, and, in her visionary manner, she accuses him of the murder, for which he confesses and receives the death sentence. Returning to her home, the villagers welcome Resi as a saint. In an early version of the scenario, Resi did not have a sister, Jakob was Hans, a soldier returning from the war in 1918, and instead of an adultery triangle, Hofmannsthal developed a relation between Hans and another, older soldier with Bolshevik sympathies, so that Resi's religious visions contrast with the older soldier's political utopianism as a basis for ecstatic experience, with Resi suffering persecution from Bolsheviks. The last version has a much more archaic atmosphere than the earlier, as if the action could happen in any number of centuries before the twentieth. The writing of the film scenario took place during the transition to talking pictures, but Hofmannsthal

obviously had in mind a silent film, and Gish believed that talking films were merely a passing fad. Indeed, Hofmannsthal describes Resi as "nearly idiotic with embarrassment when spoken to" and hardly able to speak at all in moments of profound emotion until the end, when she makes her accusation. Gish even visited the illiterate German woman, the mystic stigmatic Therese Neumann (1898-1962), who had inspired Hofmannsthal's story, and asked her to pray for Gish's mother (Affron 2002: 240). The American screenwriter Frances Marion (1888-1973) attended the working sessions at Leopoldskron, where Reinhardt himself acted out scenes from the scenario, "with doors and windows sealed against the slightest breath of fresh air." She described both the working sessions and the scenario as extremely tedious and without hope of being made into a movie, for "how could a Hollywood movie in Protestant America show, as its central event, a woman suffering the stigmata?" (239). Gish seemed to think the project would follow up her successful star performance in Henry King's epic, sumptuous film *The White Sister* (1923), which, however, was not a deeply religious or even pro-Catholic production. Hofmannsthal worried that the Catholic Church would disapprove of the film, but he also worried about Reinhardt's ability to manage the project, while Reinhardt worried that Schenck had lost faith in him. Hofmannsthal diligently tried to accommodate Marion's suggestions for improving and shortening the scenario, and he and Gish corresponded warmly with each other. Gish proposed that German film star Brigitte Helm (1908-1996) play the role of Resi's sister, but Schenck lost patience and recalled Gish to fulfill her United Artists contract in America. Gish then launched an unwise and futile legal action against United Artists, which not only destroyed any hope of financing the film but intensely reinforced the impression in Hollywood that Reinhardt did not know how to make movies (Affron 2002: 241-244). Gish's career went into a sudden decline; Hofmannsthal died the following year. The "crisis of language" that awakened the Austro-German literary imagination to the power of pantomime had, by 1914, given way to an ever more engulfing "crisis" in film technology that, by 1920, bestowed control over pantomimic performance to directors, performers, composers, and entertainment executives rather than to literary authors, who have since then become nearly extinct as creators of pantomime for the stage.

One should not overestimate the impact of World War I in ending the pantomimic adventures of the Austro-German literary imagination, for

these adventures declined precipitously even before the war began. Moreover, only a couple of the authors could produce more than two pantomime scenarios, while still writing prolifically, during and after the war, in other literary genres. Motion pictures awakened and consumed a huge, unexplored realm of pantomimic imagination, but the literary imagination was unable to exploit film technology on behalf of a distinctive "vision" such as motivated the writing of pantomime scenarios for the stage. Overwhelmingly, the writers of screenplays had no literary ambitions: they did not write for readers or spectators; they wrote for directors, actors, and producers. Making a film for audiences depended on the choices, the "vision," of directors, actors, cinematographers, editors, set designers, costumers, and musicians. Throughout the world, film ostensibly offered a more "liberating," more accessible way than any other medium to see bodies communicate across different scenes, different angles or perspectives, different spatial contexts, different temporal structures, and different kinds of music. But the literary imagination contented itself with producing works in literary genres—novels, plays, short stories—that filmmakers adapted according to their own philosophies of visual engagement with narrative. Yet even these reasons seem insufficient for explaining why literary authors ceased writing pantomime scenarios for the stage, for film never put an end to theater, and pantomime as an art, having long preceded cinema and even anticipated it, could achieve "liberating" experiences as much on the stage as on the screen, as the Austro-German pantomime scenarios obviously demonstrate (cf. Vollmer 2011: 484-491). Most likely, literary authors discovered that the process of thinking pantomimically, of constructing narratives entirely through bodily actions, of "seriously" seeing the body "freed" from speech, was too hard, too exhausting to sustain, especially when the established theater culture remained hugely indifferent, if not hostile, to the production of even serious pantomimes. It is also possible that the established theater world regarded pantomime as largely a "strange" Jewish phenomenon, and the authors saw no further benefit to pursuing such highly imaginative strangeness when some pantomime scenarios could not receive even a single performance. Writing pantomime scenarios did not strengthen their confidence in the body to explore "invisible" realms of experience considered inaccessible to language, as Hofmannsthal, Bahr, and Hauptmann had theorized. If

anything, pantomime strengthened their confidence in speech or at least writing in other genres to build narratives.

Pantomime in the 1920s

Pantomime: a European Emblem of Modernity

Still, the war definitely had an impact on the cultural landscape of the West, including pantomime. The appetite for wordless performance outside of film was large. The 1920s was an exuberant, immensely innovative period in the history of dance. In Paris, throughout the decade, the famous Ballet Russes (1909-1929) continued its pre-war agenda of producing works that brought together leading modernists in choreography, music, and the visual arts. Under the direction of the impresario Sergei Diaghilev (1872-1929), the Ballet Russes freed ballet from the rigidity of state-subsidized ballet companies and their auxiliary academies. Diaghilev cultivated dance as an extravagant art that not only stirred bodies to spectacular expressions of glamor and dynamism but stimulated composers and visual artists to expand considerably the borders of their imaginations. The Ballet Russes established ballet as a modernist project that made the dancer the catalyst for an exhilarating intersection of the most advanced, visual, musical, and choreographic arts. The Ballet Suedois (1920-1925), also in Paris and master-minded by Rolf de Maré (1888-1964), emulated Diaghilev's strategy of redefining ballet by organizing the collaboration of extremely adventurous dancers with prominent modernist composers and visual artists. This company's works, choreographed almost entirely by the blazingly and self-destructively brilliant Jean Börlin (1893-1930), were perhaps even more radical in their departure from classical ballet aesthetics than the Ballet Russes, reaching an apex with *Relâche* (1924), an almost Dadaistic experiment incorporating a nonsensical film (directed by René Clair), super-abstract sets by Francis Picabia, music by Erik Satie, and choreography that produced a complete "rupture, a break, with traditional ballet," in which the almost total freedom from classical technique—that is, "as rapid and agreeable a movement as that procured by a 300 HP engine on the best road, lined with trees slanting in the illusion created by speed"—was synonymous with freedom from any conventional narrative coherence: instead, "a sensation of *newness*, of pleasure, the sensation of forgetting that one has to 'think' and 'know' something in order

to like something" (Häger 1990: 252; cf., Claustrat 2012). But in his efforts to release ballet from classical technique, Börlin apparently flirted with pantomime. In 1920, he devised what he called "mimed scenes," which sought to bring to life numerous figures from a painting of a storm approaching Toledo by the Spanish artist El Greco (1541-1614) and convincingly recreated by the head painter of the Paris Opera, Georges Mouveau (1878-1959). This expressionistic piece, with music composed by Désiré-Émile Inghelbrecht (1880-1965) after Börlin had designed the action/choreography, "contained nothing that was currently understood as dance." "As with El Greco, the focus of activity lay in the arms, torso and head. There was less emphasis on the legs: the characters, more or less glued to the stage, danced on the spot," and enacted a wide range of figures from El Greco, defined, so to speak, by the characterizing arm, head, and torso movements that fixed their "places" in the dark image of the city under the storm, including priests, aristocrats, a heretic, a victim of lightning, a girl converting the heretic, and devout pilgrims: "the dynamism of the baroque [...] has been liberated and transformed into mimicry of life" (Häger 1990: 18-19, 104-109; De Groote 2002: 34-35). But despite the excitement aroused by *El Greco*, Börlin quickly moved away from expressionism and any intimation of pantomime: he wanted to embrace a more radiant Parisian-Mediterranean idea of freedom through release from Northern seriousness, with its stress on the dark emotional logic that animates bodies. But Börlin was not the only one in Paris thinking of pantomime as a form of anti-ballet. In 1920, the Swiss composer Arthur Honegger (1892-1955), who soon worked with Börlin, collaborated with the French illustrator and theatrical designer Guy Fauconnet (1882-1920) on what was originally to be a twenty-minute ballet, *Horace victorieux*, from a scenario by Fauconnet, who based his story on an anecdote in Livy. When Fauconnet died suddenly, the plan to stage the work collapsed; Honegger arranged the music, quite somber and heavy with expressionistic harmonies, as a "symphonic mime," for indeed the music is far more suited to stark pantomimic action than to sleek balletic movements (Meylen 1982: 31-33). When the premiere of the music with the scenario took place in Essen, Germany in 1928, it was as a semi-pantomime, choreographed by Jens Keith (1898-1958), which preceded a performance of Honegger's expressionistic opera *Antigone* (1927). The reception, however, was "frankly hostile," presumably because the program was too intensely dissonant

(Halbreich 1999: 114). But more information about the scenario and the performance is necessary to determine the significance of *Horace victorieux*, which, unfortunately, has not received any subsequent theatrical performance in spite of its extraordinary, though not "dancey," music, for ballet companies continue to ignore it.

In their attempts to redefine ballet, the Ballet Russes and especially the Ballet Suedois revived ancient uncertainties about the distinction between ballet and pantomime (non-dance). Since the eighteenth century, ballet had striven to "free" itself from pantomime and to subordinate narrative to the greater goal of displaying graceful movement. Even when pantomime appeared in ballet, as it does in some of the older masterworks, it had to follow the "rules" of classical ballet technique for pantomime, as articulated by the revered ballet master Carlo Blasis (1797-1878), who explained, in his *Code of Terpsichore* (1820), that "Every action in pantomime must be regulated by the music" and that pantomime achieves sufficient emotional power only when performed by dancers proficient in ballet technique (Blasis 1830: 122, 127). Familiar with Lucian's writings on ancient Roman pantomime, Blasis, regarded pantomime as a foundational platform in the evolution of ballet: "Pantomime is, undoubtedly, the very soul and support of the Ballet," and if in ballet pantomime no longer seems a significant element, it is because composers (not choreographers!) "have not sufficient talent to put Pantomime upon an equality with dancing" (Blasis 1830: 121). But within ballet culture, Blasis' evolutionary idea of pantomime as a primal or fundamental phase of ballet history meant that ballet could only evolve to the ever-higher phase of its history by diminishing or altogether eliminating pantomime as a goal of performance. At any rate, Blasis inadvertently made pantomime seem like a disorderly or neglected form of dance in need of strict regulation. In reality, however, the regulation of pantomime meant the subordination of narrative to the display of movement. By the end of the nineteenth century, the distinction between ballet and pantomime was clear, which we may summarize as follows. While gestures generally operate within a code or system of signs, a common misunderstanding about pantomime is that it "translates" words into gestures or physical movements. But pantomime is best when it follows its own system of signification rather than translates from one system to another. More precisely, pantomime emphasizes action over movement. Actions, of course, contain movements. But in pantomime, the performer

thinks in terms of completing an action and then initiating another one, so that one action follows another. Pantomime shows how the body narrates. The performance of these actions does not follow any "rules" of movement; rather, the performer finds the best, most efficient way to perform the action, usually in a manner unique to the performer. What is important is the relation of one action to the next, how well the performer connects one action to another according to a "feeling" that is signified while performing the actions. In dance, especially ballet, what is important is movement itself, the formal beauty of the body in motion. In pantomime, a performer will pick up a glass of wine, take a sip, then study messages on a iPhone, while also signifying that he is maybe in an exuberant mood ... or sad or filled with anxiety or cheerful and then suddenly surprised by a message. This is a set of actions. In dance, the tendency is to use the narrative as a basis for displaying the beauty of a body in motion, an excuse for showing off movements. The dancer picks up a glass of wine off a table, holds it high, then pirouettes with the glass, rises on pointe with the glass, then rushes in a great arc over the stage. The idea is: "Look, I have a glass of wine! See what I can do holding this glass of wine. Behold the beautiful movements I can make holding this glass of wine. Look how my body shows the exhilarating thrill of taking the first sip!" The idea in pantomime is to show how the body alone constructs a narrative by moving from one action to another according to a logic signified physically. It is about the power of the body to narrate. The idea in ballet is that the body disrupts narrative control over it--to a great degree it is about how the body frees itself from narrative and follows its own "rules." Dance is about movements of the body that are interesting in themselves, and what makes them interesting is often what they reveal about the dancers or dance itself rather than about anything outside of dance. But dance (especially ballet!) is always about "rules," the regulation of the body by a system external to it, about steps, positions, a vocabulary of movements that determine the beauty or value of the art. These rules do not come from the performers; they come from movement systems, from schools. Dancers are always evaluated in relation to their adherence to the "system" or school to which they belong. Pantomimes are generally evaluated in relation to the characters they represent, their ability to represent identities outside of their own and outside of any system controlling their bodies.

But by 1920, as a result of the Ballet Russes and the Ballet Suedois, the distinction between ballet and pantomime became muddled, even though neither company had a deep interest in pantomime, simply because the companies sought to change the rules of ballet by incorporating modernist visual and sonic dimensions that somehow "compromised" the glorification of movement in itself. In Germany, which had no strong ballet tradition of its own, probably abetted by Wagner's notorious aversion to dance in opera, the distinction was perhaps even more muddled. In the days before the terms "Ausdruckstanz" and "Freie Tanz" designated modern dance, Germans used a variety of terms to describe the non-balletic artistic theatrical dance for which the country was a major producer: "Tanzpantomime," "Tanzspiel," "Tanzdrama," "Tanzdichtung." For awhile, Rudolf Laban used the term "Choreodrama," apparently without knowing that the term had been applied to Viganò's productions over a hundred years earlier. In 1925, Emil Reznicek (1860-1945) composed a large-scale "Tanz-Sinfonie: Marionetten des Todes," which had a production at the Dresden Opera in 1927, with choreography and apparently scenario by that connoisseur of luxuriously bizarre dance performance Ellen Petz (1899-1970), who had shifted from ballet to modern dance during the war (cf. Toepfer 1997: 286). The tendency nowadays is to refer to the symphony as "ballet music," but Reznicek classified the movements of the symphony according to folk dance forms: Polonaise, Csárdás, Ländler, Tarantella, and Petz used the movements to create four "images" of an opulent, aristocratic milieu from the seventeenth century without calling it a ballet, although information about this production, as with all of Petz's mysterious work, remains maddeningly obscure. Possibly the first to coin a German term for non-balletic art dancing was Otto Julius Bierbaum (1865-1910), with his scenario for *Pan im Busch* (1899), which he called a "Tanzspiel" or "dance play," a term used previously, extremely rarely, in an anthropological context to refer to festive dance rituals in folk or non-Western societies. This piece contrasted the amorous adventures of some school children haplessly supervised by a Professor and Governess in a twilight grove with the amorous gamboling of fauns and "panisci" (female fauns) encouraged by the lascivious, flute-playing Pan and his consort Aphrodite. As night falls, the difference between dream and reality dissolves, and a romantic pair who have fallen asleep in the grove become a shepherd and nymph, worshippers of Pan and Aphrodite. But after a storm, the school children

return with lanterns: the Professor and Governess forgive the stray students and the piece concludes with a rousing ensemble dance in gallop tempo, with Pan's head appearing "between the lanterns" (Bierbaum 1900). *Pan im Busch* combines pantomime with processional movements, poses, and different kinds of dances (round dances, waltzes, polonaise); with its numerous decorative effects, such as the procession of lanterns, an inundation of rose petals, and Aphrodite in white chiton, gold sandals, and gold ornaments, the piece resembles an erotic festival pageant or a hothouse erotic ceremony. It is certainly not a ballet. Bierbaum sought to engage Richard Strauss to write the music, for Strauss was always looking for opportunities to compose for the theater. But he didn't see one in Bierbaum's scenario (Heisler 2009: 38-39). So Bierbaum's friend, the Wagnerian conductor Felix Mottl (1856-1911), wrote the orchestral score, and the work had a production at the Karlsruhe Opera in March 1900 that employed such a densely lush forest setting that it is difficult to see how any kind of dancing could take place on the stage (*Bühne und Welt* v.2 pt.2 1900: 624; Draheim 2004: 109). But this odd work managed to have another production thirty years later, in Tallinn, Estonia. At the Estonia Theater, Rahel Olbrei (1898-1984), the opera ballet director, staged the piece in December 1929 using both actors and dancers and an expressionist set designed by Aleksander Tuurand (1888-1936) that provided space for dancing, although critics complained that the dances went on too long and with too much "bustle." Olbrei took a more blatantly erotic approach to the scenario than the Karlsruhe production by stressing voluptuous movements, lifts, and poses. But the acting succeeded more than the dancing, which combined ballet with German modern dance. The ballet company was only three years old, and Olbrei was struggling to build a reliable, distinctive unit with the limited talent and resources available to her. A "Tanzspiel" seemed a way to disguise these limitations, but the critic Henrik Visnapuu (1890-1951) warned that "dance pantomime," as he called it, required as much talent as ballet and was by implication not a term to which one should attach lowered artistic expectations (Leis 2006: 31; Einasto 2018: 129-131).

As explained earlier, the modern solo dance concert program resembled the ancient Roman pantomime in its exploration of the metamorphosis of the performer's body through the combination of pantomimic and dance movements. By 1924, however, the solo modern

dance concert was in steep decline: modern dance, with its new schools, favored ensemble pieces that emphasized formal complexity, abstraction, and the power of movement to free bodies from the constraints on identity imposed upon them by too easily decipherable narratives. But pantomime was by no means dead, and perhaps enjoyed a wider range of actual performances than during the period 1900 to 1913, even if fewer people could claim "authorship" of it. The revival of Reinhardt's *Das Mirakel* in 1924-1925 achieved great popular success, but for the most part during the 1920s pantomime in the theater appealed to modernist, even avant-garde sensibilities. But of course, sometimes the pantomimic imagination was difficult to manage, even for quite experimental artists in an era famous for experimentation in the arts. For example, in 1920, the Russian composer Sonia Fridman, later known as Sophie-Carmen Eckhardt-Gramatté (1899-1974), met and married the expressionist artist Walter Gramatté (1897-1929) in Berlin. Since 1914, when she had lived in Paris, Fridman had worked on the scenario and music for a pantomime called *Ziganka*. Her marriage to Gramatté caused her to move the pantomime project into alignment with the dark, eerie mysticism of his paintings. The scenario takes place in a mountainous landscape of the unconscious of a dreaming man—or boy, since the "symphonic pantomime" now bore the title *Der träumende Knabe*. In its brief three acts, the scenario describes the desire of a Man to unite with an idealized female figure, Ziganka, whom he encounters in a nocturnal mountain pass. Ziganka is actually "the personified thought of the Man," a feminized version of himself. A tribe of demons, residing in caves filled with red light, try to persuade the Man to join them and abjure Ziganka. But the Man remains fixated on Ziganka; he performs various gestures to invite her to come close to him, and they perform a dance duet that ends in a kiss. Yet Ziganka remains sad and reteats from him into a deepening darkness. The Man falls asleep in the red cave of the demons, who perform ecstatic actions that emulate the movements of Ziganka. A "red" Ziganka (performed by the same actor who plays the "ideal" Ziganka) appears and dances with the Man, and this dance also ends in a "deep kiss." The Man realizes the demons have tricked him and he turns against them: the stage fills with screams and red light. As a storm invades the scene, the real Ziganka enters with an entourage of "The Good Ones" and instructs them to dispel the demons, while she herself disappears into the foggy blue horizon. After The Good Ones defeat The Evil Ones, the Man appears and

implores The Good Ones to bring him to Ziganka, but The Good Ones block the way. In the final act, the Man wanders alone along a path, at the end of which he encounters the lifeless figure or statue of Ziganka. He is in a forest of "blue trees and black sky." The stage fills with ecstatic female figures and the sky turns purple. Different female figures attempt to dance with the Man, but he rejects them, while they each mock him and disappear. A scrim falls before the Man to signify that "a world emerges from which the Man remains excluded until the end." In the background, a mountain rises with a steep stairway. Ziganka and her entourage appear; she shakes her head sadly and gestures to signify: "I live only in your heart, in your imagination; I cannot stay." After she bows affectionately to him, she and her entourage turn away and ascend the stairs. As the stage becomes darker, Ziganka becomes brighter and brighter. Then, quickly the light fades on her to reveal the upraised arms of the Man, until these, too, go dark with the "dying of the music" (Schulz-Hoffmann 1987: 37-45). The piece makes use of numerous light and color effects, especially a shifting contrast between blue and red. Powerful light shines from stars, from caves, from clouds, from Ziganka. Particularly imaginative is the appearance of three little demons with mirrors attached to their backs. Dancing takes place in all three acts, but most of the action consists of symbolic gestures: imploring, kneeling, summoning, turning away, pointing, trembling, convulsing, reaching, being thrown back, kissing, among others, conveying somewhat the image of bodies moving in a trance. But the piece also includes moments when Ziganka assumes a pose of stillness. As preparation for the production of the pantomime in Berlin, Walter Gramatté drew twenty-two expressionistic pastel images of actions in the piece as a way to visualize the action on stage [Figure 88] (Schulz-Hoffmann 1987). He hoped to direct the production, and in a letter to Sonia, in which he compares her to a hovering angel, he claims that even if he doesn't direct the piece, their work together will hover similarly above their graves, to be discovered by future generations lamenting the "alien" treatment of the couple's work by the present society (13-14). But even before she had met Gramatté, Sonia had a sponsor, the economist, venture capitalist, and occasional literary author Robert Friedlaender-Prachtl (1874-1950), who cultivated a multi-faceted passion for theater throughout his life. Sonia envisioned a large-scale symphonic musical accompaniment, but she had limited skill at orchestration. In 1918, Friedlaender-Prachtl contracted with the conductor

Hermann Scherchen (1891-1966) to orchestrate Fridman's music, which Scherchen apparently completed before Fridman met Gramatté. However, Sonia's life with Walter caused her to make revisions in the scenario. Walter planned to stage the production at the Berlin Staatsheater in 1921 with possibly the solo dancers Niddy Impekoven or Sent M'ahesa playing Ziganka. But the performance never took place, despite the encouragement of such illustrious Berlin theater figures as Ludwig Berger and Paul Wegener, although a performance of the prelude, orchestrated by Sonia's friend Adam Szpak (1887-1953), occurred at a philharmonic concert in Hamburg in 1923. Her second husband, the art historian Ferdinand Eckhardt (1902-1995), claims that the reason *Das träumende Knabe* never received a performance was because Sonia kept changing her mind about the piece and never reached a point of deciding it was complete (11-12, 35-36). It may seem, from the scenario and Gramatté's pictures, that the "symphonic pantomime" dramatizes the failure of the male to unite with the idealized female of his imagination to produce the "work" that allows him to transcend the impure material world. But perhaps for Sonia the piece could never be finished because she kept adding male collaborators, and she could not be sure how to complete herself through any of them. The piece might well be a fascinating critique of male desire, but presumably for Sonia it was not sufficiently autobiographical, not sufficiently "her own."



Figure 88: Illustration and design concept by Walter Gramatté for Sonia Fridman's expressionist pantomime and musical composition *Der träumende Knabe* (1920). Photo: from Schulz-Hoffmann (1987).

Even so, Sonia Fridman saw expressionist pantomime as a mystical-psychoanalytic convergence of colors, sounds, and movements wherein the body followed a psychic "path" or light that was quite different from the intellectually turbulent, socio-critical expressionism in the pantomime projects of Carl Einstein, Ludwig Rubiner, and Walter Hasenclever. An even more radical expressionist mysticism pervaded the pantomime thinking of the German artist and theater producer Lothar Schreyer (1886-1966). After studying law, Schreyer turned his attention to the theater in Berlin, where he worked as an assistant director in the Deutsches Schauspielhaus. In 1914, he began working with Herwarth Walden (1879-1941), the editor of *Der Sturm*, the most famous of the expressionist periodicals. In 1916, Walden began publishing in the journal Schreyer's short, expressionist plays, which consisted largely of dialogue uttered in one, two or three-word phrases, as if the archetypal characters speak primarily to hear the music of the words. By 1918, Walden and Schreyer had founded the Sturm-Bühne, a theater devoted to the production of experimental expressionist plays by Schreyer, Walden, and August Stramm, which all featured somber expressionistic poetic dialogue in the "telegraphic" style spoken by archetypal figures in vague, abstract spaces. Schreyer was supposedly also an instructor at the

Sturm-Bühne Schule für Bühnenkunst und Pantomime, but its difficult to determine what this school actually did other than recruit people to work on projects for the Sturm-Bühne. From 1916 on, Schreyer published numerous polemical and promotional essays in which he proposed that expressionism must abandon drama and any conventional idea of theater and instead focus on the creation of "stage artworks" ("Bühnenkunstwerk"). He saw the stage artwork as fundamental to the building of a new society, a new human identity, released from materialsim and transfigured, ecstatically, by a new, modern mode of spirituality. The stage artwork resulted from a highly precise coordination of sound, color, and movement, so that all of these elements unfolded in relation to each other on the stage like notes in a musical score. Indeed, with *Kreuzigung* (1920), Schreyer composed what he called a "Spielgang," which was an elaborate pictorial notational system that assigned a cryptic tonality and rhythm to the performance of every word, gesture, sound, image, and color. The "characters" in these stage artworks were allegorical, super-archetypal figures ("Mother," "Beloved," "Death," "Child"), supposedly completely without individuality, which Schreyer regarded as a corrupting phenomenon within modern society. Yet he designed elaborate, highly unique, intensely geometric mask-costumes for these characters so that they looked like fantastically engineered super-dolls or robots. The idea of the stage artwork was not to see a play, but to experience the movement of a very modern image-sculpture in relation to various, intricate permutations of sound, color, and utterance [Figure 89].

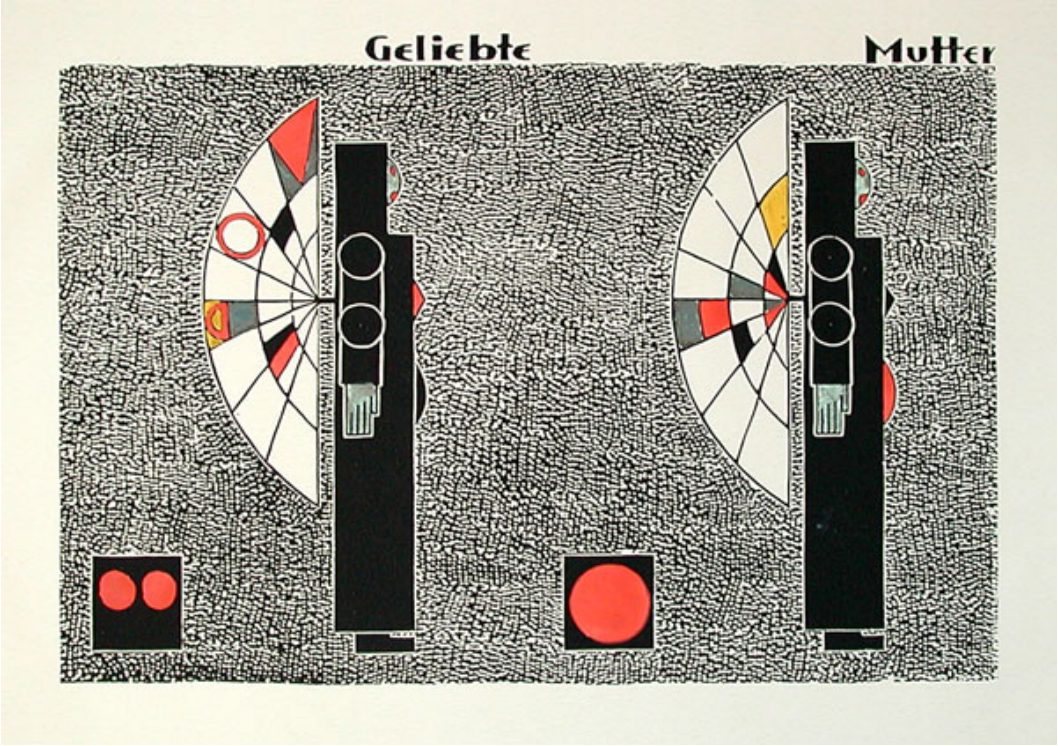


Figure 89: Abstract figures, "Beloved," and "Mother," designed by Lothar Schreyer for his "Spielgang" or "play path" *Kreuzigung* (1920).

Like the Ballet Russes and the Ballet Suedois, Schreyer believed that modernist visual effects changed the way people saw human movement; the path to a new, ecstatic society entailed new rhythmic relations between voice, gesture, color, light, and sound, all of which, in their lunge toward abstraction, turned the performing body itself into something resembling an alien idol. In recollecting his years with the Sturm-Bühne, Schreyer claimed (1948) Scheerbart's pantomime *Kometentanz* (1903) had inspired him as had the 1920 Dresden production of William Wauer's pantomime *Die vier Toten der Fiametta* (Schreyer 2001: 298, 307). "In every pantomime lies a full and complete action in itself that [...] creates a connection between objective and subjective life, in which the objective life bears the subjective and the subjective life discloses the objective. Pantomime is theater. We sought to form it as an expressionistic play of movement" (Schreyer 2001: 297). Yet Schreyer was unable to create any stage artworks without his allegorical robot-characters uttering words, cries, ecstatic telegraphic phrases. He needed a lyricism in performance that he simply could not imagine for the body, which he saw as something requiring

completely new engineering, a new geometrical-mathematical relation to color, space, sound, and language. These ideas caused him difficulties. His mysticism provoked tension with Walden, who became fervently attached to socialism. In 1919, Schreyer moved briefly to Hamburg, where he founded the Kampf-Bühne, which, as discussed below, actually came closer to a mystical expressionist idea of pantomime under the leadership of his protégé Lavinia Schulz (cf. Schreyer 1985: 147-148). His brilliant visual imagination caught the attention of the architect Walter Gropius (1883-1969), who invited him (1921) to teach in the theater section of the newly formed Bauhaus arts academy in Weimar. But when Schreyer staged his two-character ("Man/Moon," "Woman/Earth/Mother") *Mondspiel* at the school in 1923, the students complained about the cultish obscurity of the work, and Gropius himself believed that Schreyer's expressionism was no longer helpful in designing the products, structures, and forms of modern society. Schreyer resigned. He continued to publish many programmatic articles on theater and performance while pursuing various academic, literary, and religious projects, but he never returned to any creative work in the theater. Yet he understood more clearly than anyone in Paris or in the Bauhaus how a radical image of modernity, including an even more radical image of the body (as an engineered idol), caused even the simplest movements of the body to provoke deeply disconcerting, even violent emotions that obscured the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity, a confusion that, from the expressionist perspective, was necessary to change the subject's relation to reality and thus move people toward the creation of a new, redemptive society. Schreyer's ideas probably influenced Oskar Schlemmer (1888-1943) in the development of his *Triadic Ballet*, the most famous theatrical work of the Bauhaus. Schlemmer began work on this thirty-minute piece in 1915 and he never really finished it when the Bauhaus stopped performing it in 1929. The piece encountered manifold problems related to music, narrative structure, design, and production (cf. Scheper 1988). But perhaps the biggest problem was that Schlemmer invested too much energy into the design of the modernist costumes, many of which were bulbous, heavily geometric, and somewhat clownish. All movement, action, and narrative for the three dancers had to be built around the capability of the costumes to permit anything gestural. The result is like watching a bizarre fashion show: the movement exists to display the costumes. The dancers look like a set of large, animated toys

performing mechanically in yellow, pink, and finally dark chessboard spaces. But this image of modernity was obviously much more comforting or soothing than Schreyer's dark idols or totems for a new religion of modernity.

In his ambition to make theater a kind of high tech shrine for the convergence of mysticism and modernism, Schreyer cited the 1920 production of William Wauer's pantomime *Die vier Toten der Fiametta* as an inspiration for the new theater aesthetic. Yet this pantomime arose from a much different modernist ambition. The piece actually had its first production at the Kleines Theater, Berlin, in June 1911 as the first theatrical event sponsored by *Der Sturm*. Herwarth Walden composed and performed the piano accompaniment. The artist historian turned theater director William Wauer (1866-1962) directed the production, but evidently he did not write or need a scenario, for none was ever published, although an advertisement for the production acknowledged that he adapted a one-act play by an obscure writer of operetta libretti, Alexander Pordes-Milo (1878-1931). In a 1909 book on "art in the theater," Wauer asserted that, "The director is neither the lawyer nor the servant of the poet. He faces the poetry, like the painter nature, the landscape. He uses it as a motive, as a pretext, to produce his art" (Wauer 1909: 13). Wauer soon became a director of silent films, including *Richard Wagner* (1913), the science fiction drama *Der Tunnel* (1915), and many others until 1921. The poet Elisabeth Lasker-Schüler (1869-1945), who was at that time married to Walden, became enamored with Wauer's "anatomical" directing and was eager to have him direct her 1908 drama *Die Wupper*. She attended a 1910 café lecture by Wauer in which he conducted his audience, mostly students, as if they were instruments of an orchestra, which is how Wauer himself described the role of the theater director in relation to actors (Lasker-Schüler 1914: 115-116; Wauer 1909: 12). Because, however, *Die vier Toten der Fiametta* lacked a written scenario, it is necessary to rely on the written description of the performance by the novelist Alfred Döblin (1878-1957) in a lengthy review of the piece in *Der Sturm* (No. 67, 11 July 1911: 531-533). According to Döblin's scanty description of the story, the pantomime concerns the marriage between a hunchback tailor, Silvio, played by Wauer himself, and his wife, Fiametta, played by the cabaret artist and soon very busy film actress Rosa Valetti (1878-1937). Fiametta feels stifled in her marriage and takes on lovers in succession, three altogether, whom Döblin describes as "harlequins,"

each played by a different actor. The jealous Silvio arranges to have each lover killed "accidentally," thrown out of a window by a drunken beggar, believing that all the lovers are actually one and the same man come back to life. But Fiametta experiences each death as a liberation. In a drunken fury, Silvio, believing himself to be her fourth lover, winds up hurling himself to death. "Fiametta remains triumphant, the symbol of invincibility, the marriage-mocker, alone, if also never abandoned." It was apparently a dark production. Döblin calls it a "tragedy," Lasker-Schüler a "Trauerspiel" (sad play); reviewers called it violent, bloody, but not comical, even though on the program it appeared between a performance of Offenbach's one-act operetta *Der verwandelte Katze* (1858) and something called *Karneval in Nizza* with music by Hans Roland (aka Wilhelm Guttmann [1886-1941]). The production elicited numerous reviews, nearly all of which were negative and most of which complained of Walden's terrible, noisy, "raw," "childish," "naïve," and completely inappropriate music. One critic remarked that the music had completely destroyed his nervous system. Walden devoted two entire huge pages of *Der Sturm*, with a third page written by the literary critic Josef Adler, to defend his music and quote all the accusations against it (No. 66, 24 June 1911: 523-525). Walden and Adler questioned the competence of the reviewers to assess the music, for the reviewers had praised the trivial music of Offenbach and Roland without seeming to realize that Walden's music functioned in opposition to the aims of Offenbach and Roland, as if *Die vier Toten der Fiametta* existed as a drastic contrast rather than complement to the other pieces. The implication is that Walden's music was a critique or parody of the bourgeois entertainments associated with Offenbach and Roland, but the implication lacks verification, because Walden never published the music, although he published many other compositions. Döblin was more direct in his favorable evaluation of the production as a whole. He treated the pantomime as a critique of marriage insofar as marriage is a "cage," for "Marriage is perhaps the most sinister production of the human spirit, eerie not for what it is as what it can be." Fiametta "breaks out of her cage," although it is not clear if the cage is Döblin's metaphor or a scenic device-metaphor of the performance. He does, however, refer to the pantomimic action: "it is not necessary that anyone speaks in this piece. The whole expressive dimension of the action can be exhausted in movement; nothing needs to be spoken. This linear expression is artistically best, because it is

the narrowest and most concentrated," an "economic" principle that allows "minimum force to be applied for maximum effect." In this piece, the "movement of the mute pantomime" showed how a "leaden, rigid scheme" (the narrative? like a cage?) imposes itself on "the flow and abundance of the living process" and "imprints a naked dynamic and energy." But then, Döblin turns his attention to defending the music of "my friend Herwarth Walden," which he claims has been misunderstood by those who have criticized it. The music follows the same kind of "economy" as the pantomimic action by not following "the melodic or harmonic leadership of music from the past," by avoiding ornamentation, and producing a "sculptural impression of a psychic unmasking," an "essential [...] actual dramatic music." However, Döblin asserts that the pantomimic action follows the music, for it is the task of the director to "form optically what is sculpturally heard." The music would be even stronger with an orchestra rather than with a solo piano.

Walden attached another set of negative press commentary to Döblin's review, before inserting his own column praising Wauer's direction and acting, which in its economy was like a poem by Lasker-Schüler, as well as the work of other actors. "William Wauer is without doubt the strongest directorial talent of our time," for Wauer achieves a "sculptural expressiveness [...] a monumentality of personality," whereas Max Reinhardt, in his pantomime production of *Sumurun*, which had premiered the previous year, trafficked in "salon art" superficialities. With Wauer, "the art of pantomime becomes alive again, after the debris of tradition has been cleared away, and the strong breath of a personality has awakened it" (532-533). All of this commentary in *Der Sturm* stirred up considerable public curiosity about the production, which reached 25 performances, making it one of the most successful theater productions in all of Germany that year. Yet despite this success, neither Wauer nor Walden ventured further with pantomime in the theater. Wauer started directing films and Walden continued writing his "comitragedies" of unhappy marriages and dysfunctional families, all written entirely as spoken dialogue. But they did revive *Die vier Toten der Fiametta* in 1920, at the Albert Theater in Dresden on a double bill with a performance of Walden's one-act, exclusively stichomythic dialogue "bourgeois comitragedy" *Trieb* (1918). Wauer again played Silvio, alternating with Hans Fritz Köllner (1896-1976), while two women, Maria Neukirchen and Evy Peter, took turns in the role of Fiametta,

and four new men performed the three harlequins and the beggar. Walden conducted an orchestral accompaniment. Brian Keith-Smith has published a photo of a scene from the production (Schreyer 2001: 229). The image shows an expressionist interior with windows painted onto the cyclorama and even onto the ceiling like arabesque prison bars; the three lovers and Silvio appear in identical white pajama-like costumes and thus resemble Pierrots more than harlequins. Fiametta wears a tight blouse with a fur collar and a short, three-layered skirt. The production photo does evoke a Caligarian scenic atmosphere that seems unimaginable for the 1911 production, about which no one seems to have commented on the scenic design. The show enjoyed some success, because it ran from October 1920 until January 1921. In the Dresden press, Walden's music was again a source of bitter complaint. His friend, the film actor and arts commentator Rudolf Blümner (1873-1945), wrote a long letter to Walden defending the music, which Walden published in *Der Sturm* (Vol. 11, September-October 1920: 132-135). According to Blümner, the critics now objected that the music was not sufficiently modern or expressionistic, that it contributed to turning the piece into a "banal ballet." He scolded the critics for failing to grasp the difference between ballet and pantomime. Wauer and Walden, he announced, were "the first in Europe" to have "solved the problem" of the relation between music and pantomime, for they have recognized that music and "note-true gesture" do not operate in parallel (synchrony). Unfortunately, he did not elaborate on this point, which seems to suggest that the music comments on the action instead of prescribes it; at any rate, the music did not need to be expressionist to create an expressionist effect in the theater. Blümner then went on to explain that Walden's "banal" music is similar to that of Beethoven in that it is "timeless" and non-nationalistic, for "your melodies and harmonies are not from yourself, but from the depths of human souls," and thus the "cosmic banality" of Walden's music transcended the decline of music that began with Wagner, continued with Debussy and Schönberg, and culminated in the decadent expressionism of Richard Strauss. Of course, it is difficult to take this defense seriously, which was perhaps the point, completely lost by the critics, who merely grumbled that Walden's music had ruined an otherwise engaging pantomime performance. From Walden's perspective, the pantomime was not mainly a critique of marriage, though this was an inescapable feature of the progam as a whole. It was a critique of critical

values themselves, an attempt to transform negative values into positive—that was the point of publishing so many denunciations of the production, particularly of Walden's music, next to patient, almost pedantic, explanations of why what was supposedly bad about the production was actually good, so that ultimately it was unclear if the pantomime was good or bad or if it was even relevant to appreciating the significance of the performance. Good or bad according to whom? According to what system of values designed by whom? Schreyer's theatrical experiments showed how expressionist visual design radically changed perception of the simplest physical actions. *Die vier Toten der Fiametta* showed how even the most "banal" music radically changed perception of physical action and in doing so dramatized more effectively the murderous absurdity of marriage, a point perhaps obscured by the expressionist stage design. But Dresden was not the final stop for *Die vier Toten der Fiametta*. Walden's enthusiasm for the Soviet revolution brought him into contact with the Moscow theater world. In 1928, Vselevod Meyerhold staged or at least planned a production of the pantomime in Moscow, although almost nothing is known about this production outside of Russia (Schreyer 2001: 231). Meyerhold had staged an earlier pantomime production with the same title in St. Petersburg in 1911, but claimed a different source material, "N.N." (Nikolai Evreinov?), although the characters are the same and the plot almost identical to the Wauer-Walden scenario, except that Meyerhold's production seems to contain some dialogue, and, to hide her lovers from Silvio, Fiametta stuffs them into a trunk, where they suffocate to death. Fiametta then uses gold coins to bribe a drunken beggar to throw the corpses out the window. He mistakes Silvio for another corpse and accidentally throws him out the window, to Fiametta's immense pleasure. The relation between the Berlin and the St. Petersburg productions is obscure and tantalizing; of course, it would help to know when in 1911 Meyerhold staged his production. Perhaps both derive from an old *commedia* scenario. The St. Petersburg production was another of Meyerhold's "cubist-metatheater" experiments with *commedia dell'arte* figures during his "Doctor Dapertutto" phase, although Meyerhold tended to treat pantomime and his eventually "biomechanical" idea of it as a component within a play rather than as a separate catgeory of performance (Clayton 1994: 250-253). So the 1928 Moscow project may have incorporated ideas from the 1911 productions in St. Petersburg and Berlin, as well as the 1920 Dresden production. It may be, though, that the evidence

simply does not exist to decipher adequately the mysterious relationship between these German and Russian pantomime productions of the same story. But with the Walden-Wauer production of *Die vier Toten der Fiametta*, the goal was to undermine socially or institutionally constructed distinctions between expressionism and "banality," between good and bad judgments of performance, between authors within collaboration, between gestural rhythm/tonality and musical rhythm/tonality, between actor and director, between one lover and another, between marriage and prison, between desire and destructiveness, between crime and "accident," and between pantomimic wordlessness and extravagant critical verbosity.

Meanwhile, Schreyer's expressionistic theater aesthetic found a foothold outside of Berlin. At the Kampf-Bühne, which he established in 1919 in Hamburg, a city seething with expressionistic activity, where he had accepted a position as dramaturge for the Deutsches Schauspielhaus, Schreyer produced in a separate small, private theater a couple of expressionist plays by August Stramm (1874-1915) and then embarked on productions of his own "stage artworks," *Krippenspiel*, *Skirnismol*, *Empedokles, Kreuzigung*. The actress-artist Lavinia Schulz (1896-1924) had followed him to Hamburg, after working with him on a controversial 1918 production of Stramm's *Sancta Susanna* (1913) at the Sturm-Bühne in Berlin. But as usual with Schreyer, he ran into conflict with his collaborators. His theory of the stage artwork assigned importance to sound but not to music in constructing the "Spielgang" for production. Or rather, he understood sound or music as coming entirely from the isolated words spoken by the allegorical stage characters, so that actors treated words and syllables of words as musical tropes, "scored," in the "Spielgang," in relation to colors, design elements, and movements. Schulz, however, felt that Schreyer's obsession with full-body mask-costumes inhibited movement and suppressed imaginative use of music. She wanted a performance that eliminated words altogether. Schreyer contended that his work with Schulz came to an end because of her turbulent and sometimes violent relationship with her partner and eventual husband, Walter Holdt (1899-1924), who acted as well as built costumes for the Kampf-Bühne productions (Schreyer 2001: 599).



Figure 90: Alien, humanoid pantomime characters “Springvieh” and “Toboggan” created and performed by Lavinia Schulz and Walter Holdt, Hamburg, 1921. Photo: Minya Diez-Dührkoop, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg.

But Schulz’s artistic ambitions urged her to choose Holdt over Schreyer in shaping her performance aesthetic. Schreyer left for the Bauhaus, while Schulz and Holdt continued on their own in Hamburg. For Schulz, expressionism was no longer a power to construct an allegorical abstraction of human identity or a mystical “inner” condition; it was the power to transform human identity into an utterly alien form, a bizarre mutation, a grotesque species, sometimes insectoid, sometimes robotic, sometimes as if the performer’s body came from another world altogether.

The wild costumes that she designed and Holdt built out of discarded materials certainly formed the strange identities of the creatures they created for the stage (Nuñez 2006: 56-63) [Figure 90]. But unlike Schreyer with his idol-like figures, Schulz was not content to let the expressionist costume design reveal the strangeness of the simplest human movements: she wanted a unique, ideologically informed movement to emerge from the costumes. She and Holdt befriended the young composer and musicologist Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt (1901-1988), who played in a nightclub trio with Holdt. Stuckenschmidt began composing music for the "masked dancing pair," and this music consisted mostly of modernistic adaptations of the jazz and vaudeville tunes he performed in the nightclubs. Schulz and Holdt repudiated Schreyer's Christian mysticism, for they regarded Christianity as a source of ecological degradation and diseased morality; instead, they followed their own, utterly personal ideology derived from Nordic myth, the Edda, an "Aryan" heritage of hardship, struggle against elemental strain on the body, and austere transcendence of physical and economic adversity (Chadzis 1998: 84-86). While they were never as constricting as Schreyer's costume designs, the costumes constructed by Schulz and Holdt used materials—wood, metal, glass, canvas, heavy cloth—which made the movements of the performer stressful, perhaps even painful. The idea was to dramatize a primal conflict between the body and that which protects it and bestows identity upon what one might call its owner, although Schulz and Holdt approached this struggle with grotesque, perverse humor. They came up with bizarre names for the characters/costumes they invented: Springvieh, Technik, Bertchen, Bibo, Toboggan, Tote Frau. Each character entailed a unique movement style. Schulz and scholars of her work refer to her performance pieces as "dances," but Schulz did not organize the pieces around steps or around any system of movement that would define the pieces as dances. She devised elaborate, cryptic notation maps for describing the movements of characters in the pieces, which were either solos or duets she performed with Holdt [Figure 91]. She used a different notation map for each piece, which makes it difficult to see how she employed a larger system of movement, even of her own invention, to create dances instead of pantomimes. Each costume/character represented for her a different notion of struggle between the body and the strange identity imposed upon it. She even

sketched out plans for a "dance film" involving Springvieh and Toboggan and recognizably human figures (Chadzis 2006: 27).

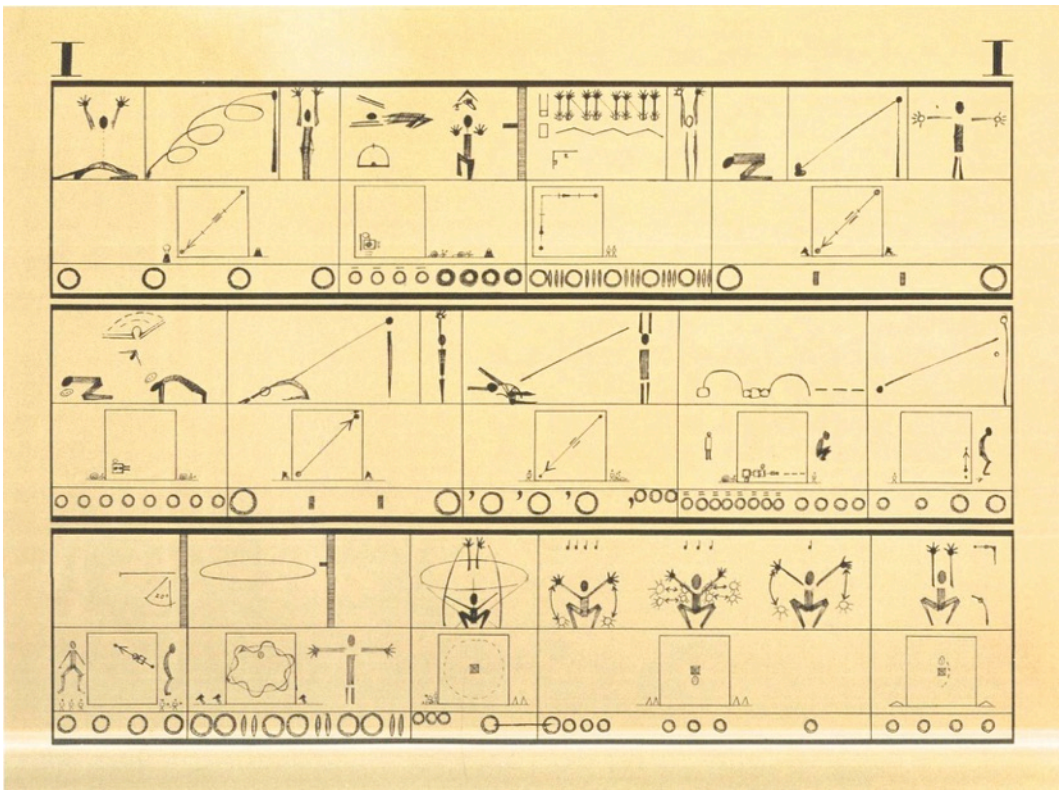


Figure 91: Movement notation by Lavinia Schulz for an unperformed dance/pantomime, *Vier Sätze der Toten Frau* (*Four Sentences of the Dead Woman*), Hamburg, 1922. Photo: Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg.

However, because she drew and inscribed the notational maps so enigmatically, it is hard to determine well, if at all, how the performances worked as narratives. Hamburg reviewers tend to emphasize the "visionary" strangeness of the performance as a whole without clarifying its semiotic significance. But the expressionist artist and editor Karl Lorenz (1888-1961) vividly described the movements of *Mann und tote Frau* (1921), which featured both Schulz and Holdt:

> *This piece is the gloomiest [of the program], physically the hardest and the most charged. Suffering, heaving, tingling, confusing. A dying, but never an end to dying. Her body whirls, turns, waltzes, folds together. Exhausted?! Yes! But [the body] rises up again out of its exhaustion.*

> *She sets the movement again on its axis. She heaves, snorts, tortured, she winds again onto the floor. Dead? She stands up again high. She swells up. Stamping, snorting, grasping, curves, throws herself, hurls herself, pushes herself, torn, and: sinks, breathing in anguish, to the floor of Death?! She lifts herself yet again. Sorrow-whipped, tortured with pain, scattering snorts. She bores again into herself—into the accumulated sorrow, the wounded world-body. A bundel of woe thus surrounds her, a heap of pain, squelched, shattered, burned up in the painful world-view and: nothing dies, cannot die. Here at its darkest is the primordial origin of being* (Chadzis 1998: 94).

Another journalist, the precocius Erich Lüth (1902-1989) in 1924 described Schulz's movement aesthetic as follows: "Here creeps the body, its own presence lost within little houses of glass and wood, in rattling joints, in sharp edges, broad flat cases, which represent a strange projection of devious souls in dead things, which achieve their own fantastic-monstrous life, a quite 'abstract organicity'" (Chadzis 1998: 92). With *Skirnir* (1921), a revision of Schreyer's *Skirnismol*, an adaptation of a section from the Edda, Walter Holdt performed a solo pantomime in a dark, heavy, leather-metal costume with an enormous sword that transformed the Nordic-Viking warrior figure into a kind of grotesque robot (Chadzis 1998: 97-99). Schulz and Holdt represented the most extreme zone of expressionist pantomime, but they reached it at a huge cost. They were unable to live outside of their art and mythic vision, and they fell into abject poverty, for their productions never earned them any money on which to live. In 1923, Schulz gave birth to their son, which only exacerbated their financial and marital difficulties. Holdt refused to accept help from his family, who insisted he give up his artistic aspirations. But Schulz became impatient with Holdt's lack of ambition while also fearing that he might abandon her. In June 1924, she shot him to death while he slept, then shot herself to death as she lay beside him and their one-year old son. Perhaps expressionism in pantomime could go no further than they took it, but no one since has gone so far in moving pantomime into an entirely new vision of the body's power to metamorphose… into something inhuman, another species.

Expressionism in the arts exerted much appeal and influence internationally in the early 1920s, even if in Germany expressionist theatrical pantomime reached only a small, cultish audience. Thus in

countries outside of Germany, artists could develop an expressionist pantomime aesthetic without experience of actual German expressionist pantomime performance. In Estonia, many artists nurtured an enthusiasm for modernist German culture, for Germans had a long and even dominant presence in the history of the country, and with the independence of the country from the Soviet Union in 1918, Germany seemed like a good friend to have in developing Estonia's orientation to the West. German films and modern German plays in an expressionist style found a solid audience in Estonia (Epner 2015: 287-291). However, pantomime in the theater had almost no heritage; it remained confined, at best, to feeble employments of it in Russian-style ballet productions. Nevertheless, Estonia became the site of an extraordinary experiment in expressionist theatrical pantomime. August (Aggio) Bachmann (1897-1923), a government clerk, had since adolescence developed a passion for theater. He had no university education, but he studied business and languages at vocational schools. He had attempted to study acting in St. Petersburg (1917) and then in Tallinn (1918), but political circumstances prevented him from achieving this goal. He turned his attention to writing newspaper reviews of theatrical performances in Tallinn, but his interest in theatrical theory and his distaste for "frivolity" in theater (Offenbach) brought an end to his career as a journalist. The theatrical writings of Meyerhold and the German expressionist film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919) greatly inspired him and urged him to understand that "theater must be the form for new ideas" (Andresen 1966: 22-28). He may also have found inspiration from the Estonia Theater's 1922 ballet production of Delibes's *Coppelia* (1870), choreographed by the Bolshoi ballerina Viktorina Kriger (1893-1978). In this production, Kriger turned much of the ballet into a pantomime by using actors instead of dancers to perform roles, because the new ballet company did not have enough dancers with sufficient ballet technique nor could the dancers perform pantomime proficiently (Andresen 1971: 26). But Bachmann realized he would not have any kind of theatrical career unless he set up his own theater company. This he did in 1921, gathering together a group of young people to produce performances that occurred on Sunday mornings when the German Draamateater was free to him. The theater group therefore bore the name "Hommikteater" or "Morning Theater." The first production was a staging of *Der ewige Mensch* (1919), an expressionist drama by Alfred Brust (1880-1938), a somber work on the theme of salvation

in a time of religious disillusionment involving over a dozen characters and consisting almost entirely of dialogue. Although German theaters produced some of Brust's plays with regularity during the 1920s, *Der ewige Mensch* (*Igavene inimene*) probably received its only performance through the Hommikteater. Bachmann decided he was better at directing than acting, and for this production he worked out every movement of a character's action in relation to speech that each actor shaped according to a "melody" and musical dynamics. Each act unfolded according to a musically defined mood: act 1: andante; act 2: agitato; act 3: grotesque; act 4: philosophical (largo-allegro); act 5: andante. The act 3 "grotesque" entailed a rhythmic pantomime of masked city persons designated according to their social class (Andresen 1966: 30-41; Aaslav-Tependi 2012: 46-47). His next production, in 1922, was of the expressionist social drama *Masse Mensch* (1919) by Ernst Toller (1893-1939), a great but controversial work, in which a woman, Sonja ("The Woman"), sacrifices her marriage to an industrialist to support a strike by industrial workers and then sacrifices herself rather than join a Communist-controlled revolution, led by an alluring Nameless One, that requires the deadly sacrifice of others to achieve the utopian state. After the failure of the 1919 Bavarian Soviet Republic, in which Toller participated, the state of Bavaria banned any performance of *Masse Mensch*, but theaters elsewhere in Germany staged the play, which became throughout the world one of the most well-known and admired dramas produced by the Weimar Republic. In his production, *Mass-inimene*, Bachmann turned Toller's "mass choirs" into movement choirs, who sang many of their lines and moved in a precisely choreographed fashion. He also used performers' bodies as scenic objects and architectural structures. Hilda Gleser (1893-1932), already a prominent actress in the Estonia Theater, played The Woman in a starkly expressionist manner. (Bachmann was astonished that she desired to perform with the company.) For the dream sequence set in the stock exchange, Bachmann composed a pantomime set to a foxtrot with financiers in top hats accompanied by half-naked girls. The famous poet Marie Under (1883-1980), in an otherwise highly favorable, lengthy review, criticized the weak diction of the actors in some of the non-singing sections (Andresen 1966: 42-59; Under 1922: 151). For his next production, Bachmann drastically reduced speech in performance with his production of Walter Hasenclever's *Die Menschen* (1919), translated as *Inimesed*. This radically expressionist, 5-act "dream play" dramatized the

"journey" of a murdered man, Alexander, to understand why he "allowed" himself to be murdered. The very large cast includes the many people Alexander encounters in "the world today" who have in some peculiar, unintentional way contributed to his murder. The dialogue is very spare, mostly one or two-word phrases that characters blurt out without reference to what anyone else says, as if the characters hear only themselves. The play presents a society in which individuals remain so withdrawn into themselves, so isolated from each other, that they remain numb to anyone's suffering, greed, or lust but their own. Throughout the play, Alexander carries a sack that contains his own head, given to him by his murderer. At one point, the head actually speaks one and two-word statements to Alexander. The only salvation in this dark, grotesque world is for the murderer to cry out, "I love!" With its many scenes and its montage organization of numerous social types, *Die Menschen* anticipates Hasenclever's film scenario *Die Pest* (1920), discussed earlier. The only German production of the play actually took place in Prague in 1920, and it was not a success. Critics complained about the obscurity and aesthetic complexity of the work (Spreizer 1999: 82). The Estonian-language production in 1923 was the only other performance until the 1990 staging in Mannheim of Swiss composer Detlef Müller-Siemens' two-act operatic adaptation. The play abounds in pantomimic scenes, but Bachmann, who played Alexander, treated the entire text as a pantomime to which he added some spoken words from the text. The effect was like watching a silent film punctuated by cries. Bachmann made imaginative use of new spotlights installed in the Estonia Theater, and he divided the stage into three sections to allow for swift shifts from one scene to the next. He individualized each of the socially defined characters by assigning them a distinctive movement, with Alexander making very soft, lilting movements that served as a kind of default kinesis against which the movements of all other characters deviated or contrasted. Under Bachmann, the Hommikteater had become a socialist organization; the programs for the company did not even list the persons involved with the productions. With *Inimesed*, the company had created a pantomime that was an intense critique of social pathology, a pantomime that depicted all classes of society as implicated in the murder of an individual, in the suppression of love, and in the awakening of murderous impulses. No other pantomime of the era attempted to represent on the stage such a wide range of social types, nor did any other

pantomime project such an overt political attitude without sinking into propaganda. Perhaps only an amateur company could adopt such a sophisticated political approach to pantomime. Again, Marie Under wrote a glowing review of the production, and the company seemed poised to become a significant artistic power within the small country (Andresen 1966: 60-68). Unfortunately, Bachmann suffered from heart disease and tuberculosis, and he died shortly after the production of *Inimesed* at the age of twenty-six. The Hommikteater attempted one more production, in 1924, an adaptation of a 1906 Symbolist play by Valery Bryusov, *Maa* (*Land*) directed by Hilda Gleser, who emulated Bachmann's theory of extravagantly stylized expressionist bodily movement contrasted this time with scenes of the poet's words spoken in darkness. But with the death of Bachmann, the company lacked a cohesive sense of purpose and ceased to exist after *Maa*. Alas, the approach to pantomime taken by Bachmann did "not find followers in Estonia or elsewhere" (Andresen 1966: 88). Bachmann was a visionary artist who could create distinctive, politically inflected pantomimic action because he did not really apply any sort of pantomime technique: each production entailed a different working out of pantomimic action. He was not a teacher, for teachers learn a technique that they teach to others. After his death, it was not enough for Bachmann to function as a model of brilliant artistic imagination; to have "followers," he had to leave behind a pantomimic technique that could be replicated and applied to one production after another. But the problem was not that Bachmann did not live long enough to have "followers"; the problem was that Estonia, like other countries, did not produce more artists with his unique, passionate, self-educated pantomimic imagination.

Jaap Kool

By 1924, expressionism in Germany began to wane as an artistic movement, giving way to the more sober, "objective" aesthetic philosophy of "Neue Sächlichkeit," with its focus on defining a "reality" outside of that distorted by the self and subjectivity. But what was left of theatrical pantomime in Germany remained attached to expressionism, presumably because the phenomenon of acting without speaking struck nearly everyone as an inherently subjective experience, a deliberate attempt to plunge an audience into a hidden world of the subconscious. Even German silent film acting retained an affection for expressionist devices until the sound era, as

can be seen in such films as Dupont's *Varieté* (1925), Pabst's *Geheimnisse einer Seele* (1926), Murnau's *Faust* (1926), Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), May's *Asphalt* (1929), and Sternberg's *Der blaue Engel* (1930). By the mid-1920s, however, new pantomimes for the German stage came almost entirely from the Dutch composer Jaap Kool (1891-1959). Educated in Germany, Paris, and Switzerland, including the famous Wickersdorf school in Saalfeld, Kool grew up in a liberal environment that welcomed experimental education and the radical social ideas associated with the body culture movement. At the Wickersdorf school, Kool became friends with Ernst Schertel (1884-1958), a member of the mystical-aristocratic "circle" around the poet Stefan George (1868-1933), and later the director of the Pantheon publishing house, one of the most ambitious producers of pornography in Germany in the late 1920s. Schertel introduced Kool to the concept of "trance" or hypnotic dancing, which eventually Schertel realized briefly through the formation in 1925 of the Stuttgart-based Traumbühne Schertel, a collaboration with the Ida Herion (1876-1959) modern dance company, although for Schertel, trance dancing was as much a matter of expressionist photography as of performance on stage. But due to a combination of familial and historical circumstances, Kool's musical career did not get rolling until after World War I. New and strange forms of music excited him: jazz, African rhythms, Asian harmonics, popular dance forms like the tango and shimmy, and modernist tonal structures. After composing music for a 1918 Berlin stage production of Georg Kaiser's *Europa*, he became the accompanist for the solo dancer Grit Hegesa (1891-1972), discussed earlier (cf. Toepfer 1997: 167-171). For her, he composed, 1919-1920, numerous dances and pieces specifically designated as "pantomimes," about which information remains extremely scarce. He asserted that modern dance required new music to accompany it, and to this end his music for Hegesa included gongs, Javanese gamelans, glass-timbred instruments, the saxophone, and different kinds of drums. He also composed a *Siamese Pantomime* (1919) for dancer Lisa Kresse and a "human marionette" dance, *Pritzelpuppe* (1919), for Anita Berber. When Hegesa became a film star in 1920, Kool turned his attention to providing jazz and hybrid music for nightclub revues in Berlin; he also published several influential theoretical works on jazz, non-Western music, and hybrid forms of music (Wipplinger 2017: 84, 254). In 1922, he became friends with Karl Vollmoeller, the scenarist of *Das Mirakel*, who now was writing screenplays. Vollmoeller's girlfriend was the Polish-born cabaret

dancer and film actress Lena Amsel (1899-1929), and he invited Kool to compose music for a three-act "grotesque dance pantomime," *Die Schiessbude*, that he had written for Amsel, although it is not clear when he actually wrote it, for his involvement with Amsel dated back to 1916, when he was still married to Maria Carmi.

The action takes place in a fairground arcade or shooting gallery managed by a man and his wife. Among the attractions of the arcade is, in a room full of mechanical figures, a trio of life-size, wooden dolls, a Jockey, a Boxer, and a Dancer, as well as a "little ape woman" named Krukru, who is a kind of assistant to the owner. She chews on something while the owner repairs the leg of the wooden Dancer. It is evident (from fondling movements) that the owner nurtures an erotic attachment to the Dancer. His wife displays a business-oriented attitude toward the dolls, and she feels jealousy arising from her husband's attachment to the Dancer doll. A rich African plantation owner, the Nabob, appears, accompanied by two elegant women, whom Krukru scares away. But then the Nabob returns alone and pays to try his luck in the shooting gallery. After shooting at pots, he offers to pay extra to shoot at the dolls concealed under a cloth. The owner intervenes to protect his creations, but his wife laughs at him and indicates that her husband is somewhat crazy. But when the Nabob offers to pay to touch the breast of the Dancer, the owner jumps on the Nabob, who manages to cast his attacker aside and tempt the wife to sell the doll to him. In the evening, the owner, bearing a "Chinese lamp," a mask, and a gong, conducts a ritualistic oath-swearing scene, aided by Krukru. Through this mysterious ceremony, the owner is able to bring the dolls to life, but when he does so, he also activates the jealous rivalry between the Jockey and the Boxer for the affections of the Dancer. The owner indicates that when he strikes them with a whip, they will return to being lifeless wooden puppets, which is what happens. He then leaves the scene. But Krukru does not. She sees the opportunity to emulate her master by reenacting the magic ritual in a "comically caricatured" manner and succeeds in bringing the Jockey and the Boxer to life. However, she then drops the gong, which shatters and instantly brings the Dancer to life. The Dancer performs a "magical dance" that draws the Nabob and the wife from their hiding place. The Nabob repulses Krukru and commands the dolls to escape with him and the wife. When the owner arrives and sees the disaster, he and Krukru set off in pursuit. Act 2: the Nabob holds a banquet in his mansion with the Jockey

and the Boxer as servants. The drunken Nabob commands the scantily clad Dancer to dance on top of the table and dismisses his guests so that he can be alone with her. The wife conspires with the Jockey and the Boxer to put the Nabob to sleep with alcohol, so that they can rob him. But the Nabob awakes and catches the Jockey, whom he condemns to death by hanging. The owner and Kruku discover the Jockey hanging from a gallows and carry him off. The following scene occurs in a casino. The Boxer, accompanied by the Dancer, wears a turban and the garments of an oriental prince, while the wife has also adorned herself luxuriously. They win an enormous sum at the gambling table and beginning quarreling over how to divide the winnings. The Boxer decides to take it all. The Nabob then appears. He offers to renounce prosecuting the Boxer for theft and to allow the Boxer to keep the winnings if he releases the Dancer to him. The Boxer agrees, but then he suddenly starts eating the money, "ecstatically," and chokes to death. The owner and Krukru arrive to discover the corpse, which they carry away while at the same time the wife and the Dancer disappear with a Gigolo and the Nabob follows after them. Scene change: the dark underworld beneath the bridges of the Seine. The Dancer is now a depraved whore and the wife is her procuress. The owner appears, but the Dancer and the wife do not recognize him. The wife urges the Dancer to sell herself to the owner. Horrified, the owner nevertheless embraces the Dancer with love. He turns on his wife and strangles her, and action that so terrifies the Dancer that she hurls herself into the river. The owner attempts to retrieve her from the water. Act 3: back to the arcade. The owner prepares to unveil for the arcade audience a "great lyric scene with his beloved dolls," but he has only a fragment from the shattered gong. In despair, he turns to a barrel organ and cranks it. The music brings the Dancer to life and she dances a few steps. The dance arouses the furious jealousy of the wife, who smashes the doll with a steel rod. The owner summons the police, but when the police examine the victim and discover that she is a doll, they laugh and depart. The scene then is as it was at the beginning of the piece. "The woman blows her trumpet. Carousel. Kruku leaps to her post, goes to her usual procedure at the organ. The arcade owner goes insane" (Vollmer 2011: 418-423; Kool 1929a).

Die Schiessbude resembles somewhat the hallucinatory image of insanity in *Caligari*. But perhaps it is more insightful to see the piece as dramatizing male fixation on the erotic power of mechanized beings,

robotic figures, who inspire greater love than any human female. By contrast, all the females—the wife, the Dancer, and Krukru—remain emotionally attached to human males. The owner's relation to the doll technology is mysterious, "magical," involving arcane technical procedures that elude complete comprehension by females, as is evident from Krukru's bumbling and disastrous effort to imitate the "master." The wife wishes to reduce the doll-robots to a commercial value that somehow prevents them from inflaming her jealousy and fear that the Dancer will replace her as an object of erotic desire. Yet she herself treats the Jockey and the Boxer as erotic companions. The dolls themselves feel no love for humans, although the Boxer and the Jockey are jealous rivals for the affection of the Dancer, who, however, follows the commands only of those who at the moment claim ownership of her. She is incapable of love, and betrays even the man who loves her, created her, brought her to life, prevented the Nabob from shooting her and then touching her breast, and killed the woman who prostituted her. The Dancer prefers to destroy herself by leaping into the river rather than return to the man who loves her. She is indifferent to the rivalry between the Boxer and the Jockey to possess her, for she does not accept that any doll can own her. The Boxer and the Jockey, attached to the wife, mistakenly assume that money is what gives them life and movement, so the Jockey steals it and the Boxer actually eats it, which only leads to their "deaths." The Nabob repeatedly attempts to buy ownership of the Dancer, but this approach is no more successful than the arcade owner's efforts to save her. She "lives" in a zone of life wherein she does not need to love or be loved, wherein desire is irrelevant, wherein obedience to a command gives all sense of purpose. Krukru remains faithful to the owner, yet she seeks to become more than what she is, to exceed the limits of her species, whatever it is, and indeed, her desire to emulate her master is what produces disaster, the collapse of distinction between human and robot, or rather, the subhuman or perhaps natural "error" that allows the dolls to transform from mechanical toys into another species able to live outside of the mysterious "oath" to which the owner has sworn them. The pantomime scenario embeds an amazingly complex set of relations between humans and technology, and the complexity intensifies when one considers that on stage humans perform the parts of the dolls and Krukru. All this thematic complexity fuels the added theme of insanity. The wife signals that her husband is crazy; the police laugh at him because of his love for a dead doll.

But in the final scene, the spectator sees the arcade as it is at the beginning of the piece, as if all has returned to normal, the fairground crowded with visitors, Krukru at the organ, the wife heralding the performance of the "great lyrical scene of a man with his beloved dolls." No one signals the owner is mad; he just "goes insane." The implication is that the ultimate source of insanity is the "normal" condition of providing ostensibly innocent, "lyrical" fairground entertainment for the public: the arcade is merely a façade concealing manifold, unconscious, self-destructive anxieties regarding relations between humans and technology (cf. Vollmer 2011: 423-429). Kool employs various musical devices to simulate the fairground carousel and barrel organ, the "oriental" mood of the oath ritual, the lewd tango of the banquet dance scene, and the jazz inflected casino scene. The music, for a twenty-piece orchestra, often sounds more sardonic or "playful" than the action it accompanies, as if Kool believed that such a dark, "grotesque" story would be entertaining only if the music created even greater uncertainty about how to respond to the action. Kool's music contains an element of parody that is absent from the scenario, which stresses the grotesque without the need to parody any conventions or institutions. In this respect, the scenario is more sophisticated than the music.

Die Schiessbude had its premiere at the Theater am Kurfürstendamm in Berlin in October 1922. But Lena Amsel did not perform in it; she was busy performing in Joe May's epic, four-part film *Tragödie der Liebe* (1923). Instead, Katta Sterna played the Dancer, and her partner Ernst Matray directed the production, both of whom belonged to the Vollmoeller-Reinhardt circle, and they had collaborated on the production of *Die grüne Flöte*. Actor Kurt Gerron (1897-1944) played the Nabob, while Hilde Arendt, a performer of extreme obscurity, received high praise for her dance-like movements and "grotesque, comic-frightening" approach to the role of the little ape woman Krukru. Actors Hermann Vallentin (1872-1945) and Ilka Grüning (1876-1964), already quite active in films, played the roles of the owner and his wife. Matray himself played a "Negro," and the soon to be prodigiously busy film actor Paul Henckels (1885-1967) appeared as "Kasperl" (the Jockey). Russian artist Xenia Boguslawaskaja (1892-1972) did the scenic design in a "futuristic-cubistic" manner, creating "splendidly the fantastic atmosphere of the pantomime" (Vollmer 2011: 429-430). Here pantomime performance entailed a combination of actors and dancers,

directed by a dancer. Critical response to the production was uneven, with some reviewers skeptical toward the blend of dancers and actors or at least focused on the differences between them (Vollmer 2011: 429-432). The critic for the *Berliner Tagblatt* thought Kool's music suffered from "excessive, shrill, whipping rhythms" that overemphasized mechanicalness. But dance critic Artur Michel (1883-1946), in the *Vossische Zeitung*, observed that the music created a "powerful sound realm" that "enveloped the rhythmically unbound flow of mimic scenes and dances"—that is, the pantomimic action and the music were in tension rather than in synchrony, always a virtue in dance from Michel's perspective. He seems to have wished for more dance than pantomime, whereas the *Berliner Tagblatt* reviewer felt that such a mix of dancing, pantomime, scenic futurism, and expressionist music worked effectively only in relation to the grotesque. But Friedrich Victor, in *Neue Zeit*, asserted that the grotesquerie of the production possessed a significance "far higher and far deeper than many, indeed most, theater pieces," whereas Franz Hessel (1880-1941), in *Das Tagebuch* (28 Oktober 1922: 1506-1507), saw the piece as "nothing but a divertissement" composed of eclectic aesthetic elements that created an almost incomprehensible "world" pieced together out of shattered fragments belonging to incompatible artistic goals. Yet he found the piece darkly exciting; he saw the Jockey as a postwar Pierrot, a "shadow Pierrot" hanging from a "shadow gallows," while the arcade owner was like a blind Oedipus, led to despair by the music of an organ-grinder, which "many may find frivolous," but he finds "delightful and heroic." The reviewers, however, tend to focus on the peculiarity of pantomimic action and on discerning distinctions between dance and pantomime rather than on identifying the themes embedded in the action or on deciphering the representational value of the performance. They saw the production as a bizarre, "eccentric" project rather than a basis for a new direction in the theater

The Berlin production of *Die Schiessbude*, done in a commercial rather than subsidized theater, may have had an infectious impact on German theater; Kool's publisher, Universal Edition in Vienna, claimed that by 1929, when it published the score, seven theaters had produced the work. In any case, Kool's confidence in pantomime as an instrument for furthering his artistic ambitions expanded. In 1923, he began working with the socialist Volksbühne in Berlin, where he produced and arranged music for dance matinees. He also became director of the Vox record company

(1923-1925), which specialized in popular and ethnic music. These opportunities strengthened his connections within the Berlin entertainment world. He collaborated with Max Terpis (aka Max Pfister), the newly appointed Swiss director of the Berlin State Opera ballet company, on the "grotesque ballet pantomime" *Der Leierkasten*, which premiered in September 1925. Terpis (1889-1958) originally studied architecture and came to dance only after encountering Laban in 1920. He had studied with Mary Wigman for only a year (1922) before opera director Hanns Niedecken-Gebhard (1889-1954) hired him to choreograph dances in Hannover. Even though Terpis had no ballet training whatsoever, in 1924, Max von Schillings (1868-1933), intendant for the Berlin State Opera, invited him to direct a ballet corps that somehow managed to have one hundred members. Schillings had the idea that Terpis would "reform" the ballet company, but instead the ballet company pushed Terpis's life into a nightmare of fiendish political intrigues. His choreographies almost exclusively used the music of living composers, and he wrote the scenarios for his productions, including for *Der Leierkasten*. But while his productions granted his scenic designers opportunities for imaginative expressionism, his choreography, which he claimed followed an "architectural" approach, never seemed to awaken any excitement. His thinking about performance was simply too sober, too restrained, and too fixated on a theoretical distinction between "symmetry" and "asymmetry" in the construction of group movement. Consequently, it is quite difficult to find useful descriptions for any of his productions, including *Der Leierkasten* (Toepfer 1997: 297-299). His production of the piece featured several prominent dancers: Harald Kreutzberg, Melanie Lucia, Rolf Jahnke, Dorothea Albu, Liselotte Köster, Julian Algo, Walter Junk, and Terpis himself played the Hunchback, yet it, like his other productions, inspired such anemic commentary that one has to search long and deep to find it. Nevertheless, *Der Leierkasten* received further productions: Duisburg, Würzburg, Mainz, Saarbrücken, Leipzig, Breslau, Weimar, Plauen, Lübeck, Zürich, Darmstadt, Braunschweig. In Würzburg, the modern dancer Claire Eckstein (1904-1994), director of the opera ballet and also a Wigman student, staged the piece, in 1927, on a triple bill that included Paul Hindemith's *Der Dämon* (1926) and Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Scheherazade* (1888). Anne Grünert, a ballet director in Duisburg about whom almost nothing is known, also staged the work in 1927. Eckstein had what Terpis completely lacked—an extravagant

sense of humor and a brilliant sense of the grotesque, which she perfected through the exaggeration of actions she saw performed in daily life. Her production also benefited from the constructivist stage design by her husband, the great modernist scenographer Wilhelm Reinking (1896-1985), whose fairground setting allowed for unusual physical actions performed on a swing, a slide, and miniature puppet theater (Reinking 1979: 64) [Figure 92].



Figure 92: Scene from Jaap Kool's pantomime *Der Leierkasten*, directed by Claire Eckstein, Würzburg, 1927. Photo: Deutsches Tanzarchiv, Cologne.

Yet another production took place in June 1928 at the Deutsches Nationaltheater in Weimar under the direction of Finnish-born ballet director, Sari Jankelow (1896-1972), a modern dance student of Maggie Gripenberg and Mary Wigman. Jankelow herself played the Young Girl. *Der Leierkasten* was the first half of a double bill that concluded with a "ballet for children," the André Hellé-Claude Debussy *Die Spielzeugschachtel* (*La Boite à joujoux* [1913]), which featured a large ensemble consisting entirely of women and girls. Despite the lack of information concerning these

productions or even its scenario, *Der Leierkasten* was important because it initiated the movement of German pantomime production from theatrical companies to ballet companies attached to state or municipal opera houses. Because directors of these ballet companies came from modern dance and lacked expertise in ballet, and because the dancers themselves often had a weak ballet education, pantomime seemed useful in displaying otherwise modest dance talents, despite the fact that the most successful pantomime productions, such as *Das Mirakel*, enjoying an enormously popular revival in 1925, were the work of actors rather than dancers.

Kool kept busy with pantomime. He composed music for Ellen Petz's ballet pantomime *Die Elixere des Teufels*, which had its premiere at the Dresden State Opera in December 1925. Petz (aka Ellen Cleve-Petz [1899-1970]) never published her scenario nor did Kool publish his score, so it is quite to difficult to ascertain how Petz turned E.T.A. Hoffmann's lengthy 1815 "horror novel" of the same name into a ten-scene pantomime. It is a *doppelgänger* story: a Capuchin monk, Medardus, receives custody of various relics deposited in the monastery where he has spent his life. These include a box containing seductive elixirs that supposedly tempted St. Anthony. But when a Count arrives at the monastery to inspect the relics and taste the elixirs, Medardus himself secretly imbibes them, and these release another personality within him, worldly, sinister, and devoted to sensuality. An aristocratic woman, Aurelie, becomes a resident in the monastery as a result of her family's wish to keep her away from the Count, who, disguised as a monk, plots to rescue her from her imprisonment. Medardus sees the Count as a rival in his own passion for Aurelie, and he arranges for the Count to die accidentally. Aurelie leaves the monastery, and Medardus decides that, he, too, wants to live outside the monastery. But the Count still lives as Medardus's *doppelgänger*, a demonic replication of himself insofar as to Medardus the Count always appears as himself but to others he always appears as Medardus. The Count avenges his death by committing crimes for which Medardus is accused. Medardus/Count murders Aurelie's stepmother and brother, but he escapes the city with the help of a strange hairdresser, Peter Schoenfeld, who also has a *doppelgänger*, Pietro Belcampo, but this double personality is amusing and affable, if quite disconcerting. When Medardus appears at the court of a Prince, Aurelie accuses him of the murder of her brother, which lands him in prison. But the Count appears and assumes responsibility for the crimes.

Medardus poses as a Polish nobleman and continues his pursuit of Aurelie, to whom he becomes engaged. But on the day of the wedding, the elixir madness overwhelms him: he stabs Aurelie and helps the Count to escape. Peter/Pietro comes again to his aid and returns him to the monastery, where he seeks a life of repentance. But Aurelie has taken vows in the monastery; again Medardus must struggle against his lust for her. The *doppelgänger* then appears, stabs Aurelie to death, and disappears. However, it is not clear how Petz ended her telling of the tale. It was indeed a very complex task to transform this convoluted tale into a pantomime. Actors and dancers shared the chief roles: Felix Steinböck (1897-1974) was Medardus, but dancer Gino Neppach (1898-1953) was Count Viktorin; actor Erich Ponto (1884-1957) played Belcampo and Petz herself played Aurelie. A dancer, Susanne Dombois (1897-?), performed the role of a saint to whom Medardus prays, but production photos suggest that she did not dance, for she performed entirely on the narrow platform of an elaborate, expressionist baldachin. Actually none of Ursula Richter's (1886-1946) photos show any dancing, but Petz nevertheless choreographed several scenes, while Dresden resident director Georg Kiesau (1881-1940) directed the production as a whole [Figure 93]. Adolf Mahnke (1891-1959) designed the fantastically expressionist set and Leonhard Fanto (1874-1940) designed the extravagant eighteenth century costumes. The production provided Petz with another opportunity to develop her taste for outré luxuriousness, but more importantly it showed an unprecedented level of public investment in "dark," psychologically turbulent pantomime that starkly and perhaps deliberately contrasted with the pious religious spectacle of *Das Mirakel*. It is unfortunate that more information about this production is so hard to excavate, for it seems to represent an extraordinarily ambitious effort to explore the limits of pantomimic narrative complexity to a degree unseen since Viganò. Accessible critical response is not extensive. The *Musikblätter des Anbruch* (Vol. 8, No. 1 1926: 6) announced that *Die Elixiere des Teufel* was a "great success" in Dresden. In the same journal issue, the musicologist and choir director Richard Engländer (1889-1966) described the work as a "dance drama," a "ballet pantomime," and a pantomime, suffused with the "dramaturgical technology" of the cinema and the revue. He referred to dances "inserted" into the pantomime: a modernistic nocturnal dance of demons in the forest scene, a waltz of goblins, a flagellants dance (which involved a female solo voice and female choir). He

also praised the actors Steinböck and Ponto for their "unheard of rhythmic-dancer-like instinct." Kool's rhythmically oriented music, which often used noise-making instruments, represented a "significant step forward" in uniting pantomime with "dance figuration" (74). But in *Neue Musik-Zeitung* (Vol. 47, No. 7 1926: 148), composer Heinrich Platzbecker (1860-1937) complained that Kool's music relied too much on rhythm and novel rhythmic effects and on too many whole tone steps, producing music reminiscent of Meyerbeer's in pomposity and clangor but without similar dramatic effect. The magical lighting effects, painterly scene design, and splendid costumes could not conceal the "emptiness" of the music. Petz embodied Aurelie with "great pliancy," but she did not succeed in "solving the choreographic problem of pantomime," which in this case was that the music failed to match the opulence and macabre mood on the stage. Kool had emphasized rhythm at "the cost of melody," and this in turn sacrificed much of the romantic feeling in Hoffmann's tale. Platzenbecker's main point is that both dance and pantomime require strong melodic musical accompaniment and melodic motifs to avoid tiring the spectator, especially if the performance takes as its material intensely emotional, Gothic romantic scenes.







Figure 93: Scenes from *Die Elixir des Teufels*, directed by Ellen Petz and Georg Kiesau, Dresden, 1925. Photos: Ursula Richter, from Deutsche Fotothek.

For the January 25, 1926 opening of the Gloria Palast cinema in Berlin, which included the Berlin premiere of Murnau's film *Tartuffe* (1925), Kool composed music for Frank Wedekind's pantomime scenario *Die Flöhe* (1892), a performance of which preceded the screening of the film and involved the acting of one of the film's stars, Lil Dagover (1887-1980), and a "sweet dance group of children." In his review of the film, screenwriter and film critic Willy Haas (1891-1973) remarked that it was a "fine, eclectic,

graceful ballet" which delighted the audience (*Film-Kurier*, Nr. 22, 26.1.1926). But the work seems not have had a life beyond this festive occasion. Another pantomime by Kool, *Das andere Leben*, had a premiere in early 1926 at the Rostock Municipal Theater, but further information about this work remains inaccessible (*Neue Musik-Zeitung* Vol. 47, No. 15 1926: 331). In 1927, he composed music for a 1929 Leipzig production of Wedekind's 1897 pantomime *Die Kaiserin von Neufundland*, for which Friedrich Hollaender had already written a score in 1924 for a Viennese production, revived in Munich in 1932 (Vollmer 2011: 186). Meanwhile, for *Melos* (Vol. 5, No. 1, October 1925: 8-14), Kool published an essay, "Musik zur Tanzpantomime," in which he theorized general principles of composing music for ballet and pantomime. In relation to music, he argued, ballet and pantomime were interchangeable. It was a myth, he asserted, to assume that powerful music distracted from the visual aspect of performance: on the contrary, strong music helped the viewer to see more acutely. Strong music for pantomime came out of the scenic environment and the actions of the performers. Unlike opera, in which action and visual elements always remained subordinate to the music, pantomime subordinated musical structures to the action on the stage. Rhythmic structures were fundamental to ballet and pantomime performance, but in modern times, rhythmic innovation was necessary, and the rhythms found in Stravinsky, American jazz, and African music provided valuable inspiration. Composers must move away from stressing the first beat and take advantage of stressing the second and third beats (syncopation), for it was not necessary that performers move in synchrony with the music, only that the music inspire the performers to move with an expressive rhythm, even sometimes a counter-rhythm. Melody, however, was also important in building a "sculptural" dimension to movement: actors move according to phrases that arise out of a melodic impulse, and the composer has to think of melodies in a visceral way, as "waves" of corporeal origin that urge listeners to dance as much as rhythms. Counterpoint, the juxtaposing of one melody against another, was a matter to approach with caution, for it overemphasized harmony when dissonance and atonality were more effective in the theater. In anti-Wagnerian fashion, Kool concluded by claiming that because pantomime intensified both the seen and the heard, it, rather than opera, represented the art of the future.

Yet after the 1929 Leipzig production of the Wedekind pantomime, Kool stopped composing for pantomimes. Instead, between 1929 and 1933, he taught at the Wickersdorf School, of which he was director 1930-1932. He began composing music for Dutch films, such as the detective film *Het mysterie van de Mondscheinsonate* (1935). He lived for a while in Ascona, but returned to Germany to help the Wickersdorf School prevent the SS from turning it into a barracks (Dudek 2017: 191-192). In 1937, the Deutsches Nationaltheater in Weimar staged his dance pantomime *Ständetänze* on a triple bill that included *Die heilige Fackel*, a "dance legend" by the actress Elsa von Dohnányi-Galafres (1879-1977) and Puccini's one-act opera *Gianni Schicchi* (1918). *Ständetänze* consisted of scenes depicting Flemish peasant life "according to paintings by Pieter Breughel" (ca. 1525-1569) and entailed a large cast of both actors and dancers playing such characters as the Farmer, the Farmer's Wife, the Farmer's Daughter, the Milkmaid, the Hunchback, the Bricklayer, and numerous other "peasant types" associated with Breughel's paintings. Choreography and direction were the work of the completely obscure Martha Gäbler, who assumed the same responsibilities for *Die heilige Fackel*. The Nationaltheater website says that she had worked as a choreographer at the theater since 1920. *Ständetänze* was possibly the only work calling itself a pantomime produced in the Third Reich. The production impressed Nazi officials enough to commission Kool to write an operetta, *Die Schweinewette*, which had its premiere at the Nationaltheater in 1939. When the Nazis invaded the Netherlands, Kool accepted an appointment from a pro-Nazi Dutch-German cultural society to direct the Kammeroper in The Hague (1940-1944). His unsavory relations with the Nazis brought him into severe disrepute after the war, and he sank into obscurity, managing a music store in The Hague until his death in 1959 (Amanda Pork 2017).

Pantomime Hybrids

Kool's retreat from composing music for pantomimes in 1926-1927 may have resulted from his fear of competition from composers more gifted than himself. In 1926, numerous modernist composers published a prodigious amount of dance music in Germany, including music for pantomimes and hybrid forms of speechless performance encouraged by a society that avoided clear distinctions between ballet and other forms of theatrical dance. In this environment, guided by composers rather than

scenarists, composers could label works pantomime when they were not. For example, composer Paul Hindemith (1895-1963) achieved much success after 1924 with his two-scene "Tanzpantomime" *Der Dämon* (1922), using a scenario by the expressionist theater journalist Max Krell (1887-1962) that depicts, in about thirty minutes, the imprisonment of two sisters by a demon, whose poisons undermine their power to resist him. While he sits on a throne with one sister shackled behind him, the other sister attempts to seduce him so that she can free her sister. But the seduction fails, and the demon, now bored with his captives, abandons them in the prison he has made for them. The action, however, unfolds through thirteen short dances thematically labeled: "Dance of the Oppressed Swallows," "Dance of the Poison," "Dance of Pain," "Dance of Sorrow and Longing," "Dance of the Closed Orchid," "Dance of Red Rage," and so forth. The sisters do all of the dancing, while the demon, primarily a sadistic spectator of the sisters' alternately tormented and seductive movements, does pantomime. Yet the premiere production of the piece in Darmstadt in December 1923 was the work of a director, not a choreographer, the young Albrecht Joseph (1901-1991), later to become a prolific screenwriter and film editor. In this atmosphere of genre ambiguity, productions become pantomimes when actors perform dances or directors choreograph dances. In mid-1920s Germany, when modern dance schools sought to produce ensemble pieces that moved away from story narratives and toward more formally abstract, anti-theatrical narrative structures, any speechless theatrical performance could be pantomime if the action followed a scenario, a story requiring characterization but not ballet technique. Universal Edition advertised Vittorio Rieti's (1898-1994) *Barabau* (1925) as a "pantomime with chorus in one act," even though the Ballet Russes had premiered this peasant farce in Paris as a ballet choreographed by George Balanchine. Numerous ballets appeared, but so, too, did some works explicitly designated as pantomimes or dance pantomimes about which information remains very difficult to extract, even though various German cities produced them: *Der Spiegel* (1925), by Albert Siklós (1878-1942), scenario by Mohácsi Jenő (1886-1944); *Pierrots Sommernacht* (1925), by Hermann Noetzel (1880-1951), *Pantea* (1921), "symphonic drama and dance pantomime" for female dancer, invisible chorus, and orchestra by Gian Francesco Malipiero (1882-1973); *Tahi* (1926), pantomime in one-act by Felix Petyrek (1892-1951) with scenario by dancer Julian Algo (1899-1955); *Prometheus* (1927), "heroic

dance pantomime," by Hubert Pataky (1892-1953), with scenario by Max Terpis; *Tragödietta* (1927), pantomime by Austrian composer Max Brand (1896-1980), who the same year attempted to establish a "Mimoplastisches Theater für Ballett" in Venna; *Der und Der* (1928), pantomime by baritone Max Spilcker (1892-1954); *Der Ozeanflug* (1928), a "Tanzpantomime," by American composer-conductor Antonio Modarelli (1894-1954), from a scenario by Dutch dancer and later film actress Ery Bos (1908-2005); *Baby in der Bar* (1928), a "Tanzspiel," composed by Wilhelm Grosz (1894-1939), from a scenario by Béla Balázs (1884-1949), and choreography by Yvonne Georgi (1903-1975), produced in Braunschweig, featured a jazz band on stage in a comic story about a distraught woman who abandons her baby in a luxurious nightclub. Stirred by the jazz music, the baby suddenly grows big and starts dancing to the different dance tunes, causing others in the club to lose their inhibitions. In 1925, composer Kurt Weill (1900-1950) composed a one-act opera, *Der Protagonist*, based on the 1920 expressionist play of the same name by Georg Kaiser (1878-1945); productions of it in Dresden (1926) and Berlin (1928) inspired much enthusiasm. Weill and Kaiser originally planned a three-act pantomime, but decided that so much "silence" was "wearisome." Set in "Shakespeare's England", the opera depicts an acting troupe preparing a pantomime for presentation to a Duke. The actors at first rehearse a comic pantomime, about six minutes long, dealing with marital infidelity, "performed entirely balletically and unrealistically, with exaggerated gestures." But when the actors learn that the Duke has invited a Bishop, they decide they must prepare a tragic pantomime, about seven minutes long, "performed with vivid expression and passionate movements," depicting a woman deeply estranged from her oppressively affectionate husband and longing to be free of him. The protagonist of the opera and the pantomimes is an actor with an incestuous attachment to his sister. The actor's life parallels that of the pantomimes insofar as he pursues an adulterous relation with a woman while struggling with jealousy over his wife's infidelity. His emotions overwhelm him to the point that he cannot distinguish himself from the character he plays. While rehearsing the tragic pantomime, he stabs his sister to death when she declares her affection for another man (Hinton 2012: 70-77; Gilliam 1994: 7-8). As might be expected, the music for the first pantomime conveys a playful, rather mischievous quality, while the music for the second pantomime contains much more dramatic contrast and emotional intensity, but it is all music in an

aggressively modernist style, determined to create a new sound for the representation of an old time that is actually not so remote from our own time in which violent emotions like jealousy destroy a person's capacity to function as a protagonist of his own or another's story. While some reviewers and scholars have asserted that the pantomimes in *Der Protagonist* show the influence of silent film and *Caligari*, the opera is actually a rare example of a modernist application of the Shakespearean dumb show.

Musikblätter des Anbruch regularly announced impending pantomimes that the composers never completed: *Die Verfolgung* (1926), a pantomime by Hanns Eisler (1898-1962), with a scenario by screenwriter Béla Balázs (cf. Hohmaier 2012: 53-64); *Die Idee* (1928), a six-scene pantomime, by Berthold Goldschmidt (1903-1996), presumably based on the 1920 wordless expressionist novel in woodcuts by the Flemish artist Frans Masereel (1889-1972), which eventually became a tragic, expressionist animated film (1932) by Berthold Bartosch (1893-1968), with music by Arthur Honegger that included the first use of an ondes martenot in a film soundtrack. But from the perspective of the German music press, the term "pantomime" described not only ballet, but any form of wordless theatrical performance that included dances or identified itself as a dance, as long as the dancers impersonated characters in a story and performed unique, "modern" movements—that is, movements specifically linked to the peculiar modernity of the music rather than to an academic technique imposed on the music. Pantomime thus applied, in critical discourse, to Egon Wellesz's twenty-minute *Persisches Ballett* (1920), with a scenario by the original choreographer, dancer Ellen Tels (1885-1944) and dedicated to Arnold Schoenberg, and to his thirty-minute "dance symphony" in nine scenes *Die Nächtlichen* (1923), with a scenario by Max Terpis and a highly unusual opening scene accompanied exclusively by percussion instruments. Examination of the score for *Persisches Ballett* explains the semantic ambiguity. Tels' scenario is a rather conventional "oriental" tale of intrigue, jealousy, and murder within a Shah's royal tent. The action is clearly and primarily pantomimic, interrupted by two dances performed only by "the Shah's favorite" female companion, Djamiljeh, who murders her jealous lover (Wellesz 1922). But while *Persisches Ballett* achieved some popularity in Germany, *Die Nächtlichen*, similarly pantomimic, was a great failure in Berlin under Terpis's direction: reviewers and audiences found the music

too harsh and intimidating. Wellesz discovered with these productions, and even with his music for Hofmannsthal's properly designated ballet *Achilles in Skyros* (1921), that, in this theatrical environment, appreciation for the modernity of his music depended on an equivalent modernity of the scenario. He subsequently focused his love of theater music on operas using his own libretti.

The idea that wordless theatrical performance in a modernist vein required new forms urged composers, rather than scenarists, to invent new names for projects that critical discourse still called pantomimes, such as the term "mimodrama," as if this term would escape whatever negative associations audiences held in relation to the words "pantomime," "dance," or "ballet." Composer Wilhelm Mauke (1867-1930) introduced the idea of "mimodrama" in 1917 with the premiere in Karlsruhe of his two-act pantomime *Die letzte Maske*, which had productions in at least a dozen German cities into the late 1920s. Novelist Kurt Münzer (1879-1944) wrote the scenario, which tells "the touching story of the traditional lovers, Pierrot and Columbine. Columbine, amidst a gay, masked assemblage, is haunted by the spectral visions of approaching death and finally falls a victim to her own dire apprehensions. Pierrot in the wild ecstasy of pain and dolorous exaltation, takes his own life" (*Musical Courier* May 6, 1920: 48). However, Hans Schorn, a critic for *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, reviewing the premiere in Karlsruhe, complained that "mimodrama" merely meant the transformation of a banal story into a vulgar movie on stage. Every aspect of the production—the music, the scenario, the scenic design, the acting, and the costumes—was hopelessly conventional and boring (Vol. 84, No. 21: 175-176). Yet German composer Albert Noelte (1885-1946), writing for the American journal *Musical Courier* (May 6, 1920: 48), described the Munich production, directed by the ballet master Heinrich Kröller (1880-1930), as "fascinating from first to last," with "music of a rather eruptive nature." But he referred to the piece as a pantomime, not a mimodrama or a ballet, even though an "unknown dancer" and eventual film actress, Charlotte Krüger, played Columbine. Reviewing the 1918 Frankfurt production, Karl Holl praised the "pantomimic action" and the "lyrically and religiously sublime expressiveness of the music" supporting a gripping *Doppelgänger* story culminating in "a modern dance of death with the bitter color-strength and sublimity of old master paintings." But he warned that the "musical mimodrama," in seeking to liberate musical theater, had to develop a new

style ("Eigenleben") of music that moved bodily expression away from "old types of dance" and "the jargon of naturalistic music dramas." The implication is that music, not the scenario, is the key to establishing the power of mimodrama and pantomime . . . but Wellesz discovered that powerful, modernist music with its "own life" will only make a conventional or not especially modern scenario seem weak (Holl 1919: 309-310).

In 1918, a musicologist, Max Steinitzer (1864-1936), used the term "mimodrama" to describe contemporary non-singing dramas that used (mostly orchestral) musical accompaniment. He saw mimodrama as supplanting the older concept of melodrama as it had evolved since the eighteen century, but he mentioned pantomime only as a category of mimodrama, which encompassed spoken drama requiring actors to move in relation to music as well as the language of the text. Mimodrama as he understood it included pantomime, "Tanzspiel," plays with orchestral accompaniment and no singing, and film dramas (Steinitzer 1918: 50-58). A more precise idea of "mimodrama" soon appeared with *Todes-Tarantella* (*La Tarantelle de la Mort*) (1920), by the Austrian composer-lawyer Julius Bittner (1874-1939), from a scenario by the Austrian songwriters and librettists Bruno Warden (1883-1954) and Ignaz Michael Welleminsky (1882-1942). This is an unusual work insofar as it combines singing, dance, and pantomime on behalf of a dark, expressionistic treatment of the relation between music and death. A "black Pierrot," played by a female soprano, sings ballad-like songs about the main character, Ninon, from a visible position on a wing of the stage but does not participate in any of the action, somewhat like a singer in ancient Roman pantomime, except that the songs here do not accompany any action on the stage. The action takes place in Paris at the time of the Revolution, beginning with a scene in a catacomb containing the sarcophagus of Ninon, presided over by the tomb guardian, Der Kastellan, a spidery, demonic figure. One of Ninon's lovers, the Bohemian, visits the tomb to grieve and sink into an alcoholic stupor. In his trance-like state, Ninon emerges from the sarcophagus to the sound of a sinister tarantella performed on the violin by Der Kastellan. The scenario, aided by Pierrot's songs, then narrates the life of Ninon, as she changes from being a simple country girl to a sophisticated cosmopolite through her encounters with different men, her lovers, beginning with the Bohemian, followed by the Dandy, the Old Man, and the Young Duke. But her ascending relations with these men result from the help of another set of

men: Der Kapellan, the Street Musician, the Ballet Master, the Clown, the Jacobin, and the Executioner. These men are all figures of Death. One actor plays all the lovers, and one actor plays all the figures of Death. The relations between Ninon, her lovers, and Death, unfold through separate scenes of pantomimic action, while Pierrot describes her motives and emotions through songs. Pantomime: "Ninon bows, the Young Duke lifts the diadem, crowns her, draws her up, and kisses her hand. The Clown accompanies this with exaggerated gestures. Ninon cannot look enough at herself in the mirror. She wonders how she can repay him. The Young Duke wishes to see once more the famous dance on pointe. The Clown hastens with grotesque leaps to grab the wreath, place it on his head, take a violin from the wall, and begin to play. Ninon dances on pointe for the Young Duke [waltz]. Now the art that was merely indicated in its first image has fully matured." Dance: eighty bars long, concluding with Ninon standing triumphant, the Duke sinking to his knees before her, and the Clown "creeping" behind them with "cutting grimaces. Song: forty-five bars long, describing Ninon's now luxurious life and concluding with the curtain drawn on Ninon asleep in her opulent bedroom, with baldachin, illuminated with a "magical" pink glow. Pantomimic action reveals that the Duke enjoys a submissive relation to Ninon, now dressed in a negligee. But a Jacobin interrupts the erotic interlude to arrest the aristocrat. Ninon stabs the Jacobin, which outrages the crowd of revolutionaries, who seize the pair. After a lamentation song from Pierrot, Ninon prepares for execution on a scaffold, and she performs a "wild dance," a tarantella, that concludes, in silhouette, with the swing of an axe that separates her head from her body as a blood-red curtain falls. In the final scene, all is as it was at the opening scene: the Bohemian sleeps, and then awakes from his dream. He leaves the tomb in the grey morning light. The spidery Kastellan returns, performing a macabre dance, "the Triumph of the Annihilator." Ninon appears at the entrance of the catacomb; her movements are "stiff and marionette-like," and blood circles her neck. The Bohemian follows her, as if hypnotized. Ninon lies down in the sarcophagus, the Bohemian prays before it, and the Kastellan stands above them. When the sounds of morning bells shift to the rumble of thunder, the Bohemian flees, the lid of the sarcophagus closes, and the Kastellan disappears (Bittner 1920). *Todes-Tarantella* was fairly popular through the mid-1920s in Germany and even received productions in Sweden and Slovenia, though perhaps it did not

achieve the popularity of *Die letzte Maske*. Yet with this thirty-minute piece the concept of mimodrama came to an end. Bittner, Warden, and Welleminsky never worked again on a pantomime, and no one used the term "mimodrama," despite the imaginative formal qualities of *Todes-Tarantella*. Bittner longed to achieve success in large-scale musical forms—the symphony, opera, and grandiose religious works. *Todes-Tarantella* was perhaps too strange, too perverse, for the concert public to believe him a master of conventional forms: a reviewer of the 1924 Bremen production complained that the scenario was a species of "unnatural morbidity," utterly unworthy of Bittner's orchestral music, and one "very much hopes that this decadence is not a symptom but only an anomaly" (Fehling 2007: 154-155). But in the postwar cultural environment, pantomime, whether embedded in "mimodrama" or not, upset conventional forms, undermined stable distinctions between formal categories. A pantomime exerted power to the extent that it was indeed an "anomaly," a thing that resisted becoming a convention, a model of representation: every pantomime must somehow achieve such a level of compelling singularity that authors find it extremely difficult to come up with another, surpassingly or even equally compelling manifestation of the art.

The most famous or lasting of the pantomimes produced in the Weimar Republic is *The Miraculous Mandarin* (*Der wunderbare Mandarin*) (1924), by the Hungarian composer Bela Bartok (1881-1945), with a scenario based on a story by fellow Hungarian Melchior (Menyhért) Lengyel (1880-1974). The piece had its premiere in Cologne in November 1926. The composer had completed an earlier version in 1918, and in 1931, he did another revision that incorporated elements from both the 1918 and 1924 versions. In all three versions, Bartok labeled the piece as a "pantomime," and in correspondence, he referred to the work always and only as a pantomime, but Lengyel called it a "pantomime grotesque." The scenario explicitly indicates when dances occur, and the only female character in the story performs all of them. The music constantly changes time signature, sometimes from measure to measure, to create an atmosphere of continuous unsteadiness, imbalance, and failure of the body to maintain control of itself or over others. While productions of the piece still occur regularly throughout the world, the music enjoys a far more popular, independent life in the concert hall and in recordings. Although *The Miraculous Mandarin* has only seven roles, none of which requires

virtuosity as a dancer, only ballet companies attached to opera houses have performed the piece because the complex musical accompaniment requires a large orchestra that only opera houses can afford. Bartok himself, while composing the first version, had in mind for the female role the actress Elsa Galafrés (1879-1977), the new wife of the composer Ernst von Dohnányi (1877-1960), whose own music for Schnitzler's pantomime *Der Schleier der Pierrette*, produced in Budapest in 1910, was apparently influential in shaping Bartok's much different approach to pantomime. For this 1918 version, Bartok gave the girl a name, Mimi, and made her somewhat more sympathetic than in the published version (Lebon 2012: 95-98). After the Berlin and Budapest opera houses had refused to produce it, *The Miraculous Mandarin* ended up at Cologne, where the conductor, the Hungarian Eugen Szenkar (1891-1977), was an advocate for modern music. The production took place under the direction of Hans Strohbach (1891-1949), who was a scene painter and costume designer and only infrequently directed plays. Rehearsals were stressful because the music was so difficult for the orchestra. The premiere caused a scandal, with spectators walking out, hissing, or hooting throughout the performance. The next day, the mayor of Cologne, Konrad Adenauer (1876-1967), who did not see the production, forbade further performances of the work on moral grounds, and it received no further performances in Germany until 1953, and until 1945 had productions only in Prague (1927) and Milan (1942) (Lempfrid 2018; Bauchhenss 2016: 70-76). The spare scenario was the cause of censure. Three men, "tramps," and a young woman live together as a criminal gang in a tenement. One tramp finds no money in his pocket, the second finds no money in a drawer, and the third urges the girl to stand at the window to entice a man into the room, where the tramps can rob him. At first, she refuses, but the tramps insist, and she goes "unwillingly and hesitatingly" to the window. She soon lures a "shabby old rake" up to the room, which the score indicates as a "decoy game," not a dance. In the room with the man, the woman inquires if he has money, but the man replies, through gesture: "Never mind money … What matters is love!" The tramps leap from their hiding places, seize the old rake, and throw him out. They angrily compel the girl to go to the window again. She begins another "decoy game," which attracts a "confused" young man to the "door." The woman "strokes" him for money, but finds "not a penny!" Nevertheless, she "draws him toward her" and begins to dance "shyly," in 5/4 rhythm, although the scenario does not

state if she dances with or for him. As the dance becomes more "passionate," the tramps leap out and throw out the young man. The impatient tramps order the girl to get someone "suitable." The third "decoy game" occurs, which soon attracts a "weird figure in the street" up the stairs. When the mandarin stands immobile in the doorway, the terrified girl runs to the other end of the room. The tramps in their hiding places urge the girl to approach the mandarin; she overcomes her "repugnance," and invites him closer and closer, until she gets him to sit in a chair. But she remains frightened and indecisive. Finally, she begins a dance, which "gradually becomes livelier" and ends in "wild erotic" excitement, which the mandarin watches with a "fixed impassive stare." The girl embraces him, and he trembles with "feverish excitement," which causes her to shudder and break free of him. The mandarin chases her around the room; every time he stumbles, he jumps up quickly until he catches her. They fight. The tramps leap out, seize the mandarin, and strip him of his jewelry and money. They decide to kill him, first by smothering him with pillows and blankets on the bed. But when they pull the covers back, the mandarin continues to stare longingly at the girl. Horrified, the tramps drag him out of the bed, and one of the ramps stabs the mandarin three times with a "rusty old sword." He "totters," he "sways," and then charges again at the girl. The tramps grab him and debate how to dispose of him. "They drag the resisting mandarin to the center of the room and hang him on the lamp hook." But the lamp falls to the floor and "the body of the mandarin begins to glow with a greenish blue light." The mandarin continues to gaze at the woman, while the gang stares in terror. The girl signals to take the mandarin off the lamp hook. But once he falls to the floor, he leaps again at the girl. She accepts his embrace. "The mandarin's longing is now stilled, his wounds begin to bleed, he becomes weaker and dies after a short struggle" (Bartok 1999).

The Miraculous Mandarin dramatizes the difficulty of awakening "passion," resisting it, killing it, or surviving it. The narrative links sexual passion to the affliction of violence and victimization. The "fulfillment" of passion is a kind of self-destruction insofar as it involves the desire for a complete stranger whose motive for making herself desirable is mercenary and dishonest. The girl/woman performs her "decoy games" and dances as a test of her power to stimulate passion in others rather than to express it. She overcomes her repugnance of the mandarin and her resistance to the

gang's insistence that she present herself as a prostitute because, evidently, she cannot survive independently of the gang. The passionate man is an "alien" creature of tenacious strength, yet he is a "mandarin" only in that he represents a person of higher status and prosperity than anyone else in the story—his passion makes him seem like a ferocious, predatory animal that counter-acts the predatory viciousness of the gang. Julie Brown sees the greenish-blue light emanating from the mandarin as he hangs from the lamp hook, not as symbolic of a powerful "life force" inherent within "love," as previous commentators have somehow managed to suggest, but as evidence of the mandarin's "electric body," which she reads as a metaphor for big city electrification, modernity that turns the mandarin into a "grotesque" parody of "the tragic sacred body of Christ" combined with the "ambivalent spiritual sign of Buddha" (Brown 2007: 106; cf. Downes 2000). But it seems more likely that the light further reveals how alien the man of sexual passion is to those guided above all by mercenary goals. The old rake and the young man embody sexual desires that have no cash value, so these two may be "thrown out," since the girl indicates no willingness to protect either of them. The mandarin doesn't care that the girl is responsible for the theft of his money, for the attempts to kill him, and for his humiliation; he doesn't care that she finds him repugnant and frightening. This is how sexual passion imposes a powerful, "alien" value on another person that is neither economic nor redemptive: it is self-destructive, like a monstrous disease, not only for the mandarin, but for the gang, whose turn to thievery and deception has suddenly plunged them deeper into an abyss of criminality. For theater and government administrators of the time, this disturbing story apparently lacked a sufficiently helpful moral "lesson" for audiences, but it inspired one of Bartok's greatest and most complex scores. Yet the high status of the score since World War II has kept theatrical productions of it within ballet companies, who invariably transform the pantomime into a ballet in their never-ending ambition to "free" ballet from pantomime. To repeat again: the point of ballet is to show how an external system of movement subordinates narrative to dance and thus reveals a human beauty that "transcends" the power of narratives to make the body a sign of imperfection. Making *The Miraculous Mandarin* into a ballet "redeems" the supposedly morbid story. Allowing all the characters to dance diminishes the unique perversity of the two dances that Bartok specifically assigns to the girl and which differentiate her from all the other

characters. His music does not create opportunities for the "flow" of movement generally expected of ballet performance; such a "flow" results from the application of movement tropes derived from the movement system defining ballet rather than from the music. But Bartok's half-hour score contains numerous time signature changes, tempo changes, harmonic shifts, melodic and thematic changes, and elaborate orchestral effects. All of these musical choices function as cues that allow music and pantomime to combine to tell a disturbing, disillusioning story, to unveil a reality, rather than to provide opportunities to dance. But it is far easier for choreographers to come up with movement tropes than to imagine pantomimic actions unique especially to this story and to this music. *The Miraculous Mandarin* is perhaps the greatest pantomime produced during the Weimar Republic, yet since its ill-fated premiere, theater-ballet culture has never allowed it to be a pantomime. Quite deservedly, the music prospers independently of theatrical performance, but that music comes out of a dark understanding of humanity.

A couple of Finnish composers also ventured into the realm of pantomime. In 1913, Poul Knudsen (1889-1974), a Danish screenwriter for the Nordisk Film Company, invited Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) to compose orchestral music for a two-act "tragic pantomime" he had written, *Scaramouche*, which he planned to stage in Copenhagen. Sibelius agreed, but then became dismayed by the amount of music he had to compose, about seventy minutes. He completed the music according to contract in December 1913, but the production never took place. The first production of the piece occurred nearly a decade later, in 1922, at the Royal Theater (Det Kongelige Teater) in Copenhagen, directed by Emilie Walbom (1858-1932), a choreographer for the Royal Danish Ballet. The Norwegian dancer and film actress Lillibil Ibsen (1899-1989) played the lead female role, Blondelaine, and choreographed her own dances. Georg Hoeberg (1872-1950) conducted the orchestra. The production was quite successful, inspiring much critical acclaim, as did subsequent productions in Helsinki (1923), Oslo (1924), and Paris (1927) (Caron 1997: 205-207). *Scaramouche* is not entirely a pantomime. The scenario contains brief passages of dialogue that do not always seem necessary, but nevertheless possess charm when spoken over Sibelius's continuous orchestral score. The effect feels like watching a silent film with spoken rather than written intertitles, as if the characters speak in a dream. Despite its title, the pantomime bears almost no affinity with

commedia dell'arte and seems much closer to Austro-German inclinations toward "dark" or demonic pantomime. All the action occurs between evening and dawn at the country home of Leilon, "a tall, slender, somewhat decadent young man." As a feast unfolds, Leilon resists dancing with his beautiful wife Blondelaine because he feels that "dancing is only for those whose soul is in the dance." Blondelaine dances solo, inspired by the music. The guests, curious about the music that animates Blondelaine, summon the musicians, whose leader is Scaramouche, "a little hunchbacked dwarf dressed in black." Leilon asks Scaramouche to play a bolero. Blondelaine continues dancing, but now it is evident that Scaramouche stares at the woman obsessively; he plays fanatically and Blondelaine dances wildly until Leilon, alarmed, orders Scaramouche to stop playing. He throws gold coins on the floor, but Scaramouche tells a boy not to pick them up, and the musicians leave the scene. Mezzetin, inflamed by Blondelaine's dance, declares his desire for her, for "a woman dances thus only for one—for him she loves" and it is "cruel to dance so for the others." Leilon approaches with the flowers she dropped during her dance, but she remains remote, self-absorbed. Tired from the dance, she asks to be alone for a moment while everyone else leaves for supper. Scaramouche's seductive music returns and carries Blondelaine into a trance, compelling her to throw away the flowers and leave the room into the garden. When Leilon and the guests return, the empty room overwhelms them with astonishment. Act 2 begins with Leilon sitting depressed in the same room. His friend Gigolo reminds him that the carriage taking them away "to the South" arrives in an hour. Blondelaine, he says, will never return; the trip will lead him to a happier life. The scene exudes a vaguely homoerotic aura. But Leilon dismisses him and instead, alone, sits, rises, pours himself a glass of wine, sits again, takes out a small portrait, "looks at it long, then bowing his head in his hands, he sits bent forward, without moving," all of this occurring, *dolce espressivo*, with music in 6/4, 7/4, and 3/2 time signatures. Blondelaine enters, her hair wild and wet. When Leilon, drawing his dagger, demands to know where she went, she says she does not know. The music cast a spell over her and she had to follow it. Leilon kneels before her, and she kisses him. He tells her she makes him happy, and he wants to honor this sentiment with a glass of wine. But the bottle is empty, and he leaves to get a new one, after she presses the flowers to her breast and kisses his hand. Alone, Blondelaine sits as the lights go out and moonlight fills the room. She hears a sound,

gets up, goes to the door to the garden, looks for a candle, finds none, returns to where she sat, passes before a mirror, looks at herself in the mirror, "laughs nervously," looks "long and earnestly at her face, then passes her hand over it." While she tries to arrange her hair, the face of Scaramouche appears behind the door leading to the garden. Blondelaine sees him in the mirror, but thinks it is a hallucination. Scaramouche approaches, grasps her hand. She presses him to leave, but he reminds her "Have you forgotten how you lay warm in my arms, how you cried, have you forgotten, what you whispered to me as we met?" Blondelaine insists that he leave, but he won't go without her. Scaramouche forces a choice, leave with him now or he will wait for Leilon to return. Blondelaine agrees to go with him, but she grabs the dagger, and as he bends down to pick up a gold coin, she stabs him in the neck. Terrified, she pulls herself together to hide the body behind the drapery and hurls the knife into the garden. Leilon returns, in merry spirits, but discovers he needs his dagger to open the bottles. Blondelaine says she threw it into the garden, and she won't let him leave to find it: she's cold, and he leads her to the armchair, wraps her in a cloak. Leilon wants to open the curtain, after Blondelaine sees it moving, but she persuades him instead to play on the spinet "all the old melodies." The first melody compels her to recall "walking one summer evening with you under the jasmine," but a second melody urges her to dance. As she dances, she slips, and discovers blood streaming from under the curtain, but she urges Leilon to play on. The melody shifts to the tune to which she danced so wildly in the first act. But she doesn't move, then points to the curtain. Leilon goes to the curtain, draws it, and reveals the body of Scaramouche in the "yellow daylight." As the dance music comes nearer, Leilon stands paralyzed. Blondelaine says: "Yes, I will dance for you, I will do all you ask—I am yours!" She dances wildly while Leilon tries to catch her and stop her, but she pushes him away. He cries for help. Blondelaine dances up to the corpse, where she suddenly stops and falls down beside it. Leilon rushes to her, kisses her, "then suddenly realizes that she is dead, and with a mad laugh he throws his arms about her." The flutist enters, as the "feast is at its height," sees the corpse of Scaramouche, crosses himself and exits (Sibelius 1919).

Scaramouche is another of those pantomimes in a Germanic vein in which female dancing represents a fatal, "forbidden" sexual desire. The by now familiar German trope of the hunchback dwarf is also here. The piece

may be understood as an expressionist representation of marriage from the wife's perspective: despite claiming to love her husband, she yields to an impulse, stirred by a demonic music, to experience some sort of orgasmic wildness that leads her outside of the cozy room, outside of marriage, and into death. Her attraction is not to the dwarf, but to the music. The "decadent" husband, refusing to dance himself, is unable to subdue the power of the music to control her, even when he plays it. The demonic music goes on, although the dwarf is dead. The scene before the mirror suggests that her own image drives Blondelaine toward an ecstatic apotheosis of herself through dance. Her dance draws men (Leilon, Scaramouche, Mezzetin) toward her, yet it frees her from them. It also releases her capacity for degradation and murder, and this fundamental paradox of her identity kills her. The scenario embeds the idea that music can be "too much" for the (female) body—it is a male fantasy of anxiety toward female masturbation. Sibelius' music achieves a dark-hued, melancholy, shimmering charm, but it is not "wild" or "demonic" in any conventional sense, as if he wished rather to invoke trembling shadows playing across a dappled surface. *Scaramouche* is unusual in combing pantomime with dialogue, and Sibelius may have wanted music that interacted precisely and effectively with dialogue without obscuring it. As in *The Miraculous Mandarin*, the scenario clearly differentiates pantomime from dance and includes haunting pantomimic actions involving sitting, standing, moving about a room, handling wine glasses and bottles, staring at the mirror, standing still, holding flowers, kneeling, and hand kissing. The dialogue, spare as it is, seems to intrude upon pantomimic action and would probably be more effective if there were even less of it. Sibelius found the process of writing the music a torment, probably because of the difficulty of weaving melodic and instrumental motifs with the words rather than simply settling for pedal points or vamps (Barnett 2007: 234). After the Paris performances, both the music and the scenario disappeared for decades, even after Sibelius arranged a concert suite of the music. While the score has since the 1970s enjoyed some popularity through recordings of both the concert suit and the complete incidental music, revivals of the pantomime with the music have occurred only occasionally, the first in 1954, by the Ballet Cuevas, at the Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt in Paris, with choreography by American ballerina Rosella Hightower (1920-2008). In 1955, the Finnish National Ballet performed the work with choreography by

prima ballerina Irja Kostinen (1911-1978). Both of these productions severely cut the scenario from seventy to about thirty-five or forty minutes to accommodate other works on the program. As happened with *The Miraculous Mandarin*, ballet companies have treated the scenario as a ballet rather than as a pantomime with two dances performed only by Blondelaine. But a postmodern attitude toward the material is probably not any more exciting than whatever seems sufficient reason to discard Knudsen's story: in 2015, the Tapiola Sinfonietta in Espoo, Finland, celebrating the 150th anniversary of Sibelius's birth, performed forty minutes of the music accompanied by video images showing Sibelius' composition desk, a Finnish wheat field, Scaramouche's viola, and various shots of fire. Instead, of Knudsen's text, spectators heard "dialogue inspired by letters between Jean Sibelius and his wife Aino Sibelius, and excerpts from the diaries of Jean Sibelius" (Kroma Productions 2015). But this sentimental, biographical, nationalistic use of the music undermines its own objective—to honor the composer—by completely rejecting the international pantomime scenario that, despite its many limitations, inspired one of the composer's most fascinating scores.

Poul Knudsen continued as a screenwriter for Danish silent films until 1928, and for a while he was married to another screenwriter, Johanne Skram Knudsen (1889-1972). But he always had ambitions to write for the theater. He published plays from at least 1919 on but without achieving any notable success in the theater. As a result of *Scaramouche's* success, he completed in 1925 the scenario for a ballet pantomime, *Okon Fuoko*, which attempted to go beyond *Scaramouche* by combining pantomime, dance, singing, and dialogue over a somewhat larger span of time and with a much larger cast. The scenario is set in ancient Japan and tells the story of a doll maker, Okon Fuoko, who brings to life one of his beautiful dolls and then falls in love with her, inflaming the jealousy of his wife. The piece ends tragically with the doll, Umegava, performing a "demonic" sword dance during a storm and killing her creator. Knudsen invited Sibelius to write the music for the scenario, but the composer was so unhappy working with Knudsen's previous scenario and with the long delay in its production that he turned down the opportunity. Sibelius's publisher, Edition Wilhelm Hansen, invited another Finnish composer to take on the project, Leevi Madetoja (1887-1947), who accepted and completed in 1927 an orchestral score comprising 35 separate scenes. However, Knudsen's plan to get the

work performed in Copenhagen failed, despite strong support from Georg Hoeberg, who had conducted the premiere of *Scaramouche*. Eventually the work had its premiere at the Finnish National Opera in Helsinki in February 1930. The production was a failure, cancelled after only three performances. Finnish reviewers blamed Knudsen's scenario, which ineffectively combined too many elements and went on too long. But they praised Madetoja's music, which contained numerous innovative instrumental effects to produce the eerie, "Japanese" atmosphere of the story (Salmenhaara 1987: 246-260). The music seemed resolutely "modern," while the story belonged to an old-fashioned *art nouveau* taste for Japonisme, even though it does explore the theme of robotic identity. After many years of neglect, the music now enjoys very high esteem within the Finnish music world as one of its greatest masterpieces. But the scenario has fallen into oblivion. In 2015, the Finnish choreographer Alpo Aaltokoski (b.1958) staged the scenario with his own dance company in Helsinki using a 2005 recording of the music by the Oulu Sinfonia. This was not a ballet but a modern dance production, which, on the evidence of video clips, does include some pantomime. Aaltokoski "modernized" the scenario by discarding the alien culture theme and focusing instead on the theme of technological transformation of human identity: "The internet is the [cornucopia] of wishes in which we can build the ideal partner for ourselves or try ourselves to become one. This is not, however, a phenomenon only characteristic to our time: since [for] centuries people have projected their dreams to various images and artificial constructions" (Okon Fuoko –see me 2015). Meanwhile, as sound movies replaced silent films, Knudsen became a prolific writer of plays and opera libretti. He wrote ballet scenarios, *Hybris* (1930) and *Asra* (1932), which received performances at Det kongelige Teater. His collaboration with Emil Reznicek on a one-act opera (1930) led to several more collaborations with German composers as well as numerous plays written in German or translated into German. He found many friends in the Third Reich, and his political drama, *Blut und Feuer, 9 Bilder aus dem Leben des Volkes* (1936), was apparently an attempt to ingratiate himself with the regime. He also wrote in German, sometime around 1935-1936, another pantomime, the three-act *Der rote Tänzer*, which, like *Okon Fuoko*, contained singing and dances. But this piece never got beyond being a manuscript, the only copy of which is deposited in the Danish National Library, so it is very difficult to determine what he planned to do with

pantomime in the Third Reich, which otherwise was utterly barren of anything resembling interesting pantomime. Knudsen's congenial relations with German theater people of the 1930s help explain why he became one of the screenwriters for the great Danish film *Vredens Dag* (*Day of Wrath* [1943]), directed by Carl Dreyer (1889-1968): he could make sure the film didn't contain anything that would disturb the Nazi administration running Denmark. But he produced his own film scenarios that did not get made, including the curious *Amleth* (1939), an adaptation of the Hamlet story as inscribed in the twelfth century *Gesta Danorum*. After the war, he turned his attention to writing novels, film aesthetics, and literary history. Yet *Scaramouche* and *Okon Fuoko* were the only works that gave him any distinction as an author, and it was the music for these works that allowed for that distinction. Knudsen's limitations as a pantomime scenarist perhaps clarify why he could not achieve much distinction in the entertainment industry. He never committed himself to pantomime: he always had to combine pantomime with dance, speech, song, and ballet with orchestral music, for pantomime needs "help" in attaining its mysterious charm. He never trusted pantomime to drive the narrative, which meant, in the case of outstanding composers, that the music could thrive independently of the scenarios. This does not mean that pantomime must exclude speech, dance, or song, only that pantomime must "say" what these media do not and make these media dependent on pantomimic action to tell the story that includes them. Throughout his career, Knudsen shifted easily from one medium to another—film, plays, translations of plays, ballets, pantomime, opera, novels, literary history—because he had opportunities to do so, not because he had a special gift or aesthetic vision for integrating these media. He could move across media with ease without exerting serious power over any of them. The stories he conjured as "pantomimes" may not have been strong examples of modernism, but that was not the problem with his scenarios. The problem was that, instead of developing a modern way of thinking about pantomime, he believed that modernity entailed a freedom to move from one medium to another to supplement the "weaknesses" of pantomime rather than to show how pantomime subordinates these media to the freedom of the body to tell his story.

The long, strained tension between ballet and pantomime collapsed, in the 1920s, into a grand muddle of uncertainty about the difference

between the two genres, and the point of this uncertainty, presumably, was to drive innovation in each that would clarify the difference. Ballets could contain pantomime; pantomime could contain dance; ballet companies could perform pantomimes as if they were ballets, although the great majority of pantomimes were never performed as ballets; but no one seems to have imagined that ballet scenarios could be performed as pantomimes. Most unusual is the case of a Dutch ballet about ancient Roman pantomime, Irail Gadescov's *Bathyllus* (1927). Ancient Rome has inspired an enormous amount of entertainment—plays, operas, ballets, films, novels—in which it is amazingly difficult to find any representation of pantomime as the Romans understood it, Richepin's ballet scenario *L'Imperatrice* (1901), discussed earlier, being a lonely example. Gadescov's ballet dramatized the conflict between Bathyllus and Pylades that initiated the centuries long public fascination with pantomime in the Roman Empire. Born in Leiden to a modest civil service family, Irail Gadescov, whose real name was Richard Vogelesang (1894-1970), from early childhood displayed a strong aptitude for music, dance, and drawing. But he faced enormous obstacles in developing this aptitude. His father rigidly objected to his pursuit of an artistic career; then Gadescov suffered severely from tuberculosis, which prevented him from studying anything for several years. A dance concert in The Hague in 1912 featuring the ballet dancer Andreas Pavley (1892-1931) and his partner, the modern dancer Lili Green (1885-1977), deeply impressed him, and he decided to abandon his job as a postal clerk and pursue a career in dance. Financed by his aunt, Gadescov attended classes, in 1913, at the Dalcroze-Duncan school in The Hague run by two sisters, Helena and Jacoba van der Pas. While at the school, Gadescov befriended another young man with theatrical aspirations, an English textile heir, Edgar Franken (1894-1971). When the war broke out, Franken and Gadescov traveled to England on a five-day family pass. There, in December 1914, Gadescov (under this name) and Franken each performed two solo dances on a lengthy program of songs and dances to raise money for gifts to send to British troops. These two dances, created while he was studying with the van der Pas sisters, were Gadescov's debut as a performer. In these dances, *Funeral March* (Chopin), and *Spring* (Grieg), he wore the costume of an imperial Roman aristocrat, although the program identified him as a "Russian dancer." Franken and Gadescov traveled to New York, where Franken's mother organized benefit concerts for Allied soldiers. When

Gadescov returned to the Netherlands in 1918, he embarked on a long career of organizing his own dance concerts and became one of the very few men to pursue a performance career in modern dance (Fehling 2007: 13-20). In effect, Gadescov had very little formal education as a dancer and none in ballet. In the early 1920s, his concerts, many of which occurred in Germany, consisted mostly of short solo dances and pair dances constructed with one of his many female partners, including the Swiss dancer Ami Schwaninger, who played Ninon in the 1924 Bremen production of Bittner's *Todestarantella*. His concerts received much praise wherever he performed. In Bremen in 1923, Gadescov and Schwaninger introduced their version of Schnitzler's *Der Schleier der Pierrette*, directed by Max Semmler. Schwaninger had studied ballet, and Gadescov learned much from her. Thus, the two of them, with the help of Semmler, began (1924) performing their own versions of the Richard Strauss ballets *Josephs Legende* and *Schlagobers* in Gera and Rostock respectively. He continued to perform solo and pair dances with female partners as well as in theater productions until he became friends with Fritz Fleck (1880-1933), a music critic for the *Rheinische Zeitung*. Fleck had written a couple of expressionist pantomimes, *Aischa* (1920) and *Die Nabya* (1922), as well as an opera and a drama, none of which were published or performed (Fehling 2007: 192). He also had written (1926) a scenario and music for an "expressionist theater of pantomime and dance drama," *Bathyllus*. Due to Fleck's connections with the Cologne Opera, *Bathyllus* premiered there on March 16, 1927, after a performance of Flotow's opera *Alessandro Stradella* (1844). Gadescov played Bathyllus and did the choreography, while Fritz Rémond (1864-1936), the artistic director for the opera and an advocate for modernist opera, did the staging. Gustav Zeiller, who assumed the title role in the 1926 Cologne production of *The Miraculous Mandarin*, played Pylades. The plot is cinematic melodrama and has little to do with the actual history of Bathyllus and Pylades. In the luxurious garden of his estate, the wealthy Maecenas sponsors a party in which Bathyllus and Pylades will compete against each other. Emperor Augustus's daughter Julia and her husband Agrippa are spectators. Maecenas and Julia favor Bathyllus, while Agrippa supports Pylades. When Julia wants to give Bathyllus the golden wreath, Agrippa threatens to leave the party. Maecenas indicates that Bathyllus will dance without music. Agrippa agrees to stay. Dressed as Narcissus, Bathyllus dances before a magically illuminated mirror that causes him to

move according to his unconscious desires: he falls into the arms of Julia, who knows the effect of the mirror. Inflamed with jealousy, Agrippa decides that Bathyllus should die, and he arranges for Pylades to hand Bathyllus a goblet of poisoned wine. During his dance, Bathyllus saw the poisoning of the wine; he strikes Pylades with the goblet, but then falls dead. A squad of Roman soldiers carries away the corpse and Julia collapses impotently (Fehling 2007: 91-93). Because neither the scenario nor the score ever reached publication, it is difficult to know what else was in the narrative besides what is in the summary, from the Cologne *Stadt-Anzeiger*, cited by Fehling. A brief review in *Die Musik* (XIX 9 June 1927: 675) remarks that Bathyllus appears as a favorite of the imperial court, while Pylades is the choice of "the people." Production photos show luxurious costumes and a scene featuring an ensemble of eleven women. Fleck's music, "full of southern, sensually warm melody," was unusual in deploying both an oboe d'amour and a piano as solo instruments, as well as a mandolin and castagnetts for the female ensemble dance. It is unfortunate that more information is not available about this production or even about its performers: Hans Salomon (Maecenas), Rose Sinitsch (Julia), Hans Robert (Agrippa), and Wilma Aug, who played the girl in *The Miraculous Mandarin*. Aug and another female dancer, Ripelli, performed solos that apparently paralleled those of Bathyllus and Pylades. It would be good to know how Gadescov and Rémond differentiated the movements of Bathyllus and Pylades or the movements of the solo female dancers, especially if the movements embodied a political-erotic significance. Fleck introduces an exciting theme: the idea of physical movement as a competition for power and sexual attraction complicated by the treacherous actions of spectators for whom the performances are merely instruments of a larger, deadly power game. The concept of the mirror releasing an unconscious and self-destructive self is another provocative device in this adventurous work. Reviews of the production were quite favorable, and these reported that the audience in Cologne was also enthusiastic. Yet *Bathyllus* never had another production and never had a performance outside Cologne. But the production is an excellent example of how an extraordinary cultural era, the Weimar Republic, could create a work of fascinating artistic imagination that becomes buried in historical obscurity simply because those who made it could not rise out of obscurity in their own time.

In societies less turbulent and open to modernism than the Weimar Republic, cultural institutions regarded pantomime either as an archaic, obsolete art or as simply unimaginable. Hélène Beauchamp has published an article on pantomime in Spain between 1900 and 1930. She describes how Spanish literary authors, inspired by the Pierrot culture in late nineteenth century Paris, Maeterlinck's "theater of silence," and the clown acrobatics of the Hanlon-Lees, published encouraging theoretical articles on the possibilities of pantomime for their own culture. But the actual writing and production of pantomimes remained almost non-existent. Beauchamp focuses on the use of pantomime in spoken dramas by famous Spanish authors, such as Ramón del Valle-Inclán (1866-1936) and Federico Garcia Lorca (1898-1936) (2009: 179-195), although Vega (2015) has a great deal to say about Lorca's interest in the Pierrot archetype. Or rather, assuming an influence of pantomime, Beauchamp observes how these authors describe physical actions performed by speaking characters in their plays: these descriptions are more like stage directions in German or English language dramatic texts. Spanish literary authors followed the classical tradition of dramatic writing by confining themselves to the inscription of dialogue and the indication of entrances and exits. The Symbolist influence of pantomime on the writing of plays was innovative insofar as it granted literary authors permission to inscribe physical actions performed on stage that conventionally were decisions left to actors and directors. But these are not manifestations of pantomimic imagination. Emilio Vega (2008) has written at greater length on the history of pantomime in Spain from 1890 to 1939, but most of the book describes the influence of Pierrot, Symbolism, and silent film on a Spanish literary imagination that hesitated to compose actual pantomimes. Ramón Gómez de la Serna (1888-1963) published in 1911 what he called a "pantomime in one act and two scenes," *La Bailarina*. But this is not really a pantomime scenario. Rather, it is a kind poetic meditation on how the narrator sees, interprets, and fantasizes the lives of performers he sees backstage, where it is "forbidden to speak," preparing for a production of an opera about Hamlet; the narrator tries to enter the minds and emotions of performers who do not speak to him or say anything he can hear. It is a prose poem or present tense short story that allows the narrator to speculate on the attitudes, emotions, motives, and circumstances of strangers performing behind the scenes before they perform what they are not on stage (Gómez de la Serna 1911). Another

member of the Spanish literary "avant-garde," Tomás Borrás (1891-1976), wrote a pantomime, *El Sapo enamorado* (1916), which the Teatro Eslava, in Madrid, staged in December 1916, with music composed for it by Pablo Luna (1879-1942), a prolific composer of *zarzuelas*. Dramatist-director Gregorio Martínez Sierra (1881-1947) staged the production, while opera singer María Ros (1891-1970) choreographed Bella's dance. Actors employed by the Teatro Eslava performed the eight roles in the scenario, although Borrás dedicated the piece to the immensely popular Russian ballerina Lydia Lopokova (1892-1981). The scenario resembles a fairy tale; as a prologue speaker informs the spectator, the goal of the pantomime is to "enter a watery land of dreams" that will "intoxicate you with unreal visions." In a great forest, the beautiful Bella lives in a little house. A "grotesque, inflated" Toad has fallen in love with Bella, but she directs her affections toward a beautiful, mandolin playing adolescent. Toad consults with his only friend, the water god or "genie," Neptune, who advises him to win Bella's affection through treasure. But Bella spurns the spectacular jewels and gold Toad offers her, and she rejects also Toad's efforts to impress her with military glory or proof of physical strength. Bella's female friend, the plain Amiga, takes an interest in Toad's treasure, but Bella becomes annoyed with her, and demands that Amiga ignore Toad, which leads to a quarrel between the women, as Amiga is willing to seduce Toad. Bella cannot stand for another woman to triumph over her in stimulating a man's desire. The piece ends with Bella and Toad kissing in silhouette as the mandolin-playing adolescent enters to discover that Bella has replaced him with another. But Amiga consoles the weeping teenager under a "moon with the face of Pierrot" (Borrás 1921). The scenario hardly seems like a serious venture into modernism; as the prologue speaker says to the spectator, it is a piece in which "you will recognize friends who you have not seen since you stopped being children." The fanciful art deco drawings accompanying the published text, by José Zamora (1882-1950), who designed the sets and costumes for the stage production, are more modern than the text.

Somewhat closer to the modernist spirit was Borrás's fascinating book *Tam-Tam. Pantomimas. Bailetes. Cuentos coreográficos. Mimodramas* (1931) with its brilliant, cubist-art deco color illustrations by Uruguayan artist Rafael Barradas (1890-1929). It is a curious collection of texts. Borrás begins with a series of small essays about several female dancers who

represent particular kinds of ballet, such as Anna Pavlova, who embodies the "literary ballet," while Josephine Baker represents the "wild ballet" and Tortola Valencia the "oriental ballet." The rest of the book consists of fifteen brief stories that Borrás imagines as pantomimes, ballets, choreographic tales, or mimodramas, but he never identifies any story according to any of these performance categories. It is therefore difficult to ascertain which of the stories are pantomimes. The texts seem like small, present tense short stories that describe scenes without any speech; Barradas's illustrations show a stronger sense of theater than Borrás's writing. Yet the stories strive to invoke a sense of performance. They wander across time and location. One piece ("Su Sombra") depicts a man's struggle aginst his own shadow ("What most exasperates him is that his shadow imitates him, converting all his gestures of harmony and joy into gestures dark and horribly blurred") (36-37). "El romantico molinero" presents a melancholy Pierrot's encounter with an astronomer to gaze at the moon, while "Nacimiento" is a kind of Spanish inflected nativity play. "El pintor cubista" satirizes the snobbery inspired by modernist art currents: in his studio, a cubist painter and his wife entertain a snobbish couple, his patrons, with his latest strange creation, but when they leave, he retrieves from behind the canvas a photograph of his wife, which he "contemplates ecstatically." But when his wife reappears, she resembles the cubist sculpture admired by the snobbish pair. Jazz music accompanies the scene. "El Niaou" is a kind of travelogue depiction of scenes on a parched African veldt and jungle, a vast silence, interrupted by the sounds and movements of wild animals; a tribe of humans appears, performing a death dance: the tribe "beats the drum with an anguished call [...]. But the jungle does not respond" (80). "La Botella Borracha" takes place in an American bar and depicts the interactions between a poet and a "fatal woman"; they enact gestures of tormented passion "in the style of 1830," which leads to the projection on a mirror of "synthetic" poems composed of six words. Other pieces briefly depict scenes from Spanish life in times long ago or in places that seem not to have reached the twentieth century. Only one of the pieces, "Juerga," actually achieved performance, in 1929, at the Opera Comique in Paris, with the flamenco-folkloric dancer Antonia Mercé y Luque, "La Argentina" (1890-1936), as the focus of a voiceless scene that evoked the atmosphere and mannerisms of a Madrid street in 1885, although the scenic décor for the Paris production, photo-documented in the book, is rather expressionistic.

However, the piece most closely resembling a theatrically organized pantomime scenario is "Nueva Danza de la Muerte," for which the book provides no accompanying Barradas illustrations. In twelve scenes, the piece envisions how, on a bright spring day in the countryside, Death, evidently a female figure, encounters various persons and leads them in various ways to extinction: the King, the Lovers, the Businessman, the Mother and Her Son, the Clown, the Alcoholic. Death gathers her victims in a flower boat; the boat sails down a river accompanied by her out of tune violin, which "calls desperately." She follows behind the boat but does not catch up to it as it sails away with a dog barking "insolently." A medieval aura pervades the piece, yet the idea of Death seducing different persons through various unusual, "delicate" gestures seems modern. All the pieces in the book might work well as pantomimes on the stage, even if some require complex scenic effects, but apparently the point of inserting the vivid illustrations was to create a kind of "performance" for the reader to compensate for the Spanish theater's utter disinterest in performing such pieces, before or after the fascist takeover of Spain. Yet even since the end of the fascist regime, the Spanish have not shown an interest in performing Borrás's eerie little speechless scenes, perhaps because of his ardent support of fascism, which of course always entails a compromised or deeply ambivalent attitude toward modernism.

By contrast, the most famous piece of speechless performance to come out of Spain during this period was the one-act "ballet pantomímico" *El amor brujo* (1915/1924), by composer Manuel de Falla (1876-1946), from a scenario by Gregorio Martínez Sierra. But de Falla struggled for years with its composition. Originally the piece contained much spoken dialogue and a set of flamenco songs, but with the failure of the premiere, de Falla revised the work by eliminating all the dialogue and reducing the number of songs to three, scored for a mezzo-soprano. In 1924, he transformed the entire piece into a ballet, accompanied by a large orchestra, so that work shows how dance releases, contains, and overcomes supernatural powers. But pieces of pantomime were still necessary to tell what was left of the story. It is a folkloric, not a modern story. An Andalusian gypsy girl, Candela, dances nightly with the ghost of her husband, though she remains in love with the man she originally wanted to marry, Carmelo. Even though she learns that her husband had an affair with Lucia, the husband's ghost still haunts her. Candela and Carmelo consult a sorcerer, who recommends that she

perform a "Ritual Fire Dance" to exorcise the ghost, but this action fails. Candela then lures Lucia into a nocturnal rendezvous with Carmelo. The nightly dance with the ghost begins, with Lucia mistaking the ghost for Carmelo. Candela moves away from the ghost, and Lucia takes her place. The ghost and Lucia dance away into death, and, in the light of dawn, Candela and Carmelo begin new lives together. The ballet had its premiere in Paris at the Théâtre des Arts (Théâtre Hébertot) in 1925, and since then has enjoyed, along with de Falla's other Andalusian ballet, *El sombrero de tres picos* (1919), a long life on stages around the world. *El sombrero de tres picos* was also originally a "ballet pantomímico" until Sergei Diaghilev told de Falla to rewrite it as a ballet. While de Falla's orchestral music creates a modern sonic richness in both pieces, the narratives depict an emphatically non-modern mode of living, reinforced by choreography and musical devices that magnify the presumption of "flamenco dance" as an ahistorical form of movement. De Falla had to excise pantomime from the works, because pantomime would historicize the narrative too much, making the action seem either too archaic and old-fashioned or too modern, too incongruous with the theme of the mysterious power of dance to intersect with the realm of the supernatural. In effect, when compared with *La Bailarina*, *El Sapo*, and *Tam-Tam*, the composition history of *El amor brujo* dramatizes the defeat or suppression of pantomime in Spain during the early history of modernism, for pantomime would create an image of Spanish life that was too alien for audiences, too modern for what audiences assumed Spain, defined so narrowly through the folkloric flamenco, should be. For this reason, as Beauchamp phrases it, pantomime belonged to an "impossible theater."

But even in a country as open to modernism as the United States, pantomime, at least in a modernist vein, did not thrive. In an article on "Recent American Pantomime" for *The Drama,* William Lee Sowers (1919: 21-37) surveyed the variety of pantomimes on American stages imported from Europe and described experiments in pantomime performed in American schools (Harvard, New England Conservatory) and "Little Theaters" dedicated to the performance of modernistic or at least new theatrical works. However, nearly all of the American pantomime activity Sowers mentions has fallen into oblivion because documentation of it is lacking. Only a few of these pantomimes reached publication. In addition to writing numerous one-act plays, Stuart Walker (1881-1941), later to become

a successful producer and director of Hollywood films, produced a couple of pantomimes through the Portmanteau Theater he established in New York City in 1915. This theater traveled about the city performing without commercial motive for "the homeless … and the despairing" until Walker found a home at Madison Square (MacKay 1917: 39-40). There he produced his pantomime *The Moon Lady*, which he originally wrote in 1908. "It told how Pierrot met in the wood an old hag who sought his kisses, for she was a Moon Lady condemned to be ugly until she was kissed by one who had never kissed before. At Pierrot's kiss she became so beautiful that he fell madly in love with her, but she eluded him. His love-making was cut short by the dawn, when the Moon Lady went away to her own land, leaving him disconsolate." Walker produced a free, open air Christmas pantomime in Madison Square, *The Seven Gifts* (1915) in which an Emerald Queen receives gifts from seven persons of different social status, but finds only a doll given by a child to be acceptable (Sowers 1919: 29). But Walker went no further with pantomime. Founded in 1914, the Washington Square Players in New York City also experimented with pantomime, beginning with *The Shepherd in the Distance* (1915), by Holland Hudson. This was a Middle Eastern fantasy, "a romance in black and white [...] somewhat in the manner of Aubrey Beardsley drawings" (27) about a shepherd and a princess who fall in love while overcoming the tyranny of a Wazir and his Vizier. It was "quaint" entertainment, as Sowers puts it, designed for performance by amateurs for an undemanding audience. The text synchronizes each gesture performed by a character with a sound made by one of a large array of percussion instruments (Holland 1921). But Hudson went no further with pantomime. The Washington Square Players produced another pantomime, *The Red Cloak* (1916), by Josephine Meyer and Lawrence Langner (1890-1962), a lawyer and co-founder of the theater company. This was "was an imitation of a marionette pantomime, the actors assumed the jerky movements of puppets in acting out an Italian story of fond lovers and irate parent." But what impressed Sowers was the set design by Lee Simonson (1888-1967), which was "especially happy in bringing out the humor of the piece," including "fantastic portraits of the simpering lovers, and above, a grotesque drawing of the assassination that formed a climax of the story" (28). But neither Meyer nor Langner went further with pantomime. The company attempted a third pantomime, *Yum Chapab* (1916), presented as a "Maya grotesque," which "related in the spirit of broadest burlesque how

the dwarf, Yum Chapab, prospered in seeking the princess and the throne," creating a "caricaturing of the primitive" (28). But then the Washington Square Players went no further with pantomime. Sowers mentions other pantomimes, mostly by women, produced in the Little Theaters: *Yoku-ti*, by Florence Bernstein; *The King of the Black Isles*, by Sara Yarrow; *The Myth of the Mirror* and *Pierrot in the Clear of the Moon*, by Gretchen Riggs. But information about these works and their authors has vanished. In 1916, composer Charles Griffes (1884-1920) adapted an 1893 story by French occult novelist and dramatist Édouard Schuré (1841-1929), *The Kairn of Koridwen*, which he called both a dance drama and a pantomime. Here the story assumes a much more serious tone than the other American pantomimes mentioned by Sowers: "The tale is about druidesses who worship Koridwen, the goddess of the moon. One druidess, Carmelis, has to choose between her love, the Gallic warrior, Mordred, and her religion. According to her religion, Carmelis is supposed to kill Mordred for seeking a prophecy, but cannot. She reveals to Mordred the secret of his future, then sends him away. Carmelis wants to believe that she will find a happier life after death. The druidesses then find Carmelis dead" (Typaldos 1993). Griffes composed an impressionistic score for a chamber orchestra; it is ominous, sometimes sinister, and exceptionally beautiful music. The Neighborhood Playhouse in New York City produced the pantomime in 1917. The prominent music critic Paul Rosenfeld (1890-1946) wrote a quite lengthy review of the production for *The Seven Arts* (1917: 673-675). Rosenfeld observed that the Neighborhood Playhouse had never "mounted anything more interesting" and that "one could return home with the sense of having undergone an experience," even though the pantomimic acting, directed by the founders of the Playhouse, Alice (1883-1972) and Irene Lewisohn (1886-1944), was "unusually monotonous," and the choreography, by Blanche Talmud, displayed a conspicuous "want of a single dynamic controlling intelligence." The bulk of Rosenfeld's review discussed the music in relation to each scene. The music was throughout on a much higher level than the performances on stage, which seemed to unfold without paying any attention to the manifold coloring and drama within the score. It is apparently another example of a pantomime scenario inspiring the composition of absorbing, innovative music, while neither the music nor the scenario inspire those responsible for the action on stage to match the level of engagement with the material achieved by the composer,

even though the Lewisohn sisters had suggested the story to Griffes and may even have written part of the scenario. Part of the score was lost in 1917, which prevented the piece from having any further life until the missing parts turned up in 1965. Later in 1917, Griffes attempted a "Japanese pantomime," *Sho-Jo--The Spirit of Wine—A Symbol of Happiness.* His friend, the Japanese dancer Michio Ito (1892-1961), performed the piece with Griffes' music as a solo dance with much success in concerts (1918) along the East Coast (Caldwell 1977: 61-65). With his close connections to the New York experimental theater culture, Griffes might well have continued to explore pantomime, but in 1919 he succumbed to the worldwide influenza epidemic and never recovered. By 1920, though, theatrical pantomime had disappeared from the Little Theaters, and even within the Little Theaters it could never seem to rise above being anything more than a "quaint," decorative exotic fantasy. As in England, pantomime on the stage was an entertainment for children, a matter for community theaters and civic pageants, not at all an unexplored region of modernist consciousness. In America, a vast film industry accommodated an enormous appetite for pantomimic performance. In spite of their quite serious approach toward spoken drama, the Little Theaters were simply unable to imagine pantomime with a seriousness or modernity that had eluded the film industry.

Futurist Pantomime

In Italy, pantomime had largely disappeared after the death of Salvatore Viganò and his Napoleonic era spectacles. French pantomime derived from the Italian *commedia dell'arte*, but Italians saw no benefit to a *commedia* without voices or to an expansion of *commedia* beyond what it had been for centuries. The Italian theater world found no inspiration in the ancient Roman art of pantomime, if, indeed, theater people were even aware of it. Pantomime appeared here and there in whatever remained of ballet. By 1900, the theater culture was pervasively stagnant, ramshackle, and moribund, heavily dependent on itinerant ensembles that lacked incentive to depart from the conventions and expectations that attracted deeply conservative audiences. Opera was the most vibrant and dynamic aspect of the Italian theater. Italians seemed distrustful or at least dissatisfied with voiceless performance on stage. Yet with the invention of cinema, Italians were guiding innovators in pantomimic film performance

and in developing the narrative possibilities of film. In relation to the theater, however, Futurism (ca. 1909-1939) provided Italy's strongest contribution to the early phase of European modernism. The Futurists, inspired by their charismatic founder and default leader, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944), pursued a radical transformation of theater, and they possessed a keen sense of how to transform all their activities into attention-grabbing performances. Futurism was a movement driven by manifestoes, grandiose pronouncements, and loud advertisements of its presence. While numerous members of the Futurist movement, including Marinetti, produced a huge number of theatrical tracts, dramatic works, scene designs, theater technology schemes, and innovative performance projects, pantomime held almost no interest for them, probably because they associated it with an archaic form of theater that deserved to be obsolete, along with so much else in theater. The Futurists composed many *sintesi*, as they called their often very short texts for theatrical performance, but these "syntheses" of modernist theatrical actions rigorously avoided voiceless bodies in performance. *Sintesi* became voiceless when the performance included no human beings but instead consisted of the actions of machines, technology, the movement of lights in the performance space, the mechanized movements of objects, the choreography of marionettes, "electric dolls," automatons, and robots, the "ballets" performed by squadrons of airplanes, and the "music" of turbines, machine guns, railway cars, and the *intonarumori* (noisemaking devices) invented by Luigi Russolo (1885-1947). Voiceless human bodies on the stage did not help the Futurists promote their important concept of "words in freedom," whereby freedom from an oppressive heritage and diseased cultural institutions depended on detaching language, in writing and in speech, from the syntactic laws, typographic rules, literary conventions, and clichés of linguistic communication that "imprisoned" the mind and obfuscated any liberating view of the future. The only Futurist to describe his work for the theater as pantomime was the visual artist Enrico Prampolini (1894-1956).

While studying painting in Rome, Prampolini became involved with Futurism in 1913 as a result of reviewing and publicizing Futurist art exhibitions. Futurism opened up for him an interdisciplinary approach to artistic production, and, like other Futurists, he initiated his affiliation with the movement by publishing theoretical essays and manifestoes, beginning with a statement, *Chromophony* (1913), on the relations between sounds and

colors. Sculptor Umberto Boccioni's (1882-1916) ideas about architecture as an extension of painting and sculpture urged Prampolini to explore scene design for the theater, and in 1915, he published an essay on "Futurist Scenography," in which he introduced his ideas for a "dynamic" theater architecture wherein performance arose out of the kinetic interplay of architecture elements—colors, lights, shadows, planes, beams, panes, and "chromatic emanations from a luminous source" (Kirby 1986: 203-210). But Prampolini ran into difficulties with Marinetti and other Futurists because of his intense, impolitic competitiveness, and he suffered ostracism and a failure to gather any support from the movement for the realization of his ideas. He worked for a while in the commercial theater, where he gained considerable knowledge of European advances in scenic technology. For his friend, the Futurist photographer Anton Giulio Bragaglia (1890-1960), he designed sets for the films *Thais* (1916) and *Perfido incanto* (1917). When the Ballet Russes visited Rome in 1916, Diaghilev sought a partnership with the Futurists, who suddenly found dance a promising subject for the application of Futurist performance theories. But Marinetti would not allow Prampolini to participate in the Futurist negotiations with the impresario. As it turned out, the financial difficulties of the Ballet Russes prevented any realization of the partnership. Prampolini then developed an alliance with the French avant-garde poet, dramatist, and editor Pierre Albert-Birot (1876-1976) to design the scenery and costumes for a production of the poet's marionette play *Matoum et Tevibar* (1918) at the Teatro dei Piccolo (Teatro Odescalchi) in Rome in 1919 (Berghaus 1998: 264-290). Prampolini's innovative colored lighting, combined with his startlingly abstract set design and robotizing costumes for the marionettes, overwhelmed discussion of the production: Marinetti invited him back into the Futurist club, and he received numerous opportunities to exhibit his work internationally with the Futurists and commissions to design productions of Futurist *sintesi*, "mechanical ballets," and theater experiments, including a couple of works by Marinetti. In 1925, Prampolini exhibited in Paris his designs and model for a "magnetic theater" in which an entire theater, not just the stage, would be kinetic, with multiple platforms and planes capable of moving, rotating, ascending, and receding in relation to chromatic distributions of light. The designs won him the Grand Prix d'Art Théâtrale at the Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs. Dissatisfied with the theatrical resources available to him in Italy, Prampolini would move to

Paris in the same year. There, at the Théâtre de la Madeleine, he established his Théâtre de la Pantomime Futuriste, whose aim, he explained, was to "demonstrate 1) the machine as a symbolic guardian of universal dynamism [...] 2) the aesthetic virtues of the machine and the metaphysical meaning of its movements [...] 3) the plastic exaltation of the machine and of mechanical elements [...] 4) the stylistic expressions of mechanical art which spring from the machine as an intermediary between the spiritual concept of the object and the plastic evaluation of the subject." "In this new type of spectacle, which is the expression of unreal life in movement, all the scenic elements converge in a dynamic exaltation of rhythm, in an orchestration and interpenetration of visions in freedom" (Berghaus 1998: 450-451).

Of course, grand intentions always produce an unforeseen reality. Prampolino gathered together an unusual assortment of prominent talents to produce his program of performances. Günter Berghaus (1998: 451-458) gives a comprehensive description of the program of ten pieces that premiered on May 12, 1927. Many of the pieces embodied aesthetic qualities that contradicted the aesthetic principles that Prampolini claimed to define the identity of the Théâtre de la Pantomime Futuriste, and reviewers of the production did not fail to point out that much of the program evoked the past rather than intimated the future (e.g., *Le Ménestrel* May 20, 1927). *La Naissance d'Hermaphrodite*, with music by Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936) from a scenario by Vittorio Orazi, was a neo-classical pantomime on a mythological theme, featuring an androgynous figure encountering her/his lover in a luxurious dream world. *L'Agonie de la rose*, by composer Vincenzo Davico (1889-1969), was apparently an "elegant" miming of the death of a flower accompanied by Davico's impressionist music reminiscent of Debussy. Vladimir Golschmann (1893-1972) conducted the orchestra. *Les Trois Moments*, with scenario by poet Luciano Folgore (1888-1966) and composer Franco Casovola (1891-1955), who would soon renounce Futurism, employed film décor on behalf of a three-part narrative: in a forest, a satyr seduces a nymph with his syrinx and takes her to the big city; in a hotel lobby, a ventilator and a gramophone make love while being watched by a voyeuristic elevator with red and green lights for "eyes"; in a hotel room, noises behind a door assail the satyr and nymph, in Japanese dress, and eventually compel them to go through the door and leave behind their clothes, which dance as marionettes (Lista 1976: 112). This piece used

Russolo's *intonarumori*, and Prampolini designed an abstract forest that, along with "polychromatic lights," dissolved distinctions between nature and mechanized urbanity. *Popolaresca*, by Prampolini and composer Francesco Pratella (1880-1955), used photographic projections, combined with "folkloric tunes" to narrate an Italian woman's fantasy of being kidnapped by a Japanese officer. *Le Dame de la solitude*, by Folgore and Guido Sommi-Picenardi (1892-1949), was an expressionist piece featuring dancer-mime Maria Ricotti (1886-1974), formerly a student and partner of Georges Wague, playing a queen wandering in a gloomy, nocturnal castle dominated by immense caryatids; when she embraces one of the caryatids, it strangles her. The mood changed abruptly with *Arlequin et le travesties*, by Francesco Scardaoni, who actually remained attached to the Symbolist idea of theater as a "temple of beauty" (cf. Goldberg 1920: 150). Arlequin visits a department store, where he mistakes two mannequins for Rosanna and Colombine. When he learns they are mannequins, he switches his affections to living models. But when he discovers how much their clothes cost, he flees. *Le Marchand de coeurs*, with scenario by Prampolini, music by Casavola, and choreography by Valclav Veltchek (1896-1967), involved three scenes in which a merchant pursues the ideal woman as embodied by three female archetypes, a country/nature woman, an erotic, lascivious woman, and an emotional, romantic woman. In the third scene, the merchant "encounters their spiritual doubles, performed by marionettes." The women reject him, so he chases away both the "real and simulated forms" of womanhood and "returns to his cave of eternal dreams" (Berghaus 1998: 454). Veltchek performed the role of the merchant, described by Prampolini as a "type d'ephebe astral." Prampolini designed an abstract set of screens of different colored surfaces that could move and project silhouettes and photo imagery (by Brunius and Greville). The female costumes were allegorical (peasant, sexy bikini, Roman chiton), while the merchant wore an expressionist black body suit with a kind of red target sewn onto the chest. The acting, according to one reviewer, entailed the "marionettization and mechanization of the person represented" (456). With *Interpretations mimique*, Maria Ricotti returned to the stage to perform three slow, moody dances to music by Schmitt, Albeniz, and Grieg. Then Toshi Komoro (1887-1951), a Japanese modern dancer who had worked with Charles Griffes in New York during the war, performed *Urashima*, his adaptation of a Japanese fairy tale concerning a fisherman who discovers that the turtle he

has saved is a princess. He follows her underground, but when he returns to his life above ground, he discovers that he is three hundred years old. Armande de Polignac (1876-1962) wrote the music in the dark, postromantic style she had adopted by the end of the war, if not before. The final piece on the program was a performance of *Cocktail*, a pantomime scenario by Marinetti. The scenario, like nearly all Futurist pantomime scenarios, was less than a half-page long (Lista 1976: 113). Silvio Mix (1900-1927) wrote the accompanying jazz score. The action takes place in a cocktail bar, where ten human bodies impersonate bottles of liquor, placed on two shelves, next to which is a giant siphon operated by a black barman, played by Veltchek. A black spectator, played by the Swiss Laban student Gilbert Baur (1903-1988), ascends to the stage from the audience and orders a cocktail. The order animates the bottles, which swirl around trying to mix the cocktail, while the swiveling siphon releases colored lights. The barman and the customer attempt to catch the bottles, but it all ends as "chaos and inebriety triumph" in a manner similar to Grosz's *Baby in der Bar* (1928). The piece was "a joyous panegyric of mechanized life, where the primitive and sophisticated merge, humans become objects, and machines turn into intelligent beings" (Berghaus 1998: 457-458; cf. Martinez 2008: 216-227).

Prampolini faced manifold technical and interpersonal difficulties in producing the program, but it proved quite successful, even if reviewers observed that the program contained pieces that were antithetical to the Futurist aesthetic agenda and represented performance styles that Paris had already seen years ago (cf. Zanotti 2015: 10). Prampolini planned another production in Paris, as well as a tour of European cities. But none of that happened. Instead, he toured three Italian cities, Turin, Bergamo, and Milan in 1928 with a ten-piece program that included only four pieces from the Paris program: *Tre momenti*, *Popolaresca*, *Il mercante di cuori*, and *Cocktail*; these he supplemented with pieces he deemed much more Futurist than what he had replaced. These new pieces emphasized the mechanization of humans and the interaction of humans with machines (Teatro Torino 2017): *L'ora del fantoccio*, pantomime by Luciano Fologre, with music by Alfredo Casella (1883-1947), who was a modernist without being a Futurist; *Volutta geometrica*, by Folgore and Guido Sommi-Picenardi; *Ritmi spaziali*, a "phono-dance" involving records on a gramophone, *Prefazione*, "grotesque pantomime" by Prampolini, with *intonarumori* soundscape by Luigi Russolo; another "grotesque

pantomime," *Il pesce meccanico*, by the same pair; and *La salamandra* (1924), a "dream pantomime," by Luigi Pirandello (1867-1936), with music by the poet-composer Massimo Bontempelli (1878-1960). Pirandello's two-page scenario in "five tempos" takes place in the atrium of a country villa and involves eight performers, including a dog (Pan) and a salamander. Pan guards a nymph against a large salamander by chasing it away with fire, but the salamander leaps out of its hiding place under a mill and attacks Pan, who manages to kill the salamander by playing the saxophone. Pan and the nymph bury the salamander and the saxophone, but flames arise from the grave. So they and the other shepherds start drinking and cooking over the fire (Pirandello 1924). But this piece seems quite out of place with the rest of the program, and in Milan, it was not even on the program, replaced by the Prampolini-Russolo mechanical pantomime *Santa velocita*, described by one reviewer as "without action, without characters, without scenery, and without music" (*L'Impero*, March 9, 1928: 3). Magito, Veltchek, Komori, and Wisiakova participated in the Italian tour, while Casavola conducted the orchestra. But the Italian tour was not a success. Reviewers insinuated either that Futurism was not respectful of Italian audiences or that Italian theaters lacked the resources to achieve the Futurist glorification of technology (Il Teatro Torino 2017; Berghaus 1998: 458-459). Prampolini's Paris program may not have represented accurately the Futurist principles he ascribed to the Théâtre de la Pantomime Futuriste, but the program nevertheless offered an innovative, emotionally diverse, and even wild type of variety show that was actually much more complex structurally than any program with a more unified Futurist aesthetic. The Paris program revealed Prampolini's gift for seeing the future of theater as something greater than technological or mechanical effects: the future was also a matter of a new type of structuring of the theatrical experience involving complex collaborations across a variety of works that shifted abruptly from one mood to the next and established the point, perhaps inadvertently, that the beauties of technology do not unify bodies, scenarios, actions, themes, images, or sounds across time and space; they create a much more fragmented or disunified image of the world than the manifestoes acknowledged or the Italian theater culture cared to embrace. Prampolini never again attempted a project with the magnitude of the Paris program. To gain access to greater theatrical resources, Marinetti and many other Futurists, including Prampolini, attempted to build an alliance with the

Fascists, but Mussolini saw the future of Italian theater, not in relation to a belief in the transformation of Italian society through technology, but in relation to the glorification of a kind of populist humanism, a monumental neoclassicism, provincial comedies, the celebration of operatic traditions, and state-Fascist centralization of theater culture. Fascism seriously marginalized Futurism even before 1930, and after 1930, speechless performance was nearly extinct except for the "aerodanze" (her famous propeller dance) and "physical culture" solo dances performed by Giannina Censi (1913-1995) in 1930-1933 (cf., Vaccarino 1998; Bonfanti 1995). Prampolini shifted to a rather conventional career as a scene designer (Berghaus 1998: 462-463). Yet he was a major figure in pantomime history, because, more than anyone else, he saw that pantomime was, more than any other art, the most capable of revealing the future as the technologization not only of performance and narrative, but of human identity itself.

The Pantomime Eclipse of the 1930s

Das goldene Pferd (1930)

Throughout the 1920s, serious pantomime in the theater functioned internationally as an experimental form of performance, and as experimentation, pantomime maintained an affiliation with modernism. But as an experimental form of performance, pantomime had an unreliable, unstable existence without any secure institutional "home," even within the large network of immature ballet companies attached to the German opera houses. By 1930, however, pantomime and the use of the word "pantomime" and of synonymous words ("Tanzspiel," "Tanzdrama") to describe these performance experiments had disappeared almost entirely in Germany, and it is difficult indeed to find applications of the term to performances elsewhere. The desire to experiment with voiceless performance had come to an abrupt end, even though experimentation and modernism in the theater continued to thrive. But an account of pantomime in the 1920s does not seem complete without a glance at an ambitious pantomime scenario that never achieved performance or even publication during the decade but which shows the unprecedented scope of the pantomimic imagination stimulated by the postwar cultural environment: *Das goldene Pferd*, by Richard Beer-Hofmann. The composition of this piece occurred between 1921 and 1922, nearly thirty years after his previous pantomime scenario, *Pierrot Hypnotiseur* (1892). But Beer-Hofmann continued to work on it throughout the decade. He corresponded (1922) with Reinhardt and his brother about a possible production of the work, and with the Bulgarian composer Pantscho Wladigeroff (1899-1978) about composing the music; in 1926, he considered inviting Richard Strauss to compose the music (Vollmer 2011: 472-474). Ostensibly production of the piece did not happen because it was too costly, although a production of it does not seem like it would have cost more than the production of numerous modernist operas staged during the Weimar Republic. The action takes place in an archaic society apparently on the coast of the Black Sea, a sort of Scythian culture. The plot deals with a young man, Bahadur, who longs to travel the world in search of adventure. However, in the courtyard of the landowner Bilal, he agrees to

marry Bilal's daughter Halimah, which the couple confirm when Halimah gives Bahadur a necklace with a medallion bearing her image. As the engagement ceremony unfolds, a troop of warriors arrives, led by an Emir mounted on a horse covered in gold armor. The Emir invites Bahadur to join them, which excites the young man until he sees the sadness in Halimah's face and rejects the offer. Night falls and Bahadur sleeps. The warriors return, with the Emir on the golden horse, accompanied by a giant and a dwarf. The Emir proposes that he and Bahadur trade places: Bahadur will receive the horse, all the splendid garments, the weapons, and the power of the Emir in exchange for the medallion necklace with Halimah's image. Bahadur agrees. After a musical interlude, the action moves to the gate before the royal city. Bahadur/Emir returns from his adventures accompanied by the giant and the dwarf. The dancer-lute player Tarkah reveals her attraction to Bahadur, but she already has a lover, Ghajur. When Ghajur strikes Bahadur in a jealous rage, Bahadur stabs him to death. The giant and the dwarf extricate Bahadur from the angry crowd of Ghajur's friends, and Bahadur rides the golden horse into the city followed by the giant and the dwarf. In the throne hall, the childless King and the Queen Mother expect the arrival of the King's nephew, the Emir. During the ceremonial encounter, the dwarf presents Tarkah, who appears in a silver veil, which she briefly opens to reveal her nudity to the King. This action causes consternation in the court, including Bahadur and the Queen Mother, who inspects Tarkah and compels her to return with her to the "women's house." In a long ensuing scene, the giant and the dwarf bring Tarkah back to the King in the throne hall. She plays the lute and gives a kind of speech-song ("Sprechstimme") explanation of herself and him that is seductive without being romantic, analytical and ominous, yet voluptuous: "Youth flown! – What hope is left? Feel, how your life drains from you! [...] See—I want to be more! From evening until morning, you shall, my restless King, rest quietly on my breast [...] Only death shall separate us!" While she intones this song, the King drinks from a poisoned chalice given to him by the dwarf. When the King realizes he has been poisoned, he tries to flee, but Tarkah casts her veil over him like a net and finishes him off by pressing her knee against his head. Bahadur, who has watched this scene from behind a curtain rushes to prevent Tarkah from continuing her violence, but the giant stops him. When the commotion summons the Queen Mother and her entourage, Bahadur defends Tarkah

and claims authority as the new king. In the fourth scene, the action moves to the sumptuous royal garden by the sea. As Bahadur, Tarkah, the giant, and the dwarf luxuriate in the performance of female dancers, the Queen Mother and her entourage appear and the sky darkens. The Queen Mother questions the identity of Bahadur, which leads to a potentially violent confrontation. Halimah seizes the medallion from Bahadur. The Queen Mother then makes a signal, and the Emir's ship appears, and then the Emir himself. The Emir commands deference from the court, but Bahadur challenges him, after Tarkah, the giant, and the dwarf have thrown themselves at the feet of the Queen Mother. The Emir points to a youth on the mast of the ship bearing a golden bow and golden arrows. Bahadur throws off his helmet and commands the Emir to kill him. The Emir gives the signal, but Halimah rushes in front of Bahadur and receives the arrow in her chest. But Bahadur manages to escape with Halimah when rioting Negroes break into the courtyard. In the castle courtyard, Bahadur removes the arrow from Halimah and tries to comfort her, but she dies, and he goes into shock. Six Negroes carry away Halimah's body to a grave; Bahadur seeks to join her but the Negores hold him back. The giant and the dwarf appear, and they invite Bahadur to mount the golden horse that now appears at the gate. Bahadur rushes toward the horse, but the golden armor falls off and reveals instead the skeleton of the horse. The gate collapses, and on the wall stands Tarkah, in her silver net-cloak, "glistening in the light." She plays the lute, and he follows her until she sings-chants "… As I swore to you—Bahadur, I've kept so: Loyal until your death!" She casts the net over him; he struggles to free himself; the stage grows dark and echoes with a "blaring cry from the deep." The scene shifts to the courtyard of Bilal's estate. Bahadur wakes up; all was a dream. The morning sun bathes the scene. Halimah enters and holds his head with both hands and kisses him on the mouth. In the Epilogue, the entire cast appears. Tarkah takes her place with Bahadur and Halimah. She plays the lute and, smiling, sings a song about dreams that concludes with her "wish from me: May the forms of your dreams not be uglier than us." The stage goes dark, leaving only the Drunkard, who wishes the audience "Good dreams—good night." The curtain falls, and from behind the curtain a choir repeats: "Good Night!" (Beer-Hofmann 1963: 467-519).

But this overview of the plot hardly covers everything in the scenario. Beer-Hofmann provides an astonishing amount of detail regarding

production of the piece for the stage. He includes interludes between scenes that involve a Blind Singer commenting on the actions that precede and will follow the interlude, a device somewhat similar to the *interpellator* in ancient Roman pantomime. But the Blind Singer, along with the Drunkard, appears in the action as an outside figure who represents a detached perspective on the characters. Many details refer to the music in the piece, which occurs on stage as well as in the pit. The orchestral music should never rise above *mezzoforte* and perhaps never below it. In Wagnerian fashion, the text specifies the use of a harp, a horn, an oboe, timpani, a tuba, gongs, and a violin for specific effects or motifs—for example, a harp arpeggio should accompany the firing of the arrow—and the author indicates tempo and rhythmic changes in the music. He also indicates various sound effects, such as the rumbling of the storm in the garden scene, the rumbling of the sea, "a dull tone, as if someone were striking iron in deep darkness." Occasionally, in the midst of much pantomimic action, characters abruptly utter one or two-word phrases: "The lute player!"; "Yes!"; "I command it!" These phrases are unnecessary as clarifications of motives; these function as startling sound effects that disturb the pantomimic action—or rather, make words and voices seem like shards of humanity engulfed by pantomimic action. The visual detail is extravagant. Beer-Hofmann describes costumes in detail, with much gold and silver ornamentation, purple cloaks, the dwarf wears at the end a turban containing a skull, the King wears black silk, as does the Queen Mother, while the giant wears "poisonous green with thickly woven silver," and the warriors in the tower wear silver in contrast to the Emir and his troop, who wear gold. The characters in Bilal's courtyard wear "southern Slavic or Near Eastern peasant costumes, while the characters in the King's court and city dress in an "oriental" manner, with turbans, silken garments. The cast includes many—well more than twenty, perhaps as many as forty—Negroes, many of whom are naked except for gold loincloths, and who are slaves, warriors, or eunuchs. No other pantomime explicitly requires so many black bodies for performance, although Beer-Hofmann does seem to regard them as an ominous decorative element in the overall visual design, the signification of a "dark," alien civilization. The action also makes use of startling, technically complex visual effects with torches, the fiery electricity of Tarkah's veil-net, the arrow shot into Halimah's chest, the riding of the golden horse, and the entrance of the ship with the "golden"

archer on the mast. The scenery is monumental for each scene, requiring multiple levels, terraces, steps, balconies, towers, pillars, walls, a grandiose throne "made of black basalt," immense doors and gates, trellises, curtains, and niches, into the shadows of which the giant and dwarf retreat, and Beer-Hofmann makes sure action occurs in all these places. The pantomimic action is also immensely detailed. But the scenario describes pantomimic actions that do more than construct the narrative; these actions provide a meticulous, anthropologically precise image of physical interaction within an archaic, imaginary society, as if the purpose of pantomimic action is to reveal how the entire organization of a society, the hierarchical distribution of power, desire, and identity rests upon particular gestures, actions *assigned* to particular bodies. Tarkah's gestures, dances, actions create havoc within the society because both the King and Bahadur fail to grasp that their desires bring death, they summon a fatal music, a deadly voice, a lethal body that prevents them from differentiating the true Emir from the false Emir, from separating dream from reality. In each scene, Beer-Hofmann devotes so many pages to detailed descriptions of pantomimic actions integrated with scenic effects that it seems as if a major goal of the pantomime is to show how the mysterious interplay between bodily movement, props, environment, lighting, music, and physiognomy is inevitably the revelation of doom, a movement toward death that enters a scary territory of beauty that speech always makes invisible:

> *At the same moment, as the cupbearer enters the woman's house, the dwarf becomes visible. He waves in the hallway—and past him file the group of black porters hauling the gifts. Behind him the dwarf with Tarkah's lute. Bahadur, without turban or weapons, enters the hallway—Tarkah from the women's house. She glances at him, and rushes joyfully from the background and throws herself on his breast. He embraces her for a moment, then pushing her away, shows a dark glance; with a sharp tilt of his head to the [the dead] King: "And he?" Tarkah wildly shakes her head decisively: "Never!" And again throws herself on Bahadur's breast; she pulls him so deeply into the dark passageway that the embracing couple are no longer visible. The blacks have loaded up the gifts. Darkly coiled, scampering soundlessly on naked soles, the group presses forward in feverish haste. Weightless shine the silver instruments. The distant sleepy song growls now in the*

> *manner of a muted echo that escorts the blacks upward into the night* (491).

This kind of intensity of description of physical action can overwhelm the reader page after page, but in performance this constant energy of pantomimic action integrated with scenic and musical elements can be exhilarating, as gripping as a powerful drug. The scenario is an engine of continuously inventive pantomimic action, some of which is quite complex:

> *The King takes his seat again. Bowing deeply, everyone else pulls back. While his court leaves through the right door at the back of the hall, the Queen Mother strides through the left pillar door of the women's house. Near the pillar, next to which the captain of the bodyguard is at his post, stands Tarkah in her veil. The Queen Mother notices her. With a commanding gesture, she lifts Tarkah's veil with the point of her walking stick. Tarkah throws the veil back, the captain recognizes her and flinches. The two princesses and the Queen Mother notice this. With a wave from the Queen Mother, the female slaves lead Tarkah into the women's house. The princesses draw close to the captain. With scarcely moving lips, he divulges information. The princesses urgently convey the information to the Queen Mother. She frowns and strides with her entourage into the women's house. Two slaves have placed wine vessels and a platter on the table [...]* (489).

Beer-Hofmann introduces simultaneous and overlapping pantomimic actions to show the intricate interlinking of physical actions that create what one might call the movement of a society. Freksa and Reinhardt attempted this kind of complicated action in *Sumurun*, but they saw simultaneous pantomimic actions arising from the assumption that each individual on stage has a unique character that causes him or her to move uniquely—an actor-centered approach. Beer-Hofmann prescribes the actions, the gestures, the qualities of movement more precisely because he sees physical action defining character—the character comes out of the action: the action comes out of the society's structural positioning of the body within it—an author/spectator-centered approach. This approach seems more dramatic, because it establishes a structural (power/class) relationship between physical actions and bodies rather than a unique

relationship between physical actions and characters. For example: the dwarf "waves," the giant "waves," Tarkah "waves," and the Queen Mother "waves": regardless of their unique physiognomies and regardless of their unique characters, the "waves" bestow on all these bodies an authority to initiate obedient actions performed by others, even though the "wave" does not specify what action the others should perform. Each actor might come up with an individual "wave" for the character he or she plays, but the scenario treats the "wave" as a sign of status rather than as an attribute of character. Tarkah, the giant, and the dwarf all behave deferentially toward the King and the Queen Mother, but their "waves" indicate to the spectator that they possess a power over everyone in the story, not because of their physiognomies, but because a larger force than social hierarchy, Death, invests their bodies with that power. Perhaps the most complex pantomimic action occurs in the garden scene. Here physical actions unfold on multiple levels. While Bahadur, Tarkah, the giant, and the dwarf sit at a large table, with a cupbearer standing behind them, an orchestra of female musicians performs, and a group of ten female slaves, with golden baskets filled with grapes on their heads, moves from left to intersect with a line of ten Negroes moving in march formation, with the movement of both groups "colored" by dancelike rhythms. On the terrace, another group of slaves and their supervisors operate a wine press, with all this work integrated with the tempo of the music, which begins slowly but becomes faster. Through the tree-covered path the Queen Mother, veiled in black, enters with her entourage of women, a doctor, and the bodyguard captain. Bahadur starts to rise to greet the Queen Mother, but Tarkah presses him down and rises instead to signal the musicians to continue playing. The dwarf and the giant "wave" the grape slaves to work stronger, faster. Tarkah "waves" yet another group of Negroes to come forth from the tree-covered path, and each female slave now has a Negro on the left and the right of her and has her arms around the neck of each Negro. All of these actions occur "rapidly." At the same time, the sky slowly shifts from a perfect blue to an intrusion of clouds that gradually develops into a great storm. Much pantomimic action develops the interactions between the Queen Mother and those sitting at the table, while the slaves and Negroes continue with their actions. Eventually the Emir's ship glides into view and the storm explodes, leading to the arrow shooting and the riot. Beer-Hofmann evidently understood that a long, almost two-hour pantomime narrative

required increasingly complex pantomimic action to sustain the attention of the spectator. Pantomime narratives of more than a half hour in duration demand an innovative approach to physical action. By 1920, a film pantomime could extend well over two hours, as long as the spectator saw rapidly changes views of the action, without which no one would watch a film at all. In the theater, a scene could change, as it does in *Das goldene Pferd*, but as the time of narration increases beyond a half hour, a larger range of actions performed by more bodies is necessary to preserve the attention of the spectator. As with Prampolini's Paris program of pantomime, spectators can enjoy nearly three hours of pantomime as long as they are watching a series of different narratives. A two-hour pantomime narrative requires a unique style of pantomimic imagination, a way of thinking about physical action, as complex as any style of writing necessary to write spoken drama. Beer-Hofmann displays this style with, among numerous other devices, his interesting use of the "wave" gesture. Although many other pantomime creators obviously displayed imaginative use of pantomimic action, Beer-Hofmann, by the immense scale of his scenario, suggests that the longer the narrative, the more detailed and varied the pantomimic action must become, unlike dance, which depends on repetition of movement to signify its detachment from the narrative. Dance frequently finds a place in pantomime, as it does in *Das goldene Pferd*, but it is always in the background, an incidental element, which only serves to foreground the pantomimic action, those physical actions that add to the narrative, that allow bodies to tell a story that cannot be told better, if at all, any other way (cf. Scherer 1993: 67-75; Elstun 1969: 181-191; Vollmer 2011: 472-483).

The fifth scene of the scenario seems to undermine the darkness of the narrative by making all the action that preceded it merely the content of a dream, although the Epilogue, in which Tarkah, the figure of Death, wishes the spectator good dreams and good night, seems ironic enough to undermine the supposedly happy ending wherein Bahadur wakes up to a long, unadventurous country life with Halimah. But *Das goldene Pferd* is a *doppelgänger* story that shows how "another life" inhabits the body of the protagonist, and this dream life is a presentiment of death, an image of a desire for freedom that is self-destructive. Beer-Hofmann saw pantomime as an optimum representation of a dream state, and from his perspective as a literary author, the dream state was where language was powerless, silent,

against the beautiful actions of Death: Pantomime makes death visible, a point emphasized by the Blind Singer, who sings the "reality" of the protagonist's situation but cannot see the action unfolding before him. The astonishing visual complexity of *Das goldene Pferd* shows the impact of film on pantomimic imagination insofar as Beer-Hofmann sought to create in the theater a visual experience that was impossible to achieve on film. Pantomime in the theater, not on film, created the most accurate connection between dreaming and death, because pantomime on the stage was the most transparent revelation of "another life" within the body. This view of pantomime is close to the ancient Roman idea of pantomime as a story of the body's "metamorphosis." Yet *Das goldene Pferd* has never reached the stage. The economic resources, the technology, the rehearsal time, and the pantomimic talent required to realize the scenario belong to film, not to theater. The scenario takes pantomime into a theater that has existed, if at all, only briefly under Viganò. In spite of its archaic subject matter, its Wagnerian soundtrack, and its ostensibly conservative resolution of a tragic "fate" by merely waking up, the scenario represents the modernist pantomimic imagination at its most ambitious level of inscription.

As long as pantomime in the theater remained an experimental form of performance, its appeal rested upon innovation, upon extending the possibilities of performance into "modern" understandings of bodily signification, and upon creating instability rather than stability within theater culture. Innovation occurred through imaginative use of stage technology, stage design, musical accompaniment, pantomimic action, and narrative. On the narrative level, the most significant innovation was the abandonment of Pierrot and the *commedia* format as the primary basis for pantomimic action. As a result, pantomime became a much more serious art that inspired a complex technological and musical support, and, in Germany especially, a far larger number of people and theaters than was ever conceivable in the excessively stable, hermetic realm of Pierrot connoisseurship. Pantomime moved speechless performance well beyond the boundaries imposed upon it by dance, especially ballet, with its conviction that only beautiful movements performed by beautiful bodies can justify performance devoid of the power of speech to tell a story and "explain" why people on stage are there. The creators of pantomimes, focused on actions rather than movements, tended to find interesting the

actions of a much wider range of bodies than the creators of dances in the theater. Modernist pantomimes therefore included dwarves, freaks, older bodies, self-consciously mechanized bodies (Futurist robots), monsters, nude bodies, black bodies, or roles taken by people who also performed in plays or cabaret or dance or appeared in silent films. But the pressure to innovate takes a steep toll on the pantomimic imagination. To construct a narrative out of pantomimic action is intensely challenging if the spectator has very limited or most likely no ability to change views of the action, as happens in a film. The narrative must come out of the pantomimic action, out of the body, not the image. It is a very stressful activity to construct a logical sequence of physical actions that tell a story or communicate ideas better than speaking or writing, because human society, in its constant need to regulate the body, does not encourage, so to speak, thinking with the body—that is, seeing what the body "says" when language cannot help one see. Playwrights can crank out one play after another; choreographers can produce one dance after another, composers can churn out composition after composition, because they all rely on some sort of language that subordinates the body to it and causes us to see something other or "more" than the body in performance. But creators of modernist pantomime were unable to sustain themselves in the genre. Innovative pantomime exhausted them; it was remarkable if they wrote or produced more than one pantomime. Beer-Hofmann attempted his second pantomime scenario thirty years after the first, and after the monumental *Das goldene Pferd*, any further venture into pantomime seemed utterly inconceivable.

But after 1930, pantomime itself seemed unimaginable, at least in relation to anything resembling the magnitude of experimentation and productivity of the previous four decades. In 1932, Reinhardt briefly revived *Das Mirakel* and a theater in Munich revived the 1924 Vienna version of Wedekind's *Die Kaiserin von Neufundland*. But these productions now seemed like curiosities from a vanished era. The urge to experiment with new pantomimes had disappeared. The most likely reason is that silent films had also disappeared. Silent films signified a vast public appetite for pantomimic performance, and creators of modernist pantomime sought to accommodate this appetite with pantomime narratives and productions that filmmakers failed to make or that film was incapable of making. With the advent of talking films, the appetite for film pantomime was suddenly

no longer large enough, at least according to the film industry, to justify the cost of producing silent films. Sound film technology encouraged some filmmakers to produce films that combined imaginative use of sound and strong musical soundtracks with naturalistic pantomimic action while containing hardly any speech, for example: *Earth* (1930), directed by Alexander Dovzhenko (1894-1956); *Vampyr* (1931), directed by Carl Dreyer (1889-1968); *City Lights* (1931), directed by Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977); *Emil und die Detektive* (1931), directed by Gerhard Lamprecht; *Das blaue Licht* (1932), directed by Leni Riefenstahl (1902-2003); *Päikese lapsed* (*Children of the Sun*) (1932), directed by Theodor Luts (1896-1980); *Ecstasy* (1933), directed by Gustav Machatý (1901-1963); *Amok* (1934), directed by Fedor Ozep (1895-1949); and *Modern Times* (1936), also directed by Chaplin. Despite the success of such films, filmmakers overwhelmingly saw sound technology as the foundation for speech-driven storytelling. The unity of voice and image amplified public faith in technology to create more realistic representations of life and thus bring humanity closer to reconciling or somehow even diminishing the great distance between reality and the imaginary. Perhaps, too, audiences felt that talking films, as opposed to sound films, prevented the bodies of performers from signifying that which is stranger than anything they speak. This cinematic power of the voice to restrain, to control the body further implied that technology strengthened faith in language to sustain social unity or at least to assure that the body performed within the limits of language rather than outside of it. At any rate, pantomime in any modernist idiom disappeared because of a technological innovation rather than because of, say, the world economic crisis of the 1930s or the tempestuous political crises afflicting the Western democracies even in the 1920s. The theatrical pantomimic imagination simply could not respond to cinematic innovation with any greater innovation than it had already achieved in response to silent film.

The Hibernation of Pantomime in Paris

The most significant development in pantomime during the 1930s took place in Paris, and even this development did not produce much in the way of performance until the 1940s. A new, modernist conception of pantomime emerged there through its chief theorist, the actor Étienne Decroux (1898-1991), whose ideas about pantomime dominated the practice of the art from the 1950s until the late 1980s. But Decroux was the product

of a peculiar French theatrical milieu. Born in Paris to a family of modest circumstances, he did not benefit from any privileged access to education. In his youth, he worked for years as a mechanic and construction worker, and this "long confrontation with the material world" instilled in him "a profound respect for physical effort, the conviction that the spirit finds in the material the site of its supreme achievement." His father's friendship with a family of Italian sculptors was also an important influence insofar as sculpture, this "Promethean [...] struggle of man with a brutal element," was "a refusal to accept the world as it is, as a will placed in rivalry with God" (Benhaim 2003: 242). In 1923, after his release from the army, Decroux earned admission to the new theater academy established by the actor and director Jacques Copeau (1879-1949), the Vieux Colombier, which was an adjunct to Copeau's Vieux Colombier Theater and ensemble. Although Decroux and Copeau differed hugely over political values, the Vieux Colombier was enormously influential in forming Decroux's approach to pantomime. Copeau came from an upper middle class mercantile family, but he early developed a deep aversion to business. After studying at the Sorbonne, he became drawn to the theater by writing theater criticism. By selling family business assets, he was in 1911 able to finance his ambition to form his own theater company, Vieux Colombier, which he sought to build as an alternative to what he considered the excessively commercialized mainstream theater and the artificial acting that prevailed there. Beginning in 1913, the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier inspired abundant critical acclaim and for the most part large audiences in Paris and in the United States, where the company spent the war. After the war, Copeau restored the theater to Paris, where it continued to attract critical praise and devoted audiences. To present a large repertoire of classical and contemporary plays in a simpler, less artificial style, Copeau believed it was necessary to create an entirely new system of education for actors. The theater, however, quickly sank into serious financial debt, in spite of Copeau's prodigious fundraising activities and in spite of his desire to use very spare set designs, simple costumes, and minimal technological effects. The Vieux Colombier School, launched in 1922, provided a stream of revenue that helped sustain the theater. But by 1924, he had to dissolve the theater and move the school to a rural village in central eastern France. The school attracted passionate students, but it did not attract enough funding to achieve Copeau's educational scheme, and by 1929 the school ceased to exist.

Copeau devised a rigorous curriculum that in effect sequestered the student from the corrupting influences of theater external to the school (Kurtz 1999: 74-75). He invited distinguished intellectuals, such as Paul Valery, Edmond Jaloux, André Gide, and Henri Ghéon, to lecture to the students. He incorporated the rhythmic exercises developed by the Austrian-Swiss pedagogue Emil Jaques-Dalcroze (1865-1950), who promoted the doctrine that bodily wellness and the healthy social integration of the individual depended on the body's ability to respond in synchrony to musical rhythms. Copeau also included mime as an area of instruction, but, like Meyerhold, he regarded pantomime as an *exercise*, rather than as a mode of performance: the study of mime helped the actor to become aware of his or her body as a thing that he or she must synchronize "naturally" with the voice, with the language issuing from the text; the body must not be in tension with the text, as was so often the case with "artificial" forms of acting. Copeau's concept of "mime" derived almost entirely from the *commedia* format, which itself derived from the ancient Roman *mimus*, the street theater, not from the imperial pantomime, of which he betrayed no serious awareness. He saw mime as an exercise in improvisation that compelled the actor to "live" in the moment rather than to anticipate or remember words or actions, which was always an element of artificiality in acting. He showed no interest in the complexities and innovations of modernist Austro-German pantomime, if he was even aware of them, and the huge repertoire of plays performed by the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier contained almost nothing German. He especially disliked the complex technological innovations in theater production and the radical emotional turbulence spawned by German expressionism. In his estimation, modern theater needed to become more "human," which meant more actor-centered. But the "humanness" of theater ultimately depended on the voice of the actor, on the voicing of the theatrical text, for theater was the "natural" voice of literature. Pantomime estranged audiences from humanity; an art that focused perception on bodily action without the intervention of the voice created the image of an alien identity. The famous actor Charles Dullin (1885-1949) was a student of Copeau and then a teacher for Copeau, and all the major French mimes of the twentieth century, including Decroux, studied under him. Dullin advocated a kind of poetic realism on the stage, which occurs through the process of "transposing" the reality of the play into the reality of theater. Transposition results above all

through the actor's poetic relation to his or her voice and body, rather than, as with Stanislavski, through his immersion in the dramatic narrative or, as happens with many stars, through finding a unique identity as a performer by watching other performances. But the actor achieves this poetic relation to his or her body through *exercises* designed by a master teacher who can discern the poetic qualities unique to the actor's voice and body: exercises supposedly expose these qualities (cf. Surel-Tupin 1984: 60-63). The poetic actor is the product of an academic environment.

One of Dullin's students, the poet-actor Antonin Artaud (1896-1948), was the most important French theorist of theater in the 1930s, although his ideas had little impact until decades later. Many of his most salient ideas appeared in his short book *Le Théâtre et son double* (1938), a collection of essays written between 1931 and 1937. Like Copeau and Dullin, Artaud condemned what he regarded as the commercialization ("prostituting") of theater, but the worst aspect of theater is its fetishization of the dramatic text, which leads to an obsession with talk on the stage, for "actors do nothing but talk and have forgotten they ever had a body in the theater." "No one in Europe knows how to scream anymore" (Artaud 1958: 141). For the theater to free itself from "falsehood and illusion," it had to abandon its reliance on textual "masterpieces" to bestow value on the theatrical experience (74-79). Inspired in part by a 1931 performance in Paris of a Balinese theater ensemble, Artaud proposed that a truly modern theater is performer-driven rather than text-driven and requires a new architecture. He envisioned the "elimination of the stage" and replacing it with a sensuous architecture that "will physically envelop the spectator and immerse him in a constant bath of light, images, movements, and noises" (125). The goal of theater was to create an intensely visceral, convulsive awareness of a repressed, poetic self that Western civilization had stigmatized or poisoned by "the lie, the slackness, baseness, and hypocrisy of our world; [theater] shakes off the asphyxiating inertia of matter which invades even the clearest testimony of the senses" (31-32). Throughout his life, Artaud suffered from various illnesses and diseases, both physical and mental, and his precarious health shaped his understanding of the body in performance. The default condition of the human body in the modern world was sickness. Therefore theater achieved its highest purpose, not as entertainment, but as a mysterious form of therapy. The theatrical event was a kind of medical procedure, visceral like a surgery, intoxicating like a

powerful drug, "hallucinatory," inoculating, as the plague, to use his metaphor, inoculates those who survive it. The immersion of the spectator in "fiery fusillades" of light and powerful sonic vibrations ("sonorisation") was necessary to achieve a visceral impact on the body, to "ensnare the organs" (91). The actor models this visceral shock to the body. But in spite of his experience as an actor for silent films, Artaud did not see pantomime as a major component in his "theater of cruelty." He indeed observed that "in our theater which lives under the exclusive dictatorship of speech, this language of gesture and mime, this wordless pantomime, these postures, attitudes, objective intonations, in brief everything I consider specifically theatrical in the theater, all these elements when they exist apart from text are generally considered the minor part of theater; they are negligently referred to as 'craft' [...]" (40). Yet he was suspicious of bodies that acted without using their voices, as if pantomime signified bodies that were insufficiently ailing or tormented. "It would be meaningless to say that [the theater of cruelty] includes music, dance, pantomime, or mimicry. Obviously it uses movement, harmonies, rhythms, but only to the point that they can concur in a sort of central expression without advantage for any one particular art" (90-91). But Artaud never developed any concrete ideas about physical action other than to remark, in a Dalcrozian fashion, that, "all movements will obey a rhythm" (98); otherwise, he relied on metaphors to describe the "umbilical, larval" movements of the Balinese theater that have an abstract beauty in themselves: "A rippling of joints, the musical angle made by the arm with the forearm, a foot falling, a knee bending, fingers that seem to be coming loose from the hand, it is all like a perpetual play of mirrors in which human limbs seem resonant with echoes, harmonies in which the notes of the orchestra, the whispers of wind instruments evoke the idea of a monstrous aviary in which the actors themselves would be the fluttering wings" (56). But Artaud does not explain how he would apply these observations, which seem to refer more to dance than to pantomime, to his own performance ambitions. The body should become an "animated hieroglyph," but he could not imagine the animation of the body without the voice—an "incantory" voice that distorted words, utterances, glottal vibrations, which in turn distorted or convulsed the body: "There is no transition from a gesture to a cry or a sound: all the senses interpenetrate" (57). For Artaud, language always signified pain, an ailment. Language, speech, the voice issued from the body like blood from a

wound. This attitude was not inclined to see in pantomime a significant component in the therapeutic mission for theatrical performance, for pantomime with any power showed what the body could say but the voice could not; pantomime was about the animation of the body by something "outside" of language, of the impulse to speak, of the vibrational pressure that produces utterance. Artaud's idea of theater was much closer to modern forms of poetry than it was to modernist storytelling or narrative structuring: a profusion of images and sensations, a sensual "anarchy," as he put it (79), rather than the building of a new type of logic or motive for the sequencing of actions. But this way of thinking limited his ability to put anything on the stage or even to compose scenarios for this "alchemical theater." He proposed as "the first spectacle of the Theater of Cruelty" a piece dealing with "The Conquest of Mexico," which never achieved production; the notes for this project didn't even appear in print until after his death. He envisioned an enormous four-act spectacle about the conflict between Cortez (Europe) and Montezuma (anti-Occident), but his notes on the project constitute a poem, not a scenario (126-132). He described impressions and effects but not the physical actions that would produce the effects: "The spirit of the crowds, the breath of events will travel in material waves over the spectacle [...] Montezuma cuts the living space, rips it open like the sex of a woman in order to cause the invisible to spring forth [...] Lights and sounds produce an impression of dissolving, unraveling, spreading and squashing [...] This unrest and the threat of revolt on the part of the conquered will be expressed in ten thousand ways [...] And in the collapse and disintegration of the brutal force [...] will be delineated the first inkling of a passionate romance." But this describes a theater that exists only in the mind of the poet. Artaud proposed other projects that never moved beyond a listing in a dream program for his proposed theater: "an extract from the Zohar"; "the story of Bluebeard [...] with a new idea of eroticism and cruelty"; "The Fall of Jerusalem"; "a Tale by the Marquis de Sade"; "a play of extreme poetic freedom by Léon-Paul Fargue" (1876-1947); and so forth (99). His historical-poetic treatise *Héliogabale ou l'anarchiste couronné* (1934) contains startling and fascinating descriptions of connections between physical actions and ideas within an innovative (montage) narrative account of the young Roman emperor's "anarchistic" life and bizarre religious cult, but Artaud never seems to have considered either the book or the emperor's life a suitable subject for "transposition"

into theater. Instead, in 1935, he mounted at the Folies-Wagram Theater in Paris an adaptation of a five-act verse tragedy of incest and murder, *The Cenci* (1819), by Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), with Artaud himself playing the maniacal Count Cenci; the modernist conductor Roger Désormière (1898-1963) arranged the music, and the artist Balthus (1908-2001) designed the sixteenth century costumes and the large, semi-abstract but not spacious or deep set. The glamorous socialite and part-time actress Iya Abdy (1897-1993) played Beatrice, the Count's violated daughter, and also financed the production, which Artaud claimed "is not Theatre of Cruelty yet but is a preparation for it" (Artaud 1972: 103). But the production was a great failure, partly because of poor acoustics, but also because of Artaud's inability to stage physical action effectively: he resorted too often to *tableaux vivants* postures while actors spoke in a stilted, amateurish manner (Artaud 1972: 128-145). Henceforth, his work for the theater remained confined to the manifesto essays gathered in *Le Théâtre et son double*. He went to Mexico in search of mystical, drug-induced therapies; he became progressively sicker. The *Cenci* production, however, seriously undermined the credibility of his ideas within the Parisian cultural milieu; he envisioned a theater that required the resources of a highly advanced scientific medical research center, but the justification for such resources seemed dubious to a society that hardly as yet saw itself as profoundly sick. Yet Artaud nevertheless exerted a strong influence on Decroux and his students, for his writings galvanized the idea of the performing body as a poetic phenomenon. But Artaud's attention to the voice (as the chief sign of illness) obscured the poetics of the body. In a sense, pantomime was for Decroux an antidote to the "affliction" of language, a sign, not so much of health, as of resilience, of immunity to the depredations of language and speech. At any rate, the pantomime aesthetic cultivated by Decroux could survive, he assumed, only by showing that a poetic body was not the same thing as a diseased body. His idea of pantomime therefore avoided the morbid themes, the pathological states, or the violence and "cruel" exorcisms that Artaud regarded as inescapable to the therapeutic mission of theater. Decroux took from Artaud the notion of the therapeutic mission, but he sought a more benign form of healing that linked therapy to political values.

Copeau's royalism and devotion to the rightwing doctrines of Charles Maurras (1868-1952) provoked tensions within the student cadre of

the Vieux Colombier. Decroux's way of thinking about how to make theater more "human" and actor-centered diverged significantly from that of his mentor and became more aligned with the views of Dullin, who had broken with Copeau, at least as a collaborator on theatrical projects, by 1920. In his youth, Decroux, like Artaud, developed an enthusiasm for anarchism, but by the end of the 1920s, he pivoted toward a socialist world-view, having reached the conclusion that "above art, there is politics" (Benhaim 2003: 244). Throughout the 1930s, he dedicated much of his time to political activism, including affiliations with communist organizations, which, starting in 1931, sponsored agit-prop productions through an ensemble he formed called "Une graine" (247). These productions, filled with oratory, choral scenes, and polemical dialogue, only occasionally and very briefly included pantomimic scenes (247-248). However, information about these productions is very scant. Although the great actor Jean-Louis Barrault (1910-1994) became his student in 1931, Decroux did not actually form his own school until 1938, but the outbreak of war quickly brought an end to this project. In the 1930s and during the Occupation (1940-1944), Decroux found work as an actor in plays and occasionally in films. It was a period of time spent thinking about pantomime and performing improvised, pantomimic experiments in Dullin's Paris studio. In 1930, Decroux, in collaboration with his new wife, Suzanne Lodieu, composed a three-part pantomime that corresponded to the three economic ages of humanity: the primitive life, the artisan life (Middle Ages), and the industrial life ("the forces of super animals"). This piece evolved over many years and only achieved public form in the late 1940s: Decroux performed only for small, invited audiences of "two or three people" in Dullin's studio or in his own home (Benhaim 2003: 254-255; Leabhart 2007: 11). In 1933, Barrault broke away from Decroux and aligned himself more closely with Artaud's psychoanalytical, trauma-oriented theater than with Decroux's socio-economic philosophy of "corporeal mime." The rift seemed profound when, in 1935, Barrault staged at Dullin's Théâtre de l'Atelier *Autour d'une mère*, a pantomime adaptation of the novel *As I Lay Dying* (1930), by William Faulkner (1897-1962). The narrative depicts the dismal, nearly catastrophic struggle of a poor, rural Mississippi family to bury their mother, Addie, as she wished, in the town of Jefferson. The novel presents this struggle through the perspectives or monologues of fifteen different characters across 59 chapters to show that none of the characters has a complete or

accurate or even shared history of Addie or of each other. How Barrault transformed this modernist literary, stream-of-consciousness narrative into a pantomimic narrative is not clear, even from Barrault's description of it (Barrault 1951: 30-45). Barrault played Jewel, Addie's favored but illegitimate son, film actor Jean Dasté (1904-1994), Copeau's son-in-law, played Jewel's brother Darl, and eleven other actors played almost as many characters as have monologues in the book. The Belgian surrealist painter Felix Labisse (1905-1982) designed the set, continuing the French habit of infusing theater with modernism by using scenery that placed the action against a backdrop of modernistic painting. But commentators do not discuss clearly, if at all, how Barrault constructed the different perspectives of the characters through pantomimic action. Barrault received much praise for a scene in which he showed Jewel wrangling a horse and played both Jewel and the horse, becoming a "centaur." Another scene that inspired delight showed the family crossing a river in a wagon bearing Addie's coffin: the actors conveyed the presence of the river and the difficulty of traversing it entirely through bodily gesture. Artaud wrote enthusiastically about the production, which opened a month after his own *Cenci* production and enjoyed a much more favorable response from the press (cf. Plana 2004: 50-51). He saw Barrault bringing great "magic" to the theater because he possessed access to a "primitive," pre-rational level of experience (Artaud 1958: 144-146). The production seemed to demonstrate the viability of pantomime even in relation to a densely literary work, which probably very few who commented on the production had actually read, and the piece greatly enhanced the esteem with which the Parisian cultural milieu held Barrault. Yet the production, this "synthesis of drama and music hall for intellectuals," had only four performances, far fewer than for *Les Cenci* (Artaud 1990). The relentlessly ambitious Barrault never again attempted such a large-scale pantomimic narrative, despite eventually gaining a reputation for being one of France's greatest mimes. Though it was daring, exceptionally innovative, and close to Artaud's therapeutic rather than political belief in the tormented, convulsive basis for action, neither Barrault nor anyone else ever revived the piece, although in 1948, the American dancer-choreographer Valerie Bettis (1919-1982) staged, in New York with her own company, a ballet-modern dance adaptation of Faulkner's novel. One gets the impression that Barrault saw in *Autour d'une mère* the opportunity to demonstrate the power of the actor's body to

"transpose" literary language into a theatrical poetry rather than to open up a new path for pantomimic theater or even for a more successful realization of Artaud's "cruel" aesthetic. Having demonstrated this power, he felt no need to sustain it by constructing any more pantomimic narratives of even remotely similar magnitude. He could subordinate pantomime to his larger goal of revealing his manifold capabilities as an actor and director. Almost no actor was as skillful at using his body to play any role. So, in spite of its small audience, the production of *Autour d'une mère* was quite good for Barrault's career as an actor without being much help, if any, to the development of pantomime. Yet without this production, pantomime in France during the 1930s had no real existence on the stage, and without Barrault's captivating and beloved performance as the nineteenth century pantomime Deburau in the 1944 film *Les Enfants du paradise*, it is most likely that Decroux, who also appeared in the film as Deburau Senior, would not have found his path to establishing a distinctive French school of "mime" in the years following the war.

Meanwhile, Pierrot seemed to have vanished from the Parisian theatrical scene. The last of the Pierrots descended from Deburau's configuration of him, Maurice Farina (1883-1943), had retired from the stage in 1928, ailing from wounds he received during the war. He made his debut in 1899 collaborating on "cantomimes" with Georges Wague. After serving in the army in Morocco and Algeria (1905-1907), he returned to Paris, where he collaborated with Adolphe Willette on Pierrot pantomimes; he toured extensively, but by 1912, he began appearing in ballets produced by the Opéra de Paris. He became a soldier again during the war; in spite of his severe wounding by mustard gas, he returned to the stage in 1920, working with Séverin at the Olympia Theater, appearing with the Opéra (1923), and performing at the Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes (1925). His performances attracted much praise from prominent Parisian literary figures in the 1920s. Pierrot was always the center of his theatrical life. According to the biographer Albert Keim (1876-1947), who composed some Pierrot scenarios for the mime, Farina's face "has the tormented, ravaged face of an emaciated Beethoven, or that of a light-hearted and naive Pierrot figure with candid blue eyes that surprise vice and infamy, and sometimes also [he presents] the profile of a hunched, tortured daemon" (Driant 2012: 6-7). Just as importantly, he collected an enormous archive of documents, images, and artifacts related to the history

of Pierrot, which in 1947 his widow donated to the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (9-12). The archive served in part to resolve the "debate" about the future of pantomime between Wague, who advocated the abandonment of Pierrot, and Séverin, who remained attached to the belief that pantomime was Pierrot. Farina himself was ambivalent, uncertain, but he did not welcome the Futurist pantomime that Prampolini offered Paris in 1927 (13). However, by 1930, it was evident even to those outside of Decroux's tiny circle that the future of French pantomime depended on a way of thinking about the art that did not stem from either Wague or Séverin.

Although Decroux's success after 1947 in establishing his emphatically "humanistic" conception of pantomime owed much to peculiar postwar conditions and to the rise of existential philosophy and the aesthetics of "absurdism," much of this conception was the product of ideas and convictions already formulated in the 1930s and even the 1920s. World War II was not the catalyst for a new conception of "mime"; rather, it was the catalyst of a "liberated" or liberal political spirit for which mime was a convenient humanist emblem. Decroux was important as a teacher, not as an artist, of mime, and he established mime as an experience produced by schools rather than by authors or artists exploring the body's power to narrate. Like Copeau and Dullin, Decroux believed that reform of the theater was necessary to save it from commercialization, which in his mind was synonymous with technologization and the Wagnerian concept of integrating various scenic and sonic performance elements into a "total work of art" that supposedly displaced the actor as the dominant element of theatrical performance. Of course, an excessive amount of talk on stage was a major problem, but the solution was not to build shows around technological effects or music hall spectacles. The solution was to build performance around actors rather than around texts or scenic splendors. But actors required a systematic, institutionalized education to achieve the confidence to build performances around themselves. Schools were essential to the fight against commercialization, but, as Copeau realized, they also could provide a more reliable revenue stream than actor-centered theater productions. Decroux only slowly grasped that the school experience of the actor could have a greater impact on the perception of pantomime than theatrical pantomime productions driven by authors and artists who believed more in the authority of their narratives than in the

authority of actors to attract audiences. After World War II, "mime" became above all an educational activity, a process of teaching actors to free their bodies from the pressures of commercialization, from the pressures to narrate and technologize performance according to tastes learned outside of school. The academic environment placed a high value on the studio performance of *exercises*, often of an improvised nature that stressed the excitement of the present moment rather than the authority of structural relations between the past and the future. The education of the mime became a never-ending process of devising exercises that tested the performer's skill at creating "moments" unique to or within the performer rather than to some larger "scene" containing the performer. Mime education was not about theorizing the relations between pantomimic imagination and the constraints imposed on that imagination by linguistic, social, political, economic, cultural, and biological circumstances that motivate or depress the desire to construct or consume speechless bodily performance. Exercise-based education in the performing arts invariably makes the display of *technique* the dominant aesthetic value of performance. Bodily technique emerges as the counterforce to technologization and to domination of the performer's body by authors, by narratives, by persons outside of the mime "community." Dullin's concept of theater as a "community" was another idea from the 1930s that Decroux (as well as Artaud) found helpful in developing his mime pedagogy. But by community, Dullin implied a collective activity that remained closed off to other communities and lived according to rules, values, and aspirations unique unto itself. He did not mean that a theater community was indifferent to political, social, and artistic issues outside of itself; rather, the community existed as a unique collective processing of these issues, yet it could only survive through a sequestering of itself, through a collective sense of purpose that was indifferent to the value placed on it by "outsiders" (cf., Surel-Tupin 1984: 76-77). Decroux "transposed" this idea of the theater community to the studio classroom. The history of mime after World War II is largely a story of mime teachers and their students, of mime schools, of mime companies formed out of mime schools, of mime communities formed out of teacher-student networks with a shared education in mime. It is not a story of powerful theatrical productions, daring narrative or technological innovation, significant transformation of the entertainment industry, or certainly any more ambitious idea of pantomime than the

history of pantomime had already offered. Exercises were fundamental in building the mime community. Exercises strengthened the bond between teacher and student by making transparent the technique that bestowed the greatest value on the act of miming, a value that was not dependent on anything outside of the community performing the exercises. Mime became a technique identified with schools and controlled by teachers. With exercises, teachers and students were simultaneously performers and spectators of the pantomimic action, of the technique that authorized, so to speak, the pantomimic action. Through exercises in the studio, students built audiences for mime out of their shared appreciation of the technique that brought them together. As with ballet and the academies that sustained it, the core audience for mime consisted of students who had studied mime. This audience would never be large enough to control theater culture, but it was large enough to sustain an international community that did not depend on "masterpieces" of its art to grow or attract the support of "outsiders." It was an art of distinctive personalities, solo artists, masters of technique, and revered teachers. This way of thinking about pantomime was what made Decroux such an important figure after the war. Pantomime thrived during the Roman Empire because Tiberius abolished in effect the academies that purported to educate pantomime artists according to a "standard" determined by the academic community. Since then, pantomime had constructed a long, disorderly history of experimentation and unsystematic, unregulated efforts to define itself instigated by people educated to do something else. Decroux's achievement in redefining pantomime as "mime" receives closer attention in the section dealing with the pantomime culture from the 1950s to the 1980s. The point here is that the *ideological* framework defining mime was a product of the 1930s and of a small French community of teachers and students formed in the 1920s.

Pantomime and War

One might assume that during World War II, theater artists lacked the resources or opportunities to "experiment" with pantomime, assuming also that artistic experimentation is a "luxury" reserved for times of peaceful prosperity. It does seem that pantomime of any sort almost ceased to exist during the entire decade of the 1940s. Yet the war produced two of the greatest moments in pantomime history: Robert Helpmann's pantomimic production of *Hamlet* in London in 1942 and Jean-Louis Barrault's performance as Deburau in Marcel Carné's film *Les Enfants du paradis* (1944). By 1940, Western societies had become fixated, perhaps to the point of addiction, on talk as the primary variable for representing experience through performance. Radio and talking films showed how voices, speech patterns, dialects, accents, inflections, intonations, and dialogic interplay revealed a vast inner realm of being that purely visual representations concealed. Authors had always tended to stuff their plays with more talk than most spectators could endure, in large part because, to be heard on stage, voices had to project an intensity that was tiring and "artificial." But radio, talking films, and (in the late 1940s) television provided a huge range of "natural" voices that animated, soothed, seduced, or gripped the listener to such a degree that pantomime seemed an incomprehensible, severely crippled form of representation. It was apparently unrewarding to understand the world through the unnecessary "silence" of voiceless bodies. The talkiness of films from the 1940s seems astonishing: a naïve trust in speech to explain the world often props up an excessive and even lazy dependence on speech to tell a story, as if a story was worth telling only when filled with enough voices to prevent expectations placed on the revelatory value of the image itself from becoming too exorbitant. Within this cultural ideology, in which technology strengthened faith in the power of speech to reveal a kind of "inner world" occluded by the image, pantomime receded into a virtually dormant state.

Perverse Pantomime Fantasies in Nazi Germany

Nevertheless, the pantomimic imagination was not altogether extinct. Neither the war nor media fixation on talk deterred the aristocratic

Austrian writer and artist Fritz Herzmanowsky-Orlando (1877-1954) from composing two pantomime scenarios in 1941. A man of great inherited wealth and chronically poor health, he spent much of his life in an insulated world he was able to make for himself. He wrote prolifically in several genres: novels, short stories, dramas, ballet scenarios, and even a radio play. Yet the only thing he published in his lifetime was the comic fantasy novel *Der Gaulschreck im Rosennetz* (1928), which he actually wrote in 1917. Neither did he publish or exhibit any of the many bizarre color drawings he made throughout his life depicting grotesque encounters between weird humans and fantastic creatures. Only well after his death did the Austrian cultural world recognize him as a master of grotesque comic fantasy. By 1913, he belonged to a Munich circle of writers engaged in the promotion of mystical-occult theories of identity, body, and social organization, including Karl Wolfskehl (1869-1948), Ludwig Klages (1872-1956), Alfred Schuler (1865-1923), and the artist of macabre fantasy Alfred Kubin (1877-1959), with whom he corresponded for half a century. He was also a disciple of the reactionary Austrian apostle of the neo-pagan, racist, anti-modernist, and anti-feminist esoteric philosophy of "Theozoology," Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels (1874-1954), and in 1922, he became a priest in Liebenfels' neo-pagan cult religious group, Neutempler-Orden, founded in 1900. In his writings, however, Herzmanowsky-Orlando veered toward the fantastically comic rather than toward the mystical. In the 1920s, he and his wife cultivated the companionship of "androgynous" young women, to whom Carmen became intensely attached. He claimed to have joined the Nazi Party in 1932, yet evidence for his activities on behalf of the Party is difficult to excavate. When the Nazis annexed Austria and launched the war in 1939, Herzmanowsky-Orlando did not inscribe his attitudes toward these events, even in his correspondence (Goldberg 1988; Holeschofsky 2012: 3-4). He seems to have regarded writing and art as ways to insulate himself from a larger world over which he was powerless to exert any influence; writing and drawing in his Austrian and Italian castles confirmed his aristocratic sense of being able to live according to fantasies that were immune to the perturbations of world events effecting everyone else. He felt no need to share these attitudes by publishing his writings, for the mere act of writing was sufficient to affirm the aristocratic authority of his imagination. His two pantomime scenarios from 1941 are examples of a pantomimic imagination

unconstrained by any need to represent life as anything other than a bizarre fantasy--something imagined rather than lived.

Youghiogheny, set in the Prater fairground of Vienna in a "timeless era," entails an enormous cast of characters, fifty-eight altogether, although it consists only of a brief prelude and one long act. The prelude depicts preparations for the performance of a ballet in a coffeehouse garden, with the ballet master and the program director arranging dancers and escorting visitors (two old counts, Bobby and Buby), while workers arrange scenery, trees, a throne, and while the dancers move about to the accompaniment of a triangle and drum. With the sound of ovation, a ballerina escorts Bobby, who, raising his monocle, pinches her on the cheek as the curtain falls only to rise immediately. The point of the prelude apparently is to imply that persons for whom the narrative is intended to entertain and some figures on stage who are preparing to perform are also in the narrative, although the narrative that subsequently unfolds is not the ballet. The entire act consists of an incredible profusion of actions performed by a multitude of characters, many of whom remain on stage the entire time. Many of the actions occur simultaneously, and characters appear and depart with a sudden arbitrariness that suggests they exist simply to disrupt someone else's performance. The act feels like sitting in a fantastic, expressionist coffeehouse where a strange variety of people come and go and it is difficult to make a coherent story out of the scene. It is like one of Herzmanowsky-Orlando's bizarre drawings come to life: eccentric human forms interact with an exuberance that overrides any other motive for action or any further need to understand character. Here character is nothing more than the status assigned a body by a costume or racial attribute, although the coffeehouse society seems to lack any hierarchy of identity. Everyone in the piece exists only to contribute to an ecstatic chaos. Here is a half-page sample of the profusion of actions the author compiles in an act that contains twenty-two pages of a similar level of craziness:

> *The Photographer leaps from the table and, his upper body still covered with the black cloth, begins to crawl on hands and feet. He disappears to the right. The four [Persian] magicians and the Page-girls appease the audience. The Nymph throws them a hand kiss. Loud calls from the garden. The stage music intones the nymph hymn. The Flower Girls rush up against the new arrival [Youghiogheny, the little*

> *female dragon]. At the table, the fat Married Couple has placed the Trumpeter. The Oriental [Mauretainian] dancer gives the fat man a kick, because the Trumpeter had leaped up protestingly, and he falls. The Blonde [dancer] leaps over him, and [the Mauretainian and Blonde dancers] join the embracing Page-girls with the golden bow. The Pikkolo pulls the napkin from the desperately floundering Lady. The Pension Chaperon finally frees herself from the flypaper. It remains hanging on a branch. The Flute Player leaves her after a bow. She indicates to her [four] Pupils to curtsy before the nymph. The little Reporter is again rebuffed. The [coffeehouse] Manager wants to lead the Nymph, from whom the Moor takes off the fur coat, to the throne chair. The Reporter, notebook pulled out, stops the Moor and touches the fur. A bow-carrying Page-girl sticks him from behind with a gold arrow. Suddenly there appears, through the entrance to the coffeehouse, an old-fashioned tramcar, pulled by false horses. From it emerge not entirely satisfied coffee guests. Foremost, an old-fashioned Lord, who slouches toward the nymph in the throne. He immediately unfolds a newspaper. The last to appear [from the tram] is a Pifferari [an Italian shepherd, who here has a poodle as a companion]* (Herzmanowsky-Orlando 1991: 130-131).

This bewildering level of action is continuous throughout the act, with three times as many other characters participating. Amazing things happen: doves flutter in and out of the scene; flowers fall from above; gold coins pour from the table; cannon shots explode; a man lights a cigarette from a torch, and each time he inhales he expands to great size and when he exhales he shrinks to a small size. Different characters perform dances: a Hungarian czardas, a "macabre Fandango-caricature," a belly dance, Youghiogheny's dance to the accompaniment of a glockenspiel, and Ravel's *Bolero* (1927) accompanies much of the second half of the act, although other music, such as an ocarina-playing child, sometimes occurs at the same time. But the most fantastic figure is Youghiogheny, the little female dragon, who accompanies the Nymph and bears a "grim but somehow piquant mask," whose eyes are shifting colored lights. The dragon uses a lorgnette to observe people and waves a fan. She appears about a third of the way into the act, and for a while she participates, "radiating fire as the demonic-graceful central figure," in dances with Fan-girls and dervishes

before performing her solo glockenspiel dance, without, however, diminishing the multitudinous actions performed by many other characters, including Bobby and Buby and the Director. The Lord reads his newspaper throughout all this madness. But when a "friendly, big-headed Chinese family" arrives from the tram, the chaos escalates, with the Nymph dancing "seductively" with four Page-girls and the dervishes, into a "kind of bacchanal of the coffeehouse guests." Thunder resounds. The Page-girls decorate Youghiogheny in bridal veil and myrtyl. The Chinese lead Buby to the table, which is a fountain of gold coins. In the midst of many other actions, it becomes clear, from the gestures of the Nymph, now named the Fairy, that Buby should marry the dragon, but he refuses the money to do so. The now golden-haired Moor and the Pikkolo kneel before the Fairy and offer themselves as the groom, but the Fairy waves them away. The dragon, now possessing a "graceful girl's body," snuggles up to Buby, and the Fairy urges him to kiss her, but he refuses. Youghiogheny removes her mask to reveal a "delightful girl's face" that enchants Buby, and he kisses her. However, the Flower-girls and the Page-girls surround Youghiogheny and "shoot their gold arrows to the sky," roses fall from the sky, Bobby and Buby lead the Fairy to Youghiogheny, and the Fairy throws her arms around Youghiogheny's neck. The piece ends with bon-bons thrown to the audience. The guests compel the Lord, sitting on the throne reading, to bow before the Fairy and Youghiogheny before he is thrown out of the final tableau (Herzmanowsky-Orlando 1991: 121-164).

The scenario presents the coffeehouse as a bizarre, manic society in which people, regardless of their eccentricies or otherness, may behave in a friendly, exuberant, and libidinous manner without risking any punishment. Speech is completely unnecessary in this environment where one physical action ignities another and another. The Lord, the stereotypical Vienna coffeehouse newspaper reader, gets thrown out at the end because he really doesn't belong there: he's too normal—he buries himself in his newspaper without paying attention to the peculiar life around him. In this wild society, even the concept of marriage becomes subverted. The Nymph suddenly decides that Buby should marry her partner, the dragon, by placing his hand in Youghiogheny's, and the dragon, who has put on gloves for this action, makes encouraging gestures. Only when the dragon entirely reveals herself as a girl is he willing to kiss her. But this revelation compels Buby and Bobby to see the Nymph-Fairy as the

proper partner for Youghiogheny, so that it seems the audience witnesses the celebration of a homosexual marriage. Homosexuality also seems hinted at in the pairing of Buby and Bobby, the Mauretainian and the Blonde dancers, and the Moor and the Pikkolo, and in the quartet of Persian magicians. It doesn't matter to the Nymph that her partner is a "demonic-graceful," fire-spewing, sexually aggressive female dragon *and* a charming, delightful girl. Thus, in addition to its extravagant density of physical action, the scenario shows a pantomimic imagination cheerfully glorifying a "friendly" reorganization of sexual desire. Obviously such a scenario would not find a place on any stage in the Third Reich or even in print; most likely it would not have found a place on a stage anywhere else in the world. But for Herzmanowsky-Orlando, the mere writing of the scenario was sufficient to show that a happy, friendly society is also a wild, fantastic society best represented through an ecstatic excess of pantomimic action.

Herzmanowsky-Orlando's second pantomime scenario from 1941, *Der Raub der Europa*, is somewhat less difficult to describe than *Youghiogheny*, although it contains an even larger cast of characters. The piece contains three acts, yet it is shorter than *Youghiogheny*. The basis for the scenario narrative is the ancient Greek myth of the god Zeus, who abducted the Phoenician princess Europa by appearing to her as a white bull. But Herzmanowsky-Orlando only uses a few elements from the mythic material—or rather, he transforms the myth into a bizarre fantasy of an ethnically diverse society pursuing eccentric forms of sexual happiness. Though the action takes place during the "age of the bull" ("Tauruszeitalter"), anachronisms crop up, such as a large photographic group portrait of the heroes of Troy under the skull of an ox in the breakfast room of King Agenor, the use of matches, the reading of a newspaper, the swinging of golf clubs, and female harlequins on the deck of Zeus's ship. The long first act unfolds in the breakfast room of King Agenor's palace in Phoenicia and depicts the hectic environment in which the King enjoys his breakfast. It is similar to *Youghiogheny* in its extravagant profusion of pantomimic actions. Servants bring in food and drink, the Ceremony Director ushers in various guests and envoys, a morning concert plays, Kadmos, the son of Agenor, appears with seven of his athletic friends, Europa, the King's daughter, appears with her own entourage of seven friends to ask her mother, Agraule, who has a mustache, permission to go to the beach, half-naked black African female dancers—"an improvised

Laokoon group"—perform a "wild, acrobatic and—unfortunately—not entirely morally unobjectionable act." While these things happen among others, a pair of dwarves play different musical instruments, eunuchs attempt to police the unruly visitors, a large "dog's head" rises over the breakfast table to snatch food, the chief eunuch sings a song by Schubert, Agraule signals to prevent people from irritating her husband the King, but she herself sometimes irritates him, Europa plays the lyre, Moorish servants (one with a gold wig) hand things to others, the androgynous youth Gygax brings a bouquet for Agraule, the Ceremony Director performs a "passionate" dance while Kadmos's friends engage in athletic contests, Gygax hurls a spear, but it goes awry and bounces off Agenor's head, and an ape in a cage—presumably a chimpanzee—performs various actions throughout that comment on the actions of the humans: "One of the black maids dusts the bricks [...] so that the other [maid] stealthily [performs] a bit of a little belly dance according to Radaukles' rhythm. Agraule, who does not see this with pleasure, wipes a tear of emotion from her eyes and gives the ape a piece of sugar. The ape whistles loudly with two fingers toward the door, which the two dwarves, who had hidden under the table, have opened." The act eventually ends with several of the characters, including the ape, bowing before the audience and throwing kisses. The curtain falls, but the dog's head pokes underneath it to sniff a soufflé pot. In the second act, Europa and her entourage are at the beach. "Grandiose music" performed by Tritons resounds. A ship approaches, its crew consisting of "half-naked maritime Girls" and female harlequins. With circus-like ceremony, a young steer emerges from the ship, greets Europa courteously, kisses her hand, and summons his crew to toss flowers and confections to the girls. Europa responds by offering her hand for the steer to kiss. A group of fish heads, bobbing in the waves and holding notebooks, sing tunes conducted by a "chief fish head." The steer (Zeus) sinks to all fours, Europa climbs on his back, and the entourage places a rose necklace around his neck. From a great laurel tree, the crew tosses flowers, then scampers onto the ship. Europa and the steer board the gold shining ship with the purple tent. The tent closes as Europa and the steer enter it; the harlequins perform acrobatics on the golden nets as the ship sails away, leaving the entourage behind. The third act takes place in a palace on the island of Crete. Zeus lies in bed with Europa, as Moorish dancers perform for them. Europa kisses her beloved. Then Zeus removes his steer mask: Europa is

"delighted to see a beautiful young man before her." He summons his assistant Hymenäos and his Negro bureaucrats to bring the scepter by which the god will officially designate Europa queen of Crete. But Mercury appears with a message: Agenor and Agraule have arrived to take back their abducted daughter. The King and his wife are in an angry, impatient mood, to which Zeus responds inscrutably, while the dancing girls offer the royal couple sweets. Thunder rumbles, Agenor pulls out an umbrella, Europa sobs, and a three-headed hellhound, Cerebus, rises up growling from the floor in red light, but Agenor scares him away with his umbrella. Agraule sees that Europa loves the young man, and she submits to the urge to kiss him, but he waves her off, "darkly and majestically." Finally, lightning strikes: the scene reveals that the youth has transformed into a stone monument of Zeus. Ganymede appears in a pink cloud, painting his lips and spraying perfume all over Europa, who sobs on her mother's breast. Agraule and Agenor perform several actions (whispers) of negotiation, until Agraule realizes she has a "quite passable plaster for her daughter's wounded heart": " Who dances prettily and with victorious confidence [...] a chirping, masked little figure—is it a boy, a girl, or in the end a eunuch?" It is the androgynous Gygax, Agraule's favorite. She presents Gygax to Europa, who does not seem keen on him. But Agenor and his ministers find the idea appealing. Europa and Gygax kneel before him, he blesses them, and Mercury brings a crown to place on Gygax's head. Cerebus growls again. The parents embrace and kiss their children. A "gold-klanging" ballet, directed by Mercury, concludes the pantomime (Herzmanowsky-Orlando 1991: 165-183).

Der Raub der Europa presents a society animated by "peculiar" sexual desires: Agenor is married to a woman with a moustache, and she is fond of the androgynous Gagyx; Europa becomes enamored of a steer, and the god Zeus pursues a sexual relationship with a human but can only consummate the relationship by transforming into a beast; Kadmos and his gang of sporty friends exude an aura of homoerotic camaraderie that Gagyx tries to join; the two Moorish servant girls form an erotic pair, as do perhaps the pair of dwarves; the girl crew on the ship showers Europa's girl entourage with affection and gifts; Ganymede's blatant homosexuality annoys Zeus, though not Agenor and Agraule, who dislike the hyper-masculinity embodied by Zeus as a steer ("Roastbeef Lohengrin"), as an unmasked playboy, and as a stone monument, and they show no fear of him; they

agree that Gagyx is a superior partner for Europa. Crowding the stage with so many characters, many more than mentioned here, serves, as in *Youghiogheny*, to create the impression of a busy, glamorous society suffused with a warm erotic narcissism, in which characters whimsically interrupt the actions of others or perform actions simultaneously but separately, like the dog heads that pop up seemingly inconsequentially. Pantomime here constructs an image of society that is otherwise invisible to the spectator when language, speech, is superimposed over the actions representing social relations. The abundance of pantomimic action signifies a current of erotic feeling motivating the "work" or responsibilities of all the many figures belonging to the mythic society, including even the caged ape, who "trembles with lust" at the approach of an "old Austrian woman" wearing pants. But obviously this is not a pantomime that seeks to recover an archaic, primeval mythic experience of communal rapture buried by modernity. Rather, the pantomime sabotages the archaic myth by infusing it with a modernist (and anachronistic) idea of sexuality that is almost pornographic: the old myth is merely the inspiration for a utopian sexual fantasy, for an image of an "unspeakable" need for a new, happier society. In a sense, though, Herzmanowsky-Orlando is close to the ancient Roman pantomime in his transformation of mythic material, in his modernist treatment of pantomime as a bodily "metamorphosis" of a society (myth) rather than as a myth's metamorphosis of a body. His two scenarios represent a pantomimic imagination far in advance and far more uninhibited than people in the theater anywhere are likely to regard as feasible for production, even though his scenarios do not require material resources any greater than those for a large-scale ballet. But to stage such an abundance of unique pantomimic actions does require an equal abundance of acting and directorial talent that probably even the richest theaters cannot assemble. This is not because Herzmanowsky-Orlando has written purely literary "closet pantomimes" that take no account of the realities of theatrical production; it is because people in the theater are unable to think, to narrate, pantomimically—it is not "natural" to them. But, as a terrible war unfolded, for Herzmanowsky-Orlando, the unnaturalness of pantomime was perfect for imagining an unnatural but happier and much more productive, action-flooded society than those invoking "reality" ever allow.

Helpmann's *Hamlet*

Nevertheless, in the darkest days of the war, theater people in London did manage to produce a large-scale pantomime: Robert Helpmann's extraordinary version of *Hamlet* (1942). Born in Mount Gambier, Australia, Helpmann (1909-1986) began acting and dancing as a child, sometimes performing with his younger sister Sheila (1916-1994), who had a long career as an actress in Australia. In Adelaide, he studied social dancing with Nora Stewart, who in 1923 opened a dance club in the city. When the famous Russian dancer Anna Pavlova (1881-1931) toured Australia in 1926, Helpmann's father was able to arrange for her to meet with his son. She invited him to tour with her throughout Australia and New Zealand, and he took ballet lessons with her dance partner, Laurent Novikoff (1888-1956). Pavlova's performances so impressed him that he decided at the rather late age of seventeen to become a ballet dancer. She advised him to study the art in Europe, but his father's death in 1927 compelled him to stay close to his mother. For several years, he acted and danced in musical comedies in different Australian cities. He did not reach Europe until 1933, with the goal of becoming a ballet dancer. But the classes he took in Paris were so stressful that he began to doubt that he had any talent for ballet. He went to London to obtain work as an actor. Another actor gave him an introduction to the Irish-English dancer Ninette de Valois (1898-2001). Formerly a member of the Ballet Russes, de Valois had formed (1931) the Vic-Wells ballet company as a component of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Company, managed by Lilian Baylis (1874-1937), who wanted the theater to perform separate drama, opera, and ballet programs. De Valois needed male dancers for her company, and she immediately recognized Helpmann's potential. He performed in many ballets, and by 1935 he was starring in most of the works produced by the company (Walker 2009: 9-23). But he did not begin choreographing for the company until 1942, when he produced three major works, *Comus*, *Hamlet*, and *The Birds*. *Comus*, an adaptation of John Milton's 1634 masque libretto, featured Helpmann as Comus, the sinister forest demon who attempts to seduce the lost Lady into a life of debauchery and depravity, and in the piece Helpmann spoke lines from the poem as he danced. What made Helpmann unique as a dancer and then as a choreographer was that he regarded dance as a form of drama that required acting skill as much as movement technique: "the dancing interest is subservient to that of the story" (Brahms 1943: 28). Because he never had

much training in ballet technique, he did not regard stories as opportunities to introduce dances that displayed technique; rather, he saw dance as a means of characterizing bodies in relation to other characterized bodies. But in *Hamlet*, he dispensed with danced movement almost entirely and built the narrative out of pantomime.

Helpmann's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was about twenty minutes long, accompanied by Tchaikovsky's *Hamlet Overture-Fantasia* (1889), which invoked moods inspired by the drama rather than depicted musically specific scenes from it. As a counterpoint to the music, Helpmann's pantomime invoked specific scenes from the drama, a kind of monumental dumb show of key moments in the play. The piece begins with the dying Hamlet being carried off stage by four monks, and what follows, after a blackout, are a successions of "swift cinematic images, economical in movement but rich in significance; each one translates visually some key passage in Shakespeare's text" (Walker 2009: 54). Hamlet encounters the Gravedigger with Yorick's skull, and this image precipitates the Ghost of Hamlet's father, who reveals that his father has been murdered. Court ladies enter and perform a dance. Polonius and Laertes, Claudius and Gertrude, and then Ophelia appear: "They waver and fade and replace one another and bloom afresh before him. He makes to hold one and finds he is clutching the other" (Brahms 1943: 29). "In Shakespeare's Hamlet, Gertrude, the Queen, is an amiable but silly woman. It is the King who is the villain [… but Helpmann] and the personal beauty of Celia Franca [1921-2007] who dances the Queen, put a different emphasis on the play's characterisations: the Queen flowers triumphantly upon her second marriage like a lovely evil orchid, while the King dwindles to a puppet's stature with a puppet's potentialities" (Brahms 1943: 40). As Laertes bids farewell to Ophelia, they perform a "kittenish *pas de deux*," which Polonius interrupts to press her toward Hamlet. Ophelia and Hamlet perform their own "tender and lyrical" duet until Hamlet realizes that Polonius and the King are spying on them. The Court returns, the Page assembles everyone for a performance of the play-within-a-play: the Ghost plays the murdered King, Ophelia the Queen, and Hamlet Claudius. Ophelia/Gertrude hands the poisoned chalice to Claudius/Hamlet to pour into the King's ear. As Hamlet/Claudius points accusingly at the real Claudius, he embraces Ophelia/Gertrude while the Court rushes away in horror. Claudius kneels, Hamlet draws his dagger to kill him but cannot slay a man in prayer. Polonius intrudes upon the scene

and Hamlet stabs him. Gertrude and the Ghost return; Hamlet collapses unconscious on a stairway. Laertes and Claudius enter "struggling," but Ophelia, "stark mad in white satin," interrupts them: she dances, handing flowers to Laertes, Claudius, and Gertrude, before embracing Laertes "passionately." She departs, and Laertes rushes after her. Hamlet awakes: a funeral procession approaches, led by a woman. "As she reached him, she opened her veil to reveal herself as Ophelia and not the Queen." But the blue veil represents the river in which Ophelia has drowned. Pulling aside the shroud over the bier, Hamlet sees his mother's body. He sinks to his knees, while Claudius restrains Laertes from killing Hamlet, and both retreat from the scene. The Court returns, carrying goblets. Laertes, Claudius, and Gertrude greet Hamlet. As Gertrude drinks the poisoned wine, Laertes and Hamlet receive the foils from the Page. Laertes stabs Hamlet in the back, but Hamlet spins and stabs Laertes, who accuses Claudius of poisoning the sword tips. Hamlet turns his sword upon Claudius, but "seeing that Gertrude has been poisoned by the wine, he forces Claudius to drink its dregs." The drunken Gravedigger appears and offers Hamlet a drink from the skull he uses as a cup. But Hamlet dies, and the four monks lift his body and carry him away, so that the piece ends as it began (Walker 2009: 54-55; Brahms 1943: 29-30).

It is astonishing that Helpmann could weave together so lucidly so many tragic actions in under twenty minutes, but that is because of his use of economical pantomimic actions rather than dances (or words, for that matter) to construct the narrative. The dances never last more than a minute. Helpmann used complex arrangements of arm movements, especially for the Court scenes, to create what Brahms (7) calls "a superb sense of line," a kind of kinetic architectural relationship between bodies. The production exuded a heavy aura of expressionism. As always, Helpmann paid close attention to theatrical effects. The makeup was intensely white, luminous, with dark eyes and lips, like faces in films from the early 1920s. The costumes, beautifully detailed, even for the Court women in claret-colored gowns, evoked a late fifteenth century grandeur; Hamlet wore a black body suit with a white belt and an ornamental chain and cross over his chest; Ophelia wore a luxuriously luminous gown, "a lovely shade of lime-green," while Gertrude was ominous in a dark, bluish-green gown and a crown with exaggerated spikes. The Ghost also wore a disturbingly spiked crown, but his mask and costume appeared "alien"

within the historicized costume suite, like a figure from Chinese opera. The sleeves for all the characters were asymmetrical, producing a sense of imbalance in them. The reclusive artist Leslie Hurry (1909-1978) designed the costumes and the set. Helpmann invited Hurry to design the Hamlet production after he had seen an exhibition of the artist's work, but Hurry was "doubtful as to his ability to design for the theatre." When Helpmann outlined his concept for the production, Hurry consented to trying his hand at designing for the theater. In Britain, Hurry had the reputation of being an "ultra surrealist," apparently because he studied briefly in Paris in 1938. But his work strongly favors the subjective distortions of expressionism over the incongruous juxtapositions of surrealism. His décor for *Hamlet*, "certainly the most original setting for ballet seen in recent years," was a masterpiece of expressionist "representation of the subconscious." Combining a large painted backdrop and architectonic entrances with steps on either side of the stage, the set depicted a gloomy and fantastically baroque interior of a palace in red, orange, crimson, ochre, and green. The pillars of one entrance ascended to form a huge hand holding a dagger and wine cup; the pillars of the other entrance rose to form a large, spiked crown. A huge, helmeted, nearly nude figure brandishing a sword leapt forward from the backdrop, which showed arched doorways and a staircase receding into abysmal depths. Huge, obelisk-like daggers mounted on ornate pedastals framed the limits of the proscenium. "Above the great staircase [was] a vortex ring of flame from which leapt tongues and spurts of fire." "Mysterious, ominous, and filled with a sense of open and lurking menace, few spectators can look upon it for the first time without an involuntary catch of the breath" (Beaumont 1947: 7-9). [Figure 94]. Although Helpmann specified that he wanted an "overpowering" set that "dominated" the dancers and reduced them to "pygmy stature," such an extravagantly linear design actually allowed the performers to move, gesture, and act with an extravagant, undulant rapidity without appearing excessively exaggerated. Powerful scenic effects did not "distract" from the pantomimic action; they enhanced it. Helpmann's production showed images passing through Hamlet's mind as he moved toward death. This mind approaches its end without any verbal poetry, for the passage to death is a concatenation of memories performed in pantomime within a distorted frame.

Hamlet opened at the Theatre Royal York on December 26, 1942, with Helpmann playing Hamlet and Margot Fonteyn (1919-1991) as Ophelia;

Alexis Rassine (1919-1992) was the Ghost. The cast included several other performers who later became distinguished as actors or dancers: Moira Shearer (1926-2006), Moyra Fraser (1923-2009), Margaret Dale (1922-2010), Beryl Grey (b. 1927), Pauline Clayden (b. 1922), Lorna Mossford (1924-1972), David Paltenghi (1919-1961), and Julia Farron (b. 1922). What an amazing ensemble of youthful artistic adventurers facing the terrible proximity of death in the middle of a terrible war! Constant Lambert (1905-1951) and Julian Clifford (1903-?) alternately conducted the orchestra.



Figure 94: Scenes from Robert Helpmann's production of *Hamlet*, London, 1942, with Margo Fonteyn as Ophelia, bottom left, and Celia Franca as Gertrude, right. Photos by Russell Sedgwick, from Brahms (1943).

On the program, the piece followed Helpmann's one-act ballet *The Birds*, set to music by Respighi, and preceded scenes from Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker* ballet, in which Helpmann also danced. Critical response was largely quite enthusiastic about the production, with *The Dancing Times*, an arch defender of classical ballet, unique in complaining about the lack of dancing ("one can scarcely call it a 'ballet'") and the morbidity of the piece. The dance critic and novelist Caryl Brahms (1901-1982) published a generous sampling of press comments (1943: 31-37) that describe well the great excitement provoked by the production, and she asserts that audiences were "overwhelmingly enthusiastic." Her own monograph on Helpmann, published months after the performance and containing many beautiful photographs of the production by Russell Sedgwick, is itself evidence of the tremendous power of the production to stir the viewer. She believed that in fifty years, *Hamlet* would remain one of the works still performed (10). Helpmann revived the piece for the now Sadler's Wells Ballet in 1947-1948, with himself and Fonteyn playing their original roles with an otherwise new cast. In 1964, the Royal Ballet, which was the name of the Sadler's Wells Ballet after 1956, revived *Hamlet* again, with Rudolf Nureyev (1938-1993) as Hamlet, Monica Mason (b. 1941) as the Queen, and Lynn Seymour (b. 1939) as Ophelia. The production used Leslie Hurry's set and costumes. Here, as in Helpmann's original production, the ballerina playing the Queen was younger than the woman playing Ophelia and younger than the man playing her son. However, it is not clear how much of Helpmann's pantomimic approach remained in this production, for Nureyev was an ardent believer in classical ballet technique and carefully constructed his roles to display his virtuosity to the fullest, although in his 1966 production of *Sleeping Beauty*, he did employ some pantomimic scenes that did not include himself. Yet it is difficult to see how all the scenes in the piece could appear within the twenty-minute time frame without the efficiencies of pantomimic action: so it's remarkable that Nureyev even chose to perform the piece. Reviews of the production—"a remarkable ballet by any standards"—matched in excitement the response to the 1942 production (Walker 2009: 127). The Royal Ballet revived *Hamlet* yet again in 1981, with Anthony Dowell (b. 1943) as Hamlet, Monica Mason again as the Queen, and Antoinette Sibley (b. 1939) as Ophelia. This production, again using Hurry's set and costumes, had many more performances than any previous production. Anna Kisselgoff (b. 1938) reviewed the production for *The New*

York Times (June 22, 1981) and called it "one of the season's most interesting works."

> *It is 1940's modern and 1940's in its Freudian approach. The action is so fast-paced and seemingly straightforward that one has to look carefully for the interpretation of Shakespeare's play that is actually there. It is one in tune with, possibly in advance of, Ernest Jones's famous psychological view of a Hamlet with an Oedipus complex.*
> *In the hallucination scene that makes up this entire ballet, the Helpmann Hamlet is in love with his mother. He cannot tell the difference between her and Ophelia. The two women exchange places in a doorway, and at Ophelia's funeral the body on the bier is the Queen's. Ophelia herself has an incestuous hankering for Laertes - with Miss Sibley's Ophelia giving [... him] a passionate unsisterly kiss on the lips*.

The production used different dancers to perform the roles of Hamlet, Gertrude, Ophelia, and Polonius, causing Kisselgoff to remark that, "the beauty of this acted dance-drama is that it allows for diversity of interpretation," with each cast different in excellent ways ("Monica Mason's Queen had wonderful unconcealed passion toward her son in the evening, while Sandra Conley in the afternoon was more of a distant ideal"). In a review of a biography of Helpmann a couple of months earlier, Kisselgoff (*NYT* April 12, 1981) observed that *Hamlet* "is exactly the kind of ballet one would have thought past revival," and "it would be foolish to presume that the present concentration on pure-dance values is not going to make room for dance-drama again." Yet *Hamlet* has not had any production since 1981, and the focus on "pure-dance values" since then has become, if anything, even more intense and inhospitable to Helpmann's actorly-dramatic aesthetic. In 2009, David Bintley (b. 1957), formerly a choreographer for the Royal Ballet and currently a choreographer for the Birmingham Ballet, asked the Royal Ballet the status of *Hamlet* in the repertoire in connection with the centenary of Helpmann's birth. But the Royal Ballet told him that it had "got rid of it, which is not really forward-thinking at all. If you want to eradicate ballets then there are plenty that can be got rid of but a heritage ballet like that with those great designs? I would certainly have kept that" (Bintley 2015).

Hamlet moved Helpmann much deeper into acting. In 1944, he played Hamlet in Shakespeare's play at the Old Vic in a production directed by Tyrone Guthrie (1900-1971) and Michael Benthall (1919-1974), Helpmann's lifelong partner. He alternated with Paul Scofield (1922-2008) in the role, creating a contrast between a "cerebral, aloof" Hamlet (Helpmann) and a "passionate, romantic" Hamlet (Scofield) (Rosenberg 1992: 138-139). The production was so successful that Helpmann and Benthall revived it in 1948, and Helpmann even performed sections of the play on the radio. Helpmann continued to choreograph and dance with the Sadler's Wells Company, including the extraordinary and controversial *Miracle in the Gorbals* (1944), a dark, violent expressionist ballet set in the slums of Glasgow. He choreographed the dances for the fascinating ballet film *The Red Shoes* (1948) and started acting in films. But he never returned to the sort of pantomimic drama he created with *Hamlet*. The reasons were probably political. Another major choreographer for Sadler's Wells, Frederick Ashton (1904-1988), became deeply resentful of Helpmann's success. Despite his own fame, Ashton was intensely insecure. His popularity with audiences and critics derived in large part from the "lightness" and glittering charm of his ballets. He favored a pure dance approach to ballet, with many of his pieces avoiding narrative altogether to emphasize the elegance and abstract beauty of movements in themselves. He feared that Helpmann's much "darker," expressionistic approach to ballet, with its heavy reliance on pantomimic acting at the expense of classical virtuosity, would cast a deep, dominant shadow over the company, although Helpmann, not one to worry much about his power over others, continued to perform in Ashton's ballets, most notably when he and Ashton played the grotesque stepsisters in Ashton's production of *Cinderella* (1948). Ashton conspired with members of the company to insure that "his importance to Sadler's Wells Ballet would never be jeopardized" (Walker 2009: 56). His success in reaching this goal depended on tightening his relationship with the director of the company, Ninette de Valois, who was quite a crafty administrator as well as an important choreographer. De Valois realized that Helpmann, as an actor, dancer, and choreographer, would always find opportunities outside of the company, whereas Ashton would never find a life outside of the company. Ashton's aesthetic prevailed, and in 1963, he replaced the retiring de Valois as director of the Royal Ballet until 1970, when he, too, retired. By 1960, Helpmann's days as a dancer in

the company had begun to wane, but just before she retired, de Valois commissioned him to do a short ballet, *Elektra* (1963), with an exceptionally violent musical score by Malcolm Arnold (1921-2006). The wildly acrobatic expressionism of the piece, "associated with 'adagio dancers' in nightclubs and cabarets," provoked turbulent controversy and a severely divided critical response, while audiences apparently found the "volcanic passions" of the piece quite thrilling (Walker 2009: 122-123). Soon after, Helpmann moved back to Australia to develop a series of innovative, sometimes very controversial projects for the Australian Ballet in Sydney, where he would remain for the rest of his life. *Hamlet* was a great pantomime inspired by the war and the threat of extinction. Postwar revivals of the piece stirred audiences unforgettably. But the circumstances that created the work were inimitable: a company struggling to survive, a choreographer-director whose education in classical ballet technique was weak and whose love of acting was as strong as his love of dancing, a profound, "serious" uncertainty about the future, the sense that if "what comes next" (narrative structure) depends on what one remembers, then the future is death, and people just starting to choreograph, to dance, to design. This tragic pantomime about the sinister majesty of death was the work of an utterly unique configuration of young people who did not have a clear idea yet of what "English" ballet should be. By the 1980s, such a combination of circumstances was impossible anywhere within ballet. The standard of proficiency for the performance of classical ballet technique had become so high that ballet has become an art almost entirely fixated on the virtuoso display of dance skills. After Helpmann, the postwar development of pantomime would not find innovative nourishment from the ballet.

Les enfants du paradis: Children of Paradise

The most impactful pantomime performance in the 1940s was Jean-Louis Barrault's performance as Baptiste Duburau in the French film *Les enfants du paradis* (1944-1945), directed by Marcel Carné (1906-1996). Regarded by many film critics as one of the greatest films ever made, *Les enfants du paradis* (*Children of Paradise*) makes pantomime as the French conceived it a central, motivating force in the narrative. The idea of making a film about the mime Deburau came from Barrault when he met with Carné and his longtime collaborator, the poet and screenwriter Jacques Prévert (1900-1977) while on holiday in St. Tropez in 1942 (Forbes 1997: 11;

Barrault 1972: 167). The three-hour, two-part film takes place in Paris over a period of several years, roughly 1828 to 1836, with nearly all of the action occurring in the theater district or "Boulevard of Crime." The story depicts how performances at the Funambules Theater draw four men to an enigmatic, elusive woman, Garance, who works as an idealized "living statue" in pantomimic performances. Prévert based the characters of the four men on historical personages: the actor Frederick Lemaitre (1800-1876), the criminal and would-be dramatist Pierre François Lacenaire (1803-1836), the Duke of Morny (1811-1865), presented in the film as Comte Édouard de Montray, and the pantomime Jean-Gaspard Deburau (1796-1846), presented in the film as Baptiste Deburau. Played by Arletty (1898-1992), Garance conducts amorous relations with all four men, but the only one she loves is Deburau. She becomes the mistress of the Comte de Montray and leaves Paris for several years to live in London and Scotland. When she returns to Paris, she nightly and secretly attends pantomimic performances by Deburau. Discovering her presence at the theater, Lemaitre, Lacenaire, and de Montray compete with each other to claim her attention, but when Lemaitre learns that she has only loved Deburau, he contrives to have the mime rendezvous with her at the theater in which Lemaitre is performing the role of Othello. The social/class animosity between de Montray and Lacenaire reaches its peak when, during an intermission, Lacenaire, weary of de Montray's contempt for him, exposes to the public the romantic tryst between Garance and Baptiste on a terrace of the theater. De Montray in turn humiliates Lacenaire by having him thrown out of the theater. A few days later, Lacenaire completes his revenge by murdering de Montray in a Turkish bath and awaiting the police to arrest him for the crime. Garance and Baptiste share a night together in the hotel in which years before they first communicated their romantic feelings for each other. But in the morning Baptiste's wife Nathalie, played by Maria Casares (1922-1996), appears and tries to persuade him to return to her. She is as much in love with him as he is in Garance. As she embraces him, Garance flees the room. Baptiste follows her into the street, but loses her in the jubilant crowd of carnival celebrants. She disappears forever from his life.

The film projects a powerful romantic grandeur, but a tragic logic drives the narrative: for the main characters, love never achieves fulfillment, reciprocation, or even happiness that is more than of the utmost brevity.

The only love that seems enduring and mutual is that exchanged between the actors and their audience ("the children of paradise"). As Lemaitre explains to Lacenaire (Marcel Herrand [1897-1953]), when the criminal visits the actor in his apartment with the idea of extorting money from the man he thinks has robbed him of Garance: "To hear and feel your heart beat at the same time as the audience" is what makes acting "the finest" profession. Theater here mobilizes "passions" in the characters and brings them into contact with each other. The performances on the stage do not "mirror" the life of the film characters. Rather, they represent a "poetic" life that the characters seek to intrude upon and assert themselves as "authors" of it, a point made most humorously by Lemaitre when in the performance of a bad melodrama, he ceases to speak the lines written for his character and begins improvising a critique of the play, leaving the stage altogether and assuming the position of spectator in a loge, from which he addresses the audience and the actors with his extravagant criticisms. Pantomime is the most "poetic" form of theater insofar as it creates "more love"—that is, it awakens the love of Garance and Baptiste for each other and Nathalie's love for Baptiste, whereas the other men, who disdain pantomime, only desire Garance, who loves none of them. Lemaitre, played by Pierre Brasseur (1905-1972), gets his start in the theater by performing small roles in Baptiste's pantomimes, but he feels profoundly stifled by not being able to speak with the bombast and grandiosity that come more naturally to him than from the authors of plays: "I'm dying of silence!" Prévert, however, was reluctant to write the screenplay because of his aversion to pantomime, and he agreed only after Barrault said that he and Decroux, who played Baptiste's father in the film, would supervise all the pantomime scenes, which they did with the help of Georges Wague (Turk 1989: 220). Yet Baptiste is more than the role he plays on stage, and indeed, his love for Garance is an expression of a doomed desire to escape that role.

The film presents three scenes in which Baptiste performs pantomime. In all three scenes, he enacts the figure of a "white" Pierrot. The first scene, however, which introduces the character of Baptiste, takes place in the street before the theater and presents a proto-Pierre. Anselme Deburau addresses the crowd and invites people to attend the theater. He introduces his son, Baptiste, sitting before the crowd, as "someone you will not see on stage," for Baptiste is a "know-nothing, a dolt, a sleepwalker, an unbelievable nincompoop, a blockhead, a good-for-nothing, a famous

father's despair" whom the father clubs on the head. Baptiste sits forlornly, as if catatonic. Instead of the typical Pierrot white pajama costume with large buttons and a black skullcap, Baptiste wears a white waistcoat, a white vest, white baggy pants, a large, floppy white hat, and long blond hair, although he paints his face close to that of the typical Pierrot. While Anselme speaks to the audience, Baptiste sees Lacenaire steal a watch from a man watching the presentation. Anselme goes into the theater, leaving Baptiste alone on the street stage. When the man discovers that his watch is stolen, he accuses Garance, standing next to him, of having stolen it. The police arrive and seize Garance, but Baptiste intervenes and demonstrates through comical pantomime how Lacenaire stole the watch. The police release Garance, which inspires the audience to cheer exuberantly the skill of the pantomimist. The pantomime is unusual in that in reconstructing the crime Baptiste impersonates, with caricatured gestures, the man with the watch, the thief, and Garance. Garance thanks Baptiste by giving him a flower and blowing him a kiss as she wanders away, which inspires the smiling Baptiste to see in her the great love of his life. But this scene also establishes Baptiste as a superior pantomime artist who replaces his abusive father on the stage of the Funambules. In contrast to the other ambitious male characters in the film, who love to talk in a poetic, philosophical, aphoristic, literary manner, Baptiste embodies ambition as a "silent" phenomenon, as a thing unspoken, undeclared but merely manifested through a gesture, a movement, a glance, a posture that others cannot perform so well or so "poetically."

The second pantomime occurs somewhat later, after Baptiste has become a star. This time he wears the typical white Pierrot costume with huge sleeves, huge buttons, billowing pants, and the black skullcap. The rather modernistic painted scenery depicts a city street with the statue of a goddess (Garance). Pierrot becomes enamored of the goddess, although a police officer (Anselme) enters and discourages his unwholesome attraction to the statue [Figure 110]. Pierrot retrieves a bouquet of roses that he offers in vain to the immobile goddess. Depressed, he falls asleep beside the statue. Harlequin (Lemaitre) appears, picks up the roses, and offers them to the goddess, who comes alive, floats down to him, and accepts the roses as he guides her away. When the policeman awakens him, Pierrot becomes distraught to see that the goddess has disappeared, and he dives off the stage. The curtain falls only to rise almost immediately. The scenery now

depicts a drab countryside. Pierrot sees the beautiful woman with Harlequin in a boat gliding past him on the river. He longs for her, but she vanishes beyond his impotent, tormented reach. He decides to kill himself with a rope, but as he prepares to hang himself from a tree, a little girl appears and asks to use his rope to skip rope. When he retrieves the rope from the girl, a woman, played by Nathalie, appears and asks to use the rope to hang laundry with Pierrot holding one end of the rope. While holding the rope, Baptiste sees Garance chatting intimately with the harlequin Lemaitre in the wings, which causes him to freeze with jealousy and Nathalie to cry out in alarm: "Baptiste!" a violation of the law that forbids pantomime theaters from uttering anything on stage. Backstage, Nathalie explains to her father, the manager, that Baptiste has changed, that he is "lost," and that only she can see his "torment," because she loves him. The pantomimic scene represents only a tiny fragment of pantomimic action that the Funambules would have presented in a show, yet the scene is not in itself particularly interesting. What is interesting is how the film shows characters outside the pantomimic scene intruding upon the lives of the characters in the pantomimic scene: from his box, the Count de Montray (Louis Salou [1902-1948]) sees Garance and becomes infatuated with her; Lemaitre and Garance in the wings disturb the performance and partnership of Baptiste and Nathalie. In costume backstage, Baptiste expresses gentle, quiet concern for Nathalie's "distress," while she confides that she has "faith" that someday he will love her. In costume backstage, Lemaitre and Garance discuss their dying relationship: neither is happy with the other, and in her sleep, Lemaitre observes, she calls out "Baptiste!" As he leaves her dressing room, de Montray enters, bringing with him an enormous wreath and proposing to her, using grandiosely flattering euphemistic language, that she become his mistress. While changing from her goddess costume into her street dress, she explains that her life is fine as it is, but she accepts his card, which proves useful when dealing with the police again, who suspect her of having conspired with Lacenaire to commit another crime. When the Count leaves, Baptiste enters, still in costume. He treats the wreath as a symbol of his own funeral, which is better than a wedding for a groom without a bride. The memory of his happiness when he danced with her in the tavern and escorted her to the hotel room he found for her never leaves him. He dances momentarily and sadly with himself, then draws a sword from a prop rack and hacks violently at the

wreath, confessing his hatred of the Count, Lemaitre, and himself. Garance asks why he assumes she does not love him. But Nathalie enters; she declares that Garance does not love him, only she loves him, no one else can love him, and no one else can break the invincible truth that she and Baptiste belong to each other. The point here is that the pantomime performance extends beyond the stage to include a drama that no single character can see as completely as the action on the stage. This drama bestows a power on pantomime that is really not in the pantomime performance itself, which consists almost entirely of simple, childlike, exaggerated gestures whose "poetic" quality rests upon the assumption that no one would perform them except on a stage the characters explicitly say has "changed" them. As a result, the pantomime performance on stage appears much simpler and less sustainable than the dramatic and much more subtle performances that unfold before the camera off stage. The film propagates the idea of pantomime as a "poetic" or romantic art, but this idea depends on the *cinematic* representation of Baptiste, for example, carrying the Pierrot image into dramatic scenes off the stage in which he performs bodily movements of a far greater refinement and subtlety while also speaking.

The third pantomime occurs several years later, after Garance has returned from Scotland and watches nightly, from her private box, the pantomime performances at the Funambules. This pantomime is a heavily abbreviated version of the old *Le Marchand d'habits* scenario from 1842. The scenery here is handsomer, more costly, indicating a rise in the fortunes of the theater and of Baptiste. At night, a luxurious carriage, pulled by a mechanical horse, glides across the stage, with Pierrot stealing a ride on the rear bumper. An elegant, aristocratic woman, the Duchess, played by Nathalie, descends from the carriage and ascends the steps admitting entrance to an opulent mansion. Through a window, the spectator can see the silhouettes of couples dancing. Pierrot hops off the carriage as it pulls away and, in his white pajama costume and skullcap, jauntily struts toward the mansion entrance. But a pair of guards blocks him and then tosses him on his butt, causing a great roar of laughter from the "gods," the "children of paradise," the crowd in the cheap seats of the top balcony. The dejected Pierrot signifies his unhappiness at having the wrong costume to gain entrance to the ball. He dances momentarily with himself, emulating the dancing silhouetttes in the window. He then hears the call of an itinerant

clothes merchant bearing a rack of second hand garments. Leaping exuberantly, Pierrot prances around the merchant, who tosses him a pair of items. But when the merchant extends his hand for payment, Pierrot plunges his hand into a big pocket and comes up empty. The merchant tussles the clothes from Pierrot and moves away. Pierrot draws a sword from the merchant's scabbard and stalks him with a chilling intensity, causing Garance in her box to remark to Lemaitre: "He is gentleness itself. How does he manage to look so cruel?" Pierrot plunges the sword into the merchant, elegantly watches him fall, leaps over the body, and gathers up the clothes he wanted. He stealthily tiptoes away with large steps as the curtain falls. But the film intercuts the pantomime performance with scenes of Garance talking with Lemaitre in her box, where the production manager has escorted the actor, who wears his arm in a sling as a result of his duel with the author he insulted on stage. The dialogue between these two updates the viewer on Garance's life over the past few years, then drifts toward other themes: Baptiste's "marvelous" artistry, her current non-happiness, Lemaitre's jealousy over Garance's persistent love for Baptiste, his willingness to inform Baptiste of Garance's desire to see him during her brief stay in Paris, and his realization that his jealousy has now enabled him to play Othello. Backstage during the intermission, many things happen that effect the performance of the pantomime on stage. Lemaitre and Baptiste meet after many years and praise each other's success as theater artists. They join Baptiste's wife, Nathalie. The actor praises Nathalie for her beauty, though Nathalie says she is not beautiful but happy. Lemaitre also meets the couple's young son. The insidious ragpicker Jericho (Pierre Renoir [1885-1952]) arrives, urging Baptiste to move away in disgust with Lemaitre. An informant, a spreader of malignant gossip, and dealer in contraband goods, Jericho complains to the stage manager about Baptiste "murdering" him every night in the pantomime and then complains that his sad fate is to inspire no one's love. He informs Nathalie of Garance's presence in Box 7, and she sends her little son to the box to inform Garance that his family is very happy, the implication being that Garance should stay away from Baptiste. As Baptiste in the wings prepares to go back on stage, Lemaitre reveals that Garance is watching the show and would like to see him again. The pantomime resumes inside the ballroom of the mansion with many couples waltzing and the Duchess (Nathalie) at the center. The Duchess drops her fan, which is the cue for Baptiste, in his new toreador-

like costume but retaining his skullcap, to sweep onto the stage and retrieve it. He takes a position to dance with the Duchess, but freezes, thinking of Garance. In tight close up, Baptiste, with a memorable expression of painful renunciation, turns his white face away from the frightened Nathalie. He rushes off stage, abruptly terminating the performance and arousing dismay from the audience. He goes to Garance's box, but she has gone. In a subsequent scene, Baptiste broods in the hotel room where he first declared his love for Garance. When the concierge brings him supper, she suggests that he cure his depression by attending a performance of Lemaitre's *Othello*. It is during the intermission of the play that Baptiste and Garance run into each other, observed by Lacenaire, who turns the rendezvous into a humiliating "scandal" for de Montray and himself. Here, more than in the rope pantomime, the actions of characters outside of the pantomime overwhelm the action on stage and even destroy it. Pantomime seems too fragile to absorb or even to survive the "passions" of those who perform or watch it, although the same might also be said of Lemaitre's bombastic performance as Othello. Pantomime mobilizes the passions of the characters without representing the passions beyond a perfunctory, stereotypical set of gestures. This is not a weakness of the film, for which pantomime is merely a sign of a "poetic" spirit that actually conceals what only the film can see: the destructive interlinking of real and simulated passions. Barrault performs Pierrot masterfully, but as Baptiste outside of Pierrot, he is powerfully captivating, his speech exquisitely economical (compared with nearly everyone else), his movements elegant, precise, delicate, cautious, his smile, his gaze, even a slight turn of his head or a shift of his eyes, all seem like the inflections of a sublimely gifted artist who brings a majestic poetry to the body, to the character of Baptiste. It is Barrault/Baptiste, not Pierrot, who brings about the redemption of French pantomime. This point is fundamental in understanding how the film almost single-handedly rehabilitated the decadent, nearly extinct Pierrot figure, which then inspired, in the postwar years, the emergence of the mime school culture, guided by Decroux, that succeeded in dominating international perception of pantomime until the end of the century (cf. Him-Aquili 2012) [Film Still Series A].

The haunting romantic aura projected by Barrault is the heart of the film, even if other characters, though splendidly acted, are more interesting or complex as characters (rather than as acting performances). Postwar

audiences for the film, which were very large, believed that Barrault's enchanting performance was due to his training in pantomime under Decroux, a belief reinforced by the partnership of Barrault and Decroux in constructing the pantomimic scenes. Indeed, the film earned for Barrault the reputation of being a great mime, even though after the film he seldom performed any pantomime. But Barrault's enchanting performance became entangled in the strange political significance of the film, which further contributed to the rehabilitation of Pierrot. The making of the film in Nice and Paris during the Occupation entailed tremendous difficulties that Turk and Forbes have described extensively: film production resources were curtailed, weather, personal conflicts, and financial problems hobbled production, and both collaborators and members of the Resistance participated in the production, which necessitated much devious, stressful maneuvering on the part of Carné and his associates to avoid German interference (Turk 1989: 180ff.; Forbes 1997: 10-16). Upon its release in March 1945, the film simultaneously symbolized the Liberation of France from Nazi tyranny and France's "tragic" accommodation of the Nazi Occupation. Arletty spent eighteen months in prison for treason because of her brazen love affair with a German Nazi officer. Carné himself faced interrogation because the film received financing from collaborationist and German sources. However, the immense popularity of the film assured its place in history as a monumental achievement that restored cultural glory to a humiliated France. The film takes a distinctly and entirely French subject, the theatrical milieu of the Funambules, and uses it as a metaphor from which the viewer may discern a political significance: in a milieu, in a society consumed by theater, pervaded with masked or concealed identities, and smothered with deceptions, illusions, dreams, and failures to love or inspire love, pantomime makes the act of "not speaking out" seem deeply poetic and romantic, the sign of an epochal tragic loneliness insofar as the solitary, melancholy figure of Pierrot totally dominates the film's representation of pantomime. *Les enfants du paradis* perhaps represents best what Turk regards as the "unmitigated sadness" of Carné's film work as a whole: "Equating individualism with abject solitude, [Carné's films] suggest that human fulfillment resides not in maturity, critical consciousness, and emancipation, but in regression, dependence, and disengagement from the material world" (1989: 433). While one may easily apply this statement to the characters of *Les enfants du paradis*, with

theater on stage, backstage, and in the audience signifying an ironic, collective desperation to negate this tragic loneliness, Barrault/Baptiste/Pierrot represents this "abject solitude" in its most romantic vein, as the heritage of a nation, a poetic defiance of societal constraints and yet a glamorous incarnation of defeat and lost happiness. But as Turk's treatise demonstrates, this "unmitigated sadness" pervaded Carné's films of the 1930s. The Occupation did not cause it; rather, the Occupation allowed it to achieve monumental, heroic grandeur in *Les enfants du paradis*. The abject solitude of the Barrault/Baptiste/Pierrot figure functioned beautifully as an icon of the existentialist philosophy that emanated from Paris across the Western world in the postwar years and defined much of Western culture until the 1970s. This philosophy, as explicated especially by Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), proposed that human beings are fundamentally alone and responsible for their actions; they are "free" and cannot use God or the state or society to absolve them of responsibility for their own actions or the actions of others, otherwise they justify totalitarian catastrophes like Nazism in the name of some "higher meaning" for existence. Freedom is a condition of existence, not an ideal toward which humanity strives. Freedom makes one alone, yet obligated to respect the freedom of others, which means, as Sartre so memorably put it in the last line of his play *No Exit* (1944): "Hell is—other people!" But *Les enfants du paradis* invests this existential alienation—the failure of love to dissolve an inescapable aloneness—with a romantic grandeur and historical credibility that ironically and incongruously encouraged audiences to see the philosophy in continuity with the past and therefore as the persistent basis of a unified national identity. The film's representation of pantomime helps explain why the mime culture that flourished in the postwar years was so backward looking, a restoration of a premodern "poetic" civilization, a variation on the solitary Pierrot figure that completely ignored modernistic developments in pantomime from outside of France and even from the huge adventure in pantomime provided by silent films. Decroux himself said: "I have invented nothing [...] because I am hostile to novelty. [...] I do not like novelty. When someone proposes something new, it is because they do not have the courage to value something old" (Decroux 2003: 80). Barrault brought pantomime to the film, but the film made pantomime in France as Decroux and Barrault defined it.



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Film Still Series A: Scenes from Marcel Carné's *Les enfants du paradis* (1944-1945). 1) Pantomime scene at the Funambules Theatre, with Nathalie (Maria Casares), Anselm Deburau (Etienne Decroux), and unidentified actor in lion's costume. 2)

Pantomime scene with Pierrot (Jean-Louis Barrault) falling in love with the statue of an ideal woman (Arletty). 3) In pantomime, Pierrot sees his ideal woman sail away with Harlequin (Pierre Brasseur). 4) Pierrot holds up the wash for Colombine (Maria Casares) with the rope by which he intended to hang himself. 5) Baptiste crosses out his Pierrot image in the mirror when he realizes that Garance cannot love him as he desires. 6) In the *Marchand d'habits* pantomime, Pierrot's love for the ideal woman makes him vicious when he has no money to buy nice clothes to gain entry to the party where his love awaits; so he steals the clothes seller's sword and stabs him. 7) Offstage, Pierrot usurps or effaces Baptiste as the center of domestic life. 8) In portraying Baptiste offstage, Jean-Louis Barrault's performance is much more restrained physically than when he portrays Pierrot in the pantomimes on stage. Except when he takes a sword to the huge bouquet of flowers Count de Montray has given Garance, Baptist appears as a quiet, introspective, melancholic figure defined by his alluring economy of gesture. 9) Much of Baptiste's character, as opposed to Pierrot's characters, Carné and Barrault reveal through luminous close ups of greater emotional resonance and subtlety than any of the exaggerated actions performed by Pierrot in the Funambules pantomimes. The film was of immense importance in creating the "mime culture" of the 1950s to the 1980s, but it was Barrault's romantic performance as Baptiste rather than his performance as Pierrot in the Funambules pantomimes that drove the enthusiasm for mime. 10) The Funambules pantomime performance with audience as imagined by Carné and art directors Léon Barsacq and Raymond Gabutti. Photos: Carné (2002).

The Postwar Mime Culture

Decroux

On June 27, 1945, with the success of *Les enfants du paradis* well affirmed, Barrault and Decroux, with two students, Éliane Guyon (1918-1967) and Jean Dorcy (1898-1978), presented a program of "corporeal mime" performances at the Maison de la Chimie in Paris, which was and remains a large lecture hall primarily used for scientific conferences. Leabhart (1989: 48) contends that more than a thousand persons attended the presentation, although the Maison de la Chimie website designates the hall as containing only 851 seats. The guest of honor was the English theater theorist and apostle of an abstract-symbolic theater, Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966), who had lived in France since 1931, having since then retired from any active involvement with theater. A purpose in inviting Craig was "to show up the doctrinal links from Craig to Copeau, from Copeau to Decroux, from Decroux to Barrault" (Leabhart 1989: 49). Craig had become famous in the early years of the century for promoting the idea of the stage director as the defining figure of theatrical performance, determining all production elements to create an emotionally powerful visual experience in which actors became scenic details, "marionettes," within the director's omniscient vision. It may seem odd that the actor-centered Copeau-Dullin school of theater would link itself to Craig, but Decroux's ambition was to transfer the absolute authority over the actor from the director in the theater to the teacher in the studio classroom. The 1945 program contained eight pieces followed by Decroux's lecture on the theory of corporeal mime. Several of these pieces, which Decroux devised in the 1930s, he and his students performed in sometimes slightly revised versions for decades to follow. Barrault performed his horse wrangling scene from *Autour d'une mere*; Decroux, Barrault, and Guyon performed a choral piece, "a panoramic evocation of famine, mass movements of population, revolution and finally peace"; the final performance piece was the *Combat antique*, performed by Decroux and Barrault, which the two had developed for a production of Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra* at the Comédie-Française earlier the same year, although Barrault and Decroux had worked on it since 1933

(Leabhart 1989: 50-51; Kurkinen 2000: 110). For Decroux, this single performance was more a demonstration of his mime technique, a "work in progress," than anything one might call a theatrical production. Yet it is doubtful that, if Leabhart is correct about the attendance, Decroux ever again had such a large audience for anything he performed as corporeal mime. The event generated much publicity for Decroux's pedagogic approach to mime, but this approach soon separated him from his greatest students. In 1946, Barrault produced, under the title *Baptiste*, a stage version of Cot d'Ordan's *Marchand d'habits* pantomime from *Les enfants du paradis*, with music by Joseph Kosma (1905-1969); with the Compagnie Renaud-Barrault, he revived the production in 1948, again at the Marigny Theatre. The production involved elaborate costumes and stage décor that emulated those in the film [Figure 95]. Decroux regarded Barrault's use of pantomime as retrograde and trivial, while Barrault believed Decroux had become single-mindedly obsessesed with achieving an absolute purity of bodily signification that was antithetical to the pleasures of theatricality (cf. Dobbels 1980: 54). But after *Baptiste*, Barrault abandoned pantomime altogether and devoted himself to building a grand career as an actor and director in spoken drama and films. In 1948, Decroux forbade another of his famous students, Marcel Marceau, from entering his school, because Marceau had cultivated an interest in pantomimic characterizations, particularly his Pierrot-like "Bip" character, which he had introduced with great success to Paris at the Théâtre de Poche in 1947 (Benhaim 2003: 266). Meanwhile, Éliane Guyon "perfected the creations of Decroux, *L'usine, L'esprit malin, La statue*," but in 1949, while touring with Decroux in Switzerland, she met her future husband, the painter and scene designer Jean Monod (1922-1986), and quit Decroux's ensemble. She and Monod went to Rome with an actor, Marcel Imhoff (1922-1979), to do movement research at the Alessandro Fersen Theater Academy. There, she, Monod, and Imhoff began constructing cabaret performances that involved an interaction between pantomime and puppetry: Guyon was especially gifted at creating characters with her bare hands. In 1952, she returned to Paris and worked for a month with Decroux and his son Maximilien (1930-2012) demonstrating some of Decroux's pieces. But her focus was on her own production at a small theater of her "mimodrama," *Le Tribunal*, which involved pantomime and marionettes constructed by her husband. Decroux disapproved of her use of masks, costumes, dramatic narrative, and

characterization. Guyon therefore "distanced" herself from Decroux and went on to stage further marionette dramas, and in 1954, in Lausanne, she appeared as the Soldier in her production of Stravinsky's *Histoire du Soldat* (1918), which used giant puppets (Chercher 2005: 774-775; Poletti 2011: 32-33). Her work deserves greater scrutiny, if it can be excavated, because of its strange combining of pantomime, puppets, and marionettes, but also because it exposes a unique tension between a female student and Decroux, whose hallowed legacy rests heavily upon an overwhelmingly male sector of his student corps.

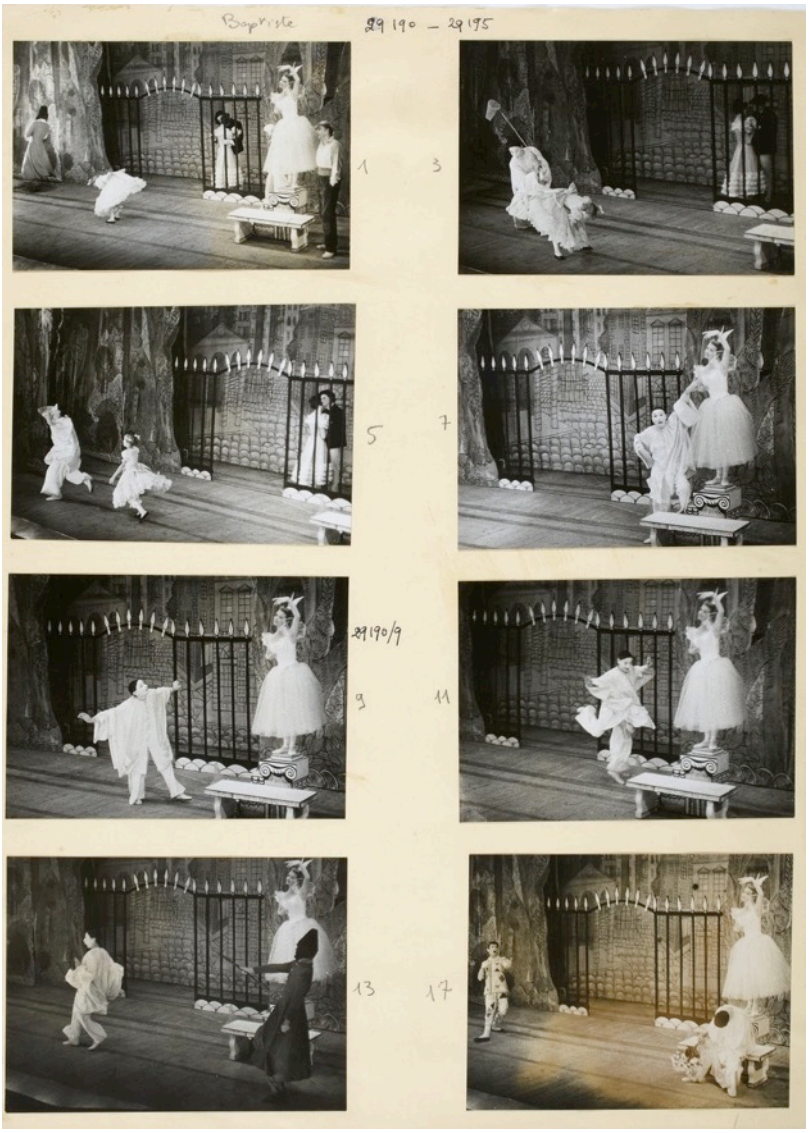




Figure 95: "Marchand d'habits"scene from Jean-Louis Barrault's production of *Baptiste*, Paris, 1946. Photo; Gallica, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Decroux established a small school in Paris in 1947 that enabled him to receive invitations to give demonstrations and workshops, which sometimes lasted months, on corporeal mime in Amsterdam (1949), Lausanne (1949), Israel (1950), the Sorbonne (1951), the Netherlands (1952), England (1952), Milan (1953), Stockholm (1954), Zurich (1954), Oslo (1955), and Stockholm again in 1956. After Marceau discussed mime with American interviewers, the Actors Studio in New York City in 1957 invited Decroux to teach for eight weeks, apparently as part of an effort to prepare actors to handle assignments associated with the "theater of the absurd." He gave further demonstrations at the Dramatic Workshop and at Baylor University in Texas. In 1959, he returned to New York, opened a school, lectured at ten universities, and taught a course at New York University. Much of the film documentation of Decroux's demonstrations and "evocations" took place in the United States. He did not return to Paris until 1962, when he opened another small school, but many of his students opened their own small schools in Sweden, Italy, Israel, Canada, and the United States. An International Festival of Mime in Berlin sought to honor him as a "great pioneer of modern mime," but he refused the invitation (Benhaim 2003: 266-267). In 1963, he published his only book, *Paroles sur le mime*, which was mostly a manifesto for a radical redefinition of theater. By the mid-1960s, Decroux had achieved an international fame that circulated primarily through mime schools established by his students and through educational institutions seeking to incorporate corporal mime into their curricula, with the mime school culture producing work for "public" audiences mostly at international mime festivals attended mostly by mime students and educators.

Decroux developed a severe, ascetic pedagogy that complemented his intense aversion to any public performances of corporeal mime. He separated mime from pantomime, for he regarded mime, as he defined it, as a completely modern phenomenon, while pantomime was an archaic, "ridiculous, and indecent" form of theatrical performance that attempted to tell stories through gestures and was therefore a corrupt form of writing ("thought corrupts movement") rather than a new vision of the body's expressive power (Decroux 2003: 61, 202). Mime, however, has no existence of its own: "for mimes to exist, there have to be schools of mime" (92). To be a mime or to perform mime requires the appropriate education in a mime school to achieve the goal of mime, which is to perform "research" on

bodily expression rather than to perform for people who have no experience of the research mission. Decroux demands total, exclusive focus on the body as the goal of study. The student learns what the body can "evoke" absolutely and free of attachments to things or even other bodies. A profound distrust and distaste for theater pervades the learning environment. Like Copeau, Decroux practiced a sequestering of the student from the world outside of the studio classroom. The bare studio is the ideal space for mime performance or, preferably, "demonstration." This space contains no scenery, no costumes, no masks, and no props; the lighting is always flat and even; music is unnecessary and obtrusive; texts have no place here. The research goal of the actor is to "evoke" a relation to the world, to things, to others entirely through the body. If a mime wants to show that he climbs a ladder to retrieve a tool with which he builds a chair on which he will sit, he should "demonstrate" these actions entirely with his body, although for Decroux, the "purest" aim of mime is simply to *evoke* the act or concept of building without representing it. "Evocations" in Decroux's pedagogy were free of drama, avoided showing conflict, and did not tell stories or represent characters. In performing demonstrations, students should wear loincloths or neutral body stockings, although in early demonstrations, Decroux wrapped a thin veil around his head. In the film documentations of his own demonstrations done around 1960-1961 in Texas and New York, Decroux appears alone in a loincloth or white body suit against a dark or white background. His demonstrations evoke numerous abstract actions through stylized movements that emphasize a balancing of weighted and counter-weighted pressures (pushing and pulling movements) within the body, usually within about twenty seconds: "The Weight Lifter," "The Rope Puller," "The Boxer," "The Bell Ringer," "The Offering," "Melancholy," "The Effect Becomes the Cause," "Transporting a Glass of Water," "Placing Plates between the Guests," "Inclining with Respect and Shaking Hands." In one of the longest (one and a half minutes) demonstrations, "Greeting the Collectivity," Decroux makes expansive gestures with his arms while shifting his weight from right foot to left and pivoting, as if surrounded by persons he must acknowledge in an elaborately formal manner. Decroux hardly ever moves more than three or four steps away from the initial standing pose of equilibrium. Indeed, the goal of the demonstrations is to display a ceremonial formality in the performance of basic actions like greetings and lifting or setting down

imaginary objects. Kathryn Wylie and Maarjana Kurkinen suggest an influence on Decroux of the elaborate stylization of bodily movement in Japanese Noh theater dating from Copeau's 1924 experiment in Noh aesthetics, *Kantan*, which Decroux himself acknowledged as significant (Wylie 1993: 111-112; Kurkinen 2000: 111-113; De Marinis, 2003, 272-274; Decroux 1963: 18). But the demonstrations also remind one of the elaborate ceremonial gesturing introduced at the court of Louis XIV and his successors, a ritual dignification of humble bodily effort, and Sklar (1985: 73) notes a student who observed that studio sessions with Decroux resembled a ritual designed exclusively for initiates.

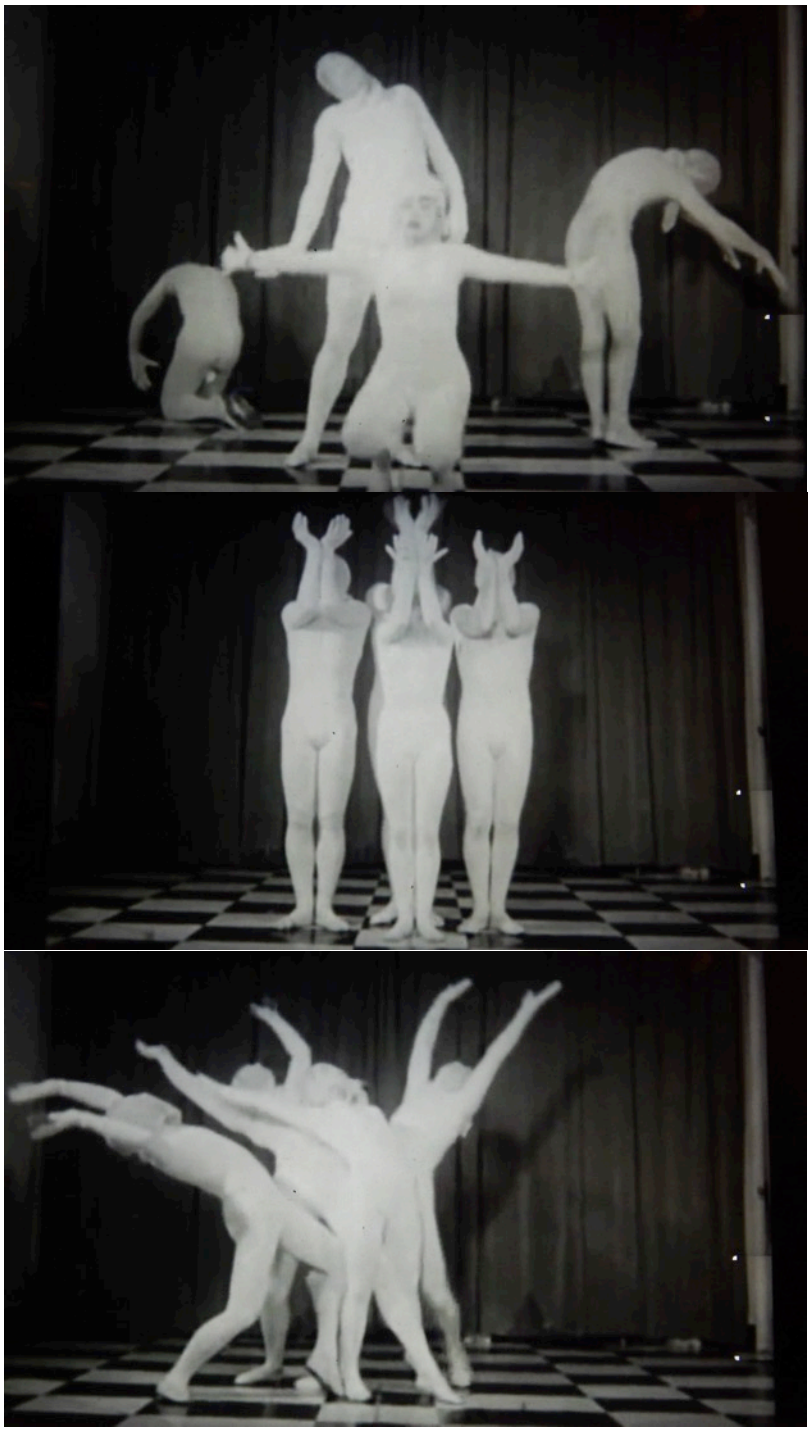
While Decroux focused largely on the education of the solitary body, he did construct some evocations involving two or more bodies. These date mostly from the 1930s and 1940s, but students afterward performed them for decades. With these evocations, he supplied musical accompaniments. In *Le Statue*, about three and a half minutes long, Decroux appears as a sculptor in black while the female statue wears a white leotard. The piece develops a Pygmalion theme: the sculptor rises inspired from a slumber with his lumpen material (the female partner), makes commanding gestures to which the female figure responds with dancelike movements, then applies hammering and chiseling gestures that bring the statue to life. Impressed with his creation, he picks up the statue and carries it exultantly, until it embraces him. He slips out of the embrace and sinks exhausted to the floor as the statue stands smiling. *L'Usine*, about five minutes long, used three performers of indeterminate sex wearing hooded black body suits contoured with a white stripe. Here the performers wore silver masks and performed movements evoking the operations of machines: stamping, pendulum, hacking, sawing, flipping movements synchronized with mechanical sound effects devised by Decroux. The piece had no dramatic structure, no concept of struggle between or within machines or between the body and the machine; rather, it straightforwardly demonstrated the ability of human bodies to emulate the geometric movement patterns of automated factory machines, which was hardly innovative even in the 1930s. *Le Matin*, with harp accompaniment, and *Le Duo Amoureux*, accompanied by the slow movement of Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto (1901), were more lyrical demonstrations, four and six minutes long respectively, in each of which a male-female couple in white body stockings slowly exchanged or shared ardent, picturesque poses of devotion, as if they were

statues moving in a kind slow motion trance, always remaining within a couple of feet of the places in which the pieces began. One of his most interesting demonstrations, *Les Arbres*, dating from 1946, lasts about nine minutes and features his largest documented ensemble—four persons wearing white body stockings and veils covering their heads, the face never having any importance in his aesthetic. The piece does not imitate the movement of trees; rather, it evokes, so to speak, the lives of trees and of groves through continually shifting configurations of flowering, blooming, branching, bending, reaching, fluttering, swaying, arching, canopying, bobbing, and lilting motions, sometimes in unison, sometimes individually, mostly with the arms and hands [Figure 96]. The performers do not move more than two steps beyond their intial and concluding "grove" position. In one film document, the first movement of Beethoven's "Moonlight" Sonata (1801) accompanies the action, but in another film document, Decroux uses unidentified postromantic orchestral music, which suggests he did not conceive the piece in relation to any specific musical source. In *Combat antique*, one of the earliest demonstrations, from about 1933, about four minutes long, two men, bare-chested, enact a physical combat brandishing imaginary swords and spears and making lunging, feigning, darting, stabbing, shielding, dodging, tangling, leaping, and taunting motions until one of them, almost inadvertently, stabs the other, who falls. The victor prods the body to make sure it is dead, then walks away. Though somewhat less abstract than other Decroux demonstrations, the *Combat antique* has remained a popular exercise in mime schools dedicated to Decroux's philosophy, in part because it emphasizes his enthusiasm for "masculine," sport-inspired movement themes, which has proved effective in making corporeal mime more attractive to male students than dance. But as Decroux's ideas about mime became more abstract, he responded to the question of what differentiated mime not only from pantomime but from modern dance in a quite long-winded, abstruse manner, deciding eventually that "the need to dance is not the need to narrate" and that "dance is an evasion, mime is an invasion" (Decroux 2003: 110-116, 194). In practice, dance movement consumes much more space than mime movement as he taught it. He believed that the torso anchored the body, whereas in dance, the torso functioned like a motor to animate the arms and legs into movements that pretended it had no weight. Sculpture provided a huge inspiration for Decroux, and he regarded mime as a kind of

"mobile statuary" (Lecoq 2006: 44). "I think often of Rodin, never of Deburau," he claimed, and according to Petra Kolařova, who has written an enormous dissertation on Decroux's relation to Rodin, "the work of Rodin appeared to [Decroux] as the antithesis of classical dance" (Kolařova 2015: 127, 132-133). Yet his evocations never disclosed a serious "need to narrate." They show instead a need to sculpt the body with movement.

While Decroux described his work with students in his studios as "research," he had no interest in sharing the results of his research with the public, through performance or publication. His little book *Paroles sur le mime* consists entirely of essays written in the 1930s and 1940s. The film documentation exists because universities wanted it. He relied on his students to "publish" his work through interviews with him and their own memoirs of working with him. A cult atmosphere emerged that, as Kurkinen has remarked, encouraged "the zealousness of the students of Decroux" to produce a discourse on him in which "one is let to understand that writing or doing research on Decroux's art without having first-hand experience on his mime disqualifies the scholar altogether" (2000: 14). Yet he deserves credit for initating the international expansion of mime culture from the 1950s to the 1980s, even if much of this global expansion was due to the performance success of a few students who had departed from the master's teachings. The mime culture spread primarily through schools established by students of Decroux and through universities that sought to incorporate corporeal mime into their performing arts curricula: schools provided a more reliable source of income than the production of performances for which audiences were willing to pay enough to see. Mime education, with its minimalist aesthetic of the bare studio, was less expensive than traditional theater arts, with their costly scenic technologies, costuming requirements, complex collaborations, theater facilities, royalty payments, marketing obligations, and intricacies of casting. Perhaps, too, many students found mime less intimidating than conventional theater or dance studies, which often encourage demoralizing competitiveness, although numerous actors and dancers have studied mime as a way of enhancing their competitiveness. Decroux's socialism was attractive. Mime, he contended, was something one could only learn and learn only through the application of the appropriate technique; it was not a "talent" given by genetic predisposition or biological determinism. The

learning of the technique came from the teacher and the pedagogical regime, not from an



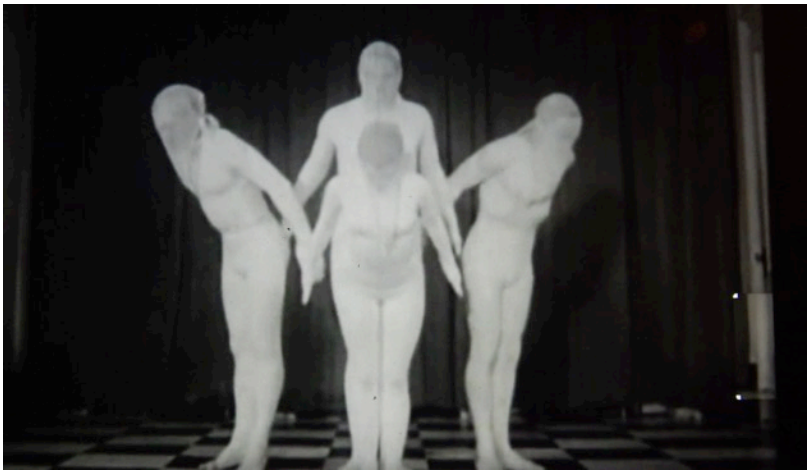


Figure 96: Etienne Decroux's *Les arbres* (1947), as filmed in his New York studio in 1960. Photo: screen capture from projectomimicas YouTube channel, posted on December 19, 2012.

intuition or "instinct" or even from mere exposure to art or performance. Ostensibly, an egalitarian spirit pervaded the studio, for the purpose of mime was not to produce art consumed by public audiences, but to create a way of living with the uniqueness of one's body, regardless of whatever "talent" the body may possess. Most students studied mime to become teachers of mime and to reproduce the studio classroom environment that defined the life of the mime. One learned technique above all through exercises, and exercises often resulted from a process of improvisation that resisted any "complete" idea of an action. The chief product of mime study was therefore not performance nor was it the analysis of performance, but exercises, the discovery, development, and compiling of exercises, the deployment of exercises that showed a student how to "use" a part of the body as a sign. But using a body part as a sign is hardly the same thing as using the body to signify, to narrate, or to build a representation of the world. It is somewhat like learning a vocabulary without learning to compose an essay or a story. Decroux himself, however, never published any compilation of studio exercises. In interviews, Decroux discusses mime in broad, philosophical terms, sometimes referring to great authors, like Hugo, or great artists, like Rodin, and often in an aphoristic style: "The mime must not detest technique [...] The technique is the proof of personality. It is an obligation, a language, and it tells us: 'You have to do it like this and not like that.' [...] Monsieur Paul Bellugue [1892-1955] was

professor at the Academy of Fine Arts [...] One day he said to me: 'Technique is the obedience of the hand to the spirit.' I was struck by the clarity of this reflection [...]" (Decroux 2003: 119). But he never described his technique or particular relations between body parts, "counter-weights," rhythms, and signs. He introduced theoretical terms like "body lines," "segmentation," and "immobility," without showing their applicability to particular bodies in relation to particular "evocations." Leabhart mentions an exercise in which "students manifested the five qualities that [Decroux] associated most with corporeal mime: pause, weight, resistance, hesitation, and surprise" (Leabhart 2003: 437). But he doesn't describe this exercise or any others, which apparently he derived from his old demonstrations and evocations. Instead, his students compile his many aphoristic statements: "The feet are the proletariat of the body" (Decroux 2003: 202); "Immobility is indissociable from the law that says 'one thing at a time'" (347); "The mime is no longer a mime if he uses music" (136). One of his most prominent students, Thomas Leabhart (b. 1944), a professor at Pomona College, has described the classroom atmosphere when he studied under Decroux from 1968 to 1972. But the discussion of the classroom atmosphere does not include examination of the pedagogic system or technique applied by Decroux; it focuses instead on identifying the teacher's personal qualities, his way of interacting with students, his style of communicating: Because he "insisted first on technique and that improvisation and inspiration came only afterwards, he tended to show us how what he humorously called dry and boring technique worked in an improvisation. He did this by first giving us a philosophical context for work (the conference), and then allowed us to realize how this technique could enslave the imagination and work 'from within to outside'"; "Decroux responded differently to our efforts to transcend ourselves: mockeries, warm praise, tender compassion [...] Often a long cold silence followed our efforts [... then] commentaries such as: 'You must sing with your muscles' or 'You have not found the rhythm of the thought' [...]" (Leabhart 2003: 437). In other words, exercises were "proof of a personality" insofar as they revealed the mysterious or "elusive" charisma of a teacher in sculpting the minds and bodies of students (cf. Soum 2003: 405ff.). Mime physicalized the mysterious, unwritten relationship between teacher and student, which was the thing the student could best reproduce rather than any relationship to something outside the studio.

Even though "mime cannot be learned from books," according to Samuel Avital, because "it is passed down from teacher to student," nevertheless, the period from the 1960s to the 1980s saw a prodigious publication of books on mime (Avital 1977: 101). Nearly all of these books explain how to do mime and how to be a mime; they emphasize mime as a technique learned by performing exercises or "routines" recommended or described by the author. They avoid analyzing or evaluating mime performances or the history of pantomime. They also tend to focus on mime as a solitary activity, somewhat like a hobby that opens the path to a more creative life. One of the most imaginative of these publications is *Mime Work Book* (1977), by Samuel Avital (b. 1932), a Moroccan-born Jew, who migrated to Israel before moving in 1958 to France to study with Decroux, Barrault, Marcel Marceau, and Maximilien Decroux, who had established his own school and company in Paris in 1955. In 1964, he moved to the United States, where in 1971 he founded his mime school, Le Centre du Silence, in Boulder, Colorado. *Mime Work Book* is a montage of texts and photographs including autobiographical statements, interviews with Avital, interviews with other mimes, brief reflections on the history of mime as it derives from the *commedia* tradition, Pierrot/Deburau, Decroux, Barrault, and Marceau, quotations from mime students, polemical essays on mime ("Not every white face in a town square gesticulating hopelessly is a mime"), and remarks on the mystical relation of mime to Kabbalah ("In our Jewish culture in Morocco we have days that we don't speak. We fast from speech.") (Avital 1977: 20, 137). But much of the book consists of advice on how to do mime, including numerous exercises and philosophical aphorisms in the manner of Decroux grouped under thirteen headings, such as "Staccato and Slow Motion," "Snail Movement," "Bases and Fixations," "Trips," "Gravity": "Work the traject in staccato rhythm. Break down the everyday movement into pieces of movement like a camera lens opening and closing. Walking in staccato send a telegram to one part of the body and move it. Be careful the movement is not tense. Breathe the movement" (33). Some advice relates to habits of living as a mime: "Fast from words once a week, choose a day and keep it steady" (86). "The Singing Plastique Cycle" consists of eleven exercises that the mime should perform daily; No. 7: "Pelvis: first lift each hip straight up, alternating; then Belly Dancing, i.e., swirling hips in a circle, 26 times" a day (87). Avital also provides a "Language of the Thinking Body" that lists words under four

categories of "communication" between teacher and student, such as "Exercises: spiral, withdrawal, interwinding [...] caress the space, steal the space [...]" (90) and "Expressions" that the mime should keep in mind as motives for making a sign with the body: "the body as a brush," "shower on fire," "don't be too nice with yourself," "embrace the opposites," "heels kissing," "rewind the film," "be your own mirror," "vigorously, not violently" (92-94). Then, "Samuel Says" offers several pages of teacherly aphorisms: "The slower the breathing, the more relaxed," "A teacher is one who takes what is given and gives what cannot be taken," "Orgasm is freezing," "When you think you can do it, your progress stops," (110-111, 116-117). Avital is more open to theatricality and public performance than Decroux, and his book includes numerous photographs of himself, in circus-like costumes, and his students, in white face, performing in public spaces. But the book avoids analysis of mime performance itself or the aesthetics of mime performance. The focus is always on how to improve one's life through the practice of "mime work." In all these ways, the book is typical of the many books on mime that appeared from the 1960s onward and established mime as an individualistic enterprise in self-development, an actor-centered life that only incidentally intersected with theatrical performance.

Marcel Marceau

Yet the international spreading of mime school culture probably could not have happened without the enormously popular, commercial performances of Marcel Marceau (1923-2007), the most famous of all Decroux's students. Marceau's performances, many of which occurred on television, made the world aware of mime as a distinct genre of performance that justified motives for studying mime. Many of those who came to Paris to study mime in the 1960s and 1970s were residents of other countries; Leabhart says that most students in Decroux's classes were foreigners (2003: 432). Marceau was born in Strasbourg. His parents were Jewish; he joined the Resistance in 1944, after the Nazis had murdered his father in Auschwitz. Though he spoke several languages, he developed an intense attachment to pantomimic performance while working for the Resistance, where he mimed the role of a scout leader while smuggling Jewish children to safety in Spain. He always regarded the silent films of Charlie Chaplin as the greatest influence in his life. In 1945, he enrolled in Dullin's dramatic arts school, where he studied under Decroux. The

following year, he appeared as Arlequin in Barrault's production of *Baptiste*. This experience inspired him to produce his own "mimodrama" the same year, *Praxitele et le poisson d'or*, in which he introduced a prototype of the Bip character that became his lifelong performance persona. Marceau then appeared in 1947, at the tiny Théâtre de Poche, in a performance of several Bip sketches. The performance prompted Decroux to expel Marceau from the school, for Decroux felt that Marceau's desire to entertain corrupted the goal of corporeal mime. However, Marceau's goal was to produce more mimodramas in which Bip only occasionally appeared merely as one of several ensemble characters played by other actors. After presenting Bip in a rather somber mimodrama, *Mort avant l'aube* (1948), he formed (1949) a company to produce more mimodramas: *Le Manteau* (1951), an adaptation of the 1842 overcoat story by Gogol; *Pierrot de Montmartre* (1952), "inspired by the black Pierrot of Alphonse Willett"; *Les Trois Perruques* (1953), another comedy set in 1840s; *Loup de Tsu Ku Mi* (1956), an archaic, Kabuki-like drama in an abstract Japanese setting; *Paris qui rit, Paris qui pleure* (1958), in which Marceau played a Parisian street newspaper vendor in what appear to be bygone days; *Don Juan* (1964), an adaptation of the 1630 play by Tirso de Molina (1579-1648). In all these works and others, Marceau collaborated with the actor Pierre Verry (1913-2009), also a former student of Decroux; and Etienne Bertrand Weil (1919-2001), who had photographed some of Decroux's demonstrations, photographed Marceau's productions, and later became notable for using multiple and time-lapse exposures to capture the movement of stage performers. While the narrative organization of action in Marceau's mimodramas remains incomplete (he never published any scenarios), the photos of them show an investment in simple scenery and fairly complex period costumes, with the stage containing up to ten characters (*Les Trois Perruques*) [Figure 97]. Joseph Kosma was one of the composers who wrote music for the productions. All the productions, even *Paris qui rit, Paris qui pleure*, evoke a nineteenth century atmosphere. He also made a short film, *Au Jardin* (1954), shot in a studio with a rather elaborate set and accompanied by impressionistic orchestral music, in which he appeared as nine characters, only one of which vaguely resembled Bip, who visit or work in a city park. But after the *Don Juan* production, he stopped producing mimodramas, although when he opened his school in 1978, he called it the Ecole Internationale de Mimodrame de Paris Marcel Marceau. He said the reason he stopped

producing mimodramas was because, despite his international success as a solo mime, he could not secure government subsidies for his company (Fifield 1968: 156). In 1955-1956, he toured Canada and the United States, performing his solo act featuring Bip. Audiences in cities across America responded euphorically, adoringly, and this incredible triumph propelled him to worldwide acclamation. From then on, he toured prodigiously throughout the world almost until he died. He performed everywhere on television and people everywhere who otherwise knew nothing about mime or pantomime knew of Marcel Marceau. Over the decades, his solo programs consisted of a series of "sketches," each usually about three to five minutes long, in which Bip mimed his relationship to invisible objects against an empty background, as if he inhabited a space without any context. Bip changed only slightly from when Marceau invented him in 1946: in addition to the white face and Pierrotesque makeup, he wore white sailor pants, a white or dark half-jacket, a striped T-shirt, and often, though not always, a shabby opera hat with a large red carnation. The sketches presented Bip in a variety of activities: catching a butterfly, with his fluttering left hand simulating the insect, a lion tamer frustrated by the failure of his lion to leap through a hoop, a waiter serving a dish to a dissatisfied customer, Bip trying on different masks that distort his face, Bip dancing a comic tango, Bip playing a matador. Bip was not always in a comic mood and occasionally slipped into moments of pathos, as in a sketch in which he mimed the stages of life from birth, to childhood, to youth, to maturity, to old age, and to death; "The Cage" showed Bip attempting to break through invisible walls that surround him and finally sinking into apparently fatal resignation. Nearly all of the sketches dated from the 1950s, and even sketches produced after then remained faithful to what Bip was in the early 1950s. Bip's immense popularity seemed to derive from his power to signify the unchanging, eternal solitude of "humanity" without speech, the charming and even absurd "innocence" of humanity when speech did not corrupt it. Yet Marceau was well aware that Bip entirely controlled his pantomimic imagination and prevented him from achieving much success outside of Bip, such as the mimodramas: "But I am a prisoner of my art. People do not want to see me as a character other than Bip" (Andriotakis 1979: Paragraph 7).



Figure 97: Scenes from Marcel Marceau's production of *Le manteaux* (*The Overcoat*), Paris, 1951. Photo: Gallica, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

No one in the mime culture ever achieved the popularity of Marcel Marceau; it was as if the world needed no more popular or even equally popular mime artist than Marceau or needed any larger idea of mime or pantomime than that represented by Bip/Marceau. Bip projected a harmless, charming, friendly, congenially "segmented" image of solitary human innocence unencumbered by words or contaminated by any despoiling context. He was amusing, without being particularly funny, for

to be funny, Bip would have to traffic in nasty caricatures, display some satiric bitterness, disclose people or situations worth ridiculing, reveal a disillusioned attitude toward life. The postwar theater and literary worlds assumed that audiences had no interest in seeing pantomime explore the sometimes demonic, sometimes grandiose, but always adventurous paths opened up earlier by the Austro-German pantomime culture, the silent film, or even the Cercle Funambulesque. Postwar ballet and modern dance could move into shadowy, disillusioning, or at least not "innocent" zones of human experience without losing their audiences, as seen, for example, in the work of Martha Graham, Jerome Robbins, Peter Darrell, or Dore Hoyer. It seems incredible that theater people everywhere could not imagine pantomime as anything more than the French idea of it as a very small scale, nostalgic, repetitive remodeling of Pierrot and Chaplin's "Tramp" figure; otherwise, it was an activity left for schools to do as "preparation" for something more ambitious than pantomime itself. Marceau conveniently embodied the limits or summit of pantomime, which implicitly were the limits of the unregulated, speechless body in performance. The English novelist Mave Fellowes (b. 1980), the author of a novel, *Chaplin & Company* (2013), about a young woman who desires to become a mime like Marcel Marceau, has insightfully remarked that "after Marceau, there was nowhere left to go. I think he took his particular style—he was the best at it there could ever be. There was no room for further evolution, and no one has yet come up with another version of mime which is as appealing" (Hartnett 2014: Paragraphs 6-7).

The Spread of the Mime Culture

A major alternative to Decroux's heritage of mime education came from the Parisian-born Jacques Lecoq (1921-1999), who never was a mime and never studied mime. His background was in physical education, and his thinking about physical movement derived in large part from his extensive study of gymnastics and training for various sports, especially swimming. The poetic qualities of athletic movement encouraged him toward theater, as did the actor Jean Dasté (1904-1994), Copeau's son-in-law, who arranged for him to act briefly (1945-1946) with a company in Grenoble. Dasté introduced Lecoq to the mysteries of masks in performance, an experience that shaped his philosophy of movement education and compelled him, in 1948, to spend the next eight years in Italy working with the mask maker

Amleto Sartori (1915-1962). With Sartori, Lecoq discovered much about the original *commedia* tradition that French theatrical practice had obscured. In Milan, he established in 1952 a school attached to the Piccolo Teatro established by the director Giorgio Strehler (1921-1997) and the impresario Paolo Grassi (1919-1981). He directed or choreographed numerous productions in various Italian cities until he returned to Paris in 1956, when he established his École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq, which subsequently became famous for teaching so many people who became major actors and directors in theater and film (cf. Leabhart 1989: 88-101; Wright 2013: 72). But it was not a mime school; it was a school of movement education for students who wanted to be actors in the theater, not mimes. Mime was for Lecoq simply a pedagogical device to make actors more conscious of their bodies and consequently more expressive. Unlike Decroux, Lecoq was open to exploring relations between physical action and the other arts, including architecture. His pedagogic method relied heavily on improvised exercises or games in which students, individually and in groups, created through movement a scene given by the teacher. As is evident from videos documenting his classes, Lecoq displayed powerful imagination in coming up with practical situations that allowed students to respond with consistently effective theatrical solutions. The use of masks was an important part of the two-year course of study, although only 30% (thirty students) received admission to the second year. Students began with the "neutral mask" to free themselves from all identities that imposed constraints on their ability to move in relation to the given situation rather than in relation to a "natural" inclination. Students then moved on to masks derived from the *commedia* tradition, which had the effect of exaggerating movement for comic effect. Lecoq urged students to clown, to delight in the freedom of the clown, to accept clowning as fundamental to discovering the poetry of theatrical movement. But a significant consequence of this veneration of the clown, which has pervasively influenced theatrical productions since the 1970s, is that "theatricality" of movement has become largely synonymous with comic effects, with caricature, with the exaggeration of a character attribute, so that the actor (or director) adopts an exaggerated movement to signify a defining attribute of the character's status, motives, or values and thus, as Brecht might put it, to construct in the audience a critical, humorous, or distanced attitude toward the character: it's difficult for the spectator to take the character seriously. In

any case, Lecoq kept mime within the *commedia* paradigm and Leabhart regards Lecoq's teaching as "responsible in large measure for the renaissance of interest in *commedia dell'arte*" in the 1970s (1989: 100). Here as in other schools of mime, the actor-centered approach to performing evolves out of improvised exercises, games, situations, or sketches of few minutes duration, distinct from each other, and revealing, as Decroux would say, one thing at a time, one incident at a time. Mime schools, including Lecoq's, do not study the sequencing of physical actions to construct large pantomimic narratives that reveal a dramatic reality otherwise obscured by speech or choreographed efforts to regulate the body; they study the sequencing of physical movements to show how the actor theatricalizes the body. To pursue a larger idea of pantomime, one needs a deep appreciation of the "verisimilar," rather than "histrionic," performance of physical actions, to use Pearson's terminology regarding silent film acting, which means an acute awareness of how non-exaggerated or "natural" physical actions in sequence build the emotional involvement of the spectator with patterns of physical signification unique to the narrative rather than to the actor, unique to something observed outside the theater rather than to theatricality.

Perhaps the most successful mime enterprise to come out of the Lecoq School has been the Swiss group Mummenschanz, founded in 1972 by Bernie Schürch (b. 1944), Andres Bossard (1944-1992), and Floriana Frassetto (b. 1950). Schürch and Bossard met while studying at Lecoq's school in 1967-1969. In 1970, they collaborated on cabaret entertainments performing as a clown duo, Before and After. While performing their cabaret act in Rome, they met Floriana Frassetto, an Italian-American, who had studied acting at the theater academy in Rome founded (1957) by Alessandro Fersen (1911-2001), a Polish-Italian film actor, socialist functionary, journalist, dramatist, director of numerous plays in a rather expressionist vein, and practitioner of what he called "mnemodramma," a process by which actors "abandon techniques" to reach a state of trance wherein "there are no more dams, psychological streams, which somehow curb and control their expression" (Fersen 1973: Paragraphs 6, 8). Mummenschanz began repeated tours of Europe and the United States in 1973, and in 1977, their show began an epic run on Broadway that lasted until 1980 and required the group to hire new performers to replace them, so that they could meet obligations elsewhere in Europe, South America,

and Asia. A new show, launched in Zug, Switzerland in 1984, also toured the world with great success. As Mummenschanz absorbed new members, it developed new productions in 1989, 1993, 2003, and 2016, and made a movie in 1997, although in recent years the group has ceased to be the show business powerhouse it was in the 1970s and 1980s (cf., Bührer 1986; Garduño 1997). The company has built its performances around ingeniously designed masks made out of a large variety of materials: Styrofoam, dough, Velcro, toilet paper rolls, violins, a suitcase, plastic containers, plastic membranes, and various kinds of fabric. In the 1984 show, Mummenschanz greatly expanded the number of masks that covered the entire body to produce, for example, a sort of giant slinky worm that manipulates a large red ball, a giant clam that opens and swallows things, a pas de deux involving two huge humanoid figures made out of inflated air bags, huge blob-like creatures that move slowly and gelatinously over platforms and ramps, enormous cloth hands. Although the company has its headquarters in Altstätten, Switzerland, it has spent much time in former industrial spaces in Zürich, Lugano, and St. Gallen that provided sufficient room to experiment with so many different materials, which required long periods of testing, rehearsal, and collaboration with materials manufacturers. Mummenschanz subordinates all movement to the mask, for the point of performance is to show how the body transforms the mask and makes the mask a dynamic, unstable sign of identity. A typical program involves a series of discrete scenes, usually three or four minutes in length, in which one, two, or three performers display their skills at manipulating their own or each other's masks to describe their relations to each other, invariably for comic effect. In more recent productions, four performers appear on stage, which seldom contains more than a box platform and a ramp. Very rarely do music or sound effects accompany the action. Two bodies with giant electric plugs for heads meet and kiss by plugging their heads into each other; two bodies with violins for heads conduct a rather quarrelsome dialogue by plucking the strings of their faces until a giant metronome appears and gets the violin heads to pluck a tune together. In one of Mummenschanz's funniest scenes, dating from 1974 at the latest, two performers sit on a platform with the goal of applying dough to their masks to make the masks more expressive and decorative. The figure on the right applies the dough with ceremonial precision and artistry to create a beautiful *commedia* mask. The figure on the left tries to emulate his

partner, copying all of his gestures and applications, but succeeds only in making hideous but very funny messes of his mask. The exasperated artist "fixes" his partner's mask by making it look like a woeful dog's head. Left then sabotages Right's mask by pushing his head into the dough plate. Right responds by transforming his mask into a menacing, predatory creature, while Left does likewise; they attack each other's masks until they smash into each other's faces and become one blobby mask. Yet even though no one disputes the ingenuity with which it constructs its masked mime performances, Mummenschanz has provoked criticism, even from Lecoq, that the group too readily seeks to please audiences with feats of cleverness that do not bring with them any larger understanding of relations between body and mask (cf. Bührer 1986: 40; Leabhart 1989: 105-106). The silent miming of the body conveys extraordinary plasticity on the mask, but this dynamism never creates any larger implication than that it is "fun," a delightful revelation of the desire to transform mundane materials into something living, something human.

In the United States, the commercial viability of mime performance reached its most impressive manifestation in the 1970s through the duo of Robert Shields (b. 1951) and Lorene Yarnell (1944-2010). Without having any formal training in mime, Shields began performing on the street in Hollywood in 1969. Marcel Marceau saw him perform and offered him a scholarship to attend the Marceau school in Paris, but Shields left the school after less than a year because he did not want to become "a little Marceau." He moved to San Francisco and began performing on the street. While appearing briefly in a 1972 Sunday morning children's TV special produced by the puppeteering team of Sid (b. 1929) and Marty Kroft (b. 1937), Shields met TV dancer Lorene Yarnell, and she followed him back to San Francisco, where they married the same year. Shields was a gifted acrobat and dancer—and extremely handsome. On the street, he performed in white face and wore a kind of parade uniform while interacting with bystanders in San Francisco's Union Square. Police arrested him several times for public disturbance, though bystanders found amusing his interactions and imitations of them, and thus his street performances brought him to the attention of news media and television producers. With Yarnell, he perfected a "robotic" style of mime, although it is more accurate to describe their characters as automatons. They presented their bodies as imperfect, sometimes malfunctioning machines that moved in a jerky,

spasmodic manner, like marionettes with broken strings or toys whose springs or gears are out of synch. They applied their robotic style to the enactment of numerous characters and situations, such as a robot couple grocery shopping, a robot couple eating breakfast, a robot couple going to bed, automatons imitating Sonny and Cher, robots trying to kiss, or a human dancing a tango with an automaton. Their robotic style of mime was especially effective on variety television shows, where they did not have to present a whole program of mime sketches, and they appeared on many nationally broadcast TV shows. In 1977, CBS gave them their own variety TV show, which featured skits involving the robot suburban couple, The Clinkers, but the show lasted only one season. They continued in Las Vegas and as guests on numerous TV shows; comedian Bob Hope (1903-2003) included them on a tour of China in 1979. But in the 1980s, Shields and Yarnell began to develop separate paths as entertainers, divorcing in 1986, with Yarnell acting occasionally in films and on stage before moving to Norway with a new husband and Shields eventually pursuing ambitions as an artist and jewelry maker in Sedona, Arizona. Shields complained that bad miming had killed off mime altogether in 1980s, by which he implied that too many less talented performers had tried to imitate him or Marcel Marceau to the point that the broad public no longer believed that mime was capable of anything more than what Shields and Yarnell or Marceau had done with it (Shields and Yarnell "The Lost Tape" 2010). Indeed, in the 1980s, hostility toward mimes, especially street mimes, became a trope of popular culture and a persistent attitude within large sectors of the public. It wasn't television that "killed mime," but the idea of mime as a sort of "democratic" entertainment that invaded public spaces because apparently anyone could do it in the street as it was done on television. Mime in this mode became an emblem of craving for popular success that many people found pleasure in despising.

However, the stigma attached to mime in much of popular consciousness, especially in the United States, did not deter the spread of mime schools or depress the desire of many young people to study or perform mime. But the stigma did spur efforts within the mime culture to broaden, redefine, or repudiate the term "mime." The American Mime Theatre, established in 1952 in New York City by Paul Curtis (1927-2012) and Leslie Barrett (1919-2010), still remains the oldest mime company in the United States, although it has always been much more of a mime school

than a production company. Curtis, who studied with Decroux in 1950, claimed to teach "American mime," which meant performing without whiteface and in black body suits. The company has retained the word "mime" to refer to speechless characterizations mostly of a humorous nature vaguely reminiscent of vaudeville. But for a company that has existed so long, its work and aesthetic remain remarkably obscure, perhaps more deeply attached to the hermetic philosophy of Decroux than the word "American" might indicate. The San Francisco Mime Troupe, founded in 1959 by Ronald Guy Davis (b. 1929), another student of Decroux, used the term "mime" in the ancient Roman sense, as a form of comic political street theater that used speech and was never pantomime. The United Mime Workers (1971-1986), based in Urbana, Illinois, also included spoken dialogue in most of its comic satires on suburban middle class life, but occasionally it did construct pantomime scenes in which middle class types performed various actions, such as shopping, hanging clothes, eating lunch, cleaning house, working in an office, without talking to each other (United Mime Workers 2014). One of the company's co-founders, Bob Feldman, living for many years in Singapore, went on to pursue an unusual application of mime skills to the training of corporate personnel in delivering more effective presentations at corporate and public events. Some American companies, beginning in the 1970s, rebranded speechless performance as "new vaudeville" or new forms of "circus" to include juggling, trapeze acts, magic tricks, acrobatics, and above all clown acts, which are not a theme of this book but which, nevertheless, reinforced public perception that mimes were thin, nimble clowns. In America, however, due perhaps to the tendency of mime performers (though not mime schools) to consider themselves heirs of silent film comedians like Chaplin, Keaton, and Lloyd, mime became synonymous with comic speechless performance, and the idea of mime in a serious, emotionally turbulent mood was practically taboo (cf. Leabhart 1989: 123-127). To receive grants from public arts agencies or civic-minded donors, other mime companies or companies that once did mime (like the Milwaukee Public Theater) moved beyond the street or parks to perform in schools, healthcare facilities, prisons, or churches, which meant performances designed to accommodate "positive" (good-humored) civic or therapeutic messages (cf. Milwaukee Public Theatre 2017). The Montreal company Omnibus le corps du théâtre, founded in 1977 by Jean Asselin (b. 1948), a

student of Decroux in the 1970s, as an adjunct to the mime school, has presented student productions that imaginatively use mime to reveal the bodily signification of sexual misunderstanding, romantic expectation, sexual harassment, female anxiety over body image, and deconstructed "sexy" poses, as in *Rêves, chimères et mascarade* (2009) and *Misère et splendeur d'une courtisane* (2013) (Omnibus Archive). But Asselin has moved far from Decroux: the school still offers courses in corporeal mime and productions of "pure mime" on contemporary themes, but since at least 1982 company productions often contain a great deal of speech that relies on texts by or adaptations of famous authors (Shakespeare, Racine, Proust, Faulkner, Lewis Carroll, Henry James) or on original texts by Asselin and co-director Sylvie Moreau (b. 1964). Within Omnibus, mime functions as movement for the stage, in a manner similar to Lecoq's school, to develop an actor-driven kind of hyper-physical theater closer to Artaud than to Decroux.

Two members of the original Omnibus Company, Kari Margolis and Tony Brown, both students of Decroux, founded their own company, MB Adaptors, in Brooklyn in 1984 and immediately attracted international attention with a piece called *Autobahn* (1984), a twelve-scene mostly pantomimic satire of American infatuation with pop culture images involving eleven performers:

> *Three TV monitors glare out at the audience and remain ever-present through the evening, as much a constant as they are in American lives. At one spot on the crowded stage, a couple grills franks on an outdoor barbecue; at another, three men in astronaut outfits wrestle with a huge coil of metal tubing. Elsewhere nearby, a woman tending flower pots seems about to strangle herself in a garden hose; a sunbather lolls on a chaise, and other characters busy themselves with pets and infants. The sound track mingles Bach, birds and bees, and racetrack bugles. [...] Among the most memorable images are those of the quartet of women with ironing boards, turning themselves almost literally into living dolls; the spectacle of a man at first terrorized by a microphone, and then, conquering his fear, using it to deliver a diabolical tirade in a mock-language that sounds like a fusion of Japanese and Swedish; a woman pitching erotic woo to a hair dryer, as four of her friends bounce their rumps on the floor; a platoon of red-*

> *eyed toy robots whirring and clanking across the stage as a woman croons "Let's Bring Back WWI"; and a scene called "Executive Suite" paying homage to Kurt Jooss' ballet, "The Green Table," with corporate types tearing each other to bits over vested interests* (Alan Kriegsman, *Washington Post*, February 19, 1988).

The company moved to Minneapolis in 1993 and then to rural Highland Lake in New York State in 2004, where the company offers summer workshops and improvisational exercise programs for training "actor warriors." Brown and Margolis have presented their productions as "non-linear dreamscapes," pantomimic satires of American obsessions with popular culture icons and of media-constructed models of consumerist behavior, such as *American Safari* (2001), in which a suburban everyman, having won a trip to Disneyland, travels across America in a toy Chevy convertible (MB Adaptors Archive). More adventurous perhaps was *Vidpires!* (1994-1998), a twenty-scene, twelve-person "comic, multimedia movement piece whose central characters are two vampires stuck in the boredom of today's media culture which both fuels and mocks their sentence of immortality" (Basting 1998: 147-148). These two vampires, Desmodus and Diphylla, appear to "feed on film images to perpetuate their own immortality both on and off screen" (149). The production integrates film and television imagery with live performers who imitate this imagery, and their imitations then become film imagery, dramatizing the "inseparability of bodies and [image] technology" (156). Some of the imagery comes from silent films like *The Sheik* (1926), in which Brown and Margolis, as Desmodus and Diphylla, enact on film their sadomasochistic relation to immortality in the 1926 style of film pantomime with intertitles. In other scenes, performers manipulate screens that project clips from movies and TV shows: a man pulling an "almost medieval" cart filled with TV screens showing Mickey Mouse cartoons; Desmodus holding on his arm a TV set depicting the playing of a violin, so that it appears as if he is playing the instrument. "In the seventh scene, 'The Body of Love Video,' a male and female dancer stood to the right of the stage with their backs to the audience, their naked bodies washed in the hot light of hand-held video projections [...] The video was another rapid succession of looted classic film images, this time of kisses rather than death scenes. As the performers moved slowly in unison, the film images contorted to the shapes of their

bodies" (157). The guiding idea of the piece is that a culture built around a vampiric consumption of film images nourishes a sort of life-sustaining or, as Basting puts it, age-denying uncertainty concerning the distinction between "real" (mortal) and mediated (immortal) bodies. But despite its emphasis on voiceless performance, MB Adaptors has for a long time ceased to identify itself with either mime or pantomime, claiming that it is a "performance ensemble" which constructs its "dreamscapes" out of a collaborative process, as if mime and pantomime had lost all allure in describing a postmodern performance sensibility.

From Mime to Movement Theater

Even though some American teachers who were students of Decroux, such as Jewel Walker (b. 1929) and Daniel Stein (b. 1952), have retained the term "mime" to describe their work, the perceived damage done to or by the word "mime" as a result of its appropriation by street performers or clown acts urged some artists elsewhere seeking a more serious approach to speechless performance to develop the concept of "movement theater." But this concept should remain separate from other terms, like "movement for the stage," "movement for actors," "movement training," and "physical theater," improvisational, exercise-intense pedagogical regimes that have proliferated in theater education since the 1980s and may include acrobatics, fencing and stage combat, somatic training, dance, gymnastics, or *commedia* buffoonery, and often entail the total exclusion of anything resembling pantomime (cf. Potter 2011). Movement theater originated in The Netherlands with the founding in 1965 of the performance group Bewegingstheater (Movement theater) or BEWTH by Frits Vogels (b. 1933), a student of Decroux. But this group emerged out of tensions within the Dutch Decroux cult. In 1952, Jan Bronk (1928-1985), a student of Marceau, established the Dutch Pantomime Institute, which performed mime scenes similar to those of Marceau. Vogels, Rob van Reijn (1929-2015), a nightclub performer who modeled himself after the Dutch clown Johan Buziau (1877-1958), and Will Spoor (1927-2012), a student of Decroux for six years, joined the Institute in 1954. The Dutch Decroux disciples embraced more ardently than other disciples Decroux's concept of the "Zero" or "neutral" state, a theoretical "nakedness," in which the body no longer signified an individual or personality but became a symbol of humanity, as Decroux explained: "When I see the body

rise up, I feel as if it's humanity that's rising up" (Langen 2017: 47-48). The Zero concept emphasized the torso as the dominant source of semantic value in the body while demoting the value of the hands, arms, and face, which too easily promise, conceal, and lie (53). This distinction supposedly separated mime from pantomime and enhanced the value of stillness, wherein it was possible to make visible the "movement of thought" or "mime thinking" (mime denken). In 1956, the Dutch Pantomime Institute produced a piece designed by Jan Bronk, *Rood zien*, in which performers used their bodies, without using their hands much, to create a larger abstract image. Baart (1982: 18) claims that this event marked the abandonment of pantomime by the Pantomime Institute and the inauguration of a Dutch mime aesthetic opposed to pantomime. Rob van Reijn soon left the Institute to pursue numerous opportunities in the entertainment industry (revue, film) primarily as a pantomime clown, and in 1967 formed the Pantomime Theater Carrousel, in which he developed the recurring comic character Mannetje Maccus. "I do not care for abstract mime," he declared (Jeanne-Marie Jobse, "Een bijzonder mens moet het zijn geweest," *De Verdieping Trouw*, 12 March 2001, Paragraph 11). Eventually he published a monumental novel, *Voetlicht en vetpotten* (2000), about the early Amsterdam pantomime Jan van Well (1773-1818), who devised and performed *commedia* ballet pantomime scenarios (as Pierrot or as Arlequin) for the Schouwburg Theater (cf., *De Toneelkijker* 1818: 88, 165, 213, 334). Meanwhile, Will Spoor, who came from a musical-theatrical family and was himself a violist, moved away from Decroux's idea of the body as a symbol and toward the body as an instrument that makes "music for the eyes," which, however, meant developing an absurdist image of the body. His attachment to absurdism derived not only from his appreciation for the work of French absurdist playwright Jean Tardieu (1903-1995), but from his own rather messy career. In the 1950s, he worked in Parisian cabaret with the French marionette producer Yves Joly (1908-2013) before performing comic cabaret pantomime duets with Bronk; he had a part in a 1961 cabaret act by the famous Toon Hermans (1916-2000). He tried to establish his own company and school in 1962-1963, but these failed, and he moved on to playing for a season the bumbling crook Snuitje in the clown duo of Snuf and Snuitje on the popular Dutch children's TV show *Pipo the Clown* (1963). He found small parts as an actor or dancer in mainstream drama productions, then ventured into street theater for a while, before starting a

new, four-person company in 1967. In Italy, he and his performance partner got arrested (1968) for performing a mime using artificial penises. The group moved to London to work in the avant-garde Arts Lab newly established by the American counter-culture impresario Jim Haynes (b. 1933). There he experimented with multimedia and with minute bodily movements and connecting movements of animals, plants, and insects to the human body, and these performances, *The Art of the Fugue*, became the subject of the film *Moving Statics* (1969), by the Australian experimental filmmakers Arthur (b. 1938) and Corrine (b. 1928) Cantrill. Unlike Deroux, he was not comfortable with solitary mime and continually sought to create ensemble mimes. In 1971, Spoor formed the Waste of Time mime group, which removed him from the ensemble in 1974, presumably because of his acute abstractionism: "I hate the actors theatre," he said, "I try to make a science out of mime, instead of an expression of my most inner feelings. For nobody has anything to do with what I think" (Langen 2017: 84). He formed new companies, Stichting Inccoprodinc (1977-1992) and Onktheater Overal (1981-1984), while appearing occasionally in experimental, speechless films like *Harpya* (1975). Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, he appeared in or supervised numerous productions through these companies; his daughter Pepijn sometimes performed with him in mimes, but also for a while (1987-1989) operated her own highly abstract street theater, Witte Wiven, as seen in Maartje Seyferth's (b.1945) experimental film *Movimenti cantabile* (1989), deposited in the Amsterdam Eye film archive, "in which a young homeless woman, a saxophonist, and a businesswoman stage a silent choreography amid a labyrinth of illuminated tiles" (Eye web page). Yet all this mime activity remains bereft of documentation or commentary that describes what it was. Marijn de Langen's treatise on the Dutch "mime thinking" cult, which provides the most extensive commentary on Spoor, focuses entirely on his work in the 1960s (Langen 2017: 67-86).

Yet Spoor's influence was probably greater than seems evident from the feeble historical record. Mime groups proliferated in The Netherlands (Mimetheater Kruimels, Mimegroep Oceaan, Mimetheater Mekaniek, Nieuw West, Suver Nuver, De Daders, Bewegingsgroep Bart Stuyf, Toneelgroep Carver, to mention a few), and these showed a similar disinterest in documentation. Some of these groups did not work exclusively in mime, but they did treat the body as an abstract form that did not require a story or a character to invest the body with meaning. In The

Netherlands, mime nearly became synonymous with a hyper-modern use of the body to construct an abstraction of life rather than a representation of it, in contrast to postmodern dance, which concentrated on movement, rather than on the body, as an abstraction of life, for dance saw movement as something detachable from the body that performed it. The Dutch mime culture saw the mimed abstraction of life as a phenomenon that happened only in the moment of its performance and had no "life" outside of its performance: documentation was irrelevant, a contamination, and in this respect, mime continued to follow Decroux (86). This attitude toward mime created a great deal of mime activity, especially in schools, without building a large audience for mime. Spoor's mimes showed the body "thinking" through movement. He liked to take a single movement, such as the pendulum motion in *Pink Metronome* (1968) for three persons, and show variations and reversals in speed, rhythm, rigidity, bodily position, and spatial relations. The act of initiating a movement from a "neutral" position of stillness preoccupied him and was a basis for the four-part *Art of the Fugue* (1968). The point of mime was to show the strangeness of any human movement, a point he amplified by miming minute insect movements in *Bug Counterpoint* (1968) (78). Unlike Decroux, he liked to explore the relation of the body to objects, as in *Cardboard Column Canon* (1968), in which three performers inside three large cardboard roles open hatches, release different objects, such as a banana peel, smoke, bubbles, and wrenches, and then gradually "break free of their packaging." With this aesthetic, mime revealed the "universal" absurdity of humanity—humorous, perhaps, but never mistaken for a clown act (85). Spoor's ideas about "mime thinking" produced widespread awareness of the body as an "instrument," but as usual with those under the spell of Decroux, the ideas, the theoretical framework of mime, far exceeded in influence the evidence of performance itself.

The Dutch concept of "movement theater" (Bewegingstheater BEWTH) emerged as a response to the absurdist appropriation of mime as Spoor theorized it. Spoor was indifferent to the context of mime performance, which could happen anywhere—the studio, a theater, the street—without disturbing the "zero" foundation of universal "mimed thinking." Like Spoor, Frits Vogels embraced Decroux's concept of the body as a "zero" state of being, but unlike Decroux, he never thought of the body as a symbol of something other than itself: the zero state was a body free of

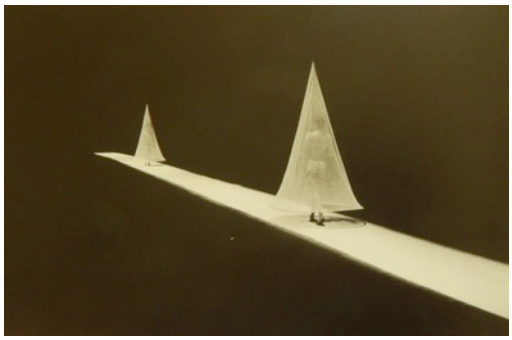
all personality and any motive for acting, for making a movement (Langen 2017: 120, 126-127). Every movement or action is the process of the body returning to a zero condition of stillness ("stilstand"), a notion similar to the Roman pantomime idea of moving from one pose to another. This attitude toward bodily movement allows mime to draw insight from bodily representations in painting or sculpture. It was not a matter of mime copying visual images; rather, visual images clarified relations between movement/stillness and context: movement is a response to a particular context, a particular space, a particular physical environment, which of course may include other bodies. Whereas Spoor saw mimed movement as a thought issued internally from the body to make a corporeal "music," Vogels saw movement as a thought stimulated externally by a particular location: mime was a physical response to a unique physical space and clarified the body's relation to the space. With the sculptor and muralist Arnold Hamelberg (1931-2010), Vogels formed the Bewegingstheater BEWTH in 1965 in Amsterdam as a mime school, with, among others, Spoor and Luc Boyer (b. 1935), another student of Decroux, as teachers, but Vogels (like Spoor) became less interested in perfecting movement or in discovering the ideality of a movement than in revealing movements imaginable only in relation to a particular moment in a specific space. Unlike many mime teachers, including Decroux, Vogels (and Spoor) did not place great emphasis on exercises and the application of a rigorous technique; Vogels followed a more "open" and intellectual process of incorporating influences from the other arts (134-135). Indeed, the term "movement theater" arose because Vogels was not altogether sure he was doing mime as conventionally understood, and while he never repudiated the term, he needed another term to differentiate his idea of mime from an overdetermined public and pedagogic image of mime. He and his students began (1965) experimenting with "bizarre" movement in the school's tiny Micro Theater (seating for thirty) and in Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum, where bodies formed aesthetic relations to abstract sculptures. In 1968, BEWTH captured widespread attention for its production of *Bossche Bollen* in an Amsterdam church that was now a youth nightclub, the Paradiso. The piece mimed actions depicted in the monumental painting *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (ca. 1495-1505), by the late medieval Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch (1450-1516). As seen in the 1968 film made of the performance by Marcus van Hoorn (b. 1947), the piece involved eleven

performers, seven men and four women, dressed in white knit body stockings, surrounded by the audience on a bare stage (dance floor); low-hung cross-lighting allowed the performers to cast long shadows. All the performers interact with each other and no one leaves the performance space, but different combinations of performers interact in different parts of the space simultaneously, making it difficult for the camera, which functions as if it is in the performance, to see all the action occurring at the same moment. The performers continually form new configurations: duos, trios, quartets, and occasionally even larger groups; they dart and dash impulsively across the stage to form new bonds that last briefly before abruptly breaking up to form new relations. They crawl and slither toward each other; they pounce on each other. They jab, prod, kiss, fondle, carry, and wrestle each other. They form rings; they prance around; they build rolling sculptures out of their bodies; they pile up on each other; they simulate sexual acts, including male and female homosexual intimacies. One man seems to sprout an erect fur penis that goes through his male partner and comes out of his partner's anus. Some members of the group briefly break away to do things alone, such as assume the pose of a crucified man or walk as if on a tightrope. A female performer seizes a man in a suit from the audience, pulls him to the ground, and aggressively overwhelms him with her sexual embace until she suddenly leaps off him to rejoin a group. The performers handle objects: a woman kneels holding a domed, wire cage over her body; a group lifts a platform on which lies a woman; men battle for control of a stick; three women play with a large toy fish. Especially notable is a moment in which ensemble members roll dozens of balls to each other and roll the balls over each other. Later, dozens of small balls fall from the ceiling, and yet the performers continue to perform their physical interactions as if a stage littered with many tiny balls made no difference. In the latter portion of the piece, the performers move from exuberance to a more sinister mood, presumably the "Hell" panel of Bosch's triptych: some restrain, twist, toss, or stretch the bodies of others; some hobble about as if crippled; some convulse as if in pain; they all lie on the floor, holding hands, as balls bounce over them. The piece ends with a man leading another man. They kiss. Suddenly the leading man grabs his partner and shoves his head into a bucket of water. The man with his head in the bucket rolls over and lies still, as if dead; the other man stands over him, as if frozen in triumph: "Stilstand." The music in the film accompanying these

actions is eclectic: guitar, somber organ tones, avant-garde electronic sounds, rock and roll, folk tunes. But the final death scene is silent. Obviously a huge number of actions occur in about twenty-five minutes to create the mimed image of a community in which all members appear to have uninhibited access to each other's bodies, and this access is simultaneously exhilarating and dangerous and more than one can see in the finite space. The performance fractures the spectator's ability to "contain" space or bodies through vision, much like Bosch's effort to create a fantastic scene of bodies that the viewer is unable to absorb all at once. None of the action is choreographed. Instead, performers follow a different logic: "I am doing A with f, but now it is time to do B with h, which includes e, who may do C, which may be unkown to me, until E." The performance arises out of a collective trust in the bodies of the community, unlike, for example, dance, which arises from a collective trust in the steps, the choreography, the system of regulating bodies. An improvisational quality pervades the performance, as bodies move from one action to another, one "access" to another, impulsively, without being "told" to do so by any one member or a text or some invisible guiding force like a director or choreographer. The space creates the communal logic and infuses the performers' bodies with the idea of access to other bodies as the governing motive for action.

With *Bossche Bollen*, BEWTH embarked on a lengthy period of developing performances—126 productions altogether—in manifold large spaces originally designed for other purposes: numerous churches, metal and machinery factories, a water pumping station, a shipbuilding works, museums, city halls, medieval castles, a horse riding school, abandoned warehouses, city plazas, government buildings, university lobbies, the roof of the Rijksmuseum. The company did not bring performances to the spaces; it built performances out of the unique properties of the spaces. Performances became increasingly complex with the incorporation of elaborate lighting designs, avant-garde music soundtracks, architecturally interesting props, and stylized costumes. The placement of audiences was often the most challenging question. Over the years, many people worked with the company, which changed "leaders" fairly often; Vogels never sought to maintain control over the company or any production, and for many years persons involved with the productions remained anonymous, never identifying their functions (*Leidse Courant* 11 May 1976: 5). As Vogels

explained: “The theatre doesn’t want us? They aren’t interested in a new kind of mime, not even if we call it ‘movement theatre’? Our answer: The theatre has to escape from the theatre. No money for scenery? Then look for some place – monumental, if possible – and perform a piece in it, or about it” (Bakker 2004: 8). Audiences for any performance were never large, because of limits imposed by the architecture of even the largest spaces and because the audience was also mobile in relation to the performance. The Dutch government and various municipalities subsidized most of the costs of production, enabling the company to provide performances without charging admission. The Dutch government ceased its subsidies in 2005, which brought the end of the company. Unlike other groups in the Dutch mime culture, BEWTH was relatively diligent about compiling documentation of its production, partly because their performances made alluring photographic images [Figure 98] (cf., Schade 2005). Vogels started another mime company, Griftheater (1975-2003), which worked in more conventionally theatrical spaces, but constructed performances out of architecturally unusual sets and props. Often the company developed pieces in a manner similar to the Bosch production by miming bodily relations depicted in artworks by such modernists as Man Ray (1890-1976) and Max Ernst (1891-1976), which allowed bodies to interact within surrealistic spaces, although in the gloomy *Op de rand van een vrouw* (1993), with “mimography” by Vogels, one sees bodily “access” tropes and interactive patterns similar to those in *Bossche Bollen*, indicating the presence of a *style* of performance imposed over the ostensibly collective creation of the piece. In the latter part of its life, Griftheater began exploring the possibilities of “landscape theater,” whereby the group built performances in response to specific geographic or “architectural” features provided by nature.



Although its work was not well known outside The Netherlands, BEWTH nevertheless exerted great influence in mutating perception of “mime.” For one thing, BEWTH showed implications and consequences of Decroux’s pedagogy that actually carried mime performance far from the doctrines of the master. Even more significantly,

BEWTH showed how mime performance undermined borders between theater and other arts and allowed mime/theater to appropriate manifold spaces. “Movement theater” became a highly interdisciplinary activity that fostered an ambiguous intersection of theater with other arts to produce hybrid modes of aesthetic corporeal messaging requiring new terms, like “movement theater.”







Figure 98: Images of BEWTH performances. Pieterskerk, Leiden (1976), Raadhuis, Hilversum (1996), Haags Gemeentemuseum, The Hague (1989), Pieterskirk, Leiden (1976), Ministerie van Social Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, The Hague (1994). Photos: Schade (2005: 89, 90, 151, 201).

BEWTH emerged in a time of profound dissatisfaction with conventional, institutionalized organizations of performance and was concurrent with other experiments elsewhere in bodily performance, such as Fluxus events, Viennese Actionism, performance art, installations, happenings, and the "kinetic theater" of the visual artist Carolee Schneemann (1939-2019). But the company was unique in seeing mime as the foundation for a major reorganization of institutional resources for the performing arts in a national society (cf., Haan 2003). BEWTH established "location theater" as an activity worthy of taxpayer subsidy. Many new theater groups arose as "alternatives" to the established, pre-1968 theater, and the established theater soon became far more "physical" in the performance of texts. Theater came to mean a radical reimagining of how to use bodies in performance. Perhaps the most extravagant and popular of the speechless "location theater" groups was Dogtroep (1975-2008), founded in Amsterdam by Warner van Wely and Paul de Leeuw, along with other artists and musicians with no training in mime. Dogtroep began as a kind of carnivalesque street theater to "infiltrate" the public sphere and showcase

bodily performance skills, stunts, and processions that required more space and freedom than conventional theater could provide. But in the early 1980s, the company focused on location theater, and its productions, involving a large staff, became enormous spectacles performed in vast, open air spaces, often empty fields that allowed the group to integrate the operation of heavy machinery and huge props into the performance; *Noordwesterwal* (1994) made spectacular use of a monumental canal and dyke complex. In a large Amsterdam studio, the group devised productions collectively, which included the ideas of the technicians and craftsmen who contrived the multitude of machines, video projections, bizarre costumes, and architectural structures that defined the Dogtroep aesthetic. The company was very imaginative in designing unusual towers, scaffolds, robotic platforms, giant wheels, pyrotechnic effects, costumes containing all kinds of surprising contraptions within them, collapsible sets, water tanks, mysterious lighting effects, eccentric projectiles, and strange vehicles, including the use of cranes to move objects and performers across the performance space. The obsession with props and contraptions spawned an athletic performance aesthetic built around a rapid succession of comic or grotesque stunts. The company attracted immense audiences, not only in The Netherlands, but in many European cities. The performers had to display considerable physical agility in dealing with the elaborate, even dangerous machinery of production, yet they remained subordinate to the idea of the body as simply a component of a larger, "absurd" mechanical apparatus. Dogtroep presented a hallucinatory, Boschian circus, the "infiltration" into contemporary society of a medieval image of humanity somehow transplanted and entangled in the machinery of modernity. In the 1990s, the company, while maintaining an enthusiasm for location theater, began to adjust its flamboyant productions to more conventional theatrical spaces, but in the twenty-first century this type of theater became difficult to sustain. It cost too much to maintain such an industrial-sized workshop, while suitable or available "locations" became scarce. Without the body as the fundamental sign of modernity, which Decroux struggled to articulate, theater was bound to run out of spaces big enough to accommodate Boschian visions of bodies as "instruments" of a communal belief in the inescapable (though carnivalesque) doom constituting, one might say, the cosmic "machinery of life" (cf. Boer 2008; Findlay 2016).

Pantomime in Cold War Eastern Europe

Pantomime in Soviet Russia

During the Cold War, mime culture in the West generally distanced itself from the term "pantomime," which many mime practitioners and schools, including Decroux, regarded as old-fashioned, a word associated with a non-modern form of speechless performance that lacked a sufficiently abstract vision of bodily signification or evoked a reactionary nostalgia for naïve storytelling or failed to reveal actors (rather than characters or scenarios) as the engines of performance. In the East bloc countries, however, the word "pantomime" acquired different connotations and speechless performers self-consciously used the word to describe their work. But pantomime in the East appears to have begun in response to performances of Western mime in Eastern cities, specifically Marcel Marceau's tour in 1955, although Marceau had already performed in Berlin for a couple of months in 1951. Following "the thaw" in Communist Party control over culture in October 1956, Henryk Tomaszewski established his Pantomime Studio in Wroclaw, Poland and Robert Liger founded the Riga Pantomime Company in Latvia the same year, perhaps the earliest manifestations of pantomime in the Soviet bloc, although Kathleen Cioffi mentions several Polish student groups in Gdansk in the period 1954-1956 that specialized in visual theater without attempting pantomime (2013: 72). Neither Tomaszewski nor Liger regarded Marceau as an aesthetic model, but Marceau's performances in the East may have signaled that the culture ministers of the Communist Party might allow public performance of pantomime. Previous to 1956, the Party regarded pantomime as an old category of dance put under the exclusive control and regulation of state ballet companies. Further pantomime activities appeared in the German Democratic Republic (1957), Czechoslovakia (1958), Hungary (1958), Estonia (1963), Lithuania (1967), and Bulgaria (1973). Apparently pantomime did not appear in Romania until 1990, after the fall of the Communist regime, when the stage and film actor Mihai Mălaimare (b. 1950), a student of Jacques Lecoq, founded the Masca Theater in Bucharest. Much information about

pantomime in the Soviet era remains buried in national and personal archives, awaiting discovery and wider dissemination. Yet the history of pantomime requires acknowledgement, even if merely tentative and suffused with uncertainties, of the unique contributions of the Soviet era to that history.

The attitude toward pantomime by Party leaders in Moscow cast a deep shadow across the Eastern bloc. In the Soviet Union itself, even after 1956, pantomime was a suspicious genre of performance, managed by ballet academies or, after 1960, handled as a category of clown performance by the State School of Circus Art. Soviet films often included skillful pantomimic moments in a realistic vein, but such moments had their pedagogic framework in performance labs dedicated to cinematic acting. Russians often use the word "pantomime" to refer, not to voiceless theatrical performances, but to "plastic expression," to the study of how actors use their bodies for dramatic effect, a meaning similar to the term "movement for the stage" in the West. Alexander Rumnev (1899-1965), who had worked with Tairov at the Moscow Chamber Theater in the 1920s, done choreography for musicals in the 1930s, and acted in films, supervised a pantomime laboratory and course at the State Institute of Cinematography from 1944 to 1965 (cf. Ruggiero 1996; Ruggiero 1999). In 1962, with film actors, he formed an Experimental Theater-Studio of Pantomime, called EXTEMIM, which produced a half dozen works mostly inspired by old literary sources. When the theater began to find audiences in Moscow and elsewhere, the government shut it down, though perhaps not because the group's pantomime performances violated ideological doctrines. Rumnev also published a couple of books on pantomime in 1962, 1964 and 1966, in which, among many other things, he asserted that pantomime was not a bourgeois art, but an art expressive of working class struggles and aspirations. His focus was largely on cinematic pantomime, but he acknowledged the great influence of Delsarte, Charles Dullin, the Dalcrozian advocate Sergei Volkonsky (1860-1937), and Stanislavsky, who emphasized the importance of the silence between words (Rumnev 1962: 5-7). In pantomime, however, unlike in dance, "the best gesture is that which is perhaps unnoticed" (8). While he devised exercises to help students learn to "to divide energy, weight, speed and range of movements," it is clear that Rumnev saw pantomimic performance emerging most successfully out of the performer's relation to accompanying music. He also believed that

pantomime was most powerful when it had a literary source: pedestrian and mundane actions must achieve a quality that is both poetic and realistic, as demonstrated in the writings of authors like Puskin and Gogol (8-13). With the allegorical pantomime *Africa*, staged by EXTEMIM in 1962, Rumnev intended a socialist example of his art. The piece showed how black people in Africa (performed by white men and women wearing black body stockings and white belts) danced happily until the arrival of the white colonizer (a single male in a white uniform and white pith helmet), whom the blacks greet affably. But the white colonizer soon draws a gun on them and forces them into slavery and exhaustion. The blacks gather in secret, they conspire, they drive away the white colonizer, and they signify their freedom (Rumnev 1964: 234; cf. Kayiatos 2012: 72-74). With complacent disregard for historical reality, Rumnev also claimed that pantomime had its origin "in the people among the crowd on the street" and that "from the people's theater came the pantomime plays of the Italian comedians" (Rumnev 1964: 13; Kayiatos 2012: 63). Party leaders seemed to believe that pantomime, as a separate performance genre, was an inadequate instrument for transmitting or articulating class-consciousness, Marxist-Leninist ideology, or Party political goals. Yet the idea that pantomime represented a "dissident," subversive, or resistant cultural activity should not be assumed. Because pantomime producers avoided the censorship imposed on dramatic texts does not mean that they sought to imbue their productions with a dissident attitude or that they, like some dramatic theater productions, sought to encode their performances with an ambiguous signification constituting a veiled critique of the regime that somehow escaped the scrutiny of the regime's guardians. People who wanted to do pantomime in the East probably had motives for doing it similar to those of pantomime people in the West. But people in the East worked in societies that were pervasively suspicious of any cultural activity that was not explicitly in accord with the Party's prescriptions for affirming and promoting its political goals. For this reason, people who ventured into pantomime in the East assumed risks that people in the West were much less likely to face. In the Soviet Union itself, pantomime outside of its use in traditional ballet, functioned primarily in clown circus performances featuring sometimes amazing juggling acts, acrobatic stunts, and slapstick gags. However, the Armenian-Russian clown, Leonid Yengibarov (1935-1972), a 1959 graduate of the State School for Circus Art, after much

difficulty in relation to initially unreceptive audiences, developed a pantomimic component to his stunt-packed clown act, which involved projecting a kind of Chaplinesque poetic persona. By the mid-1960s, this poetic clown persona had become immensely popular throughout the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc because Yengibarov introduced elements of pathos and resisted the assumption that clowns must always be funny. In his clown costume, which included a striped T-shirt and slim dark trousers but often no whiteface, he explored a sort of expressionist gymnastics wherein he dramatized the melancholy, solitary process of testing his body to achieve unusual balance or pliancy. He became "the clown with autumn in his heart." In 1971, he left circus performance to form a pantomime theater with his friend and teacher Yuri Belov, whom the government forbade to join any foreign tours. The pantomime theater would present solo autobiographical pantomimes related to the theme "the Quirks of a Clown." These pantomimes were both "happy and sad," capable of revealing the pain inflicted on the body and spirit of the clown as a result of endless practicing and an incredible, exhausting touring schedule, which only exacerbated his problems with alcohol. But the Culture Ministry refused to permit Yengibarov to use the term "theater" to describe his "troupe." Nevertheless, he toured relentlessly while also appearing in films and publishing numerous stories before dying of a heart attack at the age of 37. The pantomime troupe made only one production of solo pantomimes, *Starry Rain*, and after Yengibarov's death, pantomime in Russia remained almost implacably embedded in circus clown performance, which, however, cast its influence over the development of pantomime in some satellite countries of the Eastern bloc (Yengibarov Archive; cf. Beumers 2005: 186-192 on Russian circus choreography). Rumnev asserted that the Moscow Youth Festival of 1957 produced the first international pantomime competition, which led to the "renaissance of pantomime as a self-sufficient art" in the Soviet Union; pantomime groups from China and North Korea, he observed, contributed significantly to awareness of pantomime as an art (1964: 13). But he didn't explain the relation of the "renaissance" to subsequent international pantomime competitions, assuming the existence of a "first" one. Anatasia Kayiatos further proposes that Culture Minister Ekaterina Furtseva (1910-1974) "was so smitten with Marcel Marceau" that she encouraged the development of a Soviet idea of pantomime. Kayiatos provides a "brief" listing of eight "post-Stalin pantomime troupes in Moscow

and Leningrad" (2012: 36). But aside from the pantomimes produced by Rumnev's EKTEMIM studio, the evidence is lacking to show that these groups functioned as anything more than academic studios for the supposedly "scientific" study of bodily expression for actors or worked outside of the clown paradigm of pantomime performance. Cultural policy favored the cultivation of the clown paradigm, the wily, resilient Chaplinesque comic persona, as the symbol of "the people," as the representative of the "voiceless" genius of determined, industrious, good-humored workers, although this situation was not much different in its effects than in the West, where mime, rather than pantomime, had become almost entirely identified with comic/clown performance by the 1970s, especially in the United States.

Perhaps the most adventurous pantomime performance in the Soviet Union came from the poet, theater director, and teacher of acting and pantomime at the State Film Institute, Evgenii Kharitonov (1941-1981), who was indeed a dissident, especially in his defense of homosexuality. He also worked part time at Moscow State University studying speech defects. He was a student of Rumnev, whose own career faltered due to suspicions of homosexuality after the enactment of the 1933 anti-sodomy law (Misler 1999: 99; Kayiatos 2012: 178, 181-182). Rumnev was a dancer of great elegance and "aristocratic" physiognomy in the 1920s, alluringly photographed, and in those years he glorified nude male dancing. For him, "Pantomime was really about the beauty of the male and not the female body" (Kayiatos 2012: 178; cf., Misler 2017: 197, 201, 214, 221-223). According to Kayiatos, Rumnev introduced "a new conception of plastic beauty with his pantomimic dance, which Kharitonov took up, altered, and expanded in his own right," for "Kharitonov venerated Rumnev as something of a living relic" from a more "ecstatic" time in Russian history (180-181). In 1972, Kharitonov completed a dissertation for the State Cinematography School *On Pantomime in the Instruction of the Film Actor*. In this work, he avoided treating pantomime as the cultural-anthropological phenomenon described by other Soviet commentators on the subject, including Rumnev; instead, he adopted a semiotic approach inspired by the scholarship of the famous Estonian-Russian semiotician Yuri Lotman (1922-1993). Kharitonov argued that pantomime follows a principle of "dynamic opposition," whereby the body achieves expressive power through a "natural" or "non-normative" tension between one body part and another. Pantomime creates signs or bodily

tensions that have meaning only in relation to other signs that are unique to the specific context and occasion of performance; each pantomime "composition" creates its own distinct emotional values that produce a distinctive set of corporeal dynamic oppositions. "The 'canon of dynamic opposition' introduced by Kharitonov does not have a prescriptive character, but is created by the investigator every time for his own purposes." Pantomimic action is therefore never normative even in relation to the performance of different pantomimes. Ballet is "unnatural," because it always results from imposing on the body an external semiotic system, which in effect produces a normative mode of signification, for the norm is the goal of the system. Similarly, the movement of the body in daily life, which cinematic pantomime attempts to simulate, especially under the concept of "socialist realism," is unnatural yet normative, because it is the result of a social system for controlling and constraining dynamic tensions within the body, so that bodies within an entire society act according to a norm that prevents them from signifying "natural" and potentially "alienating" emotions (Larionov 2017: 187-189; cf., Kayiatos 2012: 142-151). On one level, the dissertation explained the logic by which the Party discouraged any serious idea of pantomime. But then Kharitonov applied the theory in a manner that undermined the goals of the Party in following the logic.

Kharitonov was a director at the Moscow Theater of Mimicry and Gesture, founded in 1962 by the Russian Society of the Deaf, which managed the company. Mostly the company staged classical plays in which deaf actors communicated the texts in a sign language and mouthed the words, as they had learned from lip-reading instruction, while voices off stage spoke the dialogue in the texts, with the result that the performances were not pantomimes but more closely resembled ventriloquist acts or puppet shows. Both deaf and hearing audiences had difficulty understanding the action, and by the early 1970s the company received criticism for the staleness of its productions (Kayiatos 2010: 13-14). The Society decided to experiment with pantomime as a form of performance that might more fully engage audiences and the talents of deaf actors. Kharitonov's academic background in pantomime and in speech defects made him an appropriate choice to produce a pantomime. With this opportunity, he was able to apply his theory of pantomime to the production of a pantomime, *The Enchanted Island*, which received 66

performances between 1972 and 1980. The scenario consisted of three acts, "in which a jealous Prosperian sorcerer magically shape-shifts a pair of shipwrecked lovers into all manners of being; all the while the lovers remain resolute in their insatiable search for one another's touch. Some of the fantastic aspects assumed by the actors include a touching trio of palm trees; an invisible man and a married couple; a military commander, his cross-dressed maid, and a lovelorn cavalryman, a cave-dwelling Cyclops, his companion monkey, and their marooned human captive" (Kayiatos 2012: 105). Kharitonov never published his scenario, so knowledge of the production comes largely from interviews with some of the performers conducted by Anastasia Kayiatos in 2009. The piece was neither tragic nor comic, but instead created an atmosphere of "enchantment," in which pantomime unfolds in a theatrical environment where human bodies are free to metamorphose, to discover the limits of their abilities to change their identities or assume new identities. "Supernatural beings become human; humans try on contradictory identities, crossing lines of gender, age, social class, and so on. In and out of turn, they morph into inanimate objects, plants, then animals and back again" (113). As Kharitonov explained, the guiding motive was the sorcerer's "curiosity to see beings created differently than he" (113). Many transformations of identities take place, such as a trio of palm trees turns into human dancers, while a woman desired by an invisible man turns into an airplane and flies off. The invisible man, seeking to escape the blows inflicted on him by a street crowd that does not see him, enters the apartment of a married couple, where he tries to emulate them by looking into a mirror. But he doesn't see anything until he paints himself, and what he sees fills him with "great happiness" (114). Despite their various transformations, the shipwrecked heterosexual lovers do not end up with each other. Especially interesting was the display of the performer's bodies. Some performers, male and female, wore netted body stockings that made them seem vaguely reptilian while simultaneously revealing much of their human nakedness. Other male performers were nearly nude, except for very small briefs. In the guest commentary book provided by the theater, some spectators complained about the nudity and others said they did not understand what they had seen. Yet every year for ten years, the company performed the piece several times, and the public apparently regarded the work as representative of an advanced, experimental path of theatrical art. Unfortunately, Kayiatos does not

describe well how the principle of dynamic opposition works in the piece. Presumably the principle entailed bodily tensions, for example, in the simultaneous impersonation of a palm tree and a dancer or a human and a flying airplane. But how the body achieved these "oppositions" remains unclear. Kayiatos stresses at length the importance of the production as a dissident example of marginalized queer performance in a highly repressive society (2012: 152-172). But equally important was the idea of the "enchanted island" as a place where non-normative configurations of signs occur, where the signification of a palm tree is relative to the signification of a dancer or airplane or the invisibility of a body that anyone in the audience can see, even if the audience, conditioned to expect normative bodily significations to give "meaning" to performance, does not understand that the body signifies these identities. Kharitonov's insight was that only non-normative pantomimic configurations of bodily gestures allow the body to signify its metamorphosis from one identity to another. Embedded within this concept of metamorphosis is the implication that sexual identity and sexual orientation are fluid, which is one of the uniquely liberating "enchantments" of pantomime. This linking of non-normative bodily signification to metamorphosis is very close to the ancient Roman imperial idea of pantomime as a sign system unique and relative to the performer's repertoire of scenes rather than to a semiotic system "shared" by all who claimed the status of pantomime. In imperial Roman society, the government never regarded the representation of metamorphosis through a non-normative set of pantomimic significations as fundamentally dangerous to social order, and indeed, one might even argue, though probably not persuasively, that the imperial government used the non-normative significations of pantomime as a normative mode of theater to suppress normative significations of public speech that would threaten social order. In the totalitarian society of the Soviet Union, the non-normative significations of pantomime as Kharitonov applied them could exist only in relation to the very small, non-normative ("defective") social sector of deaf people; otherwise, such "dynamic oppositions" fail as an "art of the people," because their ambiguity threatens the stable, normative categories of identity that define "the people." Kharitonov contemplated other pantomime productions, but these never materialized, presumably because, like nearly all of his literary writing, they linked pantomime with homosexual or non-normative sexual desires. He became a target of KGB

surveillance, harassment, and interrogation, which then filled his life with suffocating terror. He died of a heart attack on the street while carrying some of his manuscripts, which he could not even publish in the underground *samizdat* press, due to the hostility toward homosexuality (further complicated by Kharitonov's virulent anti-Semitism) within the dissident subculture. Even after his death, the KGB hunted down as many of his manuscripts as it could locate and confiscated them. The state made clear: Kharitonov exemplified the conditions under which pantomime became a dangerous, self-destructive activity.

Czechoslovakian Pantomime

A few countries in the Eastern bloc favored the clown paradigm of pantomime. In Czechoslovakia, Cold War pantomime culture emerged around the figure of Ladislav Fialka (1931-1991), who developed clown personas modeled after Marcel Marceau, Pierrot, and a kind of Chaplinesque whiteface figure wearing a bow tie and straw hat. He studied dance at the Prague Conservatory of Dance, and in 1953-1954, he staged pantomimic dances based on Pierrot stories enacted by Jean-Gaspard Deburau. After meeting Marceau in Paris in 1956, he resolved to found in 1958 his own pantomime company with students from the Conservatory. The following year, the company moved into the renovated Theater of the Balustrade, built in 1832, and began producing revue/cabaret pantomime shows in which the action revolved around his clown characters. He seems to have wanted to revive the sort of comic cabaret entertainment that the clown duo of George Voskovec (1905-1981) and Jan Werich (1905-1980) perfected so successfully in Prague in the 1930s. Voscovec and Werich offered leftwing political satire, but they were not pantomimes, and their revue acts consisted mostly of witty banter and jesting songs augmented with dance numbers. Fialka avoided political commentary and instead introduced absurdist elements; he was fond of dramatic works by Samuel Beckett and performed in them on stage and on television. In the 1970s, his shows became more poetic without becoming any less comic, such as the six-scene "collage" *Caprichos* (1971), inspired by Goya's satiric-grotesque drawings that caricatured the corruption of the Catholic Church, and *Funambules* (1977), scenes based around the life of Jean-Gaspard Deburau. But audiences declined and the company entered a period of "greatly decreasing invention." By the 1980s, the company developed clown acts

inspired by the writings of Gogol, the films of Fellini, and the dream imagery of artists like the puppeteer-animator Jiri Trnka (1912-1969) and the symbolist painter Jan Preisler (1872-1918), by which time the company catered primarily to tourist audiences (Gillar 1971; Holeňová 2001: 72-74). Fialka did not confine himself to pantomime performance, but collaborated with puppet and animated filmmakers, acted in films, developed children's television shows, wrote a book on pantomime, and eventually became a professor of pantomime. In 1964, he choreographed the pantomimic actions in Jan Grossman's disruptive, clown-oriented production of Alfred Jarry's maniacal 1896 play *King Ubu*, which attempted to move pantomime away from the influence of Marceau and toward the ideas of Artaud, although it was still a kind of insane clown show (Plicková 2012; Miholová 2007: 103-107). An energetic promoter of pantomime in schools, in the media, and at mime festivals, he was a beloved figure in Prague and within the European theatrical community, but one feels that he was always waiting for a time when pantomime might become something more serious than he was able to make it, and then his time came to an end. Boris Hybner (1941-2016) worked with Fialka on the *King Ubu* production and then joined Fialka's company until he formed his own Alfred Jarry Pantomime Company in 1966. However, Hybner had a less stable personality than Fialka, which made it difficult for him to form serious, successful alternatives to the Theater of the Balustrade, even after Fialka's death (1991) and the end of that pantomime company in 1993. He did not develop a signature clown persona; rather, he made clown performances out of his impersonations of different, otherwise commonplace characters, such as a pianist in a nightclub orchestra, a sailor demonstrating life jackets, or an academic trying to read a book in a bar. What most inspired him were silent film comedians like Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd, which led to the formation of the Czech *Gagman* TV series in 1987 and his Gagman company performance of his show *A Garden Named Hollywood* (1987), in which he played various characters involved in the production and consumption of Hollywood slapstick comedy films in the early 1920s. Though shot in color, the TV series, which contained no speech, emulated the physical movements of people seen in films made during the period represented on the screen. Many people worked with Fialka and Hybner, but none seemed to make any headway in pantomime on their own. Even after the collapse of the Communist regime in 1990, Czech pantomime, when it fitfully

appeared, remained steadfast in its devotion to the clown paradigm, as if, in spite of the grotesque example provided by the *King Ubu* production, any other kind of pantomime had never been imaginable anyway. Yet since the fall of the Communist regime, pantomime has become the subject of fairly abundant Czech scholarly-theoretical discourse (cf., Nagy 2016: 7-15).

The Slovakian pantomime Milan Sládek (b. 1938) did not develop a strong connection to the Decroux-Marceau style of pantomime. He first studied art at the School of Arts and Crafts in Bratislava, but as a result of performing amateur theatricals, he studied (1958-1960) acting at the Bratislava Academy of Performing Arts, where his teacher was the modernist theater director and writer Emil František Burian (1904-1959). With Eduard Zlábek (1930-1988), a dancer at the Burian Theater, he formed a pantomime ensemble in 1960. He created a Pierrot-like persona, Kefka, a white-faced clown who wore a variety of bizarre costumes. By 1962, his Kefka ensemble was a unit within the Slovak National Theater, where he began performing pantomimic versions of well-known dramas, Biblical tales, and operas. In 1968, Sládek planned to open a theater that featured pantomime, cabaret, and plays, but the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia put an end to the venture. He escaped to Sweden before migrating in 1970 to Cologne, Germany, where he established the Kefka Pantomime Theater. There he embarked on a successful series of pantomimic adapations of well-know literary works: *Das Geschenck* (1971), *Don Juan* (1978), *Carmen* (1983), *König Ubu* (1984), and *Apocalyptica* (1989), among others (Sládek 1985). His productions attracted enthusiastic international audiences from the nearby diplomatic community in Bonn, the Goethe Institute sponsored tours to numerous countries, and The Folkwang School in Essen recruited him to teach pantomime. In 1989, he returned to Slovakia with the idea of residing there permanently: "The reason I returned [to Czechoslovakia] was not only to show that I care for the country I come from, but also because I firmly hoped I could continue doing the art at home that I had developed abroad" (Habšudová 2002: Paragraph 5). He continued with ensemble pantomimes derived from "classic" literary or venerated sources, such as *The Marriage of Figaro* (1991), *The Coronation of Poppea* (1993), *Grand Pierrot* (1994), and *The Threepenny Opera* (2001). The government appointed him (1994) director of a newly formed Institute for Motion Theater and provided funding for the reconstruction of the Arena Theater, which would provide a home for his pantomime productions. In 2002, however, he decided to

return to Germany "for good," after denouncing the Slovakian Culture Ministry for its failure to support the Arena: because "there was no mime tradition in this country, our work was considered 'experimental,' and we were never able to make enough money to support the theatre on our own. After seeing that I wouldn't get adequate [state financial] support here, I made my decision," although the Culture Ministry asserted that the subsidies it offered were perhaps too generous in relation to the small audiences that Sládek's productions attracted (Habšudová 2002). Back in Cologne, he pursued his "classics" approach to pantomime with help from the city and the Goethe Institute: *Magic Night* (2003) and *Pantalon und Colombine* (2006). In 2007, he performed three solo pieces on the mosaic floor of the Römisch-Germanischen Museum in Cologne, including *Leda and the Swan*, *Samson and Delilah*, and *Party*, in all of which which he metamorphosed into different persons, male and female. *Kreuzweg* (2007), was another solo pantomime, an eighty-minute church performance, in which he enacted Jesus and the fourteen stations of the cross accompanied by *Le Chemin de la croix* (1931), an enormous organ work by Marcel Dupré (1886-1971). In 2015, he staged a pantomime, *Antigone,* with a small, all-male cast, and at the age of 80, he continued to perform pieces he had created decades earlier. Except for *Kreuzweg*, Sládek devoted himself to a comic style of pantomime that evoked the artificiality of eighteenth century *commedia* performance and the physicality of silent film comedians in the years 1913-1918. His Kefka persona was present in all of his pieces. In *Marriage of Figaro*, his actors interacted with puppets; in *Antigone*, his actors used grotesque masks, prostheses, and luxuriously colored costumes. In ensemble pieces, he liked bodies to move with dancelike exaggeration of gesture. Scenic context for the action was minimal, if not altogether absent. His pieces conjured up an "old" mode of clown performance that somewhat recalled the Prague cabaret scene of the 1930s, if not the frolicking atmosphere of the eighteen century *foires*. He never really saw pantomime as a medium for embodying a modern idea of reality. Indeed, pantomime was an escape from political realities that could never achieve accurate or satisfying representation in comic form (Sládek Archive).

Hungary

Pantomime in Hungary during the Cold War evolved in a different fashion than elsewhere in the East bloc perhaps in large part because of the

failed attempt in 1956 to overthrow the Communist regime. Before 1956, the Party forbade any form of pantomimic performance or any effort to recover the exciting modern dance culture that, guided almost entirely by women, thrived in Budapest during the 1920s and 1930s and which included one of the greatest pantomimes of the twentieth century, Bartok's *The Miraculous Mandarin* (1924) (cf. Fuchs 2000: 82-85). During that time, Valéria Dienes (1879-1978), who, in addition to acquiring a doctorate in philosophy, studied dance in Paris with Isadora and Raymond Duncan, developed a mystical-mathematical system and school of bodily movement, Orchestics, which she applied to the production of numerous large-scale religious "movement dramas" in Budapest, including one involving a thousand performers, *The Fate of a Child* (1935). These productions may have included pantomimic action derived from her "orchestic" and "evological" theory of kinetic communication (Dienes 2001: 5-7). Alice Madzsar [Jászi] (1877-1935), a student of Delsarte and Mensendieck, and Olga Szentpál (1895-1968), a disciple of Dalcroze, established dance schools in Budapest that produced unusual movement pieces that apparently included pantomime (Dienes 2001: 10-18). But with the Communist takeover of Hungary in the 1940s, these ideas about bodily movement and knowledge of them virtually disappeared.

A governing slogan of the Party proclaimed that, "socialist man speaks openly and does not display." From the Party's perspective, pantomimic avoidance of speech disclosed a profound distrust of words, and such distrust in itself undermined confidence in the language used by the state to justify its policies and in the language used by "the people" to build solidarity on behalf of the socialist program of salvation. Yet unlike in other East bloc countries, in Hungary numerous people became involved in efforts to create pantomimic art, with the result that pantomimic activity did not congeal around one or two dominant personalities, but became scattered across a variety of artists who never succeeded in consolidating an array of pantomimic enterprises into a sustained pantomime production platform. Orsolya Huszár Fürjesné wrote a thesis on pantomime in Cold War Hungary for Panonnia University, which the University published (without pagination) on the Internet in 2008. Her thesis remains the most comprehensive source for information about Hungarian pantomime for the period, and most of the facts regarding Hungarian pantomime here come from this work. She contends that the earliest efforts to create pantomime

in Hungary took place in 1957, when the actress Itala Békés (b. 1927) and her brother-in-law, the opera director András Békés (1927-2015), invited Marcel Marceau to visit Hungary, and Marceau in turn invited them to Paris. Itala Békés had studied body movement under Olga Szentpál (1895-1968), who in the 1920s and 1930s was the director of a modern dance school that had produced experimental expressionist dance pantomimes [Figure 99]. Itala and András Békés hoped that the connection with Marceau would allow them to develop ambitious plans for a pantomime studio in Budapest, but nothing came of these hopes except invitations for more pantomime artists to visit Hungary. Another actor, Ferencz László (1923-1981), after studying briefly, in 1957, at Jean-Louis Barrault's school in Paris, set up a pantomime studio in Budapest the following year to produce what he called "mimo-grotesques." But the studio, which lasted only about a year, was primarily a place where actors could practice bodily expression, and it apparently produced only one "mimo-grotesque," the twelve-scene *Tales of Man*, by the choreographer and ethnographer László-Bencsik Sándor Mesék (1925-1999). In 1958, a teacher, István Barlanghy (b. 1926), set up the Hungarian Pantomime Studio, which operated as a training facility in the University of Budapest. This studio lasted until 1965, but Barlanghy, who promoted the idea of pantomime as an independent mode of performance and published several theoretical articles about pantomime, including a small book of mime exercises, was unable to produce a single pantomime. Fialka's Theater of the Balustrade from Prague visited, as did Tomaszewski's Wroclaw Pantomime Company and Marcel Marceau (1967-1968), but these did not lead to pantomime production in Hungary, only to visits abroad for Hungarians to attend workshops, classes, and festivals. A dancer, Zoltán Kárpáthy (b. 1939), inspired by Decroux, decided to become a pantomime and studied under Jean Soubeyran and Jacques Lecoq. The government in 1963 granted him the first license to operate a pantomime theater (rather than studio), the Debiru Pantomim, which seated only twenty-four spectators but lasted from 1967-1973, although it remains unclear what the theater actually produced. Fürjesné explains how different theater journals and newspapers published essays on theoretical issues of pantomime, on whether audiences required education on pantomime before performing it, on whether pantomimes can be performed without performers educated in the art, on whether pantomime was a "people's art," on foreign pantomime performances and artists, on forums about pantomime, and on the

popularity of pantomime studios. One newspaper reported that in 1973, 100 people in Hungary classified themselves as pantomime artists. In 1977, the government set up a pantomime commission at the request of the National Institute of Nursing, which believed that pantomime might provide therapeutic benefits. But apparently nothing came out of the commission, nor much out of all the media discourse on pantomime. The government would grant licenses to perform pantomime, but refused to provide any funding or any space for it. When the media reported on the "popularity" of pantomime, it referred to the proliferation of studios in which young people people performed exercises and experiments in pantomimic signification but not much in the way of pantomimes for public consumption. Fürjesné contends that the published discourse on pantomime in the 1960s was on a higher level than in subsequent decades, but the result was the formation of studios filled with students learning to be teachers of pantomime who would have their own studios in which students learned to be teachers of pantomime. The discourse failed to build an audience for pantomime.



Figure 99: An intriguing image of a pantomime performance by the Olga Szentpál dance group in Budapest, ca. 1935. However, information about pantomime in

Hungary during that time remains very obscure. Photo: Erzsébet Leichtner, from Földvári Books.

It was evident, though, that pantomime performances were necessary to establish pantomime as an art rather than as a pedagogical activity. In 1967, Miklos Köllő (b. 1946), a biochemistry student, founded in Budapest the Domino Pantomime Studio after seeing a performance by Marcel Marceau, although he had no desire to emulate Marceau's style of pantomime, and he studied briefly at Ladislav Fialka's International School of Choreography in Prague. The Domino Studio operated out of the basement of his house, which meant that from the government's perspective, the Studio was never eligible for support from public funds. Köllő's productions involved students registered for his courses in pantomime, and by 1980 the Studio had nearly a hundred students enrolled in pantomime courses. He wanted to develop a dramatic style of pantomime through what he called a "dramaturgy of dreams." In an article for the theater journal *Színház* (IV, 12, December 1971, 43-48), he explained that while people currently think of pantomime as clowns in whiteface, among ancient people, including the Romans, pantomime had two functions: 1) as a trance-like, shamanistic religious ritual, and 2) as a profane, erotic embodiment of an exclusive "symbolic sign system" that made the body move abstractly. The distinction between the two functions was not always clear, nor did the ancient cultures make a clear distinction between dance and miming. In addition to the Romans, Köllő referred to the dance pantomimes of African and East Asian cultures as examples of these neglected functions of pantomime, but he also discussed Decroux in relation to a "geometry of the body" that he considered unique to pantomime, "a new kind of motion rhythm," the "condensed drama" of "dynamic immobility." He apparently meant that pantomime created a compressed drama through abstract or symbolic tensions between parts of the body, which music intensified without determining. He asserted that pantomimic action had an "internal, psychic" origin derived from the performer's unique relation to the person represented, unlike dance, which relied on "prefabricated forms" to design bodily movements. Köllő's pantomime productions nevertheless used a good deal of abstract movement, geometrical, gymnastic contortions of the body, which sometimes resembled modern dance, but was closer to dynamic sculpture,

because he had little interest in showing how the body consumes space. He suffused his productions with theatrical effects: masks, strange costumes, curtains, footlights. Literary works inspired many of his productions: Victor Hugo, *Notre Dame Paris* (1969), Albert Camus, *The Artist's Life* (1969), Jean Genet, *The Blacks* (1970), Gyula Juhász, *The Boy Changed into a Rabbit* (1973), Thomas Mann, *Transposed Heads* (1974), Béla Balázs, *Garments of Dreams* (1974), *Gogol Panoptic* (1977), Ernest Hemingway, *The Old Man and the Sea* (1978), Miguel Asturias, *"Oh … the Half-Breed Woman"* (1980), Michel de Ghelderode, *Night of Fools* (1982), *Edgar Allan Poe's Supper* (1983), *Salome* (1983). Köllő's productions sometimes brought him trouble from the government, which banned some of his productions, even though he often did not advertise them. Undercover agents of the secret police infiltrated his audiences (Köllő 2016: 93-94). His audience was never large, but it was large enough to sustain the productions, filled as it was with well-educated people looking for adventurous artistic experiences, including foreign visitors and spectators employed by foreign embassies. These foreign spectators facilitated opportunities for him in other countries. His production of *Notre Dame Paris* at the International Theater Festival in Amsterdam launched his international reputation and gained him invitations to show his productions at other festivals over the years. He taught pantomime at the International Theatre Institute in London between 1976 and 1979, and from 1986 to 1988 he directed the International Theater Center in Athens. The Hungarian government suspected him of being a foreign agent while the Hungarian mainstream cultural media regarded him as estranged from any genuinely Hungarian artistic identity. Yet in 1983, he was able to set up a larger venue for his productions at the Centi Stage, and in 1984, he assumed the directorship of the Budavari Labyrinth, a vast underground network of caverns in the Buda Castle, previously long dormant, which enabled "panopticum" exhibits to incorporate unusual visual and acoustic effects. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, he continually found work choreographing films, television shows, and theatrical productions. Yet he never found the Hungarian cultural environment congenial to his artistic ambitions—that is, he always looked beyond the borders of Hungary for the development and expansion of his artistic identity. The Domino Pantomime Theater staged its last performance in 1989, with Köllő's production of *Macbeth of East Central Europe*, after which he resigned all his theater positions. He claimed that,

even before the collapse of the Communist regime in 1990, commercial ambitions had corrupted the theater culture and municipal government. Soon, however, he formed a new production company, the Central European Dance Theater, which indicated his move away from pantomime and toward the German concept of "Tanztheater." His productions subsequently derived more from history and biography than from literature: an adapatation of Mikhail Bulgakov's *Satan's Ball* (1994), *The Joyful Blessing of Franz Liszt* (1995), *Viper's Nest* (1995), inspired by the life of the Italian gay, Marxist film director Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922-1975), *Peasant Decameron* (1996), *Rasputin is Satan* (1998). After 1996, the Central European Dance Theater, as a formal organization, ceased to exist, because Köllő could no longer afford the rent for the theater, which rose in part, he says, because officials of the National Theater believed that a "national theater" should not be hosting a company dedicated to sponsoring "central European" projects (Köllő 2016: 101-102). In 2003, he formed yet another company, Tarka Színpad, comprised of amateur performers, chiefly senior citizens and designed for senior audiences. The productions of the Tarka Stage (2003-2012) were mostly musical comedies built around old comic tales (Hans Sachs) or contemporary fables, although its last production (2012) was of the lesbian drama *The Maids* (1947), by Jean Genet (1910-1986). Köllő seems like an extraordinary figure in the East bloc theatrical scene, but a stronger evaluation of his significance in pantomime history depends on access to documentation of his productions rather than on further anecdotes about the peculiar circumstances under which he managed to produce so many ambitious dramatic pantomimes.

The Domino Pantomime Company's success in foreign countries motivated the government to encourage the development of an authentically "Hungarian" type of pantomime. The state had already approved the establishment of an experimental theater at the Budapest University of Technology, believing that the University was more likely to emphasize appropriate socialist messaging in the theater's performances than in the private productions of Domino. In 1974, the government allowed the formation of a pantomime theater company within the University Stage and the University named Pál Regős (1926-2009) as the artistic director. Regős began his career as an ice dancer and had performed for several years (1948-1957) with the Hungarian ice dance company, Jégrevü, which traveled throughout the East bloc. As a child, he had seen

circus clowns, and since then he had always wanted to become a clown, although it was "impossible to learn" how. But in 1957, he created a Charlie Chaplin figure for an ice dance show. From then on, his attention focused on acting and pantomime. The same year he saw at the Radnóti Theater several prominent actors perform "ancient pantomimes," which created "a most impressive ethereal show" hosted by István Barlanghy. Regős became friends with Ferencz László, and then with Henryk Tomaszewski in Wroclaw, where he also met Marcel Marceau. Yet he was largely self-taught in pantomime, guided intensely by Jean Soubeyran's 1963 textbook on pantomime performance, *Die wortlose Sprache*. He formed in 1962 his own pantomime company, Commedia XX, which rehearsed for free in the exercise room of the Ice Theater. But he never became a clown. His first pantomime production took place in 1964 and emulated the type of pantomime performance created by Tomaszewski, although Regős included musical interludes because the actors had to change the scenery for each scene. The primary scenario featured a "sleek" Black Pierrot in a black body suit with "huge white buttons." Pierrot pursued a girl dressed entirely in white, but could not win her "because he was black." A secondary scenario, "The Great Book," inspired by a poem of Dezső Kosztolányi (1885-1936), was more abstract-allegorical and featured a conflict between the Heart, in a red body suit, and the Brain, in a blue body suit. Subsequent productions, entirely amateur, were sporadic and took place in "various cultural houses," chiefly workers' or community clubs. Regős worked as a window washer to pay for costumes, props, and space rentals. Then the Budapest University of Technology invited him to manage a pantomime unit of the University Stage, which compelled him "to think differently within the genre. The traditional language of pantomime no longer worked." His first production for the University Stage was a 1975 pantomimic adaptation of Samuel Beckett's absurdist, apocalyptic drama *Endgame* (1957), which, amazingly, Beckett authorized. But the most successful productions, from 1976, were of Bartok's ballet *The Wooden Prince* (1917) and pantomime *The Miraculous Mandarin* (1924), which, however, Regős set in an Asian milieu rather than the European city Bartok originally imagined. Although the University Stage workshops were popular and enrolled numerous students, the pantomime productions of the Stage were on a small scale, involving only a handful of performers, because Regős had to cover much of the touring cost with his own money, whereas Köllő sometimes had as many as thirty

students performing in his shows, which he only produced once a year. After traveling to various European cities with the Bartok program, Regős moved in what he regarded as a new direction with his 1982 production of a three-person pantomime based on the story *The Metamorphosis* (1915), by the German-Jewish writer Franz Kafka (1883-1924), which depicts the life of a man transformed into an enormous insect. Regős himself played the role of Gregor Samsa, but the piece failed to attract an audience, and though he was not sure why, Regős felt he could not let go of Kafka as a source for pantomime. He was born Jewish, but grew up Calvinist, because his parents had converted. The government nevertheless considered him Jewish. Kafka, he said, led him to a more "personal" way of moving the body. Meanwhile, he accepted an offer to teach "movement design" in Vienna, and there he remained until 1988. Pantomime almost completely disappeared from the University Stage, as it became a studio for the study of "motion theater" or Creative Motion Design. Regős returned to Kafka in 1985, with a solo piece, *Requiem for Josef K*, inspired by attending a performance in Vienna of the *Requiem* (1982) by German composer Aribert Reimann (b. 1936). But he was not happy with this performance, either, and later acknowledged that, "I wanted to show Kafka's world too much. I was playing very cramped, and that's not good." That is, he was too diligent in translating the claustrophobic world of Kafka's into highly constrained bodily movements. A new path opened up in 1990 when in Vienna he met the Japanese modern dancer Emi Hatano (b. 1939), and they transformed the Kafka piece into an abstract, expansive duo, perhaps closer to the Heart-Brain duo of his first production than to the human-insect duality of Kafka. Then (1994) he collaborated with Gabriella Salz (b. 1971), a German literature student and movement therapist, on another "movement duo," inspired by the German book *I Don't Want to be Inside Me Anymore* (1993) by Birger Sellin (b. 1973), purportedly the first book authored by a functionally non-verbal autistic person, although the Sellin text had resulted from the completely discredited method of "facilitated communication." Regős developed another duo project, *Heartwitch* (1998), with the modern dancer Rita Bata (b. 1973), whose dance aesthetic strongly incorporated Asian influences, especially the expressionistic solemnities of Japanese Butoh. He kept revising and reviving (2001, 2004) his Kafka piece. While all these projects seem fascinating and strange, especially the duos involving the elderly Regős and a young woman, information about the productions remains

largely inaccessible, and what is known mostly serves to support Regős's assertion that, "You should never stop developing, you should not always do the same thing. The latter work must in some respects exceed the previous one" (Rókás 2009). With his female collaborators, it appears that he moved away from pantomime toward something that was neither mime nor dance but what he called "motion theater" or "motion design," which apparently had some affinity with movement therapy and thus was not preoccupied with audiences. Regős exemplifies how pantomime awakens and accelerates a hunger for change, both personal and social. For Regős, pantomime in the 1960s represented a new path to a new sense of identity arising from the body rather than from words or prescribed ways of moving in a world in which, as Köllő observed, one could "no longer trust words," because "words had lost their true content" (Köllő 2016: 91). Pantomime meant moving the body outside of one's self, into another identity, another story. But Regős always had difficulty finding a story that moved the body in a new way. Unlike Köllő, he did not trust literary sources any more than he trusted the words of the government or the language of communal discourse. Not even Kafka could provide the "metamorphosis" he expected of pantomime. By the end of the 1980s, he realized his body had to move in a more "personal" way, outside of history, away from stories told by others, away from an identity inscribed and prescribed by history or approved by audiences. He thus turned to "movement theater" or "motion design," a kind of therapeutic activity perhaps, but a logical result of perceiving that you cannot move in a new way if your body and identity have been lost in a history that has already made you someone other than you might have made yourself.

Fürjesné seems to regard János Karsai (b. 1945) as the most popular of the Hungarian Cold War pantomime figures; nearly half of her thesis describes his career. He began as an actor with the alternative performance studio of the Pince Theater in Budapest, but turned his attention to pantomime in 1968, when he became a student at Zoltán Kárpáthy's school, where the curriculum derived from the Germany-based Jean Soubeyran, a student of Decroux and Barrault. But because he was unable to see nearly any pantomime performances in the theaters, Karsai's greatest inspiration came from silent films, particularly the comic styles of Buster Keaton (1895-1966) and Stan Laurel (1890-1965). Kárpáthy included Karsai's sketch in an hour long pantomime show for factory workers, which inspired Karsai to

develop his own, hour-long, solo pantomime performance, *Confession in White* (1970), which enabled him to receive a license to perform pantomime. For a while he worked with the Thalia Theater, training actors in physical expression and performing Bartok's *The Wooden Prince* and *The Miraculous Mandarin*. Fürjesné notes that he spent much time discussing, promoting, and explaining pantomime in an effort to stimulate interest in the phenomenon in different audiences. He formed his own pantomime company, Mimickry Mim, in 1974, which included his wife Gizella (b. 1955), Vladimir Laczkó, a circus acrobat, and Pál Ferenc, apparently a clown who has otherwise remained completely obscure. The company gave its first performance at the University of Debrecen Medical School in 1975, a pantomime representing the cycle of life. But Karsai spent much of his time as a member of cultural delegations within the East bloc and attending workshops. In 1978, Mimicky Mim became the Karsai Pantomime Company, with many shows occurring in nightclubs. The following year, he started a small TV series of pantomime sketches, and throughout the 1980s he created more TV pantomimes, produced children's shows, performed at construction camps, community centers, senior care facilities, the Planetarium in Budapest. Karsai was a tireless popularizer of pantomime, and he aggressively opposed the "aristocratic," avant-garde pantomime developed, for example, by the Domino Pantomime Company or Tomaszewski in Poland. He regarded Charlie Chaplin as the summit of pantomimic art, which, for Karsai, meant that pantomimic gestures and actions should always be understandable to any audience, they should not drift into choreographed abstraction and metaphysical symbolism, and they should represent "everyday people dealing with everyday problems." But this inclination to "cleanse" and simplify bodily signification led to an entirely comic performance aesthetic in which all action issued from or around a clownlike, Chaplinesque persona. His largely solo program, *Life Is Complicated?!* (1973), was an enormous success, yet it remains difficult to ascertain the nature of the performance, other than that he enacted the commonplace misadventures of his Everyman clown persona in ways that allowed him to perform on stages everywhere without much scenery, lighting effects, complex musical accompaniment or more than two or three supporting characters. Fürjesné lists the pieces in the program without any description of how Karsai performed them: "Opening Song; Pantomime; Street; Humanisn; Lifetime Achievement; Trial; Marijuana; History; Ballade;

They Are Two; How are you doing?; Door; Love Story; Hyenas; Wild West Pub; The Last Minute. In the second half there were nine songs, the first performed by Gizella Karsai, followed by the pantomime: Mr. Primitive's Adventures; Education; Diploma; Advertising for Marriage; Bullfighter; Love; Rake; Problems." His shows were not without occasional controversy. While touring in Dresden in 1981, government officials warned him not to show a scene in which his character breaks through a wall, but he performed the scene anyway, with the audience responding in amazed silence. In another show, he presented his character on a street urinating under a picture of Lenin. By the late 1980s, though, he concentrated on pantomime and pantomime instruction for television. In 1988, he appeared in six episodes of animated film writer Ágnes Bálint's (1922-2008) TV series *Szimat Szörény*, a kind of puppet show in which human actors wearing animal masks performed in pantomime while the dialogue and songs were done in voiceover and told how the dog police inspector, Szimat Szörény, solved crimes in a ridiculously modern world of animal-humans (cf., Filmek Kedvenc 2015). After the collapse of the regime, however, Karsai devoted himself almost entirely to teaching.

Karsai is probably more important as an educator and promoter of pantomime than as a performer. Fürjesné calls him the "shaman of pantomime." He made pantomime seem like an accessible, happy way to make one's body say things that people from different backgrounds would find enjoyable or amusing. The body becomes "understandable," he contended, only though rigourous self-discipline, both ethical and physical. He taught hundreds of students, from children to university students to quite mature adults, for, like many mime instructors in the West, he regarded pantomime as a way of living more than a profession on the stage. As director of the Pantheon Studio of the KISZ Central Artists Ensemble (1978-1988), he was able to organize numerous international pantomime conferences and foreign visits, and he was prominent in the formation (1982) of a pantomime section in the Hungarian Academy of Theater Arts. When in 1977 the Hungarian Institute for Folk Education established a committee to supervise amateur organizations, he (along with Miklós Köllő, Zoltán Kárpáthy, and István Barlanghy) determined the conditions under which performers or ensembles could be licensed as pantomimes. Through his skill at publicity, he assured that Hungarian pantomime culture received enthusiastic appreciation from foreign countries and invitations to perform

abroad. The end of the Communist regime diminished his influence, although his wife Gizella achieved a growing popularity as a singer of folk-rock tunes while continuing to teach pantomime, primarily to children. Two of the Karsais' children, Veronika (b. 1975) and András (b. 1986), have become major figures in the pantomime culture of contemporary Hungary; the brother and sister formed their own company, New Generation Pantomime, in 2000, and then in 2009 a sibling company, Mimage Pantomime Theater. Because of András's busy schedule performing as a dancer and actor in musicals and operettas, Veronika assumes much of the creative responsibility for work produced by the pantomime companies. However, while Veronika retains aspects of János's principle that pantomimic gestures should be "understandable" to any audience, she has also explored an increasingly abstract, choreographed idea of speechless performance, which she describes as either pantomime or "movement theater." But with this shift toward abstraction, she showed an inclination, not strongly developed in her father, toward dramatic rather than comic effects. She has tried to combine comic "understandability" with dramatic abstraction in such works as *richard2nixon* (2009) and her remarkably inventive 2012 pantomimic adaptation of the early absurdist play *The Bald Soprano* (1950) by Eugène Ionescu (1909-1994), which used a variety of imaginative musical accompaniments to the choreographed action. Perhaps her most effective synthesis of "understandable" pantomimic gesture and movement theater is her solo piece *It Is Also Dance* (2008), done in conjunction with an exhibition of ancient Hungarian artifacts in Cyprus. In this piece, she mimes a series of "women figures in heaven and earth" while wearing a black body stocking before nothing more than a green curtain. Karsai uses no props or mask while performing a woman cradling a baby, washing dishes, ironing and folding laundry, staring at herself in a mirror and applying makeup [Figure 100]. The piece, entirely dramatic, becomes more abstract as she embodies mythic women—Eos, creator of winds and stars, a woman in a mask, Daphne, who turned into a laurel tree rather than submit to Apollo, an angel playing a lyre. Her beautiful, though not always "understandable," movements in constructing the different "earthly" and mythic female figures here achieves a Roman idea of pantomimic metamorphosis that was practically unthinkable during the Cold War in either the East or the West (Karsai 2009-2017). It is astonishing how vibrant the Roman idea, as she incarnates it, remains across so many centuries, and

yet she has achieved it through the otherwise unlikely synthesis of her father's aesthetic of "understandable" gesture and the "aristocratic" aesthetic of bodily abstraction.



Figure 100: Veronika Karsai performing her pantomime *Tanc az is* (*It Is Also Dance*) (2008). Photos: from video excerpts of the performance on the Karsai Veronika YouTube channel.

Bulgaria

The clown paradigm also prevailed in Cold War Bulgarian pantomime, but not nearly to the extent that it did in Russia, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. Indeed, pantomime in Bulgaria was largely the work of two men who worked together for a while, Velyo Goranov (b. 1946) and Peter Mim (b. 1952). Goranov was a student of acting at the National Academy of Theater and Film Arts, as was Mim. They formed a Pantomime Studio in Sofia in 1973 with a performance ensemble called MIMANS. Goranov says that he first became interested in pantomime in 1967, but what precipitated his interest and how he manifested it before 1973 remains very obscure, although Marcel Marceau was evidently a great influence. Both Mim and Goranov constructed clown personas modeled after Chaplin's Tramp and Marceau's Bip, but neither has published any description of how they differentiated each other in performance. By 1978, Mim was working as an actor in provincial theaters, eventually becoming a director at the theater in Sliven. He attended workshops given by Tomaszewski and Fialka, and eventually he studied under Tadashi Endo (b. 1947), an especially somber proponent of the Japanese Butoh aesthetic based in Göttingen, Germany. Yet Mim remained committed to the clown paradigm. He developed a precise, vivid impersonation of Charlie Chaplin, even enacting scenes from Chaplin movies like *The Gold Rush* (1925) to make an entire program, but he cultivated another clown persona, somewhat similar to Marceau's Bip, though perhaps more macabre. He wore either a white shirt and pants or a black shirt and pants, while the mask remained the same: whiteface with heavily mascared eyes, hugely exaggerated black eyebrows, a bright red mouth, and a bald head in conflict with unruly streams of hair flowing from the sides and back of his head. With the "Mim" character, he has built solo sketches mostly out of the movements of his hands and arms, so that humor is incidental to displaying skillful use of the hands to evoke playing a musical instrument, a bird in flight, picking flowers, or moving along a wall. Finding opportunities for pantomime limited in Bulgaria, Mim migrated to Germany in 1991, where Marceau and Jean Soubeyran had stimulated popular enthusiasm for mime, particularly in schools. In Hannover, he became involved with physical training, mime instruction, and non-verbal communication workshops as well as solo performances in a variety of corporate and public venues. With students, he began to produce ensemble pieces, such as *Myths, Mysteries*

(1994), a sequence of "visual poems," including"Swan of Tuonela," "Valse Triste," "Pygmalion," and "poems" featuring "Mim," none of which could be called humorous, even if they emphasized a mood of macabre playfulness. In 1999, he formed his own company, Fenix Theater, to present "dreamlike productions" using fantastically ornate costumes and masks with lights embedded in them, so that the "bizarre beings" exude a polychromatic translucence. Since 2005, he has run his own school, Mimart Studio, and most of his life has subsequently focused on organizing and leading a constant program of workshops, courses, and demonstrations. One of his more interesting "Mim" pantomimes shows him actually painting a picture following the outline of a female body in black tights pressed against the back of the canvas and visible to Mim and the audience. The body moves and Mim paints the contours of the body, creating the image of a body either in movement or transformed into a kind of expressionist deformity. Cello music accompanies the act of painting. Mim completes the painting and drops to his knees to make movements with his hands. The model comes from the painting to observe the result. She assumes poses similar to those painted expressionistically. The piece seems preoccupied with the relation between the physical action that creates the expressionistic brushstroke/image and the physical action that creates an expressionistic pantomime. But despite the genuine power of the painting he creates, Mim reveals a deep uncertainty about the relation he dramatizes rather than an insight into it. As a performance the piece is simply not as a strong as what may have inspired it, namely the action painting-performance art of the German expressionist artist Barbara Heinisch (b. 1944), who, since the 1970s, has treated the act of painting as a performance, wherein a nude female body behind the canvas is the model for the figure that Heinisch paints onto the canvas, accompanied by dark, often avant-garde music. When Heinisch decides that the painting is complete, she tears the canvas, and the model steps through the torn section, as if emerging out of a vagina in the image. The painting always has the tear in it, as if to signify a convulsive violence involved in the representation of the body. Although Heinisch has done this performance for decades, it still manages to retain a visceral intensity. Mim does not satirize Heinisch's performance, nor does he use her performance as a basis for an alternative (or maybe non-feminist) understanding of the painter's and the model's contrasting relations to the image. It feels like he wants to imitate Heinisch while

omitting the nudity and the "wound" to his own creation. But the resulting performance seems timid, with the painting completely eclipsing the actions that produced it. But this timidity, which perhaps results from a desire to assimilate (imitate) German expressionism instead of emerging out of it, is typical of so much mime culture that, through the harmless, friendly clown figure, strives simply to please audiences rather than move them to a dynamic relationship with representation.

Meanwhile, Goranov, who characterizes himself as "a loner," toured widely with the Pantomime Studio, but with his deep, resonant voice, he also acted in numerous Bulgarian films and TV shows throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Although he was friends with Marceau and hosted him in Bulgaria, Goranov did not want to emulate Marceau's mime style. Yet he was unable to develop a pantomimic identity without a Pierrot-type clown persona. However, his clown persona was ironic, almost a tragic mask: a whiteface with black tears smearing his cheeks and a red mouth blotched as if it were bleeding. He performed traditional solo routines with this mask—the wall, the flower picking, the attempt to sit comfortably—which made them seem much less humorous or charming than pathetically poignant. He liked directing as much as acting, so he always wanted to work with an ensemble. Much of the ensemble work consisted of adaptations of well-known stories and literary works (Don Quixote, Don Giovanni), the most successful being, perhaps, his 1985 slapstick, pantomimic version of the long comic Czech novel *The Good Soldier Švejk* (1921-1923), by Jaroslav Hašek (1883-1923). While touring in Mexico in 1986, members of his ensemble considered remaining in America, and to bring the group back to Bulgaria, the government offered to give Goranov his own theater. The group returned and Goranov got a theater, but that was only the beginning of "all sorts of violent battles to survive." Members of the company deserted him, and it proved oppressively difficult to find money to keep the theater going. With the collapse of the Communist regime, the situation did not improve much. Goranov borrowed money at extortionate rates to sustain the theater, which, since 1988, operated under the name Movement Theater. The Culture Ministry appointed him the official director of the theater, but he had to raise money for own salary, so for a while he gathered funds by running a junk collection business. He describes the period 1987 to 1997 as like living "in a pirana tank. It was just hell," according to an interview with him in the Bulgarian language *Business Weekly* (online June 9, 2001). With

the Movement Theater, Goranov tried to synthesize pantomime, dance, acrobatics, and slapstick, and he even produced (1996?) a pantomime depicting the voluptuous extravagances of the Roman Empire (*Teatur Dvijenie* 2012). He clearly wanted to create a "serious" kind of pantomime, but Bulgarian society remained locked into a mime culture modeled by Marcel Marceau. For years, he acted in and directed plays, and although he finally received official awards for becoming the "greatest Bulgarian pantomime," he decided to celebrate his seventieth birthday in 2016 by performing with much success one-man dramas: *The Grand Inquisitor*, from the poem in Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) and Samuel Beckett's one-act play *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958). Bulgarian pantomime remains almost entirely devoted to the Marceau/Pierrot charming clown paradigm, with Alexander Iliev (b. 1956), a student of Barrault and an instructor of mime and physical theater at the National Academy of Theater and Film Arts, perhaps the most prominent representative of the style, which he combines with instruction related to techniques of the *commedia dell'arte*. He published between 1993 and 1997 an enormous, four-volume treatise, *Towards a Theory of Mime*, some of which has been translated into English (2014), a very convoluted work, stuffed with the many exercises that are a central obsession of mime culture and suffused with much mystical Asian or New Age philosophy regarding the body's relation to things like "matter," "energy," and "time." But the book does contain a comprehensive bibliography of Russian language books on pantomime, which could be the basis for a major reappraisal of pantomime within Russia during the Soviet era. Even so, Bulgaria's attachment to the Marceau/Pierrot pantomime paradigm was not due entirely to Russian or Communist tolerance of the paradigm as a symbol of "the people" or of some kind of harmless, popular image of "humanity." The paradigm also held because it represented an idea of "the West," of the solitary, independent performer, who needed no words, no speech, or no one else to construct an identity for him or herself, no matter how generic that identity might be and no matter that the paradigm (as opposed to Marceau himself) was never especially popular as a performing art, even in the West no more than in Bulgaria. The paradigm functioned to signify a Western "way of life," an accessible, exercise-driven, therapeutic-hygienic "discipline" that enabled the performer to construct an appealing, likeable, yet strangely "human" identity unencumbered by the pressures of a text, a theater, a society, or even a market to become anyone

other than this charming clown the performer has made her/himself. The paradigm was an image of freedom.

French Pantomime in East Germany

In East Germany, pantomime entered the cultural scene through contact with the Marxist dramatist and theorist of "epic theater," Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), who, after many years of exile and after interrogation in 1947 by the United States House Un-American Activities Committees for his affiliations with Communists, had returned to East Berlin in 1949, where he formed the famous Berliner Ensemble dedicated to the principles of epic theater. While residing for a year (1948) in Switzerland, Brecht made the acquaintance of a French pantomime, Jean Soubeyran (1921-2000). Brecht invited Soubeyran to choreograph the carnival scene for a 1956 production of Brecht's *Das Leben des Galilei* (1943) by the Berliner Ensemble. Although Soubeyran had already toured East Germany with his West German pantomime ensemble in 1955, the connection with Brecht gave him a privileged status within the Communist regime, and in 1957, he moved to East Berlin, where he, along with his wife Brigitte (1932-2015), introduced pantomime performances that he had developed in West Germany. Soubeyran had studied acting under Charles Dullin in 1944 and corporeal mime under Decroux in 1945 before presenting (1946) a small mimodrama at the Comédie-Française directed by Barrault. He then performed in the ensemble Marcel Marceau had formed, appearing in Marceau's production of Gogol's *The Overcoat* (1951). But after attempting a couple of solo pantomime programs of his own, Soubeyran realized that Paris did not have space for more pantomimes from the Decroux-Barrault pedigree. He put together a small ensemble, including Brigitte, whom he soon married, to perform outside of France, in Switzerland, the Netherlands, and West Germany, where it seemed as if the great pantomime experiments of the 1910s and 1920s had never happened and any idea of pantomime from France enjoyed the advantage of being an exotic import. By 1954, he had established his pantomime troupe first in Dortmund and then in Düsseldorf within the French Occupational Sector. Soubeyran was more of a Harlequin than a Pierrot; though he accented his lips, eyes, and eyebrows, he avoided whiteface. Brigitte was more a Pierrot than a Colombine, wearing whiteface, a black skullcap, and pants and blouse instead of a dress. They wanted to develop a gender-neutral comic aesthetic, a kind of androgymous

pantomime slapstick, although this effect was due perhaps more to Brigitte than to Jean [Figure 101]. In addition to touring, Jean found work as an instructor at the Folkwang School in Essen when he received the invitation to work in East Berlin. There, after the *Galilei* production, opera director Walter Felsenstein (1901-1975), dedicated to making opera singers more physically expressive in their performances, invited Soubeyran to supervise the physical training at the Komische Oper. For the DEFA film studio, Soubeyran starred in the curious pantomime film with musical accompaniment *Der junge Engländer* (1958), directed by Gottfried Kolditz (1922-1982) and based on the 1825 short story of Wilhelm Hauff (1802-1827) about a mysterious stranger (Soubeyran) in a South German village who persuades the provincial citizens that a chimpanzee he has acquired from a circus is his wealthy nephew, a young Englishman. Soubeyran transmitted the Decroux-Marceau pantomime aesthetic to many East German students. However, when the government embarked on construction of the Berlin Wall, he returned to West Germany and continued his career there. Although born in Cologne, Brigitte ardently believed in the socialist ideals guiding the East German state, and she remained in East Berlin, claiming that theater there was superior to that in the West. She worked as an actress, a teacher of pantomime, and an assistant to directors until, in the early 1970s, she became one of the first women in Germany to direct plays, which she did for many years, including numerous productions at the Volksbühne in Berlin and occasional productions in cities elsewhere in East Germany. Thus, gender-neutral pantomime was a path to a gender-neutral perception of the stage director.

Nadja Rothenburger and Selina Senti, pantomimes and body movement specialists in Berlin, have identified 25 persons who worked as pantomimes in East Germany, and they have listed the pantomime performances of these persons (Rothenburger 2010: 8-46). Unfortunately, Rothenburger and Senti provide only very minimal details about these performances, although the listings in themselves suggest that East Germany possessed one of the largest and busiest pantomime cultures in Europe. Nearly all the pantomime performances during the Cold War were the work of students, amateur ensembles, or professionals performing in their free time, and nearly all the pantomime performances were of a comic nature, modeled after the clown/Pierrot/*commedia* format. Rothenberger and Senti include a diagram showing how all the East German pantomimes

represent a perpetuation of Decroux's doctrines, because they either studied under Decroux, Marceau, Barrault, or the Soubeyrans or studied under Germans who had studied under the French masters. While some of the pantomimes interviewed identified other, foreign "influences" on their work, such as Tomaszewski, Fialka, or the Russian clown Slava Polunin (b. 1950), unlike elsewhere in the East bloc, none of the East German pantomimes identified Chaplin or any silent film figures as influences.



Figure 101: Jean and Brigitte Soubeyran performing *Im Zirkus*, early 1950s. Photo: Inge Worrigen.

Curiously, Rothenberger and Senti include the Austrian expressionist dancer Hanna Berger (1910-1962) as one of the pantomime figures of the German Democratic Republic. Andrea Amort has published (2010) a

detailed monograph about her, the chief source of information about her life and work. Coming from a troubled and humble background, Berger had joined the Communist Party at the age of seventeen. She struggled to learn dance from several teachers, including Vera Skoronel, while working as a masseuse, model, and assistant. In 1935, she studied under Mary Wigman and toured with Wigman's company and then with the company of Swiss clown dancer Trudi Schoop (1904-1999). In Berlin, Berger gave her first solo dance concert in 1937, which contained her piece *Der Krieger*, wherein she appeared, with entirely percussive accompaniment, as a soldier marching toward a not glorious doom. She always considered dance as a political activity, although her dances were only occasionally overt in their political messaging. When she published an essay critical of a dance that was too "mystical" (pro-Nazi) in its representation of workers, she came under scrutiny by the Gestapo. She returned to Vienna, but soon left for Italy, where she choreographed theatrical productions while putting together performances of her solo dance programs. She returned to Berlin in 1940 to perform new dances depicting Renaissance women inspired by her time in Italy, and with this new program she toured several German cities while accepting appointment as a dancer and teacher at the theater in Posen. After discovering numerous Marxist publications in her possession, the Gestapo arrested her for "preparing treason" in 1942. Several prominent cultural figures came to her defense, and eventually the Gestapo released her. In Vienna again, she hoped to establish a children's theater, but the Nazis forbade her to do so. After the war, she received support from the Communist mayor of the city, and for a few years, she was prodigiously active in the Viennese dance performance scene. But the Communists fared very poorly in municipal elections in 1949, and Berger, having lost her subsidy had to close the Vienna Childrens' Theater in 1950, partly because, to receive generous subsidies from the Marshall Plan, the American occupiers insisted that the city not subsidize any Communist sympathizers. Nor to her disappointment did the Communist Party offer any funding, even though the majority of her students came from the proletariat. Nevertheless, throughout the 1950s, she remained busy with dance concerts, choreography for theatrical and opera productions, teaching invitations, lectures, and dance journalism; she even choreographed dances in an Italian movie, *Il sigillo rosso* (1950). Her accompanist and musical arranger, Austrian composer Paul Kont (1920-2000), a modernist disciple of

dodecaphony, had studied in Paris under Mihaud, Messaien, and Honegger, and the two of them produced a concert of her dances there in 1952, and in 1954, they formed the Wiener Kammertanzgruppe, although this ensemble lasted only about a year as Berger and Font instead became involved in the first televised dances in Austria. Walter Felsenstein invited her to help with his program of physical training and choreography for opera singers at the Komische Oper at the same time (1956) that he brought Soubeyran. Kont had an interest in pantomime as well as connections in Paris, and since 1929, Berger had maintained a close relationship with the Communist sculptor Fritz Cremer (1906-1993), a major representative of official art in the German Democratic Republic who spoke on her behalf without, however, challenging those in the Party who regarded her work as too "formalistic" and excessively "individualistic" to entrust her with an academic position. She took on so many assignments because she lacked the reliable source of income that she had hoped the Wiener Kindertheater would provide. When in 1959 she won culture prize money from the city of Vienna, she went, nearly fifty years old, to Paris to study mime with Marcel Marceau and became the first woman to receive a diploma from him. She believed that mime would open up further teaching opportunities for her and strengthen her efforts to improve the physical expression of actors and singers. In late 1959, she taught pantomime for a couple of weeks at the Hochschule for Musik und Theater in Leipzig, but otherwise she taught pantomime entirely in Vienna, at the Conservatory, for only three months. She worked with the East German DEFA film studio on a couple of dance films and supervised the choreography for a couple of operas (Brussels, Vienna), but she did not produce any pantomimes. But she had not much time left to follow a new path: a brain tumor began to paralyze her in September 1961 and finally killed her in January of 1962.

Berger was important in the history of East German pantomime because she represented a potential direction for pantomime there that the socialist state failed to encourage. She was a dramatic dancer. While she spent much of her career choreographing theatrical productions and enjoyed producing ensemble pieces with students, she excelled at powerful, expressionistic solo dances, in which she could project different identities: *The Warrior*, *The Rider* (male and female horse cavaliers), *The Woman in Mourning*, Italian Renaissance women (*Dogaressa, Primavera, Tyranna, Amica*), *The Faun*, *The Girl*, *The Beloved*, *The Abandoned Mother*, *The*

Nymph, *The Enslaved*, *The Girl from Montmartre*, all of which she had created before 1945. She loved dancing in different costumes and in relation to a wide range of classical music. After the war, she created ensemble dances with much more overtly political and abstract themes: *Song of Solidarity* (1933), *Chaos, Sunday Song for Youth, Game in the Sun, Planning* (all 1946), with music by Hanns Eisler, although one of her most distinctive political pieces, the solo *Battlecry*, without music, she premiered in 1944. She was an ardent and highly imaginative practioner of the expressionistic solo dance program, so close to the Roman model of pantomime, that was nearly extinct by the time she gave her first concert in 1937 and which neither the Third Reich nor the Communist Party regarded as a new or even valuable path in dance culture. A good example of her semi-pantomimic dramatic style was her solo *L'Inconnue de la Seine* (1942), inspired by her first, thrilling visit to Paris in 1934 and begun when she worked in Rome in 1938. The piece, with music by Debussy, depicts a young woman alone, isolated, and abandoned on a bank of the Seine River. Filled with anxiety and despair, her movements encompass yet other emotions, anger, defiance, shame, and above all enormous uncertainty and indecision about what to do with herself in relation to the life and the great city around her. The dark river seems to summon her, yet life, the radiance of the great city, also pulls at her. She then realizes that the radiance of life is only an illusion, at best a memory of what she has lost forever. She decides to face death, the cold water; she plunges into the river, and the piece concludes with her floating in the water, sinking deeper into it, until, at last, she releases a serene smile as her body finally ceases to move. Berger's costume was a long, dark, violet dress with a green sash all made of silk to amplify the effect of the breeze and then the water rippling through it. Yet to create this drama almost entirely through gesture and movement was a gripping emotional experience for spectators during the war and after it (Amort 2010: 16-21). Berger displayed a rare gift for playing tragic scenes in pantomime, but her Communist idealism prevented her from becoming a predominantly tragic artist. She was just as skillful at playing haughty, aristocratic Renaissance ladies or a mischievious faun or a seductively androgynous cavalier. The main thing was that she brought an aura of *seriousness* to her enactments. She could bring gaiety, exuberance, even sometimes humour to her pieces, but she was never a clown, her performances did not evolve around a single, "essentially human,"

charmingly vulnerable identity like Bip or Pierrot. That was why the East Germans had no space for her despite her eagerness to work there. Even Brecht rejected her proposal in 1953 to collaborate with him on a dance work because he didn't think "ballet" in East Germany was sufficiently "developed" to claim his attention (111, 154): ballet was not sufficiently developed because it lacked seriousness, but it lacked seriousness because it did not allow a person with Berger's serious imagination to develop it; maybe, despite her Communist credentials, her status as a foreigner made her proposal untenable. Yet her dramatic approach to pantomimic narrative represented a potentially powerful "development" of bodily performance that East German theater culture failed to encourage as much as the West failed to encourage it. What is peculiar, though, is that the East German theater maintained a reputation for heavy seriousness, encouraged in part by Brecht's Berliner Ensemble. But it was a seriousness derived from a more intense trust in the authority of words, of the voice to control human action than perhaps prevailed in the West. Pantomime in East Germany, with its unanimous focus on clownery, seems to have represented a relief from this hyper-seriousness that was a byproduct of the self-important ideological Marxist discourse that invariably emanated from those assigned responsibility for controlling media. That pantomime functions as a relief from institutionalized seriousness is, of course, welcome, but that pantomime should function always, only, and exclusively as relief from institutionalized seriousness is in itself a form of oppressive institutionalization, a mode of "consensus" intended to exclude outsiders who are serious about things from which no relief seems compulsory. Amort observes that with the East German "boycott" of Berger's many proposals and the Austrian anti-communist policy, Berger existed "between" the East and the West (130). It was as if, like the unknown woman on the bank of the Seine, she became fatally split, irreconcilably divided by her artistic individuality and her love for a socialist future, and she could not survive the conflict.

After the building of the Berlin Wall (1961), pantomime, entirely in the clown paradigm, proliferated in East Germany during the 1960s through the work of amateurs and students. Harald Seime (b. 1936) formed in 1958 the most durable of the East German pantomime ensembles, the Pantomime-Studio an der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität, Jena, which consisted of students at the university, where Seime was himself a student

of physical education and music education. Marceau, whom he had seen on television, was his great inspiration, and he met with the Soubeyrans when they toured Leipzig in 1957. The same year, he presented a solo pantomime, *Marsch nach Moscou*, at a youth festival in Moscow, where he also met with Tomaszewski and Enrique Noisvander, the leader of the Chilean pantomime ensemble El Teatro de Mimos. The Pantomime Studio presented its first public performance in 1960, *Die sieben Schwaben*, an adaptation of a tiny 1857 Grimm tale made into a slapstick parody of Third Reich mentalities. Subsequent programs in the 1960s consisted of mime sketches developed by the student performers. The ensemble traveled to different festivals in the East bloc, and by 1964 Seime had received a prize from the state for "artistic folk creativity," although in 1962, the State Secret Service (STASI) urged him, for reasons of his "personal safety," not to board a ship for Helsinki, where he was the East German delegate to the World Festival in that city, and he did not (Berndt 1964). In 1967, Seime began to combine pantomime performances with jazz music by collaborating with the Jena-based Die Old-Time Memory Jazz Band, formed by university students in 1962 and specializing in Dixieland renditions of 1920s popular tunes. The ensemble continued to attend East bloc festivals in the 1970s, and in 1977, Seime, who by this time knew so many of the East bloc pantomime artists, obtained grants from the university, the education ministry, the city of Jena, and the Gera administrative district to produce the first of the International Pantomime Days festivals in Jena. In the 1980s, the Pantomime Studio began to perform comic pantomime adaptations of literary works, such as, in 1981, *Leonce and Lena* (1836), by Georg Büchner (1813-1837), in 1983, the Baron Münchhausen stories (1785), by Rudolf Raspe (1736-1794), in 1986, *Mario and the Magician* (1929), by Thomas Mann (1875-1955), in 1988, a comic play by Moliere, and in 1989, Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The ensemble received a gold medal at a 1988 Worker's Festival for its pantomimic adaptation of a section from the enormous novel *The Aesthetics of Resistance* (1975-1981), by Peter Weiss (1916-1982). According to Andreas Ittner, who worked on the Weiss adaptation, by 1988, the ensemble had come to the realization that it was no longer doing pantomime, which he defined as solo comic sketches, and had moved into what he called "a new form of theater, movement theater" (Ebert 2007: 1104-1106). But Seime, who had started his own school in 1979, remained dedicated to the clown paradigm, which sustained his popularity

in the Thuringia region and, despite the woes that befell Jena's small theater community in the early 1990s, allowed Jena to retain a reputation as a "city of clowns." His clown persona, an unusually pale or faded whiteface with red jacket and white pants, survived the turmoil of the reunification process, and for his eightieth birthday in 2016 he gave a performance of his pantomime sketches in the Jena Theaterhaus.

Other East German pantomime ensembles did not last nearly so long as the Pantomime Studio. The first professional pantomime company was the Theater ohne Worte, attached to the Volkstheater in Rostock, established in 1969 by Dagmar Dark, Gerd Glanze, Jürgen Just (b. 1941), and Joachim Lemke (b. 1942), but this group lasted only a few years, because the members separated to follow work opportunities, only sometimes related to pantomime, in other cities. In Berlin, Eberhard Kube (b. 1936), along with four others, formed the Pantomime Ensemble vom Prenzlauer Berg in 1961, which eventually included as many as thirty members, and he guided the group until it disbanded in 1987. He began his career as a physical education teacher, until, in 1956, he saw the DEFA film about Marcel Marceau. He received pantomime instruction from Brigitte Soubeyran, and eventually he became friends with Marceau, Jacques Lecoq, and Henryk Tomaszewski. He performed his first solo program in 1962, and continued to perform solo programs in the ensuing decades; he won a state cultural prize in 1987 and toured with his solo programs as far as Pakistan, India, and Nepal (Rothenberg 2010: 33). A chronicler of the "underground" East Berlin cultural scene in the 1980s, Wilfried Bergholz (b. 1953), has described Kube's charismatic skill in organizing midnight dance parties in nightclubs, where people danced "as never before seen. Pantomimes in ecstasy" (Bergholz 2015: 326). Yet here as elsewhere in the East German pantomime scene, information about Kube's solos or the Ensemble's productions remains frustratingly obscure beyond the assertion that they specialized in clown sketches and acrobatic gags. In 1987, the Pantomime Ensemble produced an adaptation of Brecht's "school play" *Die Horatier und Kuriatier* (1934), for which Hanns Eisler was supposed to write the music until the collaboration became untenable. Brecht's text is primarily a dialogue between two choruses, the Horatians and the Curiatians, with individuals occasionally speaking lines. It is not a comic piece, for it dramatizes, without even satiric irony, the battle between the Alban clan (the Curiatians) and the victorious Roman clan (the Horatians). Did the

Ensemble adapt this speech-intense one-act as a pantomime, and if so, how did they do it? If not, why did the pantomime ensemble perform it as a drama? Answers to such questions might deepen the history of pantomime in East Germany. In 1974, ten actors formed the Pantomimen Ensemble des Deutschen Theaters in Berlin to produce comic ensemble pieces from scenarios devised by Volkmar Otte (1940-2011) and Burkhart Seidemann (1944-2016).



Figure 102: Scene from *Zwischen Tür und Engel*, directed by Volkmar Otte, Pantomime Ensemble of the Deutsches Theater, Berlin, 1975. Photo: Abraham Pisarek, from Deutsche Fotothek.

The Ensemble produced one or two shows a year until 1990, when the company ceased to operate, and many of the shows caricatured well-known figures from literature: Don Quixote, Bluebeard, Turandot, Faust, Little Red Riding Hood, Hanswurst [Figure 102]. Neither Otte nor Seidemann published any pantomime scenarios, although Otte published several plays toward the end of the Communist era. Before joining the Ensemble, Otte had worked with Kurt Eisenblätter (1929-2017), the director of a theater for the deaf in East Berlin. Eisenblätter had become fascinated with deaf theater after seeing a deaf performance in Berlin in the 1930s that

featured Pierrot and Falstaff scenes, and he diligently studied the history of German deaf theater since its introduction in 1881. After the war, he found work with the deaf theater in Dortmund from 1950 to 1959, when the theater folded. With the deaf theater in Dortmund, he had performed numerous serious roles in pantomime, including Othello, Hamlet, and Faust, although these performances involved the use of sign language to translate the texts into coded gestures. He returned to East Berlin to live with his parents and accept an offer to direct the Berlin theater for the deaf, which he did until 1973, when Otte assumed the directorship but could not save the theater from extinction when he tried for a more strictly pantomimic approach to reach a larger audience. Eisenblätter then worked with Otte at the newly formed Pantomime Ensemble at the Deutschen Theater (Meyendorf 2008: 1-5). A member of the original Ensemble, Christoph Posselt, explained the obsession with developing clown personas: working without texts freed the performers from the feeling of being observed by "organs of the state." "We began to test subversive subjects, to ask questions, and to seek answers other than the official ones" (Posselt 2015: 105). He listed fifteen reasons why playing clowns conferred special powers on the performer, including, "[The clown] is an outsider. He is courageous. He needs courage [...] He knows that our communication shatters because we pay too little attention to others and take ourselves too seriously [...] He shows us our borders [...] and knows that creativity exceeds borders [...] He battles the world, he battles himself, he loses and yet keeps going [...] He knows that whoever does not fight has already lost" (107). Yet another pantomime clown troupe was Salto Vitale, based in Dresden and founded, in 1983, by Rainer König (b. 1953), an electronics worker who had studied pantomime in the Dresden studio of Ralf Herzog (b. 1952), a theater machinery technician who had taken a pantomime course with the Berlin Pantomime Ensemble in 1975. The group contained Kristina Busch (b. 1964), Constance Debus (b. 1960), Alf Mahlo (b. 1960), and Matthias Krahnert; Debus and Busch had studied dance, and Mahlo had studied for a diploma in information technology. The group toured widely in Germany and several East bloc cities until 1990, when the members followed separate paths as actors and cabaret performers but remained devoted apparently entirely to comic performance and occasionally to teaching. Even in the small city of Gera, Gerrit Junghans (b. 1952) established a pantomime studio in 1982 while pursuing a solo career as a clown in the Marceau mold

("Clown Gerrit"), and, after the fall of the Communist regime, continuing to do so with evidently much greater success. Compared with other countries in the East bloc and in Western Europe, the German Democratic Republic nurtured an abundance of clowns largely modeled after Marceau. Moreover, the pantomime ensembles placed a heavy emphasis on the collective creation of programs, which prevented the emergence of a dominant artistic personality that infused any ensemble with a distinctive aesthetic "vision" or style. With the end of the Communist state, the ensembles disappeared, but the clowns continued, becoming integrated either into the international mime culture, with its schools, festivals, and street "circuses," or into the reorganizing mainstream theater culture, with its musicals, cabarets, corporate entertainments, and televised variety shows.

But the pantomime situation in West Germany was not much different during the Cold War, at least in its embrace of the French idea of mime. When Jean Soubeyran returned to West Germany in 1961, he became the leading advocate for pantomime in the country. He received invitations to choreograph or direct at theaters in Hannover, Hamburg, Bonn, and Berlin, while supervising his own pantomime troupe based in Essen, where he organized the third International Pantomime Festival (1966). He published his popular, slender mime textbook, *Die wortlose Sprache* (1963), with schematic illustrations by Angelika Morkel Lülsdorf (1934-2006) that depicted a faceless male figure demonstrating Decroux's counterweight positions. By 1968, he was the choreographer for the Wuppertal Theaters, a position given in 1973 to Pina Bausch, the greatest creator of German Tanztheater, and by 1972 he was a professor of acting at the Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien Hannover, where he taught numerous actors and directors in the West German theater scene. Yet the French mime aesthetic did not really gather much momentum in West Germany after the 1960s, nor did clowns seem to have quite as much appeal as they did elsewhere, perhaps because of a deeply ingrained identification of clownery with degradation, as embodied so well in the sordidly masochistic transformation of Professor Unrath into a grotesque, cuckolded, and humiliated nightclub clown in the film *Der blaue Engel* (1930). In contrast to East Germany, pantomime in West Germany appealed almost entirely to men. Ellen Dorn, Soubeyran's second wife and translator of his book into German, was possibly (and only briefly) the only female pantomime in the country. The 1970s saw the rise of Tanztheater through the powerful,

innovative, and revelatory productions of Pina Bausch (1940-2009), the director from 1973 of the Wuppertal Opera Ballet, which soon after her appointment became the Wuppertal Tanztheater. Bausch developed a monumentally serious performance style by introducing ballet, modern dance, and social dance movement tropes derived from observing underlying social, psychological, and political tensions between men and women, between bodies of both sexes and their social environments, and between performers and audiences. Her Tanztheater became synonymous with an intense, sometimes witty, visually stirring, and often harrowing critique of repressive social structures and patriarchal assumptions about sexual difference. Unlike in most modern dance ensembles, Bausch was able to attract numerous men to perform in her projects, which above all critiqued the institutionalization of dance and dance movements. Throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, Tanztheater completely dominated the West German audience for speechless theater, as Bausch's success encouraged other important practioners of Tanztheater, such as Susanne Linke (b. 1944), Reinhild Hoffmann (b. 1943), Johann Kresnik (b. 1939), Rosamond Gilmore (b. 1955), Kristina Horvath (b. 1947), and Anna Vita (b. 1964) (cf. Schmidt 1992). But Tanztheater only occasionally introduced pantomimic actions, for the point of Tanztheater was to show in an innovative way how social environments, conventional structures of "beauty," and emblems of power regulated the movements, the steps, and the positions by which persons of both sexes interacted within and toward a society. Pantomime, still clinging to French ideas from the 1950s, offered nothing nearly as compelling. Soubeyran apparently sensed the need for a more serious mood in pantomime. With his students at Hannover, he staged, in 1982, an adaptation of Poe's *The Masque of the Red Death*, and after he retired (1986), he directed the mysterious pantomime *Keltenvisionen, Ein Maskenspiel* (1989) for the outdoor Scharniertheater in Hannover, a collaboration with the composer Willi Vogl (b. 1961) and the expressionist graphic artist Hans Ulrich Buchwald (1925-2009), who designed the large, rather menacing "Celtic" masks worn by the performers. Buchwald, who had worked as a theatrical scene designer in the 1950s, had initiated the Scharniertheater performances in 1969: he wanted to design large masks that were expressive on all sides of the head. *Keltenvisionen*, inspired by the enigmatic imagery on a silver bowl discovered in Denmark in 1892, enacted a primeval ritual invocation of supernatural spirits

apparently both in a park space and on the stage of an indoor theater. An inscrutable image from the Danish bowl inspired each of the twelve scenes. Each scene depicted an aspect of the primeval Celtic world rather than built a story around a single protagonist or conflict: 1) Trinity of Gods; 2) Nature; 3) Woman; 4) Male Rivalry; 5) Dream; 6) Unity (of Man and Woman); 7) Anxiety; 8) Druids; 9) Sacrifice; 10) Technology; 11) War and Apocalypse; 12) New Beginning. A narrator, like the *interpellator* in ancient Roman pantomime, prefaced each scene with a brief description of its significance, for example, "Woman": "Woman, with her knowledge of the secrets of nature, gathers roots, fruits, and seeds. She builds barns. Feminine patience tames wild animals into pets"; "Sacrifice": "The people have pushed the gods away. Forces of nature create fears. The priests try to reconcile with the gods through blood sacrifice"; "Technology": "The wheel is a gift to the intelligent human. The visionary machine era announces itself." The performers, seven in all, pantomimed these statements wearing extraordinarily imaginative, large masks, some of which represented horses, bulls, fish, or the huge hands of gods, although the performers mostly wore white body stockings underneath the masks. Even the human masks were stunningly expressionistic in their evocation of the "alien" sense of identity with which primeval humans seemed to see each other. The narrator's brief, intertitle statements contain the action words that motivate the pantomimic action, which adopts a style that appears both somewhat ritualistic and yet utterly alien to "our" world, as if the performance had contradictory purposes: to "explain" the Celtic "vision" carved onto the bowl and why the audience can never really "understand" it. Günther Kappler and Ahmed Ezzat (b. 1964) assisted Soubeyran with the choreography of two scenes, and the small book published about the production mentions many others persons involved in what was evidently an intense community experience, with, however, Soubeyran and Buchwald involved in much conflict over the development of the piece [Figures 103 and 104]. The book presents numerous testimonies from performers, spectators, and critics about the powerful emotional impact of *Keltenvisionen*, and the numerous photographs of the production convey some of the fascination provoked by this mysterious piece (Buchwald 1992). But Soubeyran worked only on this one production for the theater; Buchwald continued producing fantastic masks for annual summer performances in the park, and the three-person, 30-minute "walking theater" performances have continued since his death,

with new, young artists involved in the creation of the huge, grotesque heads, although none of these subsequent productions has apparently approached *Keltenvisionen* in pantomimic audacity. It was an astonishingly innovative kind of pantomime devised by an artist who was completely outside of the mime culture, and thus Soubeyran concluded his career by working on a pantomime that owed almost nothing to a French idea of it.



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Figure 103: 1) “Der Besiegte und Hinde Ailbe” (“The Vanquished and the Dog Ailbe”), with giant god hand as a character, 2) “Das geflügelte Pferd bringt den Unterlegenen ins Totenreich” (“The Flying Horse Brings the Defeated into the Realm of Death”), 3) “Krieg” (“War”). Photos: Buchwald (1992: 20, 21, 45).



Figure 104: *Keltenvisionen*, Scharniertheater, Hannover, 1989, directed by Jean Soubeyran. Top: "Vereinigung" ("Union"). Bottom: "Der Weise übergibt dem Suchendem den Torques" ("The Sage Hands the Seeker the Torques"). Photos: Buchwald (1992: 27, 35).

Henryk Tomaszewski

Unlike in East Germany, which distributed pantomime culture across numerous individuals, none of whom was able to claim "control" of the culture, in Poland, pantomime became identified almost entirely with a single person, Henryk Tomaszewski (1919-2001), whose approach to pantomime, dramatic and grandiose, departed significantly from the French model. Tomaszewski's work attracted many actors, many admirers, many workshop students, many international invitations, and many who regarded him as a great "influence." For over forty years, the international pantomime world regarded him as one of the greatest and most imaginative practitioners of the art, even if most of the vast number of people who knew of Marcel Marceau never heard of Tomaszewski. Yet very few, perhaps even none, of his many admirers modeled their own work after his, and he remained utterly unique in the history of Cold War pantomime in his ability to produce large-scale, dramatic pantomimes for so many years. Unlike so many pantomimes in both the East and the West, he enjoyed consistent access to extensive theatrical resources. But he obtained these resources because he persuasively articulated ambitious ideas for pantomime. Perhaps the postwar mime culture in other countries simply lacked persons with ambitions for pantomime as large as Tomaszewski's, but clearly theater institutions elsewhere did not encourage such ambitions. When supporting speechless performance, they chose instead to support ballet or modern dance, as if it was necessary to choose between dance and pantomime or between pantomime and spoken drama, when in reality, the postwar theater culture simply produced (or closed off) hardly any awareness of the artistic potential for large-scale, dramatic pantomime. In Poland, the national ballet in Warsaw, resurrected in 1950, never attracted, for reasons that are by no means evident, the international attention that the Wroclaw Pantomime Theater provoked during the Cold War nor the international attention inspired by ballet in New York, London, Paris, Copenhagen, The Netherlands, Stockholm, and Russia or by Tanztheater in West Germany, to name the most obvious contrasts in Cold War priorities for speechless performance between Poland and other countries. Yet Poland had its national ballet (as well as ballet companies in Lodz, Wroclaw, Cracow), and it had its Wroclaw Pantomime Theater.

Tomaszewski was himself, between 1945 and 1947, a student of ballet in Cracow under Feliks Parnell (1898-1980), an adventurous and innovative dancer and choreographer during the interwar years and even during the

Nazi occupation. Parnell had danced and choreographed for Warsaw cabarets (1921-1934) and for opera ballets (1927-1930), before forming his own ballet company, Ballet Polonais (1934-1939), which traveled with much acclaim throughout Europe. His aesthetic blurred distinctions between ballet and modern dance, introducing acrobatic, folkloric, and dramatic effects that placed his work "on the border between ballet and circus" (Mościcki 2016: Paragraph 11). During the same years (1945-1947), Tomaszewski also studied acting in Cracow under the strongly modernist director and designer Iwo Gall (1890-1959), who "thought little of the dance and considered Tomaszewski's attraction to the ballet almost as treason to the theater," although Gall later agreed to collaborate with Tomaszewski on the formation of a movement theater (Hausbrandt 1975: n.p). Tomaszewski left Parnell's company in 1949 to accept a position as a dancer in the Wroclaw opera ballet. With other dancers in the ballet company, he began experimenting with dramatic pieces involving pantomime. When in 1955 Warsaw hosted a World Festival of Student and Youth, officials discovered that Poland had no representative for a mime competition. They called on Tomaszewski to represent the country, and he won a medal for a solo piece, *The Pianist* (Hausbrandt 1975: n.p.). Inspired by the performances at the Youth Festival, he brought together a group of actors, dancers, students, and athletes to form a mime studio the following year. By the end of the year, the Pantomime Studio produced at the Wroclaw Drama Theater a program of four scenes: *Sentenced to Live, The Hunchback of Notre Dame, The Overcoat*, and *The Tale of the Little Negro and the Golden Princess*. Theater critic Andrzej Hausbrandt (1923-2004), author of the first (1974) monograph on Tomaszewski, contended that the larger Polish theater and cultural journalism communities, with their prejudice against ballet, initially displayed a hostile attitude toward Tomaszewski's project. But Tomaszewski persisted. A second program of pantomimes occurred in December 1957; this contained *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *The Overcoat* plus four new scenes: *En Passant*, *Nativity Play, Fortune Telling*, and *Orpheus in Search of Euridice*. In 1958, the state and the municipality of Wroclaw established the ensemble as a state-sponsored theater, presumably because Tomaszewski enlisted the support of the numerous actors, scenic artists, and technicians with whom he worked, an amazing accomplishment within such a short time. The Wroclaw Pantomime Theater continued with programs of short pieces, as many as eight, such as: *Harlequin's Masks*

(1959), *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* (1960), *The Cabinet of Curiosities* (1961), and *The Labyrinth* (1963). The second phase of the Pantomime Theater's evolution, according to Hausbrandt, was the introduction of long programs with fewer scenes: *The Minatour* (1964), and *The Garden of Love* (1968). No matter how serious the pieces within a program, the cultural commentators of the time evidently regarded the programs as a form of cabaret, which lacked the level of seriousness expected of mainstream drama. Thus, the third phase in the evolution of Tomaszewski's aesthetic was the production of evening-length pantomimic dramas, and he (and the Theater) remained dedicated to this concept until the end of his life, although he remained busy as a stage director and choreographer for other theaters, an aspect of his career that still seems obscure (cf. Hera 1983).

Literary works were largely the inspiration for Tomaszewski's evening-length productions, of which he created many over a period of thirty years, although only Janina Hera has described the narrative content of these works (up to 1978) in any detail, while Andrzej Hausbrandt provides more impressionistic descriptions for some works up to 1974 (cf. Hera 1983: 13-52; cf. Smużniak 1991: 18-80). *The Dress* (1966) derived from "traditional Japanese legends"; *Gilgamesh* (1968), from the 1200 BCE Sumerian epic poem; *The Departure of Faust* (1970), from Goethe; *November Night's Dream* (1971), from a 1904 play by Stanislaw Wyspiański (1869-1907); *The Menagerie of the Empress Phylissa* (1972), from Wedekind's pantomime, *Die Kaiserin von Neufundland* (1897); *Arriving Tomorrow* (1974), from Euripides' *The Bacchae* (406 BCE) and the film *Teorema* (1968) by Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922-1975); *Fantastic Scenes and Legends of Pan Twardowski* (1976), a variation on the Faust tale dating from the sixteenth century about a Cracow sorcerer that numerous Polish poets, novelists, dramatists, composers, and filmmakers have adapted; *The Dispute* (1978), from a 1744 play by Pierre Marivaux (1688-1763); *Hamlet—Irony and Mourning* (1979), from Shakespeare; *Knights of King Arthur* (1981), from the 1485 book by Thomas Malory (1415-1471); *The Prodigal Son* (1983), from The Bible; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1986), from Shakespeare; *Cardenio and Celina* (1990), from a verbose 1649 tragic play by the German author Andreas Gryphius (1616-1664); *Caprice* (1995), from the 1900 play *Schluck und Jau*, by Gerhart Hauptmann; *Tragic Games* (1999), from two plays by Austrian dramatist Ferdinand Bruckner (1891-1958), *Te Deum* (1919) and *Death of a Doll* (1956), the latter evidently a rewrite of the former, which has

disappeared. Clearly, Tomaszewski drew upon a wide range of literary works, but, except for Pasolini's *Teorema*, he avoided texts produced during the time in which he worked. He did not "translate" the texts into a pantomimic vocabulary. Rather, he extracted from literary sources images and narrative tropes that he used to construct a symbolic-allegorical collage of pantomimic actions embodying his attitude toward the characters—a kind of morality pantomime. He was less of a pantomime storyteller than a pantomime architect; his relation to literary texts was similar to that of a stained glass window artist's or a muralist's relation to Biblical stories or historical events. The audience's appreciation of the performance depended on actions that referred to ideas or images outside of the narrative frame; more precisely, the performance narrative or collage referred to a larger "text" or historical situation with which the Pantomime Theater assumed the spectator was already (incompletely) familiar. For example, the published program for *Knights of King Arthur* (1981) included a two-page synopsis of the scenes in the piece, a brief description of the characters, a philological discussion of Malory's *King Arthur* by Polish literary historian Zygmunt Czerny (1888-1975), a commentary on the book by Norwegian novelist Sigrid Undset (1882-1949), an essay from a 1981 book on the *The Grail* by John Matthews (b. 1948), and another comment on the Grail theme from a 1913 book by the medievalist Jesse Weston (1850-1928) (*Rycerze Króla Artura* 1982). This sort of intellectual apparatus for the spectator, commonplace for ballet and opera, was new for pantomime and perhaps necessary to establish pantomime as an art as serious as ballet or opera. Tomaszewski wrote out his scenarios in very rough fashion, but the only one ever published, posthumously, was the 2000 screenplay for the stage filming of his last work, *Tragiczne gry*, the loose adaptation of the two Bruckner plays (1999) (cf. Smużniak 2006). Unlike the Austrian and German pantomime writers earlier in the century, Tomaszewski was not an innovator in using pantomimic action to construct narratives. Even if his pantomimes depended on respectable literary sources, he treated these sources as raw material for a larger project: to show that the stories, the structural relations between actions, were less important than the kinetic, corporeal images they inspired, which is why some critics complained that he was an "illustrator" of literary works. He wanted to show that the story or plot "lives" outside of the text and does not need all the words that compose the text. This approach was somewhat similar to the actor-centered Roman

pantomime recycling of mythic material, but for the Romans, the pantomime "story" was not in the mythic material, but in the metamorphosis of the actor from one mythic identity to another—the narrative, the "plot," was the sequencing of the actor's metamorphosis. The imperial Romans did not encourage original stories, because they believed originality (of metamorphosis) lay with the actor, not with imaginary characters or dramatic situations. In the modernist era, however, originality of plot became a fundamental sign of modernity, especially if modernity entailed repudiating the ideology of metamorphosis. In this respect, Tomaszewski's unwillingness to construct original plots through pantomimic action is perhaps the greatest limitation of his aesthetic.

A recurrent theme of his pantomimes was corruption, the limitations of love in thwarting or redeeming corruption and history as the image of human struggle against corruption. He saw corruption as a succumbing to appetites and desires, libidinous or sensuous, that are excessive insofar as a class or society shares this indulgence and fails to see it as a manifestation of delusion, decadence, or oppression. Tomaszewski said that, in the theater, he liked dealing with "extreme situations [...] without a distinct end" (Hausbrandt 1975: n.p.). For him, theater functions as a purification of the spectator's relation to history, and this moral-allegorical aspect of Tomaszewski's productions cast a somewhat medieval aura. His sensibility was basically tragic or "dark," if sometimes sardonic and "baroque," and he developed a distinctive performance style to articulate his sensibility. He set his pantomimes in a distorted historical environment. He avoided complex scenery requiring spectacular effects, detailed décor, or interfaces with visual technologies such as film, video, or photography. Nor did he situate actions in a very specifically imagined milieu. One of his more complex sets, for the 1981 King Arthur production, consisted mostly of a rather crudely constructed wooden fence in the background. Mostly action occurred before a dark cyclorama or background that sometimes changed color, but his productions consistently gave the impression of taking place at night in an eerie, symbolic space where light seems to fall on the actors as if from street lamps. While he kept the scenic environment spare, Tomaszewski delighted in using furniture: tables, chairs, beds, couches, and steps. In *King Arthur*, the assembling of a giant round table is part of the choreographed action. A long banquet table appears in *Kaprys* (1995), at which the aristocratic guests watch two homeless men entertain them. In *The*

Menagerie of Empress Philissa (1972), actors occasionally ascend a little stairway to a platform that functions as a bed, a throne, or a stage. In *Gilgamesh* (1968), priests on decorative stools bathe a young man poised within a shell-like bowl, and in another scene, a chariot, pulled by two men with horse/unicorn heads, carries a driver and an embracing couple. *Tragic Games* (1999) involves elaborate use of a woman in a wheelchair. Costuming assumed a more audacious role in Tomaszewski's productions. He constantly worked with large casts; for example, the King Arthur production contained forty-five roles performed by forty actors. Much of the visual effect of his productions thus derived from the complex, dynamic tableaux that he created out of different groupings of bodies and the semiotic relations between movements, bodies, and costumes. Some costumes, flamboyant and luxurious, placed the performers who wore them in a particular historical period. In *The Departure of Faust*, Mephistopheles wears a late medieval waistcoat with red stockings and a huge red cape; in *The Menagerie of Empress Philissa*, several characters, male and female, wear costumes of the eighteenth and the late nineteenth century; in *Hamlet*, performers wear costumes that belong more to seventeenth century Eastern Europe than to the late Scandinavian Middle Ages of Shakespeare's text; in *King Arthur*, some characters wear costumes associated with the Dark Ages, but one character (Sir Ither) wears a suit of armor belonging to a much later era, and another character (Mordred) wears a black latex outfit that resembles the fetish couture of a particular strand of twentieth century sadomasochistic sexuality. Even in his last production, *Tragic Games*, perhaps the most "modern" setting for any of his pantomimes, the costumes all seem to date from the 1930s. In a couple of productions (*Gilgamesh*, *Arriving Tomorrow*), some robe-like costumes signify "ancientness" without being historically specific, while in *November Night's Dream*, the old soldier on nocturnal guard duty wears a military uniform from the early nineteenth century, but in his dream, the revolutionary warriors wear ancient Greek helmets and military caps from the early nineteenth century but not uniforms. Only occasionally did Tomaszewski employ masks, but he did so with impressive dramatic effect, as in the Death masks for *Embrasure* (1961) and *The Departure of Faust*, and the horse heads for *Gilgamesh* and *Faust* and the shrouded Inquisitional Figure in *Philissa*.

Although he worked with different prominent designers, including Wladislaw Wigura (b. 1940), Kazimierz Wiśniak (b. 1931), and Zofia de Ines-Lewczuk (b. 1948), his productions maintained a remarkable stylistic, visual unity across the decades to produce the distinctive Tomaszewski performance image, regardless of the historical era or literary source. The anachronistic scenic historical details symbolized the embedding of different historical eras in the performance of an action. Tomaszewski did not invent this practice; it had precedent elsewhere in the vibrant, symbolist-oriented postwar Polish theater, perhaps even in the extravagant expressionist dramas of the 1920s by the artist-writer Stanislaw Witkiewicz (1885-1939). He was actually much more innovative in his *minimal* use of costume—that is, in his display of performer bodies. Characters in body stockings appear regardless of the historical era represented, and these appeared very early, with the abstract-symbolic male duo (dark versus light), *The Grain and the Shell* (1961). In *The Labyrinth* (1963), with costumes by Krzysztof Pankiewicz (1933-2001), the entire ensemble wears body stockings covered with vaguely reptilian or protozoac designs as part of an abstract ambition to show how human society, "like the calyx of an opening tulip," forms a "labyrinth of obstacles, of barriers set up by man against people, by people against man" (Hausbrandt 1975: n.p.). In subsequent productions, bodystockings became simpler; in *November Night's Dream*, for example, the Athena/Minerva figure leading the revolutionaries wears a black body stocking and a Greek helmet while wielding a spear and shield. Philissa wears a corset and Helen of Troy appears in a bikini in *Faust*. More daring was his presentation of male bodies. In nearly all of his pantomimes from 1963 to 1990, men appear bare-chested or entirely nude except for tiny briefs, loincloths, or thongs. These semi-nude men, always handsome, with athletic physiques, are sometimes individuals or protagonists (such as Faust) or they form choral ensembles, like the dream soldiers in *November Night's Dream* or the Sumerian worshippers in *Gilgamesz*. All this baring of male flesh signifies underlying libidinal energies within society, within history, but they also precipitate devouring, destructive appetites, acts of sacrifice. This display of male beauty exudes a homoerotic aura that, except for Kharitonov's severely marginalized production of *The Enchanted Island* (1971), seems peculiarly permissive within East bloc theater culture, even if commentary at the time acknowledged it, if at all, as simply a metaphor for the excessive pleasures or voluptuous vulnerabilities that lead a society to

decadence or, as in *November Night's Dream*, failed revolution—whereas Kharitonov presented male nudity as an entirely positive element of performance, of a new idea of utopia. Yet it is doubtful that Tomaszewski could have built such a large pantomime ensemble with so many men in it without these opportunities for display of glamorously athletic male bodies (rather than glamorously athletic female bodies). In 2007, according to a newspaper article by Wojciech Szymański and Tomasz Wysocki, Polish radio in Wroclaw reported that Sebastian Ligarski (b. 1975), a researcher on the state security apparatus during the Communist era, discovered documents that revealed Tomaszewski had "confidential contact" with state security agents from 1960 until at least 1967: his job was to report on actors in the ensemble and their relations with "foreign contacts" when the company went on any of its many tours to countries in the West bloc. Ligarski contended that "the services knew about the artist's homosexual inclinations," and they may have blackmailed him into informing by threatening either to charge him with homosexual behavior or to forbid his company from touring abroad. He appears not to have provided the security services with any useful information (*Wyborcza* May 9, 2007). It's not clear if the security services shifted their attention to other members of the company in their effort to establish, through homosexual contacts, counter intelligence operations in foreign countries. The homoerotic aura of male display continued in Tomaszewski's pantomime productions until the end of the Communist state and disappears in his productions of the 1990s [Figures 105, 106].



Figure 105: Top: Scene from *Gilgamesz* (1968), directed by Henryk Tomaszewski, Wroclaw, Poland. Bottom: Urszula Hasiej in *Hamlet ironia i zaloba* (1979), directed by Henryk Tomaszewski. Photo: Joanna Drankowska, from encyclopediateatru.pl.

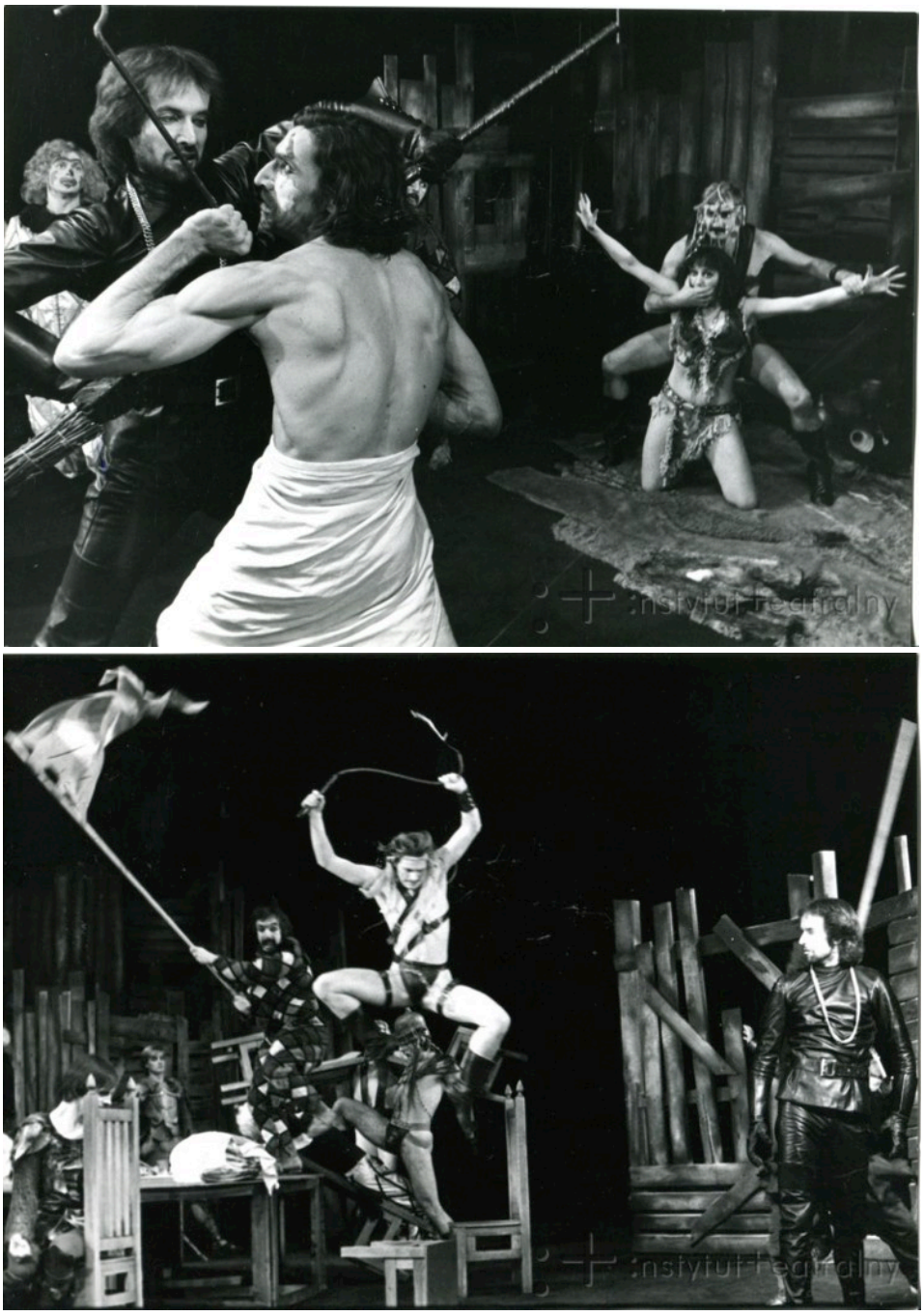


Figure 106: Scenes from *Krol Artur* (*King Arthur*), directed by Henryk Tomaszewski, Wroclaw, Poland, 1981. Photos: Marek Grotowski, from encyclopediateatru.pl.

Tomaszewski also introduced innovative music soundtracks (always recorded) for his pantomimes insofar as he wanted a range of musical styles

to accompany the action, even if these styles lacked historical authenticity. For example, *King Arthur* used music by Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837), Gordon Giltrap (b. 1948), and Richard Wagner. *The Departure of Faust* had music by Hector Berlioz (1803-1869) and jazz and pop tunes. On the other hand, *The Menagerie of Empress Philissa* used only the pop-oriented music of Zbigniew Karnecki (b. 1947), as did *Arriving Tomorrow*, while only the modernist instrumental music of Juliusz Luciak (b. 1927) accompanied *The Dress*. Luciak's music also accompanied *November Night's Dream*, as did Frederic Chopin's. *Hamlet* had music by Gustav Holst (1874-1934), Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924), and Bogdan Dominik, a prolific composer of theater music. But *Tragic Games* used music by thirteen different artists ranging from Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) to The Alan Parsons Project (1975-1990), Duke Ellington (1899-1974), Jean Francais (1912-1997), and jazz composer Boguslaw Klimsa (1945-2000). Unlike in ballet, music in Tomaszewski's pantomimes provided a "modern" emotional texture to a scene or moment rather than to suffuse the moment with historical credibility or to shape the movements of the performers. It is soundtrack music that carries with it emotional values that are independent of the action on stage but which cause the historicized action to "intersect" with the presumed greater sonic emotional power achieved by invariably later eras.

Tomaszewski choreographed the action in his pantomimes, and unlike most pantomime programs elsewhere in the East bloc, he did not function as a facilitator of a "collective" creative process; all production elements were subordinate to his distinctive "vision" for a production. His training in ballet predisposed him to think action in speechless theater achieved value to the extent that someone choreographed it, and printed programs of the Wroclaw Pantomime Theater listed him as "director and choreographer" of the productions. But his pieces were not ballets, because he did not build pieces around movements; he did not apply movements because they were beautiful in themselves; he did not introduce movements to show the skill or virtuosity of his performers; and he avoided acrobatic effects. He choreographed pantomimic action: each action advanced the narrative or revealed something about the character performing it. But the action was not "naturalistic" in the manner of verisimilar silent film pantomime or the naturalism of Hermann Bahr's pantomimes. His approach to gesture was expressionistic, relying on exaggerated or distorted

movements to construct a symbolic value for the gesture. His way of thinking about gestural exaggeration and distortion resembled Decroux's insofar as he built physical actions around a set of movement concepts, which he called a "spherical theater," from which he could attach various symbolic values, such as inward and outward "current," including rotation (usually of the torso), "flexion" or the bending of limbs, "shifts" or "the principle of counterpoint," wherein one part of the body moves in tension with another part, and "subjectivization," whereby the actor mobilizes these concepts through physical movements to achieve an "identification," not with "an object, but with a state, a time, an emotion…" (Hausbrandt 1975: n.p.). Even if movements existed only to advance the narrative, they did not necessarily create narrative clarity, for Tomaszewski acknowledged that spectators appreciated explanations of what actions "meant." The "spherical theater" idea was simply a way to prepare actors to make decisions about gestures embodying the actions constructing a particular narrative. Different actors might choose different movements or gestures to realize an action, unlike in ballet, where choreography means that a dancer performs the same movement as another dancer, even if the dancers perform these movements differently. In this respect, Tomaszewski's pantomimes are closer to literary "interpretations" of action than ballet. For example, Hausbrandt describes the "Dionysia" scene in *Arriving Tomorrow* entirely as a series of intended actions or performance outcomes without describing how the actors performed these actions:

> *The Great Dionysia in honour of the Factory. Emblems, tires, models, toasts, drinks, pageants, total stress. And just when everything is in full swing, in top gear—the fun dies down. The revelers grow listless, like pricked balloons, everything comes to a standstill and is covered with a skin of boredom […] Ordinary family dinner at home: Father, Mother, Daughter, Son and Maid. A mawkish, nauseating Come to Sorrento. Everything in perfect trim, fully predictable—no dreams, no hope […] A party—perhaps a continuation of the Grand Entertainment? Ladies, gentleman, His Eminence, hippies, second class "Dolce Vita." Everybody is cool, indifferent, cynical, bored. And then the Maid ushers in the Guest [Dionysias]* (Hausbrandt 1975: n.p.).

Like so many other commentators on Tomaszewski's work, he never describes how the actors "interpret" these actions, presumably because such description is a matter of "technique" that is irrelevant to the meaning of the work, even though the "counterpoint" revealed by the actor (rather than the scenario) is the "struggle with the environment" that informs all human action. In his scenarios, however, Tomaszewski may have indicated more precisely the physicality of the actions, judging from his one transcribed (from handwritten) scenario, for the tele-film of *Tragic Games*, of which an excerpt:

> *Becoming a human means to Adrianna: subordinating (pushed to the dressing table) - before that she was detached from herself (doll) - suffering - fate - and humiliation - and Fear -*
> *Adrianna - Solo in front of a mirror = lifted from a broken pose - upright and with a compressed body - she smiles no*
> *you can see that inside she is completely broken - she stands and goes to the mirror - she adopts the pose where everyone is jealous of her – she goes - she stops, the face accepts a smile - just like you - you - you - shows finger on her reflection*
> *- and suddenly she falls on her knees - a gesture as if blameworthy - so that this reflection will release her from herself - what stands in the mirror, it is not a human – it's a Vision - an illusion of an ideal - but it's not human, she is hitting her head in the mirror - her head is at the mirror, and the human is looking at the mirror, if she is still in the mirror - and there is no human there*
> *- you hear the wedding music - away, (light) how the ghosts appear to the bridesmaid and friends - somewhere they set themselves up -*
> *- Adrianna bends with the mirror – she's kissing herself in the mirror - now she only has tears - now she polishes the pills - this scene ends, - at the dresser, now the dress-up brings dresses - Kreator is following her – Adrianna dresses behind the screen - when she comes out from behind the screen in a wedding gown - Kreator - takes her by the hand - (he teaches how to proceed during the ceremony with the gown - how to clink - before clapping [...]* (Smużniak 2006: 120-121).

Tomaszewski saw the pantomimic action in fragments, phrases, incomplete sentences, as if each individual action disrupted another—that was how he physicalized a woman's ambivalent relation to her image, her distrust of the

mirror, her obsession with it, and her intense doubt about her ability to see herself in a "good" yet truthful way. The scenario seems even more remarkable when compared with Ferdinand Bruckner's play, *Der Tod einer Puppe* (1956), which consists almost entirely of dialogue, in blank verse, with very few stage directions. The plot, which Tomaszewski follows in rudimentary fashion, revolves around an immensely wealthy widow, Adrienne, who is inhumanly beautiful because, as a result of her mother's protectiveness, she has never endured the slightest suffering, has never once wept, for tears would destroy her beauty; she inspires love without feeling it. When she falls in love with Paul, an unambitious but charming dilettante, she fears her beauty is not enough to keep him, and she finally sheds tears for all the happiness she has lost. These tears bring about her death. The first part of the play (and the pantomime) occurs at a glamorous fashion show, where Paul and Adrienne discuss her inhuman obsession with beauty and clothes while the models ("mannequins") confide their anxieties about modeling; the second part takes place in Adrienne's salon with Adrienne interacting with Paul, the models, fashion executives, aristocratic ladies, Paul, and the ghosts of her mother and former husband. Unlike in ballet and indeed most theater, where people in an ensemble who are not the focus of a scene stand or sit still while the foreground action unfolds, here, as elsewhere in Tomaszewski's work, characters in the background or at the edge of the stage are as busy as characters in the foreground, because in his mind a foreground action does not somehow cause a background action to cease its indifference to the foreground action or cause a background action to become transformed into rapt fixation on the foreground action. Bruckner's mirror scene is complex insofar as he has Adrienne give a lengthy monologic commentary on what she sees in the mirror ("What is sorrow against the miracle/of a well-trained body?") and then has the four models appear, striking poses while commenting satirically on their poses (Bruckner 1956: 98-102). But Tomaszewski's version of the mirror scene is equally complex in that he expects the *ideas* Bruckner inscribes through speech to achieve equivalence entirely through gesture, with the result, however, of communicating something that is not in the play: that one's response to one's mirror image is viscerally fragmented, a kind of disintegration of language, as the language of the scenario suggests (amplified even further by the very messy handwritten autograph copy of the scenario), rather than a poetic distillation of

language. It is an excellent, postwar example of *pantomimic thinking*, of thinking out a sequence of actions that narrate a *character's* dynamic relation to an "environment," not, as in dance, as a sequence of regulating steps and movements to prevent visceral fragmentation, and not, as in so much mime, as a sequence of gestures designed to display the performer's skill at evoking what is not visible.

Henryk Tomaszewski was the most ambitious creator of pantomimes in the Cold War era. He produced pantomimes on a larger scale than any one else, he produced more large-scale pantomimes than anyone else, he produced them over a longer period, thirty years, than anyone else, and, in relation to the content of his pantomimes over the decades, he probably invested pantomime with a greater seriousness than anyone else. He established the Wroclaw Pantomime Theater, possibly the longest living professional pantomime ensemble, which continues to thrive well after his death. The ensemble regularly toured throughout Europe and occasionally in North America, so a considerable international audience witnessed the magnitude and seriousness of his achievement in pantomime (Smużniak 1985: 70-81). His work and teachings provoked intense admiration and inspiration, not only within the international pantomime world, but within the general European theater culture, for many prominent actors and stage directors were his students. Yet his achievement was utterly unique; no other country created such a large professional pantomime company with such a consistently serious agenda. It is true that Tomaszewski had access to theatrical resources that were unimaginable to pantomime artists anywhere else. But the Polish government chose to invest in his pantomime aesthetic as an art that could achieve superior expression in a socialist society, just as the government subsidized the famous "avant-garde" Theater Laboratory, also in Wroclaw, established by Jerzy Grotowski and the experimental Cricot 2 Theater formed by Tadeusz Kantor (1915-1990) in Cracow. Pantomime was a useful instrument in the government's Cold War cultural program for demonstrating the power of artists under socialism. It was, indeed, a matter of supporting the artist rather than the art. In relation to speechless performance, the rest of the East bloc preferred to invest in ballet and folk dance ensembles, relegating pantomime to the circus. Similarly, in the West, cultural policy almost entirely favored investment in ballet and modern dance, with pantomime relegated to the marginalized, individualistic, therapeutic studios of the mime culture or, as in The

Netherlands, transformed into a technocratic "movement theater." Tomaszewski may have influenced late twentieth century ballet to become less rigid in its use of movement, and he certainly contributed to the greater physicalization of spoken drama performance, especially of "classic" plays, as did Grotowski. But his success was unable to create a strong institutional base for pantomime anywhere else, and it was not the Cold War that prevented pantomime from finding secure "homes" within national cultures. As an art, pantomime was too messy, too "undisciplined," too unreliable to have a home capable of sustaining at least a mediocre level of entertainment worthy of a complex theater apparatus with an expensive payroll of performers and staff. Public investment in pantomime attached itself to powerful, charismatic "visionaries" like Tomaszewski. But in the Cold War he was alone in possessing a pantomimic imagination strong enough to mobilize a state to encourage and protect his grandiose ambitions.

The Latvian and Lithuanian Ventures

However, Tomaszewski was not the only one in the East bloc to establish an enduring pantomime ensemble dedicated to serious manifestations of the art outside of the Pierrot/Marceau/Clown model. In Latvia, Robert Ligers (1931-2013), a 1955 graduate of the Latvian Conservatory Theater Department, began his career as an actor in Riga at the Daile Theater, founded in 1920 by Eduard Smiļģis (1886-1966), an engineer who turned his attention to theater while working (1911-1914) as a technician in a St. Petersburg factory located next to the city's Latvian theater. Smiļģis was a guiding inspiration for Ligers, for the purpose of the Daile Theater (Art Theater) was to stage monumental, heroic productions of classic European dramas, a task largely beyond the resources and cultural program of the newly independent republic. Smiļģis collaborated with the modernist scene designer Jānis Muncis (1886-1955) and the artist and physical education instructor Felicita Ertnere (1891-1975) on the organization of the theater. Muncis had studied (1917-1919) under Meyerhold in Moscow, and Ertnere, in St. Petersburg (1912-1914), became a disciple of François Delsarte, Emil Jaques-Dalcroze, and the Russian physical educator Peter Lesgaft (1837-1909). On a visit to Moscow, she became "fascinated" with Alexander Tairov's use of pantomime at the Chamber Theater. Her task at the Daile Theater was to integrate dynamic

corporeal movement into Muncis's scenic modernism (1921-1926) and Smiļģis's modernist interpretations of European drama during the interwar years (Rodina 2015: 186-189). These ideas somehow survived the Soviet takeover of the theater and contributed heavily to Ligers's education as an actor. But in addition to Ertnere, he had also studied ballet in Riga under Irena Strode (1921-2013) and Jevģēnija Čangas (1920-1999). He felt he had to develop a more physical dimension to his performance because he could not compete against established stars for major roles in the Daile. Initially, however, Ligers did not like pantomime when he first saw it performed by a visiting "French troupe." Then, in 1956, he saw in Riga a performance of the *Joy in Sorrow* cabaret show produced by the Polish student group Bim-Bom (1954-1960), based in Gdansk and formed by the charismatic film actor Zbigniew Cybulski (1927-1967), who impressed Ligers with his skill in constructing dramatic scenes without spoken words (cf. Szymula 2015). Ligers resolved to form a pantomime ensemble with students from the Conservatory and a place to rehearse and perform at a Construction Worker's Club, with the film composer Indulis Kalnins (1918-1986) writing the music performed by the Club orchestra. The second production, *Serious Jokes* (1958), earned Ligers the chance to travel abroad sponsored by the Club. Because he wanted to bring in more experienced actors from the Daile Theater, he started working as an assistant to Smiļģis, who nevertheless told him that the theater had no room for a pantomime ensemble, for Smiļģis was "extremely jealous" of Ligers's Club productions and assigned Ligers only to non-speaking roles on the Daile stage; when Ligers proceeded with another pantomime production, the "Central Committee" forbade him to produce it. Then Valentin Skulme (1922-1989), an actor at the Daile and in films, introduced Ligers to the expressionist woocut "novel" *The Idea* (1920), by the Flemish Marxist artist Frans Masereel, which German composer Berthold Goldschmidt had turned into a pantomime in 1928. Ligers decided (1961) to do a staging of the picture book with accompanying spoken text, like a voiceover, consisting of poems by Belgian Symbolist writer Emile Verhaeren (1855-1916). A municipal committee approved the project, but an entirely Russian committee denounced the "bourgeois" production because the text was not Russian or at least Latvian and because "The Idea," embodied by a woman, was naked. Ligers then scrapped the text altogether, so that piece was completely a pantomime, and he dressed "The Idea" in a red tunic with red make up. "It

turned out that everyone [in the audience] could understand without any talking, so we went to absolute silence," Ligers explained in an interview, although with this production Imants Kalnins (b. 1941), soon to become famous in the early 1970s as a composer of both rock and symphonic music, began providing the musical accompaniments for the ensemble (Eksta 2018: 1-3). From this production on, Ligers remained committed to completely speechless pantomime performances.

The Riga Pantomime Studio was always an amateur ensemble, functioning primarily as a training unit for students seeking to enter the Daile Theater; Ligers (in *Seja* 24 February 2005 online) complained that Smiļģis prevented the company from becoming professional by poaching all of his best actors. The attitude thus persisted that actors could not enjoy a vibrant career unless they played major roles in classic European dramas. Tomaszewski inspired Ligers with the "horrible, beautiful things" he made out of pantomime and out of his attachment to literary sources. But Ligers felt that Latvian theater had become too deeply dependent on established literary works to allow the body sufficient power of expression. He preferred to compose his own stories. But new productions appeared only intermittently: *Hiroshima* (1966), *Smile* (1967), *The Road* (1969), *Mysterious History* (1971), *Kurpe* (1974), *The Land of My Fathers* (1981), *Why Not Know Why* (1983), *Bread* (1986). His most successful or popular production was probably *Symphony* (1975), which used Imants Kalnins's Fourth Symphony (1972) as accompaniment, a work that ingeniously combines rock music idioms with a monumental symphonic sound, particularly in the first movement, with its vast, ominous ostinato march-rock beat. The piece focused on a single, solitary man in conflict with different parts of himself represented, allegorically, by other performers. In the early 1970s, Ligers introduced his idea of "philosophical pantomime," which involved a symbolic use of colors. *Symphony*, for example, unfolded in various shades of blue. When Marcel Marceau visited the Studio, he recommended that Ligers avoid whiteface, because whiteface was too much of a French tradition and Ligers's ensemble gained nothing by using it. The idea of staging pantomimes in relation to a dominant color is quite intriguing: white supposedly symbolized integrity and purity, red was the color of love and Latvia, and blue represented fantasy or romantic feeling. However, information about how the "philosophical pantomime" unfolded in particular productions is difficult to locate, as is so often the case with the

pantomime history of Eastern Europe during the Cold War. Ligers never published his scenarios, and even the available photo documentation, though alluring, seldom properly identifies images with particular dates and productions. The graphic designer Zenta Dzividzinska (1944-2011) made a series of beautiful dramatic photos of Studio members rehearsing in 1964-1965, but these pictures have only recently emerged from complete obscurity. They show that, in addition to abstract, geometrized scenic contexts and chiaroscuro lighting, Ligers liked having his actors wear body-displaying body stockings, with whiteface used only occasionally [Figures 107, 108]. His pantomime style was serious without being tragic, bizarre or eerie without being clownish or even comic. For example, one of Dzividzinska's images from 1965 shows four performers in dark body stockings facing the camera in different poses; they wear tops hats and a pair of side lamps projects double silhouette shadows of the figures onto a white cyclorama—a startling combination of playfulness and sinister game playing (Tifentale 2014). From the 1980s on and after the end of the Communist state, his productions became more nationalistic in their themes, conjuring images uniquely associated with Latvian history and culture. Nevertheless, the Studio received invitations to perform in other European countries and in the United States (1987), apparently because of the ensemble's skill in exploring themes such as "the responsibility of state leaders" and "the power of money and wealth over the fate of the people" (Rīgas Pantomīma 2013). In its final years, though, the ensemble became more like a conventional mime company focused on the performance of studio exercises, with black being the consistently dominant color. In the 1970s, Ligers invited ballet dancers to instruct the performers and give them a greater awareness of the body's expressive potential, but the performers were slow to absorb the lessons because, as he explained, when he grew up, dance was a "dark thing" (Eksta 2010: 4; *Seja* 24 February 2005 online).

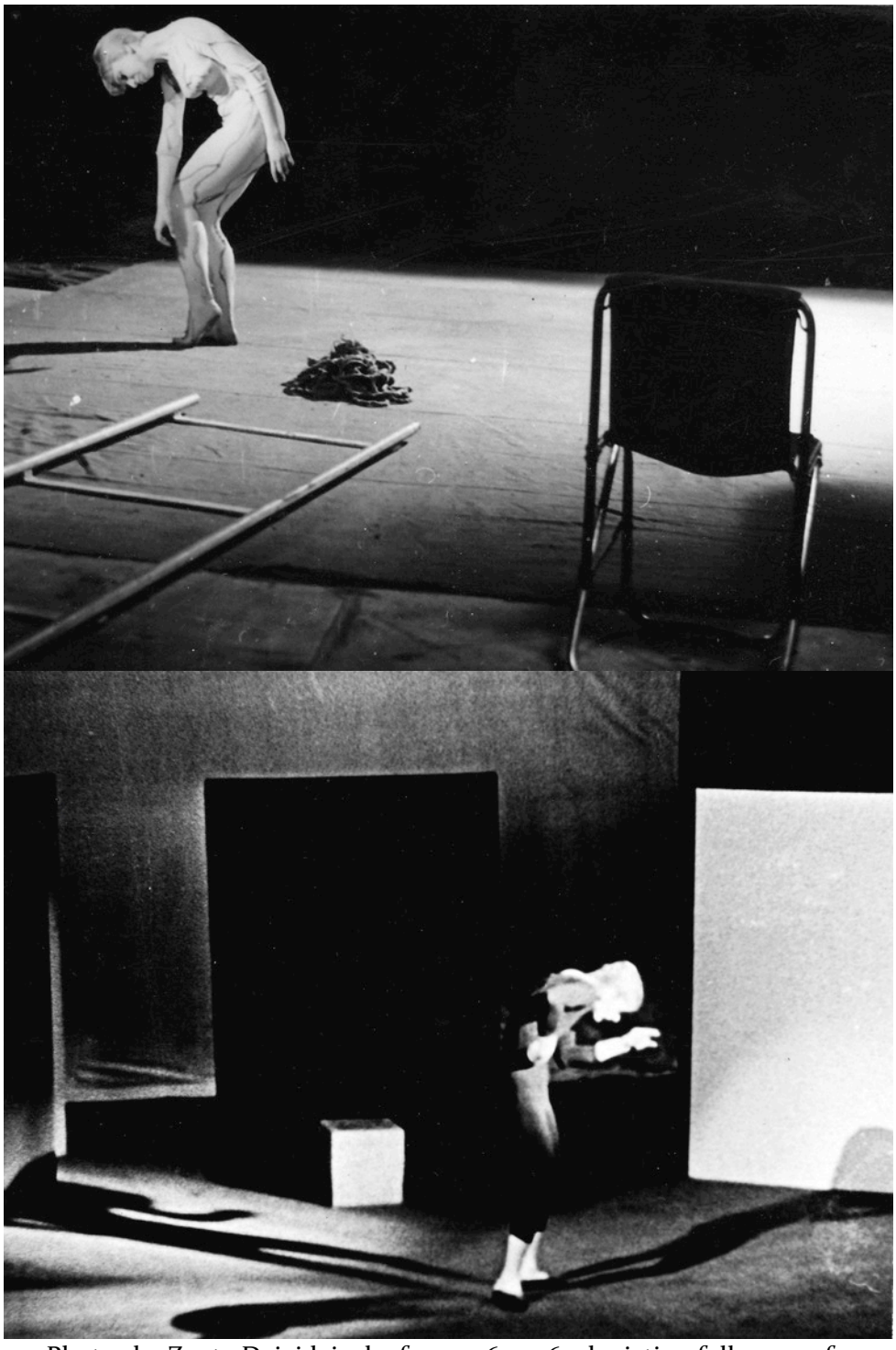


Figure 107: Photos by Zenta Dzividzinska from 1964-1965 depicting followers of Roberts Ligers rehearsing in the Riga Pantomime Studio. Photos: Laikmetīgās mākslas centra arhīvs.

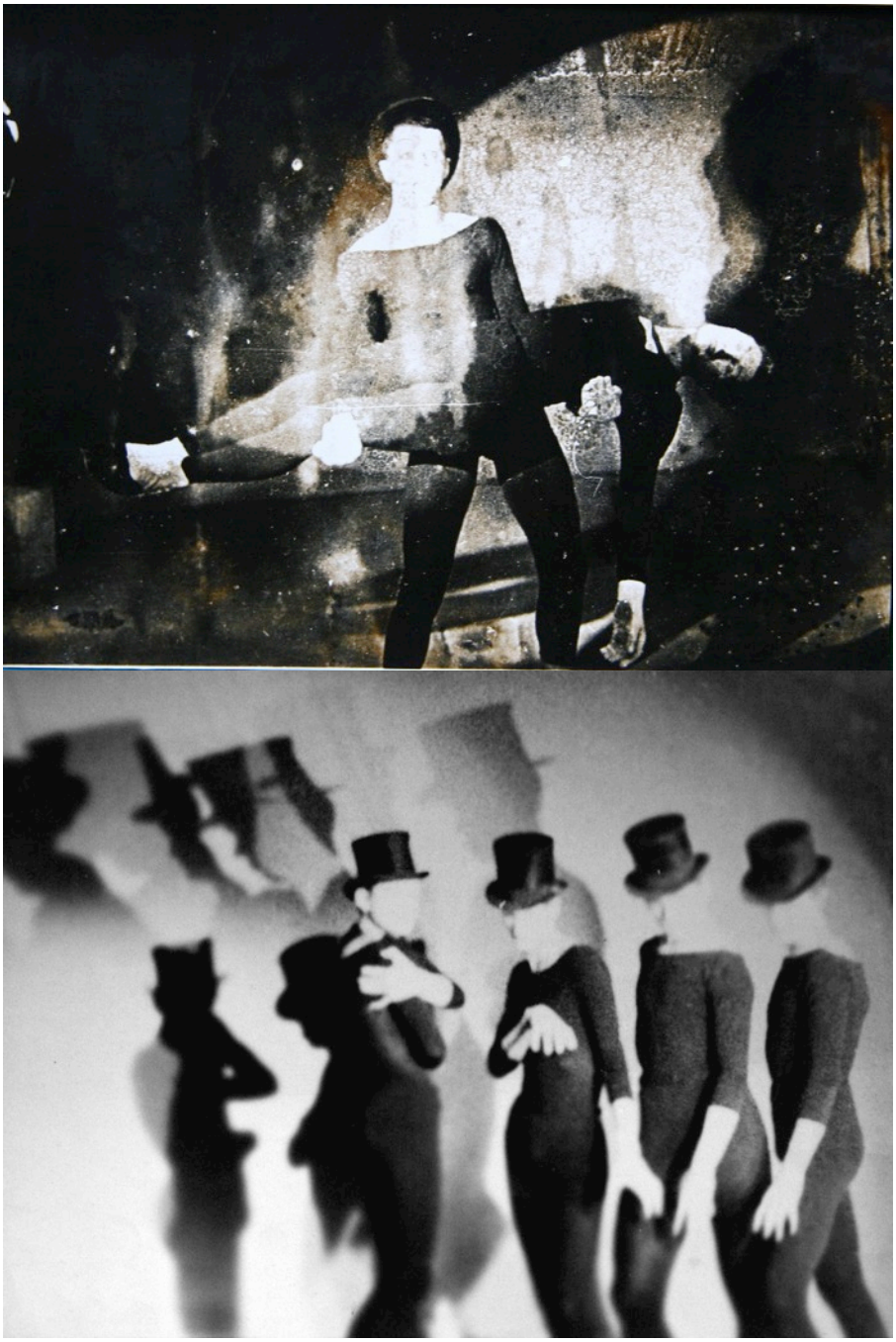


Figure 108: Photos by Zenta Dzividzinska from 1964-1965 depicting followers of Roberts Ligers rehearsing in the Riga Pantomime Studio. Photos: Laikmetīgās mākslas centra arhīvs.

Ligers taught numerous persons who became important in the Latvian theater culture. One of his students was Modris Tenisons (b. 1945), who formed a pantomime ensemble in Kaunas, Lithuania, where he had

moved in 1967 because his girlfriend lived there. Tenisons possessed a suave, exuberant, daring personality that motivated actors to leap into experimental, "wild" forms of performance. His attitude toward acting was not nearly as severe or controlling as that which pervaded the Smiļģis-dominated Daile Theater. He guided the Kaunas pantomime ensemble for only five years (1967-1972) and directed five productions: *Ecce Homo* (1967), *Dream Dreams* (1968), *Care for the Butterfly* (1969), *XX Century Capriccio* (1970), and *Collage* (1971). In 1972, "in protest against the regime," a passionate fan of the pantomime ensemble, Romas Kalanta (1953-1972), set himself on fire before the theater where the ensemble was scheduled to perform. A riot ensued as a result of a youth demonstration. The authorities shut down the pantomime ensemble and compelled Tenisons to return to Riga. Later, a terrible automobile accident struck his family, killing his wife and injuring him severely (Busygin 2009 online; Tracevskis 2010). In the 1970s, he did movement training for classic drama productions in Riga, Liepāja, and Valmiera, but he never returned to pantomime. Yet in Lithuania, and perhaps in Latvia, too, Tenisons has commanded deeper respect than Ligers has in Latvia.

Tenisons infused his pantomime productions with mystical, cosmological symbolism, for "pantomime analyzes the inner world of the human body," though his *XX Century Capriccio* depicted "features of the lower middle classes which lead to fascism" (Savukynaitė 2001: 94; Busygin 2009). Viktor Busygin says the ensemble originally consisted of eight men and two women, all young people, but others besides those named by Busygin were part of the ensemble, including Busygin himself, whom Tenisons initially refused to admit, and Elena Savukynaitė (b. 1946), who wrote a short book about the ensemble in 2001. Like Ligers, Tenisons preferred his performers to wear uni-colored body stockings that "equalized" or "universalized" the identities (or bodies) of the characters they represented, and he seems to have borrowed some ideas from Decroux that managed to reach him (Savukynaitė 2001: 44-47). But unlike Ligers, Tenisons saw pantomime as a mode of performance that intersected with other media and invaded spaces outside the theater. He collaborated with filmmakers, such as Vidmantas Bačiulis (b. 1940) and Arkadijus Vinokuras (b. 1952), who was also a member of the ensemble, to document the activities of the company; the great photographer Vitas Luckus (1943-1987) also made the group the subject of several memorable images. Vinokuras's

film clips show a group and then a male-female couple (Tenisons and Asta Urbanavičiūtė) performing movement improvisations in a forest, and these are reminscent of Rudolf Laban's "choral movement" exercises in meadows of the 1920s (Vinokur 2012). Bačiulis's 1972 documentary integrates shots of the ensemble wandering in a park, rehearsing in a studio, and performing Tenison's pantomime *Ecce Homo* (Tenisons 2010). Both films suggest that pantomime created a kind of "underground" community that gathered in unpopulated or shadowy spaces to perform mysterious, liberating actions, which both filmmakers capture with distinctive, cinematic shots: these give the impression of performance for an audience outside the theater and beyond the time and world of the filming—indeed, pantomime was the path to a new *image* of communal life. Tenisons described pantomime as the act of "drawing" emotions with the body, and the actors studied drawing, painting, and modeling in addition to music; one project was to describe through movements the colors in paintings by the Lithuanian Symbolist artist Mikalojus Čiurlionis (1875-1911) (Busygin 2009). A unique feature of Tenisons' pantomimic style was the performance of slow, deliberate, precise, almost languid movements abruptly punctuated by jolting lunges, pivots, swivels, convulsions, lurches, swoops, flips and sweeps of arms, and wilting plunges. He chose modernist, even avant-garde musical accompaniments: jazz, electronic tape, atonal expressionist chamber pieces. But he did not develop a system whereby the "drawing" of a particular movement correlated with the representation of a particular emotion. Rather, he used a philosophical-cosmological rhetoric to get the actors to "draw" the emotions embedded in the language in a way unique to themselves. Savukynaitė provides an example of this rhetoric in relation to a section of the production of *Ecce Homo*, so that, instead of a narrative scenario of sequential actions, one encounters a semi-poem of sequential emotions "drawn" by the actors:

> *Man's death. His inner world is a white and heavy sheet of paper. There is only a great desire to reduce everything, to know everything and find your place in this complicated world. Then, as in the past, peaceful coexistence spins into a huge conflict. It turns out that this is just an illusion. The first human steps brought the first crashes.*
> *The first encounter is the hypocritical exploitation of preaching by human beings. The human being is trying to protest, but this protest*

> *has no name, yet is not completely broken. This is more than an intuitive denial of violence. […]*
>
> *The human world comes to love. The first one. She is easy and uncomfortable: a violet song, a fragrance of life, and an earthquake. But the human is not yet able to understand her great, dark secrets, perceive the essence of a curious life. And he turns himself into an eagle, he is in love with golden remixes of idealization, thus ending the eulogizing of nature, and, at that very moment, he wounds and impoverishes himself. […]*
>
> *A man is afraid of his feelings, of his own affairs. All of this is dreadful and meaningless, lacking truth. And then comes love. She's now active, trying to help by any means but she only effects the man's senses, the physical nature of his life. He loses the inner need to understand himself. The man turns into a sociable marionette* (Savukynaitė 2001: 95).

The voice here seems uniquely Eastern European: an allegorical montage of archetypal images depicting humanity (or "Man") as simultaneously cosmic and pathetic. Yet in film documentation of the piece, the actors perform amazingly precise, lucid actions, movements, and gestures to dramatize Tenisons' controlling theme—humanity in conflict with itself, the inescapable tension between the individual ("Man") and an unstable group or society to which he wishes to belong and then does not wish to belong or which turns against him or causes him to turn against himself (Tenisons 2010; Martynov 2010; Martynov 2014). The group does not consistently appear as a unified, choral unit; each member of the group responds differently to Man, and what makes a group is a shared agreement to include or exclude Man as a result of his disclosure of a particular feeling. But because Man is above all "afraid of his feelings," fear, manifested in different physical gestures, controls the dynamic relation between Man and the group, and the greatest fear is being alone. Love is the emotion that most strongly binds Man to others and creates "peaceful co-existence," but the emotion always arises in response to an illusion that fear inevitably shatters, for love excludes at the same time that it binds one to others. Tenisons devoted much attention to movements that signified the attraction and aversion of bodies to each other, to dynamic shifts from aversion to attraction (and the reverse), and to the struggle of an averse body with attracted (or controlling) bodies. Unlike Ligers or Tomaszewski,

Tenisons, an art student, had no background in dance, which meant that he had little interest in blurring the distinction between dance and pantomime. His kinetic sense was entirely pantomimic: he could create intense drama with bodies that did not move far, if at all, from an initial spot—unlike dancers, the performers did not need to consume a lot of space to evoke an emotion, an attitude, an identity. He delighted in producing manifold expressive effects with fingers, hands, arms, turns of the head, weight shifts, kneelings, undulations, as well as the abrupt shifts in movement rhythms. Yet movements did not coalesce into a system that "translated" various emotions into particular gestures. Rather, he urged actors to find new ways of signifying an emotion as it arose in relation to a particular dramatic situation or attitude toward "another body." Movement was the basis for "analyzing" emotion—"the inner world of the human body"—instead of emotion being the basis for analyzing movement, which, in dance, often means finding a way to fit an emotion into steps and movements that have a source external to the "inner world" of the performer (cf. Savukynaitė 2001: 36-43). Tenisons emphasized this point by his use of masks in *Ecce Homo*, which emerged out of an earlier studio piece called *Rumor/Gossip*. All members of the group wear the same grotesque, rather mournful, primitive mask, while the Man remains unmasked. Like the uni-body stocking, the mask unifies the group, but it does not prevent members of the group from moving differently, although sometimes an emotion does cause the members to produce the same unison movement. The scenic context for stage performance was bare, an empty space lit in a chiaroscuro manner, partly because the ensemble had so little access to theatrical resources, partly because "cosmic" dramas dealing with Man and humanity require only a space for performance, and partly because the ensemble did not make a clear distinction between the space and the world outside the theater.

With *XX Century Capriccio* (1970), Tenisons shifted to a more overtly political representation of the conflict between the individual and the community with a fable revealing the "barbarism of the bourgeoisie." The piece took place in a market place bringing together many different persons with a mythical town: "evaluators, intelligent critics, prostitutes, eccentrics, elderly shepherdesses, ancient believers, unbelievers, sadists, nosey meddlers, naïve country folk, suave aesthetes, low officials, all assuming a right to give punishment [...]" (Savukynaitė 2001: 149). Some of the large

cast came from high schools and from outside of Kaunas, for the ensemble had already a reputation for innovative performance that allowed actors to shape the content of the production. Much of the story came from Tenisons' expressionist drawings depicting turbulent tensions between individuals and groups, and Savukynaitė says that the Greek junta coup and the Vietnam War inspired the production. But Tenisons and his ensemble created a pantomime that referred more precisely to the political situation in Lithuania. The story concerned a Sculptor whose art has become too strange or enigmatic to suit the tastes of the diverse community gathering in the market place. A lowly member of the community, the Dictator, who "is poor and needs the mass," inflames community resentment against the Sculptor, for his art exists independently of the "base" consumerism of the market place: "true art is dangerous to the citizen." The pantomime therefore depicts "the characteristics of a town, of [its notions] of finery, of the events leading to the death [of the town]." The diverse qualities defining individuals within the community, signified through pantomimic gesture, merely mask a conformist mentality, a unified desire to punish the artist for having placed himself "above" the common craving or "instinct" to become like others—to avoid being alone. The ensemble dramatized the idea of the community by extending the performance beyond the stage, so that, as soon as spectators came to pick up or present tickets, actors greeted them as if they were members of the market place community on the stage, and they pretended to gossip about members of the audience as well as about themselves; one actor mimed "the dark eyes of a blind man" (Savukynaitė 2001: 144-149). Ostensibly, Tenisons presented the pantomime as a critique of bourgeois consumerism, which was the "base" origin of the fascist mentality. However, some viewers thought the production showed that fascism had its origin in the resentments, greed, and petty appetites for "punishment" in ordinary citizens, who regard as dangerous art that makes them feel small or crude. The production therefore was not a critique of capitalism that showed how fascism was the invention of an elite class to impose its will on a class-stratified society and thus distract the society from the exploitation of the lesser classes by the hugely profiting elite class. *XX Century Capriccio* showed that fascism was an inherent, default state of mind within ordinary citizens; only art, the "strange" image of another body, could release people from that state of mind, and such art was the work of an elite element within society. Following this production, Kaunas

briefly became a hub for various "underground" or radically experimental activities in theater, the visual arts, and literature, with Giedrius Mackevicius's 1971 staging of *The Siege*, by the poet Judita Vaiciunaite (1937-2001) especially causing concern for Soviet authorities, in addition to Tenisons' pantomime productions (Truskauskaite 2012: 11-14; Konstantinova 2015: 2-4). This flowering of underground culture came to an end with the public disturbances of May 1972 ignited by Kalanta's self-immolation.

Tenisons' expulsion from Lithuania apparently entailed a warning that he should refrain from producing any more pantomimes. He devoted himself to art and to providing movement training to actors in Latvian theaters. But even after the fall of the Communist state, Tenisons did not return to pantomime. He became involved in developing and promoting his "zime" project whereby the abstract designs stitched into the unity belt of traditional Latvian costume could encode secret messages, and computer programs could embed the messages into the unique designs of individual belts. Finally, in 2013, he set about producing a pantomime on the theme of Mindaugas (ca. 1203-1263), the first and only King of Lithuania. He made a glamorous trailer for the production showing a large cast in historical costumes performing a montage of actions related to Mindaugas's life, his quest for power, his ambitious wife Morta, and his vacillating relations to Christianity and paganism (Rhyzhykov 2013). But it is unclear how much of this monumental project actually achieved performance beyond the staging of highlight moments for the video trailer and photography. It may be, however, that due to the political circumstances, the inclination toward pantomime shifted to explorations of performance art or staged imagery. One of Tenisons' actors, Kęstutis Adomaitis (1948-1996), formed his own pantomime theater in Kaunas in 1968 but apparently could not sustain it. In 1982, he managed at last to establish the Kaunas Pantomime Theater as a professional unit receiving subsidies attached to the Drama Theater and then, in 1988, as an independent organization. His productions, such as *Faceless* (1984) and *Scream, Scream* (1988), resembled Tomaszewski's in their use of expressionistically exaggerated movement and the presentation of historic memories in which characters appear nude, in body stockings, and in period costumes against a dark, placeless background. In 1994, he staged a pantomimic adaptation of Eugène Ionescu's absurdist drama *Rhinoceros* (1959) in which those who had turned into rhinoceri wore flesh-colored body stockings and rhinoceros heads (Egrynas 2014).



Figure 109: Scene from *Jēzus Kristus kāzas* (*The Wedding of Jesus Christ*), staged by Andris Grīnbergs, Latvia, 1972. Photo: Māra Brašmane, Laikmetīgās mākslas centra arhīvs.

But while the Kaunas Pantomime Theater still revives Adomaitis's productions from the 1980s and 1990s, much of the aftermath of the Cold War Latvian pantomime spirit drifted toward non-institutionalized forms of "non-verbal theater," to use the phrase designated by Sanita Duka, a student of Tenison's movement training workshops in 2006 (Duka 2015). In 1972, a designer of countercultural fashion, Andris Grīnbergs (b. 1946), staged a two-day performance in the countryside, *The Wedding of Jesus Christ*, in which he married Inta Jaunzeme (b. 1955) in a series of actions beautifully documented in photographs by Mara Brasmane (b. 1944). The piece contained much pantomimic action of a symbolic-ritualistic nature, nudity, bisexual gestures, and hippie-style costumes [Figure 109]. The audience consisted of only about twenty persons specifically invited by Grīnbergs and Jaunzeme, but Brasmane's documentation circulated widely, if rather clandestinely, initiating a vogue in Latvia for private performances of an interdisciplinary construction whereby the documentation of the performance was integral to it and reached a much larger audience than the

physical circumstances of the enactment allowed (Kristberga 2016: 139-140; Bryzgel 2017: 47). The fascination with performance art soon completely obscured the appeal of pantomime, even after independence from the Soviet Union (cf. Matule 2009; *Lettische Avantgarde* 1988). An especially interesting example of this interdisciplinary shift in thinking is the photographer/performance artist Viktorija Eksta (b. 1987). She was a student of Roberts Ligers in the Pantomime Studio, and in 2010 she published an interview with him about the Studio. Between 2013 and 2016, she worked on her photo performance project *God Nature Work*, in which she staged photographs of herself enacting the solitary life of a woman who had once lived in an abandoned farmhouse; she wore clothes and performed actions (tasks) belonging to the time of the artist's grandmother; she kept a journal chronicling the disturbing emotional consequences of this pantomimic enactment of another life, with the journal becoming a silent (written) part of the project imagery, its exhibition, and publication (Eksta 2016). Another student of Ligers, Ansis Rūtentāls (1949-2000), formed his own studio, ARKT, in Riga in 1978 with the goal of creating a "movement theater," by which he meant a postmodern aesthetic of freeing movement of the need to represent anything other than the performer's capacity to transform the body into a form containing and releasing abstract kinetic impulses. The idea was to find movements that in themselves described the condition of contemporary life rather than to find stories, characters, dramatic scenes that represented the conditions of contemporary life and then to designate movements that appropriately brought the stories to life. It was largely a studio-centered aesthetic; Rūtentāls followed Ligers in favoring body stockings for costumes. But in the 1980s, he experimented with performances that took place outdoors, in fields and woodlands. At first, he used music by modernist composers like Stravinsky and Bartok, but in the mid-1980s, his accompaniments became more eclectic with music entirely by living composers, mostly Latvian. His productions had abstract titles and themes, similar to postmodern dance works: *For Voice without Accompaniment* (1979), *Epiphany* (1980), *Colors, Journey* (1982), *Reflections* (1984), *Circle* (1987), *Whispers in Grey* (1989), *Tabula Rasa* (1991), *Two* (1994), *Labyrinth* (1999), *Emotions in Seconds* (2000) (Rūtentāls 2008). But because the postmodern aesthetic is so "accessible" to so many performers, ARKT has experienced, since Rūtentāls death, difficulty in sustaining a distinctive presence in the Latvian cultural

scene. Ligers himself believed that Rūtentāls approach was doomed (Eksta 2010), but then, in 2013, his own Pantomime Studio vanished with his death. On the other hand, Alvis Hermanis (b. 1965), who studied under Ligers as a teenager, moved in a direction almost opposite of Rūtentāls: he has become one of the most acclaimed directors of spoken drama and opera in Europe, with spectacular productions of famous European classics in Salzburg, Vienna, Milan, Brussels, Zürich, and several German cities, as well as at the New Riga Theater, where he has been artistic director since 1997. His productions, for which he often designs the scenery in addition to directing, combine intensely rich visual details with flamboyantly imaginative bodily movement, making him a prominent exponent of the postmodern, director-driven theater aesthetic. In 2007, however, he produced a pantomime, *The Sound of Silence*, which achieved enormous success and toured thirty countries. Hermanis has an affectionate attitude toward the 1960s. At the New Theater in Riga, he gave the actors copies of the famous pop music album, *Sounds of Silence* (1965), by Paul Simon (b. 1941) and Art Garfunkle, released the same year in which Hermanis was born. He asked the actors to choose a track on the album and come up with a little story that the song inspired. The actors then collaborated with Hermanis to research the 1960s and fit the different stories together into a unified scenario. The piece takes place in an apartment designed in great detail to look like an apartment in Riga in the 1960s; the actors wore costumes from the 1960s, they used props, devices, appliances from the 1960s, and they incorporated movements, gestures, and poses drawn from iconography of the 1960s. The music of Simon and Garfunkle accompanies the action, which largely consists of inventively playful encounters between inhabitants of the apartment building and their friends—Hermanis avoids examining the darker aspects to the 1960s. In a discussion with a Romanian audience, he claimed that the 1960s was "the last time that Europe believed in utopia," believed that the world was getting better, and he contended that since then Europe has no longer believed in its greatness, although in neither the piece nor in his Romanian discussion did he clarify why the utopianism of the 1960s did not guide subsequent decades other than to suggest that the social, sexual, and artistic experiments of the decade threatened entrenched institutions and the political system that protected them (Bersin 2013; Barau 2010). But while the pantomiming of gestural tropes from a particular segment of the twentieth century was a remarkable, vivid feat, Hermanis

has not produced any more pantomimes, perhaps because he associates pantomimic action with the signification of a utopian feeling that he no longer believes in, that he regards as "lost." Perhaps that is also the reason for the fading of pantomime in Latvia.

Meanwhile, Giedrius Mackevičius (1945-2008), a Lithuanian associate of Tenisons at the Kaunas Pantomime Theater, realized after the disturbances in the town in 1972 that he could not pursue a career in pantomime as long as he remained in Lithuania. He moved to Moscow to study stage direction at the Russian Academy of Theater Arts, where he also studied acting under the Stanislavsky disciple Maria Knebel (1898-1985). Students in the acting class invited him to form a pantomime studio in 1973; the following year the studio bore the name Plastic Drama Studio of Moscow, although it never had a permanent performance space and always remained a largely student organization attached to the Kurachatov House of Culture. Originally a biochemistry student at Vilnius University, he brought a scientific, intellectual approach to pantomime: "The spiritual basis of Mackevičius' theatrical thinking is the transformation of physical being into a mysterious action in which the performer expresses archetypal, unconscious forms of behavior." He cultivated a theory of "figurative psychogenesis" wherein pantomime became the "organic embodiment of the deepest, most inaccessible zones of the psyche" and assumed the task of "creating a theatrical art that, through its emotional-sensory impact on the consciousness of the actor and spectator, could be comparable to the impact of ancient sacred ritual" (Yachmeneva 2012). Like Tenisons, Mackevičius saw pantomime as a fusion of bodily movement with art, music, and metaphysics. But his scientific studies and his studies with Knebel urged him to combine an elaborate psychophysical theoretical apparatus with devotion to the power of literary texts. He absorbed a great deal of psychoanalytical and analytical psychology scholarship, especially the works of Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) and Erich Fromm (1900-1980), in addition to scholarship in art history, mythology, and philosophy. One of his students wrote that Mackevičius required the actors to read particular scholarly texts before beginning work on a production. He staged twenty-five pantomimes in almost as many years, beginning (1974) with an adaptation of the Symbolist Pierrot grotesque farce *The Puppet Show* (1906) by Alexander Blok (1880-1921) and including, among others, *The Star and Death of Joaquin Murietta* (1976), from a play by Pablo Neruda (1904-1973);

Henry IV (1976), from the 1922 play by Pirandello; *Blizzard* (1977), from Blok's violent poem *The Twelve* (1918); *The Shine of the Golden Fleece* (1977), from Greek mythology; *A Day Lasts More Than a Century* (1984), from a 1980 novel by Chinghiz Aitmatov (1928-2008); *The Betrothal* (1984), from the 1918 play by Maeterlinck; *Emigrants* (1991) from the 1975 play by Slawomir Mrozek (1930-2013); *Song of Songs* (1993), from The Bible; *Island Lilith* (1998) from the 1993 surrealist play by poet-musician Liia Liberova (1948-2010); and *Poem of the End* (2002), from poems by Marina Tsvetaeva (1892-1941). A couple of Mackevičius's productions (1981, 1991) were cabaret-circus programs. In 1984, he began collaborating with the Russian avant-garde composer Alfred Schnittke (1934-1998): *The Yellow Sound* (1984), *Labyrinths* (1988). *The Red Horse* (1981) brought to pantomimic life "the world" embedded within the famous painting "Bathing the Red Horse" (1912) by Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin (1878-1939). In this production, the action unfolded in four separate performance spaces, "symbolically signifying the concept of conditional reality": the space of fate, the space of community, the space of the artist, and the space of dreams and visions. The boy-hero riding the bathing horse (nude in the painting) moved within all four spaces, after his "expulsion" from the picture frame. Pantomime released from their painting frames Petrov-Vodkin images of other persons in the hero's life, "plastically implementing the picturesque rhythms of the paintings," with female images "floating in a kind of centrifugal movement" while male images moved with an "aggressive," competitive linearity, so that "rhythmic lines collided." The climax of the "plastic drama" was the "reincarnation of the [hero] into his dream, the red horse, which involved a herd of horses bursting out of the picture frames" and "creating a sense of limitless openness, ultimate spatial and perspectival freedom." It is a drama of "inner rebirth: pain and suffering transformed into perfect forms of beauty" achieved through "scenic multidimensionality" and the "symphonic character" of bodily movement through different spatial dimensions (Yachmeneva 2012). This is indeed a complex aesthetic involving metaphysical concepts and their corporeal-scenic manifestations that are not readily accessible in terms of conventional narrative progression of action, for the central conflict of Mackevičius's plastic dramas was the conflict between different internal aspects of the protagonist—that is, they were dramatizations of the creative process from a quasi-Jungian perspective, as the conflict between various "archetypes" to achieve the

"rebirth" of the Artist through art. "Mackevičius released the multiple 'I' of [his] protagonists in metaphorical images" (Yachmeneva 2012). The "I," as a result, is a microcosm of society while the stage is the macrocosm of the universe. Anna Konstantinova contends that Tenisons' production of *XX Century Capriccio* was a powerful influence on Mackevičius: "If society rejects the Artist within itself, it is deprived of any potential similarity to God, of any artistic or even human image. The world becomes unaware, plunges into chaos" (Konstantinova 2015: 232). Mackevičius's most transparent and well-known dramatization of this theme was *Overcoming* (1975), a 90-minute pantomimic excursion through the psyche of a "Renaissance Titan," the sculptor Michelangelo (1475-1564). The piece depicts the phases of Michelangelo's life from boyhood and apprenticeship to maturity as a great sculptor, Dionysian creator, disillusioned penitent, and ultimately Christlike figure. Different actors play different phases of the artist's life, but the psyche of the artist is greater than his life and includes archetypal dimensions embodied by other actors: the Trickster or Jester, the Feminine-Dance muse, a Feminine-Mother figure, a Feminine Erotic figure, a male religious figures (Savanorola-type monk, Bishop). All of these figures seek to guide, dominate, encourage, suppress, or possess the artist. They fight each other, they collaborate with each other, or Michelangelo must fight them or intervene between them or submit to them. The artist must also contend with figures from the "fresco" of his imagination—people who inhabited the world he lived in and became figures in the images he has painted, people who alternately condemn his art and respond to it (and him) with orgasmic rapture. The esoteric symbolism sometimes makes it difficult to discern the borders between self, archetype, and "otherness." But that is the point: the artistic self does not exist or evolve "outside" of society—rather, society embeds itself within the artistic self, so that struggles within the self are inseparable from a struggle with society. *Overcoming* is a montage of scenes showing the artist's struggle to overcome the human obstacles to creating a godlike human image—the statue of David. But then the artist transforms David into a pieta sculpture with himself as the Madonna figure holding Christ in his arms. The godlike man is dead, and the artist's efforts to revive him are in vain while a female black angel of death writhes ecstatically in one of the four arched doorways that constitute the set. The artist covers the body with a cloth, the angel slumps dead in her doorway, and the artist pushes open the doors toward

the audience, as if engulfing it with a cosmic darkness that either cannot be overcome or is in reality the most acute state of overcoming (video at Vasilev 2012). The pantomimic action is exceptionally complex and full of rapid changes in rhythm. Like Tomaszewski, Mackevičius has simultaneous actions occurring in different parts of the stage, dividing the spectator's focus, but here separate actions always connect, integrate to form new actions elsewhere on the stage, for the body of the artist links all struggles to him. For example the struggle between the Jester and the Feminine Dance muse invariably leads back to the artist, who must fight them both or prefer one over the other while other figures of obstruction appear in the doorways. Indeed, as others have observed, it is quite difficult to describe concisely the astonishing variety and power of *dramatic* physical action in this piece. But this complexity is the result of following Tenisons' aesthetic (and perhaps also of Knebel's Stanislavskian teaching) of allowing the actors to develop physical movements based on their own emotional relation to the particular actions required by the scene. Although a couple of Renaissance style dances appear, these only last about twenty seconds, to signify "Renaissance court culture." Otherwise pantomimic action unfolds with a mysterious, cinematic urgency, and it is as if one is watching strange incarnations of humans engaged in a violent, enigmatic struggle from a cosmic point in time. The Feminine-Dance muse does not dance; she pantomimes an abstract idea of Dance that is actually more alluring than any "material" idea of dance, which would be a dance. The artist builds monumental sculptures with only his hands and arms to suggest his relation to the stone he wishes to bring to life. Mackevičius places this abundant physical action within a simple but monumental scenic context. The background is always black, with heavily chiaroscuro lighting on the action. Four arched, metallic doorways function to "frame" characters that invade them, and the actors move them into different positions to achieve vividly painterly images of figures and to dramatize the perception that no aspect of the self or society can overcome its placement within an image, a frame. A black platform with steps blends in with the black background and enables characters who ascend it to appear as if floating or hovering above the stage floor. The costumes contribute significantly to the powerful stage "fresco." While some characters wear Renaissance style costumes, Mackevičius partially retains Tenisons' body stocking aesthetic [Figure 110]. The Feminine-Dance muse wears a green body stocking with a little green

cape, while the Feminine-Erotic muse wears a white body stocking that simultaneously suggests her purity and her nudity. David appears in a flesh-colored body stocking, so that he also seems naked. The Jester wears a kind of harness over tights, while the Saint-Mother figure is captivating in a flowing purple gown and a white cowl. Michelangelo, as embodied by different actors, wears a range of costumes, including a Russian tunic, a flesh-colored (nude) body stocking, and (at the end) a black undershirt and tights. Yet the piece achieves a stunning visual unity, revealing, not "Michelangelo's world," but "another world" altogether as seen by the modernist artist Mackevičius. For music, the director used numerous modernist symphonic pieces, including excerpts from works by Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959) and Kyrztof Penderecki (b. 1933). But some sections of the work have no musical accompaniment. In other words, the music does not guide the action; following a soundtrack function, the music follows the action and of course supplements it with an emotional intensity that is subordinate to a larger design than the composers intended. *Overcoming* is a monumental work of pantomime achieved with relatively modest theatrical resources and with superb, exciting performances by actors, many of them students, who volunteered to perform it because of their profound devotion to Mackevičius's mystical vision and genial method of interacting with them.

The many other pantomimes in Mackevičius's portfolio are not nearly as well known as *Overcoming* and *The Red Horse*. Video glimpses of these works are certainly intriguing (e.g., TheDedochek 2011; ADGO 2015). During his lifetime, his works attracted full audiences and many persons wanting to work with him. But the cultural press largely ignored him and was not eager to deviate from the official position that pantomime should follow the circus/clown paradigm, even after the collapse of the Soviet regime. It is therefore still difficult to determine how his approach to pantomime evolved or to reach anything approaching an adequate assessment of his contribution to pantomime history. So much of his work remains to be discovered. In 2010, *Overcoming*, a monumental compilation of his theoretical writings, notes, and lectures appeared in Russian, but even this book is difficult to access. In 2012, Mariana Yachmeneva, a student of his, completed a dissertation on him; in 2015, Anna Konstantinova, Director of the Russian Drama Theater in Vilnius, published a long essay on him in both Russian and Lithuanian, after completing her own dissertation on him

in 2013, and in 2017, the Lithuanian Theater, Music, and Cinema Museum in Vilnius and then the Drama Theater of Klaipeda hosted exhibitions and international symposia on Mackevičius. His personality was in a sense too powerful, for the Plastic Drama Theater could not survive his death, and as a result he has become memorialized rather than emulated. Tenisons himself perhaps believed he could not expand upon what Mackevičius had achieved. Where could pantomime go without the unique, elaborate cosmological philosophy that Mackevičius brought to it? For years, Tenisons has collaborated with his life partner, Simona Orinska (b. 1978), on performances and installations she has staged (and documented with numerous videos). These incorporate her passionate attachment to Japanese Butoh aesthetics and present bodies moving slowly, as if in a trance, in mysterious shimmers, pools, undulations, and slivers of colored light (cf. Orinska 2015). In a 2008 video for Latvian National Television, she and Tenisons described connections between Butoh and a Latvian hunger for an "eastern" spirituality (Orinska 2011). In her more recent performances, she projects onto the bodies of sometimes nude performers streaming video scrolls of zime unity belt designs, for "in the collective archetypes, both the cosmic code of the Baltic sign and the 'archaeology' of the human body of Butoh have the same beginning" (Orinska 2015; cf. Orinska 2014). At the same time, she has devoted much and perhaps most of her life to dance and movement therapy. Such have been the manifold consequences of the Latvian pantomime impulse initiated by Roberts Ligers in 1956. Ligers, Tenisons, and Mackevičius created an utterly distinct, fascinating, intensely dramatic pantomime culture that subsequent generations felt the need to "overcome" through new forms of performance rather than to extend or expand.



Figure 110: Scenes from video of *Overcoming* (1975), directed by Giedrius Mackevičius, Moscow, 1975.

Estonia

In Estonia, a comparatively modest pantomime culture evolved during the Cold War around the personality of Adolf Traks (b. 1933), an announcer and master of ceremonies for the Estonian National Philharmonic. In the spring of 1963, Traks formed his own Youth

Pantomime Studio in conjunction with the Tallinn Culture Palace. An article in the September 1963 issue of *Kultuur ja elu* (40-43) described the recent visit of the Riga Pantomime Studio to Pärnu, where the group had performed its "Progress" program that included scenes inspired by *Naked Life*, a 1920s novel by Latvian Communist author Andrejs Upīts (1877-1970), two scenes adapted from turn-of the-century stories by Maxim Gorki (1868-1936), and the ensemble's popular adaptation of Masereel's *The Idea*. The article announced that pantomime is a new form of performance for Estonia that may prove especially appealing to youth clubs. It is not clear, though, if Traks regarded the Riga group as a model for constructing an Estonian pantomime aesthetic. He was aware of August Bachmann's pantomime experiments with the Tallinn Hommikteater in the 1920s, but he never stated his motive in establishing the Pantomime Studio other than to claim that he loved pantomime because it was disciplined yet "open," producing a unique kind of "harmony." He published a call for auditions and worked with an initial group of seventeen students five times a week, but after a while only two students remained. After two years, he finally had ten persons in an ensemble. At first, the Studio functioned as a club for students to discover physical expressiveness by improvising exercises. Progress was slow but steady. At last, the Pantomime Studio gave its first public performance in the spring of 1965. The ensemble fluctuated in size from six to thirteen members, with six of the original members comprising the group when it disbanded; at most Traks had nine women and four men. In the summer months, the group performed in the ruins of the Dominican monastery in the Old Town section of Tallinn. The first program, *Quiet Hour*, consisted of brief ensemble sketches or "miniatures," including *Watch Out*, *Hiking Pals*, *Autumn Comes*, *Romance*, *Beginning and End of the Month*. One sketch, called *Life, I Love You*, showed a woman and man living in the same building separated by an invisible wall; when they step into the street, they encounter a street musician and take action to avoid the commission of a crime, and thus they find each other. Another sketch was *Hatching Apparatus of Bureaucracy*, "in which the young actors were able to produce a gallery of greatly caricatured types, ranging from a cheeky typist and a hardline career ladder-climber alongside a clown secretary to a steadily rising cadre inspector and dignified director" (Traks Archive 1982: n.p.). Five bureaucrats display their love of official documents, with each document affirming the previous one until eventually the humans

disappear behind piles of paper (Traks Archive *Vaikne tund* 18 March 1966). Another, abstract piece involved performers wearing phosphorescent gloves and collars and black body stockings so that the spectator saw only the movement of these illuminated objects. While the ensemble adopted the Latvian preference for body stocking costumes, it did not use whiteface, because whiteface negated the "individuality" of the performer. The ensemble produced the following year another program of "miniatures," *Miracle without Miracle*, comprised of three sections. The first, *Arlecchino*, was the group's only venture into *commedia dell'arte*, with the performers wearing costumes traditional to the genre and impersonating the basic figures: Arlecchino, Pantaloon, Colombine, Pierrot, Brigante. The second section presented scenes from a bizarre circus, including *The World's Strongest Woman*, *Rope Dancer*, *Redhead*, *Magician*, *Two-Headed Calf*, *Snake and White Clown* (*Snake Charmer*), "and others." The third section included more serious scenes: *Imperialism*, *Evolution*, *Man and Machine*. *Evolution* depicted the cosmic origin of life, beginning with congealing of dust to the formation of organisms, the appearance of humans, the creation of slavery and civilization, and the revolutionary liberation of humanity. Reviewers of these early productions generally wrote approvingly (Traks devoted most of the space in the printed programs to quoting the praises), and the ensemble produced programs that combined different pieces from previous programs. However, one reviewer (Vello Köllu) felt the *commedia* piece didn't work at all and was too big a theme for the group to compress into a miniature and too "eclectic" or uncertain in its performance aesthetic. For example, Colombine washed invisible laundry, but Pierrot presented her with a real flower. Some of the circus scenes displayed "bad taste." Although the Magician was quite expressive, the Rope Dancer (on an imaginary rope) was weak. The Snake Charmer scene, in which the Snake and the Charmer reverse roles, though effective, was too long. *Hatching Apparatus of Bureaucracy* suffered from too much bustle without motive, while *Evolution* was too abstract and vague; one had to consult the program to grasp the concept. But *Man and Machine* showed true mastery and precision of pantomimic performance (*Kultuur ja elu* January 1967: 39-41). Consequently, the ensemble dispensed altogether with comic scenes and attempted a more "concrete" pantomime style for its 1967 program, *With Time, a Person Changes*, which included a revised version of *Man and Machine*, and new "miniatures": *Seasons*, and *A Human Time*. Another

reviewer for *Kultuur ja elu* (December 1967: 22-25), V. Raun, discussed the pantomime scene in general, with special attention to the Riga Pantomime Studio, which had visited Tallinn earlier in the year. In comparison, the Tallinn Pantomime Studio seemed immature: *Man and Time* (the new name for *Evolution*) revealed a "superficial philosophy," a tedious sloganeering that was "illustrative," a "skeleton without content," while *Seasons* was "clichéd," the work of "pupils" turning in "school essays." *Imperialism* and *Man and Machine* were much more interesting in their satirical style, but pantomime culture would benefit from the formation of a truly professional pantomime ensemble. However, texts that actually describe the content of these performances are conspicuously difficult to locate, and it may be that periodicals and programs were purposely vague to protect the Studio (or youth clubs in general) from attracting troublesome surveillance by the authorities, although the Studio won third place in the 1967 pantomime festival in Riga. A photograph (EFA.332.0-82325) by Valdur Vahi (1933-1982) in the National Archive (Rahvusarhiiv) photo database shows the curious "Snake Charmer" scene from *Miracle without Miracle*: a man in a chef's hat, striped T-shirt, and apron appears to be describing something with his hands to an attentive woman in a body stocking [Figure 111]. Behind them is a a kind of painted proscenium with curtain labeled "Circus" and a poster depicting a rather elegant woman in a nineteenth century dress with a sign labeling her "The World's Strongest Woman." The photo reveals a visual-semiotic sophistication not usually associated with student club theatricals . In 1969, the Pantomime Studio began a partnership with the Academic Drama Theater and performed a pantomime scene in the theater's adaptation, *Light My Light*, of 1912 poems by Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941). The same year, the ensemble produced another program of three linked pantomimic scenes, *Homo Sapiens*, with accompanying music by only two composers, radical modernists, the Estonian Arvo Pärt (b. 1935) and Franco-American Edgard Varèse (1883-1965). The first scene, *Yesterday*, with Pärt's music, described a mythical past of primordial innocence. *Today*, with music by Varèse, showed the corruption of the contemporary world, how greed, hypocrisy, betrayal, pettiness, and careerism have become habits of life. The final scene, *Tomorrow*, with Pärt's music, represented "the unbinding of the most complicated knots of life, the persistent fight for the future" (Traks Archive 1985). A conflict then arose between the ensemble or Traks and the management of the Academic

Drama Theater that somehow caused the Pantomime Studio to disband (Traks Archive 1982). Traks never published a statement explaining the dissolution, but the use of music by Pärt, whose compositions suffered censure from Soviet authorities, and by Varèse, whose music (though mostly dating from the 1920s and 1930s) otherwise was not welcome in the Soviet Union, to accompany pantomimic action at least indicates considerable boldness of imagination in any cultural context of that time.





Figure 111: Top: Snake charmer scene from *Imeda imed* (*Miracle without Miracles*), Tallinn Pantomime, directed by Adolf Traks, Tallinn, Estonia, 1967. Photo: Valdur Vahi, FOTIS, Rahvusarhiivi. Bottom: Scene from *Hingetaud* (*Soul Sickness*), Tallinn Pantomime, directed by Adolf Traks, Tallinn, Estonia, 1985. Photo: FOTIS, Rahvusarhiivi.

Traks returned as an announcer for the Philharmonic from 1970 until 1977, when he formed a new ensemble, Tallinn Pantomime, which brought together students from the Nõmme and Mermaid Culture Houses. He alluded to "rather sad" and exasperating difficulties in forming the ensemble, but he refrained from describing the circumstances of these frustrations. Instead, he suggested: "Perhaps it is better to wonder why Tallinn Pantomime is still the only one [in Estonia]?!" He asserted that pantomime required a versatile actor, who was capable of meeting the audience's high expectations for the genre. Serious pantomime was rare because it required actors with exceptional confidence and technical skill in making their bodies emotionally expressive. Traks claimed that the ensemble created "psychological pantomime," which was "a vision of the soul": "The subject is the mystery of the human self. Man with his contradictions, which includes his ethical decisions and values." Pantomimic movement is "the breath of the soul" (Traks Archive 1982). As with the Pantomime Studio, the Tallinn Pantomime company apparently devised its own exercises and "creative games" to achieve "psycho-physical"

expression; Traks did not identify any models of pantomime development adopted by the group. He encouraged a sharp, angular, propulsive style of pantomimic movement: "all fluid lines and flows were disrupted and broken into bits and pieces" (Einasto 2002: 4). A student in his workshops in 1981, dance scholar Heili Einasto (b. 1965), has described the pedagogic environment, which seems somewhat reminiscent of Decroux's approach:

> *The beginners group, from which after two months a performing group was to be chosen, had three 90-minute classes per week. We had movement studies alternating with Traks's lectures about our (that is, his) aims. He emphasized that, "we are a bit insensitive, a bit slow and we have to develop in ourselves temperament and speed." "Speed" and "precision" were two key words in our trainings, next to "discipline" and "dedication." There were the following exercises: "Machine," the aim of which was to achieve a machine-like precision, no matter what the speed—and for that he used a metronome (at least at the beginner level no music was used—we were not dancers, but actors) that set the tempo. In his words, "Machine" gave us a technique, a basis upon which everything else was built. "Machine" had no emotional side, and I remember ourselves wandering around with jagged, "jointy" movements, as if we had got an electric shock. Another exercise was called "Sculpture"—a well-known acting etude in which one has to stop in a certain pose and keep it. We were reminded that sculptures do not freeze, but that we should "move or melt into sculptures," and that sculptures are three-dimensional and observable from all sides* (Einasto 2002: 4).

Traks also instructed the students to "observe only yourself, try to find and understand yourself. Don't pay any attention to others. On stage you will see your faults in the mirror. Therefore you have to discover your faults and fight against them. You must be in control of yourself, to suppress yourself. The requirement is: be in control." In her diary entries for 29 and 30 October 1981, Einasto remarked that "[The workshop group is] very sluggish. We have to know what we are, to free ourselves from ourselves. [...] We have to be restless (but not frantic) and sharp. [...] We need speed of fantasy and thought" (Einasto 1981: n.p.).

The Tallinn Pantomime was a smaller ensemble than the Pantomime Studio. The productions of the group contained three to five named performers, although over its ten-year existence, the ensemble had a total of eleven performers, of whom nine were women. Performances most often took place in the ruins of the Dominican monastery in the Old Town section of Tallinn. The first production, *Contrasts*, occurred in 1979 and consisted of a series of earlier "miniatures" revived by Traks. Subsequent productions, however, Traks classified as dramas, tragi-comedy, or tragedy and constructed a single narrative. *Legend of Love* (1980), a drama in three scenes, "begins with a religious ritual, lead by a shaman with a drum, and directing people into the Netherworld. The cult the people perform requires unconditional surrender, affirms loyalty and promises courage—all in order to ensure a successful hunt. A young hunter runs forward and after a while kills a magic deer [elk]—an act that gives freedom to a beautiful young woman who had been trapped in the body of the deer. The hunter and the woman fall in love. But again we hear the drums, referring this time to approaching hunters for whom mercy for the hunted is absolutely unknown. The hunter is caught between his love and his religion. But it is only after the bloody sacrifice of his beloved that he rejects his religion" (Einasto 2002: 2-3). The printed program notes by Traks summarized the theme as "Love hiding within cruelty" (Traks Archive 1982). The accompanying music was by conservative Russian composer Oleg Khromushin (b. 1927). *Anti-Human* (1981), was a tragi-comedy in three "metaphors," with five women performing all the roles and "fragments of modern music" accompanying the action. According to the printed program, the first "metaphor" depicted "hypocrisy as lying," while the second metaphor "spoofed human vanity, greed, grief, envy, and aggression." The final metaphor presented "indifference as superstition." The piece exuded an aura of medieval allegory, with bodies or movements representing concepts like Hypocrisy, Greed, or Superstition. The ensemble presented a revised version of *Legend of Love* in 1982, although it is not clear how the new version differed from the old. *Death Bell* (1983) was a tragedy in three scenes, with music by the English rock band Pink Floyd. According to Traks' philosophical rhetoric in the printed program, the three scenes, *Longing*, *Lust for Life*, and *Despair*, showed how "love protects humanity," and how the "loss of love is irreparable." The "most intense happiness produces the greatest sensitivity to pain." "Life is a bad teacher, without

mercy, without compassion." The piece thus reveals "the tragedy of unborn love" and yet also the inability to "escape love's grasp." But how the ensemble transformed these grandiose ideas into physical actions eludes description in the available documentation. A photograph from the production shows five barefoot performers in white, gray, and black body stockings with capes posing dramatically in the monastery ruins, as if all the characters are challenging each other, wary of each other (Traks Archive 1983: ETMM T438). With music by French radical modernist Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992), *Eksinu* (1984), roughly translated as *The One Who Is Lost*, was a tragedy concerning a Woman whose conscience deserts her at a crucial moment of her life. She commits a crime, evidently the murder of a child, and then "the power of the soul" returns and resolves a fundamental "contradiction" within her. Three other women appeared in the piece representing either aspects of the Woman or the society from which she has become estranged. The tragedy was that, "There is only a too-late wisdom: reality has ruined everything human." The piece was also unusual in that the Woman wore a medieval costume with a white veil covering her head (Traks Archive 1984: ETMM T438). *Soul Sickness* (or *Cellar Spiders*) (1985), a "drama," featured four women performers and a montage of electronic music arranged by Arno Kivisikk (b. 1953). A newspaper story inspired the piece, which concerned the enticement and assimilation of a new member into a criminal gang that hangs out in a sinister cellar. The theme was the "morals of young people, the evil that gives birth to violence, insolence, a disdainful attitude toward public order, and egocentrism." The barefoot girl gang wore punk hairstyles, black body suits, and serapes made to look like spider webs (Traks Archive 1985: ETMM T438) [Figure 111]. The ensemble's last production, *Conflictus* (1986), another drama, also featured an all-female cast of three with music by minimalist Estonian composer René Eespere (b. 1953). In his typically existential rhetoric, Traks described the piece as "the encounter of the Human Being with the Human Soul. Conflictus is the concept of being in the human world, evolving through patience and love, while animal passions plunge the Human into the chaos of the soul. Full of pain is the path where the Human's constant companion is Death. [...] The Human develops through suffering and love." He explained that the scenario arose out of improvisations with the actors to get them each to discover a unique pantomimic representation of emotions (Traks Archive 1986).

But despite the grand "universality" of his themes, Traks' productions did not achieve the "visionary" power of works by Tenisons, Tomaszewski, Mackevičius, or even Ligers. He not only lacked access to theatrical resources; he lacked a mystical concept of the body as a symbol beyond the grasp of the state and conventional morality. His productions were like morality plays—that is, he showed how "the Human Being" struggled to accept responsibility or obligation to some larger sense of humanity than corrupt "animal passions." In this respect, his productions survived because they did not challenge official ideological doctrines of the socialist state. Yet his productions nevertheless depicted "humanity," encompassing his own communist society, as fallen, corrupt, and redeemed only by an *individual* sense of conscience and responsibility, by a profound sense of aloneness in the world. Even *Imperialism* was a critique of a "human" instinct to enslave others that audiences could read in relation to their own society as well as that of the capitalist West. Pantomime, Traks implied, was the path to a new society rooted in an individual morality arising from the recovery of the "soul," a conscience otherwise buried or stifled by the evil "habits of life" governing his society. The soul was in the "breath" of bodily movement, not in words that obfuscated and veiled apprehension of the body or the soul, as indeed they do in the rhetoric (including his own) published about his productions. Each of Traks' productions received between 40 and 100 performances, which indicates a strong public appetite for his aesthetic. Yet in 1988, Tallinn Pantomime disbanded, ostensibly because it did not have enough money to continue (Traks Archive 2017), although in conversation with Heili Einasto, a person close to the group said that Traks was "tired" and wanted to pursue a teaching opportunity in Germany (Einasto 2017).

When Traks formed Tallinn Pantomime in 1977, he gathered about him a group of students for which he had rigorously auditioned. With this group, he hoped to establish a highly competitive ensemble whose performances would pantomime from the margins or shadows of Estonian culture to a more commanding position, and he insisted that members of the group devote themselves to practice several hours a day five days a week. Members of the group, however, could not commit to this schedule because of their university studies and other professional and personal obligations. Traks' first group thus disintegrated after the 1979 performance of *Contrasts*, and he had to start the audition process all over again. But

members of the first group, led primarily by Aavo Rebane (b. 1955), wanted to continue with pantomime. A poet, Rebane, like Traks, became attracted to pantomime through his involvement with a folk dance group. He was friendly with Rein Agur (b. 1935), the director of the Estonian State Puppet Theater (NUKU) located in the Old Town section of Tallinn. Agur allowed Rebane's group to practice in the evenings in the large foyer of the puppet theater; the group stored its costumes and props at the Nõmme Culture House. Agur wanted to experiment with combining puppets with human pantomime, and the group's first efforts were on behalf of NUKU productions, which involved speechless humans interacting with talking puppets. Rebane attempted to improve his performance skills by studying (1984-1986) at the Estraadiakadeemia, until academy officials told him he was too old to study there. From 1981, the group, called the Pantomiimi- ja Plastikastuudio, performed fairy tales at many schools, although these productions were not actually pantomimes—the case of a group being asked to perform things other than what it wanted to do. In 1987, the ensemble collaborated with an environmental activist group, Cooperative Recrea, to protest Soviet plans to develop a phosphorite mine in Northern Estonia, and the collaboration entailed a large-scale protest demonstration production involving pantomimic movement accompanied by a large choir. The mine never opened. The pantomime group felt a clearer sense of mission, and in 1988, the Pantomiimi-ja Plastikastuudio became a professional organization insofar as the actors received salaries, although the group never received a license to perform. For a while, the group performed at the Linnahall, a former sports and concert complex located on the waterfront, but the rent soon became too high. Not having a theater of its own, the group performed primarily in schools, and in 1991, the Stuudio established its own school, in which Traks and Maret Kristal taught. The idea was to train actors for an interdisciplinary, "synthetic theater," because "there was no imaginative acting in the theater of that time." But the school and the group struggled to survive. With another ensemble member, Peeter Undrits, Rebane set up a furniture company to subsidize the school and ensemble, but the company failed and the Pantomiimi-ja Plastika Stuudio came to an end in 1993 (Rebane 2017).

The pantomimes of Mackevičius had deeply impressed Rebane when he had seen them in Moscow. He and the ensemble wanted to develop pantomimes similar in seriousness and inventiveness as Mackevičius', but

although Mackevičius could attract highly talented performers with ballet training, Soviet authorities refused to allow him or any of his group to travel either to Latvia or Estonia; as a result, understanding of Mackevičius' techniques for organizing pantomimes was fragmentary, inspirational rather than methodical. The Stuudio developed pantomime productions out of improvisational exercises. The ensemble varied in size from ten to fifteen persons, including technical support; Rebane directed all of the productions. The group remained aligned with Traks' body stocking aesthetic but departed from him in the approach to bodily movement, favoring instead a less angular, more fluid, more lyrical style. The Stuudio's first production, *Searches* (1982), consisted of Marceau-type solo "miniatures" in the first half and ensemble miniatures in the second half. One ensemble piece, *The Orchard*, depicted a group enslaved to mechanized life in a factory. One of the workers attempts to bring a liberating spirit to the environment by planting a tree. But the workers trample down the tree. The worker tries again, but the group again tramples it down and turns against him. This theme of the individual struggling against conformity and group unity continued in subsequent productions. A second program of miniatures appeared in 1983, and a third program, *Scrawls*, in 1985, in which the group still divided the program between solo and group miniatures, accompanied by the recorded music of Rachmaninov, Stravinsky, The Alan Parsons Project, and the Estonian Sven Grünberg. Typically Marceau-type solo miniatures included: The Conductor, The Train Passenger, Ladder, The Wall, Exhibition, Pardon Me, Surgeon. The second half brought a revival of *The Orchard* and another dark piece about oppressive collective behavior, *The Bird*, in which a boy meets a bird in a meadow. The boy imitates the bird and becomes friendly with it. But a group of people enters the meadow and stones the bird to death. The unhappy boy tries to resurrect the bird by performing the bird's movements. But he succeeds only in bringing back the group, which starts to stone him. The bird then comes back to life, and her movements summon a powerful storm that annihilates the group. The bird, however, dies, and the piece ends with the boy alone as an old man. Each year brought a new program: *Fairy Tales* (1986), *Satires* (1987). A second program in 1987, *Crisis*, presented for the first time a single scenario, with a highly abstract theme and music by the Greek composer of ambient, electro-fusion soundtracks Vangelis (b. 1943). The action represented the

birth of Fire (male) and Ice (female) and the ensuing conflict between them. The perfection of each and the reconciliation between them encounter persistent interruption and mutation from a trio of shadows or colors. The piece made frequent use of a swinging movement to signify a shared quality of Fire, Ice, and Shadow. *Passage* (1988) was another single scenario production, with music by easy rock composer Avo Ulvik (b. 1957). Here a religious theme prevailed, with allegorical figures: the Passerby, the Nameless One, the Blind Man, the Preying One, the Shadows. The Blind Man needs the help of others, needs a coat, and needs food. When he receives these things, he begins to feel he has power over others, and eventually he orders people to bring him rope, with which he orders the hanging of people. The Passerby appears, responding to a "calling" to become a savior. The Nameless One rings a bell, while the Blind Man attempts to stop the Passerby. When the Passerby seems to pass through a wall, the Blind Man slashes and blinds him. But the Blind Man dies, while the Passerby hangs like Christ on the Cross. The Shadows rapturously treat him as the new leader, replacing the Blind Man, but he simply falls down from the cross. Productions continued: *22.07* (1990), *Nightmare* (1991), with music by the experimental Estonian rock group Tunnetusüksus, a work of psychological symbolism involving a young man seeking a spell from a witch that will release him from demonic, nightmarish thoughts, a female fiend, and a wish to possess the soul of a girl he desires. Various demons assail the man: "a figure in white, a double-headed hawk, a grey old man with a black hat, a rabbit, an enormous fly, a naked man, an egg, a needle. The young man fears candlelight and fire." He cannot overcome his demons. For this production, Rebane divided the stage into sectors inhabited by various characters who never left their designated space, while the young man moved from one sector to the next, as if visiting a different zone of his psyche. *Three* (1990) featured three pieces including one in which a woman appears bound to a tree by the sea, with a soundtrack of crashing wave sounds mixed with "birth screams." People pass by the woman, a beggar, a tourist taking pictures, an effeminate man. An executioner arrives, offers her a cigarette, but she refuses. He unties her. But she laughs at him, because she has no interest in being free. The Stuudio's last production was *Chaos* (1991), a series of improvisations inspired by erotic poems and performed before a chessboard. The group had further productions planned: a pantomimic adaptation of the tragic

poem *The Demon* (1841) by Mikhail Lermontov (1814-1841), a program of pantomimic adaptations of stories by Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), and an adaptation of the long poem *The Comedy of Poverty* (1935) by Estonian poet Betti Alver (1906-1989). But the funding to support these ambitious, innovative projects failed to materialize, and by 1993, the Pantomiim- ja Plastikastuudio had vanished (Rebane 2017). The cultural press never reviewed any of the Stuudio's productions; people in the Estonian theater world refused to see any of the performances, because the ensemble lacked any official status. Rebane admitted that he and his colleagues were rather "shy" and not very efficient at promoting their productions. Yet the ensemble displayed a boldness of imagination in using pantomime to represent dark, psychological, sadomasochistic structures of power that Estonian society seriously underestimated.

In 1975, a theater student, Merle Karusoo (b. 1944) directed at Tartu University a "silent play," *Popi ja Huhuu*, an adaptation of a 1914 short story of the same name by Friedebert Tuglas (1886-1971). The story contains no dialogue or voices and adopts the dachshund Popi's perspective on the actions that unfold. Popi lives happily with his Master in an old house filled with relics from a long past. A monkey, Huhuu, lives in a cage. One day, however, the Master fails to come home and never returns. Huhuu escapes from his cage and begins transforming the house into a great, chaotic junkyard. He wears the human clothes from the wardrobe in an eccentric fashion and turns all the relics into toys that he casually discards or destroys. He torments Popi, but he also performs kind, generous actions toward the dog, who fears leaving the house because of the vicious dogs who attack him on the street. Eventually Popi considers Huhuu as his master, and Huhuu regards Popi as his obedient friend. Huhuu starts drinking the alcoholic beverages he finds and soon becomes a drunkard. Popi also becomes an alcoholic and the pair spends their days in an alcoholic stupor until Huhuu, fiddling around with a box, accidentally blows up the house (Tuglas 1982: 28-50). As seen in film documents of it, Karusoo's adaptation of the story entailed an absurdist performance style, with the actors Urmas Kibuspuu (1953-1985) and Lembit Peterson (b. 1953) moving about in an exaggerated, acrobatic style in an abstract set consisting mostly of boxes and platforms (*Popi ja Huhuu* Archive). In 2003, Estonian National Television broadcast a production of *Popi ja Huhuu* directed by Gerda Kordemets (b. 1960). Here the set was much more elaborate and

realistic; the actors attempted stylized simulations of traits associated with dogs or monkeys in contrast to the 1975 production, when Kibuspuu and Peterson performed more like wild, drug-addled humans. In the television production, the actors emit growls, barks, cries, although these are absent from Tuglas's story. Also missing from the television production was the sense of an immense transformation of the old, museum-like house into a crumbling junkyard. The story seems to require a larger pantomimic sense of the sadomasochistic relation between Popi and Huhuu rather than the more precise sense of their animal characteristics seen in the television production. In 2016, the Theatrumi Company staged a pantomimic adaptation of the story using puppets to represent the characters (*Popi ja Huhuu* Archive). The story makes an excellent subject for pantomimic performance, regardless of the political era in which it appears: A comfortable life, free from the viciousness of the world "outside," depends on a silent, animal-like, sadomasochistic relationship between a master and a submissive companion. Popi remains comfortable within the violent transformation of the house into a junk heap. But Popi and Huhuu can only sustain their sadomasochistic relationship through their (alcoholic) addiction to dreams, memories of a past they have destroyed. Huhuu's "freedom" leads to a momentous change in the environment without changing the fundamental, sadomasochistic condition in which a "comfortable" life is possible. Even if Estonian pantomimic adaptations of the story seem to fall short of the story's fascinating, disturbing insight, they nevertheless lead to a kind of allegorical awareness of relations between a "comfortable life," freedom, social transformation, and power dynamics that one does not find elsewhere.

Yet another Estonian ventured into pantomime. For a brief period, 1980-1982, Maret Kristal (b. 1943) presented a single program of pantomimes with considerable success. In 1967, she graduated from the Moscow State Circus School, where pantomime was strictly a minor adjunct to clown performance. In Estonia, she worked as an "Estrade" (concert stage) performer with the Estonian Philharmonic from 1969 to 1972. She then returned to Moscow to study directing for the concert stage and mass spectacles at the State Institute for Theater Arts. Back in Estonia, however, her life became unsteady as she frequently changed jobs and seemed unable to develop the career for which she had studied. In 1976, she entered into a relationship with the writer and editor Kalle Kurg (b. 1942), and they

occasionally shared an apartment in Tallinn that had two rooms entirely devoted to her costumes and rehearsal space, because she was unable to obtain space for them at a theater. Nevertheless, by 1978 she suffered an emotional crisis, believing that no one wanted her as a performing artist. In 1971, in the tower of the Kiek in de Kök in Tallinn, she produced her first evening-length solo performance, a *Dance of Death* inspired by the famous 1483 painting by Bernt Notke (1440-1509), but according to Kurg, the piece was not a pantomime, but a "movement production" containing pantomimic elements. Kristal wanted to perform pantomime, but was unsure how to construct ideas through physical action. Kurg, who was editor-in-chief of the prestigious literary journal *Looming*, knew many people in Estonian arts circles, and he helped arrange for Kristal to receive a contract from the Vanemuine Theater in Tartu to produce a pantomime. She was, however, still uncertain how to proceed. Wanting to escape the stress that had befallen him as a result of his editorial duties, Kurg took a leave of absence and went to Tartu to help Kristal. In conversation with Heili Einasto, he explained that he devised three scenarios for Kristal, took on the responsibility of directing the performances, and designed the stage setting. Though he wrote theater criticism, Kurg had no extensive knowledge of pantomime, and he had not pursued any ideas about pantomime with Traks or anyone else in the Estonian theater world. From his perspective, pantomime was a problem for the Soviet authorities, who felt ballet had long ago superseded pantomime and who also believed that pantomime was a "Jewish" phenomenon, an art imported from abroad that was alien to Soviet ideology: "a libel was created that the Jews of the USSR are dealing with pantomime, and do not know what it is, while the right people still deal with the classical ballet in the spirit of the Russian ballet" (Kurg 2017). But the stage director Kaarel Ird (1909-1986), the Artistic Director of the Vanemuine Theater was, according to Kurg, ready "to flirt with this" (Kurg 2017). Collaboration with Traks was apparently not an option for Kristal, who reportedly explained: "I cannot work with people who have studied under Traks. He breaks them. They are like machines and impossible to train" (Einasto 2002: 7). Kurg saw that Kristal possessed charisma on the stage; she could engage audience attention, yet she had difficulty establishing a strong motive for being on stage. Kurg also believed that Kristal did not know how to respond effectively to music: she couldn't count, she couldn't read music, and she didn't allow music to lead her to

imaginative forms of movement. She only knew a handful of movements, and it was difficult for her to move beyond this repertoire, so Kurg largely supervised the performance. The Vanemuine ballet dancers did not like working with her, because of their prejudices against pantomime and against improvisation—or more precisely, their prejudices against a person who had no ballet training. This seems like a case of pantomime nevertheless proceeding with almost no encouraging gestures, no sense of mastery of the medium, no powerful sense of purpose, and no feeling of confidence in constructing an entertainment for the public. Kurg fashioned for her a program of three pieces, *Mimeskid*, or *Mimesques*, which premiered at the Vanemuine Theater in Tartu in November 1981, with music written especially for the program by Lepo Sumera (1950-2000) and Sven Grünberg (b. 1956).

The first piece, *Light* (music: Grünberg), depicted a woman leading a blind man from darkness into light. She seeks to restore his trust in his "inner light," which will allow him to overcome his fear of becoming lost in darkness, though he also fears finding the light, for light destroys as much as it gives. They become separated and try to find each other in the darkness. But he is able to approach "absolute light," which enables him to restore trust between himself and darkness. The pair are able to go forward. The piece incorporated interesting lighting effects. When the woman was apart from the blind man, a soft light fell on her, but when they were together a hard spotlight shone on them. In the second piece, *Wreath Ballad* (music: Sumera), a girl, in a costume made to look like moss, weaves a wreath. Three sisters approach her and invite her to play with them. But the game soon turns violent and becomes a struggle for power with the goal of "dancing somebody to death." "Heaven crashes and swallows everything." The lyrical movements of the moss girl contrasted with the rigid, mechanical movements of the deadly sisters (Kristal Archive 1981, 2017). A photo in the Rahvusarhiiv (EFA 414 0-116554) of the piece shows the three sisters wearing chiton-like dresses in different colors and contemporary feminine footwear, although the moss chiton worn by the wreath girl, who here appears blindfolded, looks distinctly poorer than the sisters' dresses. Mari Kurismaa (b. 1956) designed the costumes. But it is evident that Kristal and Kurg wished to depart from the barefoot and body stocking aesthetic that prevailed with Traks, Ligers, and Tenisons. The final piece, generally regarded as the strongest, was *The Flight of a Migrating Bird* (music:

Grünberg), which showed the hatching of a bird from out of nothingness, out of an invisible egg. The bird discovers a "frightening but inviting world." The hatchling grows into a bird and struggles to raise herself into the air. A storm or "unspeakable invasion" approaches, which compels the bird to surge upward until finally she succeeds in flying into a great black emptiness. Blackness attaches to her body, but she pushes forward, pushes away the darkness until she reaches the a clear, white sky. It is an existential drama revealing the symbiotic relation between freedom and inevitability (Kristal Archive 1981), although Kurg had originally planned a darker ending, which, however, he felt might exacerbate his difficulties with Party cultural officials. A lighting technician told Kurg that it was possible to project onto the dark background a patch of blue light, which would then present on the stage the colors of the Estonian flag. Though this effect had nothing to do with the scenario, it did bestow a coded political significance on the story of moving from darkness to a liberating radiance. Kurg designed a special moving disk that contained light within it and rotated to simulate flight when the performer lay upon it, and he described *Mimesques* as a kinetic visual experience. The program attracted large and enthusiastic audiences, and played for two seasons at the Vanemuine Theater, before touring in Kaunas, Lithuania and Leningrad (1982), Belgium and Finland (1989). The program won first prize at the Moscow International Pantomime Festival in 1985. A graduate student, Anne Dieme, made (1985) a film of *Mimesques*, which appeared in theaters and then on Estonian television.

But neither Kristal nor Kurg moved their pantomime aesthetic beyond this initial success. They split in 1986. For Kristal, the success of *Mimesques* did not lead to any significant opportunities to work with any theatrical institutions or groups, perhaps because of her reputation for being "difficult" in collaboration. In 1988, she produced her own solo program, *Hingemaa*, which might be translated as *Breath of the Land*, a program of three pieces, *Unbreakable*, *Credo,* and *Debt*, with recorded music by Maurice Jarre (1924-2009), Alo Mattiisen (1961-1996), Arvo Pärt, and Jaan Rääts (b. 1932). The program was serious in tone, dealing with patriotic themes, with the reclaiming, through bodily performance, of a "sacred" ancestral ethnic heritage. As she explained to a reporter in Rakvere, these sacred "attitudes and feelings [...] cannot be abandoned: for their timeliness or awakening lullaby have wanted to take us. They are [the basis

of] human dignity and a sense of solidarity. They are communication between people and a sacred feeling that embraces the concepts of mother and fatherland" (*Maaleht* No. 42, 20 October 1988). Her costume was a diaphanous white gown or dalmatica, but for some parts she was barefoot. *Breath of the Land*, however, was a venture into modern dance, not pantomime. She performed the piece at an Estrade concert with the Philharmonic, at a church in Tartu, and at a theater and church in Rakvere. But the piece inspired hardly any commentary in the press. She next collaborated, in 1989, with the tapestry artist Pilvi Blankin-Salmin (b. 1955) in another nocturnal tower performance, *Sanctus,* in the Kiek in de Kök. The musical accompaniment was a combination of avant-garde soundscape and New Age synthesizer melodies by Jüri Vood (b. 1947). In this piece, Kristal, barefoot, wore a crude burlap top, skirt, and headband to incarnate an archaic, pagan Estonian woman. The action is pantomimic. In the video made of the piece, the woman nervously, cautiously enters an iron cage draped with ropes and covered with a large cross made of tree branches. She raises the cross and lifts herself out of the cage. But when she stands the cross up, she becomes frightened and releases the cross, as if experiencing a seizure. She moves convulsively through various corners of the medieval tower walls, where hang Blankin-Salmin's tapestry images of ancient times. She touches the images and even enters one image, as if passing through a curtain. Eventually, though, she returns to the cross, lifts it, cradles it, lays it down, then mimes scooping water, drinking it, and pouring it on herself. She gazes up at the night sky with an expression of anticipation and anxiety. She reaches for a large white cloth lying on a table and fashions a long, flowing wimple to cover her head. Her movements become voluptuous. She takes a black cloth and another white cloth from the table and lays them like an X over the cross, which she then lifts, cradles, dances with, and brings to one of the tapestry images. But the piece ends with her holding her arms upward on the branches of the cross, with an imploring gaze into the night sky. She appears disappointed, however. Her arms drop, her body slumps, and her gaze droops downward sadly to the earth (Torninäitus 1989). In *Sanctus*, the female body functions as a repository of archaic, ancestral history. But the piece also presents an intensely lonely image of Woman. She enters as if fleeing some horror; she enters the cage as if seeking protection; she tries to find comfort with the cross, with the images; and she seeks some encouraging sign from the sky.

But in the end, both paganism and Christianity have left her completely alone, utterly abandoned. It is quite a tragic scene, and Kristal's charismatic aura is strongly evident. Yet she was unable to build upon even this mysterious production. She did some freelance work in cabarets for a while, then visited Canada and Finland in search of opportunities. In 1996, in Estonia again, she formed an amateur dance group, Crystal, with nine high school students. The purpose of the group was to recover ancient Estonian incantations and combine them with modern dance. Estonians, she explained, carry a "stone of hope," which creates "the heavy walk of the people of this land." She claimed that pop rhythms are incompatible with Estonian identity. But after two years, Crystal ceased to exist, and Kristal ceased to create any more performances (Kristal Archive 1988).

Meanwhile, after the Tartu performance of *Mimesques*, Kurg returned to his busy literary life. In addition to his increasing responsibilities at *Looming*, he published numerous poems, poetry anthologies, stories, and essays related to literature, media, and ecology. In the early 1990s, he assumed administrative duties for Estonian Television, launched a cultural journal, and then became the editorial chief for a couple of publishing houses until in 2000 he decided to become a freelance writer. In 1986, he wrote a children's play, *A Sailboat in a Bottle*, performed before the Tallinn City Hall; it contained some pantomime scenes performed by Kristal. Otherwise, Kurg never returned to pantomime, although he remained open to further ventures if potential collaborators had appeared. In the early 1990s, he became involved with Estonian National Radio's program of broadcasting the reading of literary works on the ERR's Midnight Program. *Mimesques* was not a project that Kurg wanted to do; he did it as a favor to Kristal, and he would not have done anything in pantomime if not for her. Together they created an exciting program of pantomimes. But they also showed that one could create serious, compelling pantomime without the rigorous training associated with Decroux and his disciples. Their approach to pantomime differed radically from Traks, who insisted on prolonged exercise to prepare actors for performance. But in one respect, the relation between Kurg and Kristal was similar to the relation between Traks and his overwhelmingly female ensembles. Women performers drove Estonian pantomime insofar as they were searching for new ways to make their bodies expressive. But they depended on men to construct the narratives that released and justified this

new expressiveness. Female desire required a place in a male story. When Kristal tried to frame her desire within her own stories in *Hingemaa* and *Sanctus*, she could not strengthen or even find her place within Estonian culture. *Sanctus* revealed how terribly alone "Estonian Woman" is when telling her own story in pantomime. Yet Traks had no story to tell without the women, and Kurg, though he possessed a pantomimic imagination, much preferred to tell stories that did not depend on the reality of the female body in performance. Pantomime disappeared from Estonia when the country became independent in 1991, perhaps because independence meant that both men and women were free from the need to tell such "silent," tragic stories that culminated in *Sanctus*.





Figure 112: Top: Scene from the "Wreath Ballad" section of *Mimeskid* (*Mimesques*), directed by Kalle Kurg, Vanemuine Theater Tartu, Estonia, 1981, with Maret Kristal, Sirre Oengo, Mare Tommingas, Jelena Tšaulina. Photo: FOTIS, Rahvusarhiivi. Bottom: Maret Kristal in *Sanctus*, performed in the Kiek in de Kök, Tallinn, 1989, left: as pagan woman, right, as Christian woman with wimple. Photos: from "Torninäitus" video directed by Tiina Pork in ERR Arhiiv.

Gendered Perspectives on Modernist Pantomime

Irene Mawer

Ever since the eighteenth century, women in Western civilization were far less likely than men to pursue artistic ambitions through pantomime, even though the silent film era and the early modern solo dance programs showed all the same that pantomime was no less "female" than it was "male." Nevertheless, assumptions about fundamental differences between the sexes synonymous with childish superstitions pervaded Western consciousness and encouraged a kind of gendering of the arts whereby, in the realm of voiceless performance, women overwhelmingly preferred to dance while men, if they must be "silent" in performance, perceived that they encountered much less risk of becoming "feminized" if they ventured instead into pantomime. Pierrot and the teachings of Decroux reinforced rather than challenged these peculiar assumptions in the twentieth century. As is evident by now, women rarely controlled the production and content of pantomime, in contrast to the situation in modern dance, where women largely shaped the history of the art. Annette Lust (1924-2013), herself a mime, devoted a chapter to "Women's Voices [sic!] in Mime" in her book *From Greek Mimes to Marcel Marceau and Beyond* (2000), but mostly she only identified women she knew who were in the mime business. The chapter gives the impression that women, too, can be clowns in the Pierrot/Marcel Marceau tradition, and Lust does not situate women in any larger context for pantomime than the small scale, usually solo, comic-clown sketches promoted by the postwar mime culture descended from Marceau (Lust 2000: 237-259). However, the history of pantomime includes a few women with ambitions for the art that have gone beyond finding a place within the clown paradigm.

In 1932, an English poet-actor, Irene Mawer (?-1963) published *The Art of Mime*, a book written primarily for teachers responsible for high school theatricals. Mawer had performed professionally in vaudeville

pantomimes from the early 1910s. She appeared in a *commedia* pantomime, *Et puis bonsoir*, written by Ruby Ginner (1886-1978), which had an all-female cast, with Ginner playing Pierrot and Mawer as Harlequin. Ginner's great passion was reviving what she understood, on the basis of archeological and literary evidence, as ancient Greek dance, and she published a book on this subject in 1933, *The Revived Greek Dance*, which had the same publisher as Mawer's book a year earlier. In 1915, the two women formed a school, The Ginner-Mawer School of Drama and Dance, the purpose of which was to affirm "that a system of normal, sanely-balanced movement is necessary, as a counter-influence to the neurotic tendencies of the present age" (Ginner 1933: 14). Ginner and Mawer had studied elocution under the prominent voice specialist Elsie Fogerty (1865-1945) and had appeared in the chorus for Fogerty's productions of ancient Greek tragedies in 1902 and 1904. Through Fogerty, Ginner and Mawer became (1918) involved in the Stratford Summer Season run by the actor-manager Frank Benson (1858-1939), and, in 1919, Mawer choreographed the chorus for Benson's production of Euripides *The Trojan Women*, in which she and Ginner also performed; the production later moved to the West End (Macintosh 2010a: 200-203; Macintosh 2011: 50). Ginner's pedagogy focused primarily on choral movement in the Greek style. The aim of Greek choric movement was to produce an idealized image of the female body that would protect women, mentally, emotionally, and physically, from the manifold "harms" of twentieth century life, although Ginner's rhetoric resembled that of the "Grecian dance" advocate Genevieve Stebbins back in the 1890s. But Mawer declared in 1960 that, "I was not then, and never have been, a dancer" (Purkis 2011: 78). Her focus was pantomime; she and Ginner performed the three-act *L'Enfant prodigue* (1890) repeatedly (1922, 1929, 1934), with Ginner playing Father Pierrot and Mawer constructing a very androgynous-looking Pierrot (Mawer 1932: 152, 162). In 1925, she published a book of poems on ancient Greek themes, *The Dance of Words*, which also contained numerous photographs of ancient Greco-Roman monuments and artworks and of young women in *palli* performing movements inspired by the poems or the artworks. The book asserted that the unique "word-rhythms" of the poems, when spoken aloud, would urge the pantomimic performers to move in unique ways, and she provided notes that indicated how specific poems implied particular movements of the body (Mawer 1925: 87-101). But Mawer did not mean that the performer "translated" the words

of the poem into an "equivalent" movement; rather, unique word-rhythms awakened in the body movement rhythms that were otherwise inaccessible. The idea was to tap an archaic, buried source of poetic rhythm that informed both the writing of poetry and the movement of the body. As Charlotte Purkis explains: "Combining dance and words seemed to be for her part of that Dionysian state of perpetual becoming which she thought was the essence of an artist. The meaning and purpose of poetry for Mawer was not merely utilitarian. Poetry is not just to be danced to or a reflection of the dance in words. Rather, poetry becomes a form of inscription: writing 'on', and 'as', dance" (2011: 80).

Yet in *The Art of Mime*, Mawer described pantomime largely as a matter of translating words into movements. She devotes the first half of the book mostly to an overview of pantomime history, which she integrates with the histories of various Asian theaters, *commedia dell'arte*, lithurgical drama, and clowns. In the second half, she discusses various techniques and numerous exercises by which a teacher of pantomime can guide students to achieve expressive control over their bodies. The use of the hands is of primary importance, for the "mime must use [...] gesture, not as some strange language, learnt with difficutly and delivered with care, but as if he knew no other way to speak the urgent message of his mind and heart" (Mawer 1932: 132-133). Yet Mawer does treat pantomime as mostly a "language" that one must learn by practicing repeatedly the many exercises that fill the second half of the book. She includes numerous examples of "phrases" that the mime must perfect in developing a gestural vocabularly: "I beseech you"; "I refuse you"; "I love you"; "Will you marry me?"; "You and I"; You go over there"; "You come here" (145). Mawer moves on to discuss the vocabularization of other body parts and the exercises appropriate to achieving mastery in the use of the parts. But she saw pantomime as the performance of actions, not the performance of specific movements. Each student had to develop her own "vocabulary" of gestures, her own way of signifying with her hands, "I beseech you." Mawer provided sensible exercises for getting the student to think about how to use a part of the body to signify an emotion, an idea, or a character trait. The hands, for example, should reveal the social class, occupation, moral quality, and age of the character. Even so, the exercises served to place pantomimic action within an implicit anti-modernist cultural code that Mawer never questioned and with which she assumed pantomime was complicit. Like

most teachers of mime, she avoided theorizing relations between action and narrative: she regarded actions as discrete "phrases" one learned by heart so that they could be inserted into a narrative conceived by someone other than the teacher or student. But her notions about pantomimic vocabulary applied to ideas about pantomimic narrative that she had inherited at the beginning of the twentieth century. Indeed, in 1933, when she published her anthology of *Twelve Mime Plays*, all of the scenarios dated from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Into the 1930s Ginner and Mawer presented productions of revived Greek dancing and pantomimes in London's Hyde Park, Regents Park, and Royal Albert Hall (1936) as part of their public campaign to present an ideal of young womanhood that resisted the corrupting influence of modernism. In 1936, Mawer designed costumes for a program of comic pantomimes on mythological themes, performed by an all-female cast, at the Vaudeville Theater, and she wrote one of the four pieces, *The Flood*, in which she played Noah (Wearing 2014: 536). But these were pantomimes that might have appeared in a Parisian salon of the 1890s. Although Ginner and Mawer were radical feminists at the time of World War I, Fiona Macintosh (2010b: 25) has observed that "Ginner's idealized, physically perfect dancing Greek, who lived in harmony with nature, was dangerously close to the Aryan ideal of Nazi ideology," and something similar could be said about Mawer's claims regarding the racial-ethnic origins of pantomime and pantomime semiotics. Her pantomime aesthetic, old-fashioned long before the 1930s, could not survive in the postwar cultural scene, and in the 1950s she could not find a publisher for her book on the relation between poetry and dance, for her understanding of the poetic never outgrew her youthful infatuation with an *art nouveau* idealization of the decorative. For her, pantomime was the sign of a reverence for a mythic past, for the ancient world as glamorized by the refined milieu she inhabited as a girl.

Angna Enters

Another woman, however, American Angna Enters (1897-1989), fashioned a pre-World War II pantomime aesthetic that did survive well into the postwar era. She was born and grew up in Milwaukee and New Berlin, Wisconsin. An only child, she spent much of her time reading history and art books, and she studied design at a Milwaukee Teachers College; she designed sets for the Wisconsin Players. In 1919, she moved to

New York City to study at the Art Students League, where she was a student of John Sloan (1871-1951), who subsequently did several portraits of her and numerous sketches of her mime characters. An ardent student of art history, she believed that the greatest art was figurative, and she began to study dance because she thought that movement would give greater life to the figures she wished to draw and paint. She briefly (1921-1922) studied and performed with the Japanese dancer Michio Ito (1892-1961), who was friendly with the Irish poet W. B. Yeats (1865-1939), but Ito's efforts to fuse elements of Japanese Noh drama with dance evocations of Yeats' symbolic-mystical poetry were remote from her own ambitions, and she realized that Ito was not able to teach her pantomime (Enters 1944: 107-119). For a while she lived in poverty and had to pawn heirlooms to fund her first public performances of pantomime, in 1924, in a Greenwich Village revue including ballet pieces and comic scenes by other performers (158-160). Enters found work as a commercial illustrator, but she quit the job, when in 1926, she produced her own evening program of solo pantomimes. The success of the program led to an invitation to perform in London and then to tour the United States. Until the 1960s, she performed programs entirely of solo pantomimes, touring the United States fourteen times, visiting not only all major American cities, but many small and medium-sized towns, such as Albuquerque, Grand Rapids, and El Centro; colleges, women's social clubs, and civic community centers invited her to perform. President Roosevelt invited her to perform at the White House in 1940. She performed in Paris in 1929, but although she spent much of the 1930s traveling throughout Europe after receiving Guggenheim grants, she did not perform again in Europe until 1950, when she appeared in London, and 1951, when the State Department sponsored her visits to Paris and West Berlin. She constantly created new scenes inspired by her relentless traveling, and over forty years, she constructed, she claimed, at least 250 pantomime characters.

But her artistic energies extended well beyond pantomime. Her drawings and paintings also attracted a large audience. She had regular gallery exhibitions in New York, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Los Angeles County Art Museum acquired works by her. But she was herself the subject of many artworks by others, including John Sloan, Walt Kuhn (1877-1949), photographer Francis Bruguière (1879-1945), photographer Doris Ulmann (1882-1934), and

sculptor Gutzon Borglum (1867-1941), the designer of the Mount Rushmore monument. Enters was also a prodigious writer: she published (1937, 1944, 1958) three volumes of autobiography drawn from her enormous diary-journal. Her memoir *The Silly Girl* (1944) was a bestseller, which the MGM movie studio planned to turn into a film, with Enters as one of the screenwriters. The film was never made, but she worked on the screenplays for two other films and supervised the *commedia* scene in the movie *Scaramouche* (1952). She published a monumental play, *Love Possessed Juana* (1939), about political intrigue in the early sixteenth century Royal Court of Spain, for which she wrote the music and designed the projections for its performance, in 1946, at the Houston Little Theater, which then staged her next play, *The Unknown Lover* (1947) (Enters 1958: 297-300; 321). In 1955, she published a long novel about an artistic girl growing up in a mid-western city, *Among the Daughters*. In the early days of television, she performed some of her mime pieces, but the single recording of any of her performances is a 1959 half-hour film, *Drawn from Life*, which presents her in only three humorous scenes and is in any case extremely difficult to access. When she began teaching at various colleges in the 1960s, she published her lectures *On Mime* (1965), an insightful book that further revealed her gift for pedagogic innovation. In addition to her fame as a stage performer, Enters knew a great many famous artists and people in the entertainment industry, which made her an appealing guest on radio talk shows, and her image appeared in popular magazines like *Vogue* and *Life*. Yet she was a solitary person. In her profuse autobiographical writings, she did not disclose any romantic attachments nor even a sense of close, intense friendship with anyone. In 1921, she met the arts journalist Louis Kalonyme (?-1961), but did not begin dating him until 1924. He wrote a favorable review of her first solo performance evening in *The Arts* magazine (Kalonyme 1926: 278-279), and around 1930 he gave up his own career to become her concert manager and publicist. They apparently married in Spain in 1936, but he did not want it known that they were married to make it easier for them to live largely separate lives (Cocuzza 1980: 94). After Kalonyme's death, Enters became the live-in companion of the widowed and invalid film director and producer Albert Lewin (1894-1968), a longtime friend, who asked her to marry him, but she refused. After his death, she lived alone in New York City.

Enters performed only programs of solo pantomimes that displayed the diversity of her characterizations. For her first set of pantomimes in 1924, she had wanted to collaborate with the black bass singer Paul Robeson (1898-1976), much against the advice of her friends, but Robeson himself bowed out because of throat irritation (Enters 1944: 219-220). Subsequently, she did not interact with anyone else in the performance of her pantomimes. A program usually consisted of eleven to thirteen pantomimes lasting an hour to an hour and a half, with each "episode" lasting four to seven minutes. Even by 1930, she had so many pieces in her repertoire that she could perform different programs in different places or even in the same place without difficulty, and audiences were always aware that she had "characters" that they had not seen. She described many of her "compositions" in some detail in *First Person Plural* (1937) and *An Artist's Life* (1958). Distinctive and often elaborate costumes were essential to her characterizations, and she designed them all herself. Because she could not afford a fulltime "maid," she hired assistants at each hotel in which she stayed to assist her with the numerous quick costume changes she had to make with each performance. She employed different kinds of props and furniture pieces like small tables, chairs, a couch, or a stepladder, but otherwise the scenic context consisted mostly of a spotlight focused on her. Music was always piano accompaniment, which she modified to accommodate her actions or movements; she did not move to the music, which brought criticism from dancers that she was not a dancer (Enters 1944: 233-234). She used a wide range of music, including popular music, which was very rare in dance concerts of the 1920s and 1930s, and was utterly unique in using in performance by a white woman music by a black composer, Nathaniel Dett (1882-1943). Her piece *Dance of Death* (1924), however, had no musical accompaniment at all. But while the musical accompaniment was a major component of the performance and required extensive collaboration and rehearsal, Enters avoided discussing her accompanists in any detail. Early in her career, Madeleine Marshall (1900-1993), who started teaching at Juilliard in 1935, was Enters' accompanist beginning in 1926, but her own ambitions as an accompanist compelled Enters to rely on other accompanists for her prodigious tours, and Marshall's "loyal association" to Enters "endured to this day rather as a collaboration of friendship than of performers" (Enters 1958: 22). Yet Enters never described this collaboration or friendship beyond these words. All but

a few of her characterizations were of women. One of her most popular characters was *The Boy Cardinal* (1924), a "fantasy," a "commentary on the politics, casuistries, manners, and oppressions of such a cardinal-premier as Richelieu." The music was a song from the historical era, "and this was the only time in my theatre career that I worked with a second person on the stage, a singer who stood off toward the wings" (the scene that she wanted Robeson to perform with her). "As the words were sung, the figure of my composition enacted the gruesome story with hands, shoulders, and eyes" (30-31). But in subsequent performances, Enters used a piano arrangement of *paso doble* [Figure 113]. In *Le Petit Berger* (1924), with music by Debussy, she played a shepherd boy aroused from drowsing by something speeding by him. "The flow of pose into movement was a 'natural' abstraction of expression and gesture into a rhythmic pattern, without dance steps" (24). *David Dances before the Ark* (1934), a "vision of David in his grave dance of exultation" and a project that "persisted" with her, was difficult to realize because she couldn't find the right musical accompaniment, a combination of Byzantine and Hebraic chants. In *Mr. Mozart Has Breakfast* (1938), she impersonated Mozart, in nightgown and nightcap, composing music "between bites of roll and sips of coffee," accompanied by his own music, but she did not keep the piece in the repertoire because concert houses provided her only with an anachronistic modern grand piano for Mozart to play (183). *The Grand Inquisitor* (1939) showed her as a sixteenth century Spanish official tormenting a figure bound to a stake, but this piece, too, did not remain long in her repertoire because it required that she hire a union stage worker to assist her (183). She also did a composition called *The Effeminate Young Man* (1934), depicting a seventeenth century French courtier, "feminine in dress and behavior," one of "the most dangerous rivals the ladies had for masculine affections." The costume was elaborate: "gray velvet trimmed with silver and loops of variegated velvet ribbons in rose, mauve, several shades of blue, and green. The full lace-trimmed blouse is white and the sleeves are tied with cerise and golden bows. The white frilled trousers over pink calves—and the slippers almond green" (109). *A Modern Totalitarian Hero* (1937) "is a gas-masked, strutting and preening figure in a fantastically over-decorated uniform." She used a "rose as a symbol of the arts and the decencies of human existence. It is against the rose that [the] totalitarian, somehow effeminate, hero wreaks his vengeance, after pricking himself during an oversentimental orgy of

appreciation in the best Wagnerian *yo-ho-to-ho* ecstatics in celebration of the flower's beauty" (156-157). Otherwise, her vast repertoire of characterizations was female.

Enters created her characters by reading history books and magazine articles, by looking at paintings, by observing people as she saw them on the street, in cafes, or in various abodes, and by fantasizing about herself. Unlike many mimes, she did not depend on literary works, musical compositions, or theatrical performances to feed her imagination. Her pantomime programs combined serious and comic compositions. Many characterizations were imaginary historical figures, not figures who actually lived or whose portraits artists had painted, but she herself as she might have lived in an earlier time. One of her most famous and enduring works in this vein was *Moyen Age* (1924), with music by Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643), in which "the problem I set for myself was to tell of the Crucifixion, Adoration and Annunciation in a stylized union of movement, costume, lighting, and music—an attempt to convey the spirit of the life celebrated by Giotto, Fra Angelico and other primitives [...]" (Enters 1958: 24). The costume changed over the years from a stone-chiseled, gray-white look to a more pliant vermillion wool gown with a gilt crown. Enters constructed several other religious characters: *Queen of Heaven* (1926), depicting "a woman of the time of Thomas Aquinas, in whose worship of Mary would be mirrored the worship of the age." "She sat—her knees wide apart—as though holding the world in her lap." The music was a piano arrangement of a song by Gautier de Coincy (1177-1236); *Flemish Saint* (1931), with hymn music from the fifteenth century, presented the saint as "she passes delicately and almost impersonally on her way to martyrdom." "Her gown is of Vermeer green and navy blue velvet," along with a white veil (84); *Auto-da-fé* (1931), "a composition of the pursuit and persecution until her death at the stake of one whose heresy is that she is Jewish." Costume: a dark gray gown, with a red circle on her breast, "the symbol of Jewishness." Music: a Spanish tune with an intensifying drumbeat that ceases when she falls from the stake (84); *Flesh-Possessed Saint—Red Malaga* (1936), accompanied by the *Malaguena* tune, depicted a lust-tormented nun at the time of the Spanish Civil War; *Ikon Byzantine* (1932) with music by Mussorgsky, showed the movement of a female figure in a costume of dark red, fresco blue, and gold, "carefully spaced as though in self-explanatory symbols" (86); *Inquisition Virgin* (1929), with Mozarabic chant, was "a

constant reminder that the Queens of Spain 'have no legs'." Her scepter was a symbol of judgment rather than compassion" (64). But many historical scenes were secular: *Pavana* (1929), a medieval fresco with drumbeat requiring a complex costume—black velvet, gold embroidery, wine-colored shoes with aquamarine jewels, black gloves, jeweled and "studded with nailheads to resemble armor"; *Heptameron* (1927) depicted a *femme galante* from the sixteenth century and the "freedom of the women of the court [of Francis I], their participation in dueling, the hunt, and the excessive dances [...] deplored by the less worldly" (38); *Mme. Pompadour—Solitaire 1900* (1936) was "a kind of reverse strip-tease," showing a "woman of the gas-lit early 1900s, discovered just after she has stepped from a tub preparatory to a long toilette." "It is characteristic of the woman of this composition that, at last, ready, but with nothing to do, she should play solitaire—and cheat herself" (142). Some compositions evoked ancient Greece: *Sapphic* (1926) "revealed a Greek woman occupied in the sunlight with the movement suggested to her by a Sapphic strophe. [...] She walked in counterpoint to [the] strophe" (33-34); *Cassandra* (1935) presented the doomed prophetess; *Pagan Greece* (1933), an "experimental cycle" of nine scenes, depicted various female figures from Greek mythology, comic and tragic, and culminating with the glorification of Athena, the Goddess of Wisdom (99-101). Some compositions explored exoticism: *Ishtar* (1936), who, luxuriously dressed, "fans away flies with the horsetail"; *Isis-Mary* (1936), an "Egypto-Greco-Roman fantasy," in which "Isis merges into Mary" (130); *Odalisque* (1926), one of her "most frequently requested compositions," "disclosed an odalisque [...] awakening from sleep with languorous animal stretchings and amorous rehearsals of a few half-awakened moments. She then relaxes into a drowsy state of a hot Oriental afternoon. The general motif was one of remembered pleasure." Enters performed the entire scene on a bed (Enters 1958: 36; Enters 1965: 76-78). *Second Empire. Entr'acte 1860—Rendezvous* (1927) was "a dance of the eyes," showing how a woman greeted different persons on the street and culminating with her "picking her way through the dark side streets of Paris, her face concealed, on the way to an intimate meeting. Her walk epitomized the furtiveness ladies had to show" (Enters 1958: 34). Enters regarded *Harlot's Progress* (1943) as one of her best compositions but was unable to perform it more than once because of the high cost of scene changes. The piece, another cycle, dramatized "the evolution of a young 'Lorette'—or street girl—of the 1830s through

successive stages as courtesan to *haute monde* marriage and social position" (245).



Figure 113: Left: Angna Enters as *The Boy Cardinal* (1924). Right: Angna Enters in *Heptameron* (1927). Photos: Enters (1937).

Enters presented some scenes drawn from contemporary life: *Société Anonyme* (1932) satirized the intellectual cult that formed around Man Ray, Katherine Dreier, and Marcel Duchamp in New York during the 1920s with their celebration of "the neoclassical fads of the moment in interior decoration, 'health' movements, sun worship, and the 'Pure Dance,' then still modernistic-machine-abstract," embodied by a "kind of Artemis clad in white pajamas" riding on a merry-go-round hobby horse. The accompaniment consisted of "movie 'Indian' music," Arthur Honegger's *Pacific 231* (1923), and carousel tunes played on a phonograph (85). *Hollywood Horror Story* (1942) "presented a study of what could happen to a girl, susceptible to glib encouragement [from "I'll make you a star" scoundrels in the movie industry], in the space of morning, noon, and night" (244). Her liberal, intensely anti-fascist political views, violently stirred by her dismay at the damage done by the Spanish Civil War to a country she obviously loved, led her to infuse some of her 1930s

compositions with political attitudes that went beyond the anti-clericalism of her religious pieces. *A Modern Totalitarian Hero* has already been mentioned, but it was the first of a three-part cycle that included *Japan—"Defends"—Itself!* (which showed a defenseless Chinese peasant hiding from bombs dropped on a field) and *London Bridge Is Falling Down* (1937), which showed Britannia, "in peerage robes," placating "warring factions" that parade before her. In *Wiener Blut* (1939), accompanied by a Strauss waltz, "a German student, summoned by an ominous knocking at the door, which she knows is the Gestapo come to take her to a Concentration Camp, burns the thesis on which she has been working" (196-197). *Crackpot Americana* (1940) satirized the "cults of Ku Klux Klan in all forms, [and the] oversentimentalization of 'back home on the farm,' Mom, etc." (197), while *Deutschland Ueber Alles* (1936) satirized the "ardor with which masses of women regard *Der Fuehrer*," which "is in itself an extraordinary display of physical release" (143).

Her comic compositions often satirized the vanity and carelessness of young artistic women. In her "piano music" scenes, she sat at the piano and performed pieces that revealed "all those little human things which illuminate her as imprisoned in her restlessness [...] overdramatizing herself into a foreordained climax" (33). *In Pursuit of Art* (1926) depicted a woman trying to find "self-expression" by playing avant-garde music but ends up sinking into "self-pity" by playing Beethoven's "Pathetique" sonata. *Tristan* (1928) presented a woman, a music student, attending a Wagner opera with a man, another music student. The man is seen entirely through the woman, "her arrival with the music score, her excitement in being with him, and in her doing the wrong things in an effort to please him," and her realization at the end that "she is not the ideal Isolde" (46). *Narcissism* (1930) showed a female city worker "returning from her daily work" and playing a phonograph record of "Dream Lover" (1929), sung by Rudy Vallee (1901-1986). "Through his singing she takes on a new beauty in her own eyes, which carries the composition to a macabre end," for "only by the slight exaggeration of an impulse, human character will swerve from normal to abnormal" (72). Enters disliked modernist abstract painting, and she made fun of it in several compositions, such as *Dilly Dally—Ah Sweet Mystery of Life!* (1942), in which a painter, dressed in a ballet tutu, paints her canvas as if it were a violin resting on her arm and the brush in her other hand is like a violin bow. The artist, "inspired by her face in the

mirror," paints her own portrait, which, "when unveiled to the audience is that ultimate of abstraction—nothing." Yet Enters became disconcerted when audience members asked to purchase the paintings she made during the performance. *Figures in Moonlight—Danse Macabre No. 2* (1935) displayed Enters' taste for the grotesque. Harlequin, on top of a stepladder, strums a guitar to his beloved Colombine, represented by a dressmaker's dummy, who remains utterly indifferent to him. "He stabs her, and from her dress-form heart come ribbons of blood, with which he strangles himself" (130). Darker still, though popular at women's colleges, was *Aphrodisiac—Green Hour* (1929), inspired by Enters' observations of women on the Friedrichstrasse in Berlin, which "dealt with the moments of a prostitute [in black velvet dress and black, ostrich feather hat with "poisonous" green gloves] at a café, during business hours, and was designed to communicate that death which is contrived in life"—thus, "a composition based on the *movement*, the expressionless expressions, the sentimentality, the dance in the life of [...] unsuccessful women" (45-46).

Enters produced many other compositions as well as humorous dances, but after 1943, she ceased to create any new compositions. Her popular programs from the 1940s to the early 1960s contained mostly pieces she had first performed in the late 1920s and early 1930s. She was the most distinctive pantomimist in the United States until the vogue for French mime culture took hold in the 1970s. She herself believed that the *commedia* format had stunted the development of French pantomime and created characters that existed only in the theater (53), whereas she created her characters by looking outside the theater, by finding herself in history, by enacting the behavior of people as she witnessed it. Her pedagogy, as inscribed in *On Mime*, emphasized to students this need to observe and to imagine movements rather than to encode them through relentless exercise. She stressed the importance of narrating through action rather than identifying movements that displayed the student's control over her body: action was subordinate to characterization, whereas in dance characterization was subordinate to movement, a distinction that caused dancers to regard her as something like a freak, although she herself did not always make a clear distinction between dance and pantomime. She was the modern incarnation of an ancient Roman pantomime, a solo performer metamorphosing into the multitude of historic and contemporary identities inhabiting her body. "Mime is a lonely art," she wrote, "for the mime works

in a solitary world inhabited by phantoms which take only transient physical form through him" (Enters: 1965: 125). The mime "is a lonely figure in whom neither the audience nor the figures of their imagination have any interest. [...] To me, the realization of this loneliness is an asset, for it provides a sense of that isolation in which one is free to abandon oneself to the expression of those images with which one is obsessed" (129). But neither her performances nor her itinerant teachings produced any significant efforts to compete with her. She remains alone in the history of American pantomime, because she was not afraid to be alone. In the postwar era, mimes were afraid to be alone. They needed to belong to a community built out of a shared image of pantomime; they needed to belong to a school, to a system, to a shared set of practices and disciplined training, to the mime culture, to the French idea of mime as the discovery within oneself of a fundamental, existential, or "absolute" Pierrot, who is the antithesis of the metamorphosing body.

Women Students of Decroux

The French mime culture that displaced the concept of pantomime in the Cold War era attracted numerous women to study under Decroux, Marceau or Lecoq, but many of the women who subsequently achieved distinction in the performing arts did not work in pantomime, such as stage director Ariane Mnouchkine (b. 1939), movie star Jessica Lange (b. 1949), or German dancer Karin Waehner (1924-1999), who decided that neither Decroux nor Marceau provided the right path for her and decided to return to the expressionist dance aesthetic encouraged by her first teacher, Mary Wigman (Waehner 1997: 313-314). Female alumni from the Parisian schools have achieved distinction primarily as mime educators rather than as pantomime artists, such as Corrine Soum (b. 1956), who, with Steve Wasson (b. 1950), another student of Decroux, established in 1984 the Theatre de la Ange Fou, which moved from Paris to London in 1995 and then in 2010 to Spring Green, Wisconsin, where the company has transformed a 1902 church into a school and theater (The White Church Theatre Project). Soum has reconstructed (1994) several of Decroux's pieces, and she and Wasson have directed numerous productions with their students, although some of these productions, inspired by fairy tales or European literary works, are not pantomimes, but examples of the exaggerated "physical theater" that has become entangled with the concept of "postdramatic

theater" as Hans-Thiess Lehmann (2006) has defined it, such as *A Strange Day for Mr. K* (2015), "a playful collision of Franz Kafka and Buster Keaton." But the Theatre de la Ange Fou and the White Church Theatre Project constitute above all a school whose main business is the provision of workshops and training programs on corporeal mime (White Church Theatre Project 2016).

Similarly, Claire Heggen, a student of Decroux, formed with Yves Marc the Théâtre du Mouvement in 1975 based in the Parisian suburb of Montreuil. They proclaim that, "Etienne Decroux's approach towards a corporeal and dramatic actor occupies the highest place in our affective references. He opened the way for a theatrical genre beyond the verb where poetic formalization has as much if not more importance than narration," for as Decroux said: "It is not a question of movement conveying poetry, but of movement itself being poetic" (Théâtre du Mouvement 2018). Heggen and Marc constantly give workshops and "conferences" on corporeal mime both in Montreuil and at many academic institutions. But Théâtre du Mouvement is also a production company that attracts artists from a variety of backgrounds (as well as Decroux adepts) to give performances of almost annual regularity of what the company regards as "research projects" to demonstrate some principle of poetic movement. In the 1970s and early 1980s, their productions consisted entirely of solos and duos of an abstract nature; as a duo they wore identical costumes and often performed the same movements in synchrony or created a symmetrical bodily architecture, as in *Mutants* (1975), in which, wearing body stockings that cover their heads, they perform "a fiction reinventing the creation of man and woman from primordial chaos. Starting from an amorphous ball, they intersect and show through the poetics of the movement different animal, aquatic, aerial and terrestrial body states up to standing human" (Théâtre du Mouvement Archive). The body stocking was a default costume in the early years, but from the beginning Heggen had an attachment to masks and puppets that she never abandoned. She and Marc came up with the idea, in *La Récréation* (1972), of attaching several masks to the body and then moving the body to convey the impression of several alien characters living off of a dark, ectoplasmic blob that the viewer will, eerily and disconcertingly, perceive is a human body. The body stockings disappeared in favor of a kind of eccentric street-clothes image, but the masks changed from aliens to recognizable animals, perhaps to appeal to the children who

were their prime audience in the 1990s. Since 2000, Théâtre du Mouvement productions have emphasized the "evocation" of existential themes that Decroux advocated, with performers interacting with abstract forms, such as balls, cubes, swathes of fabric, or a chair in a space with almost no material context, a kind of dark Everywhere/Nowhere. In *Things Being as They Are, Everything Is Right as Can Be* (2009), Heggen, interacting with a puppet, embodied an old man "caught between his constant desire to rise up and the promise of an unavoidable decline, he notices the dwindling of his vital space. He puts up with it the best he can, he gets used to restrictions, reductions, the senseless restraints which will eventually bring up his vanishing" (Théâtre du Mouvement Archive). But the corporeal movement in the company's pieces is "poetic" insofar as it is largely abstract, derived from viewing the body as a form that requires no context other than the studio in which the performer created the movement, as if the studio is the metaphor for the universe. The pieces seem like exercises, things one creates when the studio has become the world or a refuge from the world rather than an engagement with it. Heggen makes this point herself: "Another aphorism that is important for us is 'Theatre must be played before it is written.' This means that you don't start with a story and then look for forms with which to express it. Instead you begin by working with forms, and little by little things appear and you can compose your story from the things that result from this exploration. That is how we always work" (McCaw 2007: 15). Dick McCaw reinforces the point by describing Heggen's pedagogic techniques without any reference to her mime productions or her artistic achievements: "Heggen demonstrates a physical process whereby ideas or images come through acts of movements. First the actor works at the level of physical sensation, then, hopefully, come the images and ideas by association. [...] The training she proposes is a 'tuning' by means of which the actor can listen to the emotional and imaginal 'resonances' created by movements" (McCaw 2007: 15). This physical process, however, is an entirely pedagogic goal that requires no artistic outcome as proof of its efficacy, and it hardly moves beyond Decroux's thinking in the 1940s. In France, though, the idea of "educating" the voiceless body seems synonymous with institutionalizing the body within a "poetic" system of signification that comes from teachers, lessons, and plenty of exercises rather than from artists, rather than from the poetry of performance meant for audiences other than actors. Théâtre du

Mouvement has for several decades honored the teachings of Etienne Decroux, which has inspired in 2017 an exposition celebrating the company/school and the publication of a monumental book compiling documents of Heggen's and Marc's pedagogic philosophy.

Yet another interesting French duo that has spent decades nurturing Decroux's legacy is Pinok and Matho, the professional names of Monique Bertrand and Mathilde Dumont. They met as students at the former L'école normale d'éducation physique in 1959 and then studied together under Étienne and Maximilien Decroux. But they also became "impregnated" with the ideas of Mireille André-Fromantel, a modern dancer unique in France for having worked with German dance leaders such as Mary Wigman, Kurt Jooss, and Rosalia Chladek as well as with the American modern dance pioneers José Limón (1908-1972) and Martha Graham (1894-1991). Pinok and Matho introduced a "different pedagogy" that blurred distinctions between dance, pantomime, gymnastics, and acrobatics and created "an art of movement" or "bodily theater" (*théâtre corporel*). The purpose of this "decompartmentalization of techniques" was to bring "creativity" to voiceless performance, because "in the 1960s, the notion of creativity had little presence in dance or mime." In 1962, the duo formed the Théâtre école movement et pensée (TEMP) that sought to educate students of various ages according to an eclectic curriculum built more around games than on exercises (Pinok 2016: 563-566; cf. Robinson 1990: 333-335). But Pinok and Matho pursued an extensive performance career that occurred primarily in nightclubs, cabarets, and small theaters, such as, from 1990, the fifty-seat Le Tremplin Théâtre in Montmartre. Unlike many mime performers, the duo did not involve their students in their productions: they performed always only as a duo. Maximilien Decroux endorsed their performance aesthetic, and the writer of bizarre, dreamlike tales Marcel Béalu (1908-1993) praised them because, "refusing to enclose themselves in a system, refusing the traditional image of the whiteface mime, Pinok et Mathot, with great independence, explore the relations between two persons, relations dynamic and dramatic, exploiting and opposing their differences [… and creating] a distortion of reality, an introduction to a fantastic or surrealistic dimension. […] Their bodies, which an intensive physical education has transformed, muscled, and planed, have become more doe-like, more leopard or cat or panther than bearers of breasts." Another commentator described the pair as "androgynes dancing before Caesar as dreamed by

Fellini," while yet another observed that they were "androgynous beings who evade the sexes with ferocity and trepidation at the same time" (Pinok 2016: 442-443).

Video or even written documentation of their performances, however, remains feeble. Pinok and Matho describe their performances in several pages but do not even provide dates for their productions. They identified five categories of duo performance: 1) a conflict or opposition between two persons; 2) two persons who complement or mirror each other; 3) one person succeeds another in performing solo; 4) one person who remains the same while the other incarnates multiple persons; 5) two persons identically clothed and masked give the impression that they are a single person (445). Some of their pieces are comic, a kind of absurdist clownery, such as *Les Reines* (1968), in which the duo appear as chessboard queens in black and white costumes and attempt to upstage each other entirely through exaggerated formal movements, or *Cadeau de Noël* (1971), in which a little girl receives a Christmas gift of a doll but casts it aside when a bigger gift appears: when she removes the big box, a human being stands before her, and she proceeds to play with the lifeless human as if it is a doll. But other duos are melancholic, eerie, or austere, such as *Toc Toc Toc!* (1979), where a woman in a silver mask and a brown medieval dress stitches an imaginary garment in a dark space until a figure in a suit, bow tie, bowler, and white mask knocks; he speaks somber, unintelligible words, then leaves, while she performs a standing dance out of weaving movements to the accompaniment of a ticking sound. *Temps distillé* (1971) showed two silver-masked women in white medieval robes performing complementary stitching movements, one standing, the other crouching: "our hand gestures suggest the actions of sewing, spinning, threading without really imitating them, gestures close to the artisan's gestures, precise, meticulous, or close to the movements of certain insects" (Pinok 1976: 9). In *Où sont tous mes amants* (1974) they appeared in Greek chitons made of the same piece of cloth and adopted different histrionically "emotional" poses while hearing a 1935 tune ("Where are all my lovers?") by music hall singer Fréhel (Marguerite Boulc'h [1891-1951]). In *Totem* (1982), they created a living totem pole in which their arms, heads and legs continuously reconfigured the image of a double-bodied idol (Dumont 2016; Pinok 2016: 449-459). One of the duo's most ambitious works was the program *Tango avec la mort ou Hamlet et Hamlet* (1976), a five-act "opera-

reverie" inspired by Hamlet's monologue and containing seventeen discrete scenes or pieces, both comic and serious, depicting either moments in the play or physical "meditations" on themes of the play. "The theme of death is recurrent" in their work, they explain, "even in the more comic pieces, not through complacency with a climate of morbidity, but with the intention of tracking down the slightest signs that announce or report violence, destruction, the dangers of totalitarianism and the death of arbitration, the crushing of innocence, and denouncing the will to power" (Pinok 2016: 444). In 1978, the duo began collaborating with the experimental composer Dominique Laurent on the program *Les pays de tout en tout* and then again with *Ténèbres et Azur* (1982), eleven sketches built around the duality of light and shadow: "after a nocturnal journey that unmasks the avid impulses of humanity comes the slow path into obscurity, then the supreme quest or spirit triumphs over materiality" (447). Laurent's music added an alien, haunting, electronic pathos to the duo's basically existential vision of a desolate, death-saturated world where love is very hard to find and never more than two people struggling to do something together in an otherwise dark, empty space.

But the duo's productions seem like supplements to their pedagogic activity, if indeed French mime as envisioned by Decroux is above all an intellectual rather than an artistic project, the enactment of a philosophy or theory. Pinok and Matho published several books in the 1970s: *L'expression corporelle à l'école* (1973), *Écrits sur pantomime, mime, expression corporelle* (1975), *Expression corporelle: mouvement et pensée* (1976), and *Le fabuleux voyage aux pays de tout en tout* (1979). These books introduced, developed, modified, and reiterated their ideas for implementing a "different pedagogy" to intensify creativity in "bodily expression." But perhaps the most provocative of their 1970s publications is *Dynamique de la creation: le mot et l'expression corporelle* (1976), in which they assert that enhanced creativity in bodily expression depends on a "creative pedagogy." A basic tenet of a creative pedagogy is a devaluing of exercises, for these lead to habitual and routine ways of thinking and performing. Instead, creative pedagogy emphasizes game playing as the foundation of "movement thinking." Games, however, involve improvisations in which rules of play change to produce a "dynamic" understanding of the body's capacity to respond to internal and external stimuli (20-24). Most salient in the improvisational process is the idea that words are the "detonators of

movement," for "the isolation of words or their random proximity disconnects us from the coherent sentence or a more literary formulation, and achieves the value of novelty, of strangeness" (32). According to Pinok and Matho, words in isolation trigger unconscious associations, a "reverie" of images that "escape the determinative sentence," and the body moves in response to these images or "stimuli" that are unique to the performer. "For one person, the word *moto* [motorcycle] signifies an intolerable noise, for another a muscular sensation, for yet another a homosexual symbol or a beautiful, glittering new object or a feeling of power and freedom" (32). Improvisations arise out of allowing the body to move as an "expression" of the image "detonated" by the word. The authors discuss colors as a fruitful basis for bodily improvisation; particular colors, "for me," contain particular "reveries" of association:

> *Violet: shade, Holy Thursday, covered statues, devil…*
> *Black: raven, obscurity, shadows, trout, death…*
> *Green: herbs, oxygen, mountain, non-pollution…*
> *Red: blood, trepidation, excitation, ardor…*
> *White: washing, slowness, immobility, calm, virginity…* (43)

The improvised movements that arise in response to each set of associations attached to each color-word are the basis of "thinking in movement," "a mysterious game of association born of chance." Like a relational database, different movements from different sets of association may be combined to produce a new kind of corporeal narrative that reveals the "metamorphosis" of the body into an emblem of a hidden self, a manifestation of an otherwise invisible realm of the unconscious (Pinok and Matho quote Baudelaire, Proust, and Symbolist poets). Isolated word associations prepare the student's body to respond to other stimuli, such as music, noise, light, objects, touches. The authors supplement their text with images of their duo performances. But their theory of pantomime as an image of the unconscious, of a dream world, though seemingly influenced by the French psychoanalytic discourse of the 1970s, is a modernized renovation of the nineteenth century romantic rhetoric about Pierrot as a dream figure: Pinok and Matho have given this rhetoric a pedagogic logic, a basis for treating pantomime, not as an end in itself, but as an instrument for achieving another goal—the liberation of a repressed self, the release of

a "creativity" that words in their "determinative" structures have smothered. Here pantomime becomes a supreme sign of subjectivity, a thing evaluated almost entirely by the performer's experience of performing it. The relation to an audience or to a world external to the performer's unconscious is almost irrelevant.

But Pinok and Matho themselves seem to have come to the conclusion that the French pantomime tradition has reached some kind of end. In 2016, they published a huge history of pantomime, *Une saga du mime: des origins aux années 1970*, a rich, montage compilation of quotations, biographies, images, "reflections," and epochal summaries. The book provides a brief account of the "origins" of pantomime in ancient Greece and various features of pantomime under the Romans. Another chapter, also comparatively brief, with the title "German Expressionism 1905-1920," discusses Frank Wedekind, Mary Wigman, Harald Kreutzberg, and Kurt Jooss as important figures who somehow influenced mime, although Wigman, Kreutzberg, and Jooss achieved prominence only after 1920. Otherwise the immense book presents mime and pantomime as entirely French phenomena, without reference to pantomime anywhere else or even reference to important examples of French pantomime outside of the *commedia* format, such as Angiolini, Noverre, Cuvelier, or Richepin. Pinok and Matho situate themselves within this history as a culminating expression of French pantomime, for they do not refer to anyone after them or contemporary with them. The implication is that pantomime came to an end in the 1970s with the emergence of "corporeal expression" and the blurring of distinctions between dance, mime, and performance art, which is synonymous with a postmodern collapse of faith in the body to construct narratives other than the "mysterious games" of the unconscious. The story of pantomime thus comes to an end when those writing it can no longer find stories to tell in pantomime and must rely on chance relations between the body and word associations to allow the body to "express" something without words.

Ilka Schönbein

Since the 1970s, some members of a younger generation of female pantomimes received their educations outside of the mime culture defined by Decroux and his disciples. As a result, these women have produced a different understanding of the body's relation to narrative, although they

may, as Pinok and Matho contend, represent the postmodern trend toward blurring distinctions between pantomime and other arts. A good example of a female pantomime who evolved from a different heritage is the German performer Ilka Schönbein, born in Darmstadt around 1963 (no one has published her birthdate). She studied eurythmic movement at the Eurythmeum School established in Stuttgart in 1921 by the anthroposophic educator and philosopher Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), who advocated a "spiritual" relation of bodily movement to light, color, space, and music according to a mystical system or "language" of gesture affiliated with natural and geometric forms (cf. Veit 1985). Schönbein then studied with the famous Stuttgart marionetteer Albrecht Roser (1922-2011), who was a protégé of the Swabian marionetteer Fritz Herbert Bross (1910-1976), a mechanical engineer descended from a woodcarving family; he developed a successful process for manufacturing string puppets. A major inspiration for both Bross and Roser was the theoretical story-essay "Über das Marionettentheater" (1810), by Heinrich von Kleist (1777-1811). In the story, the narrator describes his encounter with a dancer who explains that marionettes achieve a superior level of graceful movement because, without consciousness, their movements always submit to a center of gravity, which is "either no consciousness or consciousness without limit: either the jointed doll or the god," whereas human dancers, with only limited consciousness (or excessive self-consciousness), struggle constantly to escape gravity and in their struggle they impair their gracefulness (Kleist 2014: 4). Roser achieved immense popularity with his Clown Gustaf marionette, and Schönbein worked with him for several years, touring widely with his marionette production of *Don Juan* (1988). But in the early 1990s, she broke away from the marionette heritage and perhaps also from the eurythmic concept of bodily movement to form her Theater Meschugge, a word derived from Yiddish, meaning "crazy" or "wild." She gave her first performances in streets and in market squares, often in France.

In the marionette theater, the marionette dominates perception of the performance, which results from the movements of the "invisible" human body pulling the strings of the figure seen by the spectator. Schönbein wanted a more intimate, physical connection with the puppet, so that the puppet became an extension of her own body. Her first production was *Metamorphosen* (1994), which she revised several times in the ensuing years. The production consisted of several scenes in which Schönbein

incarnated female figures from pre-war Eastern European villages. The scenes were bizarre, eerie, grotesque, expressionistic, and suffused with an intense melancholy. One of the most powerful scenes showed a thin, pallid, pregnant woman wearing a brown slip who suddenly goes into labor, sinking to the floor with her mouth wide open, lifting her legs straight up, and holding the position until the tiny arm of the enfant begins flipping out from between her legs. A haunting Jewish lullaby accompanies the entire scene. Eventually the entire baby crawls out; the woman sits up, her mouth still open, as if she is in shock. The baby twitches beside her, and the baby is really grotesque. But the mother studies it carefully and then gently lifts it toward her, rolling it along her arm, as her open mouth morphs into a smile of awe. She lovingly cradles the twitching baby in her hands, then brings it to her breasts. The music stops, and the spectator hears only the sound of the baby clawing at the mother's breast. She lowers her slip so that the baby can suck her breast (Lipus 2008). The puppet baby is an amazing creation in that Schönbein is able to manipulate, with one hand, all its legs and arms and to open the mouth of its oversized head to form an image of wailing. The baby seems like a monstrosity, and the mother's loving gestures are disconcerting, perverse, even demonic, for the piece is not a glorification of a mother's transcendent love for her baby in spite of its grotesqueness. It is about a mother who loves her baby *because* it is grotesque, *because* it is the monster it needs to be to survive in a dark, loveless world without mother. Schönbein's movements are bold, clear, suffused with tenderness without being exaggerated. She first performed the piece on the street, but in the best video performance of it, the action takes place in some kind of dingy washroom with a suitcase, which amplify the sense that the woman is utterly alone in giving birth. Another scene from *Metamorphosen* presents a little blonde girl in a yellow dress sitting on the lap of an ominous woman whose face is a silver mask and whose body is enshrouded in a dark wimple-dress. The little girl moves her bare feet, which are the feet of the performer. Music begins: an old Yiddish tune song by a child. The little girl moves her feet to the rhythm of the song, as if dancing on the woman's lap. When the child becomes too restless, the mother clenches the girl, who turns her head upward, and shakes her head, warning the child not to become so agitated. The child sulks and smolders, then begins to move her feet again. But she resists following her impulse, becomes alert and turns to her mother, who whispers into her ear. The child slumps, the mother

stands. The girl straightens her dress and again starts tapping her feet to the song. She swings her entire body energetically, but when the song comes to an end, sinks back into her mother's lap. Mother and daughter turn and pick up a metal pot and shake it to produce the sound of coins rattling in it. They walk slowly forward and away (Heike 2011). The mask and the puppet possess a gripping vividness without being altogether realistic, just as the movements, again, are bold without being exaggerated—indeed, the piece focuses on the necessity of restraining the body. The theme of the piece may be that the mother must restrain the daughter's kinetic impulses to preserve a kind of humble, austere dignity that will improve their success at begging. A third scene depicts a young, unmasked woman in a worn, faded bridal veil and dark dress holding a bouquet of roses as she sways to a gentle klezmer waltz. She gazes at herself in a mirror. She lifts from behind the roses the mask of a young man with a black hat and hides her own face behind it. The man's eyes seem closed, as if he is in a deep trance. He inhales the fragrance of the roses. Then he drops the roses, and he and the woman sway to the music. The woman embraces him with her left hand while he embraces her with his right. They sway as if in a deep rapture. The man pulls from his pocket a ring, slips it onto her left hand, and brings her hand reverently to his cheek. Then he pushes her hand away and sinks his head, revealing hers again, as she cradles him protectively (Heike 2011). The piece seems to be a woman's fantasy of inspiring the love of a man who does not actually see her, who lives only within her. The video was shot in what looks like a theater dressing room, yet the action evokes a remote time and place—somewhere in a poverty-stricken Eastern Europe before the war—and it is as if these eerie figures from some "other" land haunt, not the stage of the theater, but spaces backstage, the place where actors don their costumes and masks, the institution itself, as well as the body of the performer.

Metamorphosen opened up opportunities for Schönbein, almost entirely in the form of invitations to perform at various festivals and small theaters. She met the French marionettist and theater director Alexandre Haslé (b. 1965) while working on *Metamorphosen*, and they collaborated on her next production, *Le Roi Grenouille* (1998), based on the 1810 Grimm fairy tale of a sad princess, rather grotesque herself, who encounters a frog but treats him with disdain. However, she allows him to sleep on her pillow, where he transforms into a handsome man. Haslé and Schönbein toured

with this production for three years; he then departed to form in Paris his own theater company involving puppets and a more comic world-view. Schönbein's next production was *Winterreise* (2003), an enactment of the gloomy 1827 poem-cycle of the same name by Wilhelm Müller (1794-1827), set to the songs of the poems composed by Franz Schubert (1797-1828), except that Schönbein used accordion rather than piano accompaniment for the singer, who was a counter tenor rather than tenor. The song cycle describes the bleak, nocturnal winter wandering of a young man who has lost his beloved to another man. Snow, silence, and darkness are everywhere. Death pervades his mind. Lights and radiant memories are mere illusions. He encounters a crow, a snowstorm, a cemetery, and in the end he meets a sinister organ grinder, whom even dogs fear. But Schönbein made the protagonist a pregnant woman and employed many more masks, prostheses, and puppet effects than in *Metamorphosen*. Despite the extraordinary inventiveness of the production, she could not find a "home" for her art. Germany had no "place" for her, and she lived for the most part out of a camper truck (Tanzfilminstitut 2007). In France, she received support through complicated co-productions involving different theaters and municipal-national grants (Ksamka 2016: 3). In 2006, she produced *Chair de ma chair*, an adaptation of the autobiographical novel *Why Is the Child Cooking in the Polenta?* (1999) by the Swiss-Romanian writer Aglaja Veteranyi (1962-2002). The book describes the severely dysfunctional life of an émigré Romanian circus family as seen by an illiterate daughter, Olinka. The production presented nine scenes of sordid family life as circus acts. A "clown angel" (Nathalie Pagnac) sitting at a typewriter spoke words from the book that accompanied Schönbein's pantomimic embodiment of the thoughts and fears being spoken. These include the alcoholic father's incestuous violation of Olinka, Olinka's fear that her mother will have a terrible accident as a trapeze performer, and the mother's prostitution of her daughter. Schönbein concentrated on the tormented mother-daughter relationship, but she attached to her body a variety of masks and prostheses to create the impression of a body inhabited by multiple demons and monstrosities or, as Marion Girard-Laterre (2011: n.p.) puts it, a "teratogenic process attacks the body." For this production, Schönbein made masks resembling her own face and prostheses molded from her own very thin body in an effort to dissolve the distinction between her body and the puppets, for as she had already proposed: "Little by little, I cut all the

threads of my puppets and allowed them to come closer and closer to me. Since that time, there is no longer any thread or stick between the puppet and me; in their place I always experiment with new handling techniques using my own body, I play with the hands, with the feet, with the head or the buttocks" (Girard-Laterre 2011: n.p). With *Chair de ma chair*, she used more than one mask at the same time on her body, and she manipulated prosthetic arms and torsos to show how multiple identities feed off of her body or, as Prost (2012) suggests, to show how Schönbein's body feeds off of the puppets she creates—or rather, her body produces a profusion of "monstrous parasites" (Girard-Laterre 2011: n.p). In some moments, the nudity of her body was difficult to distinguish from that of the puppet. Schönbein herself claims that, "the border between the puppet and my body is occult" (Girard-Laterre 2012: n.p). Indeed, the piece concludes with a grotesque baby puppet devouring the mother figure and the mother devouring the baby. But Schönbein's obsession with the "demolition" and "reconstruction" of her own body goes beyond her ingenious puppet simulation of her body through masks and prostheses. *Chair de ma chair* feeds off of Veteranyi's characters with the same morbid intensity with which Veteranyi fed off of her own deranged family members to write her book and thus creates a frightening exploration of women's inability to identify the boundaries of their own bodies, of their possession by other bodies [Figure 114] (cf. Burger 2017; Maëlle 2013).

Following the horror show of *Chair de ma chair*, Schönbein turned again to fairy tales with *La vieille et la bête* (2009), a series of four scenes partially inspired by stories in Grimm and also by the death of her father, which occurred when she started work on the project. She collaborated with the Italian mezzo-soprano and composer Alexandra Lupidi, who wrote the incidental, cabaret music for guitar, double bass, and percussion and spoke the voiceover. The first scene related the story of a queen who prays to give birth. When she does give birth, her child is a donkey. But she transforms her horror into love by teaching the donkey to play the lute, and by playing the lute, the donkey transforms into a human. For this scene, Schönbein devised a donkey head puppet while the rest of the donkey's body consisted of appropriately costumed parts of her own body. The second scene, "La Ballerine," resembled the mother-daughter beggars in *Metamorphosen*: a puppet in a white blouse, pink tutu, and ballet slippers sits on the lap of a stoic woman wearing a crown. The ballet dancer

performs ballet movements without rising from the woman's lap, but the *ballerine* transforms from imagining herself a "ballet queen" (*ballereine*) to becoming a "ballet ruin" (*balleruine*). In the third scene, God invites an old woman to make a wish. She requests that children who climb her apple tree and take apples should remain stuck there. Death then visits her, so she asks him to climb the tree and pick an apple for her. But Death becomes stuck there, hanging in the air. The old woman confesses to Death that she is "almost ready," but she delays the fatal moment: "it is not me who is old and ugly, it is him, the animal which is called my body!" (Collège au théâtre 2010: n.p.). The final scene showed Schönbein in the Pieta pose of holding an old dying woman in her arms, her mother, who becomes transformed into a child. In this piece, however, Schönbein seemed preoccupied less with revealing the "monstrosity" of her body than with showing how she could embody inhuman identities—an animal, Death—amplified by the emaciated thinness of her body (cf. Impe 2014).

Her interest in animal puppets had begun with *Metamorphosen*, which contained a scene wherein a deathlike puppet figure behind her runs its hand (which is her hand) over her body and that hand is a gigantic black spider. In 2006, she directed and designed the puppets for a show by another German puppeteer, Kerstin Wiese (b.1971), *Le loup et les sept chevreaux*, based on the Grimm tale of the wolf and the seven young goats, and in 2010 she directed and designed puppets for *Faim de Loup*, an adaptation of the Little Red Riding Hood story, a tale of "a child transformed into an adult," with Laurie Cannac performing all the roles. The collaboration with Cannac (and Lupidi) continued with *Queue de poissonne* (2013), an adaptation of "The Little Mermaid" story (1837) by Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875): a creature who is half-woman, half fish discovers through sinister sorcery that becoming wholly human means a life of pain and unfulfilled love. In 2014, Schönbein performed her own incarnation of the wolf and seven goats tale, *Sinon, je te mange…* with herself dressed in black like a veiled widow from an earlier century as she manipulated the various puppet animal heads. But while she toured with this production, she suffered "a complete physical and psychological crisis." She delayed work on her next production, which included *Eh bien, dansez maintenant*, about a grasshopper dancing for an ant in the hope of receiving food. Schönbein would perform this piece, while the other piece in the production, *Ricdin-Ricdin*, an adaptation of the Rumpelstilskin story, had

Stuttgart-based puppeteer Pauline Drünert performing with Schönbein's puppets, while Lupidi and Suska Kanzler composed the music. The production eventually went on tour in September 2017. However, Schönbein's productions based on fairy tales and involving animals lack the visceral power and daring emotional intimacy of *Metamorphosen*, *Winterreise*, and *Chair de ma chair*, and it is as if she has had to compromise her aesthetic to accommodate a more childlike audience that is necessary for the Theatre Meschugge to receive the grants by which it survives. As she said of her personal crisis:

> *Is there life after puppets? I've been searching for it, this life without puppets, and I still search for it - so I can live, survive. Something alive is dearer to me than all the puppets in the world.*
> *Why do I want to tell this fairy tale?*
> *Why am I telling you this very personal story?*
> *The tale talks about art. […] Because every true artist feels like she or he is in the same situation as the miller's daughter, imprisoned in a room full of straw that absolutely needs to be transformed into gold. […] And nobody will convince the true artist that there is a real life outside her golden cage* (Ksamka 2017).

The problem with Schönbein's aesthetic may be that while her puppets have evolved, as has her relationship to the puppets, her relation to pantomimic action has not evolved so effectively. The positions she assumes in manipulating the puppets, which are so often those of a woman struggling to bestow affection, love on a strange creature or even "monster" she has created, remain stable, so that Schönbein's body functions like the center of gravity for the marionette figure in Kleist's story. The puppets change, but the movements animating the puppets remain fairly constant. In a sense, the puppets determine the movements of the performer, who cannot seem to live as an artist without puppets attached to her body. Schönbein's efforts to build puppets for other performers and direct their productions may be part of a strategy to detach puppets from her own body and affix them to the bodies of others. But this strategy does not seem to include so far an expansive or innovative construction of pantomimic action, which may be fundamental to understanding the "physical and psychological crisis" troubling the artist. At the same time, her later reliance

on fairly tales to motivate identities and actions evokes a need to link puppetry and pantomime to a primordial childhood experience of the body's frailty, its vulnerability to "metamorphosis," to usurpation by "others," and this obsession with preserving that childhood experience functions as a grotesquely poetic defense against time, against the aging of the body, against Death (cf. Gérard 2017).





Figure 114: Ilka Schönbein in the birth scene of *Metamorphosen* (1993) and *Le roi grenouille* (1998), showing the fusion of human and puppet identities. Photos: Ilka Schönbein, Marinette Delanné (2017).

Other Women from the Stuttgart Performing Arts Academy

Another German performer who has displayed a fascination with the relation between pantomime and puppetry is Antje Töpfer (b. 1978). Born in Chemnitz, she moved to Stuttgart to study at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst but was not sure if she wanted to concentrate on visual arts or puppetry (*Figurenspiel*). She decided to pursue an interdisciplinary approach to performance. Her first solo performance was in collaboration with Iris Meinhardt (b. 1977), a marioneteer, who directed Töpfer in *…des Glückes Unterpfand* (2005), although this piece was not a pantomime: Töpfer, with loudspeakers attached to her body, lay and

squirmed on the stage as she spoke into a microphone texts written in prison by the German terrorist Ulrike Meinhof (1934-1976). In 2006, she collaborated with marionetteer Florian Feisel (b. 1972), who directed her solo production *Pandora Frequenz*, which was a postmodern commentary on or "appropriation" of the doll photographs taken by Hans Bellmer (1902-1975) between 1934 and 1937. In Berlin, Bellmer had constructed an eerie, slightly less than life-sized doll of a pubescent girl. He used ball joints to connect the legs and torso to each other. Then he photographed the doll indoors and outdoors in various poses to convey his idea that the girl's body is an "anagram" of organs: body parts may be reconfigured to reveal the fetishization of a body part that is the basis for sexual attraction to "a girl." For example, some photographs show four legs sprouting from a torso with no head, while others show a torso with a head and only one thigh (cf. Bellmer 1983). In *Pandora Frequenz*, Töpfer, barefoot and wearing a sleeveless black dress, manipulates a series of white boxes that she can fit all into one big box. She reconfigures the boxes many times to create platforms, shelves, walls, chairs, niches, and abstract cubical structures. She climbs over the boxes, hides behind them, pushes them around, covers parts of her body with them, and releases from them a large number of black metal balls of varying size; these roll onto the floor until she gathers them up and puts them in a box. She also pulls prosthetic parts from different boxes. These body parts resemble those in Bellmer's photographs, except that they approximate a woman's rather than a girl's body. Töpfer fragments her own body by revealing only parts of it—an arm, a leg, a hand, her head—and concealing the rest of her body behind or within a box. She manipulates the different body parts by wearing them in place of her body parts, by acting as if a body part, such as an arm, belonged to another body and was touching her, by acting as if she had an additional body part (three arms instead of two), and by treating a body part as an "unnatural" extension of herself, such as a leg sprouting from her head. She then retrieves the different body parts from the different boxes and tries to assemble a complete body after selecting the appropriate balls to connect the body parts. After partially assembling the doll, she returns to the boxes and constructs a platform on which she can lounge and balance the doll's head on her foot and elsewhere. She then dismantles the doll and places different body parts in the different boxes now stacked as a tower. She slips the balls into her dress. After turning the tower of boxes so that the viewer

can no longer see the compartments containing the body parts, she walks away, pauses, and then lets all the balls fall from under her dress onto the floor. In 2009, Töpfer and Feisel revised the piece to include a scene in which ropes descend and Töpfer attaches the balls to the ropes. She then attaches the body parts to the balls, with the pendulum movement of the ropes creating a sense of body parts swaying rhythmically without connecting. She places the large torso ball under her dress to convey the impression of being pregnant and then draws together the different ropes to bring the body parts to the torso and connect them through the act of giving birth to the connected body by transferring the torso ball from her body to the torso. The doll body overwhelms or smothers her, and she begins dismantling it, then simply crawls away from the dismemberment. In the revised version, she does not walk away at the end, but faces the audience, performs a little dance that releases the balls from under dress, and then leaps toward the audience (Feisel 2008; Feisel 2010). In the 2006 version, flutist Wiebke Holm (b. 1977) composed the accompaniment, while for the 2009 version Christoph Hamann (b. 1975) provided a more somber electronic soundscape.

Pandora Frequenz lacks the potent erotic aura of Bellmer's photographs, for Töpfer's purpose apparently is to demystify the "anagramic" fetishization of female body parts in Bellmer's project. The piece suggests that a woman cannot find or assemble her identity from a male fantasy of it. She cannot create a female identity or body out of parts stored in separate, malleable compartments of her own mind (cf. Werckmeister 2011). However, in 2007, Töpfer and Feisel did a similar production, *Cranko: Reflection*, with a male performer (Tomas Danhel) manipulating body parts that descend from above on ropes; instead of boxes, the man deals with a folding screen that rises up from beneath the stage, and he succeeds in building a complete male manikin replica of himself, but when he cannot suspend himself in space like the doll, he dismantles it and attaches the body parts to himself in the "wrong" places to fashion a new body for himself before sinking down the trap door (Feisel 2011). Here the inspiration was not Bellmer, but the ballet piece *Reflection* (1952) by the Stuttgart-based choreographer John Cranko (1927-1973), who had explored the theme of Narcissus. But in the Töpfer-Feisel piece, the male performer treats the manikin, not as a beautiful reflection of himself, but as a beautiful fantasy of himself that proves to be a deathly illusion,

which he transforms into a grotesque debasement of himself. The duo revised *Pandora Frequenz* to become an installation at the Kunstsammlung Hoffmann in Berlin in 2008 and included an erotic girl-doll on a bed in addition to the woman body parts. The piece toured widely and internationally. Feisel has then gone on to direct experimental "performances with objects" apart from Töpfer, who has continued to explore a postmodern pantomime aesthetic imbued more with an interdisciplinary idea of "performance" than with any rigorous concept of pantomime as a "discipline." In 2012, she collaborated with the experimental theater director Anna Peschke (b. 1978) and (again) the FITZ! Zentrum für Figurentheater Stuttgart on *Titania tanzt für einen Esel*, in which two women, Töpfer and Peschke, enacted a transformation of each other. The Princess (Töpfer) is so ashamed of her ugliness and disappointment to her father (an image in the background) that she wraps herself up in layers of furs and rugs. When she unbinds the ropes that seal her within the furs, she appears in a flesh-colored body stocking, but her hair covers her face. She puts over her head a garment that contains multiple layers of veils. She lifts each veil until she reveals her face, which is the black mask of a male face. Silhouetted male cut out heads pop up from the stage, and she tries to press them down, but they keeping popping up. Titania (Peschke) appears in an orange body stocking and flaming wig. Her husband, Oberon (Martin Christensen), is also a menacing presence. She performs aerobics movements until she becomes obsessed with diminishing a little bit of tummy fat. She starts taping down her stomach, and then tapes down her thighs; she makes a corset with the tape. Soon she has taped her entire body, with legs and hands bound together. Yet she keeps on exercising until, exhausted, she falls asleep. The Princess discovers her and with scissors cuts the tape off her. The pair huddles together under the furs. Titania removes the black mask from the Princess and the Princess removes the wig from Titania (Peschke 2013a). The controlling idea is that the more they look at each other, the more they become like each other, and the more they become like each other, the freer they are from the tyranny of how they were supposed to look. Peschke provided a feminist theoretical framework for the piece in an article for the German puppet journal *double*:

> *Can dolls and doll body fragments provide a different approach to nudity? Is not one more "shamefully undressed" when a doll is a*

> *substitute for nakedness? The doll allows a distanced view of one's own body through the constructed body of the figure. If you look silently and naked in the mirror, feel ribs, folds and fat rolls, the disbelief increases, really fills this picture there in the mirror with soul and flesh. As a puppeteer, however, the question of the "authenticity" of one's own body, after disbelief, can be turned around and turned into the absurd. Yes, one is this body, which one sees mirrored there, but one is also the sewn, built, deformed, oversized doll body, which one holds in the hand, on which one looks. You can express the varying perceptions of your own body, you can translate the moments where you feel thin-skinned, small, spongy or stiff, in a (figural) body. Through this process of figurative building, an examination of the construction of one's own femininity can take place* (Peschke 2011).

Töpfer and Peschke collaborated on a short video, *Eselei* (2012), with Peschke directing, in which Töpfer clad in a grey overcoat and wearing the huge donkey skull from *Titania tanzt für einen Esel* wanders through the corridors and rooms, upstairs and downstairs, of what appears to be an opulent, elegant hunting lodge. At then end, Töpfer lifts the skull to reveal her smiling face (Peschke 2013b). The video is bizarre, grotesque, and charming, conveying the sense of some animal-monster Death poking around the old beautiful building when actually it is a woman masked as Death. Töpfer and Peschke display a gift for constructing pantomime in an unusual space and for seeing video as an advantageous performance medium for pantomime. Yet they did not continue their collaboration. Instead, in 2014, Töpfer collaborated with the Stuttgart performance group O-Team on the "noise theater" production of *Lichtung*, which took inspiration from cryptic writings on technology by the philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). This was "a music-based performance for two people and one machine: the search for two actors for our existence between nature and technology; the meeting of an actor and a puppeteer with the microphones and sensors of a modular synthesizer; a non-verbal scenic dialogue using *musique concrète*; an acoustic journey on the winding paths of Heidegger's thinking and speaking" (Hof 2014). The action takes place in a banal kitchen; Töpfer played the female role and Folkert Dücker (b. 1980) played the male role. Samuel Hof (b. 1980), an experimental director fond of incorporating electronic technologies into productions invading unusual

spaces, directed *Lichtung*. The man and woman extract the wiring infrastructure for the kitchen and its appliances and communicate with each other by transforming the kitchen into a kind of digital laboratory of light and sound effects involving also the use of microphones and synthesizers while supertitles display words written by Heidegger. After touring with this production for nearly two years, Töpfer returned to solo performance in 2016 with *3 Akte—Das stumme Lied vom Eigensinn*, directed by Stefanie Oberhoff (b. 1967), an artist who has designed many puppets. In this piece, Töpfer has devised scenes involving the donkey skull and coat, although in this case separately, and a final scene in which she interacts with large masses of paper, including a sort of vast wedding dress made of white paper and an enormous origami accordion. (In 2015, she received a grant to study paper art in Japan, where she performed *Pandora Frequenz*.) The object of performance here is apparently to dramatize the sensual, even erotic relation between the female body and supposedly "dead" materials and thus to expand the concepts of "puppet" and "body." Unlike Schönbein, who treats the puppet as an integral part of her body, Töpfer treats materials as if they possessed an alien life that she can awaken through silent, pantomimic interactions with them. She could not build the doll in *Pandora Frequenz* because a more powerful experience of intimacy arises from interaction with objects, from "bodies" utterly unlike one's own.

Anna Peschke, however, disclosed a different perspective on female intimacy with materials in her dark pantomime *Ilsas Garten*, which premiered in Mannheim in 2011, with dark electronic music by Christoph Wirth (b. 1985) underlying some old recordings of popular songs by Friedrich Hollaender (1896-1976). In this piece, she first appears wearing a white lab coat and gloves as she plucks with tweezers the soft stuffing from a dilapidated armchair and inserts the specimens in bottles. She strips the chair of its fabrics. The setting is a laboratory for the making of wigs mounted on numerous manikin heads. She gently, lovingly caresses the hair on one of the heads. But she begins removing long braided pieces of hair from a basket and draping them over the chair. When she sits in the chair, listening to an opera aria, she seems in a trance. A subsequent scene shows her performing drill exercises with her arms, which leads to her flipping her right arm upward in the Hitler salute over and over again with increasing speed. She puts on a shiny black fur cloak and sings a German song, wandering in and out of shadows and smiling. She then begins dressing up,

quietly, almost ritualistically, putting on a black corset and the uniform, boots, and cap of an SS officer, while an old, melancholy song in English accompanies her. She appears sleek and glamorous in the sinister uniform. From atop a ladder throne, she cracks a whip. When she returns to one of the blonde wigs, she carefully combs it with her black-gloved hand, then begins shredding it.



Figure 115: Anna Peschke in *Ilsas Garten* (2011). Photo: Kai Kremser.

Evidently it is hair from concentration camp victims. She balls the hair up, inserts it into a soft blue cloth, and places it on her ladder throne, where she sits tapping her boot to an old German song. Later she discards the uniform so that she wears only a white T-shirt and blue shorts while she braids strands of the blond wig hair into her own dark hair. She looks like an athletic member of the Nazi League of German Girls. She stands in a blue spotlight breathing heavily (Peschke 2012) [Figure 115]. Here a woman's rapturously sensual interaction with objects, materials, and sounds is the basis for an inhuman will to power. The seductive glamor of the piece is disturbing, but the most impressive feature of the piece is how Peschke turns simple, ordinary, "feminine" actions such as plucking, combing, sitting on a softened surface, brushing a garment, taking a dainty sip of

water, or adjusting her cap into emblems of totalitarian mastery of reality. *Ilsas Garten* traveled widely in Europe and provoked considerable fascination from audiences. But Peschke has not returned to this quite imaginative vein of pantomime. After working with Töpfer, she has turned her attention largely to productions that fuse Western dramatic texts like *Woyzeck* (2012) and *Faust* (2013) with the techniques, costumes, and stagecraft of Beijing Opera; later (2014) she became involved in the direction of experimental eco-theater productions in natural surroundings.

In the postwar era, pantomime descended from the French tradition became preoccupied with the sense that modern dance could eclipse pantomime altogether as a modernist form of bodily performance and make pantomime even more marginal than it was in the 1930s. French-oriented pantomime blurred distinctions between the two modes of performance. Like modern dance, pantomime descended from Decroux stressed the body as an autonomous, abstract form that needed hardly anything more than itself to produce performances or "demonstrations" of artistic value. The body of the pantomime became a sign of an existential crisis resolved, from Decroux's perspective, by finding a transcendent mode of movement that rendered distinctions between dance and pantomime irrelevant, just as performance itself was irrelevant. But the French tradition contended that the body cannot achieve this abstract, transcendent, existential identity without a systematic education, without a school dedicated to freeing the body from the constraints imposed upon it by social anxiety toward it, without a compelling pedagogic philosophy, without teachers, who to a large extent supplanted the performing artist as the goal of bodily education. One achieved this "modern" pantomime body through the performance of innumerable exercises, a constant state of training, a life devoted to the sacred space of the school studio. French pedagogy created an international community of pantomimes built around a shared existential ethos established to preserve the autonomy and humanist charm of the art. But an insistence that the art exude a hygienic or therapeutic charm, which was never Decroux's intention, kept French pantomime from pursuing larger ambitions, from becoming "too serious," from exceeding the dimensions of the sequestered studio-world. Perhaps for this reason Pinok and Matho, in their history of French pantomime, saw the art as exhausted by the 1970s: its survival depended upon an interdisciplinary relation to other arts, but they could not identify what that relation might be, even if

many in the "mime culture" had no sense at all of a stagnation within their art, which is, however, a sad feature of artistic practice dependent above all on exercises.

Angna Enters and the post-1970s German female pantomimes coming out of Stuttgart represent a strand of pantomime outside of the French tradition. For them, pantomime has less of an interdisciplinary affiliation with dance than with the visual arts. They did not see performance as a way of dramatizing an existential crisis to discover a presumed authentically human identity, for they saw the human body as fragmented into multiple identities and in a constant search for some "other" identity. They became preoccupied with the body's attachment to other bodies, to objects, to materials, to images, to masks, to costumes, to theater, to life observed outside of the theater, to history. They avoided stylized movements meant to display the self-sufficiency of the body and the "disciplined" virtuosity of the body that performed them. They preferred to perform actions as they had seen others perform them in the world outside of the theater, and they focused on the narrative significance of sequencing otherwise "untrained" physical actions to reveal what was perhaps invisible to the audience outside of the theater, in the society. Their movements may appear more restrained and less exaggerated than in the French model, but they showed much greater inclination to drift into less "charming" aesthetic regions that were grotesque, tragic, bizarre, eerie, morbid, or erotic. Comedy was not taboo, but neither was it compulsory. These women did not build schools or construct pedagogic systems, because they regarded performance as the best way to embed their ideological programs. Nor therefore did these women create an international community of like-minded adepts; rather, they appealed to a diverse, international audience drawn to "the arts," to experimental aesthetic experiences, to innovative modes of performance. It is a much less stable model of pantomime culture than the French model and entails a much more uncertain process of identifying and developing ideas worth watching in performance. The change expected from one production to the next is much greater.

Chilean Pantomime

It is tempting, then, to consider a gendered rift in pantomime culture arising at the end of the twentieth century, for the French approach

and indeed nearly the whole of pantomime history has been the project of men to free the body from the voice and to free voiceless performance from dance. But a gendered understanding of pantomime history in the late twentieth century inevitably becomes complicated by the shear scale of male investment in pantomime compared to female, and by the diversity of male perspectives on pantomime. The male investment is not as stable as a constant focus on the French model indicates. In Chile, for example, pantomime began as a male enterprise, as one might suppose anyway. A university student, Alejandro Jodorowsky (b. 1929) dropped out (" I don't think you need to study art to become an artist") to become (1947) a clown in a circus (Barton-Fumo 2012). When he saw the film *Les enfants du paradis*, he decided to form a pantomime troupe in 1948. But the group did not present its first program of scenes until 1951 at the university in Santiago, where Jodorowsky had recruited the members of the five-person ensemble. The program contained five pieces: *Pierrot*, *La Bañista* (*The Bather*), *El Buey Sobre el Techo* (*The Ox on the Roof*), *El Viejo, el Amor y la Muerte* (*The Old Man, Love, and Death*), *El Prestidigitator*, and *El Joven Suicida* (*The Young Suicide*). Jodorowsky promoted the production as "experimental pantomime," with no music and no scenography: the actors "play the role of houses, windows, clocks, lanterns, benches, doors, beds" to create "pure pantomime" not "mixed with theater or ballet." His program owed much to the *commedia* format, but he infused it with a seriousness of tone reminiscent of productions by the Cercle Funambulesque. *El Buey Sobre el Techo* derived from a 1920 ballet by Jean Cocteau and Darius Milhaud, whose music compiled numerous Brazilian popular songs. A story by Marcel Marceau was the basis for *El Joven Suicida*, which told "the story of a very miserly father, who jealously watches both his daughter and the valuable art objects he collects at home. A poor young man falls in love with the girl, and is reciprocated. The father surprises this idyll and, confronting the couple, frees his daughter frenetically. In the absence of the girl, the young man and the antiquarian engage in a fight, in which—accidentally—the father dies. The daughter accuses the boy, and he—desperate—from injustice and incomprehension--commits suicide" (Biblioteca Nacional Chilena: NOIFD-0002). Images from the production show a deeply melancholy Pierrot, sailors wearing goggle masks, and a woman wearing fashions from early decades of the twentieth century. An especially striking image from an unidentified piece shows an entirely black Pierrot, including

black mask, black hat, and black gloves (Biblioteca Nacional Chilena: FB-0452) [Figure 116]. But despite this promising beginning, Jodorowsky, a perpetually restless man, did not continue with the company, although he announced plans for productions of Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale* and an adaptation of Gogol's *The Overcoat*.



Figure 116: Alejandro Jodorowsky in his black Pierrot costume (1951). Photo: Biblioteca Nacional de Chile.

In 1953, he moved to Paris to study with Decroux for three months. Unfortunately, his time spent with Decroux was profoundly unpleasant, as he explained in his autobiography:

> *I never imagined that this mythical creator of the modern mime language [...] had such cruelty, such bitterness, such envy of another's*

> *success. I knew that that year he had presented himself with his students in London, at the same time as Marceau. The show of Marceau was declared the best of the year, and that of Decroux the worst of the year. What happened was that with a relentless, inhuman technique that demanded incredible efforts to carry out each movement, it bored the spectators. On the other hand Marceau's finesse, his naivety, his aerial gestures that suggested everything without any effort, delighted the public. Decroux shuffled my photos with ostentatious contempt, asked me to undress and, taking as a witness his son Pepe, proceeded to examine my body, classifying its defects with medical coldness* (Jodorowsky 2009*:* 195).

He described Decroux's exercises as excruciatingly boring, punctuated by cryptic, "paradoxical" aphorisms ("The greatest force is the force that is not used"; "If the mime is not weak, he is not a mime"), cruel criticisms, and gross displays of sexism: "Decroux, with an old man's lubricity, had the women placed in front of him [...] and would display his testicles" (196). Jodorowsky found a place in Marceau's early ensemble and traveled widely with the group, and he designed Marceau's sketch, *The Cage* (1962). In the Louis Mouchet (b. 1957) documentary on Jodorowsky, *La constellation Jodorowsky* (1994), Marceau described in detail Jodorowsky's contribution to the making of *The Cage*, which in pantomime depicted a man struggling to break through a wall only to find himself imprisoned in another cage. Marceau said that the communication between him and Jodorowsky was "like osmosis." Sandra Rudman, a scholar at the Universität Konstanz who informed me of this relationship, translates Marceau's words in the documentary as follows: "(a man) walks, finds a cage, and he begins (makes arm movements that suggest probing a wall) – he didn't even show me (...) that concept, that I created at this very moment... this pressure point within space, and Alexandre felt it, he knew it, we found each other through osmosis, and then, he is prisoned in a square cage that shrinks. He finds to get out of this cage, he sticks a hand outside the cage, he feels, the fluid, the space, the air, freedom. He gets out of the cage, only to enter in a bigger cage, that shrinks again, and this time, he stays within the cage" (Rudman 2019; Mouchet 1994). In 1957, he finished his short color film *La Cravate*, which he had been working on in his Paris apartment since 1953. It was a surrealistic adaptation of Thomas Mann's story *Transposed Heads* (1940): a

young man (Jodorowsky) believes he is unattractive to a woman he courts, so he visits a store where men can transpose their heads for new ones on display. The young man keeps transposing heads because the woman he courts still remains cold to him. Different actors play the heads and the revised young man. The shop girl, however, keeps the young man's original head on her fireplace mantel and falls in love with it. The young man realizes the futility of his quest and goes back to reclaim his original head. When the shopgirl transposes the heads, he realizes he belongs with her rather than with the other women. They embrace. The action, accompanied by the fairground music of Edgar Bischoff (1926-1999), is in the verisimilar mode, so that the acting somewhat resembles that of a silent film from around 1926. *La Cravate* launched Jodorowsky on an incredibly prodigious career in France and Mexico as a filmmaker, theater director, dramatist, novelist, philosopher, psychoanalytic theorist, "psychomagician," journalist, television celebrity, comic book author, and visual artist. But he did not return to the Chilean theater company he founded, nor did he return to pantomime.

However, one of Jodorowsky's recruits to the Santiago ensemble, Enrique Noisvander (1928-1989), assumed leadership of it. The ensemble gathered in rooms at the university until finding a place on Mosqueto Street. It was primarily a meeting place, a club, for bohemians, and Noisvander set up a mime school to help fund the place, which also received support from a member of the prominent Gandarillas family. The ensemble did not start offering public shows until 1957, when it presented *Recuerdos de mi niñez*, in which Noisvander presented a pantomimic montage of scenes from his childhood. The production attracted much attention from the international diplomatic community, which sponsored tours to Europe (including Moscow) and to several cities in Latin America. But the ensemble remained an amateur enterprise, which led to difficulties. The touring prevented the ensemble from developing new pieces or experimental exploration of performance possibilities. The group disintegrated when it returned to Chile in 1958. Noisvander then encountered Jaime Schneider (1940-2010), who, having attended a performance by Marceau in Chile that year, had resolved to become a mime. For a few years, the Teatro de Mimos consisted only of Noisvander and Schneider, until they added a couple more performers, including the dancer Rocío Rovira and the actor Oscar Figueroa. With *Historias de Amor*

(1961), the ensemble toured Southern Chile for the first time, performing in the remote town of Punta Arenas, where the audience consisted largely of workers and peasants. This experience caused the company to reconsider its ambitions, which subsequently became more socially conscious, as exemplified by *Crónicas de una Familia* (1964) and *Cataplúm, o de cómo aprendí a reírme de la historia y a no tenerle miedo a los bandidos* (1966), a big success. The company also became professional in the sense that it toured commercially in Europe and Latin America. In 1968, the ensemble, enlarged to fourteen persons, performed weekly on a television show, while Noisvander managed the pantomime academy and merged it with the formation of an Experimental Theater. In *Adiós Papá* (1971), the company began to introduce spoken dialogue, which continued with the production of a play, *La Kermesse* (1974), by the generally somber dramatist José Pineda (b. 1937), and the very popular *Educación Seximental* (1972). As Noisvander explained: "We realized that we had started to be actors when we premiered *Educación Seximental*. [...] The dialogue proposals were coming out where necessary. But if you measure the dialogues with the length of the work, you realize that the spoken part is about a third of the piece: everything else is action. That is not pure mime, it is not pure pantomime, but a pantomime we could call theatrical" (Piña 2014). But the turn to dialogue was in part a result of the political situation in Chile. In 1973, the ensemble was on tour in Venezuela when rightwing leaders of the Chilean armed forces, backed by the CIA, staged a violent coup against the socialist government of Salvador Allende (1908-1973) and established a military dictatorship under the control of General Augusto Pinochet (1915-2006) that lasted until 1990. The Pinochet regime regarded the Teatro de Mimos as a leftwing organization and had murdered the popular Communist folk singer Victor Jara (1932-1973), who had performed with the company. In Venezuela, some members did not want to return to Chile, and the ensemble broke up. Noisvander returned because he had to make payments on the loan he taken on to secure the company's theater, Petropol, which was across the street from one of the military offices. The incorporation of speech into performance helped to discourage the perception that the company had not adjusted to political realities and continued to perform the "pure pantomime" formerly associated with a leftwing activism. But by 1978, the company had resumed entirely pantomimic productions with *Cinehistorias Caupolicán* (1978). However, the company struggled to find an

audience within a society whose government was not keen to invest in the arts. Noisvander revived the pantomimes *Mimes, mimitos y mimotes* and *Mimomanías* from the 1970 children's television show, and he produced the musical revue *Petropol* (1979). But financial difficulties persisted. In 1981, he produced another pantomime "for adults": *Picardías de Fausto y Mefisto* (1981) with support from the German Goethe Institute. This production met with much success as far as attracting audiences, but these audiences could not generate enough revenue to prevent the demise of the Teatro de Mimos by 1984. Afflicted with alcoholism, Noisvander suffered further ailments and retreated to a nursing home, where he died in 1989 (Biblioteca Nacional Chilena 2017; Teatro Nescafé de los Artes 2015).

Yet it is difficult to ascertain the performance attributes of Noisvander's productions. Press coverage tends to publicize productions rather than to report what happened on stage. Realizing that Chilean pantomime history was in danger of evaporating altogether without scholarly intervention, in 2009, Francisca Infante Mott, a dance professor at the Catholic University in Santiago, collaborated with the Biblioteca Nacional to mount an exhibition on Noisvander and to identify archive materials related to the Teatro de Mimos, which included oral testimonies from surviving alumni of the ensemble. But the available oral histories consist largely of anecdotes that recount personal interactions, work habits, general aspirations, and appreciations. Descriptions of pantomime content remain frustratingly vague. Nevertheless, the digital archives provided by the library allow for some description of Noisvander's aesthetic. Influenced perhaps by Soviet film theory, Noisvander conceived of a pantomime production as "montage" of discrete scenes related to a governing theme rather than as program of unique, unrelated scenes designed to display the diversity or skill of the performers. *Recuerdos de mi niñez*, for example, presented various childhood "memories" with the ensemble wearing costumes from the 1930s and adults playing the children; *Historias de Amor* was a series of different love stories; *Crónicas de una Familia* depicted several generations of a family in a series of scenes from different decades. One of the most popular pantomimes was *Cataplúm o de cómo aprendí a reirme de la historia y a no tener miedo a los bandidos* (*Catapult or how I learned to laugh at history and not be afraid of bandits*): "The pantomime tells how God, when feeling a great uproar on the Earth, sent an angel to investigate what happened [and who became] the victim of the betrayals

and traps of man. The angel returns to heaven and tells God of cruelty, lust, excessive ambition, greed, the systematic destruction of nature, pollution, etc. God sends a message of salvation to men, but they misuse the new possibility and destroy themselves; then God decides to make a second creation" (Archivo Fotográfico 2017: AF0012772). The popular musical revue *Educación Seximental* (1972) inspired by far the most press commentary, for it was revived and toured several times into the early 1980s. The production satirized the concept of sex education by presenting a kind of humorous alternative history of sex education showing the knowledge of sexual life from the time one is a child to subsequent "sexological" episodes at different stages of life, such as playing doctor as a child, the overprotective mother, the evasive but macho father, the first teenage parties, the first birth, the first encounter with a prostitute, marriage "by Law, by the Church, and by force," and revealing the hypocrisy of parents and elders in controlling knowledge of sexuality in young people. The production featured both male and female nudity (*La Estrella Valparaiso* 23, V 1973: 19; cf. Piña 1973). Another unusual "montage" project, about which, however, far less is known, was *Cinehistorias Caupolicán*, apparently a revised "film history" of Chile from the perspective of Caupolicán, the leader of the failed war of the indigenous Mapuche people against the Conquistadores in Southern Chile. Noisvander's great ambition was to produce a montage pantomime on the history of the world, but this project never happened. Yet the concept of a pantomime production as a series of historical scenes linked to a governing theme was unique to Chilean pantomime, and Noisvander's ensemble realized this when they toured Europe and saw pantomimes (including Tomaszewski's) that did not attempt narratives covering broad expanses of time.

Moreover, much of Noisvander's choreographic approach to bodily signification derived from his and his actors' observations of how people from different sectors of society moved and interacted on streets, in homes, and in various places of work. Some small pieces were abstract in the French style, such as *Catedral Gótica* (1962), in which two men and a woman in black body stockings construct with their bodies a Gothic cathedral as if seen from different perspectives. Noisvander also inserted occasional dances, although these tended to follow the show dance model of building the special theme of a scene rather than providing an interlude to display skill at dancing. After the first tour of Europe in 1958, Noisvander

decided to dispense altogether with constructing a scenic context for the action. He concentrated on costumes, movement, and music to evoke different milieux and historical eras. The whiteface, French Pierrot look was a constant feature of his productions until 1966, with *Cataplúm*, which contrasted human whiteface characters with angels whose faces appear more "natural"; after this production, whiteface disappeared entirely, although Noisvander had combined whiteface and "natural" faces as early as 1956. He does not seem to have made any use of masks. The black body stocking was for many years the basic costume supplemented with accessories like hats, tunics, robes, skirts, or jackets that evoked a historical period or a profession: this convention allowed for quick costume changes [Figure 117]. Indeed, the most elaborate costumes appeared in his last production, *Picardías de Fausto y Mefisto* (1981), based on the seventeenth century German puppet play dramatizing Faust's bargain with Mephistopheles. Here Noisvander not only clad his eight actors (for fourteen characters) in quite detailed and elaborate costumes of the era; four of them wore huge paper mache heads with crowns to caricature the grotesquely distorted "humanness" ascribed to "heads of state." As for musical accompaniments, he favored recordings of popular songs (including non-Chilean pieces) or pieces evocative of an era, although in *Fausto y Mefisto* a speaker accompanied the action by reading from the old German text [Figure 117].





Figure 117: Top: Scene from *Cataplúm* (1966), directed by Enrique Noisvander, Santiago Chile. Bottom: Scene from Noisvander's production of *Picardías de Fausto y Mefisto* (1981), Santiago, Chile. Photos: Biblioteca Nacional de Chile.

The Teatro de Mimos drew inspiration and some ideas from the French pantomime tradition without professing a strong allegiance to it. Noisvander allowed his actors to bring their own experiences of Chilean history and culture to the shaping of performances with the aim of creating a distinctly Chilean mode of pantomime. Jodorowsky's carefree, bohemian spirit found an appropriate heir with Noisvander, for although he directed a pantomime academy, the school emphasized experimentation as the path to performance rather than disciplined mastery of the body. A crudeness or lack of elegance seems therefore to have afflicted his productions and was on occasion a source of conflict within the group, which to survive toured so relentlessly that it lacked enough time to perfect ideas or develop new ones sufficiently. But the political atmosphere of the dictatorship, which had no desire to extend public resources to the group, contributed to the "poverty" of the productions. Pantomime disappeared in Chile when Noisvander dissolved the Teatro de Mimos.

However, in 1989, one of Noisvander's actors, Mauricio Celedon (b. 1957) formed the Teatro del Silencio in Valparaiso. After performing street theater in Madrid in the early 1980s, he studied mime under Decroux and then Marceau. He started producing street performances in Toulouse and

for a few years he acted in productions directed by Ariane Mnouchkine at the Théâtre du Soleil in Paris. In Paris, he met the daughter of a diplomat, Claire Joinet (b. 1968), who became his wife, his partner in the Teatro del Silencio, and a lead actor in the productions. They wanted a theater "without borders" that combined pantomime, dance, music, and acrobatics. Their productions unfolded in streets and outdoor venues, beginning with *Transfusión* (1990), the theme of which was the migration of different peoples to the Americas. Subsequent productions included *Ocho Horas* (1991), which compiled images of labor struggles in Chicago in 1891; *Malasangre* (1991; revised 2010), "a show inspired by the life of the French poet Arthur Rimbaud [1854-1891]"; *Taca Taca, mon amour* (1993), which presented major icons and figures responsible for World War II interacting on a soccer field; *Nanaqui- Dossier N° 262 602* (1997), in which theatrical spectacle is a metaphor for the madness that afflicted the poet Antonin Artaud during the final years of his hospitalization; *Alice Underground* (1999), a kind of psychedelic circus inspired by Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) wherein several actors played Alice to create a "kaleidoscopic figure [who is] perceived from different angles and speeds"; *O Divina la Commedia* (2003-2008) depicted all three parts of Dante's 1320 epic poem; *Emma Darwin* (2010), an "occult poem" on the life of scientist Charles Darwin (1809-1882), as seen by his wife Emma (1808-1896); *Doctor Dapertutto* (2014) a street theater spectacle "inspired by the life and works of Russian theater director Vsevolod Meyerhold" and staging various scenes from Soviet history; *Oh! Secours et Cap au cimetière* (2017), an arena spectacle on the theme of Samuel Beckett's "nightmarish, comic, absurd, and poetic" relationship to Godot (cf. Teatro del Silencio 2017). The company moved from Valparaiso to Aurillac, France in the mid-1990s and remained there until 2009, when it moved to Paris.

The Teatro del Silencio has not constructed a distinctly Chilean world-view or performance aesthetic. Productions take their themes from European literature and history, and Celedon has worked steadfastly to integrate the company into the French cultural apparatus, beginning in 1993, with *Taca Taca, mon amour*, which received funding from the French Foreign Ministry as well as from the Chilean Ministry of Education, although members of the company remained largely Chilean until *Alice Underground* in 1999; Jodorowsky's son Cristobal (b. 1965) performed with the group for several years in the 1990s. But after 1997, support has come

overwhelmingly from various French cultural agencies. As a result, the company has obtained resources that were unimaginable to Noisvander or perhaps to anyone working in pantomime since him. But Celedon's connection to pantomime is tenuous. Teatro del Silencio has more closely resembled the "new circus" model pioneered by the Canadian Cirque du Soleil, now an enormous corporate entertainment conglomerate that also began as street theater. However, Celedon began his company at about the same time that Cirque du Soleil achieved its first big success in North America and was yet to recover from its considerable financial difficulties. Early on, Celedon saw the possibilities of a circus that appealed to a well-educated audience familiar with allusions, images, and emblems attached to literary works and historical events, whereas Cirque du Soleil built its productions around myths and fantasies supposedly shared by a global audience that did not have to "read into" the performance narrative anything more than wonderment at the mysterious, amazing nimbleness of human beings in completing seemingly dangerous but beautiful feats of bodily and mental agility. Teatro del Silencio bestowed a cultural "seriousness" on circus performance, which entailed a diminishment of pantomime in the construction of the performance, further intensified by the company's appropriation of elements from German Tanztheater and maybe even from Butoh. Pantomime functions primarily to transition from one dance or acrobatic act to another, while the dances and acrobatic acts embody the "ideas" advanced by a production. For example, in *Taca, Taca, mon amour*, a performer dressed up as Hitler in a military uniform struts up and down a soccer field while a team of synchronized dancers responds to his commands and manipulates poles that impale naked dummies. Since *Nanaqui*, the company has featured rope climbers and trapeze artists to create the impression of a major character, in this case Antonin Artaud, dangling perilously in a nightmarish mental landscape. A reviewer for *La Montagne* (August 19, 1999) described *Alice Underground* as Celedon's effort to "go to the other side of the mirror to meet Alice's nightmares. Her white silhouette runs along a pit from which the symbolic characters of Carroll will rise up against those of our 'History.' Alice's visions, as we know, distort reality, but how can we not recognize under their grotesque appearance the stars of the great tyrants of this century? [The figures of Karl Marx, Lenin, Che Guevera, and Salvador Allende appear in the piece.] Very physical, the play of the actors skillfully expresses all the suffering, the pain, of an

amputated people, and some day, of their freedom. Beautiful aerial scenes alternate with the 'underground,' provoking with the same force and each time a multitude of emotions. At the heart of this choreography of a world in agony, the smell of the earth is tenacious" (Teatro del Silencio 2017). Casts are fairly large and the costumes elaborate, perhaps most successfully in *Malasangre*, which contains a spectacular ethnographic imagining of Rimbaud's encounter with a luxuriously garbed Arab entourage, but with *O Divina la Commedia*, Celedon began including copious amounts of nudity in his productions (while including the presence of Nazis and concentration camp inmates in Purgatory, among other anachronisms in the style of director-driven opera productions). Technological effects became more complex: in *Emma Darwin*, simultaneous actions (dances, acrobatics) occur on two stages, with one stage elevated above the main stage, while behind both stages six large video screens continuously project imagery. Unusual stunts abound, such as, in *Emma Darwin*, a woman in white singing while standing on top of a rolling grand piano pushed by the man playing it; men push a woman in a rolling cage that also contains actual birds; "colonialists" drag boxes containing the bodies of naked "indigenous" people. In *Oh! Secours*, a woman in a hospital gown sings while writhing in a hospital bed pushed by an attendant. In *Cap au cimetière*, a seemingly pregnant woman in a pale body stocking opens her belly and black coal dust pours out. Many scenes in the company's productions contain mass movement and processional tropes inspired apparently by agit-prop theater techniques from the 1920s. The title of the company appears ironic, for its productions are generally quite loud and full of dissonant or hectoring, haranguing sounds, music, or shouted speeches. The original music by numerous composers is always aggressively contemporary; for example, Rimbaud and his Parisian pals in evening clothes perform a sitting dance to the accompaniment of an industrial rock beat (Teatro del Silencio Archive).

Yet as political theater, the Teatro del Silencio has not been particularly adventurous, oriented as it is toward a bourgeois, state-institutionalized, slightly left of center political and historical consciousness honoring the weight of the past rather than envisioning the future. As Claire Joinet remarked in relation to *Alice Underground*, memory is what drives the company's work (*El Mercurio de Valparaíso* 21 January 2001). The company's shows strive to reach large audiences in public squares and arenas with the aim of presenting a shared, tragic historical heritage that is

the presumed basis for social unity against tyrannical emblems or assertions of power. Yet Celedon's concept of an interdisciplinary "theater without borders" subordinates pantomime to acrobatics and elaborate techno-stunts because the concept also subordinates the body to the principle of political "memory" as the rationale for performance: bodies within this philosophy are perpetually "victims" of history, of the crushing power of memory and dominating images of the past, and, unlike the mythic, aspirational fantasy message of Cirque du Soleil, no amount of suave pantomime, indeed, no awesome frenzied dancing, militant mass movement, contortionism, gymnastics, acrobatics, or stunning balancing acts allows the body to escape its "tragic" subordination to a communal idea of the public gathered in the streets. Here interdisciplinarity signifies democratic inclusiveness. Pantomime perhaps signifies too much of an "imperial" perception of the body to fit into the "serious" circus mode of interdisciplinary theater. Noisvander saw pantomime as a way to represent history as a montage of "silent" images guiding the body, whereas Celedon sees large-scale, interdisciplinary street theater as a way to represent history as a kind of great force that dissolves borders between the arts but at the same time somehow makes the body seem smaller, less triumphant, less in control of reality than basic pantomimic action.

Lindsay Kemp

In England, pantomime in the postwar era departed from the imperturbable Christmas pantomime format through the figure of Lindsay Kemp (1938-2018). Though he studied under Marceau, most of his education was in dance, in London, from the Marie Rambert Company and Hilde Holger (1905-2001), a Viennese expatriate and exponent of expressionist dance. He claimed that, from infancy, "I never walked, I always danced. For me dancing is so much more pleasurable than walking" (Lewis 2016). Yet he was never important as a dancer or choreographer. It was his skill in pantomime that enabled him to enjoy a very long career as a performer. After struggling for several years to discover his own unique performance style, he formed a three-person company in 1964, which staged a mime revue in London, *Clowns* (1966). The show impressed the rock musician David Bowie (1947-2016), who became Kemp's student at the Covent Garden Dance Centre, and then invited Kemp to collaborate with him on music productions. Through Kemp, Bowie, whose career as a singer

kept stalling, learned how to construct a more effective, theatrical performance persona, for Kemp displayed a powerfully liberating fearlessness in cultivating a flamboyantly theatrical personality. Bowie and Kemp produced a pantomime, *Pierrot in Turquoise* (1967), for which Bowie wrote the songs and played the character Cloud; Kemp played Pierrot, whom Colombine discards in favor of Harlequin; Pierrot kills Harlequin and maybe Colombine as well when she resists his attempt to rape her (*Pierrot in Turquoise* 2015 [1970]; cf. Waldrep 2015: 25). The show was peculiar for several reasons: Cloud (Bowie), in whiteface and white gown, was a melancholy, singing commentator on the pantomimic action. Harlequin (Jack Birkett [1934-2010]) was a bald, nearly nude, muscular black man who wore large earrings and mascara and knitted. Birkett, who had worked with Kemp since 1956, was also blind. Pierrot wore a sixteenth century tunic while Colombine (Annie Stainer) wore a complementary period dress and extravagant blonde wig, but she bared her breasts for Harlequin. Pierrot inhabited a cluttered room stuffed with Victorian bric-a-brac, and when, after dressing, he looks into a full-length mirror, he sees Colombine. When he steps through the mirror toward her, he enters an abstract space, filled with ladders and manikins, where sexual scenes and the murders take place. *Pierrot in Turquoise* was not a comic piece, but a bizarre evocation of pathos stimulated less by the conventional tragic love triangle story than by a "fatal" atmosphere of sexual ambiguity. Kemp worked with Bowie on fashioning the singer's alien, androgynous "Space Oddity/Ziggy Stardust" persona of the early 1970s, and in the late 1970s, he worked with English rock singer Kate Bush (b. 1958) in developing an energetic movement style for her concert performances and music videos: "I had no qualifications in ballet. I had almost given up the idea of using dance as an extension of my music, until I met Lindsay Kemp, and that really did change so many of my ideas. He was the first person to actually give me some lessons in movement [...] it's more like mime" (Bush 1982). In 1973, Kemp produced in London *Flowers, a Pantomime for Jean Genet*, which became perhaps his most successful production and which Kemp himself regarded as his "most fabulous" achievement. He based the piece on the novel *Notre Dame de les Fleurs* (1943) by Jean Genet (1910-1986), who wrote the book clandestinely while imprisoned for theft. Initially, Kemp wanted to stage Genet's one-act play *The Maids* (1947), with men playing the maids and their female employer in drag, as Genet intended, but another London theater forbade

him because it had already scheduled its own production starring Susannah York, Vivien Merchant, and Glenda Jackson. He responded by putting together *Flowers* in a hastily improvised manner.

Genet's novel poetically inventories the various sordid, underworld characters who inspire the incarcerated narrator's masturbatory sexual fantasies. The chief criminal character is the transvestite prostitute Divine, whose death the narrator announces at the beginning of the book, which therefore describes his memories of Divine and her interactions with different criminals, including her masochistic love for the murderous pimp Darling Daintyfoot. In *Flowers*, Kemp plays Divine in whiteface and whitened body and in several different costumes. As in nearly every one of his subsequent productions, he removes his wig to display his bald head. Much of the action consists of showing Divine's attraction to men in a gay nightclub setting and the men leaving her for other men to emphasize Genet's theme of betrayal as the basis for the redemptive "abjection" he regards as proof of love. Divine performs a couple of slow solo dances, makes sweeping and delicate movements with a fan, makes voluptuous movements with a veil, and, powdered entirely in white and wearing only a jockstrap and a veil, metamorphoses into Our Lady of the Flowers, a saintly figure who hovers affectionately over the the nearly nude body of a symbolically crucified criminal. The music accompanying the action consists of recorded excerpts of classical music, religious music, ballet music, and old music hall tunes. Lush and sometimes lurid colored light bathes the stage. While Kemp likes to sprint about when he dances, most of his movements are slow, deliberate, protracted, and the pace of the show (and in all subsequent productions) is leisurely, for, as he explained, "I always take my time, because I love to make the audience wait, and the audience loves that." The slowness, he believed, contributes to a mood of "intoxication" that is the goal of performance: "I'm terribly into intoxication—that's the only thing that counts" (Brown 1974). Before *Flowers*, pantomime had perhaps never represented male homosexuality—and certainly male masturbation—so explicitly. His audience was—and remained—primarily gay, but that audience was large enough to sustain him and his company for decades. The extravagantly theatrical "camp" aesthetic ascribed to him signified an art openly designed for the pleasure of homosexuals without, however, becoming confused with the parodies and comic travesties of nightclub drag acts. Kemp brought a sweet pathos,

an "intoxicating" self-indulgence, and a seriousness of purpose to his flamboyant productions that released camp from the need to be laughable. With him, pantomime signified a rapturous freedom of being that entailed a daring, necessary shamelessness. Occasionally he appeared as a bizarre character in films, perhaps most memorably in *Sebastiane* (1976), directed by Derek Jarman (1942-1994). Here he was an ancient Roman dancer performing for "decadent" aristocrats at a villa party. His dance is lewd: he is nude except for an ornamental codpiece, his entire body is powdered white and his eyes heavily mascared. As he undulates lasciviously, he excites a group of six otherwise nude men who wear giant paper mache penises. These men circle around him with increasing frenzy, prodding him with their penises, until they lift him up, glorify him, lower him to the marble floor, and ejaculate onto him. It is a scene of "intoxicating" excess that tests the film viewer's capacity for shamelessness.

After *Flowers*, he produced numerous pantomimes that toured internationally: *Salomé* (1975), *Mr. Punch's Pantomime* (1975), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1979), *Duende* (1980), *Façade* (1982), *Nijinsky* (1982), *The Big Parade* (1985), *Alice* (1988), *Onnagata* (1990), *Cinderella* (1993), *Variété* (1996), *Rêves de Lumière* (1997), *Dreamdances* (1998), *Elizabeth's Last Dance* (2005) and *Kemp Dances* (2015), with many of these shows employing music written for them by the Chilean composer Carlos Miranda (b. 1945) (cf. Wilms 1987). But none of these productions achieved nearly the impact of *Flowers*; while his literary and historical inspirations changed over the years, he relied almost entirely on the pantomimic tropes, devices, movements, and images that he introduced in *Flowers*. Nevertheless, as Margaret Willis has remarked, "he possesses a magnetic personality onstage that draws the onlooker into his make-believe world. His skin is painted white, his eyes panda-black, and his lips ruby-red; his puckish features are topped by his shiny bald head. And he likes to wear dresses. His drag performances are reminiscent of a beloved granny getting up to do an impromptu party piece with an endearing abandon, beaming with a self-satisfaction that cuts through any embarrassment" (Willis 2002). In 1979, he moved his company to Spain, where his shows were very popular; in 1991, he moved the company to Rome and to a former monastery. But in Britain, despite the proliferation of mime courses and the prestigious annual London International Mime Festival, established in 1977, no one has come

close to matching Kemp's success in pantomime, perhaps because it requires an intimidating level of courage (cf., Senelick 2000, 409-411).

The Extinction of the Pantomimic Literary Imagination

Performers and directors completely defined pantomime culture after World War II, even if literary works sometimes inspired them. Pantomime came from performers and directors who wanted to control the imaginary lives they lived on stage rather than perform the lives assigned to them by the authors of dramatic texts. The literary imagination, which exerted so much influence over pantomime at the beginning of the twentieth century, has been completely absent from pantomime culture since Herzmanowsky-Orlando wrote scenarios in 1941 that he never even published, although by then he realized that theater implacably regarded pantomime as an obsolete genre. Since then, writers have seemed incapable of thinking pantomimically, incapable of imagining theatrical performance without speech, without assuming that spoken language causes and resolves all conflicts. In the early decades of the twentieth century, a sector of the Austro-German literary imagination turned to pantomime as a response to a perceived "crisis" in language. Pantomime allowed them to represent "invisible" zones of reality that eluded the power of language to reveal. Since World War II, however, dramatic writers generally have perceived a different sense of crisis in language: if anything, they have tried to restore credibility to language, which otherwise seemed to lack "authority" unless backed by incredible, unprecedented levels of physical violence. In reality, the dramatic literary imagination was afraid of performing bodies that did not speak, could not imagine life without voices, whereas actors and directors could.

Beckett's *Acts without Words*

In 1956, an English dancer and actor, Deryk Mendel (1920-2013), performed in a Paris cabaret a clown act based on the character of Frollo in Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris*. The management asked him to come up with a new Frollo piece for the next program. Mendel contacted several French absurdist dramatists in Paris, including Samuel Beckett (1906-1989), inviting

them to write a piece for him. Beckett agreed, after his companion Suzanne Déchevaux-Dumesnil (1900-1989) reported enthusiastically about Mendel's performance. He wrote *Act without Words*, a pantomime for one actor, but the cabaret could not stage it because the text requires the suspension of scenic objects over the stage and the theater had no flyweight system (Knowlson 1996: 377-378). Eventually Mendel staged the piece in April 1957 at the Royal Court Theatre in London, following the premiere performance of Beckett's drama *Endgame*. Beckett saw the pantomime as an opportunity to commission his cousin John Stewart Beckett (1927-2007) to write incidental music for it. He claimed to have written the piece out of his affection for comic silent film performers like Buster Keaton (1895-1966), Ben Turpin (1869-1940), and Harry Langdon (1884-1944), but he probably would never have written a pantomime if Mendel had not invited him to and if Suzanne Déchevaux-Dumesnil had not encouraged him to do it as a way of breaking out of a creative "impasse." *Act without Words* takes place in the "dazzling light" of a desert. It begins with a man "flung" backwards on to the stage. He responds to the sound of a whistle to the right and to the left, but gets flung back each time. After performing each action, he "reflects," but all of his actions fail to alleviate his lonely, isolated situation. Objects descend from the sky: a palm tree, a pair of tailor's scissors, a carafe labeled "water," a big cube, and then a smaller cube, but he does not notice the objects until the whistle calls his attention to them. He looks at his hands while "reflecting." He tries to pile the cubes to reach the carafe, but falls instead. The carafe pulls away from his reach. A rope descends; he tries to climb it to reach the carafe, and when this fails, he cuts the rope to make a lasso by which he can capture the carafe, but this strategy also fails, as does his effort to hang himself. Another whistle beckons him from the right wing, but when he tries to exit, he gets flung back. When, however, a whistle sounds from the left wing, he does not move, but merely "reflects" and trims his nails with the scissors. The objects fly upward. When he sits on the big cube, it pulls upwards and dislodges the man. He lies on the ground. The carafe drops down to a few feet from him. The whistle sounds. But the man doesn't move. The palm tree disappears, the whistle sounds, but the man doesn't move. "He looks at his hands" (Beckett 1984: 37-40). In *Act without Words*, Beckett uses pantomime to construct an existential parable of human existence: a human body gets thrown into a deserted, inhospitable place from which no escape is possible. Life in this space offers

temptations, rewards, hopes, opportunities, but these are all beyond man's capacity to realize, they are illusions that leave man in a space he longs to escape. After much "reflection," he realizes that he must refuse to obey the whistle calls of illusion, that he must find purpose within himself, in his hands, in his powerlessness, his non-response to external distractions.

Beckett apparently wrote *Act without Words II* around the same time that he wrote *Act without Words*, but this second short pantomime did not have its premiere performance until 1960, in London. In this piece, the spectator sees a "neat pile of clothes" beside which, in "frieze effect," are two sacks, B and A, and each contains a man. A long pole, called a "goad," enters horizontally from the right. The goad patiently succeeds in prodding the man in sack A to move. "A, wearing shirt, crawls out of sack, halts, broods, prays, broods, gets to his feet, broods, takes a little bottle of pills from his shirt pocket, broods, swallows a pill, puts bottle back, broods, goes to clothes, broods, puts on clothes, broods, takes a large partly eaten carrot from coat pocket, bites off a piece, chews an instant, spits it out with disgust, puts carrot back, broods, picks up two sacks, carries them bowed and staggering half-way to left wing, sets them down, broods, takes off clothes (except shirt), lets them fall in an untidy heap, broods, takes another pill, broods, kneels, prays, crawls into sack and lies still, sack A being now to left of sack B." The goad enters again, this time on a wheel, and prods B, who crawls out of the sack and performs a variety of different actions, among others: "he consults a large watch, puts watch back, does exercises, consults watch, takes a tooth brush from shirt pocket and brushes teeth vigorously, puts brush back, rubs scalp vigorously, takes a comb from shirt pocket and combs hair, puts comb back, consults watch, goes to clothes, puts them on, consults watch, takes a brush from coat pocket and brushes clothes vigorously, brushes hair vigorously, puts brush back, takes a little mirror from coat pocket and inspects appearance, puts mirror back, takes carrot from coat pocket [...]." He takes off his clothes and puts them in a pile and moves the sacks to their original position and crawls into his sack to the left of A. The goad enters again now on two wheels and prods A to repeat the action all over again (Beckett 1984: 41-43). The pantomime dramatizes a mechanistic condition of human existence. "Life" is dormant, "sacked away," until prodded or goaded awake by an abstract, inhuman mechanical power. Existence consists of performing and repeating a series of mundane actions until a moment of "brooding" or "consulting" compels

the performer to return to a state of dormancy after arranging the sacks so that he will not be "goaded" awake too soon. Theaters around the world continue to perform either of the two pantomimes fairly often, both were part of the *Beckett on Film* (2001) project, a Hollywood animation company made a 1960 cartoon film of *Act without Words*, and the pieces have inspired some complex scholarly commentary (cf. Lamont 1987; Zilliacus 1993; Zhghenti 2014). But after 1956, Beckett never returned to pantomime. With these two little pieces, he prescribed all the actions a voiceless body could perform to represent his existentialist view of humanity.

Peter Handke

The only other notable postwar literary dramas that resemble pantomimes are *Das Mündel will Vormund sein* (1969) and *Die Stunde, da wir nichts voneinander wußten* (1992), by the Austrian novelist and dramatist Peter Handke (b. 1942). *Das Mündel will Vormund sein* (*The Ward Wants to Be the Guardian*) belongs to Handke's youthful period of radically questioning the institutionalized conventions of theater, including the roles that speech and language play in accommodating these repressive conventions, with his most famous work of that time, *Kaspar* (1967), consisting of a single character on stage, Kaspar, struggling to speak a single sentence with competence, conviction, authority, power, insight, uncertainty, freedom, or other conditions masked by the words. *Das Mündel will Vormund sein* is a two-person pantomime set in a rural space, a farmhouse before a large beet field. The text prescribes in great detail the physical actions of two men, the ward and the warden, farmers who wear masks and engage in a competition to determine to what extent the warden can control the actions of the ward. A cat is also part of the beginning and ending scenes, and "does what it does." In the opening scene, the ward eats an apple unself-consciously until the warden appears, holding a pumpkin, and attempts to control the ward through a steady stare, an act of aggressive surveillance that makes the ward increasingly self-conscious and somehow imperfectly "compliant." The scene becomes dark and "we" can only hear a strange breathing that "is 'like' the strongly amplified breathing of an old man, but not quite; on the other hand, it is 'like' the strongly amplified breathing of a wild animal that has been cornered, but not quite, either; it is 'voracious,' 'frightened,' 'ominous,' but not quite; at times it seems to signify someone's "death throes" to us, but somehow it doesn't

either because it appears to change constantly" (Handke 1973: 14; 1970: 65). The breathing vanishes, replaced by music, the chord strumming of "Colors for Susan" (1967), by Country Joe and the Fish. When the stage is bright again, the scene shows the interior of the farmhouse, which the text describes in elaborate detail. While the ward and warden listen "pleasantly" to the music, the warden continually performs small physical actions that apparently test or define the ward's capacity to respond to them:

> *The warden folds the newspaper page in half and goes on reading.*
> *The ward pulls a pencil out of his pants pocket, a carpenter's pencil like the warden's, only smaller; he uses it to mark the book while reading.*
> *The warden goes on folding the paper.*
> *The ward no longer marks in his book but crosses something out.*
> *The warden goes on folding as best he can.*
> *The ward is obviously starting to draw in the little book.*
> *The warden folds.*
> *The ward exceeds the margins of the book while drawing and begins to draw on palm of his hand.*
> *The warden: see above.*
> *The ward draws on the back of his hand.*
> *The warden is gradually forced to start crumpling the paper, but we don't actually notice the transition from folding to crumpling.*
> *The ward draws on his lower arm; what he draws doesn't necessarily have to resemble the warden's tattoos.*
> *The warden is obviously no longer reading or folding but is vigorously crumpling.*
> *Both figures are vigorously occupied, one with drawing, the other with crumpling.*
> *The warden completes the crumpling process and the paper is now a tight ball.*
> *The ward is still drawing.*
> *The warden is quiet, the ball of paper in his fist; he looks at his opposite who is drawing* (1973: 20-21; 1970: 68).

The scene continues with the warden making different movements at the table, then walking around, then climbing onto the table, elevating himself

higher than the ward, who always remains "lower." But then, the warden lies down and the ward cannot make himself lower than the warden. A profusion of other actions occur. At one point, the warden cuts his toenails and then his fingernails, while the ward picks up the clippings. Later, the warden fills a teakettle with water from a hose and the ward grinds coffee until the teakettle blows. After another dark scene, the ward tosses thistles on the back of the warden, while the warden writes obliviously until he turns around and the ward throws the remaining thistles onto his chest. A while later, the warden physically and "non-violently" adjusts the position of the sitting ward and, after a prolonged stillness, begins tossing bottles at the ward, who displays complete incompetence at catching them, except for the last one: "We are startled." The warden eventually decides to leave the kitchen, and the ward intends to follow, but the warden insists on closing the door behind him and overcomes the ward's effort to open the door. The ward nevertheless crawls outside through another door "as if for a dog." Outside again, rain is imminent. The ward unveils a beet slicing machine and demonstrates the slicing of beets. The ward, however, has difficulty operating the machine. The warden watches him fail repeatedly as the stage grows dark and the ominous breathing returns. In the final scene, the ward enters the place before the house carrying a small tub and rubber hose. "He is no longer wearing his coveralls." He sets the tub down, places one end of the hose into it, and "we hearing running water into the tub." The ward returns with a sack, from which he draws a handful of sand. He lets the sand fall through his fingers into the tub and repeats this action until the stage goes dark (Handke 1973: 7-38; 1970: 62-83).

Handke expects the actors to perform the many actions naturalistically, with the idea of showing how a person controls another person through physical actions alone, and how the other person responds to this control entirely with physical actions that reveal a condition of dependence, incompetent compliance, resistance, provocation, submission, defeat, or (at the end) conquest. The piece is a theatrical allegory of male competitiveness, a sobering demonstration of how assertions of power operate outside of language, in simple, minute physical actions that have no motive other than to cause another person to act "accordingly," to acknowledge a dependent relation, to accept control by another, even if acceptance means resistance or imperfect obedience. Handke explores how bodies construct power relations, struggles for power without resorting to

physical violence, without reliance on the "civilizing" oppressions embedded in language. The final scene suggests that the ward has become independent, free of his guardian. Some commentators read the ending as a triumph of the ward over his oppressor, an allegory of revolutionary overthrow. But the ward never indicates that the warden oppresses or abuses him; rather, the ward responds variously to the warden's physical assertions of power—the ward assumes he must respond in a "submissive" manner without the warden having even to give a commanding gesture. After all, the ward picks up the fingernail and toenail clippings without the warden signifying that he should do so. The text does not indicate the conditions under which the ward has obtained his independence, nor does the play, in spite of its title, show that the ward and warden have reversed roles. The ward is independent insofar as his guardian is absent and he is able to perform the inscrutable actions of filling a tub with water and pouring sand through his hand into the water: a state of independence, of being "free" of responding to someone more powerful, of having no dependent relation to a guardian, is something the text implies "we" cannot understand, because it happens in darkness. The performance of the play's actions may at moments seem tedious, but manifestations of power probably do depend on tedious bodily actions or actions that have no greater purpose than to provoke the response of another body. This point seems connected to the "we" invoked by the text, the "we" who are named as spectators of the performance. Bonnie Marranca considers this "we" as "a kind of literary authoritarianism," a "coercion" of the reader/spectator to respond to the action the same way as the person employing the "we." The play is thus a "confrontation with the audience in which the dialectic is played out, not on the stage, but in the relationship between stage and audience" (Marranca 1977: 275). In other words, pantomime itself is the revelation of a power dynamic insofar as it provokes the audience to respond to it "accordingly" and pantomimically: "We are startled." Claus Peymann (b. 1937), whose own distinguished career began with directing premieres of Handke's early plays, directed the premiere of *Das Mündel will Vormund sein* at Frankfurt in January 1969. The production attracted much attention, as any work by Handke did and still does, but although the piece has occasionally been revived on the stage, it has not enjoyed as much popularity in the theater as other Handke plays. A production in New York in 1971, under the title, *My Foot, My Tutor*, provoked some intellectual

discussion without provoking much acclaim. The piece did nothing to motivate other writers for the stage to compose pantomime scenarios, and *Das Mündel will Vormund sein* effectively represented a unique experiment in speechless theater of which Handke had somehow earned exclusive ownership: it was as if, having written a pantomime, Handke had exhausted the possibility of anyone else writing another one.

Nevertheless, Handke himself wrote another one twenty-three years later, *Die Stunde, da wir nichts voneinander wußten* (1992). As a performance, however, "the hour we knew nothing of each other" lasts at least a hundred minutes. Although no one speaks a word during the entire performance, Handke calls his piece a play, not a pantomime. He instructs "a dozen actors and lovers" to perform hundreds of roles during the performance, but in practice, theaters have required more than two dozen actors to handle all the roles. Handke claims that the idea for the play came from sitting all day in an outdoor café in Muggia, Italy and watching people pass by. The action of the play unfolds in a brightly lit town square, for which Handke provides no further contextual details other than mentioning in his dedication "to S" the square before the Centre Commerciale du Mail in Vélizy, France, which is actually now a mall. Handke here applies a strategy that is the exact opposite of his strategy in *Das Mündel will Vormund sein*. In the earlier play, he prescribed a great profusion of minutely detailed actions performed by single, interacting characters. In *Die Stunde, da wir nichts voneinander wußten*, he presents single actions performed by a great profusion of characters. The piece begins with a single person of unspecified sex rushing across the stage followed by another rushing in the opposite direction. A third and fourth person cross the stage. Subsequently hundreds of characters appear on the stage, some defined only by the actions they perform, some by their actions and the clothes they wear. Only a few characters appear more than once, so that the performance resembles a grand procession of "types" of people who appear momentarily, hardly more than thirty seconds, and then disappear. Handke strives to provide a constant processional variety of characters and actions:

> *A woman in a headscarf and rubber boots crosses the square, she drags a watering can and carries a wilted, rotting flower bouquet that she in a high wave throws behind the scene.*

> *In the next moment comes from somewhere else an equally well-dressed type of Old Woman, with a sickle, a travel bag, and a handbasket overflowing with forest mushrooms.*
> *A third woman, undefinable, dressed almost the same, moves in a different direction, with nothing in her hands, the back and neck deeply bent, the face directed to the ground, steady, hardly moving from the spot, and behind her succeeds another wanderer, clogging the path, bit by bit, as if the path was too narrow for overtaking with a long-distance vision, without eyes for the thing before the wandering peaks* (Handke 1992: 21-22)

Occasionally characters briefly interact with each other or appear as a group: an ensemble of refugees, a circus troupe, "two or three in winter clothes" meeting "two or three in summer clothes." Pairs appear once in a while: a man dressed as a woman with a woman dressed as a man; "a man and a woman place their hands on each other's genitals," a man follows a woman. Otherwise unrelated individuals perform the hundreds of actions, such as a person whizzing by on roller skates, another reading a book, or a man pulling a wagon full of masks. The actions do not seem related to each other and could happen in a different order, but the second half of the play creates a more hallucinatory panorama than the first half as characters from different historical eras or cultural contexts appear:

> *[…] a youth blows out the old one's candle; the lighthouse keeper marches through; a patrol [passes] with dangling hand shells and talons; a wanderer goes audibly through a deep pile of leaves; the grandfather carries a winding snake from the floor; the Portuguese woman leaps up; the girl from Marseille steps onto the harbor dock; the Jewess of Herzliya throws gas masks into the alley, the Mongolian woman strides through with a falcon; the patroness of Toledo pulls a lion's skin over herself* (62).

Chaplin and Moses also appear momentarily. It is clear that the piece does not represent continuous real-time actions but a theatrical abstract of many actions that occur in a generic space over long periods of time. Handke indicates numerous pauses when the stage is empty before a new set of actions resumes. Although no one speaks a word or even intimates they are

speaking, some characters make sighs or cries. Dogs bark, bells toll, storm thunder resounds, but Handke indicates no musical accompaniment. The piece ends with a First Spectator leaving his seat to join the throng on stage, but he becomes disoriented and flees; a Second Spectator tries to intervene, but two women hanging wash hinder him. A Third Spectator "threads himself into the scene and meanders, obviously of course, with the undisturbed procession. Coming and going, coming and going. Then the square becomes dark" (64). The piece therefore is not a project to see with documentary precision the actions of people as one might see them from a detached vantage point, such as a table in an outdoor café. Such a project would require a degree of naturalism and anthropological observation of actual persons that is nowhere evident in the play. Rather, the aim is to show how a generic public space hosts an immense variety of actions or types of actions whose "meanings" remain opaque or indecipherable to anyone but those who perform them. The theater spectator may consume the spectacle of multitudinous actions performed by hundreds of people, but the spectacle is only an accumulating phantasmagoria of unknowing. "We do not know each other" by presuming that the crowd, the public, or the community "we" observe is somehow "us," even if the actions people perform are familiar. In reality, as revealed theatrically rather than anthropologically, the public is nothing more than a procession of individuals who know nothing of each other any more than they know of its "audience" and can only be known as momentary figures who have imprinted themselves in memory because of some inscrutable peculiarity in their performance of a fleeting action. As usual, Claus Peymann directed the premiere of *Die Stunde, da wir nichts voneinander wußten*, in 1992, at the Burgtheater in Vienna. The production and the play received abundant acclaim, as did subsequent productions in Bochum (1993), directed by Jürgen Gosch (1943-2009), and in Berlin (1994), directed by Luc Bondy (1948-2015) (cf. Meurer 2007: 159-197). Since then the piece has enjoyed numerous productions internationally, occasionally outdoors, with directors varying widely in their organization of the action, so that some productions seem like civic pageants while others resemble stylized critiques of "modern" society. Despite the cost of acquiring so many actors and costumes to produce it, *Die Stunde, da wir nichts voneinander wußten* remains one of Handke's most popular works for the theater. Again, though, his venture into pantomime has failed to motivate any other

dramatic author to work in the genre, and he himself has made no further attempt. The international postwar literary imagination evidently believes that only one literary writer in the whole world should or needs to write pantomimes, and having written one, it is almost impossible to write another without it becoming a singular, monumental project to overcome, however briefly (100 minutes), an overpowering doubt about the capacity of a "play" to sustain the attention of a theater audience without the performers speaking.

The Silence (1963)

In the postwar era, motion pictures have shown greater propensity than theater to explore the possibilities of pantomimic action, particularly since the 1960s, when the film industry internationally made a concerted effort to free itself from the excessive reliance on talk that dominated filmmaking in the 1940s and 1950s. Movies anyway often contain actions in which characters do not speak, and the screen time for these actions increased considerably from the 1960s onward, although the purpose of these actions was seldom to focus the viewer's attention on how actors performed them or to make unspeaking actions the subject of cinematic narrative, and the postwar film industry has never believed that the artistic or financial value of films would expand if they contained no voices at all. Even so, films have appeared, largely in a comic vein, that consist almost entirely of pantomimic actions, such as the comedies *Mon Oncle* (1958) and *Playtime* (1967), directed by Jacques Tati (1907-1982), the Mr. Bean films (1997, 2007) and television show (2002-2004; 2015-2016) produced by and starring the English comedian Rowan Atkinson (b. 1955), or *The Artist* (2011), directed by Michel Hazanavicius (b. 1967), a black-and-white film that strives to emulate qualities of silent films in the late 1920s and depicts the relationship between a Hollywood film star and a young actress during the period when movies transitioned to "talkies." The American independent film *Trapped by Mormons* (2005), directed by Ian Allen, was another black-and-white effort to reproduce the qualities of a silent film from the 1920s by having the story take place in the 1920s, and Allen modeled his film after the English silent film melodrama *Trapped by Mormons* (1922), directed by H. B. Parkinson (1884-1970). Both *The Artist* and *Trapped by Mormons* associate cinematic pantomime with silent film and not with the time in which the films were made: pantomime signifies

an "old" way of acting, it evokes a nostalgic mood, or, as in *Trapped by Mormons*, it affirms a "camp" pleasure in celebrating unfashionably extravagant, melodramatic action. The Canadian director Guy Maddin (b. 1956) has also appropriated silent film gestural tropes in films like *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* (1988) and *Archangel* (1990), always for a comic or "camp" effect, but he tends to integrate bodily actions into montage imagery that relies on many editing and photographic processes: pantomime does not construct the narrative; rather, the narrative consists of complex images that reference silent film poses and gestures in the desire to create a dreamlike, mythic vision that is also "old," an element of cinematic consciousness whose "kitsch" style still exerts an appeal for "our" time.

A more "serious" approach to pantomime in film entails pantomimic action that the filmmakers do not build around the unique skills of a particular actor to perform gags, slapstick, or stunts or around a director's unique skill at visualizing a narrative. That is, the pantomimic action is unique to the narrative and its characters, and different actors and directors will perform the pantomimic action differently. The pantomimic action constructs a narrative that is larger, so to speak, than any interpretation of it or even the medium of interpretation. The literary imagination is the primary source for such narratives. Directors like Tomaszewski and Mackevičius created powerful pantomimes inspired by literary works their authors never considered as pantomimes. Since the end of the silent film era, however, filmmakers have shown little inclination to construct narratives out of pantomimic action, for this would involve building sequences of physical actions related to the theme of the body's detachment from speech, to what the body "says" rather than what the performer or director "says" in performing them. The pantomimic imagination is a vision of how bodies signify uniquely in relation to a theme in which speech is an unhelpful distraction, if not an ailment—but rare are the filmmakers with an interest in this theme. That is to say, the pantomimic imagination is the subject of the film—the sequence of physical actions is in the story, not in the screenplay or film, although these may include pantomimic action in their adaptation of the story. Directors, however, may possess literary imaginations insofar as they are authors of stories and think pantomimically in constructing their stories.

A good example of this "serious" approach to cinematic pantomime is the 1963 Swedish film *The Silence* (*Tystnaden*), directed by Ingmar Bergman (1918-2007), who shot the film in September 1962. Although he is famous as a film and theater director, Bergman also wrote plays, short stories, and novels as well as the screenplays for all the films he directed and screenplays for films directed by others. He possessed a literary imagination in that his way of seeing of the world, his "stories," entered his mind at a level above their realization in a particular medium. *The Silence* is not a pantomime film like *The Artist*. The film contains brief passages of dialogue, but these bear directly on the theme of "silence" accompanying the actions of the characters, and Bergman himself, though proud of the film, later concluded that much of the dialogue was "unnecessary" (Bergman 1994: 109). While making *The Silence*, Bergman kept a notebook in which he self-consciously described his efforts to make a film that did not rely on speech. He described his own films as suffering from what he called "dialogue disease." "I have to curb my delight in [writing] dialogues. [...] But how... incredibly dependent one has become on talking. Now I work with one arm tied [behind my back]. I really, once and for all, have to get away from dialogues. I'm damned tired of all these meaningless words and discussions. Besides it's very hard finding oneself mute. Given that all my life I've practiced [writing] dialogue, it certainly gives you a sense of loss and anxiety not to be allowed to use it anymore." Thus, in the film, "the dialogue [should be] only a rattle on the soundtrack without any meaning. Ignoring all that talk will be delightful...[and] cinematographic" (Koskinen 2010: 70-71). The film is important because it makes imaginative use of pantomimic action in relation to narrative and because it makes innovative use of pantomimic action in relation to cinematic devices. The entire story transpires over a period of a little more than 24 hours in an imaginary European country whose language is unintelligible to the main characters: two sisters, Anna and Ester, and Anna's young son, Johan. Because Ester suffers from a mysterious illness, perhaps tuberculosis, the trio interrupts their train ride to Sweden to stay in the city of Timoka until Ester is able to continue the journey. They stay in a huge, luxurious, but mostly empty hotel. An intense heat wave oppresses the city. While Ester lies in bed, Anna takes a bath and asks Johan to scrub her back. Mother and son then take a nap, as Ester tries to work at her typewriter in bed. But a powerful feeling of loneliness overwhelms her, and she masturbates to alleviate her

agitation. When Johan wakes from the nap, he leaves his mother sleeping and wanders alone through the corridors of the hotel and encounters different persons, including a troupe of Spanish dwarves, who invite him into their room, put a dress on him, and entertain him until their leader arrives and puts an end to the revelry. In the hotel room, Anna wakes and changes into a clean dress. She tells Anna she is "going out" and leaves, but Ester again becomes agitated by a feeling of abandonment and collapses with fear that she will die before reaching her homeland. She rings for the elderly hotel servant, who lifts her into bed and calms her through a series of comforting actions. In a café, Anna sits at a table, smokes, orders a beverage, and buys a newspaper written in the language of the country. The waiter performs several actions indicating his sexual attraction to her, but they do not exchange any words. Johan returns to the hotel room, and Ester invites him to eat some of the food the servant has brought. She tells him the the good things that will happen to him when he reaches home, but he prefers that she not touch him. He goes into an adjacent room to draw a crude picture of a human face. Anna visits a theater, and from a balcony seat, watches a clown tumbling act performed by the Spanish dwarves. A man and a woman in seats near her engage in sexual acts that horrify her, and she leaves the theater. After some hesitation on the street, she returns to the café and gives a subtle, wordless signal to the waiter. Johan wanders the hotel corridors again and encounters the elderly servant eating his meal. The servant shares a piece of chocolate with Johan and shows him some photographs apparently of his family decades earlier. When Anna returns, Johan leaps to greet her; she enters the room, but Johan remains in the corridor and hides the photographs under the carpet. Anna changes into a bathrobe, washes, as Ester, elegantly dressed, watches her, then returns to her writng desk. Anna approaches her and warns her to mind her own business, which leaves Ester tense. In the evening, Ester, in pajamas, listens to Bach on the radio, while Anna, in another dress, holds Johan in her arms. The servant brings coffee to Ester, and she asks him the word for music. He replies with a word that is similar to music. "Bach" is another word they share. After Johan leaves to wander the corridors, Anna and Ester converse in the shadows of the room. Ester asks where Anna went in the afternoon, and Anna delivers a story that is a lie, an account of a sordidly promiscuous sexual encounter with a man in a movie theater. But after Ester wonders if the story is true, Anna admits she lied. Ester does not want Anna to go, and

she physically discloses an erotic, homosexual desire for Anna, who repulses her: “I have to go.” In the corridor, she encounters the waiter. They enter another room, secretly watched by Johan from the shadows of the corridor. Johan returns to his room, where he sees Ester sleeping. He watches a tank rumble through the street below, recalling the scene in the train carriage when he saw another train carrying many tanks. Ester awakes and asks him to read to her, but he instead puts on a Punch and Judy puppet show, in which the characters speak an unintelligible language. In the other hotel room, Anna and the waiter lounge in speechless post-coital anticipation of further sex. Ester works again on her translation and Johan asks why she translates books. He asks also if she knows the language of the country they are in, but she says she only knows a few words. He then asks her to write down the translations of the words. Ester learns from him that Anna is in the other hotel room. Anna complains about Ester to the waiter, who understands nothing and says nothing. She hears Ester calling, weeping. Anna opens the door, Ester sees Anna in the arms of the waiter, and sits at a table in dismay, wondering why Anna torments her. Anna gives an accusatory speech in which she condemns Ester’s “egotistical personality”: “You can’t live without feeling superior.” Ester denies the accusation, and claims that she loves Anna. “Poor Anna.” But Anna can’t stand the patronizing tone and orders Ester out of the room. But Ester repeates: “Poor Anna,” caresses Anna’s hair and leaves. Anna laughs, then starts crying, as the waiter initiates another coital session. In the corridor, the troupe of dwarves returns from the theater in their strange historical costumes; they nod to Ester standing alone in the corridor. In the morning, Ester leaves the waiter sleeping, but when she opens the door, she finds Ester slumped against it. With Ester in bed again, the hotel servant helps her drink some juice. Anna informs her that, after a snack, she and Johan will leave on the next train. Johan and Ester say good-bye. Through gestures, Ester asks the servant for her writing tablet. But she soon begins talking to the uncomprehending servant, explaining that, “It’s all a matter of erectile tissue and secretions. [...] I stank like a rotten fish when I was fertilized. [...].” With her hand gently resting on the servant’s head, she says “I don’t want to accept my wretched role [...], submission to “the horrible forces [...] of ghosts and memories. [...] All this talk. There’s no need to discuss loneliness. It’s a waste of time.” “Feeling better,” she speaks fondly of her father. But she suddenly becomes wracked by another seizure, gasps

desperately for air: “Must I die all alone?” An air raid warning sounds. She calls for her mother. Johan returns and approaches the bed. Ester tells him not to be afraid. “I’m not going to die.” On the train leaving the city, rain pours against the carriage windows. Johan pulls out the “letter” Ester gave him with the words translated from the language of the foreign country (actually a language invented by Bergman). He shows it to Anna. “Nice of her,” she says. She opens the carriage window to let the rain fall on her. The final shot is of Johan’s face reading the words Ester has translated.

This account of the *story* leaves out many actions and details that construct the *narrative* pantomimically and cinematically. For example, in the opening scene set in the railway carriage, pantomimic action alone reveals a variety of details about the relationship between the three main characters and their status as foreigners. That Anna and Ester are sisters seems communicated by placing the two women next to each other rather than facing each other and having Johan sitting beside Anna, although none of the characters actually looks at any other until quite a bit into the scene. The heat is intense and signified by the listlessness of the two women: Ester, played by Ingrid Thulin (1926-2004), drowses, while Anna, played by Gunnel Lindblom (b. 1931), gazes blankly into space, as if recalling something very remote. The scene also shows that Anna has a very close, loving relation to her son, played by Jörgen Lindström (b. 1951), who is about ten years old: when Anna moves to the other side of the carriage to doze, Johan follows and presses his head against her breast; she strokes him, urges him to curl up and sleep next to her as she places a protective hand on his shoulder while gazing again into space until, for the first time she directs her gaze toward Ester. Ester is sick: she suddenly starts suppressing a cough and breathing heavily; when Anna moves to comfort her, Ester resists and leaves the cabin. Ester brings her back and lays her on the seating bank. Costumes convey some of the upper class status of the women, who, after all, travel in a first class carriage: Ester in a pale business suit; Anna in a sleeveless white dress and a necklace made of thin gold rings. But the two women also disclose an elegant physical composure associated with their class, which, however, does not disguise fundamental differences between them: Anna is more restless and outward looking, shifting from one seat to the other. She likes to display herself, whereas Ester is more withdrawn into herself, turns away when she coughs, and tries to hide herself. Anna is more physically demonstrative, touching herself,

touching her son, and touching Ester. Johan is like his mother: restless, but exhibiting a curiosity about the environment that the women do not share. In the only dialogue in the entire train carriage scene, which is seven minutes long, he points to a sign in the train and asks Ester: "What does it mean?" To which she responds: "I don't know." He pronounces the unintelligible words. When Anna shuts him out of the cabin to attend to Ester, he wanders down the corridor, gazes out the window as the sun rises over mountains, but when he slumps down to the floor to sleep, the train conductor enters to announce that the train is stopping soon at Timoka, although the viewer cannot understand his short declaration. Johan peers into a carriage cabin and sees military officers awakening, but he does not want them to see him. He finds another place in the corridor to sit and look out the window as the train enters the city. He sees the train carrying the tanks moving in the opposite direction, creating the impression of entering a country facing a conflict that words may not solve. As he gazes out the window at the strange city, his mother comes behind him and they both stare out the window intently, but Gunnel Lindblom gives Anna a wary, hawk-like stare that contrasts with Johan's wondrous gaze and fixes Anna with a "hardness" lacking in Ester. The entire railway carriage scene presents characters inhabiting a world of "silence," in which they prefer not to talk, prefer to communicate through subtle bodily gestures, because silence creates greater or enough closeness between people than speaking.

At the same time, though, silence creates a space between the family members, silence makes them seem alone, solitary. This silence is not oppressive; rather, it fuels a tension, an anticipation, an expectation, a sense of entering a "foreign" domain of the self. Despite the seemingly cramped setting, Bergman creates a powerfully dramatic atmosphere in which speech is "unnecessary" and would merely amplify the oppressive heat. Speech would intensify an oppressive atmosphere of confinement, as indeed it does in the later hotel room scenes. It is words that cause a fatal sickness and apparently contribute to the translator Ester's illness: she starts coughing after Johan asks her what the railway sign means. The scene invites viewers to look at the characters without spoken "explanations," without talk that identifies where the characters are coming from, why they are together, why the boy has two "mothers" and no father, or where they are going. The idea is to see the characters free of any language that would frame them within a "motive" that clarifies why the viewer is watching them. The viewer

watches them to see how "silence" keeps them together. The camera constructs the viewer's perspective on the pantomimic action in an innovative way, and the cinematographer, Sven Nykvist (1922-2006), obviously contributed to the innovation. In the cabin of the railway carriage, the camera, in mid-shot, pans from one character to another or characters move toward or away from the camera to emphasize the space between the characters; the camera avoids point-of-view shots or even cuts, except when Anna casts a dark stare at the dozing Ester, who suddenly begins coughing. The viewer sees the action as if sitting where the window is between the two seat banks, which creates a sense of closeness to the characters without being certain whose point-of-view is in control of the narrative. When Johan enters the corridor of the railway carriage, Bergman employs more shots and a great variety of camera angles, including point-of-view shots for Johan when he sees the sun rising over a mountain ridge, looks into the cabin with the awakening officers, and watches the tanks racing by on the opposing train. In a couple of angles, the camera looks at Johan gazing through the window from outside the window. Nykvist uses heavily expressionist lighting to show Johan moving in and out of shifting shadows, but, as always with Bergman, the lighting gives Johan's face a soft luster against dark backgrounds. Yet these corridor actions do not establish Johan as the protagonist of the narrative nor even that the narrative issues from his point of view. That is clear from the powerful shot outside the window of Anna looming hawk-like behind the rapt Johan as the train arrives in the city: they gaze outward in the same direction, but the image shows that they have quite different points of view that neither "knows." The film never does settle on a dominant point of view, for the point of view shifts back and forth from Anna to Ester to Johan to show how, despite their closeness, each lives separately and unknowingly from the other. Johan is, so to speak, "between" the sisters: he loves Anna and Ester, and they both love him; Ester feels a deep attachment to Anna, but Anna hates her sister and achieves her freedom from Ester only by abandoning her. No point of view can prevail when neither the boy's love for the two women nor their love for him makes it possible for them to love each other. Pantomimic action best represents Bergman's perception that love precariously binds people together through "silence"—that is, a condition of doing things together, of traveling together, of living together, in which it is not "necessary" to speak to signify the presence of love. Words, especially

speech, invariably undermine this precarious balance "between" love and hate. Yet Ester's work as a translator, Johan's curiosity about the meaning of the words in the foreign country, and Ester's "letter" to Johan translating the words she has learned from the servant imply that less precarious expressions of love might happen by communicating in another, "foreign" language, although Anna, responding with a tepid "That's nice" and a dismissive gesture, seems skeptical [Film Series B].

Of course, the film goes on to present many more scenes of imaginative pantomimic action in combination with innovative, cinematic ways of seeing pantomimic action. After Anna and Johan get into bed to take their nap, the camera focuses on Ester as she works in bed in her pajamas, reading, notating, coughing, gasping, smoking, and drinking. The camera, at low angle, pans from her face to her hand and watches her hand, stub out a cigarette, pour a drink, turn on the radio, tap to the music, and change the channel, as her head comes into view, pressed against her hand on the radio. The camera follows her head as she lifts herself upward and seems to inhale the serene music, causing her to smile, before returning to her book and pen. But she can't concentrate. She wanders, smoking, toward the the doors leading to room inhabited by Anna and Johan, but the camera does not follow her; it watches her recede and actually tilts down to show her receding figure obscured by the bed covers and the radio. On the other side of the door, the camera watches Ester from a higher angle as she approaches the bed and studies the sleeping pair; she leans against the bedrail, lightly touches Anna's hair, considers touching Johan but hesitates, then leaves them. It is a pantomime of small, subtle gestures rendered intimate by the camera's closeness to the performer. When she returns to her room, the camera follows her face in profile as she smokes, deeply melancholy, and moves to the window to gaze down into the busy street, with the film cutting to a view of her from outside the window. She sees a wagon pulled by an emaciated horse roll into view, although buses and cars also crowd the street. An old man in a black derby drives the wagon, stops it, and gets down. The wagon is full of furniture, plants, and strange, unidentifiable objects. Perplexed, Ester returns to her bottle, turns off the radio, pours another drink, which empties the bottle, the camera panning up from the little table to her face. The camera then pans from her face to the servant (Håkan Jahnberg [1903-1970]) entering the room and holds on his profile as Ester, also in profile, appears, full figure, reflected in the full

length mirror behind him, so that she seems further away from him than she actually is. She asks him in French, English, and German if he speaks any of those languages, but he politely indicates he does not. She therefore mimes that she would like another bottle of liquor. He understands. She sits down and lights another cigarette, with the camera again studying her profile, her exhalations, her desire for some sort of voluptuous pleasure, as the camera more closer to her face, while an air-raid warning signal sounds in the distance. The servant places a tray with a glass of brandy and a bottle of it before Ester, who savors the aroma from the glass and examines the bottle. She offers the servant a cigarette, but he refuses, as the camera now shifts to a low angle shot behind her to observe him. She gestures for him to tell him the word for "hand" in his language, and he responds by speaking the word and writing it on a piece of paper. The bell rings summoning him to another room, and he gestures that he must run off. She studies the piece of paper, pronounces the word, then grabs the bottle of brandy as the camera follows her back to the bed, where she drinks and caresses her lips with the paper. She falls back onto the bed, while the camera watches her from above as she unlooses her her pajama top, caresses her breast, opens her legs, and inserts her hand into her pajama pants to masturbate with her eyes closed. The camera moves in on her face; at the moment of orgasm, her eyes open wide as she gasps. She closes her eyes again and turns into the billowing comforter to sleep as the sound of jets suddenly roars overhead. The entire scene is rich in captivating pantomimic action that dramatizes Ester's loneliness, her gathering anxiety about being excluded from the sleeping pair in the next room, and her sense of being excluded from the strange, foreign culture in the street below her. But the scene also reveals her sensuality, her pleasure in voluptuous sensations, quite in contrast to the image of primness she projected in the opening scene, although these become entangled with self-destructive addictions. She makes the camera look at her from different angles and move toward and around her, as if searching for a way to stabilize its view of her. It is an astonishing sequence of physical gestures and actions that exposes the basis for the woman's deepest anxiety: that she has not been loved as she has deserved nor has she been allowed to love as fully as she is capable, the most powerful cause of loneliness. Ingrid Thulin performs this melancholy sequence with a confidence that is riveting, as if she felt completely at ease and lilted by the character's sorrow, utterly fearless at incarnating Ester's

intense vulnerability and intelligence. Bergman himself remarked that making the film was an "enormous amount of fun" because all involved with the production felt "uninhibited," and the actresses were "always in a good mood" in relation to performing quite daring scenes, although Gunnel Lindblom did insist on some inhibition when she refused to perform a scene with the waiter in the nude (Bergman 1994: 112; Lindblom 1995: 62). Indeed, it is doubtful that pantomime as precise, imaginative, and uninhibited as appears throughout the entire film could happen without a profound sense of trust between the director and the performers: this sort of elegant, "uninhibited" pantomimic action is possible when the performers and film crew know each other so well from their extensive previous work together without necessarily "knowing" the characters well at all. The characters take the performers into an unknown region of humanity that requires a lack of inhibition, but ironically, this lack of inhibition depends on a fundamental condition of trust between people that the film itself neither refutes nor treats as a salvation (cf. Fischer-Kesselmann 1988).

In subsequent scenes, however, the film explores aloneness from different perspectives: being alone without being lonely. When the jets roar overhead, Johan awakes. He leaves his mother sleeping and, with his toy pistol, he wanders through the cavernous hallways of the hotel, firing his pistol at a service worker changing a lightbulb in a chandelier, watching the elderly servant in his tiny office and running away from him when the man approaches him, observing a huge erotic painting of a centaur grasping a nude woman, running away again from the grasp of the elderly servant, casting his distorted shadow against the wall of a stairway, and coming upon the open door to the room with the troupe of dwarves, all male, who silently play cards, read, drink, smoke, or mend costumes. Johan shoots two of the dwarves and a third wearing a lion's costume, and the play with him by pantomiming their deaths. The raucous, but wordless dwarves put the dress on him and entertain him with one of them leaping up and down on a bed wearing a clownish gorilla mask until the apparent leader enters and orders them to cease, though he graciously escorts Johan out of the room. In a corner, Johan pisses on the floor, then walks away whistling, as if whistling negates his bad behavior. A homosexual aura pervades the old servant's affection for the boy and the dwarves' invitation to him to join their strange, foreign society, dramatized so well by the wonderful close up

shot of a dwarf's hand beckoning Johan to enter the room. Johan clearly enjoys being alone; the hotel offers happy opportunities for adventure, and he finds pleasure in the freedom of speechless wandering.

But Bergman intercuts the scenes of Johan exploring the hotel hallways with the scenes of Anna washing and getting dressed to go out and, after Anna leaves, of Ester's despair, collapse, and return to bed with the kind assistance of the elderly servant. The intercutting implies that the contrasting conditions of solitude experienced by Ester, Johan, and Anna are dependent on each other—that is, on causing Ester's loneliness, on one person abandoning another, as, in a small, "innocent" way, Johan has abandoned both women. But he returns to Ester, and she shares her dinner with him as she explains his future when he returns home, where his grandparents will take care of him. The film then focuses on Anna's solitary visit to the café, her silent interaction with the waiter, played by the longtime Bergman actor Birger Malmsten (1920-1991), her entrance (wearing dark glasses) into the Variete Theater, where, smoking in the shadows, she watches the dwarf tumbling act and the couple near her engaging in sexual intercourse partially in the glow cast by a spotlight. The super-expressionist lighting amplifies Anna's horrified stare at a couple utterly shameless (or "uninhibited") in succumbing to their lust. She is a person who lives in shadows. Later, when she enters the hotel room with the waiter, she commands him not to turn on the lights. Yet when Ester comes into the room, Anna turns on the lamp, so that Ester feels humiliated by Anna's shamelessness in cavorting with the nude waiter in bed. When Anna leaves the theater, she enters the sunny street crowded entirely with men—soldiers, workers, students, pensioners, and professionals, although a few women sit outdoors at the café when she returns to give the waiter an almost invisible signal to rendezvous. The camera follows her with a telescopic lens to produce a surveillance mode of viewing and to imply that she is moving in a society that does not encourage speaking. Indeed, in the café, in the theater, on the street no one is seen speaking and no voices are heard, although the street is noisy with activity. Bergman then cuts to Johan wandering through the hotel again holding his pistol. He watches the elderly servant in his office eating and drinking with quietly ritual deliberation. When the servant notices Johan smiling at him, he performs a miniature puppet pantomime using a sausage that he then swallows. Seeing that Johan has not enjoyed this cannibalization of the sausage character,

the servant offers to share with him a chocolate bar. Johan sits beside the servant, munching the chocolate as the man pours himself a drink, swallows, and sprinkles Johan's head with droplets, which causes Johan to smile with amusement, although nothing the man has said is intelligible. The servant then pulls from a large wallet the photographs that apparently depict his parents and what appears to be an outdoor family funeral ceremony long ago. He puts the photos in Johan's hand and puts his arm around the boy, and with his face conveys a profoundly sorrowful sense of his own loneliness. But Johan hears the sound of his mother entering and runs off to greet her; she fondles him, but they do not speak as she opens the door to the room. Left alone again in the corridor, he studies the photographs before slipping them under the carpet. Perhaps with this mysterious action, Johan hopes to "bury" the memory that binds him emotionally with the old servant, as if loneliness were contagious, an illness, such as already afflicts Ester.

The Silence contains numerous other scenes of comparably imaginative pantomimic action, which fascinate viewers because of the unusual ways the camera sees the action. It is pantomime designed for a motion picture camera capable of a highly dynamic relation to the performers, capable of observing subtle inflections of gesture, and capable of interweaving separate pantomimic sequences into a larger "view" of the semiotic relations between bodily actions performed by people when they are alone. Bergman showed how film technology widened the meaning of "pantomime" and expanded the expressive power of the body to communicate large ideas when speech has lost its authority to control the narrative. It is an "uninhibited" form of pantomime insofar as Bergman completely trusts his actors to perform "natural" actions and avoids stylized movements that treat the body as an abstract form rather than as an instrument of consciousness in material reality. The film does not even employ any soundtrack music to accompany the pantomimic action. All music in the film comes from sources within the image, such as the radio, the jazz vibraphone in the café, and the pit orchestra in the Variete Theater. In the evening, in the shadowy atmosphere of her room, Ester listens to the radio play a Bach cembalo prelude while Anna holds and embraces Johan on her lap in the room behind Ester. The servant enters bringing coffee, and Ester asks him the word for "music" in his language. He replies with a very similar sounding word. Ester says, "Sebastian Bach," and the servant

repeates the name, nodding his familiarity with the name and the music. A few moments later, after Anna asks to borrow cigarettes from Ester and Ester suggests that Anna and Johan leave this evening, Anna asks what the music is, and Ester replies, "Bach. Sebastian Bach," to which Anna replies, "It's nice." Ester turns off the music, which soon precipitates the quarrel between the sisters over Anna's appetite for promiscuity and their competitive relation to their father. It is as if music was a translation of a foreign language that otherwise no human understands. But the music is not an accompaniment to pantomimic action; it is a peculiar intrusion upon the "silence" that is the default accompaniment to this "natural" performance of pantomimic action [Film Still Series B].

This "uninhibited" mode of pantomime caused enormous controversy from the moment *The Silence* premiered in Stockholm in February 1963. Bergman believed that the film would not attract any audience, and Svensk Film Industri, believing the project was too obscure, originally did not want him to make the film, but he went ahead with it anyway, an act of great confidence and courage (Sima 1970: 195). *The Silence*, however, became the most successful film in the history of the company, and in West Germany it was the most successful film since 1955, with eleven million viewers (Schmitt-Sasse 1988: 17). Of course, the boldness of the sex scenes startled many viewers around the world, but this boldness was perhaps unthinkable without a new way of seeing the body, without seeing the body as a thing in tension with the voice trying to control it, as a thing that made speech "unnecessary" or an encumbrance to knowledge of others. The film precipitated an immense amount of discourse that contended or merely insinuated that the "silence" referred to the absence of God in the modern postwar world, because the narrative contained so many actions "free" of any voice contextualizing them within a morality encoded through language (cf. Theunissen 1964; Schmitt-Sasse 1988). Pantomime elevated the power of film technology to see humanity without much, if any, deference to Christian morality. For this reason, the pantomimic action of *The Silence* signified for many people a dangerously radical image of the body: with voices largely absent, "naturally" performed actions, rather than stylized movements, appeared intensely mysterious without evoking a religious aura, like translating from a foreign language, producing a disturbing proliferation of "interpretations," an astonishing upheaval of words. But for probably all audiences *The Silence* signified a

freedom to see that precipitated the immense transformation of cinema in the 1960s and, in subsequent decades, a vast, global investment in expanding and perfecting image technologies (cf. Koskinen 2010: 43-66). Yet *The Silence* remains unsurpassed in its synthesis of pantomimic action and cinematic seeing. Although Bergman deployed adventurous pantomimic sequences in later films such as *Persona* (1966), *Hour of the Wolf* (1968), and *Cries and Whispers* (1972), he himself never again relied so much on pantomimic action to construct a film narrative as he did in *The Silence* nor was his pantomimic imagination quite as inventive or complex. His focus shifted more toward exposing the destructive or repressive powers of speech than toward revealing the cryptic varieties of voiceless bodily communication. As Bergman indicated, in the postwar era, the capacity to construct cine-pantomimic narratives of such seductive seriousness depends on a peculiar condition of being "uninhibited," of feeling on the threshold of a freedom to see the stories that bodily physical actions tell, and it is just incredibly difficult to possess that lack of inhibition or even the circumstances that enable one to possess it.

Bergman's highly imaginative use of pantomime in *The Silence* owed nothing to a Swedish tradition of pantomime in the theater, for pantomime had a negligible presence in Swedish theater long before and well after the making of the film. It is true that he found much inspiration from the distinctive silent films that Sweden made when he was a boy, especially works directed by Victor Sjöström (1879-1960) and Mauritz Stiller (1883-1928), as well as from German expressionist films directed by F.W. Murnau (1888-1931). But Swedish silent films achieved international distinction in part because of the sophistication with which they applied a verisimilar mode of acting, and this in itself was a break with a traditional (histrionic) mode of acting associated with the stage. Bergman further credited two films by Czech director Gustav Machaty (1901-1963) with deepening his attraction to film narratives "without dialogue": *Ecstasy* (1933) and *Nocturno* (1934), both of which contained almost no speech but complex music and noise soundtracks (Bergman 1994: 291). These films urged Bergman to write and direct a largely pantomimic episode (No. 2) in his anthology film *Secrets of Woman* (1952), and he included powerful pantomimic scenes in subsequent films, such as *Sawdust and Tinsel* (1953) and *The Virgin Spring* (1960). Bergman linked pantomime with inventive film performance, with a way to expand the expressive power of film.

Pantomime was "traditional" for him only insofar as he disclosed a pattern of fascination with it in film since boyhood. Despite, however, many years as a major, distinguished director of stage plays, Bergman never showed an interest in pantomime for the theater. He depended on cinematic devices to construct pantomimic performance: editing, expressionist cinematography, close ups, mobile camera. As a director for the theater, he worked almost entirely with dramatic texts by other authors, and these authors avoided pantomime. For Bergman, pantomime signified a radical break with the Swedish "tradition" of a voice-dominated dramatic theater, and he never seems to have considered making such a break, perhaps believing that voiceless performance in the theater belonged more appropriately to the prestigious Royal Swedish Ballet. If Sweden had anything resembling a tradition of pantomime before Bergman, it lay with the Royal Ballet, which between 1786 and 1871 staged or hosted numerous "pantomime-ballets," "historical pantomimes," and "pantomime idlylls" in a French style, choreographed by ballet masters: Jean-Rémy Marcadet (1755-?), Louis Deland (1772-1823), Jean-Baptiste Brulo (1746-?), Anders Selinder (1806-1874), August Bournonville (1805-1879) (cf. Klemming 1879: 497-506). By 1871, though, the Ballet had sufficiently "freed" itself from pantomime to dispense altogether with using the word to describe anything it produced. As discussed earlier, Jean Börlin staged his very innovative pantomime *El Greco* with Rolf de Maré's Swedish Ballet in Paris in 1920, but he referred to it as a "mimed drama" to diminish association with the somehow less appealing term "pantomime." Bergman himself never used the term "pantomime" to describe his attraction to scenes "without dialogue" in film, perhaps because during his lifetime the word had become too narrowly defined. More precisely, it had come to mean what ballet wanted it to mean: a codified, stylized way of regulating bodily gesture to support ballet narratives whose artificiality supposedly allowed dance to transcend them. It was a French attitude toward pantomime that assumed a performer could not justify voiceless performance without having experienced a rigorous education or training with teachers in a school that sufficiently respected the stylized code ("tradition") regulating bodily signification whereby, for the most part, the body created an artificial, abstract world of imaginary objects rather than interacted with a world of material objects. Such a narrow definition of pantomime could account for why Bergman preferred to speak of cinematic scenes "without dialogue" rather than explain how

pantomime migrated across performance media instead of remaining imprisoned within a definition of it imposed by theater institutions determined to control it severely if not suppress it altogether.



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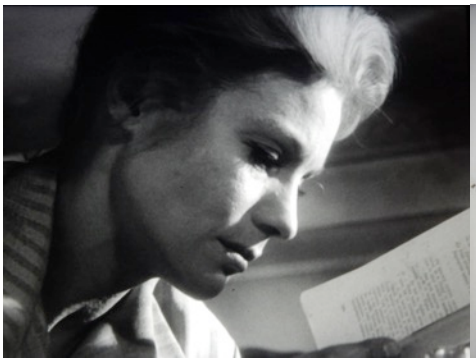
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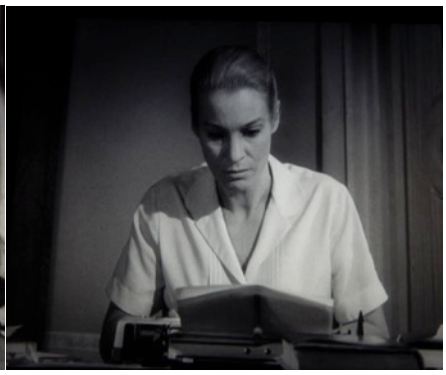
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Film Still Series B: Ingmar Bergman's *The Silence* (1963). Film technology allowed Bergman to produce unprecedentedly imaginative pantomimic performance. His use of the face to construct character and narrative is well known, but the face was never so free of speech as in *The Silence* (1-6). But in this film Bergman also made dramatic use of hands to create a remarkable and unstable relation between bodies or even between characters and their own bodies (9-13, 15, 21). The film builds much drama out of the performance of simple, yet intensely observed pantomimic actions, such as walking through corridors, reading, typing, combing, washing, smoking, drinking, comforting, serving or sharing food, or looking out windows (5, 7-8, 11, 16-18, 20, 22, 24, 28). However, the great dramatic power of these actions does not diminish the "shock" effect of other, equally "simple" actions, such as Ester's masturbation, Anna's horror at witnessing a couple copulate in the theater, the dwarves putting a dress on Johan, and Anna's sexual rendezvous in a hotel room with a nameless stranger she encountered in a café (14, 25-27). Yet Bergman did not rely entirely on close ups of fragmented pantomimic actions to amplify their dramatic allure; he amplifies numerous "simple" actions by having them performed within complex, precisely detailed scenic contexts that evoke persuasively a country in which the characters do not understand the language of its citizens (19, 21-23), including mirror reflections (19-20). Actors; Ingrid Thulin as Ester, Gunnel Lindblom as Anna, Jörgen Lindström as Johan, Håkan Jahnberg as the hotel servant, Birger Malmsten as Anna's sexual partner, the dwarves: the Eduardinis. Photos: Bergman (2003).

The London International Mime Festival

Since the 1990s, varieties of voiceless performance in the theater have emerged that either expand the definition of pantomime or, more likely, render inadequate the "mime culture" idea of performance issuing from Paris so pervasively from the 1950s to the 1980s, for after all, performers and audiences in various countries had moved beyond French-defined mime culture well before 1990. In Eastern Europe, however, performers were less afraid than in Western countries to use the term

"pantomime" to describe their performances. Except for Handke's *Die Stunde da wir nichts voneinander wussten*, the world literary imagination had nothing to do with this project of expanding the definition of theatrical pantomime since 1990. Because mainstream theater institutions were unable to make a stable place for pantomime, the mime culture, scattered across a multitude of small, often non-professional troupes, institutionalized itself not only through the mime schools that began to proliferate in the 1960s, but through international mime festivals formed in conjunction with the networks of mime schools. The problem with the festival format was that it insulated mime culture: mimes performed largely for other mimes, and festivals functioned like professional conferences. Festivals did little to expand the space for pantomime in theater culture outside of the mime culture network. Instead, festivals, with their numerous auxiliary workshops and technique demonstrations, emphasized mime as a pedagogic enterprise. Learning mime was an end in itself, a path to the self-development of the performer; under the spell of Decroux, mimes quite often regarded performances for diverse audiences outside of the mime network as an unhealthy compromise of pedagogic ideals. The pedagogic environment persistently stressed the display of performer skills, dexterity of technique, at the expense of narrative innovation, representational imagination, or scenic complexity. This academicization of mime has led to the creation, in 2011, of the Mime Centrum in Berlin, with its busy schedule of workshops, lectures, demonstrations, trainings, and archival activities, but it has not led to *any* pantomime performance in subsidized theaters in Berlin or indeed in any German subsidized theaters other than revivals of Handke's pantomime dramas from 1969 and 1992. The Mime Centrum primarily serves teachers and students who wish to enhance the instructional quality of classroom and studio activities. In Germany, pantomime has become an acceptable therapeutic activity in public schools for improving socialization and communication skills as well as body awareness; it is a way of integrating children into the society. While it is probably a beneficial aim, pedagogic pantomime reinforces the perception that pantomime is primarily an activity for children and young people and therefore detached from "serious" artistic ambition.

The London International Mime Festival, established in 1977, is the oldest and perhaps the most prestigious of the international mime festivals. The Festival began through the initiative of the English clown-mime Nola

Rae (b. 1950), who had studied under Marcel Marceau. She persuaded a theater manager, Joseph Seelig (b. 1948), to organize the event at a theater he managed in London. Seelig soon soon supervised the operations of several theaters, and in 1986, he began co-directing the Festival with Helen Lannaghan. Since then, the Festival has followed their shared vision of voiceless performance, although Seelig has said that the word "mime" is not accurate to describe the scope of the Festival (Martin 2012: 2). Nola Rae proposed the Festival because she felt the public needed a larger idea of pantomime than the media's tendency to reduce it to Marcel Marceau, if not the annual Christmas pantomime. The Festival has always brought in performers and companies from different countries, but for economic reasons, the performances are on a small scale, though not without challenging technical and physical complexities. A diverse array of voiceless performances have filled Festival programs, including acrobatics, jugglers, quasi-dance concerts, puppet and marionette shows, circus stunts, kinetic sculptures, performance art ritual actions, and forms of "physical theater," in which performers show different movements or effects they can create with their bodies rather than represent characters or construct narratives out of a sequential, linear logic of physical actions. Many of these performances are not pantomime insofar as the performers do not "imitate" others, as is implied in the original meaning of the word. The Festival treats all these types of voiceless performance as "mime" apparently under the assumption that the word is more vague or more inclusive in its meaning and connotations than the word "pantomime" and thus will attract a wider range of spectators. The Festival unfolds in different theaters and neighborhoods throughout London and attracts a much less unified audience than festivals organized by the mime culture networks established in the 1970s. Originally, Seelig promoted a festival of "mime and visual theater," but he soon dropped the term "visual theater," because it seemed even more vague or confusing than just "mime" to describe voiceless performance that was not dance: spectators tended to regard any kind of theater performance as a visual experience anyway, even if some performance groups used the term to describe speechless, though by no means soundless, performances emphasizing dynamic imagery, stunts, technical effects, acrobatics and/or bodily communication, including sometimes but not always pantomime. Even in 2016, Seelig complained about the "unnatural prejudice" against mime that the Festival has sought

to dissolve, but in his efforts to redefine mime, he has inadvertently reinforced a prejudice against "pantomime," insofar as this word presumably has come under the control of school teachers or become implacably identified with the Christmas pageant and thus irreparably signifies an infantilizing mode of bodily performance (Martin 2012: 2). Nevertheless, while it is hardly comprehensive in its presentation of voiceless performance since 1977, the Festival has across its history provided a good cross section of "mime" that reveals how postmodern aesthetics has destabilized the modernist semantic relationship between "mime," "pantomime," and "visual theater."

Many of the voiceless performances featured at the Festival employ tropes or unique performance devices that broaden the meaning of mime or pantomime while narrowing the scope of their performance aesthetic, so that they specialize in applying the trope rather than building different performance strategies around different types of narrative. For example, a French group led by Camille Boitel (b. 1979) has specialized in scenes wherein characters inhabit mundane environments of evolving chaos. The characters, in *L'Immédiat* (2002), perform routine tasks, such as getting dressed, while the clutter of daily life collapses around them: tables crumble, objects fall off walls, shelves tumble, walls cave in; the characters stumble over things, bang into them, fumble their way through doorways or underneath tables or chairs; they treat cabinets or closets as looming obstacles or escape hatches; they treat other bodies as objects in need of removal or displacement. The entire scene dramatizes the precarious, perpetually transforming environment of daily life in which no one who inhabits the environment seems in control of it. The company's productions require fantastically detailed technical cues and intricately engineered props and scenic structures, with some of their more recent productions requiring many thousands of objects, all of which move from one place to another on the stage (cf. Gallagher 2016). By contrast, the Belgian Compagnie Mossoux-Bonté, founded in 1985 by Nicole Mossoux (b. 1956) and Patrick Bonté (b. 1956), uses super-abstract, bare, cold, minimalistic settings, often bathed in cold blue or white light, to emphasize the power of bodies to dominate, override, or negate any context. More precisely, the company focuses on how the display of bodies and physical responses to bodies form groups, communities, and power relations between members of the communities, power relations between bodies. The performers

highlight gestures, poses, postures, "impostures," and movements that signify their power to attract, scrutinize, adjust, ignore, study, devalue, glorify, rank, re-position, assemble, or separate other bodies, usually accompanied by ominous, heavy electronic soundscapes. *Juste ciel* (1985/2012) builds a 45-minute solo piece out of gestures of prayer, supplication, and obeisance. Some of the company's pieces feature complete nudity of both men and women: *Les dernières hallucinations de Lucas Cranach l'Ancien* (1991), *Hurricane* (2001), *Le corps et la mélancolie* (2006), *Nuit sur le monde* (2007), *Les corps magnétiques* (2009), *Les buveuses de café* (2013). Although Mossoux studied under French ballet choreographer Maurice Béjart (1927-2007), her works with Bonté are not dance, but elaborately choreographed kinetic poses, like clinical or scholarly visual analyses or catalogues of bodily signifying practices. When productions occasionally contain scenic props, these are grandiosely symbolic, such as the enormous bed in *Les sœurs de Sardanapale* (1994) on which the performers pounce, lounge, leap, crawl around, or submerge themselves. *Migrations* (2012) featured seven performers skating their power relations on an ice rink. In *Les sœurs de Sardanapale*, *Les buveuses de café*, and *Taste of Poison* (2017), the company makes very imaginative uses of tables to reveal how people use them to show their control over their bodies or their control over other bodies. *Katafalk* (2002) features a half-nude woman who lies, stands, or crouches on a table or platform while video images loom behind, on, or before her. Some of these video images depict her wearing a bizarre mask, but the scale of these images varies, so that she interacts with sometimes huge, sometimes equivalent, and sometimes small images of herself. In one scene, she lies, as if asleep, while an image of a girl bounces up and down on her. At the end of the piece it is difficult to differentiate the real woman from the video image of her; as she lies perfectly still on the platform, she also seems to levitate, as the hovering video image of her lying on the platform replaces the living performance of her lying. But then another image enters of her lying, nude with pearl-like golden lights coiling around her body, which has become glistening black. She undulates as the image recedes into the darkness (Mossoux-Bonté 2018). The piece dramatizes an evolving conflict between a body and images of it that are presumably the projections of an internal, psychic attempt to control the idea of a "self." It is exceptionally effective in showing how electronic image technology "enters" the body and controls the very idea of

the self. But this concept of a projected self defined by image technology controlling a "real" self derives from the puppet aesthetic that Mossou explored with *Twin Houses* (1994). Here Mossou used five different puppets or "mannequins," male and female, attached to one shoulder-arm or the other, to show, in five scenes, how the puppet controlled the puppeteer, how different "projections" of her identity, her sexuality, her body transform her into a puppet or at least undermine distinctions between the "human" self and the projected self (cf. Piris 2014: 33-35).

The perceptual trope of technology erasing distinctions between puppet and puppeteer has given rise to the concept of pantomime performed by non-humans or robots. Several companies specialize in such performances. The French company L'Insolite Mécanique, in which Magali Rousseau is the only human performer, specializes in Rousseau's interactions with delicately, mechanically constructed birds and insects, as in her *Je brasse de l'air/Lift Off* (2014), in which she depicts "a little girl who wishes to escape by becoming a master of the air," although the escape depends on creating completely robotized creatures rather than becoming immersed in an intensified, glorified image of natural flying creatures. In 2011, the Israeli theater director Amit Drori created *Savanna*, a performance involving the interaction of robotized animals resembling African wildlife, such as a giraffe, an antelope, a stork, a monkey, a tortoise, and an elephant. Because the robotized creatures interact with their human creators, Drori contends that the performance dramatizes the "discovery of nature" rather than the replacement of it (Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne 2011). A more completely robotic type of pantomimic performance comes from the Sharmanka Kinetic Theatre, created in 1989 in St. Petersburg by a woodcarver, Eduard Bersudsky (b. 1939), and his wife, the theater director Tatyana Jakovskaya (b. 1947); since 1995, the company has resided in Glasgow, Scotland. Bersudsky builds enormous kinetic sculptures involving sometimes hundreds of moving parts and figurines attached to twirling mobiles, rotating wheels, swinging pendulums, pumping levers, or churning conveyer belts. The dynamic lighting designs, by Sergey Jakovsky (b. 1980), constantly change perception of the fantastic apparatus. For Bersudsky, this elaborate updating of the archaic automata performance represents a "mechanical paradise" designed by entirely invisible humans and operating completely according to inhuman laws of physics (cf. Kassabova 2013). But this form of robotic pantomime carries with it a vaguely non-modern aura

of fairground quaintness, an extravagant obsession with creating a "happier world," as Jakovskaya says, out of toys, with invoking a childhood feeling of control over objects, an experience entirely opposite to that staged by Boitel.

A far more demonic vision of robotic pantomime is the work of Survival Research Laboratories (SRL), which has never performed at the London Mime Festival or attempted any association with pantomimic theater. Founded in 1978 in San Francisco by Mark Pauline (b. 1953), an art school graduate, the company specialized in outdoor performances involving very large, remotely controlled robots built out of recycled machine parts (cf. Hicks 2012). The machines looked like monstrous predators, for Pauline equipped them with large claws, hammers, ramrods, torches, and explosives. The object of performance was for the machines to attack and destroy each other, creating an orgy of destruction. For a while in the 1980s, Pauline amplified the violence of the performance by including the corpses of slaughterhouse animals. Productions of SRL reached enormous audiences internationally. A peculiar feature of the machines was that they projected unique personas, albeit sinister and menacing, and spectators cared about which machines would "win" or survive the contest. It was emotionally unnerving to watch a hobbled robot continue to attack and struggle to keep moving, so that the robots actually seemed "alive," because of their somehow visceral ability to simulate pain, affliction. The robotic pantomimes of SRL proposed that technology inescapably creates destruction, expands capacities for violence, imposes conditions of sacrifice, is an intimation of death. Though humans create the performance, their "invisibility" during the performance implies that the violence is inherent to technology, regardless of whether humans created it. It thus seems as if the machines come from an alien world, even though humans created them out of the debris of their own world.

However, in the twenty-first century, a much more postmodern manifestation of robotic pantomime has emerged through motion capture technology. This technology "captures" the movement of bodies without showing the body itself. The capture of movement alone allows the image-maker to "map" the movements onto different bodies and to place these bodies and their movements in different physical contexts. To capture movements, performers wear special body suits covered with sensors, which send signals to a computer that tracks the movement of the sensors. The

more sensors the performer wears the more movement data the computer will record. Motion capture can record facial or hand movements with great precision. Some motion capture systems can handle ten or twelve bodies moving at the same time. But generally, to create large ensemble scenes, it is more effective to take data from individual bodies and combine them with data from other bodies to produce ensemble scenes. Motion capture allows an artist to create performance with a wider range of bodies and movements than is possible in live performance. Movements of humans can be mapped onto objects, so that it is possible, for example, to have a chair crawling like a human. The image-maker can model bodies through programs that either provide numerous body models or allow the artist to construct entirely original bodies. In the modeling process, bodies can be distorted or transformed while the movement remains stable. With motion capture, the camera sees the action at 360 degrees and thus allows the image-maker to see the action from any angle and move in or away from the action at will and at varying speeds. Aside from its scientific use related to biokinetics, physical therapies, and athletic performance, motion capture provides the basis for movements and actions performed by characters and objects in many video games, 3D animations, and live action motion pictures. Occasionally theater productions have used motion capture for unusual spectacular effects, such as The Royal Shakespeare's 2016 production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, in which the performance of the magical character Ariel was a projection achieved through motion capture. But motion capture is most likely to operate most significantly in projects that are independent of live performance—in performances intended for digital distribution and consumption. The main reason for using the technology is to extend the movements of the body beyond the moment of their performance, to show how a movement inhabits other bodies, things, or spaces, to show how movement or action has a "life of its own," so to speak, independent of the bodies that perform it (cf. Jochum 2014). The problem with motion capture in relation to pantomime is that the potential of the technology greatly exceeds the imagination of those who might use it. Digital image technology requires a different kind of pantomimic imagination and a different approach to what pantomime "says" or "means" in relation to audiences who exist outside of the conventional live performance culture. For example, motion capture might be an effective way to reconstruct ancient Roman pantomime within different performance

contexts or in relation to competing ways of performing the roles assumed by the actors in the ancient performance spaces. But perhaps the power of motion capture is more alluring when applied to achieving the ancient Roman pantomime goal of revealing the "metamorphosis" of the body, of showing how an action transforms or migrates from one body to another. Such an application may require a pantomimic narrative imagination such as the Romans possessed but which seems completely outside of the modernist or postmodern performance imagination, for at the moment, pantomimic action achieved through the technology remains overwhelmingly subordinate to cinematic narratives that depend heavily on a great deal of speech to "explain" the action. It is largely in video games that motion capture-derived pantomime, with intensely realistic imagery, sometimes renders speech "unnecessary," as Bergman remarked. The future of robotized pantomime perhaps resides in digital image technology, whereby motion capture can build large databases or dictionaries of movements and actions from which consumers can purchase or at least download specific tropes and apply them to arrays of model bodies and objects to construct their own narratives for distribution across digital media that quite possibly replace or diminish the need to consume already made narratives. In this future, the virtual reality does not replace "live" reality; it simply has more authority than live reality insofar as it is a record of life rather than a memory of it: to construct identities through robotized pantomimic actions intensifies pressure on consumers to model themselves after the images they create and after the narratives they share, which probably means that their lives and bodies would "metamorphose" in relation to images or pantomimic objectifications of themselves that they control. In this respect, Mossou's *Katafalk*, which hauntingly depicts how the electronic image "enters" the body and defines the self, seems prophetic.

But robotic pantomime probably has a minor place in the general future of pantomime. After all, dance has always been a much more effective way to robotize human movement than pantomime, which has led to perpetual tension between dance and pantomime since the eighteenth century and made pantomime such a troublesome phenomenon in relation to societal efforts to regulate the performance of speechless bodies. Nevertheless, the general future of pantomime increasingly entails performance designed explicitly for video and digital media distribution.

The London Mime Festival and postmodern performance companies associated with "mime" or voiceless performance rely on video to promote their existence, even if the videos merely record performances designed for the stage, and the scope of this book is the result of access to videos of performances that otherwise would remain, if they existed at all, highly local cultural activities rather than the "international" art proclaimed by the Festival. Unlike the mime culture of the 1970s and 1980s, voiceless performance groups show less inclination to establish schools as a reliable revenue stream, probably because schools today must accommodate much greater accountability and are much more vulnerable to liability laws. Instead, performance groups favor collaborations with theaters and organizations in different cities or countries in the awareness that their audiences will grow in relation to a particular demographic class of international spectators rather than in relation to an expanding demographic diversity within a stable or growing local population. Voiceless performance tends to "travel" more easily than speech-dependent performances, and as is evident from the history of pantomime, audiences have displayed far greater interest in pantomime than performing arts institutions have cared even to acknowledge. With the decline of the school-oriented mime culture since the 1990s, voiceless performance has expanded considerably in scope and quantity, especially in Europe. Yet the postmodern attitudes adopted by many performance groups stress the advantages of blurring rather than clarifying distinctions between pantomime and other forms of voiceless performance, partly because pantomime seems like an "old" phenomenon that lacks the innovative significance associated with "intermedial" performance and "postdramatic theater," even though pantomime in its manifold postmodern incarnations in the twenty-first century hardly seems less innovative than other forms of postmodern voiceless performance. But postmodern pantomime does seem less innovative—or perhaps less ambitious—than its modernist manifestations, which provokes scrutiny of the ideological implications embedded within postmodernist performance aesthetics.

Pantomime and Postmodern Performance

Performer-driven productions of voiceless performance tend to build narratives out of the physical skills of the performers, so that narratives organize the sequential display of one skill after another. For example, the

Ockham's Razor Theatre Company, formed in 2004 and based in Bristol, England, is a recurring guest of the London Mime Festival. The company specializes in "aerial theater and circus," in which performers construct a variety of complex, choreographed stunts using ropes, swings, floating platforms, rotating wheels, and mobile poles. The physical virtuosity of individual performers depends on collaboration with other performers, on the skillful display of teamwork: thus, a message of the shows is that the ability of humans to navigate and adapt to complicated environments on which one lacks secure footing requires trust in the ability of others to provide support, assistance, or "balance" when taking action. This type of show, made hugely popular by Cirque du Soleil, was always a part of circus performance, except that Ockham's Razor subdues theatricality and eliminates any notion of conflict from the narrative. The performers wear drab costumes or "working clothes" rather than the glamorous costumes and masks that circus performers wore in earlier times to show that they were rare, "special," even alien creatures. The narrative, devoid of conflict, avoids altogether any sense of dangerous, "death-defying" drama associated with the old circus trapeze and tightrope acts. The solo mime performances inspired by Marcel Marceau also featured narratives that displayed the gestural skills of the mime, usually through the evocation of imaginary objects, but these performances adopted the theatrical pretense of creating a character, a performance persona, a Pierrot or Bip, even if Decroux never approved of even this degree of theatricality in mime. Postmodern performance—or postdramatic theater, as Hans-Thies Lehmann calls it—favors performances that "free" narrative from the pressure to engage the spectator through the enactment of conflicts that immerse audiences in the emotional intoxications provoked by imaginary lives. The postdramatic theater is "ceremonial" rather than dramatic:

> *Postdramatic theatre [...] liberates the formal, ostentatious moment of ceremony from its sole function of enhancing attention and valorizes it for its own sake, as an aesthetic quality. [...] The whole spectrum of movements and processes that have no referent but are presented with heightened precision; events of peculiarly formalized communality; musical-rhythmic or visual-architectonic constructs of development; para-ritual forms, as well as the [...] ceremony of the body and of*

> *presence; the emphatically or monumentally accentuated ostentation of the presentation* (Lehmann 2006: 69).

By avoiding conflict and emphasizing "ceremonial" actions, post dramatic theater constructs "non-hierarchical" relations between performers, between performers and "text," and between performers and spectators (86-87). The object of performance is to create an image of a non-hierarchical community that is "free" of conflict, which is invariably the source and result of struggles for power that cause social pathologies. "The actor of postdramatic theatre is often no longer the actor of a role but a performer offering his/her presence on stage for contemplation" (135). In other words, the narrative for postdramatic voiceless performance consists of "scenically dynamic formations" that reveal the reality (or "presence") of the body through the performers' skillful application of physical techniques, which create an image or microcosm of a non-hierarchical society. Postdramatic theater constructs a "state" of equilibrium, in which all performance components can claim an equality of value or significance, for the teamwork that creates the production is the ceremonial goal of production, not anything the production purports to "represent" or imagine outside of the moment of performance (68). But this ideological foundation for performance is really not much different from Decroux's idea of mime as the transformation of bodies into abstract forms. As with Decroux's mime cult, this postmodern vision of performance as the microcosm of a non-hierarchical community depends on a sequestering of the performers from the world: on the stage or in the studio, the performers feel sufficiently secure with each other to build the team, the non-hierachical community. They trust each other more than they trust in the "roles" or "characters" that inhabit the narratives devised by a world riddled with conflict, struggles for power and control over desires. This is an ideology that is actually deeply distrustful of theater, of masks, of the simulations, disguises, and deceptions entailed in the acquisition and circulation of power, of bodies that always contain "other identities" rather than a "real," absolute, authentic self. But it is an ideology that appeals to people who want to perform, to display performance skills, without having to display acting skills. It is also an ideology that appeals to some postmodern audiences that want speechless bodies to signify an end to conflict, an end to the ancient struggle for control over the narrative of what the body "tells."

It is therefore possible that pantomime is inherently incapable of postmodern performance; after all, in its original meaning and in nearly all applications of the word, it refers to performers who "imitate" others. Pantomime could build a firm, if neglected, place in modernism, but in Lehmann's theoretical framework it was perhaps too enamored of modernism to be worthy of postmodernism. It is also possible, though, that performers lack the skill to contruct narratives involving "other identities" than those they regard as their "own." Postmodernism then provides the aesthetic ideology that justifies performance designed to dissolve the apparently unhealthy distance between "real" and imaginary identities by eliminating imaginary identities altogether, for these are unnecessary or irrelevant in clarifying or amplifying the value of the presumed real identity of the performer, which is who you are when you are not in "somebody else's" story, when you do not have to build actions around the motives, goals, or qualities of people other than yourself and the people you trust as part of your team. But even this argument seems limited in its ability to explain why so much of postmodern voiceless performance favors narratives of no greater ambition than the sequential display of physical skills in "difficult" environments. It is perhaps more plausible to argue that postmodernism provides access to performance by performers who lack skill in acting or in the construction of conflict-oriented narratives, and this expanded access is the basis for the non-hierachical society envisioned by the postmodern sensibility. The ancient Roman pantomime was also performer-driven: performers created pantomimic narratives out of the conflict between competing identities, mortal and divine, within what the Romans regarded as the "self." Moreover, pantomimes and their *claques* created further drama out of the competition between each other. But this form of performance narrative, no matter how flexible and innovative, would have no place in the postmodern performance culture as Lehmann conceives it because it embodies an ideology of bodily "metamorphosis" that arises from a hierarchical, imperial society. The solo pantomimes of Ilka Schönbein and Veronika Karsai resemble the Roman pantomimic narrative structures, but they, too, would not fit into the postmodern performance culture, because their performances also dramatize the multiplicity of identities within the body of the performer, and this multiplicity of identities is synonymous with conflict between them. The

struggle between identities within the self is the foundation of a hierarchical organization of identities within and external to the body.

Conflict-oriented ensemble pantomime narratives by performer-driven groups may display fine teamwork, but they would not qualify as postmodern according to Lehmann because they remain attached to hierarchical representations of identity, which invariably include imaginary identities, for consolidations of power and the formation of hierarchies depend inevitably on the construction of imaginary or possible identities. Familie Flöz is a pantomime company based, since 2001, in Berlin. Hajo Schüler (b. 1971) and Markus Michalkowski (b. 1971) formed the company in 1994 while they were acting students at the Folkwang Schule in Essen. In the late 1990s, Michael Vogel (b.1962), a theater director, joined the company and has collaborated with Schüler on the direction of the shows since 1998. The company abandoned speech altogether in its productions when it staged *Ristorante Immortale* (1998), and all of its productions since then have been pantomimes. Familie Flöz specializes in comic scenes based on themes from mundane contemporary reality. A distinctive feature of the company's productions is that all the actors wear bizarre, slightly grotesque, vaguely porcine, flesh-colored masks that makes the characters seem like members of a mutant subspecies or tribe of humanity, even though they inhabit a very familiar bourgeois world (cf., Vogel 2001). Much of the action performed by the ensemble, which usually involves four actors who each play multiple roles, consists of slapstick gags and intricate relations between actions and sound or musical effects, such as the use of different dog barks by unseen dogs. In *Ristorante Immortale*, all the action depicts interactions between the incompetent staff members of a decrepit Italian restaurant that has no customers; in *Teatro Delusio* (2004), the action occurs backstage during the performance of an opera; in *Hotel Paradiso* (2008) the action unfolds in the lobby of a modest hotel, whose modesty serves in various comic ways to conceal the criminality, perversity, fraudulence, or pathos of the staff and guests. The company began using video imagery in its productions with *Garage d'Or* (2010), which depicted three middle-aged men, bored with their wives and domestic life, who escape, through a strange door, into a fantasy of traveling into outer space and "into the darkest depths of their own selves." In *Haydi!* (2014), the company tackled the theme of refugee immigration with a scenario about a young, idealistic border agency official who finds his political, humanitarian

aspirations compromised or undermined by bureaucratic careerism, "paragraph pedants, office zombies," and the mercantile self-interest of his superiors. While Familie Flöz makes abundant and inventive use of slapstick gags, the company is peculiarly effective at suddenly inserting moments of pathos, emotionally dark perturbations. *Infinita* (2006), for example, consists of discrete scenes describing the beginning and the end of life. In one scene, a pair of toddlers tries to steal the doll of a third toddler in a crib. The efforts of the pair to enter the crib and the clumsy resistance of the third are simultaneously funny and touching, because the scene also shows how struggles for power and possession shape human relations at the very beginning of life. A fourth child enters, a little girl, who helps the third toddler escape the crib with his doll, leaving the bully pair in the cage. But as he leaves with the little girl, the third toddler swats one of the other toddlers with the doll [Figure 118]. In another scene, the little girl perches on the edge of an expressionistically oversize table and lifts her skirt to the three toddlers on the floor below her, and they gaze at her in awe, as if receiving a sign from a goddess. In yet another scene, three old men in white suits sit on a bench along with a fourth in a wheel chair. The men perform a musical piece by tapping their canes and feet while at the same time competing with each other by sneaking swats at each other and then performing little dances with their canes, as if relentless competitiveness is the thing keeping them alive. A particularly memorable example of the company's work is a scene in which a man sits on a bench apparently preparing a dish while his wife sits beside him bird-watching with the help of a guide book. A duck flying overhead fills her with rapture, and she shows her husband the identity of the bird in the book. A hunter then struts in and takes a commanding, intimidating pose on the bench. When another duck flies overhead, he shoots it down with arrogant satisfaction. The woman kneels before the corpse, tries to revive it, cradles it, and tries to shame the oblivious hunter, who has seized the corpse and carries it like a trophy. The husband intervenes and casts a scolding stare at the hunter, who accepts that he has also deeply wounded the woman. He gives the husband the doll-corpse and his stick rifle. He picks up a rose and offers it to the woman. She seems touched; he offers her his arm, and they wander off together, leaving the husband holding the corpse and the rifle. Stunned, he wanders away in the opposite direction, but first picks up his wife's bird watching book. The scene seems simple in its dramatization of how

physical actions radically change people's attitudes toward each other. Yet such scenes are quite rare in voiceless performance, even if they carry a vague reminiscence of old *commedia* schema, because it is so difficult to construct pantomimic narratives, to think pantomimically. Familie Flöz may not be postmodern performance, but it operates in a postmodern or postdramatic culture that uses the word "mime," as in London Mime Festival, to present self-identified, performer-driven postmodern performances. More precisely, postmodernism functions to destabilize terms like "mime" (or make the word more "inclusive") rather than to define any particular type of performance that does not rely on a prescriptive text or a "linear" idea of narrative or a desire to represent imagined lives.





Figure 118: Scenes from the Familie Flöz production of *Infinita*, Berlin, 2006. Photos: Andrea Zani.

Hartmut Vollmer's Didactic Response to Postmodernism

The reason performers do not or cannot think pantomimically probably entails the reason for their attraction to postmodern modes of performance: they distrust bodies that project "other identities" rather than a presumed "real" identity. The display of acrobatic skills is proof of a bodily reality or authenticity that does not require masks, the simulation of other identities. As this book has shown, various modernist performers have demonstrated considerable skill in thinking pantomimically. But in the postmodern performance culture, performers often assume that thinking about "other identities" belongs to those who create texts, writers, dramatists, people who find imaginary identities more alluring than real ones, than performers themselves. In relation to pantomime, however, performers are not unique in their postmodern attitudes. The writing of pantomime scenarios since Handke's *Die Stunde da wir nichts voneinander wußten* (1992) is non-existent and practically so since the 1920s. Pantomime has simply disappeared from the literary imagination, despite the numerous fascinating scenarios composed by literary authors in the modernist era. Hartmut Vollmer (b. 1957), who has done so much to retrieve from obscurity the Austro-German literary pantomime, believes that the

expressive and aesthetic power of pantomime expands or deepens through association with literary texts. He therefore has published a slender book, *Pantomimisches Lernen im Deutschunterricht: Ein Beitrag zur Förderung des sinnlichen Verstehens* (2012), in which he proposes that pantomime instruction in German public schools should use literary texts to inspire students and to develop their "sensual understanding" of the world, their "freedom of fantasy," and the "playful" expression of their bodies (Vollmer 2012b: 26). He accepts the argument advanced with monumental zeal in a nearly 700-page dissertation, *Pädagogik der Pantomime* (1997), by Frank Nickel, who proposes that pantomime instruction is uniquely capable of developing communication skills and achieving an educational experience that "integrates body, mind, and soul" (Vollmer 2012b: 11). But Vollmer contends that the benefits of school pantomime instruction have deeper impact on youthful consciousness when the instruction involves a close relationship to literature. His explication of this relationship, however, rests upon a limited, old-fashioned idea of pantomime or, perhaps more accurately, an idea of pantomime that has circulated in Germany among teachers since the 1960s and supposedly descends from Decroux by way of Soubeyran but which actually does something different from what either man wanted pantomime to do (19). Vollmer treats pantomime as a gestural language; it is the translation of moods, ideas, and words into bodily gestures. To learn pantomime, he asserts, is to use gestures to invoke imaginary objects, people, or conditions (43). Like so many books that instruct the reader on how to perform pantomime, Vollmer includes exercises to assist the teacher in organizing a pantomime curriculum for children. For example, following the book *Pantomime für Kinder* (1975), by Pat Keysell (1926-2009), an English mime who produced BBC television shows for deaf children and taught at the Royal National Institute for the Deaf, children can learn to mime the four elements: earth, wind, fire, and water. Fire: "The children lie scattered about like dry branches. Someone lets a burning match fall—sparks flare, and immediately the first branch begins to crackle. The fire spreads, grabs one finger after the other, the arms, the legs, until eventually the whole body burns. [...] Flames are like passions, like anger. The movement must come from the center of the body, there must one find the power—not just in the movement of the arms" (Keysell 1985: 74; Vollmer 2012b: 45). Children can also perform the four seasons or different animals. Dog: watchful-observant; cat: creeping; duck:

waddling; horse: pompous, galloping; frog: bouncing (45). And children can learn to signify pantomimically various emotions, such as happiness, anxiety, fury, aggression, understanding, surprise, and arrogance. They then may move on to signifying "roles," "from earliest childhood to great age": Mother, Father, Prince, Grandmother, Rich Person, Poor Person, and so forth, keeping in mind the importance of evoking "a social environment" (47). Perhaps wisely, Vollmer does not present examples of how one might signify these emotions or roles, for different children might differently "translate" into pantomime these emotions or roles, and pantomime would hardly embody a "freedom of fantasy" if students had to learn a "correct" way of signifying them, even though with fire and the animals a correct way seems implied. At the same time, though, he does not clarify how a teacher or spectator should evaluate a child's performance of these roles. On what basis does the child improve her performance in relation to the "translation" of the emotion or role? Vollmer suggests that the child should *not* signify Father or Rich Person as a result of observations in real life; rather, the child should strive for a "generalized, stylized" image of fatherliness or wealth to achieve clarity of communication (47-48). But what is the nature and source of this abstracted gestural image of the Father or the Rich Person? The question only reinforces the sense that the performer translates something already codified into gesture rather than imitates something actually seen or even imagined. Although he refers to "competencies" in pantomimic signification, he does not explain how one measures these competencies, because competency really means skill at translating a socially coded idea of Father or Rich Person into "appropriate" gestures rather than pantomimic skill at narrating an experience of fatherliness or wealth through physical actions. In this respect, pantomime instruction serves to integrate the child into the society that has constructed the code.

Vollmer moves on to suggest seventeen scenic situations that children can perform in the classroom in an improvised manner, such as: "A child visits a shoe store with his parents. He tries on various shoes, shows his pleasures and distastes. What else can happen? What encounters or experiences in the shoe store are thinkable?" Or: "A family travels by car on a vacation trip. On the highway they run into a traffic jam. How do the family members respond? In a larger time frame of play, the children can stage the arrival at a hotel or camping site." Or: "In the morning, a married

couple wakes up in their bedroom. Stretching their bodies, they try to shake off their sleepiness. Then they drift into the bathroom to make themselves fresh. Subsequently they have breakfast. Strange, comic things transpire. What?" (52-53). Such scenic situations allow for different interpretations by the children, and Vollmer suggests that child spectators assist the performers in constructing the scenes, which might begin with the use of spoken dialogue and then proceed with the incremental elimination of words. But the situations remain hypothetical "exercises" insofar as Vollmer does not describe any actual application of them, any account of how real children responded to the suggested situations. The situations, however, apparently function as preparation for the main goal of school pantomime instruction—the interpretation of literary texts. To create space for pantomime instruction in the public school curriculum, Vollmer finds justification in the official guidelines for the appreciation of literary texts, which are important in activating the imagination, in building awareness of "unfamiliar" lives, places, sensations, and times, for reading is not only a cognitive activity, but a sensual, emotional experience (60). Pantomime from this perspective is a "sensualization of language." Vollmer then discusses dramatic, prose, poetic, and non-fiction texts that children can interpret pantomimically. These include, among others, the shaving scene from Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck* (1837), the children's novel *Das war der Hirbel* (1973) by Peter Härtling (1933-2017), Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (1912), small poems by Ursula Wölfel (1922-2014), Bertolt Brecht, Christa Reinig (1926-2008), and Henriette Hardenberg (1894-1993), and a small newspaper article about insects resisting pesticides (66-106). By translating these texts into physical gestures, Vollmer contends, children gain a deeper appreciation of the power of words to affect them viscerally while enhancing their analytical skills, although, again, he does not provide empirical evidence for this assertion nor does he give examples of how children might or actually pantomimically interpret any of these texts. He only describes, persuasively, why the texts offer good opportunities for pantomimic interpretation. Thus, the primary goal of pantomime instruction is not to improve skill at pantomimic communication, but to deepen appreciation for literature. It is a mode of *translation* that becomes entangled with the *interpretation* of words. Pantomimic thinking then becomes synonymous with translating, with correlating words and "appropriate" gestures, whereas pantomimic thinking, in the realm of

theater and film history, largely means constructing narratives through physical actions. While some of the texts, especially by the poets, contain intimations of pantomimic thinking in their descriptions of physical actions, Vollmer does not examine the process by which one puts together a series of physical actions; he only explains how pantomime might make the performer appreciative of a meaning he ascribes to the text. Toward the end of his book, he discusses two pantomime scenarios by literary authors—Hermann Bahr's *Die Pantomime vom braven Manne* (1892) and Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Das fremde Mädchen* (1911)—but mostly as examples of how pantomime has achieved an underestimated significance in Austro-German literary history. He thinks children are capable of performing these scenarios as the culmination of their instruction in the earlier stages of pantomimic activity or at least capable of discussing them in class in relation to pedagogic questions such as: Why did Hofmannsthal choose to present his subject matter through pantomime? How does the piece gain expressive power through pantomime rather than through spoken dialogue? He includes still photos from the 1911 theatrical production and the vanished 1913 film production of *Das fremde Mädchen*, but advises teachers not to show the pictures to students for fear that the images would influence how the students perform the work (126-127), rendering the point of publishing the pictures obscure and reinforcing the implication throughout the book that one does not learn pantomime by observing it. Vollmer could have made reference to any number of excellent examples of silent film pantomime, but invariably those examples were not the work of esteemed literary authors. School pantomime instruction thus remains subordinate to instruction in literature and to bolstering the authority of literary authors in guiding bodily performance.

Despite the problems with Vollmer's thinking about pantomime and school education, his proposals for school pantomime instruction deserve implementation, even if evidence is lacking to support the claim that pantomime instruction enhances the learning of literature or social integration or cognitive skills, for learning is always more or other than what one teaches. Learning to appreciate literature is a good thing, and if pantomime instruction helps to appreciate literature, then it, too, is a good thing. But a more serious problem is the failure of the literary imagination to produce much at all in the way of pantomime scenarios since the 1920s, and Vollmer does not even acknowledge the problem in his zeal to connect

pantomime instruction to literary texts. He sees that literature helps performers to construct "other identities," but he seems unable to explain why writers have failed to create these other identities for theatrical pantomime since the 1920s, except indirectly through poems and stories meant mostly to be read, and have left it to performers to produce pantomimes. It may be that pantomimic thinking cannot be taught, for it involves a mysterious learning process derived from observing pantomime performances and observing the performance of physical actions by persons in life itself. Pantomimic thinking entails a cognitive capacity to identify a significance for physical actions without further knowledge, through language, of the motives for the actions. Angna Enters discovered her own pantomimic imagination largely through looking at pictures and inventing in her mind actions performed before or after the moment captured by a picture. The ambiguities of signification, the corporeal "hieroglyphics," as Mallarmé called them, so often associated with pantomimic action are always a problem for educational institutions, which generally exist to provide a unified basis for "understanding" the world. Since the reign of Tiberius in the Roman Empire, pantomime has resisted codification of its bodily significations, has operated most powerfully outside of academic systems for standardizing or regulating the "meaning" of physical actions. Dance academies expect pantomime to conform to "rules" established by dance—or just exclude pantomime altogether. Established or mainstream theater in the Christian world has sanctified speech, the authority of the Word, as a way to control the ambiguity of bodily actions. For a long time, it has simply never occurred to people who write for the theater to write pantomimes anymore than it occurred to anyone in the Roman Empire, other than Seneca, to write plays with spoken dialogue, and nobody in the Roman Empire considered Seneca a man of the theater. The Austro-German writers of pantomime scenarios that Vollmer has retrieved from neglect never studied pantomime nor did they even see much pantomime performance beyond early specimens of silent film. These authors imply that a deep distrust of speech and language is not essential to the formation of a pantomimic imagination. Rather, what is essential is a unique capacity to see that speech or language is not necessary to "understand" a physical action, to become emotionally invested in a physical action seen in relation to an actor's performance of actions, to music, to silence, and to scenic elements. The process of composing a pantomimic narrative, of building a

sequence of physical actions that emotionally engage the spectator with some degree of seriousness, is extremely difficult. Even those literary authors who wrote pantomime scenarios in the early modernist era were unable to write more than two or three. Film pantomime is somewhat easier to do because filmmakers can rely on numerous cinematic devices to engage the spectator with the image. Theater culture has not marginalized pantomime because audiences do not care for it—audiences generally find pantomime fascinating when it reveals the strangeness of human actions. The talent and passion for producing emotionally dramatic pantomimic narratives is far too rare for mainstream theater culture to rely on it. It is rare because of large-scale social-historical constraints on the capacity of people to accommodate the ambiguity of human actions. In the Roman Empire, pantomime prevailed to the exclusion of any other theater because a pervasive ideology of metamorphosis encouraged a mode of performance that detached the body from words (laws), which functioned largely to determine where people belonged within a complex social hierarchy. Pantomime thus presented an image of freedom embedded in the multiplicity of identities projected by the unspeaking body. Christianity has encouraged a pervasive ideology of a unified self, of unity between word and action, between voice and body, to contain or diminish the ambiguities of meaning or identity associated with the performance of physical actions. In its serious manifestations, pantomime exists to estrange its audience from any unified idea, illusion, or understanding of its society or itself. It exists to amplify the subjectivity of the spectator; its ambiguities expand the spectator's responsibility for the meaning of action. Serious pantomime simultaneously deepens the spectator's sense of being alone, distinct, and free.

Pantomime is not now in a culminating or decisive moment in its long, volatile history. The art does not face any crisis confronting its existence, nor is it enjoying a time of peculiar prosperity, especially when compared to the pantomime mania of the eighteenth century or to the half dozen centuries in which pantomime totally dominated the concept of theater in the Roman Empire. But since the beginning of the twentieth century, the varieties of pantomimic performance and imagination have far exceeded the scope of pantomime in the nineteenth century, when, after the Napoleonic era, almost no one seemed able to imagine pantomime without Pierrot. For many decades, Pierrot and Pierrot-like emulators were,

in popular consciousness, synonymous with pantomime, even though Pierrot also signified a profound and seemingly interminable decadence of French pantomimic imagination. Pierrot caused many to avoid the word "pantomime" to describe their voiceless performances, including even the descendents of the Pierrot archetype responsible for the postwar "mime culture." The fluidity of postmodern aesthetic categories has allowed the pantomimic imagination to diversify and operate under terms such as "movement theater," "visual theater," and "intermedial performance," which may include pantomimic action without being completely defined by it. Pantomime has adapted well to a postmodern performance environment that encourages the dissolution of aesthetic, linguistic, political, and cultural boundaries to reach a "global" or international audience, which responds enthusiastically to what bodies "tell" instead of what texts prescribe or voices conceal.

Lähtö (2014)

A fine example of postmodern, interdisciplinary mutation of pantomime is the two-character *Lähtö* (*Departure*), created by the WHS production company based in Helsinki, Finland. The company refers to itself as a producer of "visual theater" or "new circus" or "avant-garde theater." *Lähtö* involved numerous collaborators, with Kalle Nio (b. 1982), one of the founders of WHS, responsible for the direction; he also performed the male character. But his formal education was in the visual arts, which he has supplemented with a life-long, informal study of magic. In addition to producing theater, he has exhibited installations and made experimental videos (Nio 2018). He claims that some inspiration for the piece came from the austere, enigmatic, elegant, existentialist films of Michelangelo Antonioni (1912-2007), particularly *La Notte* (1961), and *L'Eclisse* (1962) ("Magija finske predstave" *Odlazak* 2014: Paragraph 4). An actor-dancer, Vera Selene Tegelman played the female character and, with Nio, choreographed much of the physical action. The percussionist Samuli Kosminen (b. 1974) composed the soundtrack involving a mix of natural sounds (like rain), electronic sounds, and somber instrumental music. *Lähtö* had its premiere in Strasbourg in 2013, and since then the one-hour piece has been performed in many European countries as well as in several Central and South American countries. Nio has made some modifications to

the piece since its premiere, and the discussion of it here relies on the version presented in Tallinn in autumn 2014.

Lähtö depicts the relationship between a man and a woman who have abandoned speech as a means of communicating with each other. They sit across from each other at a table, separated by a vase with brilliant flowers. The man eats the peas that remain on his plate; the woman, having finished her plate, sips wine. The woman, in a grey dress, studies the man as he eats without looking at her. Impatient, she stands up, pours wine into her glass, taps the glass with her knife, clears her throat, and raises her glass to him, as he gazes at her suspiciously. He reaches in to his pocket and throws some keys on the table. Annoyed, she turns away and moves to the huge, grey curtain behind them. He pours himself a glass of wine, picks up his coat and walks toward her as she opens the curtain to reveal a view of the ocean, with waves crashing before her, as if the couple live near the sea. She stares out at the sea. But as soon as he stands behind her, she moves away and returns to the table, where she sits and lights a cigarette. The man closes the curtain and puts on his coat. When, however, he sees her light the cigarette, he takes off his coat and returns to his seat at the table. The couple performs these same actions the same way two more times. They have nothing to say to each other, yet they still communicate with each other through a speechless, ritual game of repetitive actions that imply a condition of being bound to each other without being able to break free of an impatience, a boredom, a loneliness, and a profound disappointment with each other. The relationship is in an unhappy stasis, a rigid balance of power that reinforces repetitive behavior, a constant loop of signs that merely return the couple to an initial, cold starting point, with nothing worth sharing except a bottle of wine.

After the third performance of these actions, the great curtain descends, and the man and woman enter a nocturnal, blue-hued, phantasmagoric, hallucinatory dimension to their relationship, as if it depends on an imagined, illusory, dreamlike, or supernatural idea of "togetherness." The pair performs a variety of actions alone and together. The man emerges from behind the folds of the curtain with an ironing board. He tries to iron a shirt, but the shirt keeps moving, as if it is a living thing resisting his efforts to smooth it out. Mila Moisio (b. 1981) and Kaisa Rissanen (b. 1981) designed the costumes to accommodate the magic effects, which also include parts of the woman's dress moving

independently of her or falling off her. When the man puts on a jacket, he seems to sprout other arms that grip him from behind. Alone in a red dress, the woman tries to balance a wine glass on her forehead while smoking a cigarette and dancing before great swirls of the curtain, which also seems alive. The couple treats the curtain as a kind of barrier, a huge, fluid opacity that they must overcome or manage, which involves physical wrestling with it or floundering in it. A storm arises. They try to hoist the curtain by pulling on ropes in a powerful action of physical struggle, as if, as Camillia Burows suggests, the curtain "has finally become a sailing ship that the couple tries to keep afloat" (Burows 2018: Paragraph 2). The scenic elements also involve large, *noirish* video images of the man and woman looming over the performers, so that their flesh and physical features appear intensely intimate to the spectator. In the rain, they embrace, touch, prod, lift, and move each other, but always ambivalently, not with affection, not playfully, and perhaps not with love. In another scene, with the curtain cleared away, the man and the woman sit at the table as they did at the beginning, except now they appear within a glass cage, surrounded by walls and a ceiling of mirrors that are also transparent windows. They are the same as they were at the beginning, tired of each other. The tablecloth begins to melt, and the vase of flowers slides with the goo to the floor. The pair climbs onto the table to study and touch each other, as if to affirm the reality of the existence, but their clothes, too, begin to melt, and they become entangled in the goo and must peel it away until they are both nearly nude. The couple believes that they must change their environment if they are to change their relationship. The woman moves the table, and the man also moves a table, but her image in the mirror becomes confused with that of her partner. The mirror panels reflect multiple images of the pair, and the woman moves the panels, balances a panel on her hand, in an effort, presumably, to construct a better image of the relationship or a domestic environment less confined by the image. The panels separate and glide away. At the end, the man and woman do not seem to have resolved the conflict between them, but neither have they glided away from each other as the images have. Nor does their dark dream together restore their desire to speak to each other [Figures 119-120].

Lähtö suggests that what holds people together are dreams, illusions, distorted images of the self and others, a fantasy of transforming an environment "together." But these are not images of mere wish fulfillment;

they are images of the mind looking at its owner from outside of the "self," and so it is not clear who the "author" of the actions is. Physical actions alone determine the "connection" or bonding of one body to another. The connection is only fitfully or inadvertently erotic, and not guided by any pressure for rapture or even happiness. Physical actions happen because the characters no longer believe that language, speech, can move them through the "curtain" separating self and other; indeed, language is like a curtain. Behind this curtain, the mind sees physical action unfiltered by language or speech. The physical actions change relations between bodies, objects, and space only because they occur outside of the curtain separating self and other. The meaning of the physical actions is cryptic, lacking in clear motive, difficult to "understand," because the actions follow a logic that makes speaking unnecessary; the sound of the rain and the dark music provide a far more satisfying "commentary" by being, like the dream-mind, external to the bodies performing the actions. Speechless actions do not produce a loss of identity or a clarification of it; they produce a sort of mutation of it (a "metamorphosis" of it, as the imperial Romans supposed), the appearance of your body projecting an identity that you did not "know." Speechless actions make the spectator deeply alone in deciphering their meaning; they intensify subjectivity. But subjectivity is most acute when language, as a society's chief instrument for clarifying all identities, is not there to "explain" who anyone is, including the spectator. For the spectators as well as for the characters in the performance, an implication of the piece is that togetherness achieves its strongest manifestation when one person and another have moved beyond language, so that only the physical actions they perform are enough to bond them together. Whatever is "beyond" the physical actions they perform will not keep them together. How else can one "know" such things except through pantomimic action? For pantomime is the art that most powerfully reveals what happens to people when they act beyond language. No other art shows so beautifully what people can do when words no longer matter, when there is nothing more to say.

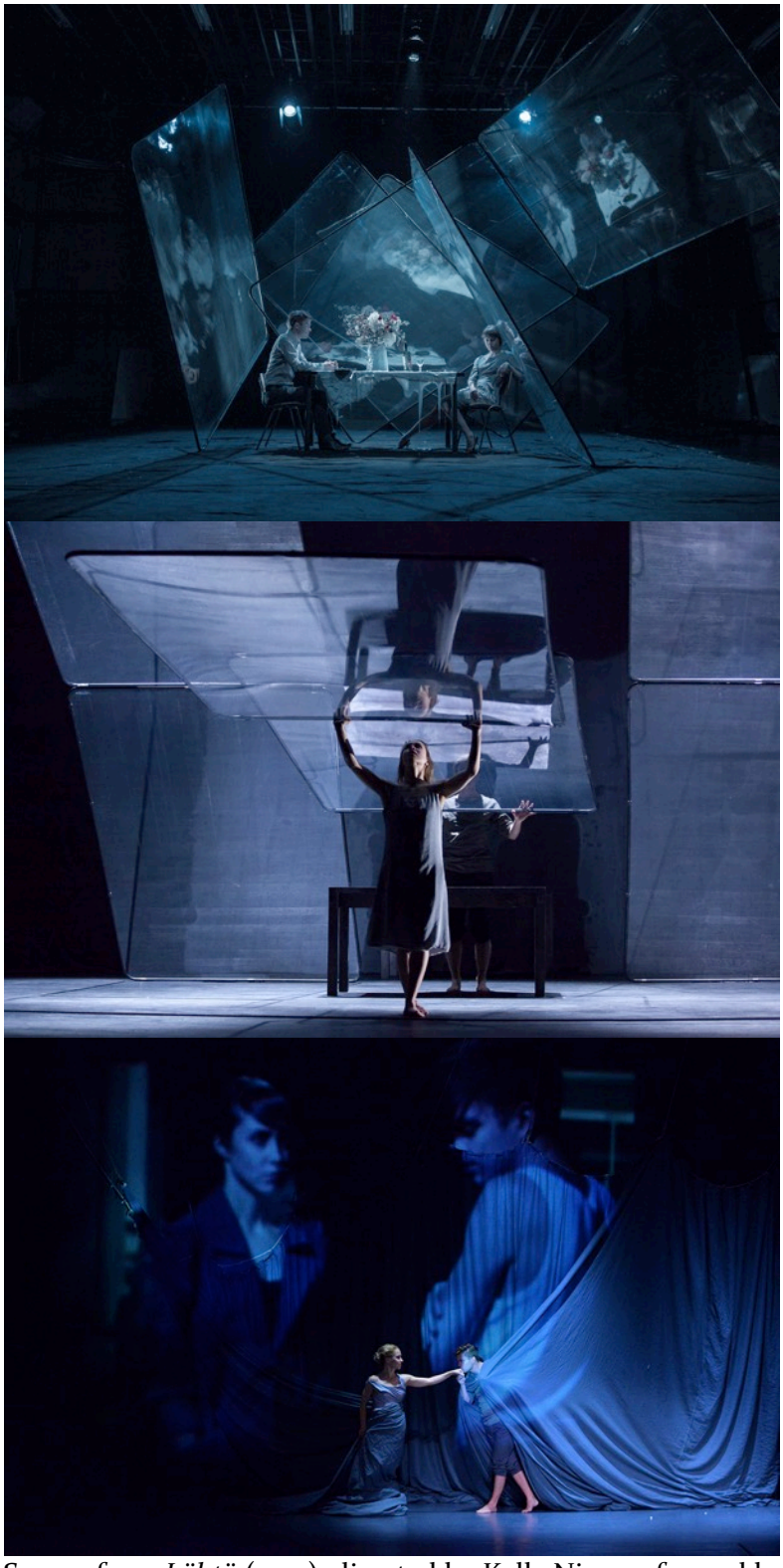


Figure 119: Scenes from *Lähtö* (2013), directed by Kalle Nio, performed by him and Vera Selene Tegelman, Helsinki, Finland. Photos: Tom Hakala.



Figure 120: Scenes from *Lähtö* (2013), directed by Kalle Nio, performed by him and Vera Selene Tegelman, Helsinki, Finland. Photos: Tom Hakala.

Desire (2019)

Within the postmodern aesthetic, pantomime functions to bestow fluidity or uncertainty of identity to performance, so that performance itself signifies unstable or dynamic relationships between text and action, speech and bodily gesture, music and sound, performer and spectator, the imaginary and the real, the solitary self and the communal persona, or technology and "humanness." These fluidities of identity become equivalent, at least theoretically, to an enhanced state of freedom, of release from the constraining, ideologically formed barriers or "limits" defining identities. But fluidity of identity in relation to the concept of "performance" perhaps inevitably requires that postmodern performance expand its power through its ability to intensify fluidity of sexual identity and desire. But with this goal in mind, pantomime is merely doing what it already had done for centuries during the Roman Empire, revealing the "metamorphosis" of the body when neither speech nor dance is able to prevent the spectator from seeing it.

A good example of a postmodern pantomime of fluid sexual identity is *Iha*, which in Estonian means *Desire* or *Craving* or *Lust*, a performance piece by an undergraduate student in the Choreography Program of Tallinn University, Keithy Kuuspu (b. 1994). *Desire* was Kuuspu's graduation piece. It had its premiere in April 2019 at the Kanuti Gildi SAAL in the Old Town district of Tallinn. The Kanuti Guild Hall operates primarily as a space for experimental forms of performance, but for *Desire*, Kuuspu and her colleagues cleaned out several storage rooms in the cellar of the building and shaped the performance in relation to these spaces made available to them. The piece involves seven performers, all women, and Kuuspu inserts herself into the performance at various moments. Lasting about an hour, *Desire* depicts erotic and domestic interactions between women living together, although none of the performers embody "characters" or named identities: the point of performance is to show tropes of interaction that are not specific to particular motives or personalities; they are specific to female-to-female desires. The relation of the performance to its audience is dynamic insofar as spectators move from one site or room of performance to another, but not together. However, the audience is together for the first and last scenes. The first scene takes place at the entrance to the cellar, with the audience standing and watching from the lobby of the Kanuti Guild Hall. The performance begins with a muscular woman (Agnes Ihoma)

slowly gyrating and caressing herself behind a transparent plastic screen, as if she is looking at herself in a mirror and trying to see how she looks when she signifies erotic desire or provokes it. Soon the audience hears the recorded sound of a woman gasping or panting, as if she is pleasuring herself. From out of the audience, the other women in the ensemble, wearing shiny scarlet pants and black sweaters or shiny scarlet robes, approach the transparent mirror-wall or another transparent mirror-wall perpendicular to the one before the muscular woman. One dark-haired woman in a scarlet robe, pressing against the transparent sheet, reproduces the movements made by the muscular woman as she presses herself against the transparency. Other women slowly undulate before the perpendicular transparency. Then all the women converge on the mirror-wall separating them from the muscular woman. The woman in the scarlet robe begins to touch the muscular woman's image in a manner that is independent of the muscular woman's movement. This distinction inspires the other women to retrieve damp cloths from a pale of water and begin scrubbing the transparent screen, as if to wash away the "invisible" barrier between them and the muscular woman. They kneel down while the muscular woman stands tall, with her arms upraised, like a priestess before her acolytes. The whole scene appears to dramatize the erotic fantasy the muscular woman devises while gazing at her own image. She imagines herself wanting and desired by more than one woman; even if all the women she imagines wear variants of the same "uniform," one woman is not "enough" to complete her desire. A group or community of women is necessary for the fulfillment of rapturous self-reflection. When the fantasy women tear down the transparency, they pass by the muscular woman and descend into the cellar rooms. The muscular woman gazes at the audience before she turns and leads the audience into the cellar.

The audience passes through a dark, narrow corridor, against the walls of which some of the women, illuminated expressionistically by soft-glowing copper light, writhe and pant, as if performing a strange, solitary exercise that they share with the public without actually being a group. At the end of the corridor is a sunken space designed to resemble a living room bathed in a flaming orange light. The audience can move through the scene as it plays and view the action from a staircase on the other side of the room. A television set is on, but it displays only a blizzard of electronic "snow." After sitting on the couch watching the television set, the muscular

woman and another woman (Dana Lorén Warres) engage in a kind of slow ritual of putting on and removing sweaters, of putting sweaters on each other, of removing their sweaters, of trying to bind each other within the same sweater, of pulling down each other's pants. With the sweaters discarded, they fondle each other on the couch. Kuuspu enters, fixes herself a drink, sits on the couch, and stares at the television set. The muscular woman and her partner tease each other with a sweater as they amble, staring into each other's eyes, up the staircase and into a corner of it, where they nuzzle each other. They then return to the positions they assumed when they began the piece and perform the scene over again, as if it is a loop. All scenes in *Desire* occur as loops to allow all portions of the audience to see all scenes but not together or in the same order. The spectator chooses which room to enter, but all scenes happen at the same time; the "looping" of the scenes enables the spectator to see different things happening at once.

In another room, two women in black Spandex shorts and tank tops (Silvia-Kairet Põld and Amanda Hermiine Künnapas) perform actions that apparently occur in a public restroom. A pillar in the center of the room supports two wash basins and mirrors, but these point in opposite directions, one bathed in green light, the other in blue light. One woman slowly approaches the green basin, the other the blue basin. They undulate and caress themselves before the mirrors, then suddenly dart away and "discover" each other in the shadows. They run in opposite circles around the entire space, as if trying to avoid and attract each other at the same time. One woman stops to splash and refresh herself at the blue basin. The other woman slips behind her and makes caressive movements, which they both observe in the mirror. They move away from the basin and start embracing in the shadows. But they emerge from the shadows performing combative actions, with both women performing both stalking and fleeing strides until one of the women abruptly halts and the other woman studies her closely, making caressive gestures. The two women begin dancing together in a sexual, voluptuous manner. Kuuspu enters the scene and pours something from a jar into the "blue" basin. She tries to insert herself into the dance, but this leads to conflict, with the two dancers uncertain who should "possess" Kuuspu or if Kuuspu should even be in the dance. An ambiguous configuration of movements makes unclear if the dancers expel Kuuspu from their dance or Kuuspu ejects herself from the dance. But with

Kuuspu gone, the dancers exchange desiring glances at each other, touch hands, and retreat slowly and separately into the shadows. The scene begins again for another portion of the audience that had watched another scene in another room.

A third scene takes place in a room dressed to resemble a small kitchen. Two young women, dressed in shiny scarlet pants and black sweaters, inhabit the space. Pink tones pervade the scene: pink coffee cups, pink spoons, a pink clock, a chandelier made out of dangling pink gloves, even the lighting is pinkish. Woman A (Kristiina Heinmets) does something at a stove in a dark corner of the room while Woman B (Alma Nedzelskyte) stands up from a chair to watch her. When Woman A returns from the stove and goes to a cupboard on the other side of the room, Woman B moves a kitchen utensil on a wall from one peg to another, and when Woman A returns from the cupboard, she returns the kitchen utensil to its original peg, while Woman B adjusts the item that Woman A had handled at the cupboard. Woman A and Woman B face each other with Woman A holding a pink plastic spoon; when Woman B does not accept the spoon, Woman A lets it drop to the floor. Variations of this sequence of actions occur three more times, once in slow motion, until Woman B catches the spoon. Woman B goes to the stove and retrieves a pot of coffee, while Woman A adjusts the pink wall clock. But Woman A blocks Woman B from returning to her chair until Woman B dodges her and they both sit down, side by side, and begin to assume different sitting poses without looking at each other. Then they swivel and face each other. Woman A places both hands on Woman B's hips, but Woman B flings her hands away. They repeat this swivel-touch-fling movement several times while Kuuspu, holding a pink goblet, enters, opens the refrigerator and peers into it before bending to pick up plastic spoons dropped on the floor. Kuuspu's "intervention" disrupts the game playing of the two women. Woman A goes to the stove, while Woman B resets the pink clock, Kuuspu tidies pink objects on the little tea table. She leaves the scene; Woman A and Woman B then ceremoniously stand and pour water from a pitcher into each other's tea cups and sit sipping from the cups until Woman B reaches for a cigarette, which she lights with a match. Woman A draws a cigarette from the same pink pack and awaits a light from Woman B. When Woman B notices Woman A awaiting the light, she leans toward her and lights her cigarette by touching it with her own cigarette, as if the women kiss each

other with their cigarettes. They smoke languorously for a moment, then simultaneously put out their cigarettes. They stand and embrace; they walk to the stove, from which Woman A withdraws a pan. She holds the pan ceremoniously before dumping the contents on the floor, spaghetti apparently. So the scene ends and begins again for another section of the audience.

The final scene occurs after all sections of the audience have seen the previous scenes performed simultaneously in different rooms. The entire performance ensemble appears together in the final scene before the entire audience. The action takes place in the same room where the bathroom scene occurred, but now the scene evokes the atmosphere of a nightclub, and the music here as elsewhere in the production is disco-electronica, although no one really dances in the scene. Virtually all of the action revolves around a large pillar in the center of the room; the audience surrounds the performance space, seated against the four walls of the room. A small metal railing, about a foot high, surrounds the pillar and enables performers to stand on it to reach and hang on to fixtures attached to the ceiling. The scene begins with Kuuspu, dressed, as elsewhere, in a black blouse, black pants, and sneakers, treading stealthily through space, scanning the audience for people or opportunities. She draws to her a pair of women in transparent tank tops and Spandex shorts; the women surround Kuuspu, but she slips away and leaves the two women to interact with each other. These women play a kind of game, encircling the pillar, darting and looping around each other, alternating stalking and evading each other, so that it is not clear who desires whom—or rather, the women convey an ambivalence about desiring or being desired. The appearance of another woman in a transparent tank top and shiny red pants complicates this game of ambivalent desire. Three women sneak, wind, and coil around the pillar, flinching when one woman touches the hand of another gliding down the pillar. Further complication ensues when a fourth woman, in transparent black tank top and Spandex shorts, enters the game, with the movements of the women becoming somewhat both predatory and furtive. A fifth woman enters, shadowed by Kuuspu, and the women study her before drawing her into their game. When a sixth woman enters the game, the action becomes very complex, with some women stepping onto the railing around the pillar, where they display themselves voluptuously, while other women gyrate and undulate alone or in pairs or slip into fleeting,

unsustained or incomplete embraces. Every time, women form pairs, a third woman intrudes to break up the pair and form a new one. Whenever a woman seems drawn to another woman, a third woman distracts her. The women radiate away from the pillar into the shadows and gyrate voluptuously and individually before the audience. But the pillar draws them back and they all step onto the railing and display their bodies, prowl over each other's bodies until finally they all step down at once to the floor and bend over in a circle around the pillar with each woman resting her head on the buttocks of the woman before her. They simultaneously raise their heads and lower them so that the other cheek of each woman rests on the buttocks of the woman before her. Each woman supplements this gesture with caressive strokes on the thigh or hip of the woman before her. But the body-chain collapses when the women break away to form pairs, three of them. The couples embrace, rather passionately, and perform provocative, gyrating movements within their embraces. Kuuspu re-enters the scene and approaches one couple; immediately this couple ceases to move as they and Kuuspu stare at each other. But when Kuuspu moves on, the couple begins to perform combative movements, as if each is fighting the other to prevent the other from attaching herself to Kuuspu. Yet Kuuspu drifts toward another couple and embraces these two women, starts dancing with them as a trio, until one of the women breaks away or is thrust out, so that Kuuspu is now a couple with the remaining woman. But the woman who left the trio causes the disruption of the other two couples when she tries to insert herself into them. Bodies become entangled and dispersed. A dispersed woman orbits the pillar and encounters Kuuspu and her partner, who thrusts Kuuspu toward the gang or "pack" of other women. One woman "confronts" Kuuspu, and the two stare at each other until they embrace and kiss. The other women form a line behind Kuuspu, with one woman embracing her from behind, leaning her head against Kuuspu's neck. Each of the women embraces the woman before her and rests her head against the preceding woman's neck. But this communal, physical unity does not last long: Kuuspu slips away from the chain and wanders off; then the other women separate and each wanders alone out of the space (Kuuspu 2019) [Figure 121].

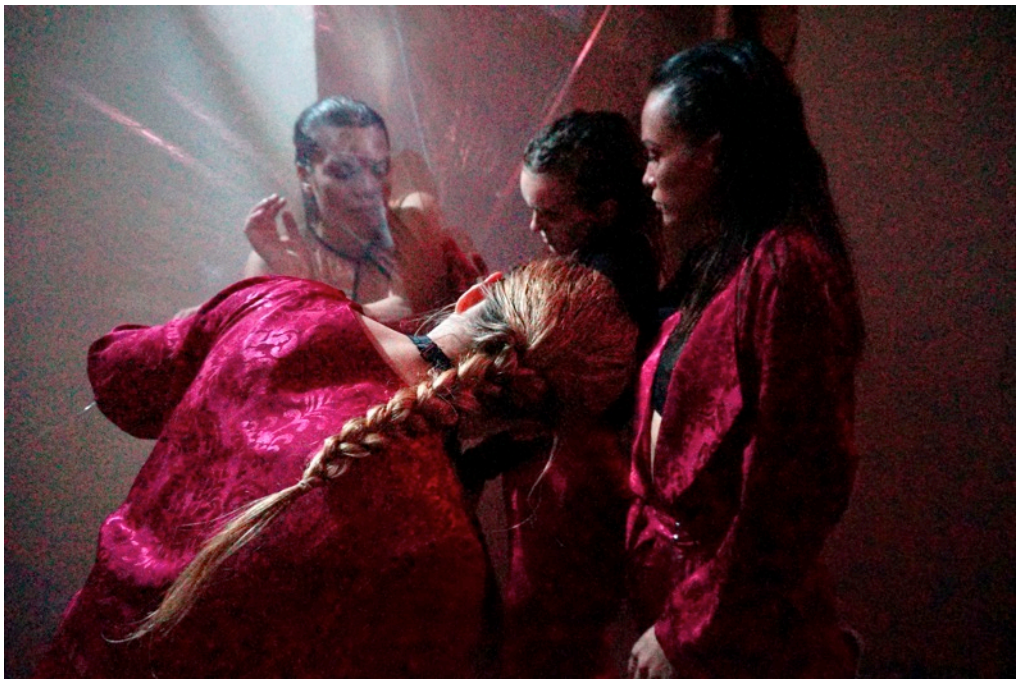
Desire constructs an impressive postmodern ideology of homoerotic female desire without relying on either speech or dance. Kuuspu fragments her narrative across different performance spaces and in doing so, she

fragments her audience, so that the culminating scene in the nightclub does not result from an "objectively" linear progression of actions but from a linear progession of actions shaped by the desire of the spectator, who chooses the order in which to see the scenes. Desire drives the narrative organization of life within the ideology of female homoeroticism. Yet all of the scenes show women disclosing an ambivalent attitude toward the desire for another woman. In the living room, restroom, and kitchen scenes, pairs of women perform actions that alternatively provoke and depress desire, creating an intensifying tension between the women that eventually produces an oppressive stasis, an atmosphere of emotional stagnation. In all of the scenes, each woman uses physical actions alone to signify her desire for another woman but also her ambivalence about desiring the woman before her and her ambivalence about being desireable to the woman before her. But this ambivalence does not arise in relation to homoerotic feeling; it arises in relation to the idea of pairing or couplehood. The scenes in the living room, kitchen, and restroom show pairs of women seemingly trapped within a domestic milieu in which they repetitively perform mundane actions they hope will manifest some measure of vulnerability in which desire might reawaken and enable a desireable "metamorphosis" within the couple. But Kuuspu's intrusion into all of the scenes implies that such metamorphosis is not internal to couplehood. Desire always deepens or expands in relation to another woman, a third woman, a woman outside or "free" of the realities of the couple. It is not relevant whether this other woman is real or a fantasy: she functions to reveal that desire cannot be contained within a couple; desire invariably includes "someone else." The opening mirror scene and the corridor scene suggest that erotic desire is both the negation and revelation of one's aloneness. You look into the mirror and see so many "others" gazing back at you with desire. In the corridor, solitary women pose voluptuously and writhe with masturbatory pleasure, as if the "other" one desires could be any of the shadowy spectators passing through the darkness of the passage to scenes of couplehood. The concluding nightclub scene provides relief from the desire-draining stasis or stability depicted in the domestic scenes. In this scene, women try to make contact with each other, they even try to form pairs, but they cannot become couples: another woman invariably "distracts" a partner or the shadowy Kuuspu appears and inserts herself between a pair. The women are actually closest when they form a chain,

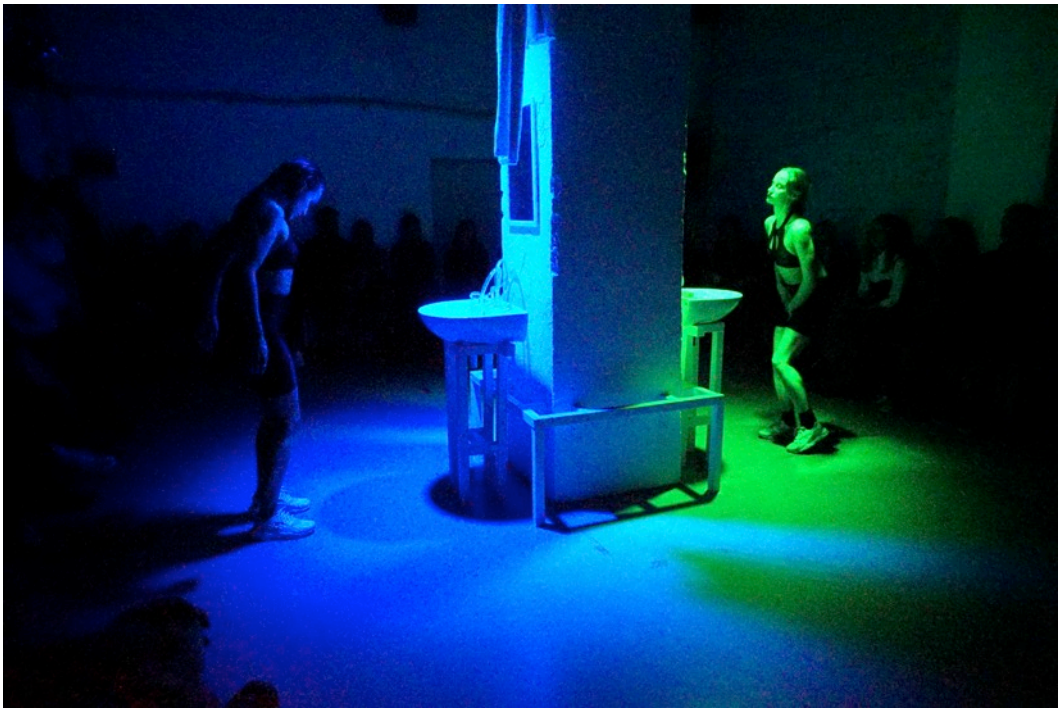
with all bodies connected and pressed against each other, as if the desire for any woman entailed desiring all the other women. Yet even this omnivorous desire cannot sustain the communal sharing of bodies: the desire for "more" or some "other," more powerful body disrupts the chain, and the women disperse, disappear alone into the shadows and out of the space. As a whole, the piece asserts that erotic desire reveals itself most accurately and transparently through physical actions, not speech or dance. These physical actions are largely mundane: gazes and glances, "confrontational" stances, timid or tentative touches, predatory approaches and evasive steps backward, darting toward and flinching away from others, the handing of spoons or cups to another, the putting on or removal of an item of clothing, voluptuous poses and lurid gyrations, uncertain caresses and incomplete embraces. But none of the actions derive from the institutionalized movement vocabularies that define the sequestered studio aesthetics of mime culture and dance. Kuuspu and her ensemble appear to have devised a pantomime aesthetic that derives from their observations of female interactions in life. It is a pantomime aesthetic that arises out of a unique personal, sexual, and subcultural experience. Yet it is this uniqueness of physical experience that accounts for an exciting infusion of freedom into the postmodern performance scene.

Some spectators complained that *Desire* was not dance and that some of the performers did not have "dancer bodies." They insinuated that Kuuspu had not sufficiently applied what she had learned in classes or in the dance studios. But perhaps these complaints cannot be detached from more subtle objections to the content of the piece, the physical rhetoric of homosexual desire, which perhaps cannot achieve accurate and insightful representation through the idealizing, institutionalized control over the body imposed by dance with its elaborate, step-bound movement vocabularies governed by schools. Homosexual desire apparently "moves" outside of this institutionalization. But in a sense, the performance of female desire as given by Kuuspu's piece may also be outside of history or outside of the aesthetic "tradition" of performing desire as preserved through academic institutionalization. Kuuspu produced her piece without any knowledge of Estonia's remarkable and imaginative contributions to pantomime in the decades before she was born. Possibly she conceived *Desire* without much, if any, knowledge of pantomime in general, for pantomime was not in the curriculum of Tallinn University. Indeed, she

relied on pantomimic action because in her mind history offered no models for accurately embodying female erotic desire. But that is the peculiar irony of pantomime history. Pantomime startles and grips the viewer because it seems to discard whatever history of performance the spectator brings to a performance; it is so strange because it is such a brazen break with the past. The "unregulated" performance of the body produces a momentous *shift* in the way spectators read the body and read performance, a shift away from the past and toward a new way of deciphering bodily significiation. It is always "new" when the body "tells" about the world without relying on speech or dance. From this perspective, the history of pantomime is the history of a mysterious and even intimidating possibility of bodily freedom, a history of a future realm of exploration.




MESTA
IN NO SENSE







Scenes from *Iha*, directed by Keithy Kuuspu, Tallinn, Estonia, April 24-25, 2019: a) the mirror scene with Agnes Ihoma, Dana Lorén Warres, Silvia-Kairet Põld, Amanda Hermiine Künnapas, Kristiina Heinmets, and Alma Nedzelskyte; b) the living room scene with Agnes Ihoma and Dana Lorén Warres; c) the restroom scene with Silvia-Kairet Põld and Amanda Hermiine Künnapas; d) the kitchen scene with Kristiina Heinmets and Alma Nedzelskyte; e) the nightclub scene with Amanda Hermiine Künnapas, Alma Nedzelskyte, Silvia-Kairet Põld, and Agnes Ihoma. On the left side of the image is visible the right arm of the shadowy figure of Keithy Kuuspu as she intrudes upon the scene. Photos: Fideelia-Signe Roots.

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