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The Modern *Physis* of Léonide Massine: Corporeality in a Postwar Era

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by

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PREFACE

My intention was never to be a dance historian, and certainly never an archival researcher. As a double major in English Literature and Dance, my aspirations were initially to dance, to write, and perhaps to explore intersections between literary Modernism and dance. As a college senior, I read excerpts from Daniel Albright's *Untwisting the Serpent: Modernism in Music, Literature, and Other Arts* and saw clearly for the first time how literature and dance could be considered intertextually (those "Other Arts" happened to include a brief section on the *Les Ballets Russes* production *Parade*). My decision to attend graduate school and pursue dance history was based, in part, upon my hope that I could carve out a place for dance within literature, to demonstrate that the words written in books and the articulated movements of bodies on stage were often signifiers of a similar aesthetic energy. Though my path has shifted significantly over the last seven years, my interest in Modernism, *Les Ballets Russes*, and my desire to cultivate an intertextual understanding of early-twentieth century material has remained constant. With the primary guidance of my Thesis and Dissertation Advisor Dr. Ninotchka Bennahum, and exemplary texts like Susan Foster's *Choreography and Narrative*, and Sally Banes' *Dancing Women*, I learned how to read choreography like literary texts, and to write about dance with the same passion that I wrote about literature.

Even with this newfound passion, however, archival historical research was daunting. Coming primarily from a background in New Literary Criticism, I began by viewing choreography as hermetic objects, untethered to any historical currents (other than the canonical Western idea of Modernism itself) or to issues of agency. My own kinesthetic, embodied understanding of choreography as a dancer, and my knowledge of Modernism

within literature guided my initial readings of *Les Ballets Russes* material. My task then became to deepen my own relationship to history, to discover the texture, the nuance, the *élan* of a particular moment in time (in my case, early-twentieth century France).

Through multiple trips to the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts and the Paris Opéra I began to comprehend dance holistically; static ideas about dance as merely isolated, semiotic objects gave way to the actual, material bodies of *Les Ballets Russes* members, and the interconnected details of their personal lives, their choreography, and larger socio-political events. While the relationship between *Parade* and World War I began as the focal point of my research, what eventually emerged was the inscrutable brilliance of Léonide Massine. My dissertation thus took shape as an attempt to recast Massine as a prominent figure within *Les Ballets Russes* and European Dance Modernism, as well as to develop a theorization of the body (of a postwar corporeality) that I felt was lacking from dance and art historical texts about this time period.

Several ideas have been footnoted or omitted entirely from this dissertation. These ideas were trimmed in order to streamline the scope of my dissertation and maintain a timely writing process. However, these ideas will be given consideration and further development as I rework material for publication. In particular, a thorough exploration of "Primitivism" (in relationship to the particular "exoticism" and "Orientalism" of *Les Ballets Russes*) has not been included here. While I provide definitions for Modernism, ideas of the Primitive (though inextricably linked) were not given equal attention. Notions of white supremacy, cultural appropriation, and the exoticization of "Othered" cultural art forms is an unavoidable reality of European Modernism. My decision to limit discussions of Primitivism is in no way meant to negate the impact of such de-humanizing ideologies. Rather, my writing was a pointed consideration of the unique aesthetic of Léonide Massine, whose work was arguably

shaped more by a deep respect and communion with the dances of other cultures than many other artists of his time. A more thorough consideration of this topic will be provided in future writing.

Additionally, a stronger, more detailed survey of ballet history is needed. While terms like Russian Imperial Ballet versus French Romantic Ballet are briefly discussed, the specific, distinctive qualities and training systems of ballet as an international phenomenon merit further discussion. Massine was the product of, not one training system, but many. For example, an in-depth discussion of the influence of Italian Ballet Master Enrico Cecchetti on the Russian Imperial Ballet would provide a more nuanced understanding of Massine's own aesthetic. Similarly, the deep influence of Spanish dance on Massine is merely footnoted here. While I have not chosen to write on any of Massine's [overtly] Spanish dances like *Cuadro Flamenco* (1921), much of his choreography is arguably saturated with the rhythms, aesthetics, and energies of Spain.

Finally, it should be mentioned that I have consciously chosen to not focus on art or music history in this dissertation. I make reference to the artists and composers of *Les Ballets Russes*, but I do not endeavor to delve deeply into their work. I feel that a disproportionate amount of literature has already been written about the musicians and graphic artists of *Les Ballets Russes*, while much has been left unexplored about its choreographers. In my dissertation, I endeavor to centralize the body, the choreographer, and choreography. Though still evolving, my writing is a meditation on the power of the dancing body, and an attempt to foreground issues of corporeality within an interdisciplinary understanding of Modernism.

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ABSTRACT

The Modern *Physis* of Léonide Massine: Corporeality in a Postwar Era

by

Lauren Elda Vallicella

My dissertation is an attempt to re-examine and re-frame the artistic legacy of *Les Ballets Russes* choreographer Léonide Massine (1896 – 1979), while simultaneously defining (through choreographic analysis and historical contextualization of Massine's work) the term "postwar corporeality." While the innovative achievements of the Russian émigré company *Les Ballets Russes* have been discussed by many authors—notably Lynn Garafola, Richard Buckle, Juliet Bellow, and Davinia Caddy—the contributions of Massine himself have been vastly overlooked. My dissertation therefore places Massine as a central figure within the creation of Modernism in postwar European dance. Through an analysis of both dancing/performing bodies and French critical reception, my dissertation seeks to understand notions of identity, physicality, and corporeality in late-Industrial Europe, in turn deepening the place of Léonide Massine (and dance history at large) within an interdisciplinary understanding of Modernism.

My writing specifically examines Massine's representations of the body in three ballets from the company's early postwar seasons: *Parade* (1917), *La Boutique Fantasque* (1919), and *Pulcinella* (1920). While previous accounts of these ballets (primarily *Parade* and *Pulcinella*) have placed an emphasis on art historical and musicological aspects, my

readings place the body and Massine's choreography at the center. When viewed together, I argue that *Parade*, *La Boutique Fantasque*, and *Pulcinella* highlight the aesthetics of Massine's Modernist choreography, revealing his exploration of the unhuman, or antihuman, character. Blending the style of the *danseur noble* with the *comique* and *grotesque*, Massine choreographically synthesized disparate sources (Russian Imperial Ballet, Russian avant-garde theater, Italian Classical Ballet, Romantic French Ballet, American Modern Dance, national dances of Spain, etc.) to craft a postwar vision of the fragmented, displaced body.

My writing takes an interdisciplinary approach in considering Massine; my in-depth choreographic analysis is woven together with archival historical research and theoretical texts from the fields of Performance Studies, Literature, and Philosophy. In defining postwar corporeality, I employ Walter Benjamin's concept of the "modern *physis*,*"* a corporeal physicalization of the trauma wrought on the body by technology, urbanization, and World War I. Furthermore, I relate the term corporeality to American modern dance artist Loïe Fuller's transformation and abstraction of the physical body into something *more than* or *other than* human. Thus, I define "corporeality" (specifically in performance) as a Benjaminian aura or Bergsonian *élan vital*, an ephemeral, yet kinesthetically perceivable representation of the body read symbolically. By taking Massine's postwar choreography as moving examples of Benjamin's modern *physis*, I argue that Massine choreographically formulated an embodied, gestural language of anxiety, fragmentation, and trauma made kinetic: a postwar corporeality.

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Theoretical Introduction

Premise and Historical Background

Time passes and with it all the excitement, all the delights, and all the tragedies of bygone days hide themselves, one by one, in the grey archives of the past. They all die down and become covered with the dust and cobwebs of history. All that remains of that pulsating life is a row of uninteresting books of reference, useful, but not exciting.
But if those same yellow documents fall into the hands of a man who has lived in the past, the shadows take shape before him, his heart will flutter, the old excitements and pleasures will grip him with renewed strength, and he will lose himself in reverie
. . .
Will there be found in this book even a few words which will bring to life before the young reader some of the romanticism of those long dead years?[1]

***

Pensively sentimental and Proustian, the writing of Prince Peter Lieven, Russian biographer of avant-garde ballet company *Les Ballets Russes* (1909-1929), evidences the prevalent romanticization of artistic 'relics' of the past. Written in 1936, less than ten years after the *Les Ballet Russes* final performance and company Impresario Serge Diaghilev's (1872 – 1929) death, Lieven's analysis of the Russian dancers prematurely consigns them to the realm of nostalgia, that shadowy space of recollections and hyperbolic, retrospective rhetoric.[2] The "romanticism of those long dead years" to which he refers is a sentimental *in*

[1] Prince Peter Lieven, *The Birth of the Ballets-Russes*, trans. L. Zarine (London: George & Unwin Ltd., 1936), 366-7.

[2] *Les Ballets Russes* existed as an official company from 1909-1929. The founding leaders of the company were Serge Diaghilev, librettist, designer, and unofficial (and then official, from 1911-1913) artistic director Alexander Benois, artist and designer Leon Bakst, and choreographer Michel Fokine. After meeting in St. Petersburg in 1890, Diaghilev, Benois, and Bakst went on to form the World of Art (*Mir iskusstva*) in 1889, a Russian magazine which sought to question, theorize, and revolutionize artmaking in Europe. While production of the magazine ended in 1904, Diaghilev, Benois, and Bakst remained in collaboration. In 1907, Benois met Fokine in St. Petersburg, and asked him to join the group as choreographer for their first ballet *Le Pavillon d'Armide*. After Benois' departure from the group in 1913, the company became an ever-rotating collection of collaborating artists, with Diaghilev always at the helm.

memoriam (but, from what else could notions of Romanticism arise?). Like so many of the other "isms"[3] now synonymous with *Les Ballets Russes*, Lieven's Romanticism-tinged memory largely derives from the company's embroidered, mythological aura, created just as much by the artistic collaborators as by the socialites and press who scrutinized them.[4]

At the forefront of aesthetic innovation, and with a keen eye to current events, Serge Diaghilev and the artists of *Les Ballets Russes* were renowned for their flirtations (and at times, confrontations) with scandal, for a radical attack of ballet technique, and for a desire to constantly—and controversially—push artistic boundaries. Notoriously offering audiences a

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During the company's twenty years, Diaghilev appointed five Russian choreographers to oversee the creation of new ballet material or revive/re-choreograph previous works: Michel Fokine (1880-1942), Vaslav Nijinsky (1889/90-1950), Léonide Massine (1896-1979), Bronislava Nijinska (1891-1972), and George Balanchine (1904-1983). While *Les Ballets Russes* was a Russian company—in that its dancers and choreographers came from Russia—the troupe never performed in its home country. With Paris as its adopted home base (until World War I, which forced the company to seek shelter elsewhere, primarily in Switzerland and Spain), *Les Ballet Russes* became an international ballet company, acclaimed across Europe, London, and, in its later years, America.

[3] The company rose to fame, in part, through its collaborations with avant-garde artists. Names like Igor Stravinsky, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, and Jean Cocteau peppered the roster of artists commissioned by Diaghilev to not only lend their ideas, but also their social and artistic clout as prominent figures associated with specific, at times socially 'controversial,' art movements. As Lieven disparagingly remarked, Diaghilev embarked on a "hunt for '-isms'" after Artistic Director and designer Alexander Benois' departure from the company in 1913. 'Modernism,' 'Cubism,' 'Futurism,' 'Primitivism,' 'Fauvism,' and 'Dadaism,' all became terms bandied about in popular accounts of the company. As *Ballets Russes* scholar Juliet Bellow notes, "We can see in the rise of so many modern 'isms,' designating groups of like-minded artists, a longing for collectivity to stave off the alienating conditions of modernity." Diaghilev certainly searched for collectivity in his attempt to ground the company in various currents of 'modernity.' However, he also relied partially on the sensationalism associated with these twentieth century avant-garde artists to generate interest in the company's new works. My dissertation, in part, seeks to look *beyond* those "isms" so commonly associated with the company (isms that at times overshadow the working artists themselves), examining instead the actual choreographic material. Lieven, *The Birth of the Ballets Russes*, 216; Bellow, *Modernism on Stage: The Ballets Russes and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 13.

[4] Original *Ballets Russes* dancer Lydia Sokolova wrote of the company's mythological status within popular culture: "The Diaghilev Ballet was surrounded in mystery. We were never allowed to go to parties or to be seen anywhere except on the stage, and we became a kind of myth. Wherever you went, you would hear people saying, 'Have you seen the Russians? Have you seen the Russians?'" *Dancing for Diaghilev: The Memoirs of Lydia Sokolova*, ed. Richard Buckle (San Francisco: Mercury House, Incorporated: 1960), 64.

fragrant, intoxicating blend of "exoticism," "orientalism," and even "barbarism," *Les Ballets Russes* cultivated an aesthetic based on the dynamic juxtaposition between atavism and the avant-garde.[5] Like Lieven's prose, these descriptive "isms" offer insight into the general aesthetic of the company. However, such reductive categorization also obscures the material reality of the choreographers and dancers who produced such an aesthetic. With roots in the unique, Classical technique of Russian Imperial Ballet, the choreographers of *Les Ballets Russes* revitalized and re-molded ballet from within, augmenting its external form and edges to adapt to new, twentieth century conceptions of life, art, and the human body.[6] More than just depicting the 'exotic' or 'barbaric,' the dancers held in their bodies and traced with their

[5] For example, reflecting on the early seasons of the company, dance critic André Levinson wrote in 1926 "The sense of **oriental sumptuousness** and of **exotic picturesqueness** pervaded everything." Similarly, in Lucien Métivet's 1918 comic book "Marianne and Germania, the Story of a Bonnet and a Helmet" the author mentions the *"barbares ballets*" ("**barbarian ballets**"), a reference to the *Ballets Russes'* ballet *Rite of Spring* (1913). Such comments are characteristic of the rhetoric used to describe the company throughout its early seasons. "A Crisis in the *Ballets Russes*" (1926) in *André Levinson on Dance: Writings from Paris in the Twenties*, ed. Joan Acocella and Lynn Garafola (Wesleyan University Press, 1991), 64; *La Baïonnette* (18 April, 1918), 252.

[6] French ballet master Marius Petipa (1818—1910) was perhaps the greatest influence on Russian Imperial Ballet at the turn of the century. Best known for his creations or restagings of quintessential "Classical" ballets—principally, *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890), *Swan Lake* (1890), and *The Nutcracker* (1892)—Petipa's productions were both lavish and formulaic. As Elizabeth Souritz summarizes: "By the end of the nineteenth century a style had been created that was the culmination of Petipa's many years of creative work: the style of academic full-length ballet. Decorative spectacles in several acts, rich in special effects, were constructed according to strict aesthetic norms. Rules were worked out that defined both the overall composition of the ballet and the structure of individual dance forms … External action was laid out through pantomime, replete with conventional gestures. Dramatic action was stereotyped. The construction of each act, the sequence of the dances—solo, group, ensemble—all followed an identical order. The triumphant coda and apotheosis of the last act was an indispensable element." Although Petipa's achievements were revered, the innovations of *Les Ballets Russes* choreographers were a direct reaction *against* those rules and assumptions about ballet established by Petipa during his long tenure as ballet master of the Imperial Ballet (1871 – 1903). *Soviet Choreographers in the 1920s*, trans. Lynn Visson, ed., with additional trans. Sally Banes (Duke University Press, 1990), 21.

steps choreographic reflections of the seismic socio-political shifts reverberating across Europe.[7]

Throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, Russia was brutally shaken by revolution and war; subsequently, many of its most famous dancers, choreographers, and artists sought refuge in Western Europe. Beginning in 1909, Diaghilev ushered Russian artists into a new environment that ostensibly provided greater safety (until the outbreak of World War I in 1914), and richer opportunities for artistic innovation.[8] However, each artist carried with them a past marred by the trauma, oppression, and poverty they had faced under tsarist rule. To ignore or overlook the fragmentation and violence that shaped the lives of

[7] Most crucial to this dissertation are the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917, and the first World War (1914 – 1918), both of which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 1.

[8] Diaghilev first brought dancers from Russia to Paris in 1909. However, his "export campaign" (a term coined by Benois) originally began in 1906 when he mounted a Russian art exhibit at the Petite Palais in Paris. The following year, he again returned to present Russian concert music at the Paris Opéra (which was met with only mild approval). In the spring of 1908, Diaghilev finally struck success with his "export" of Moussorgsky's opera *Boris Gudunov,* an achievement that inspired his return for future endeavors. Benois, in a previously unpublished article in Boris Kochno's, *Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes* (New York & Evanston: Harper & Row, 1970), 2

Driven by a "profound patriotism" (Benois) and a desire to glorify Russian art on a global scale, Diaghilev found Paris to be an ideal location to continue his export campaign. Despite Paris' position as a city of electricity, innovation, high culture, and fashion in *fin de siècle* Europe—the opening of the *Galeries Lafayette* in 1895, the finished construction of the Eiffel Tower in 1889, and the *Exposition Universelle* in 1900, to name only a few major events, helped to solidify Paris' position as such—French ballet was in a period of decline (this idea will be examined in further detail in the forthcoming pages of this dissertation). As René Chalupt proclaimed in 1912, "For some years now, we have been witnessing a manifest renaissance of the art of dance. The old ballet, as we still see at the National Academy of Music, was dying of imbecility and ennui under the titillated opera glasses of sexagenarian subscribers when a sudden invasion of Cossacks rescued it from its torpor." "Chronique Musicale: Les Ballets Russes," *L'Occident*, no. 115 (Juin 1912): 229 (translation mine), *Bibliotheque national de France*.

Clearly, Paris represented a cultural center in need of major artistic revival. The "invasion of Cossaks," or in other words, the first season of *Les Ballets Russes*, provided just that. As company *régisseur* Serge Grigoriev wrote of *Les Ballets Russes'* premiere in Paris, "On that night [May 19, 1909] Diaghilev had been able in fact to show Paris, what had so long been forgotten, that ballet could be a truly wonderful art. This first night was undoubtedly a revelation to the Paris public, and marked a resurrection of the ballet in the world outside Russia." While Diaghilev had first intended to continue on with opera, ballet proved to be a far more lucrative endeavor, and his curated vision of 'Russian ballet' quickly became his signature "export." *The Diaghilev Ballet : 1909-1929*, trans. Vera Bowen (Edinburgh: R. & R. Clark, Ltd., 1953), 21.

many *Les Ballets Russes* dancers' is to fail to consider holistically the artists themselves and their works of art.

In this dissertation, I move away from the nostalgic sensationalism often associated with *Les Ballets Russes* in Diaghilev-centered accounts of the company (like that of Richard Buckle). To escape entirely from the "isms" associated with the company proves nearly impossible, as these convenient descriptors provide conceptual boundaries—albeit malleable—by which we might better understand, categorize, and theorize prevailing artistic trends. Therefore, rather than disregard these romanticized images altogether, perhaps we might instead view them as fragments of [collective, social] memory, kaleidoscopic pieces within a more nuanced historical narrative.

Taking such a perspective, I posit that fragmentation and dissonance are fundamental to the company's choreographic aesthetic, specifically in the postwar period. Beneath the façades of lavish, audience-enticing spectacle or sparse, experimental avant-gardism lay latent themes of longing, sorrow, anxiety, and trauma. While Diaghilev's reliance on the sensational appeal of "isms" like Cubism and Dadaism ensured he remained ever-current, such artistic trends, when coupled with thematic subtexts of displacement or anxiety, also shattered any sense of a unified narrative or Wagnerian wholeness. In this dissertation, I have sought to reveal in the "exotic" ballets of Diaghilev's troupe a search for identity and artistic authenticity—both a vision of "authentic" Russian identity and an ever-evolving sense of identity within an increasingly industrial, modern world—during a period of wartime instability and anxiety. In so doing, I theorize a new definition of "postwar corporeality" (a term I will define in the following chapter), based on the choreography of *Ballets Russes* dancer and choreographer Léonide Massine and his carefully crafted presentation of the performing, dancing body of the early to mid-twentieth century.

It must be noted that the dancing bodies of this dissertation are primarily white, European bodies. My definition of corporeality is therefore highly particular, pertaining only to those bodies who lived in industrialized city spaces of early twentieth century Western Europe. However, these bodies were highly influenced by the dances and art of other cultures, and much of the legacy of *Les Ballets Russes* is the product of cultural appropriation (particularly from Africa and Spain). The appropriation of African and 'Oceanic' art is central to Cubism and the work of Pablo Picasso, who collaborated on both *Parade* (1917) and *Pulcinella* (1920), two of the central ballets of this dissertation. Therefore, those ballets are both grounded in a Cubist aesthetic, which is to say they are grounded in an Africanist aesthetic, spread through the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Furthermore, Spanish Modernism, which itself blends Muslim and Sephardic traditions, was highly influential for *Ballets Russes* choreographer Léonide Massine (and many of his collaborators, including, again, Picasso). Therefore, while my dissertation does not overtly delve into the original dance forms that undergird much of Massine's own choreography, I acknowledge the power and importance of those bodies whose steps and lives *Les Ballets Russes* dancers traced with their own bodies. [9]

[9] For an account of appropriation and the idea of 'primitivism' in modern art, see Jody Blake, *Le Tumulte noir: Modernist Art and Popular Entertainment in Jazz-Age Paris, 1900 – 1930* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999). For more on the commingling of identity, culture, and dance forms in Spain see Ninotchka Devorah Bennahum, *Carmen: A Gypsy Geography* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2013). For more on *Les Ballets Russes*' own position as an exotified 'Other' (in relationship to Western culture) see Sally Banes "*Firebird* and the Idea of Russianness," in *The Ballets Russes and its World*, eds. Lynn Garafola and Nancy Van Norman Baer (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1999): 117 –134.

Topic

This dissertation will specifically examine the choreographic aesthetics and innovations of *Ballets Russes* choreographer Léonide Massine (1895—1979), focusing on the period during and directly following World War I (1917—1920). The third choreographer employed as Diaghilev's protégé, Massine's legacy has been historically overlooked and undervalued. However, to speak of *Les Ballets Russes*' postwar seasons is truly to speak of Massine; his choreographic aesthetic reigned during this period, as he choreographed an iteration of European dance modernism that remains influential to this day.[10] I assert that, through his choreographic explorations of character, nationality, emotional expression through gesture, harmonic unity, and the "unhuman" (a term employed by T.S. Eliot to describe the artist)[11] Massine created and defined a postwar corporeality.[12] While Chapter 1 will more deeply explore the implications of the term "corporeality," it should be noted that my employment of the word pertains specifically to theatrical performance. Therefore, Massine's "postwar corporeality" is, in brief, his symbolic *performance*, his physical, crafted presentation to an audience, of a modern, post-World War I *élan* or *habitus.*

My analysis of Massine considers him both as an individual, and as a harbinger of this postwar period. Massine's choreography is uniquely his own—deeply personal and

[10] We need only look to the gestural movement vocabularies of choreographers such as Antony Tudor (an immediate predecessor) and more contemporary companies like Nederlands Dans Theater and Ballet Preljocaj to witness Massine's lasting influence.

[11] T.S. Eliot, "Dramatis Personae," *Criterion* (April 1923): 303-306. See Chapter 1 of this dissertation for my explanation of his term.

[12] Throughout this dissertation, I will use the term "postwar" in reference to 1917. While World War I did not officially end until 1918, *Les Ballets Russes* began performing again in Paris in May of 1917 (their first performance since the outbreak of war). The ballets premiered at the end of 1917, including *Parade*, are generally considered part of the "postwar season"; as such, I have chosen to adopt this classification for all three of the ballets about which I write.

embodied—yet emblematic of larger (and future) aesthetic trends. His postwar corporeality presciently physicalized a gestural language of the modern body. I use Massine's moving, physical definitions of modernism (his choreography) as exemplary forays into larger theoretical ideas about postwar embodiment. In a post-modern sense, Massine's choreography allowed dance to exist as separate from elements of music and design (i.e. choreography need not be dictated by music, but rather could exist *alongside* music). Massine broke from dance that was merely memetic pantomime bound by theme, or from music visualization which served only as a secondary extension of the score. Instead, the body became the anchor, *the* central element. In a world fractured by mass death and war, Massine presented a body that was equally fractured, yet vital; a body that could symbolize pain while performing joy through the use of subtle, psychologically-motivated, gesture.[13] I therefore place Massine as a central figure in the creation of European Modernism, and use his choreography to define and develop an understanding of postwar corporeality.

The majority of this dissertation is comprised of in-depth, theoretical analyses of three works by Léonide Massine: *Parade* (1917), *La Boutique Fantasque* (1919), and *Pulcinella* (1920). Embodying a distinct postwar period, these three works thematically represent a geographical plotting of a new, transnational identity, traveling continuously (though non-linearly) through space and time. Spatially, these ballets move Westward, progressing from Russia (as the original homeland or source), to Paris (*Parade* and *La Boutique Fantasque*), to Naples (*Pulcinella*). On a socio-political level, this movement reveals a trajectory of political and artistic alliance during and directly following World War

[13] While this point will be explained throughout this dissertation, I refer here in part to Massine's use of the dancing body in counter-point to the music, or in opposition to the overt thematic content (i.e. dancing in a seemingly joyful manner to a lively score, while actually conveying anxiety). A few decades later, playwright Bertolt Brecht would employ a similar tactic of juxtaposition in which music and dance were purposefully misaligned to create tension or irony.

I. As Russia, France, and Italy were allied during the war (along with England), the political choice to set ballets in Paris or Italy catered to the tastes of patriotic Parisian audiences. However, I argue that this movement also reveals Massine's antihuman or unhuman aesthetic (a tendency to blend nationality, style, and even degrees of "human-ness" into one character).[14] My choreographic analysis for each ballet will further define and examine this aesthetic.[15]

Furthermore, my selection of ballets showcases a move toward blended, suspended, or juxtaposed temporalities. *Parade* is set in an abstractly modern Cubo-Futurist Paris which at once suspends time, and highlights—through hyperrealism—the extreme *now-ness* of the postwar moment; *La Boutique Fantasque* juxtaposes 1860's France (*á la* Toulouse-Lautrec) with the modern classicism of André Derain, thereby moving simultaneously backward and forward in time; and finally, *Pulcinella* combines eighteenth-century music (with Stravinsky's modern modifications), Renaissance-era *Commedia dell'arte* characters, and

[14] While I have not chosen to write on either of Massine's Spanish ballets of this period (*Le Tricorne* [1919] or *Cuadro Flamenco* [1921]), Spain figures prominently into the choreographic geography of his entire oeuvre. Massine was deeply influenced by his relationships with artist Pablo Picasso, composer Manuel de Falla, and flamenco dancer Felix Fernández Garcia. His intense love of bull fighting, and his interest in and relationships built with toreadors also came to play in Massine's choreography. The dances of Spain resonated with Massine on a profound level. In an interview during the last year of his life, Massine commented on his enduring affinity for Spain and its dances. "Looking through history, Russians were always interested in Spain. You have the music of Rimsky-Korsakov and Glinka, and the compositions like 'Cappricio Espagnol'—something of an affinity between the two countries. With that **I always felt very close to the Spanish expression** …also being the boy in a musical family … Therefore, when I saw and heard the beating feet of zapateado, it appealed to me. I thought it was very interesting, **you can say so much with your feet alone**." Polyrhythm, foot stamping, inwardly curving movement, and a certain sense of feverish, even violent energy, are all evident in Massine's dances. Arguably, Massine's working (that is, dancing) definition of Modernism was influenced by the geography, culture, and *élan* of Spain. Pamela Diane Gaye, "A Conversation with Léonide Massine,*" Dance Scope* 13, no. 4 (1979): 22 (emphasis mine); for Massine's love of Spain, see his biography *My Life in Ballet,* ed. Phyllis Hartnoll & Robert Rubens (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1968), in particular page 89, about the inherent dignity of flamenco and page 142, about his embodiment of the frenzy of the bull.

[15] Key authors and theorists who aid in my understanding of an unhuman aesthetic include T.S. Eliot, Heinrich von Kleist, Walter Benjamin, Gordon Craig, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.

Picasso's ironic, cubist aesthetic to blend and suspend temporalities even further. These ballets represent at once a sense of postwar displacement (the fragmentation of time and space) and fantastic escapism (the ability to travel through time away from the reality of postwar Paris).[16]

However, the shifting geographies and temporalities of these three ballets also reveals Massine's ambiguously de-centered sense of self. As I argue, Massine's choreography ignored boundaries between "national" dances, as he opted instead for movement that blended together various styles. Similarly, he rejected the separation between "character" dance and academic ballet, arguably creating movement that was, in a sense, transnational. Furthermore, he often cast himself as characters who occupied a position as the "Other," rendered thus either by their social status or by their non-human qualities: "The Chinese Conjurer" or Prestidigitator (a mystical magician that is both sinisterly otherworldly and Imperialistically stereotypical) of *Parade*,[17] the Cancan dancing automaton of *La Boutique Fantasque*, and the eternally-reincarnated clown or puppet of *Pulcinella*. In each of these roles, Massine was not the dashing, *danseur noble*. Instead, he portrayed socially marginalized stock characters, or what Lynn Garafola terms "burlesque subalterns."[18] Into these characters, Massine could imbue his own sense of vitality and humanity.

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[16] Key authors and theorists who aid in my understanding of time and temporality include Henri Bergson, Roger Shattuck, Daniel Albright, and Lynn Garafola.

[17] The Chinese Prestidigitator was intended by *Parade* collaborators (librettist Jean Cocteau and designer Pablo Picasso, in particular) to be an unhuman character. Cocteau explained, "When Picasso showed us his sketches, we realized how interesting it would be to introduce … unhuman or superhuman characters …who should finally assume a false reality on the stage and reduce the real dancers to the stature of puppets." Thereafter, Massine repeatedly portrayed characters who embodied (overtly or subtly) puppet-like qualities. *Cock and Harlequin*, trans. Rollo H. Myers (The Egoist Press, 1921), 28.

[18] Garafola, "Léonide Massine's *Pulcinella:* In Quest of Alternative Classicism," in *Stravinsky's Pulcinella: A Facsimile of the Sources and Sketches*, ed. Maureen A. Carr (Middleton, Wisconsin: A-R Editions, Inc., 2010), 45.

Massine's choice of characters comes as no surprise in light of his own self-image. Massine recalled of his home life, "I was the last one in the family, and almost forgotten. I was the **freak**. They didn't know what to do with the little chap."[19] As a child, his sister Raissa referred to him as "the circus dancer,"[20] a prescient characterization of the roles he would later play. Additionally, Massine felt a strong "identification with the **half-human** puppet" (referring to Petrushka, a character Massine periodically played beginning in 1916) into whom he could "project much of [his] own personality."[21] It is clear that Massine saw himself as an outsider, both from society, and from his own family. I argue that, through Massine's choreography, and his own identification with the characters he played, *Parade*, *Pulcinella*, and *La Boutique Fantasque* each call into question the very nature of what it means to be human. Is a moving, Cubist cardboard cutout 'human'? Is a doll or puppet 'human'? A masked clown? In Massine's choreography, the resounding answer is: yes. Viewed together, these three ballets provide a profound glimpse into the artist's own identification with the 'Other,' and evidence a choreographic statement about identity, humanity, and postwar embodiment.

A final, crucial note about each of these ballets is that Massine danced in them himself, casting himself in the title role. Much has been written of the fact that Massine's choreography was best suited for his own body, and the original dancers that he trained. As dance critic Irène Lidova lamented upon Massine's death, "Sadly, Massine's style is very difficult to grasp for the dancers of today. The artists of his age belonged to a completely

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[19] Interview with Rob Hardin, "A Conversation with Léonide Massine," *Dance Magazine* (December 1977): 68 (bold mine).

[20] Massine, *My Life*, 13.

[21] *My Life*, 82 (bold mine).

different school where the dance called "character" was cultivated as much as classical dance. This style is lost more and more."[22] The ballets I have chosen each feature Massine, and wherever possible I have looked to Massine's own interpretation of a role as my primary point of analysis. While my claims are meant to establish a sense of general European postwar corporeality, they are, indeed, inextricably tied to Massine's own embodiment. Therefore, Massine's life, his experiences in the world, and most importantly, his *interpretation* of the world are vital. While each chapter will more fully detail aspects of Massine's life, I provide a brief introduction to the artist's early influences and training below.

1895, Leonid Fedorovich Miassine[23]

Born in Moscow on August 8, 1895, Massine was brought up amidst music and theater. His father, Fedor Aphanasievich, played the French horn in the Bolshoi Orchestra, while his mother, Eugenia Nikolaevna Gladkova, was a soprano in the Bolshoi Theater Chorus. The youngest of five children (older brothers Mikhail, Gregori, Konstantin and older sister Raissa), Massine was first educated at home by his mother and aunt, before being

[22] While this style was in decline for many years, American Ballet Theater has recently been making efforts to resurrect it.

My translation, from Irène Lidova, "Hommage á Léonide Massine (26 mars 1896 – 15 mars 1979)," *Saisons de la danse,* no 114 (Mai 1979): 40. Léonide Massine: Dossier D'Artiste, *Bibliotheque national de France*. Original: « Malheureusement**, le style de Massine est très difficile à saisir pour les danseurs d'aujourd'hui.** Les artiste de son époque appartenaient à une toute autre école où la danse dite « de caractère » était cultivée autant que la danse classique. Ce style se perd de plus en plus. »

[23] Born Leonid Fedorovich Miassine, the dancer changed his name, as many *Ballets Russes* dancers were encouraged to do, in 1916. His new, French-sounding name, Léonide Massine, appeared for the first time in the program for opening night at the Century Theater on January 17, 1916.

accepted into the Moscow Imperial Theater School in 1904.[24] It was here that Massine began his intense study and love of ballet and acting. Under the direction of Alexander Gorsky since 1900, the Theater School underwent a period of revitalization during Massine's tenure there.[25] Such revitalization included newly placed emphasis on "a dance-drama approach opposed to the conventions of academic ballet."[26] Gorsky was an admirer of Konstantin Stanislavsky, now considered one of the most important theatrical innovators of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Stanislavsky advocated for theater as a cohesive whole, and a new psychological realism that focused on the link between internal truth and

[24] For a more detailed account of Massine's family and upbringing, see Vincente García-Márquez, *Massine: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), specifically "Chapter 1: Moscow, July 1895—1913," 3-25.

[25]Alexander Gorsky (1871 – 1924) was instrumental in revolutionizing ballet within Russia. A former student of the Imperial School and a dancer with the Maryinsky in the 1880s, Gorsky went on to restage Petipa ballets for the Bolshoi, beginning in 1898. Having been steeped in the tradition of Petipa himself from his early training, Gorsky was able to re-work ballet from the inside out, using (like both Fokine and Massine would later), the forms of classical ballet in new and augmented ways. "Rather like Fokine, Gorsky wanted to remove the fairy-tale gloss from the classics and render them in sharp, naturalistic colors. … Gorsky's approach was phycological … [bringing] Stanislavsky's ideas to bear on ballet—Petipa's ballet. Eschewing the old master's outwardly ornamented steps and decorative patterns, he emphasized instead mime and gesture—he liked to call his ballets 'mimodramas'—and paid particular attention to plot development and story line." As will be discussed in this dissertation, gesture was crucial to Massine's choreographic aesthetic, as was a turn towards the psychological. Jennifer Homans, *Apollo's Angels: A History of Ballet* (New York: Random House Inc., 2010), 346.

Among his other innovations, Gorsky introduced the use of poses in profile (later seen in Nijinsky's work), and stripped down costumes, disregarding the tutu completely in his 1905 restaging of Petipa's *La Fille du Pharaon* (not coincidentally, 1905 was the same year that American modern dancer Isadora Duncan performed in Russia) . He also emphasized authentic costuming, and the use of large, realistic crowds on stage (both of which would become trademarks of Fokine's work), and continuous movement. As Garafola points out, Gorsky's "emphasis on simultaneity and multiple centers would become hallmarks of Massine's choreography, although the link with Gorsky is seldom made"; Massine himself overlooks any connection between his work and Gorsky's. Souritz, *Soviet Choreographers*, 27; Garafola, "Léonide Massine's *Pulcinella*," 41.

[26] García-Márquez, 9.

physical behavior.[27] He believed an actor could achieve such 'realism' through a rigorous system of analysis based on a series of questions regarding character objectives and the given circumstances of a scene. While Massine never admitted to any direct influence, his training at the Imperial Theater School essentially necessitated that he was aware of, and arguably shaped by, the teachings of Stanislavsky.[28] Furthermore, Massine's acting training after 1908 was primarily overseen by Alexander Yuzhin (1857 – 1927), "one of Moscow's most important dramatic coaches, [who] was greatly admired by Stanislavsky, and vice versa."[29] In Massine's book *Massine on Choreography: Theories and Exercises in Composition*—a theoretical treatise which he considered to be his life's work—the artist, like Stanislavsky before, endeavored to create his own scientific system that might unlock ideas about 'truth' and 'authenticity' expressed through physicality. Though reticent to admit the extent to which Stanislavsky (or Stanislavsky-inspired techniques) had influenced him, it is clear that

[27] "Stanislavsky was primarily and passionately interested in the art of transmission, that moment of creation by the actor, which by way of revelation evokes a response from the audience. This in Stanislavsky's view could be achieved only by the development of the actor to the utmost limit of physical, mental and spiritual capacity, and by fully supporting the actor with all the aesthetic aids and mechanical devices of stage, scenery, properties, costumes, lighting." Bertha Malnick, "Art Theatre: A Jubilee—1989 – 1948, *The Slavonic and East European Review* 27, no. 69 (May 1949): 565.

[28] In an 1977 interview with Marilyn Hunt, Massine noted that he met Stanislavsky in St. Petersburg but that the director was in love with Russian actress Olga Gzovskaya, and so paid no attention to him. When asked by Hunt if he was influenced by Stanislavsky, Massine replies, "I must say that although I felt this was a great man in front of me, I could never go to his performances because I was playing or dancing at the same time." He makes no further mention of Stanislavsky in this interview, and never mentions him in his autobiography *My Life in Ballet*. However, it is quite typical of Massine to downplay or even omit the influence that other artists had on him. [Fokine, similarly, denied Vsevolod Meyerhold's influence on his work, although his impact has been well documented. See, Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), 29-32]. "Interview with Léonide Massine" conducted by Marilyn Hunt in San Rafael, California on November 23, 1977, for the New York Public Library Dance Collection Oral History Project, *MGZTL 4-389 [sound disc] discs 1-2, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

[29] García-Márquez, 24.

Massine gained vital experience and excelled in *both* dance and drama; his ability to combine the two art forms came to be a defining aspect of his aesthetic.

As students at the Theater School, Massine and his classmates were required to perform in productions for both the Bolshoi and Maly Theaters.[30] During this time, Massine initially danced mostly character roles, solidifying within him a lasting appreciation for the dramatic, and an ability to deftly express emotion not only through his body, but through his facial expressions as well.[31] By 1911, Massine was already being cast in significant roles, to great critical acclaim, on both the Maly and Bolshoi stages.[32] In addition to performing, Massine also studied the violin and painting. These early influences—his modern ballet training from Gorsky, his exposure to and immersion in avant-garde Russian experimental theater, and his multi-modal training as both a musician and painter—all bore lasting impacts on Massine's choreography and dance theory.

Diaghilev Enters

The termination of Diaghilev's romantic and working relationship with *Ballets Russes* dancer and choreographer Nijinsky in 1913 led the Impresario back to Moscow in search of a new leading dancer. Youthful, with strikingly dramatic features, Massine caught Diaghilev's

[30] While the Bolshoi offered performances of both opera and ballet, the Maly showcased drama productions.

[31] Massine was cast in his first solo character role as the dwarf Chernomor in a production of Glinka's *Ruslan and Ludmilla* at the Bolshoi Theater. García-Márquez, 15.

[32] Of his role as Mitya in Persianinova's *The Big Ones and the Small Ones* at the Maly Theater, one reviewer praised: "The boy Miassine who is graduating this year from the Ballet School attracted attention. His performance of the role of the young hero was captivating, youthful and interesting. There was no false note, and such humor and pathos—all was very good. One can predict a great future for this sixteen-year-old actor." *Season News*, no. 2306 (December 14, 1911).

attention during Bolshoi performances of *Don Quixote* and *Swan Lake*.[33] Despite his hesitance and desire to instead pursue acting, a meeting was arranged for Massine (then eighteen years old) and Diaghilev at the Metropole Hotel. As Massine described the encounter:

> I was announced, and the door opened. I came with the absolute decision to say no, I'm not going. What I said, you see, I said, 'Yes, Mr. Diaghilev, I'm coming.' Probably it's because the conversation with Diaghilev that made me convinced that there is a different world [sic] … I remember myself—I said maybe I will learn something more there. Why not? I said after all, I will go for two months. I will try. I hardly said goodbye to my family—I said I would be back in two months. And that two months became all my life. That's it. That's the story.[34]

Once with the company, Massine was under the direct tutelage of Diaghilev. A "giant of knowledge, of intuition, of anything that would help young artists to understand what really the ballet performance is," Diaghilev took Massine to museums, introduced him to artists, and groomed him to replace Nijinsky as lead choreographer and dancer [and lover].[35] Massine re-iterated throughout his life that when it came to painting, sculpture and music "my education c[a]me from Diaghilev," and that "every word of Diaghilev was like a God."[36] The young dancer, accustomed mostly to dramatic character roles, also began extensive training with Italian ballet Master Enrico Cecchetti. In Cecchetti's system, there was "no

[33] García-Márquez, 31.

[34] Massine, Hunt interview.

[35] Léonide Massine. "Interview with Léonide Massine conducted by Marian Horosko in New York City," 1969, *MGZTL 4-48, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

[36] Massine, Horosko interview.

fantasy, everything [was] established, simple, rigid, limited, but clear."[37] From such training, along with the tutelage of Russian avant-garde artists Natalia Goncharova and Mikhail Larionov, Massine began his choreographic career.[38] From *Les Ballets Russes* to Broadway to the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo to American Ballet Theater, Massine choreographed for over sixty years, moving through different choreographic cycles, including his Spanish Modernism and Symphonic Ballets.[39] While further scholarship is needed on all of Massine's choreographic periods, this dissertation will examine specifically his development of postwar Modernism.

Method and Scope

Léonide Massine was a private, enigmatic man. He was at once withdrawn and egoic, brilliant and at times brutal, a combination that makes him a complex figure of study. Those who have written about Massine find him slightly out of reach, his multifaceted nature constantly elusive. As Walter Sorrell wrote, "It is a strange sensation that keeps me from

[37] Massine, Horosko interview. Much of Massine's early education with Diaghilev occurred during their trip to Italy during the summer of 1914. Traveling primarily between Milan, Viareggio, and Florence, Massine attended *serate futuriste* (futurist evenings) and spent time with Marinetti in Milan, watched *Commedia dell'arte* puppet shows (later, his inspiration for *Pulcinella*, the topic of Chapter 3) and became deeply inspired by the "spiritual beauty and mysticism" of painters like Cimabue, Duccio, Donatello, Fra Angelico, Pietro Lorenzelli, Fra Filippo Lippi, Tintoretto, and Michelangelo. Massine, *My Life,* 69; García-Márquez, 44.

[38] While he would continue to create works for *Les Ballets Russes* through 1928, Massine bitterly parted ways with Diaghilev in 1921. Although Massine's contract had expired, jealousy and feelings of betrayal were truly at the heart of Diaghilev's decision. Plagued by his discovery of Massine's relationship with company dancer Vera Savina, Diaghilev wavered between cruelty and sorrow, lambasting the young choreographer as "Nothing but a good-looking face and poor legs" while also heralding him as "the most brilliant mind I have ever met in a dancer." In conversation with Grigoriev, *The Diaghilev Ballet*, 169; Arnold Haskell, *Diaghileff: His Artistic and Private Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935), 272.

[39] Performance scholar Ninotchka Bennahum has compared Massine to Picasso in the breadth and variety of his choreographic periods.

properly focusing on him, the man and his work. I cannot draw his artistic profile on the walls of my memory. I told myself I must re-read his *My Life in Ballet*. Perhaps I will then be able to touch him and, like a blind man, feel the intricacies of his contours. Maybe."[40] Even in *My Life in Ballet*, Massine's autobiography, the artist himself only provides partial truths, at times purposefully leaving out or distorting facts.[41] In interviews, too, his responses were often coy or brusque, rendering opaque or brushing aside completely topics on which he did not wish to focus (particularly, topics pertaining to his sexuality and relationship with Diaghilev). Although *My Life* is acknowledged as an inconsistent account, it nevertheless remains the text that most clearly illuminates Massine's *own* vision of his life.

Vincente García-Márquez, the most comprehensive biographer of Massine thus far, wrote of his first meeting with the artist in 1978, "His gaze was disturbing and impenetrable, suggesting the insight of the sage unprepared to divulge secrets."[42] Despite the depth and

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[40] "On Massine and Cocteau, Scandals and Audiences," *Dance Scope* 13, no. 4 (1979): 12, *MGZA, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

[41] As I discuss in Chapter 4, Massine's version of events for the creation of *La Boutique Fantasque* differs from that of other collaborators. The discrepancies in his account are slight, and could be attributed either to a natural conflation of events over forty-nine years (*Boutique* premiered in 1919, while his autobiography was not published until 1968), or to a [relatively harmless] inclination to remember his own achievements more strongly than those of others. However, other acts of "forgetting" throughout Massine's autobiography are more flagrant. For example, in an oral history interview, *Ballets Russes* dancer and frequent partner to Massine, Alexandra Danilova discussed her almost complete erasure from Massine's version of history. Interviewer Peter Conway remarks that although she was "the ultimate Massine dancer" she is completely left out of the biography (her last name is mentioned three times, but only in reference to a role she danced). In the Index for the book, however, only a Marie Danilova is included, a Russian dancer who died in 1801. Both Danilova and her interviewer suspect this misattribution to be a subtle jab from Massine, who as Danilova describes, was highly jealous of *her* success in his ballet *La Beau Danube*. Laughing, she added, "It's his nature … he's just jealous." "Interview with Alexandra Danilova [sound recording]" conducted by Peter Conway on December 4, 18, and 20, 1978 and January 6, 12, and 29, 1979. New York City Public Library Dance Collection Oral History Project, New York Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

[42] García-Márquez, xi.

incredible insight of García-Márquez's seminal text *Massine: A Biography*, the author concluded that a search for the 'authentic' Massine is fruitless:

> For Massine, the creative process, in tandem with theoretical observation, dominated his contribution to the world; and thus, particularly in his case, the creative act constitutes the involuntary biography of his soul. To look for any other clues to his inner self—even from those closest to him—is an insurmountable task. There are glimpses here and there of the essence, but he eludes us constantly, becoming even more baffling.[43]

Like García-Márquez, I believe that understanding Massine may begin by looking to his dancing, and to his choreography. It is there, through his incessant rhythms and polyrhythmic complexity, through the fragmented curves and edges he crafted onto his own body, through the ambiguous characters that he created for himself, that a partial vision of the artist may emerge. While Massine himself may forever remain an enigmatic figure, his choreographic oeuvre has been [partially] preserved as a complex site of investigation for a theory of postwar corporeality.

Considering Dance History in the Present

The difficulty of recapturing a body that is gone (or a body that resisted understanding), the irreversibility of the body lost and the dance erased through time, remains a central concern for dance scholars. The unavoidable passage of time moves us farther and farther away from those "long dead years" to which Lieven referred at the start of this chapter. What then remains, largely, are not the bodies and choreographic steps of Massine's original choreography (neither *Parade* nor *Pulcinella* exist in their original form), but the static, paper documents that have survived in dossiers and the grainy images of microfilm. A romanticized image of *Les Ballets Russes* (especially in its pre-war seasons) has

[43] García-Márquez, xiii.

therefore been perpetuated, in part, by the abundance of souvenir programs and costume and set designs, in the absence of a robust moving archive. These readily-available visual materials from twentieth century artists such as Léon Bakst, Alexandre Benois, Natalia Goncharova, Pablo Picasso, André Derain, Marie Laurencin, etc., entice viewers with rich, sumptuous colors, and ornate, intricate detailing, offering a perspective of *Les Ballets Russes* that is, while authentic, merely one dimensional.[44] With few notable exceptions, the vast oeuvre of early *Ballets Russes* works lack choreographic notation or filmic documentation.[45] Due in part to this absence or poor quality of film footage, the dancing bodies themselves are recalled far less than the sensational events surrounding the production process and performance of the ballets.[46] Of course, even in those cases where choreography has been preserved (or reconstructed), recordings of the original, early *Ballets Russes* dancers rarely exist; Karsavina's performance as the titular role in *The Firebird*, Nijinsky's dancing in *Petroushka*, Nijinska's portrayal of the Chosen Maiden of *Le Sacre du printemps*, and the

[44] See, for example: "Diaghilev's Ballets Russes: 1909 – 1929. Twenty Years that Changed the World of Art," Harvard University, Houghton Library, http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton/exhibits/diaghilev/iconic_designs.cfm.

[45] Notable ballets still in repertoire include: Fokine – *Les Sylphides* (1909), *L'oiseau de feu* (1910), *La Spectre de la rose* (1911), *Petroushka* (1911); Nijinsky – *L'après-midi d'un faune* (1912), *Le Sacre du printemps* (1913); Massine – *Parade* (1917) [in a highly reconstructed form], *Le Tricorne* (1919), *La Boutique Fantasque* (1919), *Gaite Parisienne* (1938), *Aleko* (1942); Nijinska – *Les Biches* (1924), *Les Noces* (1923), *Le Train Bleu* (1924); Balanchine – *Apollon Musagète* (1928), *Les Fils Prodigue* (1929). * *Pulcinella* was performed by the Joffrey ballet in the 1970's but in a completely reconstructed version, the original choreography having been lost.

[46] For example, while Massine's *Mercure* (1924) is all but lost—with the exception of Satie's score and a few designs by Picasso—the scandalous tale of André Breton and his gang of Surrealists' protest at the premiere is infamous.

embodied knowledge that each performer carried through that role, is irretrievably lost, living on only in memories, photographs, and press reviews.[47]

Such, as dance scholars know, is the state of dance, the fleeting art of "self-erasure."[48] While performance theorists such as Rebecca Schneider, Peggy Phelan, and André Lepecki have attempted to theorize away the trouble of vanishing bodies, the fact remains that dance is about motion, about bodies moving in time and space.[49] As dance historian and theorist Lynn Garafola aptly states, dance is "an art where idea takes form only in the performer."[50] Therefore, since in most cases such motion *cannot* be re-captured, the task of the dance historian becomes a recreation of the *world* surrounding the dance; a search for the life, the aura, that once existed in a work.[51] The trouble, then, with that romanticized view of *Les Ballets Russes*, replete with "isms," is that such a view may only contribute to a surface understanding of the company, glossing over the specificity and intricacies of such an historical moment. The questions remains: What depth of understanding is lost when viewers, critics, historians, and performers of *Ballets Russes* material blindly exalt the cult of sensationalism in which the company was enmeshed, ignoring the material reality of bodies

[47] Compound this problem with the tendency of art historians and musicologists to subjugate dance and choreography to the periphery, sometimes even to the extent of writing dancing out of the history of *Ballets Russes* productions entirely. As a notable example, *Parade* is often described as a work in which Picasso, Cocteau, and Satie were the sole collaborators; Massine and his choreography are omitted entirely.

[48] André Lepecki (ed.), *Of the Presence of the Body* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2004).

[49] See, for example: Schneider, *Performing Remains* (2011); Phelan, *Unmarked* (1993); Lepecki, *Of the Presence of the Body* (2004).

[50] Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, 4.

[51] Mark Franko engages in a similar project of unpacking the socio-political resonances that can be traced through choreography in his book *Dance as Text: Ideologies of the Baroque Body* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

in Russia and Europe during the company's existence from 1909 to 1929? Additionally, what can dance and art history gain from considering Massine's ballets not only as products of avant-garde experimentalism and entertainment, but as artistic reflections of a twentieth-century *physis* of alienation and anxiety?[52]

Theoretical Intervention

While acknowledging the parameters of my research—the scarcity of an original moving archive, and Massine's own privacy—I seek to reconsider Massine's choreography through a close, theoretical analysis of the three ballets *Parade*, *La Boutique Fantasque*, and *Pulcinella*. Each ballet is viewed with careful attention to the historical context in which it was created, to the use of the choreography and body itself as a mode of semiotic expression (in direct relationship with the particular time and place in which those bodies moved), and to the function and form of the collaborative process within each ballet (that is, the way choreography augmented, and was augmented by, elements of music and design). While chapters will be grounded in historical context and the choreographic/musical/decorative elements of each ballet, my own theorization of corporeality in performance (fully defined in Chapter 1) will be the foundation of this dissertation. Situating dance within a larger art-historical milieu, I re-contextualize and re-envision both the choreography of Massine and the dancing body itself in a postwar era.

The legacy of *Les Ballets Russes* has already been thoroughly explored by historians such as Lynn Garafola, Richard Buckle, Davinia Caddy, and Juliet Bellow (to name only a

[52] My application of the term *physis* comes from its use in Walter Benjamin's short essay "To the Planetarium" (1925/6). The term, meaning a way of being in the world, specifically associated in this case with a post-WWI physicality, will be utilized throughout this dissertation, and will be elaborated on in the "Western Critical Theorists" section of this chapter.

few). My dissertation is therefore tremendously indebted to the *Ballets Russes* experts (particularly Garafola) who laid the foundation for my own work. In considering Garafola's comprehensive scholarship, I seek to further pursue certain discourses within her scholarship—specifically those of corporeality, collaboration, and identity (individual, national, transnational)—and to provide alternate theorizations of select ballets from the *Ballets Russes* repertoire.

While my writing builds upon elements in Garafola's work, I also diverge from her in several ways. Primarily, I question Garafola's assertion that the body and choreography became secondary artistic elements in *Ballets Russes* productions. She writes, "If, before, dance had been an equal, now it became a subordinate of design, with the goal of the choreographer being to enhance the inventions of scene painter and costumer."[53] Through my own theorization of corporeality, I reconsider the nature of choreography and the body within specific Massine works. My contention is that, while design elements did begin to trump choreography in terms of publicity and attention (employing artists, like Picasso, who would garner public interest, was one of Diaghilev's talents), the body nevertheless remained *the* central element within the work of *Les Ballets Russes*.[54]

While the body undoubtedly plays an integral role as a narrative agent (i.e. as a figure who conveys and portrays plot and mood) and as a medium through which emotions are communicated to audiences, the Benjaminian *aura* of the body, or the Bergsonian notion of

[53] Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, 85.

[54] Juliet Bellow argues for a similar centrality of the body in *Les Ballets Russes* works: "Under the aegis of Diaghilev's company, avant-garde artists helped to create visually and conceptually rich works – a combination of installation and performance art, *avant la letter* – that adapted modernist styles to the temporal, three-dimensional and corporeal medium of ballet. With the performer's body providing the central pivot of their work, these artists produced new forms of figural art and responded to modernity's new forms of embodiment." *Modernism on Stage*, 2.

élan vital so inherently tied to the body, profoundly elevate the positioning of the body above the static elements of stage and costume design.[55] The multi-media works of *Les Ballets Russes* hinge on the body as an indispensable vehicle for powerful kinetic and emotional expression. Whereas Garafola's writing places an emphasis on the economic, social, political, and artistic factors (including patronage, audience response, and contemporary aesthetics) that dictated the scope of Diaghilev's company/creations throughout its existence, I wish to pinpoint the centrality of the body, rendering the body in performance as a primary site of interrogation.

In Garafola's writings, corporeality is a peripheral matter within a narrative dominated by economic and social pressures and the productive means through which the company's ballets came to fruition. While I acknowledge the importance of these socio-economic factors, I wish to move corporeality to the center of the narrative, examining the symbolic nature of the body itself within larger historical currents. Garafola comprehensively illuminates the world that shaped *Les Ballets Russes*; I wish to illuminate the bodies within that world, exploring how they moved, what they may have signified to audiences (then and

[55] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936); Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory* (1896).

now), and how we can read Garafola's world *in* the performance of those bodies.[56] Furthermore, in returning to the centrality of the body within the works of *Les Ballets Russes*, I wish to solidify Massine's place as an artist who used choreography to create uniquely modern statements about, and through, the body. While art historians routinely footnote *Les Ballets Russes* for bringing [pre-existent] Modernism to the concert stage, I argue that Léonide Massine participated in the consolidation of Modernism through his choreography.[57]

Theorizing the New, *Fin de Siècle* Body: Key Theorists and Terms

*In order to arrive at a new definition of postwar corporeality, it is first important to establish the key terms with which I am working, including "Modernism" and "Primitivism."[58]

[56] With my focus on the role of the body in shaping society (rather than merely being a passive reflection), my work echoes aspects of Andrew Hewitt's *Social Choreography* (2005), an aptly named text that analyzes the "social choreography" of nineteenth and twentieth century bodies. For Hewitt, social choreography is a methodology used to retrospectively understand the signifying nature of the body within the *socius*: how bodies (independently of, or in tandem with, larger socio-political ideas) enact new ideologies. Hewitt's project looks to those moments of *faux pas* or stumbling which reveal a new [physical and philosophical] mode of being in society, thus suggesting the shifting of social codes, performed through the body. Hewitt provides strong evidence for the following notions: 1) that ideology is physically enacted, 2) that shifting ideologies may actually be *discovered in* the movements of the body, rather than merely in textual discourse and 3) that the body *can* (with caution and attention to the original intentions of artists) be analyzed retrospectively; it is only in looking at the breaks from previous social choreography that one can uncover the new. Hewitt's text is incredibly helpful in my attempt to substantiate the corporeal manifestation of nascent modern ideologies of anxiety, trauma, and human connection within Massine's work, for as Hewitt (and I) argue, the site of shifting ideologies is primarily *in* the body, though they may also be reflected elsewhere.

[57] Here I, of course, do not intend to suggest that Massine single-handedly created Modernism. Rather, I am suggesting that just as other Modern artists like Pablo Picasso, Eric Satie, or Gertrude Stein created their own unique iteration of Modernism, so too did Massine. While he was undoubtedly influenced by other Modern artists, he did not simply translate what already existed within "Modernism" into dance. Rather, he created a fundamentally *new* example of Modernism, based in and on the dancing body.

[58] While I do provide provisional definitions of the "Modern" and the "Primitive," these words should always be understood to include quotation marks around them. I employ these terms not as concrete definitions, but rather as larger, unavoidable historical currents of Western Imperialism, which must always be considered in context.

"Modernism"

From the chaotic forces engendered by war, technology, the hyper-stimulating metropolis of the early nineteen hundreds, a newly defined *physis* (evidenced in social comportment and artistic expression), and radical innovation across all artistic media, emerged a period loosely termed 'Modernism.'[59] For the purposes of this dissertation, I wish to make clear that 'Modernism,' by its very nature, entails a systemic turbulence, a *mode d'être* of fluctuation. Though it was not until 1934 that poet Ezra Pound famously claimed "Make it new!" as Modernism's slogan, the 'new' (albeit manifested in varying ancient forms) has remained a tenant of the modern within Western discourse. I therefore wish to emphasize that the definitions of Modernism I reference here are neither universal nor complete; definitions of the terms 'modern,' 'modernity,' and 'Modernism' vary between individual artists, differ from country to country, and shift within contexts. Within this dissertation, I have synthesized several definitions of Modernism that I find most helpful to my own project of defining the place of the body within modernity.

I rely on Peter Bürger's historically-specific definition of the avant-garde, which he defines in contrast to French post-structuralist definitions of modernism.[60] In his text *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Bürger makes clear that after World War I, a shift in artistic practices occurred which directly correlated to the market economy and the break between artists and patrons. As artists could now function autonomously, without the financial support and

[59] Indeed, the many, diverse writings, theories, and artifacts (poems, dances, paintings, sculptures, musical scores) that now constitute 'Modernism' were not placed together as a deceptively cohesive unit until the 1950's, when academics began to formulate the canon of 'High Modernism.'Kolocotroni, Goldman, and Taxidou, "Introduction" in *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents* (University of Chicago Press, 1998), xvii.

[60] Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde: Theory and History of Literature, Volume 4*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

aesthetic guidance/restrictions of a patron, art became an individual activity, severed from a social function. As Bürger wrote, "The apartness from the praxis of art in bourgeois society now becomes the content of works."[61] Therefore, built into Bürger's definition of the avant-garde is an anxiety surrounding the social function of art, which in Bürger's estimation, thereby dictates a *content* also shaped from anxiety and alienation. Here we see the avant-garde's very foundation as one of historically specific discord and rupture (which I also argue are underlying themes within Massine's choreography).[62]

Another useful definition of the modern comes from Cold War era art critic Harold Rosenberg, whose essay "The American Action Painters" (1952) provides an account of the new, highly embodied forms of painting he saw taking shape. Though written many years after the period of early Modernism focused on bout in this dissertation, I feel that Rosenberg's definition of the term can be applied retrospectively, when still remaining apt. In the essay, Rosenberg decreed that modern art is not a style. Rather, "It is something that someone has had the social power to designate as psychologically, esthetically or ideologically relevant to our epoch."[63] What is 'modern' in art is highly political and subjective, constituted neither by its style or content, necessarily. The critic continued:

> A supreme Value has emerged in our time, the Value of the NEW . . . This Value is a completely fluid one. As we have seen, Modern Art does not have to be actually new; it only has to be new to *somebody* . . . and to win neophytes in the chief interest of the caste . . . To see in the explosion of shrapnel over No Man's Land only the opening of a flower of flame, Marinetti had to ease the moral premises of the act of destruction.[64]

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[61] Bürger, 27.

[62] David Cottington's *Cubism in the Shadow of War: The Avant-Garde and Politics in Paris 1905-1914* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998) also aptly highlights the issue of alienation in relation to modernity.

[63] Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters" in *Tradition of the New* (New York: Horizon Press, 1960), 36.

[64] Rosenberg, 37-8.

Rosenberg highlighted two important concepts in this passage. First, that "the NEW" (which we can consider equivalent to Pound's "new" in his exclamatory cry) and the "new" (in a strict, temporal sense) are not the same. Modern art is founded just as much upon the appropriation of the old for new purposes as it is upon actual authentic innovation. This definition of the modern allows us to better understand the appropriation of well-established cultural objects (so-called 'primitive' art) within modern art (a relationship I will return to shortly).

Second, Rosenberg suggested that modern art involves a loosening or fraying of normative ideologies or boundaries. Above, he provides the example of Futurist author F. T. Marinetti envisioning the utter destruction and violence of No Man's Land as the poetic unfurling of a flower (something akin to Loïe Fuller's dances of light). To read beauty in destruction, one must discard what Rosenberg terms "moral premises," or simply, strict categorical boundaries. Rosenberg provides a canonical definition of modern art in which the 'modern' occupies a self-admittedly privileged position (based on *who* is claiming its status as 'new') grounded in an aesthetic of appropriation, juxtaposition, moral laxity, and flexibility for boundaries of comparison and appraisal.

Finally, writing in the least historically specific sense, yet perhaps closest to my own definition of modernity as a simultaneous exchange of juxtapositional forces, I rely on literary critic Paul de Man, whose definition of the term is important to my work for several reasons.[65] First, while de Man wrote primarily about literature, he began his essay "Literary History and Literary Modernity" (1970) with the assertion that modernity is essentially performative. According to de Man, "modernity, which is a way of acting and behaving" is

[65] In his foreword to Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Jochen Schulte-Sasse actually finds de Man culpable of Bürger's critique of definitions of modernism; that is, he claims that de Man does not acknowledge that "There is a historically specific institutionalization of aesthetic praxis in every era," and instead detaches works of art from their social relevance; xxxvii.

neither merely a temporality nor a concept, but *a mode of being*.[66] Although he neither uses the term "performative" nor explicitly pursues this idea further within this essay, it can be inferred that de Man conceives of modernity as something that is *enacted*; modernity requires that bodies move and act in particular ways. This idea is of the utmost importance to my own work, as my dissertation focuses on the way that bodies moved and performed in a particular moment in history. The notion that modernity *itself* is performative solidifies the importance of the body (for, what is performance without a body?) in any discussion of the events that shaped this historical period.

De Man further suggested that modernity might be characterized "just as an attempt at self-definition, as a way of diagnosing one's own present," explaining that this facet of the term accounts for the "inventiveness" and originality that accompanies a conception of the 'modern.'[67] However, the critic also wrote that, "there is nothing modern about the concept of modernity."[68] The modern is not something new, but a confrontation with the old in a new fashion. He continued, "Modernity exists in the form of a desire to wipe out whatever came earlier in the hope of reaching at last a point that could be called a true present, a point of origin that marks a new departure. This combined interplay of a deliberate forgetting with an action that is also a new origin reaches the full power of the idea of modernity."[69] De Man makes clear that modernity cannot exist without history, without the past, for the two exist in a mutual, "curiously contradictory" relationship in which history avoids becoming "sheer

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[66] De Man, "Literary History and Literary Modernity," *Deadalus* 99, no. 2 (Spring 1970): 384.

[67] De Man, 384.

[68] De Man, 385.

[69] De Man, 389.

regression or paralysis" only through its association with modernity. In turn, modernity "cannot assert itself without being at once swallowed up and reintegrated into a regressive historical process."[70] Progression and regression push against one another, fusing into a continual state of flux between past and present.

With de Man's definition of modernity in mind, it becomes clear that the terms 'modern' and 'primitive'—those ambiguous descriptors so commonly (and carelessly) applied to works of art throughout the early twentieth century—are not antithetical to one another, but in fact stem from one and the same Western impulse. The relationship between the modern and the 'primitive' (as terms of synecdoche) is essential to an understanding of much of the Western art of the early-twentieth century. Futurist artist Gino Severini wrote, "the inventions of Science take human sensibility back to the level of the prehistoric period . . . the monsters of the Stone Age . . . are now monsters of steel and copper . . . quivering with a formidable life."[71] This quotation suggests the degree to which the modern and the primitive were equated, likening machines to the purportedly 'non-rational' beings of the Stone Age, negating the humanity in both.

"Primitivism"

Of course, these definitions of Modernism stem only from Western ideologies. Therefore, any idea of 'the primitive' is defined strictly through its ideological attachment to Western colonialism. As Trinh T. Minh-ha writes,

> Striving for the Other's mind and redefining the intangible is 'human.' You can no doubt capture, tame and appropriate it to yourself, for language as a form of knowing will always provide you with Your other. One of the conceits of

[70] De Man, 391.

[71] Blake, *Le Tumulte Noir*, 56.

> anthropology lies in its positivist dream of a neutralized language that strips off all its singularity to become nature's exact, unmisted reflection. … What is perceived, however, through his language and despite it, is either the Same and the Same, or the Same versus the Other.[72]

Minh-ha's ironic use of the word 'human,' and her indictment of language which claims to be 'universal,' serves as a reminder that Western ideologies, like Modernism, often rely on appropriation to falsely render Sameness. That is, what has become appropriated is absorbed into Western culture under the guise of Sameness, reducing difference to that which is not 'valued' through a Western lens. Therefore, Modernism is not merely a period in time. Rather, Modernism is a marker of a colonial value system of white supremacy which sought to negate the humanity of non-Western cultures, instead rendering the bodies and traditions of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East as fetishized objects of study.

As so-called 'primitive' art made a resurgence in the modern European world, the confusion and despair with current modern existence was transmuted into a desire to return to a primordial utopia that never actually existed. Through the creation myths that spawned Western ideologies of Africa and the 'Orient' as mining grounds for artistic appropriation—"the indigene as object"[73]—an attempt was made to transcend current existence, to claim an allegiance to a fabricated notion of 'innate' irrationality (as in Surrealism), creativity, and a harmony with nature.

Expanding on Edward Said's foundational theory in *Orientalism*," Homi K. Bhaba argued that "[t]he myth of historical origination – racial purity, cultural priority – produced in relation to the colonial stereotype functions to 'normalize' the multiple beliefs and split

[72] Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009), 53.

[73] Minh-ha, 59.

subjects that constitute colonial discourse as a consequence of its process of disavowal."[74] He goes on to assert that, similarly, the stereotypes associated with 'primitivism' and 'Orientalism' constitute a form of fetishism:

> For the scene of fetishism is also the scene of the reactivation and repetition of primal fantasy – the subject's desire for a pure origin that is always threatened by its division … The stereotype, then, as the primary point of subjectification in colonial discourse, for both the colonizer and the colonized, is the scene of a similar fantasy and defence – the desire for an originality which is again threatened by the differences of race, colour, and culture.[75]

According to Bhabha, Western ideas of the 'primitive' relate back to a fractured sense of identity and a colonial anxiety of impotence and failure. Orientalism functions as a fantasy of control over the Other, in an attempt to make sense of the Western Self. Thus in Modernism, the 'primitive' served two primary functions: the production of a [mostly imaged/stereotyped/fetishized] Other onto whom could be projected false feelings of cultural superiority, and two, a frightfully tantalizing alternative to modern European life. As Said wrote, "The orient at large, therefore, vacillates between the West's contempt for what is familiar and its shivers of delight in – or fear of – novelty."[76]

In the same vein, author Marianna Torgovnick makes clear in her book, *Gone Primitive*, that the primitive is not a term with a singular definition, but rather a highly subjective term dependent on whom it is employed by. "The needs of the present determine the value and nature of the primitive," meaning that the primitive is a term that always implies a comparison.[77] Additionally, she asserts: "For Euro-Americans, to study the

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[74] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 106.

[75] Bhabha, 107.

[76] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 59.

[77] Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellects, Modern Lives* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 9.

primitive brings us always back to ourselves, which we reveal in the act of defining the Other."[78] As in Said and Bhabha, the primitive Other is merely an imaginative projection, a work of fabrication created to give shape to the Western Self.

While Torgovnick emphasizes that the primitive is always a comparative term, and one that implies and necessitates invisible quotation marks with each utterance, she does list several qualities that can be used as a general rule when defining the primitive. First, as already mentioned, the primitive is always defined by Western standards: it must be viewed in light of its divergence from (positively or negatively) a set of cultural values considered 'normative.' Second, Torgovnick contends that the primitive implies a sense of return or homecoming. Referencing Lukács term "transcendental homelessness," Torgovnick suggests that those who appropriate notions of the primitive often feel alienation (personal, sexual, cultural, national), lack a sense of belonging, and locate within the primitive an imagined homeland or origin. Third, Torgovnick underscores the physicality of the primitive, writing that "going primitive" is, in essence, "getting physical."[79] The primitive is linked to physicality, sexuality, and a perceived animalistic proximity to the earth. Finally, in Torgovnick's definition, within the concept of the primitive, multiple realities and temporalities are allowed to exist simultaneously.[80] Dreaming and waking, past and present, blend together, defying neat categorization. In my dissertation, I adopt Bhabha and

[78] Torgovnik, 11.

[79] Torgovnik, 228.

[80] Torgovnik, 186.

Torgovnick's definition of the primitive, and imply invisible quotation marks around the term whenever used.[81]

In examining the relationship between the 'modern' and the 'primitive,' my larger goal is to emphasize the desire of Industrial European society to return (to an impossible place), and to merge (albeit through appropriation) the Western Self and Other in an attempt to rectify a sense of fractured identity (as in Benjamin's "modern *physis*"). In Western modern art then, specifically dance, the body became a new ethnographic site through which to explore expanding (or disintegrating) notions of identity, to embody new conceptions and manners of being. How could multiple, contradictory identities and ideologies exist within one body, one nation?

Western Critical Theorists

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century philosophical writings of Walter Benjamin (1892 – 1940) and Henri Bergson (1859 – 1941), and the poststructuralist theories of Gilles Deleuze (1925 – 1995) and Félix Guattari (1930 – 1992) help to understand such multiplicity. Benjamin and Bergson provide critical (and poetic) insight into early twentieth century ideologies, and are essential to my own theorization of the ballets (and bodies) I will discuss. As postmodern sources, Deleuze and Guattari provide theoretical lenses through which to consider issues of fragmentation and the relationship between bodies and technology.

[81] Along with Torgovnick, scholars across disciplines, including art historian Jody Blake and countless dance theorists who write on Africanist aesthetics (Brenda Dixon Gottschild, Tommy DeFrantz, Constance Valis Hill, Nadine George Graves, and Robert Farris Thompson), have noted the acts of cultural appropriation, exoticism, and Othering inherent in the European adoption of African art. Similarly, scholars such as Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Trinh T. Minh-ha and Gina Marchetti have discussed the ramifications of Orientalism in Western art and culture.

Benjamin's "Modern *Physis*"

In 1903 Sociologist Georg Simmel (1858 – 1918) wrote, "The deepest problems of modern life flow from the attempt of the individual to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the sovereign powers of society, against the weight of the historical heritage and the external culture and technique of life. This *antagonism* represents the most modern form of the conflict which primitive man must carry on with nature for his own bodily existence."[82] In Simmel's words, modern life emerges as an "antagonism," a struggle of "bodily existence" against the new forces that crush and manipulate the sovereignty [and sanity] of the individual.

While Simmel focused primarily on the psychological effects of the metropolis (including the blasé attitude), he also suggested a tangible effect on the body itself (a physical need to survive in and adapt to a changing atmosphere). Changing notions of the body (its relationship to other bodies, to space, to technology, etc.) became topics of concern for many writers of the early twentieth century, including Walter Benjamin. In his essay entitled "To the Planetarium" written between 1925 and 1926, Benjamin asserted, "In technology a *physis* is being organized through which mankind's contact with the cosmos takes a new and different form from that which it had in nations and families." Benjamin goes on to explain that this "new form" takes shape through "velocities," speeds of travel never before possible.[83] Whereas in the past man communed with the cosmos through a deep spiritual connection—what Benjamin refers to as "the ecstatic trance"—that communion is now one

[82] Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (1903), in *Modernism: An Anthology*, 51 (emphasis mine).

[83] Walter Benjamin, "To the Planetarium" in *One Way Street*, trans. Jephcott & Shorter (Great Britain: Lowe and Brydone Printers Limited, 1979), 104.

of destruction, one of 'touching' the heavens through fire and electricity.[84] As the author explained:

> [World War I] was an attempt at new and unprecedented commingling with the cosmic powers. Human multitudes, gases, electrical forces were hurled into the open country, high-frequency currents coursed through the landscape, new constellations rose in the sky, aerial space and ocean depths thundered with propellers, and everywhere sacrificial shafts were dug in Mother Earth.[85]

In the wake of war, the meta-physical, spiritual connection to the earth/heavens, once constituted *through* the body, was replaced by a new modern *physis*, constituted through technology and warfare.

What Benjamin suggests here—a modern techno-human whose physical body is extended by war and machines—resembles a pre-cursor to notions of the post-human that would be expanded upon decades later by authors such as Donna Haraway, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.[86] Characterized by destruction rather than communion, this new body entails an alienated relationship to nature (a break from the continuum between humans and earth), and a physicality that is unstable and discordant. "In the nights of annihilation of the last war the frame of mankind was shaken by a feeling that resembled the bliss of the epileptic. And the revolts that followed it were the first attempt of mankind to bring the new body under its control."[87] As the very relationship of the physical body to the soul, the earth, and other human beings was altered drastically in the early-twentieth century, new forms of artistic expression became necessary to convey turbulent, shifting notions of individual,

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[84] Benjamin, "To the Planetarium," 103.

[85] "To the Planetarium," 103-4.

[86] See Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (1991); Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti Oedipus* (1977), *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987).

[87] Benjamin, "To the Planetarium," 104.

national, and cosmic sovereignty. In place of machines, we see in Massine's postwar choreography (most notably in *Parade*) the extension of the body through the "aesthetic technologies" of set design and costuming.[88] Benjamin's modern *physis* is abstractly expressed through a collaging and layering of incongruous aesthetic elements onto the body (for example, a Charlie Chaplin-esque character dancing in a Toulouse Lautrec-inspired Paris of the Second Empire, performing the movements of Romantic ballet, as in *La Boutique Fantasque*), as if the body itself were an accumulation of various temporalities and technologies, shifting and stuttering through time and space.

Bergson's Eliding Temporality

Henri Bergson's writings on *élan vital* and *durée* are vital in understanding such shifting temporalities. While Bergson, like Simmel and Benjamin, did not write specifically about the *dancing* body, his text *Matter and Memory* does speak directly to the relationship between the body and memory. His concept of duration proves incredibly helpful in conceiving of dance as a cross-temporal activity that continues to live on in augmented forms, even after the 'moment of performance' has vanished. Rather than ascribing to the notion that each strikingly transitory moment of presence (the state of dance, and of life itself) is irretrievably lost, Bergson viewed all time as, not expiring, but within a continuum—the past persistently loops into the present in an ever-ceasing flow of memory and present-ness. It is within the continuum of past and present that Bergson's idea of *durée* (duration) emerges. Duration may be conceptualized as *lived consciousness*, and in Bergson's theory replaces a concept of Time (all-encompassing Time with a capital T) as

[88] The term "aesthetic technologies" was provided by Dr. Anurima Banerji. Personal correspondence, August 30, 2017.

"homogenous and independent."[89] Rhythmic rather than linear, duration consists of vibrations and tensions from which present perception extracts images which in turn call the body to action, clearly linking the body to memory (and thereby making memory embodied). Bergson claimed, "To perceive consists in condensing enormous periods of an infinitely diluted existence into a few more differentiated moments of an intense life, and in thus summing up a very long history. To perceive means to immobilize."[90] Perception contracts moments within duration, bringing them to consciousness. A modern *physis*, as seen through the performance of the dancing body, might be thought of as moments of perception, as the motions of the dancing body capture an essence of layered, ever-evolving time.

In her book *Carmen. A Gypsy Geography*, performance scholar Ninotchka Bennahum expands upon Bergson's theory, explicitly applying his concepts of *la durée* and *immanence* to dance. She writes, "For Bergson, to enter into a work in a given moment in time or, in the case of dance or fiction, to become one with its being—its temporality, its tempo—is to seize ourselves from within, to 'install oneself within the *durée*'—the duration or time signature."[91] Bennahum suggests that if *durée* consists of entering into an artifact (a meditative, metaphysical communion through time and space), then in the case of dance, the very element that must be communed with is temporality. As dance is rooted in time, we must look to rhythm, to the expansion and contraction of a moment perceived. Therefore, in

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[89] Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul & W. Scott Palmer (A Digireads.com Book, 2010 [1896]), 113.

[90] Bergson, 113. Benjamin, too, had a similar conception of the immobilization of time: "The true picture of the past flits by. The past can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognized and is never seen again. …To articulate the past historically … means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger." Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History" in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 255.

[91] Bennahum, *Carmen*, 3.

conceiving of an application of duration to dance, we must consider *durée* to be rhythmic and temporal. When viewed in tandem, the writings of Simmel, Bergson, and Benjamin suggest a collective consciousness of the early-twentieth century characterized by a burgeoning desire to situate the body at the center of discourses (albeit in abstracted forms).

Dance, like painting, music, sculpture, and even film in later years, reacted to, reflected, and produced new ways of conceiving of the relationships between bodies in modernity. While dance artists were not unique in their portrayal of themes of modern physicality, dance remains one of the only artistic forms to make the body both its content *and* medium of expression.[92] Therefore, we might think of dance as the mode of modern expression *par excellence*, due to the form's inherently intimate relationship with the body, and subsequent ability to reflect changes in the bodily (and social) *habitus*. Rooted in tradition, yet revolutionized from within, avant-garde ballet, I argue, became a prime locus for explorations of this new modern body or *physis*, the site upon which postwar modernity is corporeally manifested and evidenced. This claim will become substantiated through my close analysis of *Parade, La Boutique Fantasque,* and *Pulcinella*.

Deleuze and Guattari's Fragmented Whole and Body "Becoming"

Decades later, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari took up a postmodern vision of Bergson's work, theorizing time (and existence) as, instead of ever-evolving and over-

[92] Singing and mime could both be considered other artistic forms in which the body of the artist is the sole "instrument." However, in neither case does the body act as both medium and content. A singer, even if only making random noises, relies on the vocal chords, and the production of sound to create the 'content.' The content is not the body itself, but an extension of the body, which is typically in the service of some type of lyrical text or melody. Likewise, a mime requires some sort of [obvious] referent object or action to recreate or perform. The very act of miming implies that there is an additional 'text,' albeit imaginary, in reference. The dancing body needs no other extension, text, or referent other than itself.

lapping loops of experience, fragmented shards constantly re-forming into new assemblages. In a section of their co-authored text *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) entitled "The Whole and its Parts," Deleuze and Guattari provide their own manifesto on fragmentation and partial objects, writing:

> We live today in the age of partial objects, bricks that have been shattered to bits, and leftovers. . . . We no longer believe in a primordial totality that once existed, or in a final totality that awaits us at some future date. We no longer believe in the dull gray outlines of a dreary, colorless dialectic of evolution, aimed at forming a harmonious whole out of heterogeneous bits by rounding off the edges. We believe only in totalities that are peripheral. And if we discover such a totality alongside various separate parts, it is a *whole* of these particular parts but does not totalize them; it is a unity *of* all of these particular parts but does not unify them; rather, it is added to them as a new part fabricated separately.[93]

Deleuze and Guattari suggest that fragmented objects can create only fragmented wholes; when combined together, they create a *new* fragment—which might falsely appear as a whole—that is merely a consolidation of other disparate fragments. The three centrals ballets of this dissertation each contain juxtaposing, layered, often conflicting elements (the fusion of different collaborators' contributions). In theorizing these ballets, I make use of the idea of fragmented wholes to better understand the trauma of postwar bodies.

Another idea crucial to this dissertation is Deleuze and Guattari's theorization of the body becoming. The authors explain:

> A becoming is not a correspondence between relations. But neither is it a resemblance, an imitation, or, at the limit, an identification . . . To become is not to progress or regress along a series. Above all, becoming does not occur in the imagination, even when the imagination reaches the highest cosmic or dynamic level, as in Jung or Bachelard. Becomings-animal are neither dreams nor phantasies. They are perfectly real. *But which reality is at issue here?* For if becoming animal does not consist in playing animal or imitating an animal, it is clear that the human being does not 'really' become an animal any more than the animal 'really' becomes something else. Becoming produces nothing

[93] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Gauttari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 42.

> other than itself We fall into a false alternative if we say that you either imitate or you are. What is real is the becoming itself, the block of becoming, not the supposedly fixed terms through which that which becomes passes.[94]

In one of their more lucid passages, the authors describe "becomings" as a state of transformation that negates the binary of either/or; *either* you are an animal *or* you are a human. In place of a binary, Deleuze and Guattari posit a cubistic existence in which multiple realities exist simultaneously: "*But which reality is at issue here?"* Multi-faceted, ever-evolving, the body-becoming is both itself and its opposite, it inhabits the spaces in between and beyond. "It is through writing that you become animal, it is through color that you become imperceptible, it is through music that you become hard and memoryless, simultaneously animal and imperceptible: in love."[95] Deleuze and Guattari's idea of the body becoming aids in a consideration of both *Les Ballets Russes'* position as an Eastern "export" to the West, and Massine's balletic fusions of time, space, and identity, blended through a performance of postwar corporeality.

Dance Theorists

In addition to the abundant writing on *Les Ballets Russes* by dance scholars, my dissertation has also been informed by the breadth of scholarship on ballet. In particular, the works of Susan Leigh Foster in *Choreography and Narrative: Ballet's Staging of Story and Desire,* Sally Banes in *Dancing Women: Female Bodies on Stage*, Jennifer Homan's in *Apollo's Angels: A History of Ballet*, and the various essayists of *Rethinking the Sylph: New*

[94] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massuni (Minnesota: University of Minneapolis Press, 1987), 238 (emphasis mine).

[95] *A Thousand Plateaus*, 187.

Perspectives on the Romantic Ballet (edited by Lynn Garafola) have guided my own theorization of ballet. Foster's *Choreography and Narrative*, for example, has borne significant influence on my work. Connecting politics and aesthetics, *Choreography and Narrative* delves into the libretti and choreography of ballets, persuasively connecting what is seen on the stage to contemporary socio-political shifts. Banes' *Dancing Women*, too, mines the narratives and choreographic structures of ballets to weave an argument about the representations and respective power of female bodies onstage.

Like these scholars, I examine the connections between socio-political events and the intricacies of aesthetics and choreography. My writing diverges from them, however, in my pursuit of a theory of postwar corporeality as found within ballet. Furthermore, while most dance scholars have asserted a clear genealogical line from Isadora Duncan to Michel Fokine in the development of ballet modernism, I instead argue that this development is better understood through the influence of Loïe Fuller on Léonide Massine (an idea which will be developed in Chapter 1). My placement of Massine as a preeminent figure in ballet Modernism and Neo-Classicism also, by default, subverts narratives of George Balanchine as creator of ballet Neo-Classicism (a topic for future scholarship).

In defining postwar corporeality and Massine's place within Modernism, I rely primarily on my own original theorization of his choreography. However, the contemporary dance theories of Mark Franko (1946 –) and Susan Foster (1949 –) (via John Martin [1893-1985]) are frequently referenced, thus meriting further discussion. I use their respective theories of "encryption" and "kinesthetic empathy" as entry points for thinking through choreographic perception and interpretation by audience members (both at a ballet's premiere and retrospectively). Furthermore, I rely heavily on Léonide Massine's own theory of aesthetics and choreography in shaping my analysis of his work and my definition of

corporeality. While Massine did not formally compile his theory until 1968, he was clearly working through these ides throughout the majority of his career. As early as 1919, Massine was already discussing, and enacting through movement, his theory of choreography. [96]

Franko's Theory of "Encryption"

Mark Franko's theory of encryption informs much of my own theorization and analysis of the layered, complex nature of Massine's choreographic statements. In its most basic sense, encryption is the idea that a performance may resonate with, and be informed by, unseen elements. That is, the choreography, music, and design elements that appear in a performance are not the sole factors that determine the experience or aura. Like a palimpsest, layers of the creative process remain, even if they are not overtly evident in the final production. In his biography *Martha Graham in Love and War*, Franko develops this idea, citing the complexity of Graham's psychological works as examples. Franko asserts that, in many of her pieces, Graham made use of "encryption," meaning that within her choreography lies an intimation of what is *not* seen on stage (for Graham, encryption was often used for subversive political purposes). For example, Franko suggests that the discontinuity between the structure and style of Graham's *American Document* (1938) was meant to provoke the idea of unstable national identity.[97] Therefore, the bodies moving onstage in *American Document* signify instability and possibly dissent, yet their performed movements do not explicitly indicate such notions; the dancing body, through the intentions

[96] Edwin Evans noted that already in 1919, Massine had "been for some time engaged upon a system of notation which will, when perfected, enable future choregraphists to set down every movement of a ballet with the same precision that is at the disposal of a composer when allotting parts to each individual member of an orchestra." "Léonide Massine," *The Outlook* 44 (22 November 1919): 538.

[97] *Martha Graham in Love and War: The Life in the Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 32.

of the choreographer, is encrypted with meaning, that is then transferred to the audience (if they have the contextual knowledge to properly read those bodies).

Another instance of Graham's encryption can be found in her famed work *Appalachian Spring* (1944), that was originally set around the time of the Civil War and contained three additional characters, titled a "fugitive slave," an "Indian girl," and "John Brown." While these characters were eventually removed from the final version of the performance, each character's corresponding musical lines remain in the score. As Franko suggests, these characters are *visibly* removed from the performance, yet a sort of haunting, memorial residue remains in their place. The original energy, choreographic intention, and even melody for each of these characters informs the work regardless of physical presence.[98] A work originally about war eventually transformed into an uplifting tale of hope; yet the tension, the strife inherent in the original characters and their melodies remained. As Franko argues, characters (especially archetypal figures like those often portrayed in Graham's pieces) may be read as "embodiments of socially repressed energetic tendencies."[99] While Graham and Massine were on separate continents, radically re-configuring both the body and modern dance in distinct ways, a similar process occurred in the work of both artists. I use Franko's theory in substantiating my own claims about the encrypted nature of Massine's choreography.

[98] For more on Franko's discussion on this frequent occurrence in Graham's work (which he terms "character compression") see *Martha Graham in Love and War*, 57.

[99] Franko, *Martha Graham*, 60. We see this idea of characters as embodiments of "energetic tendencies" particularly in Massine's later 'symphonic' ballets, particularly *Les Présages* (1933).

Martin and Foster's "Kinesthetic Empathy"

Beginning in the late 1920's, John Martin, a prolific dance critic and theorist throughout the twentieth century, began espousing the merits of modern dance, claiming that the relatively nascent art form contained emotional depth and "essential truths" lacking from other dance forms.[100] In describing modern dance, Martin invoked the term "inner mimicry," the notion that on a muscular level, humans respond to their surroundings, whether they be "architectural masses and the attitude of rocks," or "the action of a body exactly like our own."[101] Martin asserted that "inner mimicry" was based on the relationship between the body and one's psychic state (he initially termed this "metakinesis"), claiming that "this correlation [grew] from the theory that the physical and psychical are merely two aspects of a single underlying reality."[102] Watching dance is therefore not just a passive activity, but rather one in which the viewer is incited into a physical and psychological connection with the performer. Significantly, however, this connection between performer and viewer is not necessarily consciously registered or rationally understood. Martin wrote, "It is useless to approach any work of art with the notion that it must be understood before it can be responded to. Understanding is a process of rationalization after the experience; first there must be the experience or there is nothing to rationalize about."[103] For Martin, the *experience* of the performance, the simultaneous firing of mental and physical responses, is when the moment of connection occurs.

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[100] Gay Morris, "Modernism's Role in the Theory of John Martin and Edwin Denby," *Dance Research* 22, no. 2 (Winter, 2004): 170.

[101] John Martin, *Introduction to the Dance* (New York: New Dance Horizons, 1968), 51-52.

[102] John Martin, *The Modern Dance* (Princeton NJ: New Dance Horizons, 1965), 13.

[103] Martin, *Introduction to the Dance*, 51.

In 2010, dance theorist Susan Foster expanded upon Martin's concept of "inner mimicry" by applying the scientific notion of mirror neurons to the realm of dance, claiming that the effect of mirror neurons leads to what she terms "kinesthetic empathy."[104] This empathy, based on unconscious, visceral reactions and cues between performer and viewer, elicits a sort of tacit understanding between bodies that, as Martin had previously argued, has the power to forge empathic connections with "the capacity for human understanding across racial, class, and cultural barriers."[105] Crucial with respect to this dissertation, Foster also claims that the form through which kinesthetic empathy guides bodies varies in relation to historical time periods; specific time periods elicit specific modes of understanding between bodies that may be ineffective at different historical moments (this idea will be directly taken up in my discussion of *Parade* in Chapter 2). Foster's notion of kinesthetic empathy (based on the foundation laid out for her in the previous century by John Martin) focuses essentially on the experiential nature of dance (for both performer and viewer), and the way dance can be 'read' and understood by audiences on somatic levels.

Massine's Theory of Aesthetic Harmonic

While a more thorough account of Massine's theory is detailed in the following chapters, I provide a brief synopsis here. According to Massine, "Harmony consists of a visual entity of two of more parts of the body in motion simultaneously resulting in a posture.

[104] Mirror Neurons fire in the same way whether you perform an action or merely watch that action being performed (i.e., throwing a ball versus watching a ball being thrown). Therefore, the experience of performing an action and watching an action register in similar ways through the body's psychosomatic response.

[105] Susan Leigh Foster, "Kinesthetic Empathies and the Politics of Compassion," in *Critical Theory and Performance*, ed. Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R Roach (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2007), 250.

The curves or angles formed through the flexion, extension and elevation of the limbs of the body employed singly or in opposition of one to another are the basis of harmony."[106] Massine searched throughout his career for the "secret," a key that he might use to better understand the full capacity of the expressive body in performance, and in so doing, systematize the choreographic process. What he desired was a scientific system, a process that, once discovered, could be followed by other choreographers without fail.

Crucial to this system is the idea of aesthetic harmony, which entailed successive, constant movement, movement on all parts of the stage, and multi-level movement (high, medium, low). As Massine described, "The intervals formed by this succession of movements will be used as a study to determine their harmonic value. Such a profound study is the only means of penetrating the secret of composition to bring us nearer to the harmony we find in sculpture and painting."[107] Aesthetic harmony encompasses the complimentary and juxtaposing movements of both individual dancers and groups, the interplay between rhythm and bodies, and the dynamics of positive and negative space. Furthermore, Massine's aesthetic harmony involves a rebuff of virtuosity, in favor of an evocative gestural language.

In Massine's theory we find a desire to create guidelines and structure in an effort to "elevate" dance to a more scientific art form. While imagination and creativity are essential to the creative process, Massine believed that a choreographer needed the tools to mold into shape such uninhibited artistic impulses. In interviews later in his career, Massine lamented that he, in a sense, had *too* much imagination as a young choreographer.[108] His desire to give

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[106] *Massine on Choreography*, 15.

[107] *Massine on Choreography*, 27.

[108] See, for example, Massine's interview in *The Washington Post* (Aug 18, 1974), K1 (quoted in Chapter 3 of this dissertation).

shape and form to the vast and unwieldy expanses of his own imagination, in part, spurred his desire to create his choreographic system. In this dissertation, I particularly explore Massine's idea of aesthetic harmony, his rejection and/or mocking of stilted virtuosity, and his use of expressive gesture.[109]

Defining and Theorizing the Collaborative Process

Massine, of course, did not choreograph in isolation. Diaghilev believed that movement, music, decor, and costumes should all be emphasized within a performance. The tricky question of Diaghilev's authority is unavoidable. To what extent did he have creative control over all aspects of *Ballets Russes* productions? There is no doubt that the Impresario provided the overarching artistic vision for much of the company's work. In constant search of what was *new*, he assembled artists together and scoured archives in a quest to constantly remain avant-garde. Throughout this dissertation, I acknowledge Diaghilev as a strong creative force, but I argue that he is not *the* definitive force. While his influence cannot be neatly separated out from any work, my focus on Massine is an attempt to re-shift the perspective to the authority of the choreographer. While Diaghilev may have suggested thematic ideas, commissioned collaborating artists, and even groomed Massine for a career in choreography (by exposing him to specific art and artists, and surrounding him with

[109] While Massine did not officially publish his theory of choreography until 1976, he already had strong ideas about the choreographic method in the early years of his career. In 1919, he wrote, "I am now trying to find those new 'five elementary positions' which in my school of dancing will correspond to the five positions of the classical school that have held us so long in captivity. And I hope that these new fundamental positions will not only regenerate the conception of the art of dancing, but also create a whole living science of choreography, which will give us a greater number of creators in this field of art than we have to-day. I am also working simultaneously at an absolutely mathematical system of choreographic notation specifically adapted to my new choreography, and in the near future I shall for the first time apply it in my new production." Massine, "On Choreography and a New School of Dancing," *Drama* 1, no. 3 (December 1919): 70.

mentors), Diaghilev was *not* a choreographer. In fact, he knew very little about the art of choreography or dance itself. In 1911, Diaghilev remarked to Alexandre Benois "What is a ballet-master? I could make a ballet-master out of his [Fokine's] ink-stand if I wanted to!" Benois felt that this was not just Diaghilev's "bravado" response to the threat of losing Fokine as choreographer, but "a genuine conviction."[110] Diaghilev's erroneous "conviction" reveals the extent to which he desperately needed the help of true artists to realize his vision. While Diaghilev was an accomplished musician, his talents lay in the cultivation of ideas, rather than their execution. Therefore, in this dissertation I give choreographic authority to Massine, while acknowledging the looming presence that was Diaghilev. If Diaghilev provided a framework within which to create, then Massine provided the actual creative material

Due to the murky relationship between pure artistic authority (there is no *Ballets Russes* work in which there is a sole artist or influence) and collaborative influence, a theorization of creative collaborative techniques is essential to my writing. In analyzing the collaborative process, my goal is not to delve into the notion or nature of "true collaboration" (i.e. how might true "equality" amongst collaborative artists be defined and realized). Rather, I wish to explore the way collaboration was fragmented within many *Les Ballets Russes* productions, producing "time-travelling," "pastiche," and "superpositional" (or juxtaposing) effects, that blurred lines of temporality within the ballets.[111]

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[110] Diaghilev, quoted in Benois, *Reminiscences of the Russian Ballet*, trans. Mary Britnieva (London: Putnam & Co. Ltf, 1941), 318.

[111] Constance Lambert's notion of "time traveling," which Lynn Garafola's riffs on in her idea of "pastiche" (which she also terms "period modernism") ballets, and Roger Shattuck's concept of the "superposition" (a form of juxtaposition) will all be utilized throughout this dissertation as ways to conceive of the results of collaborative works.

Through an examination of the collaborative process, I endeavor to reconsider the prevailing idea of Wagnerian *gesamtkunstwerk* (the total, immersive work of art) associated with the company, instead, looking to alternate, less holistic, modes of creative execution. What is evidenced is a dramatic shift in the style of collaboration, as the artists involved in Diaghilev's projects moved from a singular vision, originating from the *World of Art* collaborators, to a multi-faceted, and often incongruous, comingling of ideas.[112] Massine's postwar works showcased an aesthetic of fragmented wholeness, a perceived unity forged from disparate elements, thus allowing him to create his "unhuman" aesthetic.

Collective Fragmentation versus Fusion

Collaboration should be understood here *not* in the sense of fusion, but in the sense of multiple, often ideologically disparate, artistic goals melded into a *single* production. With artistic visions colliding, with artists being recruited by Diaghilev or dropping out over visionary discrepancies at various stages of production, these "collaborators" were not a singular, cohesive unit, but rather individual agents with personal aesthetics and agendas. In dispelling the association of collaboration with "agreement," I hope to demonstrate the way in which we might conceive of the collaborative works of *Les Ballets Russes* as themselves akin to Analytic cubist paintings,[113] as multi-perspectival endeavors that can be understood

[112] Alexander Benois wrote, "The ballet is one of the most consistent and complete expressions of the idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the idea for which our circle was ready to give its soul. It was no accident that what was afterwards known as the *Ballets Russes* was originally conceived not by the professionals of the dance, but by a circle of artists, linked together by the idea of Art as an entity. Everything followed from the common desire of several painters and musicians to see the fulfillment of the theatrical dreams which haunted them; but I emphasize again that there was nothing *specific* or *professional* in their dreams. On the contrary, there was a burning craving for Art in general." *Reminiscences,* 371.

[113] Analytic Cubism (as opposed to Synthetic Cubism) is characterized by extreme fragmentation and was used by art critics to characterize much of the Cubist art during the pre- and inter-war years. Alternately, Synthetic Cubism characterized post-WWI work, and presented a more

not only as finished products (i.e. a performance) but also as a process; a *process* of effort, of movement (of ideas, bodies, energies, *durée*), meant to *show* and reveal effort.[114] Therefore, we must look not only to the "end" result (if one conceives of a performance as an event with a finite beginning and end), but to the swirling conceptual impetuses, the co-mingling of energies and temperaments, and essentially, the production of a certain *élan vital* forged from the meeting point between harmony and disjunction.

All of this results, I argue, in performance that, when examined from the standpoint of creative *process*, evokes effort and anxiety. This resulting anxiety is reached not because the ballets themselves are based on overt themes of anxiety (on the contrary, many are light-hearted, even comedic tales), or even because their creators set out to achieve a representation of anxiety, but because the collective energies that made the works came into contact with each other, because they collaborated at a time of national and personal anxiety, because the work itself absorbed the state of effort in which it was conceived and created.

The very idea of the *gesamtkunstwerk*, something that *Les Ballets Russes* has come to be associated with, necessitates a seamless co-mingling of elements (namely, music, movement, text, and design) to produce an experiential, unified performance. This association between *Les Ballets Russes* and Wagner's concept of the *gesamtkunstwerk* is only

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streamlined aesthetic. As Kenneth Silvers describes, "the distinction between analysis and synthesis . . . [is] a breaking-down and a putting together." Chapter Two of this dissertation will further delve into cubism and its relationship to ballet. *Esprit de Corps: The Art of the Parisian Avant-Garde and the First World War, 1914-1925* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 34.

[114] Such a revealing of effort is reminiscent of Clement Greenberg's theory of American Action painters of the late twentieth century. While Greenberg wrote specifically of an artistic phenomenon occurring in the later part of the twentieth-century, many of his comments regarding gestural painting pertain to Cubist art as well. An act of psychological and physical effort is exerted through the process of painting, and is thereby transferred to the work of art itself, revealing itself through gestural traces. Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," *Art and Literature* (Spring, 1965), Paris, http://cas.uchicago.edu/workshops/wittgenstein/files/2007/10/Greenbergmodpaint.pdf.

partially correct, and only especially pertinent to pre-war ballets. While the company certainly wove music, movement, and décor/design together in a way not previously achieved in ballet, there remains an aspect of many *Ballets Russes* productions that are decidedly anti-holistic. Disregarding Wagnerian principles of harmony between elements, the various forms of media (not to mention artistic voices involved in the collaborative process) knocked up against each other, reverberating with a feeling of uneasiness, often masquerading behind themes and scenarios involving frolicsome pleasantries.

Garafola briefly comments on the collaborative style and process of the company in her seminal text *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*. As Garafola notes, *The Ring* was performed in St. Petersburg in 1889, and it wasn't long before Diaghilev was "converted," finding in Wagner an inspiration and a model for his own future endeavors.[115] However, while early *Mir iskusstva* collaborators Diaghilev, Bakst, and Benois sought a similar artistic vision of forging a new ballet in which music, movement, and design played equal roles, Garafola suggests that true *gesamtkunstwerk* was neither entirely possible, nor, typically achieved.[116] She writes,

> Common wisdom holds that collaboration—that talismanic word—was the key to the Ballets Russes success. Certainly, in his 1914 letter to the *Times*, Fokine had laid down as his fifth and last 'rule' the 'alliance of dancing with the other arts.' In practice, however, this alliance only rarely stemmed from collaboration, if by that one understands an act of joint creation. In fact, of all the works staged by Fokine for the Ballets Russes, only one—*Firebird*—was a genuine collaboration. The others, for the most part, were choreographic job work.[117]

[115] Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, 45.

[116] For an explication of the perceived shortcomings or impossibilities of art conceived in a true Wagnerian fashion see Garafola's *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, "The Liberating Aesthetic of Michel Fokine," 45 – 49.

[117] *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, 45.

By "job work," Garafola is referring to the recurrent tendency throughout the history of *Les Ballets Russes* to exclude choreographers from the initial creative brainstorming process, thereby, in part, dictating what certain choreography should look like rather than allowing the choreographer a voice in the decision-making process. This does not mean, of course, that Fokine did not envision and create his own choreography. Rather, he often devised his work *after* major thematic and conceptual decisions had already been made by the core artistic team. So too would be the case for Massine in *Parade* (though not in *La Boutique Fantasque* or *Pulcinella*). Therefore, while *gesamtkunstwerk* was certainly an ideological model upon which early *Ballets Russes* creators based their works, as Garafola points out, few ballets actually realized such a unified approach. By the time Massine became choreographer, such a model was already shifting.

Jean Cocteau's Middle Road

While *gesamtkunstwerk* may have served as an artistic model prior to WWI, the artistic landscape in France, heavily influenced by increasingly nationalistic attitudes, began to change. Relations with Germany where tense, and Wagner was no longer regarded highly in Parisian intellectual circles. If unity in art was to be an ambition, alternate modes of theorizing such an ambition needed to be sought. One attempt at creating a new 'unified' art (albeit a very different vision than that of the original *World of Art* group) came from Jean Cocteau, the young, Right Bank parvenu, and editor of *Le Mot*, who sought to bring the Right and Left together. As art historian Kenneth Silvers points out, the Right and Left signified, at this time, not only the artistic Right and Left, but also the Right and Left Banks of Paris, which were not always neatly aligned with their political counterparts.[118] Cocteau's first

[118] Silver, *Esprit de Corps*.

major attempt at accomplishing such a feat came in the form of the collaboration between Cocteau and Picasso in *Parade*. This collaboration resulted in Cocteau [ideologically] moving from the artistic/political Right to the Left by association, while Picasso himself made the opposite journey, moving into the opulent world of *Les Ballets Russes* on the artistic/political Right. This switching of artistic sides was a part of Cocteau's plan to find a neutral road between the often polarized ends of art in France (the liberal avant-garde versus the conservative Classicism of patriotism/nationalism).

Notions of Alienation and the Avant-Garde

Additionally, a shift in the *form* of collaboration occurred between the pre- and postwar periods of the company. We might conceive of this shift as, in part, a result of a profound loneliness – a very real isolation felt by the collaborators not only from their Russian homeland, but also from each other. The group of friends from Russia (originally the youthful 'Pickwickians' at school before founding *Mir iskusstva*) Diaghilev, Bakst, and Benois all dispersed after the war, while Fokine, after being replaced by Nijinsky, returned to Russia. Even Nijinsky (Diaghilev's lover before Massine) married Romola. Diaghilev was left alone, while war ravaged the Western front. In postwar works, collaboration became fragmented, isolated; design elements were placed *next to* choreographic and musical elements, yet not necessarily in a clear *relationship with* those elements. What was perhaps originally more similar to *gesamtkunstwerk* now became more akin to Dada. Personal isolation and artistic experimentation (influenced by Cubism, Surrealism, Dada, and Futurism) merged together. Whereas in *Firebird* (1910) a true sense of collaboration might have been witnessed—a group of artists coming together for the sake of creating something distinctly Russian (albeit for a Western audience), and developing a new language of the

body (both in and of itself, and in relation to other arts)—by *Parade* (1917), the company's first postwar ballet, we see the co-mingling of experimentation and societal unrest, held together not by a singular vision, but by the individual visions of many.

Countless authors have defined the avant-garde, locating the term's use within specific political discourse (those of importance to this dissertation include Peter Bürger (*Theory of the Avant-Garde*), David Cottington (*Cubism in the Shadow of War*), Christopher Green (*Cubism and its Enemies*), and Andrew Hewitt (*Social Choreography*). For these theorists, the avant-garde constitutes a state of self-proclaimed (i.e., self-conscious) collective, alienation. For example, Cottington writes:

> Avant-gardism . . . articulated that sense of alienation from bourgeois society first registered in its modern form by Manet, but now in a collective consciousness: a recognition on the part of unorthodox, anti-academic or otherwise culturally marginalized and predominantly male artists, as their numbers rapidly rose, of their common identity as such, and a response to this.[119]

Key here is Cottington's employment of the term *collective*, as one might initially perceive the idea of alienation on a group scale to be oxymoronic. Definitions of alienation range from isolation from a group, to loss of identity, to [most interestingly] loss or lack of sympathy. The experience of such psychological, emotional, perhaps even physical isolation—especially in a locale such as Paris, filled with expatriates and émigrés, or troops fighting away from the home front—on a collective scale, registers as a crisis of individual and national identity. Such a feeling is clearly indicative of the large scale shift associated with 'Modernity.' Collective and individual feelings of isolation, alienation, and anxiety all undergird Massine's work, informing in obvious and subtle ways his choreographic aesthetic and vision of the world.

[119] Cottington, *Cubism in the Shadow of War*, 49.

Summary

The early-twentieth century period focused on in this dissertation was characterized by artistic, aesthetic, political, and intellectual tensions; between tradition and pastoral nostalgia and steely, mechanized progress, between high-art and popular entertainment, and between ideas of primitivism and/or exoticism and modernism (as symbiotic, yet separable terms). This clash between an increasingly urbanized world and a desire to return to a vanishing (or non-existent) past—continuously fraught with violence and turmoil—became the veritable material of life (and art) in the early nineteen-hundreds, for those living in both Revolutionary Russia and inter/postwar Europe, specifically France.[120]

From this socio-political landscape eventually emerged Massine's new vision of the postwar body, a Benjaminian modern *physis* crafted through choreography. This dissertation seeks to understand Massine's artistic contributions within a complex structure of collaboration and creation, in tandem with the socio-political, philosophical, and artistic events (including the Russian Revolution, World War I, and the rise of Modernism) leading to and during 1917 – 1920. Through historical contextualization, choreographic analysis, and theoretical interpretation, this dissertation will provide a deepened understanding of Léonide Massine's development of character and his *unhuman*, transnational aesthetic. In so doing, I will theorize a new definition of 'corporeality,' specifically a corporeality of postwar, European bodies of modernity.

[120] While *Les Ballets Russes* performed across Europe and extensively in Britain, the focus of my dissertation is on the company's performance history and critical reception in Paris.

Chapter Outline

In **Chapter 1: *Fin de Siècle* Corporeality**, I examine the significant socio-political events of both Russia and Western Europe at the turn of the century, which in turn shaped Massine's choreographic aesthetic in the decades to follow. This chapter considers the ideas of "authentic" Russian identity (as defined and commodified by both the company itself and French society), the relationship between Russian and French ballet, and Massine's choreographic predecessors, including Loïe Fuller. Most significantly, this chapter introduces and defines my own theorization of "corporeality" as a historically specific term. The history and theory laid out in this chapter provides the framework for my choreographic analysis in the following chapters.

Chapter 2: More than 'Cubism on Stage' – The Postwar Corporeality of Massine's *Parade* (1917) focuses on *Parade*, one of Massine's first postwar ballets. In this chapter I argue that the comingling of the collaborative elements of the ballet (choreography, score, libretto, design) present an encrypted, yet jarring, dissonance and incongruity that is reflective of the mental and physical distress of war-torn Europe. In Massine's choreography we find the first overt physicalization of postwar corporeality within his oeuvre. Picasso's Cubist costumes, combined with Massine's choreography, project an image of the modern *physis*, a percussive, fragmented, frenzied, and fatigued modern body. I additionally argue for a consideration of *Parade* as a significant choreographic work, rather than an avant-garde experiment forever in the shadow of Picasso's introduction of Cubism to the concert stage.

Chapter 3: *Pulcinella* (1920) and Re-Purposing the Character of the Fool considers Massine's embodiment of the *Commedia dell'arte* character Pulcinella in his 1920 ballet of the same name. After examining the performance history of Pulcinella (as a character that is constantly re-incarnated in various forms), I analyze Massine's exploration

and expansion of 'character' choreography. In this ballet, Massine blurred boundaries between serious and comic, noble and grotesque dance forms. Massine's idea of "character" did not simply pertain to stereotyped movements associated with stock characters; Massine created the potential for deeper emotional, psychological expression *through* the body. Through the character of Pulcinella, Massine was able to embody "unhuman" or "antihuman" qualities, and in so doing, probe the nature of identity (both his own, and a collective identity for modern, postwar European society).

Finally, in **Chapter 4: *La Boutique Fantasque* (1919) – Trauma and Escape in the Cancan**, I posit that Massine's 1919 ballet *La Boutique Fantasque* presents an iconography of trauma made fantastic. Despite the ballets façade of escapist merriment, I argue that in *Boutique,* Massine re-choreographed trauma from his childhood, rendering charming and innocent those images that had once haunted him. Although *Boutique* premiered the year prior to *Pulcinella*, I have purposefully chosen to place this chapter last. Due to a dearth of serious critical consideration of this ballet, this chapter is highly experimental and theoretical in nature. I therefore rely on the choreographic analysis and theorization of the two preceding chapters in order to better substantiate my claims. In this chapter, I challenge simplistic readings of the ballet, offering instead a theorization of *Boutique* as a presentation of the traumatized modern *physis*, concealed behind a self-reflexive mask of nostalgia.

*Chapter 1: *Fin de Siècle* Corporeality*

Introduction & Chapter Premise

A distinctive modern *physis* took shape as a result of the drastic socio-political changes of *fin de siècle* Europe. Such changes were made physically evident in, and constructed through, the choreographic works of early-twentieth century dance artists and companies like *Les Ballets Russes*. This chapter begins with a brief examination of *fin de siècle* Russia, and the influence of significant socio-political events on *Les Ballets Russes'* early aesthetic. After analyzing the company's particular identity as a Russian 'export' to the West (and how such an identity shaped the creative possibilities for Massine in the following decades), I examine the emergence of radical depictions and theorizations of the modern body in European society and performance. Looking to ideas of "authentic" Russian identity (as defined and commodified by both the company itself and the press), the relationship between Russian and French ballet, and Massine's choreographic predecessors, I introduce and define my own theorization of "corporeality" as a historically specific term. The history and theory laid out in this chapter will provide the framework for my subsequent choreographic analysis.

Russian Beginnings: Russia, 1903—1905

A consideration of the early, prewar years of *Les Ballets Russes* is a crucial aspect of understanding the environment in which Massine later worked, and the atmosphere in which his choreography was received by a Western European public. The notion of *Les Ballets Russes* as an "exotic" *Russian* troupe was fundamental to the company's identity during pre-war seasons in Paris. Early company works like Fokine's *Petrushka* (1911), for example, were classified as "Russian" ballets, in that they relied on Russia (as both a reality and an

imagined construct) for thematic content, locale, and 'style.' Of course, this 'Russian style' had little to do with authenticity and much to do with tantalizing Western viewers. Even as seasons progressed, and European tastes shifted, *Les Ballets Russes* continued to be a company rooted in its association with Russia, no matter how far "Westward" they moved (physically, as a company, or thematically/stylistically with settings and themes.) Therefore, while *Les Ballets Russes* never performed in Russia, a preliminary understanding of the events surrounding the company's journey Westward is necessary.

With "church bells ringing, canons firing, and seventeenth century-clad actors" pontificating throughout the city, St. Petersburg commemorated its two-hundredth birthday in May of 1903.[121] In retrospect, this lavish celebration of the *ancien régime* signaled one of the last peaceful moments for early twentieth-century Russia, as less than a year later the brutal Russo-Japanese war erupted in January of 1904. Among those injured in Manchuria was Officer Mikhail Massine, eldest brother of Massine. In his autobiography, Léonide reflected on his traumatic experience as a child of ten years old living through the subsequent Moscow uprising:

> Because of the fierce fighting, particularly round our quarter of the town, father closed the heavy shutters over all our windows and barricaded the door with a cupboard and sofa. For days on end we heard screams in the street outside and the noise of galloping horses as the Cossacks tried to break through the barricades. Sometimes the fighting came so close that we could hear the heavy Cossack whips, with their metal tips, whistling through the air.[122]

Léonide and his family lived in this frightening, turbulent state for almost two weeks, during which time they were confined to their home. He added, "Whenever there was

[121] Elizabeth Kendall, *Balanchine and the Lost Muse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 24.

[122] Massine, *My Life*, 25.

a lull in the fighting father would run to the nearest shop to buy bread and milk."[123]

Massine was of course not the only future member of *Les Ballets Russes*, then still unformed, to be deeply affected by Bloody Sunday and the revolutionary events of 1905. Many dancers from the Maryinsky (formerly the Imperial Theater School), including Anna Pavlova, Tamara Karasavina, Michel Fokine, and Vaslav Nijinsky, participated in the strike protesting the Tsar.[124] While the devastating effects of the revolution reverberated throughout Russia, Maryinsky dancers were personally, professionally, artistically, and emotionally enmeshed in the upheaval that would, in part, eventually motivate them to leave their home and join Diaghilev in Paris in 1909.

Interestingly—and perhaps fortunately—a fervor for cultural preservation arose from the tragedy of these times. For Diaghilev, such a desire for preservation was purposeful and calculated. Dance historian Jennifer Homans remarks that Diaghilev possessed an "acute sense that Imperial Russia was on the verge of collapse. As the political landscape darkened and the tsar retreated into the occult apostasies of Rasputin and tied his fate—and his country's—to a 'black bloc' of fanatic autocrats and secrete police, Diaghilev became increasingly obsessed with capturing a dying Russian culture."[125] His mounting of the "Exhibition of Historic Russian Portraits" in 1905 at the Tauride Palace in St. Petersburg, which served as a precursor to his French "export campaign" of 1906, evidenced his desire, not only to preserve Russian culture, but also to disseminate that culture on a global scale.

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[123] *My Life,* 25.

[124] Tragically, when pressured by the Tsar to sign a statement of loyalty to him, ballet master Sergei Legat conceded, only to commit suicide shortly thereafter, consumed by guilt.

[125] Homans, *Apollo's Angels*, 298.

However, this need for preservation also occurred, for some, on a more unconscious level. As St. Petersburg-born poet Vladmir Nabokov (1889 - 1977) described: "In regard to the power of hoarding up impressions, Russian children of my generation passed through a period of genius, as if destiny were loyally trying what it could for them by giving them more than their share, in view of the cataclysm that was to remove completely the world they had known."[126] Early *Ballets Russes* artistic collaborator Alexandre Benois (1870 – 1960) echoed Nabokov, maintaining that even as a youth he "had a premonition of the approaching upheaval in Russia." This premonition led Benois (to a level perhaps bordering on obsession) to become a collector of pictures, paintings, and trinkets that reminded him of the past.[127] "After all," he stated, "the past is the only real thing in life, the future does not exist and the present is merely fiction."[128]

This desire—or perhaps necessity—to preserve the past through memory (and in the case of both Nabokov and Benois, through art) was intersected by the calamitous events of the early twentieth century and the electric charge of the artistic current that became 'Modernism.' 'Mother of Modern Dance' Isadora Duncan's famed visit to St. Petersburg in 1905 had tremendous impact on *Les Ballets Russes* (and American modern dance *en masse*). As she related in her posthumously published *My Life*, Duncan dined at the home of ballerina Anna Pavlova, where she met Leon Bakst, Alexandre Benois, and Diaghilev, "with whom [she] engaged in ardent discussion on the art of the dance as [she] conceived it, as against the

[126] Vladimir Nabokov, *Speak, Memory* (New York: Putnam, 1966), 25.

[127] Similarly, Massine would later tour with a personal trailer, packed with his belongings, as if ready for flight at a moment's notice.

[128] Benois, quoted in Lieven, 269.

ballet."[129] In the self-important manner so characteristic of Duncan's writing, she added that "In spite of the shortness of my visit, I had left a considerable impression."[130] While Duncan was by no means the sole catalyst of modernism in dance, her visit marked a crossover between European ballet and American modern dance, igniting a flame that would be carried on by Fokine and his successors.

One might then think of the events of 1905 as the first true break with the past, not in the sense of obliteration or sheer progression forward, but as a crystallization of a "Russian-past," no longer wholly attainable, that could now be mined as an artistic and intellectual artifact. It was this idealized and partially imagined Russian past that *Les Ballets Russes* artists so frequently drew upon thematically, especially in early seasons. Russian identity (real and invented) and the legacies of the Imperial Russian ballet, revolutionary violence, and a perceived (or [self] perpetuated) "exoticism" served as the thematic and kinesthetic material for pre-war *Ballets Russes* productions.[131]

Theorizing Ballet: Alternate Bodies, Russian Authenticity, & *Becoming-Western*

Alternate Bodies

Such exotic, constructed material was welcomed by Parisian audiences as a radical revival of ballet (which had been slowly declining as an art form in France during the late-nineteenth century). Replacing the cult of the ballerina that had come to dominate ballet since

[129] Duncan, *My Life*, (New York & London: Liveright, 1927), 120. It is interesting to note that during this same visit, Duncan's train into St. Petersburg was twelve hours delayed, and a result, she was literally confronted by the burial procession of those killed on Bloody Sunday. The gravity of this event was not lost on Duncan, despite her apparent sympathies toward the Tsar, with whom she was friendly and in fact stayed with for a period of time.

[130] Duncan, 126.

[131] With Massine's appointment as choreographer, however, he began a move *away from* an exploration of 'authentic Russian' identity, towards an aesthetic that was more transnational.

the Romantic era with a focus on the male *danseuer* and *genre nouveau* style, the Russian émigré troupe presented various degrees of "exotic" (often stereotyped) bodies.[132] Ranging from the androgynous body of Vaslav Nijinsky (portraying ambiguously sexual characters in roles such as the Rose of *Le Spectre de la Rose*, and the Golden Slave of *Scheherazade*), to the Black Face minstrelsy of the Moor in *Petroushka*, to the 'Oriental' (i.e. Tatar and Russian) blend of the Firebird herself, prewar *Les Ballets Russes* presented visions of the 'Other.' Such depictions were meant to tantalize Parisian audiences and solidify a space for *Les Ballets Russes* as an exotic import.

However, *la vraie russes* was not entirely *vraie*; the company did not present *authentic* depictions of Russia, but rather, stylized cultural appropriations. This shifting, amorphous vision of the [imagined] "Other" became fertile space for a re-configuration of performed identities. Where was the space (geographically? psychologically?) between Russia and the West? What space did *Les Ballets Russes* inhabit as both the Eastern Other (in relation to France) and the Western Subject (as a company in residence in Paris, appropriating from other 'more exotic' locales such as Egypt and Spain)? As Lynn Garafola writes: "In an empire that spanned the Trans-Siberian railway, that included Bukhara, the Muslim holy city of Central Asia, Bakhchisarai, and Odessa, arguably the cultural 'other' was not the East, but the West."[133] Despite Peter the Great's project of Westernization, Russia remained geographically tied to the "Orient," a space of constructed fantasy that

[132] *Genre Nouveau* refers to a style of dancing which "differed from character dance both in its fidelity to historical sources and in its overt emotionalism." Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, 13.

[133] Garafola, *Ballets Russes*, 16.

would continue to occupy the minds of both American and European artists throughout the twentieth-century.[134]

Dance historian and theorist Sally Banes wrote of the conceptual binary between East and West, "Diaghilev and his set produced a third term by circulating an idea of Russia as operating in a field where it has not one, but two semantic 'others.'"[135] Caught between two cultural 'others,' *Les Ballets Russes* gained access to a wide range of representational possibilities. One the one hand, they could present to Western audiences (i.e. primarily French and English) an amalgam of "Oriental" stereotypes with a degree of perceived "authenticity" due to their proximity and ties to the far East. On the other hand, as a ballet troupe grown out of the official Imperial Russian Ballet /Mariinsky School, they also carried strong ties to French Classicism, as Russian Classical Ballet derives partially from the Romantic Ballet of nineteenth century France. This duality allowed the company to occupy a special position within the imagination—one of both classical ties and exotic possibilities.

A Transmutation of French Ballet – France to Russia and Back Again:

As early *Ballets Russes* designer Benois stated:

> Russian ballet, when I first became infatuated with it . . . was really in a state of mummification. It was just this mummification that saved the Russian ballet from the decline which affected all the other famous ballet-schools of Europe during the last quarter of the 19thc. In Russia the ballet continued to live its own life, remote from all disturbances; carried along, almost, by its own *vis inertiae*.[136]

[134] This fascination is evidenced especially in Cubist, Surrealist, and Dadaist appropriations of African art, termed "Primitivism."

[135] Banes, "*Firebird* and the Idea of Russianness" in *The Ballets Russes and Its World*, 118.

[136] Benois, 373.

In Benois' estimation, Russia's isolation from the rest of the world was a boon, allowing for a uniquely Russian form of ballet to develop, largely separate from the rest of the world. Therefore, *Les Ballets Russes* retained a sense of Russian authenticity, not in their choreographic and stylistic depictions of exotified bodies, but in the dancers' very movement vocabulary. Of course, "mummification" during the nineteenth century did not preclude Russian ballet from external influences, past or present. To call ballet an authentically Russian form would be to ignore the history of ballet as an import, first from Italy, and then from France after the union of Catherine de Medici and King Henry II in 1533. Benois wrote,

> The Russian ballet was not a purely national product; it was something that had been imported and had continued its existence in its new country through foreign talent—Didelot, Sain-Léon, Johannsen, Petipa and many other. The soil of Russia proved more receptive than elsewhere. It has proved so prolific that the ballet has resisted all political storms and catastrophes. . . . The fact that we had shown Europe something *European*, something that had been miraculously preserved in our country and there transfigured and revived, gave our productions a particular significance that contributed largely to their success.[137]

Until Fokine, it was largely French choreographers (most significantly Petipa in the mid-to-late nineteenth century) whose work characterized what was considered Russian Imperial Ballet. Most early *Ballet Russes* dancers—with the exception of Massine, who trained instead in Moscow at the Bolshoi—worked under Petipa at the Imperial Ballet, thereby carrying on a legacy in both French and Italian technical traditions.[138] Therefore, what became uniquely Russian was not the foundational technique, but rather the way choreographers maintained ballet's Classical integrity while also expanding and broadening its scope of possibilities. Registrar for the company Grigoriev echoed Benois' sentiment, asserting,

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[137] Benois, 373.

[138] Despite Massine's education at the Bolshoi, he still received training rooted in the St. Petersburg tradition from Alexander Gorsky, who himself originally trained at the Imperial Russian Ballet.

> All four periods [Fokine, Nijinsky, Massine, Nijinska] had one thing in common, the tradition of the St. Petersburg school of dancing, which had been carefully preserved by the older dancers, by Diaghilev and by myself. It was thanks to our so preserving it that the company [was] able to maintain the style and character of all the various works composed during these four periods, however widely they might differ.[139]

According to Grigoriev, what bound various *Ballets Russes* choreographers together was the tradition and teaching established in Russia. What followed, the legacy of *Les Ballets Russes* as an émigré company in Europe and Britain, drew its foundations from a deeply Russian past, tempered with new experiences of a modern, Industrialized world.

In an unpublished text from 1944, Benois adeptly reflected on the company's relationship to space and nation:

> In 1909, Paris saw something *especially created for her*, something that could have existed nowhere else. The artists brought to Paris in Diaghilev's company were Russian, naturally, but when they found themselves on new terrain they acquired a new self-awareness, and this is what gave them fresh strength and the means to compel unqualified recognition. Actually, in an art as notably universal as ballet, it would be unfair to trace everything back to narrowly national boundaries. Would it not be fairer to think of the Ballets Russes, which so stirred and overwhelmed European society, as the return to a shared homeland of an art that had been born earlier in Italy, in France, in Germany, and that during its long sojourn on the banks of the Neva, in the capital of the Russian Empire, miraculously preserved an unfailing freshness?[140]

In Benois' words, *Les Ballets Russes* "return[ed] to a shared homeland" in their revival of ballet as a vivified art form. [141]

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[139] Grigoriev, 202.

[140] Benois, in a previously unpublished text of an article written at the request of Boris Kochno, Paris, March-August, 1944. From Kochno, *The Ballets Russes,* 21.

[141] The idea of France as a shared homeland is further solidified by the 'French-ifying' of Russian last names, as Diaghilev encouraged (or forced) his dancers to take up new, French-sounding stage names.

Becoming-Western

In employing a classically Western, Romantic art form and incorporating elements of the Eastern 'Oriental,' *Les Ballets Russes* cultivated a unique image of ballet as a hybrid form. In America, early twentieth century modern dance artists like Ruth St. Denis were undertaking similar projects of blending (and appropriating) Eastern cultural influences with European dance forms.[142] However, *Les Ballets Russes* worked specifically with *ballet*, an old form, rather than attempting or claiming to create something entirely new, as in American modern dance. In consciously drawing upon Classical forms, the company further solidified their ties to France and perpetuated an image of themselves as belonging to the West.

A certain sense of Deleuzeian *becoming-Western* emerges through this fusion of classical and modern, Eastern and Western. In their geographical trajectory from East to West—re-discovering roots, to borrow from Benois' idea, not only in France, but also in Italy and Spain—members of *Les Ballets Russes* forged a unique "brand" and identity based in hybridity. In a sense, *Les Ballets Russes* inhabited that space of becoming described by Deleuze and Guattari: becoming-Western, becoming-new, becoming-vital, bodies continually becoming. [143] Bergson asserted in *Matter and Memory* that we access memory through action

[142] See, for example, her pieces *Radha* (1905) or *Incense* (1915).

[143] See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's exploration of the body "becoming" in *A Thousand Plateaus*: *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Throughout Deleuze and Guattari's oeuvre, but specifically in this book, the authors theorize the "Body without Organs" (BwO), which is a set of practices, a way of transforming the body into an assemblage that is open to the flows of various and ever-changing intensities. "The BwO is the *field of immanence* of desire, the *plane of consistency* specific to desire" (154). Therefore, the BwO is the space in which desire circulates and flows through the abstract machines that enable deterritorialization and lines of flight. The BwO is inorganic, an 'antiorganism' devoid of the limits that separate Self from the World (for the binary between Self and World is dissolved). The notion of the body as assemblage deconstructs 'identity,' leaving in its place becomings: "Becomings, becomings-animal, becomings-molecular, have replaced history, individual or general" (162). In the body "becoming" we witness a transforming/transformational body, capable of constantly constructing and re-constructing identity.

(through the *motion* of the physical body). If the process of *becoming* entails changing, itself an act of continuous motion, then *becoming* and memory are inextricably linked together through the action of the body. By cultivating a dynamic aesthetic that infused the avant-garde body with historical memory, early *Ballets Russes* collaborators rendered malleable performed depictions of identity, character, and nationality. The body could be anchored in the past, while *becoming*, transforming into a vision of corporeal futurity. In postwar seasons, Massine's choreographic theory of motion and emotion, of physical evocation, was perhaps a further refinement of this body-becoming, the body drawing up memory through motion, exploring multiplicity of being (alternate bodies, Eastern Westerners, the old avant-garde) through the space of *becoming*, that de-territorialized space of vitality.

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Western Europe at the Turn of the Century

"There was a wonderfully carefree atmosphere abroad in the world, for what was going to interrupt this growth, what could stand in the way of the vigour constantly drawing new strength from its own momentum? Europe had never been stronger, richer or more beautiful, had never believed more fervently in an even better future."[144]

— Stefan Zweig, of the 1900 International Exposition in Paris (1941)

"The nations slithered over the brink into the boiling cauldron of war without any trace of apprehension or dismay." [145]

— David Lloyd George, of the Great War (1933)

Across the globe, Western Europe was experiencing a similar fomentation of new ideas and anxieties at the turn of the century. One might conceive of the 1900 Exposition

[144] Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday* (London, 2009), 216. Text originally sent to publisher in 1941, several weeks before both Zweig and his wife committed suicide while in exile in Brazil.

[145] David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George*, vol. I, (London, 1933), 52.

Universelle in Paris as a microcosmic glimpse into the state of the world at the turn of the century. With exhibits showcasing national pride and burgeoning technological innovations, the Exposition espoused the values of a new Industrialist world defined by progress and global power. Visitors in 1900 were enchanted by the glittering lights of the *Palais de l'Éléctricité* (Palace of Electricity), the awe-inspiring moving sidewalks, and the intricate designs of the pagodas, palaces, and shrines of countless international architectural exhibits. Though an entertaining spectacle, this lavish global simulacrum reflected (and constructed) a panoply of global bonds, truces, and simmering tensions that characterized international relations (specifically in Europe) at this moment. The *Exposition* of 1900 displayed a vital picture of Europe at its most innovative and charming: the height of the *Belle Époque*.

However, nostalgic reflections on the so-called *Belle Époque* (which roughly spanned from 1871 at the end of the Franco-Prussian War to the outbreak of the Great War in 1914) often simplistically conflate a lack of outright war in [Western] Europe with a lack of political turmoil. Beneath a façade of global pleasantry (or more accurately, timid stalling and inactivity), murmurs of covert threats and alliances resounded as multiple countries simultaneously fueled political unrest on a massive scale.[146] Indeed, as Historian Margaret MacMillan writes, "Too often when we look back at the Europe of that last decade of peace, we see the prolonged golden summer of another, more innocent age. In reality European preeminence and the claims of European civilization to be the most advanced in human history were being challenged from without and undermined from within."[147]

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[146] To name only a few of the major global shifts in power concerning Western Europe: The secret Franco-Russian alliance in 1891, which was then officially [and publicly] signed in 1894; the Dreyfus Affair trial and wrongful conviction in 1894; the acceleration of Germany's naval race with the appointment of Alfred von Tirpitz as Secretary of State for the Navy in 1897; the ongoing struggle between Britain and France over Egypt (known as the Fashoda Crisis) that came to a head in 1898; and the eventual Entente Cordial in 1904 between France and Britain.

[147] MacMillan, *The War that Ended Peace* (New York: Random House Inc., 2013), 251.

While the political accords and animosities between countries in 1900 were anything but clear, what *is* evident is that society was (both literally and figuratively) alight with excitement regarding the technological innovations that would soon come to define modernity. As Austrian Historian Stefan Zweig stated in the quotation above, society pulsed with a "vigour constantly drawing new strength from its own momentum." The ultimate embodiment of such a vigour (albeit in stationary form) was perhaps *La Fée Électricité* (the Fairy of Electricity); perched atop the Palace of Electricity, she undoubtedly served as the focal point for the 1900 Exposition. The stunning palatial architecture of the Fairy featured a nude whose sensuous curves were juxtaposed against sharp, geometric rays of light, a dragon and horse rearing at her feet. Below the curved underbelly of the Eiffel Tower, the Fairy of Electricity beckoned viewers toward her with a sense of palpable, kinetic circularity (a whirling dance of energy). As seen in a panoramic video of the Champs de Mars, filmed by Edison in July of 1900, even the architecture and hedged pathways reflected a sense of swirling, balanced symmetry.[148] The domed tops of the Palace were accentuated by the rounded arches and flowing fountains below. Meandering walkways, accompanied by shrubs and small trees presented whimsically curved paths, all leading visitors back to the Fairy: the female embodiment of an early-twentieth century Imperialist imagination, gleaming under the guise of energy, illumination, and progress.

[148] "Palace of Electricity" or "Circular panoramic view of the Champs de Mars, [no. 1]," United States: Edison Manufacturing Co., 1900, filmed July 1900, at the Paris Exposition in Paris, France, Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/item/00694264/.

See also, "Exposition Universelle de 1900 Paris, April 15-November 12, 1900," National Gallery of Art, https://www.nga.gov/features/slideshows/Exposition-Universelle-de-1900.html?view=grid.

The Electric Fairy (*La Fée Électricité*) of Light and Destruction

In essence, there were two facets to this quintessential moment of the *Belle Époque*: light and destruction. At once, the vibrant, pulsating energy of Europe in a renaissance of innovation and experimentation, in contrapuntal (yet simultaneous) existence with tenuous, teetering global politics and a score of nations attempting to hold themselves back from the brink of war. While the 1900 *Exposition Universelle* perhaps crystallized (and to some extent, fantasized) a moment of national peace and technological achievement, it was not long before this façade crumbled. As seen in sketch designs for the Palace of Electricity, even the year "1900" is prominently displayed just below the Fairy, as if reminding viewers, in a quite literal sense, that this moment was fleeting.[149] The Fairy, harbinger of innovative hope, light, and Christian goodness, would soon turn malevolent: The Fairy of Technological Warfare and Destruction. In the hands of politicians, royal families desperate for power, and military advisors, the Electric Fairy of Light was soon transfigured into the Electric Fairy of Death as the newly-forged technologies of the Great War enabled militaries to ravage the landscapes and lives of Europeans on an unprecedented scale.[150]

La Fée Électricité, her *Palais*, the entirety of the *Exposition Universelle*, and truly, even the period considered as the *Belle Époque* leading up to World War I can all be utilized as metaphors, aggrandized abstractions to conceptualize, theorize, and thereby more deeply understand, this specific historical moment. However, in reality, these metaphors are anchored in people—bodies—who set social, political, and artistic actions into motion. If we

[149] See for example "Sculptural details of the Palace of Electricity at the Exposition Universelle of 1900, Paris," architecture by Eugène Alfred Hénard, http://archimaps.tumblr.com/post/78897835992/sculptural-details-of-the-palace-of-electricity-at.

[150] Due to the deadly innovations of trench warfare, machine guns, poisonous gases, and more sophisticated artillery, the term "weapons of mass destruction" was first coined during World War I, signaling the extent to which the nature of war had changed since the nineteenth century.

view the *Exposition Universelle* as the tipping point, the moment from which there was no return for Europe, wavering tenuously between war and peace, then we must first look at those bodies that inhabited the time and space of that tipping point. Even before the onset of war, ideologies of the public and private body (theories of corporeality) began to alter rapidly with the onset of the Industrial Revolution. In order to understand the choreographic innovations that occurred following World War I, it is imperative to first grasp the profound transformation of the publicly-perceived dancing body during the *Belle Époque*. I will therefore focus not only on key artists who changed theories of the body in the early twentieth century, but also on the very concept, and my own definition of, the term "corporeality."

Loïe Fuller and a *Fin de siècle* Theory of Corporeality

Among those who visited the 1900 *Exposition Universelle* was artist Loïe Fuller (1862-1928), *Art Nouveau* muse and pioneering figure in modern dance.[151] Perhaps the living, human embodiment of the Fairy of Electricity, American-born Fuller came to symbolize turn-of-the-century innovation. Famous for her development of underlighting and her use of large billowing costumes (often controlled by dowels at the arms), Fuller transformed not only the status of female performers in dance, but the status of *dance itself*. Using her dynamic lighting and voluminous costume to obscure her body, Fuller sculpted space, transfiguring herself into amorphous shapes meant to provoke the imagination. Fuller's metamorphosis of the body—from a female character performing familiar tropes of the distressed, fragile, lovelorn (perhaps even "manic") woman, to a diaphanous vision of the

[151] For a full account of Fuller, see Ann Cooper Albright, *Traces of Light: The Absence and Presence in the Work of Loïe Fuller* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2007).

phantasmagoric body *becoming*—arguably set a precedent for a re-envisioning of performed corporeality in Europe and America. While Fuller's endeavors primarily concerned the creation and implementation of technology rather than a written theorization of the dancing body (as those inspired by her would later write), her performances irrefutably opened up a range of possibilities for turn-of-the-century performers. As Ann Cooper Albright, author of the seminal theoretical work *Traces of Light*, states, Fuller's performances presented "a fundamentally innovative and modern way of moving, one that also precipitated a radical new way of seeing bodies in motion."[152]

Perhaps we might envision Fuller as a harbinger of corporeal transformations for the twentieth century. The body—no longer bound by the restrictive techniques of ballet, the sexualization of vaudeville, or the limited range of characters that populated both art forms—could signify *more than* a feminine or female body.[153] Sexuality needed no longer be confined to or defined by the mere presence of a male or female body. That is, the sight of a female body onstage did not (or should not) necessitate reference to long-perpetuated stereotypes of femininity; in an almost post-modern sense, *any body could be* [just] *a body*, stripped of gender. So too, corporeality was no longer a matter of character. Performers could now avoid the narrow characterization of noble (or serious), demi-caractère, or comic.[154] The

[152] Albright, *Traces of Light*, 15.

[153] This is not to say that the sexualization, stereotyping, or demeaning of female performers ceased to exist with the emergence of Loïe Fuller. In fact, despite now being considered the founder of American Modern Dance, she was initially rejected by American audiences. Rather, my claim that the body was no longer bound by sexuality is meant to suggest that *she* rejected limiting restrictions about the presentation of her own body in public space; in turn, she showed audiences and other dancers that there was a different way. Her eventual fame as *La Loïe* in France allowed future generations of dancers to follow in her footsteps.

[154] Such a classification of dance styles, based both on a dancer's abilities and physical appearance, comes from Carlo Blasis' 1820 treatise on dance *Traité élémentaire, théorétique et pratique de l'art et la danse*.

rejection of character—a trend that became increasingly popular in the second half of the twentieth century—arguably unlocked entirely new possibilities for the presentation of the performing body.

Defining Corporeality

Fuller's re-conceptualization of gender and identity had much to do with her employment of technology. Through her celebrated use of diaphanous fabrics and colored gel lighting, Fuller curated a performative space where the body, technology, and metaphor elided in movement. I argue that Fuller's techno-corporeal innovations opened up a space from which modern theories of corporeality could emerge. Unlike past treatises on dance in the Western world, a theory of *corporeality* is not merely a theory of gender/character, technique, or choreographic structure; rather, a theory of corporeality supersedes each individual theory, encompassing all aspects of the body *in performance* on a physical, emotive, and abstract level (i.e. Benjaminian *aura* / Bergsonian *élan vital*).

In the simplest terms, I define corporeality as a theorization of the body in performance, with performance here being either purposefully choreographed or mundane (as in Richard Schechner's theory of "twice behaved behavior.")[155] The corporeal body is a body that signifies through its historical, social, and personal context, a body that is liminal, a body that need not be defined by gender, or even physicality (in the sense of physical restrictions/specifications, i.e. height, shape, etc.). Corporeality, though anchored in the

[155] For the purposes of this dissertation, I will only be referring to corporeality in terms of stage performance. While I believe that my definition of corporeality would also apply to theories of behavior as performance, I focus specifically on more narrowly defined Western performance that takes place on a stage, with a knowing audience.

movement of the body, extends beyond the physical, into the realm of the symbolic. The body becomes both a sign *and* an index.

Fuller undeniably cultivated such ideas of the corporeal (rather than the purely physical), changing the way that modern audiences perceived the body in performance. Through her use of new media and dismissal of character, Fuller unlocked an entire realm of possibility for what it *could* mean to be a female body onstage, no longer restrictively bound to finite depictions of sexuality and/or physicality. That is, the shape, stature, gender, and sexuality of the body do not strictly define corporeality. If physicality implies a specific anatomical view of the body (i.e. tall, muscular, short calves, long neck, etc.), then corporeality is a *perception* of the body (cultivated simultaneously by the dancer, choreographer, and viewer) that undoes—or makes less important—such physical specifications.

We need look no further than famed *Ballets Russes* dancer and choreographer Vaslav Nijinsky (~1889 – 1950) to understand how corporeality (versus physicality) might emerge through performance. Reviews of Nijinsky abound with glowing praise and astonishment for the performer's ability to transcend his own physical limitations. Short and stalky with muscular thighs, photographs of Nijinsky reveal him to be an ordinary, if not awkwardly proportioned man. However, in performance, Nijinsky *transcended* his physicality, embodying multiple, perhaps even contradictory images. Jean Cocteau's description of Nijinsky's physicality, in contrast to his performed corporeality, is worth quoting at length here:

> Nijinsky was of a below-average size. Body and soul, he was the exaggeration of his art. His face, of Mongolian type, was attached to his body by a very high and very wide neck. The muscles of his thighs and calves stretched the cloth of his trousers and gave him the appearance of having legs curved backwards. His fingers were short as if they were cut off at the joints. In a word, you could never believe that this little monkey, with sparse hair, dressed in a wide overcoat, a hat balanced

> on the top of his skull, was the public idol. Yet he was the idol, and rightfully. Everything in him was suitable for an appearance at a distance, in stage lighting. On the stage his overdeveloped muscular system appeared supple. He grew taller (his heels never touched the ground), his hands became the foliage of his gestures, and his face radiated light. Such a metamorphosis is almost unimaginable for those who did not witness it.[156]

When describing Nijinsky's physical body, Cocteau's language is derogatory and racist; yet, Cocteau worships the dancer *in movement*, in his "metamorphosis" of performed corporeality.[157] Early *Ballets Russes* designer Alexandre Benois similarly praised Nijinsky, writing of the dancer, "He became re-incarnated and actually *entered* into his new existence, as an exceptionally attractive and poetical personality."[158] Cocteau and Benois' statements suggest that Nijinsky had the power to transcend the limits of his anatomical structure; unencumbered by physicality, he did not portray 'characters,' but rather, embodied a persona or energy.

Furthermore, Nijinsky, like Fuller, was often noted for expressing an androgynous quality in performance. I argue that such androgyny emerged and was celebrated in performance as a result of Fuller's transformation of the dancing body, and the new theories of dance and corporeality that followed. It was not that Fuller *de*-sexualized the body, but rather, she made the body capable of signifying *more than* or *other than* sexuality. Her

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[156] Jean Cocteau, *The Journals of Jean Cocteau* (New York, Criterion Books, 1956), 53-4.

[157] Cocteau repeatedly wrote of Nijinsky in this way, combining the physical with the psycho-spiritual: "In him reincarnated the mysterious child Septentrion, who died dancing on the shores at Antibes. Young, erect, supple, he walks only on the balls of his feet, taking rapid, firm little steps; **he is compact as a clenched fist with his neck long and massive as a Donatello with his slender torso contrasting against his over-developed thigs. He is like some young Florentine, vigorous beyond anything human, and feline to a disquieting degree.** He upsets all laws of equilibrium, and seems constantly to be a figure painted on the ceiling; he reclines nonchalantly in midair, defies heaven in a thousand different ways, and **his dancing is like some lovely poem written in all capitals**." Cocteau, "A Season of the Ballets Russes," trans. Frank W.D. Ries, in *Dance Scope* 13, no. 4 (1979): 8 – 9 (emphasis mine).

[158] Benois, *Reminiscences*, 289.

costumes and technology extended her body into space, as she rendered herself an organic machine, at once nature and technology.[159] In an oral history interview, Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo dancer Tatiana Riabouchinska discussed the similar way in which Bronislava Nijinska (like her brother and Fuller) could transcend body, age, and sexuality. In her broken English, she related:

> When she was showing to us *Carnaval*, you now Madame Nijinska was fat as I am now, and she was, not really, but when she did a butterfly you really looked at her and it was a butterfly dancing. … Because you see, at that time, I think, they went through this kind of metamorphosis, if you can call that, you know. … It's just the feeling and the imagination and the way they did it, they studied it…..[160]

All three dancers—Fuller, Nijinsky, and Nijisnka—performed *corporeality*, rather than physicality. My definition of corporeality, like dance itself, is rather ineffable. However, as Riabouchinska described, it has to do with "metamorphosis," "feeling," and "imagination"; corporeality is embodied and projected outward. It is both material reality and constructed perception.

We can see such modern theorizations of corporeality emerging as early as 1897 in French poet and critic Stéphane Mallarmé's collection of essays (several of which are written about Fuller) titled "Scribbled at the Theater." In this collection of notations, Mallarmé positions dance as a highly symbolic physical endeavor, elevating dance to the privileged status of words, and in fact, perhaps suggesting that dance surpasses text in its expressive capacity. Mallarmé writes:

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[159] The Futurists were highly interested in Fuller, finding in her pursuit of science and dances of light links to their own ideas of a mechanical body. See Marinetti, "The Futurist Dance. A Manifesto" (1917), trans. Elizabeth Delza, *Dance Observer* (Oct 1935): 75-76; Ted Merwin, "Loïe Fuller's Influence on F.T. Marinetti's Futurist Dance," *Dance Chronicle* 21, no. 1 (1998): 73-92.

[160] "Interview with Tatiana Riabouchinska," conducted by Elizabeth Kendall. New York Public Library Dance Collection Oral History Project. *MGZMT 3-914, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

> *The dancer is not a woman dancing . . . she* [Fuller] *is not a woman*, but a metaphor summing up one of the elementary aspects of our form: knife, goblet, flower, etc., and . . . *she is not dancing*, but suggesting, through the miracle of bends and leaps, a kind of corporal writing, what it would take pages of prose, dialogue, and description to express, if it were transcribed: a poem independent of any scribal apparatus.[161]

Remarkably, this passage denies the pure sexuality or physicality of Fuller's body—"she is not a woman . . . she is not dancing"—while promoting dance as a form of "corporeal writing" that is *more* poignant and expressive than writing itself. Mallarmé sees the potential in the dancing body, *beyond* the physical; though he does not state it in such terms, he is writing about Fuller's *corporeality* rather than her physicality. In his estimation, while the dancing body remains 'ineffable' (an epithet, previously synonymous with the feminine and insubstantial, commonly applied to dance by sexist nineteenth century Romantic Ballet critics Jules Janin and Théophile Gautier), it is *not* incoherent, weak, or lacking in intellectual rigor. Mallarmé does not reduce dance to a literal translation of words, yet he suggests that dance can be read or deciphered like a poem, therefore imbuing the art with a sense of sophistication, eloquence, and a certain rationality often denied to it. The body then becomes the site of interrogation in dance, whereas previously the body functioned as a purely narrative agent or festishized object for appraisal and display.[162]

Furthermore, we see in Mallarmé's enthusiastic writings on Fuller an appreciation for the body stripped of ornamentation and excess (the lavish sets and costumes of ballet). Writing of such ornamentation, Mallarmé asserted:

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[161] Mallarmé, "Ballets" in *Divagations*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 130 (emphasis in the original).

[162] It is important to note that I am writing here only of Western ballet and early American/European modern dance in the mid-to-late-nineteenth and twentieth century. This conception of the body as a mere narrative agent is highly specific, and applies neither to forms of non-Western dance, nor even to the state of ballet before the nineteenth century, when the body was thought to be a decorous extension of the monarchy, and not an autonomous agent.

> Opaque vehicles, intrusive cardboard—to the scrap heap! Here we find given back to Ballet the atmosphere or nothingness, visions no sooner known than scattered, just their limpid evocation. The stage is freed for any fiction, cleared and instated by the play of a veil with attitudes and gestures; the site, all movement, becomes the very pure result.[163]

As the author states, "the site" to which one should look, and the achieved, "pure result" of the performance, are one and the same: "all movement." The dancing body is no longer reliant on spectacle; rather the performing body generates meaning through moving and signifying in time and space. Mallarmé seemed to clearly understand the centrality of the body in dance. He even goes on to separate theater from dance, contending that "everyone can act it in his head, which is not the case with pirouettes."[164] Here, the poet implies that, unlike theater, which can be read and re-created through imagination (as with literature), dance is a significantly embodied form that necessitates a body; movement must be enacted through flesh and bone.[165] Therefore, as early as 1897, we see authors such as Mallarmé, clearly inspired by Fuller, shifting the body to a central position in dance, while also shifting dance to a central position within the arts at large. Through elevating the status of the body within the arts and focusing on corporeality rather than physicality, Mallarmé set the stage for authors and artists of the early-twentieth century to utilize the body as a vital subject and primary mode of expression.

It is interesting to note that while Mallarmé was watching Fuller, presumably at the *Folies Bergère* where she performed, so too were *Les Frères Lumières*, brothers who would become the first filmmakers. Auguste and Louis Jean Lumières (born 1862 and 1864,

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[163] Mallarmé, "The Fundamentals of Ballet" in *Divagations*, 136-7.

[164] Mallarmé, "Of Genre and the Moderns" in *Divagations*, 140.

[165] The same claim could, of course, be made about theater. However, this avenue of pursuit is not of particular relevance within this dissertation, and will be left to the more capable writings of theater practitioners and scholars.

respectively) captured several of Fuller's dances on camera, including her *Danse Serpentine*, recorded in 1896, which can still be seen today. As Mallarmé was crafting his beautiful prose concerning the dancing body, *Les Frères Lumières* were forging a new relationship between technology and the dancing body, inspired by Fuller.[166] As an emblem of modernity at the turn of the century, Fuller embodied the juncture between corporeal body, text, and technology, challenging the boundaries between all three. It is partially out of this transgressive space of Fuller's creation that companies like *Les Ballet Russes* were able to thrive.

Fuller to Massine: A Theoretical Lineage

I argue that this new vision of corporeality, highly influenced by Fuller, was taken up by Léonide Massine. Massine followed the legacy of Michel Fokine (1880 – 1942) and Vaslav Nijinsky (~1889 – 1950) as choreographer for *Les Ballets Russes*, beginning in 1915. Pulling from the aesthetics of both his predecessors (as well as from his studies in acting at the Imperial Theater School), Massine contributed a unique style to the company that focused on harmony (which, in his choreographic theory, entails a break from the vertical lines of ballet), counter-point, and what would later come to be considered a tenant of the Neo-

[166] While Fuller was one of the first dancers to be seen on film, her predecessor Massine became increasingly interested in the intersections between live dance and film. Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo dancer Frederick Franklin reminisced that Massine would attempt, on his rickety camera, to film snatches of footage after each rehearsal. "When a ballet was done, Massine would set up a table in the theater with this old machine of his, and we would go through whatever ballet it was, with stops and starts, and we went through it bit by bit. … Massine took the films himself with a machine, a camera … We did it in many stops and starts [it was never danced full through; Massine's antiquated machine and the technology of the day wouldn't have permitted it]." "Interview with Frederick Franklin" conducted by Mindy Aloff. June 13, 2001 and Sept 25, 2003, July 3, 2005. New York Public Library Dance Collection Oral History Project. *MGZMT 3-2253, New York Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

Classical style: symphonic ballets.[167] Many dance historians and scholars have pointed to links between Fokine and Isadora Duncan. Yet, I wish to draw a less obvious link between Loïe Fuller and Léonide Massine, as elements of Fuller's style are clearly emulated in Massine's choreography. Neither Massine in his autobiography, *My Life in Ballet*, nor his biographer Vicente García-Márquez mention Fuller as a direct muse. However, I argue that the foundation established by Fuller reveals itself directly in the choreographic works of Massine. Fuller's radicalization of the female body in public space, de-sexualization of the body, and physicalized theorization of the body as *more* than or *other* than human appear as fragments, rays of inspiration and light, throughout Massine's oeuvre.

While we find some of Fuller's ideas (transmitted via Duncan) in Fokine's choreography, I argue that Fuller's modern transformation of the body is not fully witnessed in *Les Ballets Russes* repertoire until Massine. If we see direct links between Fokine and Duncan in the form of un-corseted, bare legged, shoeless dancers, attention to authenticity and detail, and a supple use of the entire body, then we see a more ambiguous, yet equally strong, link between Massine and Fuller in the form of a crafted corporeality that transcends physicality, focusing on the harmonic qualities of the body through experimentation with velocity, flow, rhythm, and shape.

The similarities between Fuller and Massine are perhaps best illuminated through poet T.S. Eliot's assessment of Massine: "[he] seems to me the greatest actor whom we have in London. Massine, the most completely *unhuman*, impersonal, abstract, belongs to the

[167] Massine studied dance and drama at the Russian Imperial Theater under the direction of Alexander Gorsky, a man highly interested in theater reform and the innovations of Konstantin Stanislavsky. While at the Theater School, Massine received direct tutelage in the craft of acting from Alexander Yuzhin, "one of Moscow's most important dramatic coaches, [who] was greatly admired by Stanislavsky and vice versa." García-Márquez, *Massine*, 24. For more on Massine's training at the Imperial School, see García-Márquez, 3-25.

future stage."[168] The quality of being "unhuman" that the poet describes resonates throughout Massine's (and Fuller's) choreography. I interpret "unhuman" here not to mean "less-than" human or even "supernatural" in any way, but rather to denote transcendence, a "more-than" human quality similar to what I define as corporeality.[169] Eliot went on to write that whereas the "conventional gesture of the ordinary stage is supposed to *express* emotion, . . . the abstract gesture of Massine" in fact "*symbolizes* emotion."[170] The difference here between expression and symbolization is crucial, especially in light of my own claim that corporeality and physicality are different. While expression is tied to an actor/dancer's ability to emote through physical means (an almost literal "translation" or replication of something), to symbolize suggests an embodiment, a transcendence of physicality that elevates the actor/dancer to the realm of the intangible, beyond words, beyond concrete meaning. Mallarmé's claim that Fuller "is <u>not</u> a woman dancing . . . but a metaphor" resounds with a similar sentiment: both Fuller and Massine harnessed the physical capacity of the performing body, and through an intuitive and carefully crafted relationship with time/music and space, transformed their own bodies through corporeal expression.

[168] Eliot, "Dramatis Personae," 303-306 (emphasis mine).

[169] However, this descriptor of "unhuman" is also fitting since Massine often portrayed characters who were not-quite-human (a puppet, a doll that comes to life, etc.). While he imbued these characters with human qualities, they were nevertheless aberrations from the standard debonair, heterosexual male *danseur*. Massine's portrayal of such characters will be a central topic in the forthcoming chapters of this dissertation.

[170] Eliot, "Dramatis Personae," 303-306.

Socio-Political Corporeality and the Space of Performance

Of course, corporeal expression as created by Fuller is very different than corporeal expression as created by Massine. While I have theorized that corporeality in performance is a separate aspect from (or more complicated aspect than) physicality, it is important to consider *how* and *why* specific features of corporeality emerge. Contemporary European Dance Theorist Franz Anton Cramer writes that, "The knowledge of movement, the knowledge of the potentials and articulations of various anatomical and physical systems, such as the skeleton, musculature, lymphatic system, which is gained from movement, forms the backbone of the dancer's education and training."[171] These "anatomical and physical systems" underlie corporeality. However, as Cramer continues, the idea of "'body as archive' or 'body archive'" adds an additional layer. A "separation" exists

> between the tangible, physical being of the body and its largely consciously practiced use of meaning structures, reaching beyond the body and necessarily presupposing knowledge of physical potential. In this conception, the materiality of the body becomes an accumulation of documents, so to speak, which in combination can suggest meanings that refer to more than mere physical activity but also hold the possibility of referring back to traces of knowledge stored in the body.[172]

I would take this one step further, adding that it is not only the "traces of knowledge stored in the body" that are layered onto the anatomical body, but also a repository of social/cultural/political meanings that adhere to the body, based on the time and place within which that body lives and moves. Bodies are always "inscribing" and being "inscribed upon" and these layers must be understood within a theorization of corporeality.[173]

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[171] Franz Anton Cramer, "Body, Archive," in *Critical Dance Studies: Dance [and] Theory*, vol. 25, eds. Gabrielle Brandstetter & Gabrielle Klein (Universität Hamburg, 2013), 219.

[172] Cramer, 220.

[173] For more on the idea of physical inscription, see Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994).

The agency of a dancer exists and is housed within their corporeal presence, but individual agency is compounded with the agency of the observer (since performed corporeality, in my definition, relies on *both* the performance of the individual and the perception of the viewer). To clarify, while the performer (and/or choreographer) determines, with agency, how they wish to perform their own corporeality, a viewer has their own subjective experience of that performance, determined by surrounding socio-political factors. To complicate matters, History itself, as a constant agent of time, change, and progress (as well as a vehicle for subsequent reflection) plays a key role in retrospective scholarly analysis of works of art. Looking to History (on both a micro and macro level) allows corporeality to be decoded in light of specific socio-political events and biographical details. Understanding a choreographer or dancer's experience within an historical moment (the "micro" level) is therefore important in decoding the corporeality that emerges within a given performance. For Massine, a man notoriously taciturn regarding all affairs personal, this is a difficult task. However, looking to his choreographic work, his ideas regarding choreography, and his creative process is a foray into better understanding the artist himself, and thereby understanding his own choreography and performance of corporeality.

Dynamics and Vitality: Massine's Choreographic Theory

> This young man with a pale face, in which glow, and sometimes blaze, eyes like black diamonds, is not only a great dancer from the physical standpoint, but an artistic intelligence of the highest order, and, in my opinion, a genius. In the Palace hotels where he camps, he leads a severe life, turning over books and drawings, trying to find a new modulation in the syntax of motion, of gesture. When he goes out, it is generally to go down to the theatre for rehearsal. There, he sits, at the back of the stage, watching the performers steadily with his great eyes. Is he pleased or displeased? He seems lost in a dream. Suddenly, he gets up, strolls down to the

> front, and coldly, a little disdainfully, slings out some sentences in Russian which change the whole thing.[174]

Even at twenty-five years old (the above description comes from 1921), Massine was already recognizable by his aloof persona: hardworking, stoic, puzzlingly detached and unemotional (in conversation, not in movement), yet with a fiery spark ablaze beneath the surface. *Ballets Russes* ballerina Lydia Sokolova similarly described Massine's countenance: "His eyes were so enormous that they seemed to swamp his little pale face, yet when they looked at you they remained completely blank, as if there was a shutter at the back of them. Miassine would stare straight at you, but his eyes never smiled."[175] This vision of Massine offers a striking, yet vague, sense of his persona as an enigmatic figure within the legacy of modern dance. Massine's biographer Vicente García-Márquez wrote of the dancer:

> For Massine, the creative process, in tandem with theoretical observation, dominated his contribution to the world; and thus, particularly in his case, the creative act constitutes the involuntary biography of his soul. To look for any other clues to his inner self—even from those closest to him—is an insurmountable task. There are glimpses here and there of the essence, but he eludes us constantly, becoming even more baffling.[176]

García-Márquez makes clear that, if we are to understand Massine, we should look to his work; for in his choreography, in his dancing, in his presentation of a corporeal presence onstage, we might find glimpses of the artist's true self.

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[174] Vincent O'Sullivan, "Exiles and Exotics in To-Day's Paris," *The Living Age (1897-1941)* (16 April 1921): 40.

[175] On Massine's introduction to *Les Ballet Russes* company members. Sokolova, *Dancing for Diaghilev*, 60-61.

[176] García-Márquez, *Massine,* xiii.

A Theory of Harmony

Massine appraised his own choreographic theory as "Much more important than all I have done" and "The most outstanding" achievement.[177] Massine, especially in the second half of his career (beginning in the 1960s), believed he held the key to understanding choreography, to unlocking an essential "truth" that most students, dancers, and choreographers of the second half of the twentieth century didn't understand. This "truth" pertains to one central concept: aesthetic harmony. Theories of aesthetic harmony—an idea of rhythm, movement, and emotion all coalescing into one—of course precede Massine. Fokine, one of Massine's closest influences, sought unity of character, setting, and movement. Equally important were musicians François Delsarte (1811 – 1871) and Émile Jacques-Dalcroze (1865-1950), whose studies in emotional expression through gesture and rhythmic musical visualization directly influenced Massine's work. To elucidate his own conceptualization of aesthetic harmony, Massine stated that, "All we are taught is devoid of any sense of harmony," continuing that dancers are often taught "an artificial harmony. We create long lines . . . one or two outstanding positions which we all know, but beyond that we are in the dark as far as what is the matter of harmony, what it consists of, how does it relate in [the] human body, one part to another."[178]

While Massine is somewhat vague about the actual definition of "harmony" within his theory—even being so opaque as to state that, the key to understanding the theory "is nowhere . . . but I have it"—we can infer that the concept pertains to an expansive, varied use

[177] Léonide Massine, interviewed by John Gruen at the Joffrey Ballet School, September 26, 1972, MGZTL 4-180, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

[178] Massine, Gruen interview.

of the body and a constant translation of emotion through movement.[179] Essentially, Massine cannot verbalize his theory; he has instead, deeply embodied it. For example, Massine asserted that young students and choreographers must truly "know what the body is," they must know the anatomy of the body and the breadth and nuance of movement of which their body is capable. Along those same lines, he believed that all "good composition" should contain a range of "broad, medium, [and] restricted movements" in order to create a strong sense of dynamism.[180] In expanding a dancer/choreographer's movement vocabulary beyond strictly academic technique, Massine viewed the spine as essential: "The main factor is our spine . . . the trunk, the torso is the master of all good and bad postures. . . . Unfortunately, in academic, virtuosic dance, it is sort of camouflaged by the gift of technique."[181] For Massine, like early modern dance pioneers (and, I argue, muses) Loïe Fuller and Isadora Duncan, "academic, virtuosic dance" presented a barrier, not only to the scope of movement possibilities, but more importantly, to authentic expression.

In a broadcast interview with Terry Walter in 1966, Massine (somewhat jocularly) stated that there are only three choreographic sins, three movements to always avoid: *pirouettes*, *entrechats six*, and stunts. The seasoned choreographer reasoned that these movements "are sterile, harmonically" (in accordance with his system of harmonic choreographic theory).[182] Massine further explained that virtuosity and good composition have little to do with each other; true composition is often obscured behind the dazzling

[179] Léonide Massine, interview with Marian Horosko.

[180] Massine, Horosko interview.

[181] Massine, Gruen interview.

[182] Léonide Massine, broadcast interview with Terry Walter, *WNYC*, New York, from the series "Invitation to dance," October 9, 1966, *MGZTL 4-2105, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

spectacle of virtuosity associated with academic technique. The choreographer's list of "don'ts" illuminates a deeper concern within his work: that aside from (or in tandem with) a lack of harmonic dynamics, these movements are missing an emotional component. Neither constituting pantomime (a clear gestural language) nor 'free' expressive movement (tied to emotional states or impulses), stunts and highly technical feats are often devoid of meaning and a sense of true vitality.

Massine's rejection of virtuosic tricks does not mean that he also rejected a highly technical system of movement. Rather, he believed that this system must create and maintain aesthetic harmony, which thereby imbues choreography with emotion: "Technically . . . every emotion can be, *should be* expressed *by* movement, not by anything else. It should be translated in the movement which calls for it."[183] As in Fokine's choreography (from which he was directly inspired), movement should vary based on the scenario (the specific locale of a libretto, for example), the character, the emotional tone. When asked how Massine's theory changed the movement of the body, and the audience's perception of the body, the choreographer responded, "You read them [emotions], you imagine them, you interpret them in the movement."[184] Through Massine's theory of harmonic aesthetics, a sense of authentic emotionality becomes critical.[185] Despite the fact that the emotions associated with Massine's choreography may often be theatrical (that is, derived from a pre-conceived plotline), I choose to deliberately use the term "authentic" here because I feel that Massine makes a crucial distinction between emotions that are understood (on a kinetic and psychological level), and emotions that are placed onto the body. He commented that contemporary

[183] Massine, Horosko interview.

[184] Massine, Gruen interview.

[185] Massine, Horosko interview.

choreographers (in the late 1960's) "have no knowledge how to explain their works," they can't express *meaning* to their dancers "because it's so personal." As a result, dancers end up "copying or rendering" rather than understanding.[186] I argue that this "copying or rendering" versus understanding on an embodied level has much to do with the distinction that T.S. Eliot drew in his review of Massine: it is the difference between *expressing* and *symbolizing*. Copying is a hollow expression, an exactitude meant to represent a concept/emotion, whereas understanding allows one to symbolize, to embody, and to connect motion to emotion in meaningful way.

Though he does not expressly phrase his theory of dance as such, I would argue that Massine endeavored to imbue all dance steps with *élan vital*, to transform movements that have been repeated through history into a continually living and re-invigorated form. By linking harmonic qualities (or kinetically expressed/charged emotion) to dance steps, Massine sought to make dance strikingly alive, human, and vital. Perhaps most important is Massine's comment that his theory should be "taught and forgotten."[187] That is, the theory should be ingrained into a dancer's very way of moving, it should *live* in his or her body and be tapped into on an almost unconscious level. Such a theory constitutes a facet of corporeality: a simultaneous understanding of one's self, choreographic intention and emotional tenor, and movement quality, all superseding physical movement alone. Massine's work therefore illuminates the interplay between surface and depth, between profound emotion and the physical expression of the body. Within his theory, dance *cannot* be merely physical, as there is always an element of the symbolic—it is corporeal movement.

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[186] Massine, Horosko interview.

[187] Massine, Gruen interview.

Surface and Depth

To briefly return to the 1900 *Exposition Universelle*, if considered symbolically, this event represents the way in which a surface view (that is, a literal ocular or aural experience) of a work of art, a dance, a photograph, provides an understanding of only a singular facet. When the complex socio-political context of France in 1900 is viewed with, or against, the beauty and light of the Exposition attractions, a more complete understanding of the event emerges. As previously stated, the *Exposition Universelle* was, on the surface, all light, all potential for innovation and energy. Yet, in reality, such a depiction of luminous European innovation was but a fleeting fantasy, a flickering hope that would soon mutate into the incendiary conflagration of modernized warfare. It is this flickering, shifting, volatile energy that I argue came to define the aura of modernity. What was once progress became destruction; life became death; humor became mania. However, performance offers an opportunity to reconfigure, or re-choreograph, as the case may be, the mercurial tendencies of life. As the living space between life and Art, performance can bend rules, portray the contradictory pulses of life, and even defy death (as will be discussed in my forthcoming analysis of *Parade*, *Pulcinella*, and *La Boutique Fantasque*). Performance can hold this space of contradiction through suspension of disbelief, while dancing bodies can kinetically express the juncture between personal, social, political, and historical experience through personal subjective agency and as individuals who have born witness to other agents.

Without historical context, ballet might be viewed as "light" (in the sense of brightness, joy, electricity, but also in the sense of frothy lightness sometimes pejoratively associated with the art form). This is not to say, of course, that all ballet is light-hearted, cheerful, or vapid; ballets often express serious, somber, and complex issues. Rather, the *act* of dancing, and in turn, the event of attending a dance performance, is a reminder of life and

vitality. In essence, to dance is to show proof that one is undeniably alive; that one's body is performing to its greatest capacity. The virtuosic body is a vital body.[188] Of course, in reality these bodies of the early-twentieth century where often malnourished and incredibly unhealthy. However, those dancing bodies *represented* to audiences a physical vigor and energy. While it was perhaps not consciously-registered by audience members, to attend a dance performance was to be awash in this light; to be in the celebratory presence of bodies that were *alive*. Contrast this light with the devastation and destruction wrought on the body during World War I. The literal, physical state of the bodies of soldiers and civilians at the end of the war in 1917 was in crisis: killed and maimed by warfare, mutated by influenza (which killed over 20 million people), frenzied and terrorized by shell shock.[189] In war, the body itself becomes the center of violent conflict. What occurs then, when this lightness—this electricity of the dancing body—is juxtaposed against the destruction (and ultimately, stillness of death) of the body in war? Such is the central question of the following chapter. To fully understand this question, we must first look to the events of the Great War.

[188] My argument here pertains specifically and exclusively to forms of nineteenth and early-twentieth century Western concert dance that place an emphasis on the virtuosic body. There is much to be said (and learned) from dancing bodies that do not fit into this definition. American dance history saw an emergence and acceptance of such 'alternate' bodies beginning with post-modern choreographers such as Anna Halprin and continuing on today with initiatives like Mark Morris' "Dance for PD" project. The analysis of the dancing body that I present here is neither meant to erase those alternate bodies, nor to negate their power. Rather, my goal is to theorize performance on the concert stage in Europe, at a time when there was a prescribed 'ideal' for the dancing body, which was regarded as a paragon for beauty and athleticism. Despite the popularity of androgynous dancers like Valsav Nijinsky, and despite the increasingly common incorporation of non-Western dance styles (particularly with the emergence of Jazz music and Afro-Caribbean movements brought to America and Europe through the Atlantic Slave Trade), the "virtuosic" body was still a white, European body.

[189] Aside from the devastation of World War I, approximately 20 million people died in the influenza epidemic in the years directly following. According to historian Margaret MacMillan, the outbreak and rampant spread of influenza may have, in part, been "a result of churning up the rich microbe-laden soil in the north of France and Belgium" during warfare (*xxv*).

*Chapter 2: More than 'Cubism on Stage' – The Postwar Corporeality of Massine's *Parade**

> *It is an extraordinary thing but it is true, wars are only a means of publicizing the things already accomplished . . . The spirit of everybody is changed, of a whole people is changed, but mostly nobody knows it and a war forces them to recognize it, because during a war the appearance of everything changes very much quicker, but really the entire change has been accomplished and the war is only something which forces everybody to recognize it.*[190]
>
> — Gertrude Stein (1938)

Introduction and Premise

By their final pre-war season in 1913, *Les Ballets Russes* had clearly established itself as a *Western* European company, enjoying Paris as an adopted home. However, when war broke out in 1914, the company was forced to temporarily disband, with members scattering across Europe. Aside from the financial burden Diaghilev faced to maintain the company during the war years, the position that *Les Ballets Russes* had once occupied in France as exalted, exotic Russian import became tenuous. Despite Russia's allied relationship with France, the "patriotic" spirit that resounded throughout Parisian political and artistic circles provoked a return to Classicism (or, in the case of *Les Ballets Russes*, Neoclassicism) and a move away from the exoticism of Russian folklore. Indeed, after Italy joined the Allied forces of France, Russia, and England in April, 1915, *Commedia dell'arte* themes and styles became increasingly prevalent in Europe across artistic genres.[191] In his unceasing

[190] Stein, "Picasso," in *Picasso: The Complete Writings*, ed. Edward Burns (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 62.

[191] This Italian influence is directly evidenced in Pablo Picasso's collaborations with *Les Ballets Russes*, both in his drop curtain for *Parade* and his décor for *Pulcinella*. Beyond his *Ballets Russes* collaborations, Picasso produced countless variations of his "harlequin" paintings, including one modeled after Massine. Diaghilev too, was deeply inspired by his 1915 travels through Italy with Massine. For a more thorough explanation of Picasso's relationship to Classicism and *Commedia* see, Silvers, *Esprit de Corps*; Yve-Alain Bois (ed.), *Picasso Harlequin: 1917—1937* (Italy: Skira Editore

desire to remain ever-modern, Diaghilev needed to leave behind *la vraie russes*, and move into new thematic territory that more closely aligned with the current desires of Parisian audiences. Additionally, across artistic and philosophical disciplines, ideas about the body were radically altered, as war maimed and killed the bodies of millions across Europe and the Western front.

Members of *Les Ballets Russes* themselves, though not directly involved in the war (i.e. not fighting, and not French natives/citizens), were nevertheless deeply affected. During the war Diaghilev was alone, left in relative isolation, as many of his friends and artistic companions (including Nijinsky, Stravinsky, Benois, and Bakst) dispersed throughout Europe. As Lieven explained, "The shells burst, the bullets whistled, and people were killed in their [sic] hundreds of thousands. Nobody was interested in *pirouttes*, *entrechats*, and *fouttes*."[192] A changing depiction of the body on stage was therefore necessary to suite a new French audience, traumatized by war, and increasingly interested in resurrecting the values of Classicism (perhaps as a way to cling to a past that was swiftly vanishing); the ballet *Parade* (1917) presented just that.

Under the direction of Diaghilev, *Parade* was a collaboration that paired the choreography of then barely-known Massine, with avant-garde artists Jean Cocteau (libretto), Pablo Picasso (costume and set designs), and Erik Satie (score). The one act ballet premiered on May 18, 1917 at the *Théâtre du Châtelet* in Paris, with the first performance given as a benefit concert for those injured in the war. In this chapter, I examine this notorious avant-garde, multi-media ballet as Massine's first choreographic theorization of postwar

S.p.A.: 2009). For more information on the use of *Commedia* in *Les Ballets Russes*, see Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

[192] Lieven, 227.

corporeality in performance. In so doing, I will use my own definition of corporeality, along with Massine's choreographic theory, to analyze how *Parade* might function through multiple layers of contradiction, yet still produce a unifying energy (albeit one that is experiential rather than analytical), crystallizing a historical moment in time. This chapter is meant to consider the ways in which war was reflected in the ballet, and consequently how Massine and the collaborators of *Parade* themselves envisioned and constructed a modern *physis* (a techno-human body, bound more to industrialization and war than the earth) onstage. Before delving into a choreographic analysis of the ballet, it is crucial to discuss the effects of World War I, and the consequences of those effects on audience reception for the work.

To War . . .

While a full history of the Great War is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is important to understand some of the critical decisions, events, and alliances that led Europe to war, as well as the immense toll the war eventually took on the land, bodies, and psyches of Europe (specifically for the purposes of this dissertation, France).[193] In *The War that Ended Peace*, Historian Margaret MacMillan contemplates, not why the war broke out, but why "the peace fail[ed]?"[194] Why, after so many years of relative peace, did European nations finally resort to war? MacMillan cites three major causes for this final descent into war: Russia's alliance with France, Germany's naval race with Britain, and Germany's

[193] For in-depth histories and accounts of World War I see Carlisle, *Eyewitness History: World War I;* Cottington, *Cubism in the Shadow of War*; Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*; Gibbs, *Now It Can Be Told;* Kessler, *Journey to the Abyss;* Lindeman, *A History of Modern Europe;* MacMillan, *The War that Ended Peace*; Mildred, *On the Edge of the War Zone;* Silvers, *Esprit de Corps*.

[194] MacMillan, xxxc.

attempt to break up the Entente Cordiale during the first Moroccan crisis. As one of the leading powers at this moment, France's international relationships were of the utmost importance. As MacMillan explains:

> As the new century started France was in a vulnerable state both at home and abroad. Its relations with Britain were abysmal, correct but cool with Germany, and strained with Spain, Italy and Austria-Hungary, all of which were rivals in the Mediterranean. Yet France had managed to break out of the quarantine in which Bismarck had placed it and make one, very important, alliance, with Russia.[195]

Despite France's "vulnerable state," they did have one greatly desired asset: economic prosperity, and therefore the ability to create and amass technology and weapons. Due to the stability of the franc, and the fact that there was neither inflation nor income tax, France had the highest *per capita* income of any European nation (aside from Britain) between 1909 and and 1913.[196] However, due to the drastically declining birth rate in France, they were sorely lacking in the manpower needed to make use of those weapons, should conflict arise.[197] Russia, on the other hand, was in a different predicament. Depleted of economic resources, but with a massive population conscripted to fight, Russia was the ideal solution to France's problems. Therefore, in 1891 Russia and France formed a secret alliance, eventually made official in 1894. Such an alliance between France and Russia was perceived as a threat to Germany, whose population (and therefore fighting power) had, previously, greatly outnumbered that of France.

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[195] MacMillan, 156-7.

[196] See Cottington, *Cubism in the Shadow of War*, 13.

[197] Between 1871 and 1911, the birth rate in France rose by only 8%, as compared to Germany's 42% rise, and Wales' 59% rise. Cottington, 16.

Aside from France's perceived threat to Germany, the Germans were also concerned by Britain's naval power. For many Western world leaders, the end of the nineteenth century proved a major turning point for new, strategic acquisitions of power, due in large part to Captain Alfred Mahan's 1890 text *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*. In this highly influential book, Mahan asserted that:

> In these three things, production, with the necessity of exchanging products, shipping, whereby the exchange is carried on, and colonies, which facilitate and enlarge the operations of shipping and tend to protect it by multiplying points of safety is to be found the key to much of the history, as well as of the policy, of nations bordering upon the sea.[198]

In providing a history and theorization of famous naval battles, Mahan sought to prove that domination over the sea would be the crucial factor in domination over other countries. As a result of the newfound certainty in naval power, Kaiser Wilhelm appointed Alfred von Tirpitz as Secretary of State for the Navy in 1897, thereby beginning what is now called the 'naval race' with Britain.

Finally, in 1904 Théophile Declassé, Foreign Minister of the Third Republic in France, and Edward VII of England arranged the Entente Cordiale, a new 'understanding' between the two countries which, once again, posed a renewed threat to Germany. Due to the historically strained relationship between France and Britain, Germany had not previously taken the possibility of such an agreement seriously. With France now allied with both Russia and Britain, Germany was left in an increasingly vulnerable position. As a result, between 1905 and 1906, Germany attempted to pollute and corrode this new-found amicability between France and Britain during the first Moroccan crisis. However, "the attempt backfired and the two

[198] Mahan, Alfred Thayer, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660—1805* (Boston, 1890), 28.

new friends drew closer together and started to hold secret military talks which added another strand to the ties linking Britain to France."[199]

The War-Torn Body

The intricacies of the political plots and alliances leading up to World War I make any succinct account nearly impossible. However, these three major events—the alliance between Russia and France, Germany's naval race with Britain, and the Entente Cordial between Britain and France—were major catalysts in pushing Europe to war in 1914. While an understanding of these events is important, more critical to this dissertation are the effects that the war then wrought on Europe. Beginning with the rise of Capitalism and the Industrial Revolution, World War I, unequivocally, shattered humans' preexisting relationship to the earth and to themselves (on both an individual and collective scale).

A passage from war correspondent Philip Gibbs, written December 1916, describes the Battle of the Somme and the total transformation he witnessed from civilization to ruins:

> I saw a green, downy countryside, beautiful in its summer life, ravaged by gun-fire so that the white chalk of its subsoil was flung above the earth and grass in a wide, sterile stretch of desolation pitted with shell craters, ditched by deep trenches, whose walls were hideously upheaved by explosive fire, and littered yard after yard, mile after mile, with broken wire, rifles, bombs, unexploded shells, rags of uniform, dead bodies, or bits of bodies, and all the filth of battle. I saw many villages flung into ruin or blown clean off the map.[200]

Gibbs' writing emphasizes the rapidity, the suddenness, with which this destruction occurred, as verdant land became desolate, and villages (and their inhabitants) were "flung," literally, from existence. Earth, weapons, and bodies fused into indiscernible chaos, as human life

[199] MacMillan, xxxiii.

[200] Phillip Gibbs, *Now It Can Be Told* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1920), 394.

became an incidental casualty within a landscape of destruction. While British soldiers termed the war "the Great Sausage Machine," the German's choose an epithet more to the point: *Blutmühle*, meaning "blood mill."[201] Making obvious references to the robotic, unthinking qualities of the war, and to the production of mass goods (or mass killings), soldiers' employment of the terms 'Machine' and 'mill' further highlights the relationship between barbarity and modern life. These names for the battles alone suggest the extent to which the war had become an exhaustive, seemingly ceaseless march of death.

In addition to the millions who were killed or wounded, still others endured "shell shock." The term, now known as post-traumatic stress, was in fact introduced during WWI, with doctors first conceiving of the term in 1915.[202] While countless soldiers in battle experienced the physical and psychological traumas of "shell shock," the term also entered mainstream consciousness in 1916. According to the King's Centre for Military Health Research, Institute of Psychiatry, and the Academic Centre for Defence Mental Health, King's College London, "The high casualties of the Somme battle brought the issue of shell shock to the fore when, as traumatic brain injury has done today, it caught the popular imagination and the attention of the media."[203] While detailed knowledge of the exact symptoms, diagnosis, and treatments of shell shock remained ambiguous in the early twentieth century, the knowledge of psychological trauma associated with war was undoubtedly circulating in both military and civilian circles during and after WWI.

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[201] Carlisle, *Eyewitness History: World War 1* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2007), 248.

[202] "Shell shock entered the medical debate in February 1915 with the publication of a paper on the subject in *Lancet* by Capt. C.S. Myers, a specialist in psychological medicine." Edgar Jones, Nicola T. Fear, & Simon Wessely, "Shell Shock and Mild Traumatic Brain Injury: A Historical Review," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 164, no. 11 (November 2007), 1642.

[203] Jones, Fear, & Wessely, 1644.

Though most acutely felt among soldiers, wartime anxiety was palpable among civilians as well. War correspondent Mildred Aldrich, an American who moved to France in 1914, described the general feelings amongst the French during the Battle of Verdun:

> We are living these days in the atmosphere of the great battle of Verdun. We talk of Verdun all day, dream of Verdun all night—in fact, the thought of that great attack in the east absorbs every other idea. Not in the days of the Marne, nor in the trying days of Ypres or the Aisne was the tension so terrible as it is now. No one believes that Verdun can be taken, but the anxiety is dreadful . . . You probably knew, as usual, before we did, that the battle had begun . . . the German artillery let loose, with fourteen German divisions waiting to march against the three French divisions holding the position. Can you wonder we are anxious?"[204]

As Aldrich makes clear through her repetition, a sense of anxiety and foreboding permeated the atmosphere of those at home, waiting in fear, preoccupied only with thoughts of war. Whether on the front or at home, the physical, psychological, and emotional, (not to mention economic and political) traumas of war were inescapable for Europeans in the years during and following WWI.

Choreographing War

Such radical upheaval characterized much of the art of European 'Modernism,' most specifically: Cubism, Futurism, Surrealism, and Dada. Take, for example, this passage from a British war correspondent:

> It looked like victory, because of the German dead that lay there in their battered trenches and the filth and stench of death over all that mangled ground, and the enormous destruction wrung by our guns, and the fury of fire which we were still pouring over the enemy's lines from batteries which had moved forward. . . . [advancing down into German dugouts] I drew back from those fat corpses. They looked monstrous, lying there crumpled up, amid a foul litter of clothes, stick-bombs, old boots, and bottles. Groups of dead lay in ditches which had once been trenches, flung into chaos by that bombardment. They had been

[204] Letter dated March 2, 1916. Aldrich, *On the Edge of the War Zone* (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1917), 183-185.

> bayoneted. I remember one man—an elderly fellow—sitting up with his back to a bit of earth with his hands half raised. He was smiling a little, though he had been stabbed through the belly and was stone dead . . . Victory! . . . some of the German dead were young boys, too young to be killed for old men's crimes, and others might have been old or young. One could not tell, because they had no faces, and were just masses of raw flesh in rags and uniforms. Legs and arms lay separate, without any bodies thereabouts. . . .
> Victory? . . .[205]

This chilling description of coming across dead German soldiers reads very much like the corporeal embodiment of a Cubist painting. The co-mingling of guns, earth, machines, bodies, limbs; the uncanny smile of the dead soldier propped upright; the hyper-reality (and therefore almost *un*reality) of the scene—every aspect of this description reflects a Cubist aesthetic.[206]

There is a clear relationship between the imagery of Cubism and World War I. As Cubists like Picasso sought to portray the world around them—to capture a moment of perception rather than to re-create an entire [imaged, or remembered] image—depictions of war, or at least, associations with war, became prevalent. Gertrude Stein described the difference between Cubism and life as follows: "One sees what one sees, the rest is a reconstruction from memory and painters have nothing to do with reconstruction; nothing to do with memory, they concern themselves only with visible things and so the cubism of Picasso was an effort to make a picture of these visible things and the result was disconcerting for him and for the others."[207] The fragmented style of Cubism was therefore a reaction to, in part, the fragmented state of war-torn Europe. Cubism, a famed component of the ballet *Parade*, represents one iteration of modern artists' reflections of a mutation or

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[205] Philip Gibbs, English war correspondent, "Minor Advance on the Somme" (July 2, 1916), in *Now It Can Be Told*, 364-365.

[206] Though not Cubist, see also the poem "Dead Man's Dump," originally published in 1922 by Jewish poet Isaac Rosenberg for a visceral, artistic rendering of war-torn bodies.

[207] Stein, *Picasso*, 41-2.

fragmentation of the body. However, it is the dancing bodies themselves in *Parade*, combined with a Cubist aesthetic, that portray the turbulent state of Europe at the end of the war.

Parade represents a spirit, a feeling. It is not merely a "Cubist" ballet, it is not simply an exercise or experiment in the avant-garde. Rather, *Parade* is a postwar ballet, a corporeal representation of urban European life in 1917. When the Cathedral of Reims—one of France's major cultural and religious landmarks—was bombed in April 1917, pacifist Romain Rolland, exiled in Switzerland during the war, wrote of the devastation: "A piece of architecture like Reims is more than one life; it is a people—whose centuries vibrate like a symphony in this organ of stone."[208] The bombing of Reims, like so many other catastrophic losses in France, represented an [attempted] obliteration of the past. As Rolland poetically wrote, there is a vitality—an *élan vital*—that "vibrate[s]" within such a space, and that encapsulates the lives of so many generations. *Les Ballets Russes* entered into such a space when they returned—to their adopted home of Paris—for their first season since the outbreak of war. At this time, there was a battle being waged, not just amongst the powers of Europe, but amidst artistic communities. Jean Cocteau wrote,

> Each leave (I was with the army in Belgium) plunged me back into that amazing pot of contradictory forces, of inner strife between Cubist painters and writers who upturned a whole order, and substituted for it a new order on the margin of every political belief. A period when 'the new spirit' seemed like a disorder, and which was one day to be called the Heroic Period. It is difficult to understand with the passing of time that the battle of *Parade*, for example, in 1917 . . . coincided with Verdun, and that behind the lines an exemplary spiritual front had formed.[209]

[208] Romain Rolland, *Above the Battle* (Chicago, 1916), 24-25.

[209] Cocteau, *Journals*, 46-7

This "new order," this "exemplary spiritual front" was in part, a reaction to a representation of the modern *physis*. Massine's choreography in *Parade* was a first attempt at performing this modern *physis*. In examining the specific placement of *Parade* within its broader historical context (1917 France, immediately following World War I), I argue for a consideration of the ballet, not as purely avant-garde experimentalism and a [controversial] introduction of Cubism to the concert stage, but as *a theorization of the postwar body*, physically, sonically, conceptually, and visually enacted through the choreographed meeting point between death and vitality.

***Parade*: Controversy and Choreographic Analysis**

On May 18, 1917 Massine, Cocteau, Satie, and Picasso premiered *Parade* to an audience of Parisian elites and *mutiles des guerres* at the *Théâtre du Châtelet* in Paris. A seemingly simple ballet, *Parade* self-reflexively takes as its subject the theater, revealing the failed attempts of managers and performers to attract an audience. From its premiere, controversy abounded, with audiences dramatically divided: was the ballet a superficial flop, or a work brimming with avant-garde complexity?

On the London premiere of *Parade* at the Empire Theater in 1919, a critic quipped,

> It would be difficult to convey on paper any real or precise idea of the new ballet entitled "Parade" . . . To those who attempt to keep pace with ultra modern movements in art, the names of Erik Satie, who has composed the music, and Pablo Picasso, who is responsible for the decoration, should perhaps be significant enough. Those simple-minded souls, however, who cannot penetrate very far into the mysteries of the grotesque and the bizarre à la Russe—who cherish a fondness, let us say, for Chopin's "Les Sylphides" or Scarlatti's "Good-Humoured Ladies"—must perforce turn to the synopsis on the programme for commonplace, unemotional information.[210]

[210] Anonymous staff writer for "The Variety Stage: *Parade*," *The Stage (Archive: 1880-1959)* (20 November 1919), 12.

Such a critique, not of *Parade* itself, but of its viewers, represents one of the major themes in the legacy of the ballet's reception. The divide between critics and supporters of the ballet appears vast. Critics who saw the ballet as superficial at best, disastrous at worst, placed blame on the *Ballets Russes* collaborators (Massine, Cocteau, Satie, Picasso, and Diaghilev) for the perceived failure. To counter, supporters of the project accused negative critics of being, as the above reviewer described, "simple-minded souls" who did not possess the artistic taste to appreciate 'high art.' To deeply understand *Parade* is to also understand its controversial reception, both at the time of its premiere and today.

Initial audience reactions to *Parade*, as with other "scandalous" *Ballets Russes* creations (including Nijinsky's *L'après-midi du'un faune* [1912] and *Le sacre du printemps* [1913]), are infamous. In his journal Cocteau described the "infuriated house" on the night of the premiere: "He [Diaghilev] was afraid. There was good reason to be. Picasso, Satie, and myself could not reach backstage. The crowd recognized us and yelled at us. If it hadn't been for Apollinaire, his uniform and the bandage around his head—women, armed with hatpins, would have gouged out our eyes."[211] While a degree of hyperbole must always be acknowledged in accounts of *Ballets Russes* scandals, it is clear that some viewers responded with virulence.

Parade has long occupied a tenuous position in dance and art history. Touted as a ground-breaking, shocking, multi-media experiment that presented the first "Cubist ballet" (as well as the first written appearance of the word '*Surréalisme*'), *Parade* is often

[211] Cocteau, *Journals*, 52.

considered a turning point in *Ballets Russes* history.[212] Lynn Garafola asserts that "the work served as public notice of the switch in [Diaghilev's] allegiance to the avant-garde."[213] While the ballet certainly showcased a new artistic aesthetic, not only for *Les Ballets Russes* but for the avant-garde *en mass* (the novel inclusion of film and vaudeville styles on the concert stage created a clash between what was considered 'high' and 'low' culture), its actual artistic merits (its *substance* as a ballet) are often disputed. Jennifer Homans writes, "*Parade* represented a choreographic low for the Ballets Russes" citing the "flimsy conceit" of Cocteau's plot, and the fact that, as she put it "there *was* no inside. *Parade* was all surface irony and too-clever illusions, a point perhaps deliberately accentuated by Picasso's Cubist décor."[214]

Such a critique of *Parade* as a rather 'superficial' ballet remains, unfortunately, quite pervasive among more contemporary critics. According to Cocteau, the ballet was, indeed, meant to challenge viewers to engage in an intellectual/aesthetic experience *beyond* a surface level or cursory understanding of, or immediate reaction to, the piece. In an article published in *L'Excelsior* on May 18, 1917 (the day of *Parade*'s premiere) Cocteau wrote:

> Our wish is that the public may consider *Parade* as a work which conceals poetry beneath the coarse outer skin of slapstick. Laughter is natural to Frenchmen: it is important to keep this in mind and not be afraid to laugh even at this most difficult time. Laughter is too Latin a weapon to be neglected.[215]

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[212] The phrase "Until now, scenery and costumes, on the one hand, and choreography, on the other, have had only an artificial connection, but their fresh alliance in *Parade* has produced a kind of Surrealism in which I see the point of departure for further developments of this New Idea" appears in Apollinaire's program note for the ballet (Kochno, 122). However, there is some dissention as to whom the creation of the word should actually be attributed. As Picasso wrote, "The Surrealists never understood what I intended when I invented this word [Surrealism], which Apollinaire later used in print—something more real than reality." D.-H. Kahnweiler, "Conversations avec Picasso," (5 February 1933).

[213] Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, 76.

[214] Homans, *Apollo's Angels*, 328-9.

[215] Jean Cocteau, *L'Excelsior* (18 May 1917).

As the librettist suggested, *Parade* contains multiple layers; it cannot simply be understood (or appreciated) at first glance. The "poetry" which hides beneath the "slapstick" can be easily missed by viewers. Kenneth Silvers further expounds upon Cocteau's aspirations for the ballet, offering the following interpretation:

> It [the theme of *Parade*] is a parable of the travails of the avant-garde, whereby the public is not interested in making the kind of effort necessary to appreciate new (and true) art. Instead, despite the exertions of the propagandists and artists themselves, the audience remains oblivious to the spirit of a profound work, satisfied to ignore or condemn it on the basis of a superficial encounter.[216]

What Silvers describes above is an analysis of the *content* of Cocteau's libretto. However, (ironically, or intentionally, depending on whom you ask) the audience's dismissal of the spectacle is precisely what happened in *reality* as well. Just as the performers and Managers of *Parade* try and fail to lure viewers in to 'see the show,' the audience of *Parade* (both in 1917 and perhaps today) largely rejected the performance, refusing to either accept or understand the artistic experimentation unfolding before their eyes.

And yet, despite this apparent pitfall of the ballet—that the actual audience might in fact experience the same apathy and disinterest, or even contempt, as the portrayed (albeit disembodied) 'audience' within the ballet—*Parade* remains a celebrated work within the larger canon of Modernism. Is this buzz surrounding *Parade* simply due to Picasso and his Cubist creations? Does it stem from a wide-spread fascination with scandal (regardless of the subjective merits of a work of art)? Or is it the ballet's radicalism, constituted by a flagrant juxtaposition of dance, music, text, and design, that has captured scholars' interests? I would argue that, while each of these factors do explain some of *Parade*'s notoriety, the

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[216] Silvers, 118.

significance of the work truly lies in the dynamic play between surface and depth, between what is seen and heard, and what may be kinesthetically felt or understood.

The crux of one's ability to grasp at deeper meaning in *Parade* lies not in a viewer's ability to locate some inner genius in the avant-garde experimentalism of the collaboration, but in a viewer's ability to extract the significance of the corporeal body within this postwar moment. The dancing body is always placed in a specific context, but in this instance, a consideration of the historical context *offstage* is crucial to an understanding of the bodies *onstage*. If one does not examine the ballet from a critical viewpoint that specifically looks to the status (both physical and psychological) of the body in postwar Europe, then perhaps *Parade* might be read as merely superficial or slapstick.

However, as one of the first works that *Les Ballets Russes* premiered in France after World War I, the creators of *Parade* inherently produced a statement about the postwar body.[217] To dance onstage, to be alive and moving at a time when so many millions had lost their lives or become physically (and emotionally) injured or incapacitated, was to make a statement about the postwar body. Consequently, the bodies that *Les Ballets Russes* presented onstage in their 1917 season were, and *could not* have been, the same as the bodies presented in their previous prewar season in 1914: the very notion of the body itself had irrevocably shifted.

I argue that through the unique combination of [often seemingly incongruous] artistic media and methods, the collaborators of *Parade* produced a manifesto-in-motion. Their

[217] *Les Contes Russes* was performed at the *Théâtre du Châtelet* in Paris on May 11, 1917. This ballet had premiered, in parts, earlier in August 1916 at the Teatro Eugenia-Victoria in San Sebastian, and then with two additional sections in Rome in 1917. On this same performance bill was a presentation of *Firebird*, during which "Instead of being presented with a crown and scepter, as he had been hitherto, the Tsarevich would in future receive a cap of Liberty and a red flag" as a tribute to the Russian Revolution. However, this alteration was met with a "glacial reception" by Parisian audiences, and was taken out of subsequent performances. Kochno, 112; 55.

manifesto gave shape to the notion and space between vitality and death. This space is revealed to the viewer who can embrace juxtaposition, who can read the ephebism and vitality of dancing bodies onstage as a marked contrast to the mutilated bodies of war. The ballet's dynamism therefore is a product of what is occurring interstitially (rather than overtly) between chorography, music, text, and design. *Parade* is most certainly not Wagnerian *gesamtkunstwerk*. In fact, I would argue that its collaborators strove for just the opposite. In place of an all-encompassing, totalizing whole, there is fracture, a set of parts which, when viewed separately, seem to have little in common (aside from the central theme of the circus). However, behind the seemingly innocuous carnivalesque façade created by Picasso's costumes and sets, the ballet is encrypted with the dissonant, haunting memory of war, forcing viewers to embody the discomfort of a postwar reality. Returning to my definition of corporeality, the dancers of *Parade* symbolize war; they do not express war (for there is nothing overt or mimetic in their presentation of this subtext).

Disparate Elements Comingle

From its inception, Diaghilev and Cocteau (the latter more than the former) intended for *Parade* to produce gossip and scandal, much like *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1913) had four years earlier. Garafola writes, "Under the pressure of financial necessity, Diaghilev . . . sought to dazzle and tantalize [his Parisian public], counting on the allure of fashion and scandal to establish a niche for his enterprise on the Parisian firmament."[218] However, the creative impulse for *Parade* extended far beyond its potential to incite gossip and generate revenue. Diaghilev was highly influenced by both Cubism (as previously discussed) and

[218] Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, 296.

Italian Futurism, an artistic movement "in favor of the ultra-modern concepts of simultaneism, speed and dynamism."[219] Though "speed and dynamism" are certainly prevalent in *Parade*, it is simultaneity that truly characterizes this work.

In *Untwisting the Serpent*, Daniel Albright discusses *Parade* as a work that is meant to be viewed and considered *horizontally*: "Any project that involves several arts can be read either horizontally or vertically; but vertical readings of *Parade* are likely to yield confusion and various sorts of lexical outrage. It is an abyss of ismlessness: parts of it are expressionist, parts are cubist, parts are futurist, and the whole is contrived to make the parts weaken one another."[220] Albright asserts that *Parade* cannot be read as a cohesive whole; each part exists and functions autonomously from the others. There is an immediate disconnect between the viewer's visual and aural experience. Albright goes on to describe Satie's score as:

> Unpitched contrivances that interject into the domain of tonal art music a collection of sub-artistic noises, a new repertoire in acoustic semantics. Here music tries to cope with the random urgencies of urban sirens, with the information overload of a frantic typewriter and a Morse code apparatus, signaling in the void from no one in particular to no one in particular. *Parade* brought into the theater a simulation of the general background static of the twentieth century.[221]

Add to this music two acrobats, a horse (played by two dancers), the American girl (an amalgamation of iconic girls from American cinema), a Chinese Prestidigitator (sometimes referred to as a Conjurer), the French Manager (part machine, part tree, and part Diaghilev with an enormous pipe), and the American Manager (a cubist walking advertisement with a megaphone). While the American girl performs stylized movements from movies, the

[219] Marinetti, "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism" (1909), in *Modernism an Anthology*, 250.

[220] Daniel Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent: Modernism in Music, Literature, and Other* Arts (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 185.

[221] Albright, 211.

magician pulls an imaginary egg from his mouth, then his ear, then his toe, the horse performs a dainty, ironic *pas de chat* (step of the cat), and the French Manager stomps about onstage beating his cane and smoking his pipe.

Separated from historical context and the moment of its artistic creation, *Parade*'s mélange of humorous fairground characters, cacophonous sounds, and multiple, competing artistic styles (what Albright called above "an abyss of ismlessness") sounds excessive (if not disastrous). However, I argue that the ballet embraces its own excessively disastrous nature. As I endeavor to prove through my choreographic analysis, *Parade* is expressly concerned with its own failure, with the exhaustive excess of its own creation. Through a central energy which encapsulates the dynamic opposition between life and death, energy and fatigue, progress and destruction (heightened by repetition and juxtaposition), self-conscious failure emerges as an urgent (albeit nuanced) motif.

While this motif is present in multiple aspects of the ballet (in Picasso's Cubist costumes and décor, in Satie's incessant, at times Dadaist score, and in Cocteau's eerie, fatalistic libretto) these juxtapositions between life/death, energy/fatigue, progress/destruction are most clearly evidenced and kinetically felt through Massine's choreography. However, it should be noted that set, costumes, and music do play a tremendous role in cultivating the disharmonious aura that characterizes the whole piece. Black and white silent rehearsal footage from Ballet of the XX Century in 1964 reveals the ballet stripped of everything but choreography. In this extremely pared down version, there is a certain sense of frenzied energy that is missing (undoubtedly due in part to the absence of Satie's score).[222] Viewing the ballet in this way allows for a deeper understanding of how the

[222] Ballet of the XX Century rehearsal footage of *Parade*. Motion Picture, filmed at the Théatre de la Monnaie, Brussels, Belgium in 1964. Cast includes: Jorge Lefèbre (American manager), Antonio Cano (French manager), Pierre Dobreivich (Chinese magician), Andrée Marlière (American

work functioned on a collaborative level. Despite the fact that decorative, musical, and choreographic elements seem disparate, it is actually the coalescence of these elements which, paradoxically, produces a feeling of [uneasy] cohesion within the work.

Unless otherwise noted, the choreographic analysis that follows is of a full version, based off of Massine's reconstruction of *Parade* for the Joffrey Ballet in 1997, which, according to Massine, differs only in the "scientific part." That is, what Massine added in the Joffrey version was his theory of harmonic counter-point, a system he only formally developed many years after the initial creation of *Parade*. He explained, "Everybody asks me, 'Is that [the] original production?' I say, 'Of course it is [the] original production.' Because they saw the dramatic part, and that is [the] original production; there is no change. But the scientific part: how to orchestrate; how to treat the movement of the body in relation to the legs, that is the work of this theory."[223]

Death and Vitality: Dancing, Not Dying

Audiences are first greeted by Picasso's now-famous drop curtain, which displays an amalgam of various Latin influences, including *Commedia dell'arte*, and a patriotically French color scheme of predominantly red, white, and blue.[224] Featuring harlequins,[225] a Moor, a Pegasus and its baby, and a ballerina with wings (reminiscent of *La Sylphide*)

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girl), Franco Romano and Franky Arras (Horse), Marie-Claire Carrié and Vittorio Biagi (Acrobats). *MGZHB8-1000, no 231-232, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbin's Dance Division.

[223] Massine, Hunt interview.

[224] Silvers discusses the multiple stylistic influences of the curtain at length, *Esprit,* 119.

[225] At this time, Massine was already familiarizing himself with themes of *Commedia dell'arte* and the harlequin, which would be the themes of his 1920 ballet *Pulcinella,* and the subject of the following chapter.

together on a stage, the curtain is the first allusion to the ballet's self-referencing (a theme that appears throughout the work). Before the movement begins, Satie's score features a sweet melody with soaring high notes and whimsical trills. Such harmonious sounds are in stark contrast to the music that follows, lulling an unsuspecting audience into a false sense of calm serenity.

Picasso's first Cubist creation, the French Manager, made to resemble Diaghilev, enters. With the front of a [Cubist] man and the back of a tree, the mustachioed French Manager is dressed in what might be interpreted as a tuxedo, one hand gripping a cane, the other an oversized pipe held (by a large, prosthetic black limb) to his mouth. Walking, stomping, and jumping, the Manager forcefully beats out accompanying accentuations with his cane.[226] His movement consists mostly of syncopated steps back and forth, some casual *ronds de jambes à terre*, light skips with turned in feet and bent knees, and some play with turning the feet and legs in and out, weight on his heels. Most of the movement is restricted to below the knee, with the primary emphasis on the audible connection of the foot or heel to the floor.

In the character of the French Manager (and the American Manager who will follow), Massine established a choreographic fragmentation of the body. For the Managers, movement occurs primarily in the feet, and a connection to the ground is emphasized through the striking of the floor with both the feet and cane. This connection, however, is not "grounded" [in the positive sense of modern dance], but rather antagonistic; the floor exists

[226] All descriptions of movement reference: *Parade* (1917), choreography by Léonide Massine, set and costume design by Pablo Picasso, music by Erik Satie, and libretto by Jean Cocteau. Version performed by the Joffrey Ballet in 1997 at the Chicago Lyric Opera House. Paris Manager: Michael Anderson, Conjurer: Calvin Kitten, New York Manager: Sam Franke, Little American Girl: Nicole Duffy, Manager on Horseback: Adam Sklute and Todd Stickney, Acrobats: Maia Wilkins and Tom Mossbrucker. Vimeo. Video access curtesy of Nicole Duffy Robertson.

as a surface to attack and rebound off of. As in Benjamin's "To the Planetarium," the relationship to the ground (or to the earth) is one of annihilation, rather than communion. We might think of Massine's choreography for the Managers as manifestations of Benjamin's *modern physis* as the machinic techno-body is used *against* the earth and nature. Even in the French Manager's playfully rhythmic entrance sequence, there is an abruptness (and almost violence) in the way that the lower half of the body acts as a severed segment, beating out a physical score; like phantom limbs, the feet and cane have little to do with the rest of the body.

After the Manager has processed across the stage, the tone of the music shifts, introducing some of Cocteau's "noise machines."[227] The score now incorporates high-pitched, cacophonous sirens and the resounding clash of cymbals played over a short, repetitive melodic cycle. Massine's choreography speeds up during this section of the score, but the primary movement remains the same, with small accentuated steps moving continuously forward and backward, side-to-side, in a circle, and across the stage. Despite the quickened tempo of both the music and the movement, the sonic weight of the sirens and cymbals paired with the dancer's stamping imbue the scene with a hollow, tired feeling. Instead of appearing whimsical, this scene produces a sense of exhaustion, anxiety, and a sort of frenetic, yet leaden quality. As the Manager continues to strike the floor with his cane, he only occasionally succeeds in synching up his movement to what would [seemingly] be the accompanying crash of the cymbal. Here Massine purposefully works *against* the music in

[227] Though originally intended to actually include various sound effects which Satie termed "noise machines," orchestral director Ernest Ansermet, at the behest of Diaghilev, replaced most of these noises with actual instruments. Writing to Diaghilev in 1917, Ansermet wrote of the score, "For *Parade* you will manage the jangle in whatever way local facilities allow. In Madrid, I had the woodwinds and brasses take over the 'typewriters,' and I replaced the 'wheel of fortune' with a rattle; 'squishy puddles' were achieved with cymbals and sponge-tipped drumsticks, and the bottle-phone became a combination of celesta and campanelli; organ pipes were replaced by a contra bassoon." Quoted in Kochno, *Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes,*" 120.

order to create a feeling of tension and uneasiness. Massine denies the audience that customary, mild cathartic experience when music and movement crescendo together in harmony. Despite the Manager's persistence, he succumbs to the weight and burden of the cumbersome costume (ten feet tall) and the repetitive movements. His "failure" is made palpable through an energetic shift, the physical realization of the tense relationship between Massine's movements and Satie's score.

As the sirens subside, the Manager makes his way off stage-left, with a light, waltzing step (as though he has suddenly recovered). As he exits, the Chinese Prestidigitator, originally played by Massine, bounds onto the stage from behind a white curtain.[228] Face painted white with exaggerated, dark features, the Prestidigitator is dressed in a red, white, and yellow tunic with contrasting black, and yellow bottoms. The Chinese Prestidigitator's costume extends the over-arching theme of circularity (life eliding with death, progress eliding with destruction, etc.) that pervades the ballet. First, there are the whorls (the curving, almost swell-like or tentacular designs) found on the costumes of both the Chinese Prestidigitator and the Acrobats. Picasso's sketches for the Prestidigitator depict his tunic with four whorls, all beginning from the right corner of the costume, with three curving outwards, and one curving inward. Though significantly smaller, these whorls continue along the bottom of the tunic, like scalloping, with three on each side.

All the whorls curve inward toward the center line of the body, with the two largest positioned in the middle, hanging directly in front of the groin. In his analysis of the costumes, Albright surprisingly does not comment of these bottom-most whorls (seemingly the most anatomically-suggestive of all). However, he does propose an underlying auto-

[228] The Chinese Conjurer or Prestidigitator, whom Massine often played, is one of his most famous roles with *Les Ballets Russes*.

erotic element within Picasso's designs. As he notes, in 1917 Picasso and Cocteau spent time together in Rome during rehearsals for the ballet. While there, the two men "seem to have spent a good deal of time drawing penises, evidently imitating each other's designs. One of Cocteau's penises is so erect that it is impossibly recurved—twisting back into the shape of the Chinese Conjuror's whorls."[229] Although these swirling whorls are much more accentuated in Picasso's designs than in the actual costume, they remain. Suggesting the futility of auto-eroticism (as an act in which the energy of sexuality is met only by a void of reproductive possibility), this subtle costume design playfully winks at one of the major themes of the ballet: the duality between vitality and death.

Behind these white whorls, which take up much of the foreground of the tunic, are bright yellow rays, shooting out from the center point of the top. His black pants contain yellow, gently curving lines, as if presenting a stylized river or stream. Atop his head is perched a red, yellow, and black eight-pronged, three-tiered hat—a shortened version of a jester's cap—with the very top tier reminiscent of a Fleur-de-lis.[230] Together this stylized,

[229] Albright, 188. While I see the possibly more suggestive design elements (discernible only to the viewer with the already-keen eye) as little more than a naughty nod to human sexuality (we see this sort of decontextualized sexual imagery in both subtle and explicit ways in the works of numerous Modernist artists like Duchamp and Dali), Albright sees the auto-erotic loop as a more prominent theme within *Parade*. He later adds that, while most of the "homosexual subtext" was either removed from or anesthetized within the context of the ballet, "Cocteau kept a photograph near his desk of an agile man committing auto-fellatio—and in some sense the various loops that circle around *Parade* are futuro-cubist reimaginings of a compact sexual knot" (214). For more on the auto-erotic elements in *Parade* see: Albright, 186-189 and 212-215.

[230] In actual creation, the hat seems to have lost this fleur-de-lis resemblance, as seen in pictures of Massine as the Prestidigitator in 1917. However, it did become more pronounced, one again, in the Joffrey's revival of the ballet in the 1970s.

geometric garb presents a Cubist imagining of the racist, Imperialist stereotype of the 'wise Chinese magician' with a touch of Parisian flair.[231]

The Prestidigitator's movement sequence begins with swift, angular flicks of the leg (from the knee joint down), pantomime (a 'magic act' of swallowing an egg), and a general sense of restricted physicality with [almost uncomfortable] exactitude. Very rarely does a movement flow from the horizontal into the vertical plane, or vice versa (he often seems trapped between invisible panels, unable to break out of either the frontal or sagittal plane). Like the Manager, he too moves through turned in and turned out positions of the legs, but with a more stilted quality (not jerky like the French Manager, but rather with a sort of sterile precision). There is a distinct lack of emotional feeling or fluidity in his movements; nothing that he does is extraneous. The Prestidigitator repeatedly returns to a first position turn out, which, when paired with the other movements, looks decidedly odd, as if Massine is emphasizing the un-natural quality of ballet. This entire movement sequence, in fact, could be viewed partially as a parody of the strictures of ballet. The constant return to first position (as opposed to the more "natural" parallel position of modern dance), the jarring precision (often associated with the virtuosic ballerina), and the inability to transition smoothly between planes of movement, are all stylistic elements that modern choreographers were attempting to break away from. As one of the leading figures in this movement (inspired by Fuller, Duncan, and Fokine), Massine was undoubtedly aware of the irony within his choreography.

[231] A similarly Imperialist depiction of Chinese characters can be found in the *Nutcracker* during the dance of "Chinese Tea." Jumping out of a tea pot and wobbling their heads, the Chinese dancers in George Balanchine's *Nutcracker* from 1954 (based off Petipa's 1892 version) present an "exotic," comedic (or, more precisely, ridiculing) vision of Chinese culture.

Toward the end of his sequence, he performs a harsh, repetitive chopping motion. With his left hand held out flat in front of his waist (elbow at a right angle), his right hand comes sharply swinging down in a vertical motion, as he simultaneously jumps in a wide second position, his head and upper body bending alternately to the left and right. According to Deborah Rothschild in *Picasso's "Parade,"* in an unused stage direction for the end of the Conjurer's section "he cuts off his head and bows."[232] While this chopping movement sequence is slightly different, it seems that it is perhaps an echo of a similar sentiment. Such a motion brings to mind ideas of self-sacrifice (for the war), performative labor, futility, and perhaps an inherent violence that undergirds the movements (I will return to this idea later in this chapter). Accompanying many of his movements with facial expressions evocative of grimaces or silent screams, his whole performance takes on a sinister, occult tone.

The second manager (American) then comes out from stage left. This Manager holds a megaphone and a sign that reads "Parade" (introducing the motif of self-referentiality that returns throughout the ballet). Like the French Manager, he consists of two sides: one, a 'man' with a black stovepipe hat, the other a conglomeration of lilting skyscrapers that resemble sections of Picasso's backdrop for the ballet. While his movements are similar to that of the French Manager, they contain a more lively, springy quality. He also lifts his legs up off the ground, taking wider steps (perhaps representing a sort of American sensibility about conquering space). In a variation on the French Manager's section, the score for the American Manager also shifts halfway through, adding back in the *bruit* of sirens and more hurried movement. The American Manager seems more off-balance, continually lurching forward, as if remaining upright is a laborious task. Throughout his section, his megaphone

[232] Deborah Rothschild, *Picasso's "Parade": From Street to Stage* (London: Sotheby's Publications, 1991), 91.

almost always remains raised to his mouth. However, at two separate points during this more cacophonous section, he drops the megaphone down, momentarily succumbing to his fatigue. As he exits the stage, he tiptoes off, seemingly more exhausted than the French Manager.

The American girl then enters, her costume more "realistic" than the rest. Wearing a blue and white sailor-inspired top and skirt, she appears just like a character out of one of the silent films she references.[233] Miming a series of iconic film images, she moves quickly and with a vivacity only accentuated by the over-sized, bouncing bow atop her head. In the Ballet of the XX Century film especially, Andrée Marlière (playing the part of the American Girl) moves in an incredibly athletic manner, constantly twisting inward in a never-ending stream of centripetally-spiraling movement. Despite the fact that her steps are contained to a relatively small area of the stage, her wide-spread arm movements give her a sense of expansive space, while her fast footwork below resembles the quick, incessant popping of fireworks.

Despite the alacrity of her movements, there are several, clearly discernible movement sequences wherein Massine pays homage to both film imagery and pedestrian movement. Such images include: typewriting (to the sounds of a real typewriter) while laying on her back, one leg up in the air in *attitude*; playfully shooting a pistol multiple times (to the sound of gunshots), followed by a pirouette and a quick smile; a fist-fight with herself that lands her sprawled out on her back, legs open; two iconic *Swan Lake*- esque chugs backward in second arabesque; and, finally, quite an unceremonious skipping exit back offstage after a long sequence of rolling around on the ground, legs often spread wide to the audience. While there is perhaps nothing overtly violent in the dance of the American Girl, undeniably

[233] Picasso never actually created a sketch for the American girl's costume, and it was in fact purchased only the day before the premiere at Williams, a sportswear shop. Kochno, 120.

included are multiple, distinctively pugnacious pantomimes (pulling a bow and arrow, shooting a pistol, and multiple fist-fights), always paired with a quick flash of her coquettish smile. The references to American cinema—particularly the *Perils of Pauline*, as many writers have pointed out—are abundant.[234] However, there seems to be a darker side to this ingénue than simple film allusions. Notes on Satie's score for this section, titled "Steamship Ragtime" ("*Ragtime du paquebot*"), suggest an underlying tone of melancholy. As Roger Shattuck has pointed out, "Despite humorous syncopations and an exaggerated climax, these jazz passages bear the direction 'sad.'"[235] Here again we see a juxtaposition between surface and depth; the lively rhythm of jazz music undergirded by sadness.

According to critic Simone de Caillavet in a 1917 review of the ballet, the dance of the little American girl was "epileptic," the same term Benjamin used to describe the *modern physis.* Caillavet wrote, whe "symbolizes . . . the vibration of a particularly agitated nation and the feverish activity of a century that is enterprising, sporty, and hurried."[236] Despite, the cute, kitsch persona of the American girl, Caillavet clearly identifies a mischievous (possibly bordering on menacing) aspect to her character; beneath a culture that is "enterprising" and "sporty," there lies a nation "agitated" and "feverish." That such a feeling might be epitomized in the character of a little girl (herself not entirely innocent, if the extent to which she presents her spread legs directly to the audience is any indication) suggests a corruption

[234] Juliet Bellow specifically discusses *Parade*'s relationship to film in her chapter "Moving pictures: Pablo Picasso and *Parade*" in *Modernism on Stage*, 87-127.

[235] Roger Shattuck, *The Banquet Years: The Origins of the Avant-Garde in France from 1885 to World War 1*, revised Editions (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 157.

[236] Simone de Caillavet, "Ballets Russes" (25 May 1917). Quoted in Bellows, 110.

of innocence.[237] In Massine's choreography for the little American girl we see a warped vision of youth, literally playing at war, with seemingly no comprehension of the consequences.

The tone of *Parade* then shifts significantly with the entrance of the Cubist horse. This section occurs in complete silence, heightening the absurdity of the life-sized horse, played by two men. Interestingly, this horse was originally meant to be ridden by a third 'Negro Manager.' However, after falling off during rehearsal, the Manager was cut out.[238] Rearing up onto its hind legs, shaking its backside, and then looking to the audience, as if for approval or compliments, the horse historically elicited laughter from audiences. I view the horse as the only section of *Parade* that is truly meant as innocent entertainment.[239] Movements such as a *pas de chat* (step of the cat) and a deep bow at the end seem to jokingly mock the traditions of French court ballet (this sort of mocking is further heightened by the overly presentational quality of the two acrobats later on).[240] As mentioned earlier, Cocteau was keenly aware of the importance of laughter, even in times of strife. Therefore, it seems perfectly natural for such a moment of pleasure-for-the-sake of pleasure to exist in this ballet (a work, after all, created from contradictions).

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[237] Jean Cocteu noted that he was accused in the press of inciting 'erotic hysteria' in his character of the American girl. "As a rule the shipwreck scene and that of the cinematographic trembling in the American dance were taken to be spasms of delirium tremens." *Cock and Harlequin*, 37.

[238] Kochno specified that there was a "mannequin rider, which had been poorly made, [who] fell off its horse, which made the audience laugh and made Picasso decide to leave it out" (120). The horse itself is now sometimes referred to as the "third Manager."

[239] Subtext of "man as beast" could possibly be inferred, but it seems that the horse was a lighthearted attempt to truly please the audience.

[240] Cocteau wrote in *Cock and Harlequin* that the acrobats represent "a parody of Italian pas de deux," 29.

Finally, the pair of Acrobats enter. While the garb of the Chinese Prestidigitator clearly associated him with nature (and a stereotypical 'mysticism'), the acrobats seem to be associated with the celestial. With a solid blue background, the bodysuits (very similar for the man and woman, with the exception that the female acrobat had her designs directly hand-painted onto her tights by Picasso) feature the same whorls, along with several stars. As they enter, the female acrobat is perched atop the shoulder of the male, one leg and both arms outstretched, almost as if she is flying. Cocteau seems to have been, in fact, expressly interested in the Acrobats' relationship to flight. In a note written to Satie he discussed:

> Médrano—Orion—two biplanes in the morning . . . the archangel Gabriel balancing himself on the edge of the window . . . the diver's lantern . . . Sodom and Gomorrah at the bottom of the sea . . . the meteorologist—the telescope . . . the parachutist who killed himself on the Eiffel Tower—the sadness of gravity—soles of lead—the sun—man slave of the sun.[241]

While the note begins with the promise and excitement of technology—"two biplanes in the morning"—Cocteau goes on to express a sort of tragic modern relationship to the sky/earth: "the parachutist who killed himself on the Eiffel Tower—the sadness of gravity." Cocteau's note clearly draws upon similar themes as Benjamin's modern physis. The parachutist, an attempt to make man into a plane, ends in destruction. The Acrobats perhaps in some sense also embody such a desire (partially failed) to teste gravity and the limits of the human body.

This flying motif continues throughout the Acrobats' section as the female is manipulated by the male, spending very little time actually on the ground. The female also performs an extended section of movement where she mimics walking on a tightrope. *En pointe*, she precariously walks, arms outstretched, across the invisible rope. As she travels, she steadies her balance with her arms, performs some hops *en pointe*, and then tumbles. When she falls, she performs a curious movement sequence in which she stumbles, leaps to

[241] Cocteau in a note to Satie, quoted in Rothschild, 83-85.

the ground while turning in mid-air, and lays on her back with knees bent, and feet up, arms covering her face as if in a protective position. She then rolls over onto her stomach in a fully prostrate position, and then rolls once again onto her back, assuming the previous position of the legs and arms, before springing back up. This sort of 'playing-dead' seems to wink at death. Unlike the parachutist, when this acrobat falls, she cannot actually die. Together, the pair also swing and leap on imaginary trapezes, with the male at one point falling himself. When he falls, he too 'mocks' death, lifting his body up into an inverted pike position on his back before jumping up again. The pair exits in the same position that they entered, with the female held aloft by the male, "the sadness of gravity" tested, and evaded.

In the final moments of the ballet, the two Managers enter from opposite sides of the stage, performing repetitions of their characteristic footwork patterns while travelling across the floor. The music suddenly speeds up, and the Managers frantically attempt to keep pace, stomping forcefully and moving with a greater sense of agitation. This tempo increase is more pronounced and exaggerated than before, seemingly catching the Managers off-guard. The music then cuts out completely, and the Managers step to either side of the stage, respectively. Each character then enters again, one at a time, beginning with the American Girl, for what initially appears as a more vigorous reprisal of his or her original performance. What begins as frenetic dancing disintegrates into pathetic flailing, however, as if they are exhaustedly 'marking' the steps. By the end, all the characters are onstage, each left either lurching forward, lilting to the side, or falling to the ground, repeating similar movement sequences over and over again as the stage slowly darkens.

The Unrelenting Progress of Failure

Parade is, essentially, a ballet about failure. One might read this failure in multiple ways: the failure of a Right Bank (i.e. conservative, classicist) Parisian audience to understand or appreciate avant-garde experimentalism, the failure of a tired carnival performer to generate excitement in a crowd, even the failure of European society to prevent the loss of so many lives during the war. For his part, Kenneth Silvers even accuses the *Parade* collaborators themselves of a failure of judgment, arguing that they failed to accurately anticipate how Parisian audiences would react. He writes, "Its authors' intentions had been to *pique*, to surprise, but finally to charm the audience and not to antagonize it. Cocteau, Picasso, Satie, and Diaghilev had been neither oblivious to the audience's reaction nor disdainful of it: they had merely miscalculated it."[242] Here I disagree with Silvers on two accounts: first, that Diaghilev (along with the other collaborators) were unintentional in the effects that they produced, and second, that the collaborators had intended purely to "charm" audiences. Diaghilev famously said to Jean Cocteau "Astound me" and, as Albright aptly notes "*Astound me* is the sort of demand that loosens the genre contract: an audience that wishes astonishment can't ask for any sort of expected delight, only for Something Completely Different."[243] The mayhem that occurred at the premiere sounds strikingly similar to what happened during *Le Sacre du printemps* in 1913, and what would later happen during Massine's *Mercure* in 1924.

> In a vein that was typical of wartime Paris, [the audience] booed the production, shouting "métèques," "boches," "trahison," "art munichois," "embusqués," and every other epithet that signified unpatriotic behavior. Some witnesses even

[242] Silvers, 119.

[243] Albright, 37. In his own journal, Cocteau wrote of this exchange between himself and Diaghilev: "he [Diaghilev] stopped, adjusted him monocle, and said to me: 'Surprise me,' The idea of surprise, so entrancing in Apollinaire, had never occurred to me. In 1917, the evening of the premiere of *Parade*, I surprised him." *Journals,* 52.

> claim—no doubt apocryphally—that the audience was on the verge of assaulting the performers until Apollinaire—uniformed, bandaged, decorated—mounted the stage and intervened on behalf of the cast.[244]

I argue that this reaction does not represent a misjudgment on the part of Diaghilev et al, but rather, the fulfillment of yet another *succès de scandale* for *Les Ballet Russes*.[245]

While Silvers sees the efforts of *Parade* as an unavoidable failure which the collaborators should have foreseen, I believe a sense of "failure" is actually a feature self-consciously built into the ballet.[246] Though it by no means contains the dramatic conventions of a tragedy, *Parade* does not end happily; ultimately the characters do not 'succeed' in winning over the excitement of the invisible audience. The ballet ends with the two Managers, exhausted, acknowledging that they have not attracted any new audience members—nobody has come in to see the show. The ballet admits defeat in its final moments; on a meta-level, Cocteau's narrative *anticipates* the forthcoming reaction from the [real] audience, predicting that viewers may not be able to look past the surface and engage

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[244] Silvers, 116.

[245] Additionally, there are many who say that the premiere was a success. Massine himself claimed that the premiere of *Parade* was well-received, with reviewers acknowledging and appreciating the novelty, and "the serious undertones, . . . [they] recognized the efforts we had made to synthesize the new art forms." Massine, *My Life,* 111. Gertrude Stein also said of the ballet: "It had a great success, it was produced and accepted, of course, from the moment it was put on the stage, of course, it was accepted." "Picasso" (1938), in *Picasso*, 62.

[246] Silvers in fact seems to belittle the intelligence of *Ballets Russes* collaborators and their knowledge of and experience with audience reactions over the past seven years in France. Perhaps if success is determined merely by the amount of revenue generated, then in this sense, the *Ballets Russes* 'failed' due to its short performance run. However, it is difficult to believe that Diaghilev merely sought to please and entertain his audience. The Impresario renowned for his flirtations with scandal and his desire to constantly shock audiences undoubtedly had an idea of the type of reaction *Parade* might cause, and would be especially attune to audience reactions in the first post-war season. In my opinion, Silvers underestimates the forethought that was put into the ballet, failing to acknowledge that even if *Les Ballets Russes* pursued financial success, they equally pursued the buzz that yet another 'shocking,' even initially displeasing, ballet (like *Faune* or *Le Sacre* previously) would generate.

with the performance on a deeper level. This admittance of failure, thematically built into the work itself, hints at a sense of futility, arguably derived from the past three years of war in Europe.

I believe that it is not an 'interpretation,' but rather fact, to glean this meaning from the ballet. The program synopsis, based on Cocteau's libretto, stated:

> *Le décor représente les maisons à Paris un dimanche. Théâtre forain. Trois numéros de music-hall servent de parade.*
> ***Prestidigitateur chinois.***
> ***Petite fille américaine.***
> ***Acrobates.***
> *Trois managers organisent la réclame. Il se communiquent dans leur langage terrible que la foule prend la parade pour le spectacle intérieur et cherchent grossièrement à le lui faire comprendre.*
> *Personne ne se laisse convaincre.*
> *Après le numéro final, suprême effort des managers.*
> *Chinois, acrobates et petites filles sortent du théâtre vide.*
> *Voyant le krach des managers, ils essayent une dernière fois la vertu de leurs belles grâces.*
> *Mais il est trop tard.*
>
> *Parade*. Realist ballet.
> The scene represents the house of Paris on a Sunday.
> *Théâtre forain*. Three music hall numbers serve as the Parade.
> Chinese prestidigitator.
> Acrobats.
> Little American girl.
> Three managers organize the publicity. They communicate in their extraordinary language that the crowd should join the parade to see the show inside and coarsely try to make the crowd understand this.
> No one enters.
> After the last act of the parade, the exhausted managers collapse on each other. The Chinese, the acrobats, and the little girl leave the empty theatre. Seeing the supreme effort and the failure of the managers, they in turn try to explain that the show takes place inside.[247]

[247] Translation by Silvers, 117 (emphasis mine). Attempts to clarify the synopsis seem to have been made in the years following the ballet's premiere. In a 1919 program note for a performance of the ballet (ironically titled here "Parade. A Merry Display," instead of the more typical "ballet réaliste") at The Alhambra, the description reads:

"The original idea of Parade dates from the eighteenth century. When wealthy courtiers were indulging their taste for entertainment in the Palaces it was customary for a few performers to entertain the common people outside. In the same way at Country Fairs it is usual for a dancer or acrobat to give a performance in front of the booth in order to attract people to the turnstiles. The same idea brought up to date and treated with accentuated realism underlies the ballet "Parade." The

In a sense, we might interpret this "supreme effort and failure" as an allegory for the war itself. "It was in the battles of Verdun and the Somme that the horrors of war reached a stage previously beyond imagining."[248] In 1916, the Battle of Verdun, fought between the Germans and the French, took the lives of approximately 400,000 men on each side. The Battle of the Somme, also fought in France in 1916, resulted in what would become a record in British military history: 58,000 British causalities, with about 20,000 occurring in one day alone. "Together the battles of Verdun and the Somme came to epitomize for many the futility of trench warfare and the madness of modern industrial warfare. In two years of war, much of the north of France had been turned into a moon landscape, and millions had died or suffered crippling wounds. Yet the generals were preparing plans for new offensives."[249] Created a year after the battles of Verdun and the Somme and the death of millions, *Parade* is undeniably a reaction to, through abstract physicalization, the broken spirits, bodies, and cities of a world at war. Failure, futility, death, exhaustion, and yet, an energy to continue pushing on (for better or worse) seem to partially define the *élan vital*, not only of *Parade*, but of this moment in European history.

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scene represents a Sunday Fair in Paris. There is a travelling theatre, and three music-hall turns are employed as Parade. There are the Chinese conjurer, an American girl and a pair of acrobats. Three managers are occupied in advertising the show. They tell each other that the crowd in front is confusing the outside performance with the show which is about to take place within, and they try in the crudest fashion to induce the public to come and see the entertainment within, but the crowd remains unconvinced. After the last performance the managers make another effort, but the theatre remains empty. The Chinaman, the acrobats and the American girl, seeing that the managers have failed, make a last appeal on their own account. But it is too late." "Serge Diaghileff's season of Russian ballets, 1919 [Texte imprimé]: [programme], the Alhambra, London, Wednesday, April 30th to July 22nd. London: Alhambra, 1919. Bibliothèque national de France, **IFN-8415135.** *Bibliotheque national de France*, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb41336744r.

[248] Lindemann, *A History of Modern Europe* (Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2013), 192.

[249] Lindemann, 193.

Subtle Futility

These futile (or fatal) undertones within the ballet are not, however, readily evident. Again, it is only by looking to the intermingling *between* elements of the ballet that such an effect is produced. As Albright states, "The very strategy that divorces art from reality, by creating spectacles in which the stage action and the text and the music have nothing to do with one another, may terminate in a kind of seizure of reality."[250] *Parade* is a "seizure of reality" in its cubistic distortion (which is not meant to be unrealistic, but rather hyper-realistic). Cocteau refered to this as "accentuated realism" in a synopsis he wrote for the ballet.[251] One of the goals of Cubism (and so too, I would argue, *Parade*), was to *evoke* reality through unconventional modes. As Modernist author (and close friend to Picasso) Gertrude Stein explained of her work *Tender Buttons* (1913-14), the text was "an effort to describe something without naming it."[252] In a similar fashion, *Parade* is a description through kinesthetic, aural, and visual means, all of which must be experienced together.

Literary theorist and critic Terry Eagleton wrote, "Every text intimates by its very conventions the way it is to be consumed, encodes within itself its own ideologies of how, by whom and for whom it was produced."[253] *Parade* is no different. While the ballet draws on themes of war and exhaustion, its collaborators also meant for it to appeal to the sensibilities of a particular Parisian audience. In *L'Elan* on December 15, 1915, Amédée Ozenfant wrote

[250] Albright, 28 (emphasis mine).

[251] Cocteau, translated and quoted in Francis Steegmuller, *Cocteau: A Biography* (Boston: Nonpareil Books, 1986),161.

[252] Gertrude Stein's quotation, as remembered by Virgil Thomson in *A Virgil Thomson Reader* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1981), 548.

[253] Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology* (London: Verso, 1976), 48.

that art carries the "duty to be discreet about the unpleasant realities at the front."[254] Audiences did not *want* to be reminded of the horrors of war—they wanted an escape from it. *Parade* therefore operates on a level that is discreet, yet arguably still deeply evocative.

Hidden Death Drives

"*Living substance conquers the frenzy of destruction only in the ecstasy of procreation"*

— Walter Benjamin (1925/6)[255]

This discretion is achieved primarily through several prominent motifs of the ballet. As stated previously, as a theorization of the postwar body, *Parade* contains a motif of circularity; a dance back and forth between life and death, stemming of course, from the ballet's relationship with WWI. Aside from the obvious connection to war—the temporal proximity between the relative end of WWI and the ballet's premiere (with the very first performance given as a charity benefit for the *mutilés de guerre* of the eastern Ardennes region—a more subtle consideration of war is taken up in the motifs of the ballet. In *Parade*, one can witness an exuberant urge to move, to create, and ultimately, to survive, juxtaposed against the inevitability of death, or, at the very least, exhaustion and failure. Both *Parade* and war, by their very nature (one a ballet, the other a physicalization of the most extreme political strife), necessitate bodies. Dance, regardless of its form or content, requires bodies.[256] War, as a political strategy that uses the sustained life or death of the body as an indication of victory or defeat, respectively, inherently places an emphasis on the body; the

[254] Ozenfant, *L'Elan*, no. 7 (15 December 1915), 1.

[255] Benjamin, "To the Planetarium," 104.

[256] The argument can of course be made for virtual or otherwise disembodied forms of 'dance.' However, I use a more traditional sense of the term here, where 'Dance' requires a human body moving in time and space.

body becomes a site of political power, and life and death become integral to the structures of power. In *Parade*, the stage becomes the site of war [albeit stylized to the point of unrecognizability].

Sigmund Freud, whose psychoanalytic theories were circulating amongst intellectual circles during the years of *Les Ballets Russes*, famously theorized the idea of the inherent struggle between life and death within the body itself in his theory of the Death Drive versus the Pleasure Principle. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, first published in 1920 as a revision to his earlier theories,[257] Freud wrote, "We [are] dealing not with the living substance but with the forces operating in it, have been led to distinguish two kinds of instincts: those which seek to lead what is living to death, and others, the sexual instincts, which are perpetually attempting and achieving a renewal of life."[258] This "dynamic corollary," as Freud refered to it, sets up the fundamental tension between the "drives" in the body.[259] Constantly working against each other, the Pleasure Principle, which seeks only the "production of pleasure"[260] and satisfaction, and the Death Drive, which seeks only "to return to the inanimate state,"[261] inform the human experience. Cocteau and Picasso's 1917 'anatomical' sketches (which make their way into the *Parade* costumes in more innocuous

[257] As early as 1910, Freud was writing about the distinction between the Pleasure Principle and the Reality Principle; see *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey, in collaboration with Ana Freud, vol. XII (1911-1913) (London: The Hogarth Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1958), [Editor's Note] 215-217.

[258] Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1961), 55.

[259] Freud, *Pleasure Principle*, 55.

[260]Freud, *Pleasure Principle,* 3.

[261] Freud, *Pleasure Principle*, 46.

forms) certainly evoke the Freudian concept of procreative yet destructive urges, serving both the Pleasure Principle and the Death Drive simultaneously.

On a more obvious level, the setting of the ballet—a *parade* that takes place in front of an [invisible] circus—speaks to the unrelenting spirit of both performance and human life. The circus itself, as a sort of repetitive, often trudging, form of entertainment, contains a continual drive to push forward. In 1911, travel writer Arnold Bennett wrote of the circus:

> But only heavy rain can interfere with it. It persists obstinately. And the reason of it is that the Circus is the Circus. And after all, though idiotic, it has the merit and significance of being instinctive. The Circus symbolizes the secret force which drives forward the social organism through succeeding stages of evolution.[262]

Does Bennett's "instinctive," "secret force which drives the social organism" not resemble Freud's Pleasure/Death cycle? We might think of the Circus itself, and therefore the setting of *Parade*, as an inherently instinctive (and therefore universal) place in which an unrelenting, if exhausted, sense of vitality persists.

On a more subtle level, there is a certain sense of violence that lurks around the periphery, or more likely sputters below the surface, of the ballet. Cocteau wrote an entire set of spoken text for the ballet which was never used (both Diaghilev and Satie were wary to include it). Meant to be spoken by a carnival barker while the dancing took place, the text certainly provides a more explicitly macabre feeling**.** During the dance of the Chinese Prestidigitator, the following text was to be pronounced:

> A-WELL-INFORMED-MAN-IS-WORTH-TWO!
> IF-you-want-to-become-rich. IF-you-feel-sick-IF-you-
> feel-tired
> Enter-see-the-Chinese-wisdom-the-missionaries-the-dentists-
> the-plague-the-gold-the-gongs.
> The-pigs-that-eat-little-children-the emperor-of-China-

[262] Arnold Bennett, *Paris Nights and Other Impressions, Of Places and People* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1913), 108.

in-his-armchair.
The-people-who-did-not-participate-at-the beginning-of-
the-show-can-remain-seated
Enter-see THE KING OF DRAMAS-THE GREAT SUCCESS OF LAUGHTER
AND FEAR[263]

Furthermore, during this same section, Satie's score contains the written words: "They gouge out his eyes, tear out his tongue" followed shortly after by the word "*bruit,*" accompanied by the sounds of a spinning lottery wheel.[264] This monologue, with its appeal to the poor, the sick, and the tired to come and see a grotesque, if not gruesome, 'freak show' reverberates with markedly more sinister undertones when paired with the indications in the score. The incorporation of the sounds of the lottery wheel seems to suggest a sort of death lottery; in the war, death is simply one unlucky spin away, if the child-eating pigs don't get to you first. Of course, without this knowledge, the ballet retains a considerably more light, even at times humorous tone. Mark Franko's theory of encrypted meaning becomes evident in *Parade* only when a viewing of the movement is paired with Cocteau's [eventually removed] text and notes.

A Moment in Time

The recognition of such motifs of death and destruction, also of course, have much to do with *who* is watching the ballet, and where the performance is taking place. After viewing a 1921 performance of *Parade,* critic Vincent O'Sullivan suggested that the ballet was perhaps best suited for American audiences. He wrote:

> The music is ingenious, pathetic, and humorous; but Massine's work is undoubtedly the best of it. If people could take it as a farce they would be docile

[263] Rothschild, 77.

[264] Rothschild, 92.

> enough; but feeling they are expected to take it seriously, they lose their tempers. . . . I think *Parade* might be liked in America. It is inspired by the United States. It is a synthesis of George Cohan, Atlantic liners, chop-suey, and jazz band. If it were the work of Americans, it would be called typically American art. But if it were the work of Americans, it would be howled at and suppressed in America. Everyone knows that the American public will accept warmly from foreigners, books or stage plays which they would do their best to kill if they were the work of native Americans. *Parade*, presented by Russians and French, seems to me to have a good chance of success in America.[265]

O'Sullivan's comment hits on an important point about audience expectations and appropriateness. He remarks that the ballet is *meant* to be taken seriously, but that Parisian audiences couldn't, or didn't want, to treat it as such. By the very fact that *Parade* had its premiere in Paris at the end of World War I, it faced the scrutiny of audiences who wanted an escape from the harsh realities of life over the past three years, who wanted to see something familiar or reassuring. *Parade* was not that message of reassurance; it was an arduous descent into fatigue and failure, a dance of death masquerading as carnivalesque frivolity (rendering the final message of defeat even more haunting). However, for American audiences, not directly involved in the Great War, not living amongst the ruined cities just outside of Paris, this ballet did not *need* to fulfill the post-war "needs" of Parisian audiences. In what seems to be a subtle jab at the fickle or uncultured tastes of American audiences, O'Sullivan pointed out that the very fact that the ballet contains American references and comes from a "foreign" company gives it a fighting chance at being received with praise by American audiences.

The difference between French and American audience reception is crucial, and O'Sullivan's comment reminds us that *Parade* is a ballet of a certain moment. The "encryption" or more subtle motifs of the ballet, I argue, are present in all aspects of the

[265] O'Sullivan, "Exiles and Exotics in To-Day's Paris," 40.

ballet, from Picasso's costumes and decor (Cubism's legacy with war and fragmentation), to Satie's score (sounds of sirens and gunshots, the sense of fatigue built through repetition and cacophony), to Cocteau's libretto (forgotten dialogue teeming with references to death), to Massine's choreography (kinetic representations of anxiety, mania, fatigue, and violence). However, an audience's ability to "find" or interpret those motifs is based almost entirely on context: when, where, and under what circumstance one comes to view the ballet. The *experience* of performed corporeality (which has as much to do with perception as with physical reality) was vastly different for French and American audiences.

Perhaps, then, postwar corporeality in *Parade* is best understood retrospectively. *Parisian* audiences at the premiere generally disliked *Parade* because it couldn't provide relief from the war; it was a confusing, failed attempt at Modernism on stage. American audiences, and members of "high art" circles lauded the ballet's introduction of Cubism to the concert stage and its sense of utter "newness." Contemporary critics today (like Silvers and Homans) may disregard the ballet as overblown hype, a piece that missed the mark of true substance. Yet, *Parade* is a *moment in time*, a kaleidoscopic vision of War, France, America, cinema, the fragmentation of the postwar sense of self, the cacophony of life in an urbanized, Industrial world, the fatigue of modernity and its unrelentingly destructive path. Through Massine's choreography, *Parade* physicalized the frustrations of postwar Europe. *Parade* is therefore a ballet that represents the bodies and time in which it was created, not through exact replications or overt themes, but through a kinetic translation—a symbolic physicalization of feeling—expressed through the corporeal body.

Postwar Corporeality, *not* Cubist Corporeality

"The pure period of cubism, that is to say the cubism of cubes, found its final explosion in *Parade.*"

— Gertrude Stein[266]

As demonstrated throughout this chapter, *Parade* represents a pivotal shift in the aesthetics of ballet (and arguably, European contemporary art at large). While the ballet has long been praised because of its ties to Cubism and Picasso, the depiction of postwar corporeality that emerged from Massine's choreography is more than just an iteration of Cubist art. In *Parade*, Massine choreographically crafted a new image of the body reflective of a postwar era. Such an image was tethered simultaneously in visions of an alienated, detached, almost post-human body, *and* in an expressive human vitality. As stated previously, my definition of corporeality, though anchored in the movement of the body, moves beyond the physical, into the realm of the symbolic. While themes of juxtaposed vitality and death can be found throughout Modern art, Massine's choreography makes manifest a *kinesthetic understanding* of Modernity simply not available to Cubist graphic and sculptural artists. T.S. Eliot's apt assessment that Massine "symbolizes emotion" seems crucial in understanding how the choreographer moved well-beyond merely imitating Cubist art.[267] Massine's choreography showcases the postwar corporeality of the dancer, which in turn engenders a kinesthetic *experience* of anxiety, exhaustion, trauma, and vitality. Such an experience solidifies *Parade* as a ballet which expanded notions of corporeality and radically altered the presentation of the body on the European concert stage.

[266] Stein, "Picasso" (1938), in *Picasso*, 74.

[267] Eliot, "Dramatis Personae," 303 – 306.

In the following chapter I will further explore my own theorization of corporeality, specifically with regard to Massine's expansion of character and movement possibilities (unbound by stylistic categories). While *Parade* represents Massine's first steps towards choreographically defining the postwar body, his choreography over the next few years became increasingly informed by his explorations of character and gesture. Chapter 3, concerned with Massine's 1920 ballet *Pulcinella*, will explore ideas of character, style, and humanity (puppet verses human) in order to more deeply understand Massine's often-overlooked place within ballet history and Neo-Classicism.

*Chapter 3: *Pulcinella* (1920) and Re-Purposing the Character of the Fool*

"What echoes in me is what I learn with my body."[268]

– Roland Barthes

Introduction & Chapter Premise

Dance and art historians have frequently noted the prevalence of *Commedia dell'Arte* themes within the *Ballets Russes* oeuvre.[269] These carnivalesque, "grotesque" characters are seen most notably in ballets such as Fokine's *Le Carnaval* (1910) and *Petrushka* (1911), Massine's *Parade* (1917) and *Pulcinella* (1920), and Balanchine's *Jack in the Box* (1926).[270] Balletic fusions of *Commedia* were in no way unique to *Les Ballets Russes'* repertoire.[271] However, what was unique, I argue, were the ways in which the figure of the clown, or fool, became choreographically manipulated in early-twentieth century ballet. As a recurring theme in avant-garde performance (both ballet and theater) and painting (particularly among Cubists like Pablo Picasso and Futurists like Gino Severini), the resurgence of *Commedia* revealed changing perceptions of social and personal identity.[272] Moreover, particularly in

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[268] Roland Barthes, "Reverberation," in *A Lover's Discourse*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 200.

[269] An interest in the figure of the fool was expressed not only by choreographers, but also by collaborators (Satie and Cocteau) and by Picasso himself; See, Bois*, Picasso Harlequin*, in particular, "Picasso the Trickster,"19-35.

[270] In 1900, Marius Petipa created the ballet *Harlequinade*, or *Les millions d'Arlequin*, with music composed by Riccardo Drigo (Director of Music for Imperial Ballet of St. Petersburg, 1886-1904). However, Elizabeth Souritz notes that this ballet was "simple," and bore little resemblance to Fokine's work ten years later in *Carnaval*. *Soviet Choreographers*, 26-7.

[271] This chapter will briefly chronicle a history of *Commedia* in performance, particularly in Russian avant-garde theater, in the forthcoming pages.

[272] The possible subtext of Massine's choice to embody the clown will be discussed in this chapter. Picasso, too, as many art historians have chronicled, returned to the figure of the clown throughout different periods of his life. For more on Picasso's relationship with the harlequin see, Bois, "Picasso the Trickster"; Green, *Cubism and it Enemies*; Silver, *Esprit de Corps*.

the choreography of Léonide Massine, *Commedia* became a vehicle for exploring an expanded use of the expressive body in performance.

Massine's creation and portrayal of the eponymous character in his 1920 ballet *Pulcinella* showcases another iteration of the modern corporeal aesthetic he evidenced three years earlier in *Parade*. Massine now fused Italian *Commedia dell'Arte* themes and gestures with invented and authentic folk idioms, and Russian Imperial ballet (broken down and broadened to allow for greater emotive physicality). The result was a new statement on the expressive capacities of the body in *comique* or *caractère* roles. As I will continue to discuss in this chapter, "character," as fashioned by Massine, was no longer simply about stereotyped movements; there was now potential for deeper emotional, psychological expression *through* the body. Similarly, he deconstructed distinctions between "national" dances, creating an amalgamative "'super national' idiom," to borrow Lynn Garafola's term.[273] Through his own crystallizing choreographic theory, and by blurring the boundaries between *danse d'école* and "grotesque" dance, Massine achieved an agile and dynamic portrayal of Pulcinella, a character who, as in Barthes, thinks, acts, and learns *through* his body.

Commedia dell'Arte is a highly physical art form, typically privileging the body over dialogue or plot. Such an emphasis on physicality therefore lends itself well to choreographic explorations of corporeality. A brief introduction to the role of the body within *Commedia* is helpful in understanding Massine's expansion and manipulation of characters in *Pulcinella.*

[273] Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, 89.

Commedia **and the Fool/Clown: A Brief History**

"Fools, clowns, buffoons, and madmen—broadly defined—are found in the theatre of virtually every culture, but there is little doubt that these iconic figures found their most expressive home on the Italian stage."[274] While variations of *Commedia dell'Arte* existed cross-culturally for thousands of years, *Commedia* as we often think of it flourished during the Renaissance in Italy.[275] The art form features stereotypical stock characters (with which Italian audiences were familiar) who represent various aspects of human nature (deceit, greed, naivety, gluttony, etc.). As Jeanne Chenault Porter notes, "The actors of the commedia dell'arte belonged to semipermanent, often itinerant, troupes. Unlike the medieval interpreters of religious theater, they were professionals, often with specialties such as vocal, technical, or acrobatic skills. They performed in public squares, banquet halls, and theaters often collectively referred to as *stanze* (rooms)."[276]

Commedia players rely on comedy, improvisation, and masks. While *Commedia* often features intricate, farcical storylines that involve the peccadilloes of multiple characters (often switching identities), the plot is largely unimportant. Movement is featured prominently, and it is in fact through physicalization (in both costuming/masking and movement) that characters develop or reveal their identity. *Commedia*, therefore, places the physical body at the center of its 'discourse.' The play between what is masked and what is revealed is central to an understanding of character. Due to *Commedia*'s relationship with the

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[274] James Fisher, "Images of the Fool in Italian Theatre from Pirandello to Fo," *New England Theater Journal* (2000), 104.

[275] For an in-depth history on *Commedia* see, *The Routledge Companion to Commedia dell'Arte*, eds. Judith Chaffee and Olly Crick (London & New York: Routledge, 2015).

[276] Jeanne Chenault Porter, "The Naples *Pulcinella*: Mask and Mirror," in *Stravinsky's Pulcinella: A Facsimile of the Sources and Sketches*, 53.

body, the art form proved a wellspring for both avant-garde theater practitioners (like Vsevolod Meyerhold, to whom I shall return shortly) and choreographers like Massine.

Characteristically, the fool[277] himself is one of the most physical *Commedia* players: an entertainer dealing in jokes of the body, particularly through awkwardness, feigned physical ineptitude (falling, tumbling, jerking), subtle gesture, and explicit pantomime. The mental acuity of the clown—his tricks, schemes, and deceits—stem from his physical prowess. He is not an analytical being, pondering stoically before making his next move; rather, his plots are conjured and carried out *in movement*. He gambols his thoughts into action. Jean Cocteau's description of Nijinsky as the Harlequin of *Le Carnaval* (1910) gives us insight into the particular type of physicality required of such a role. In his estimation, Nijinsky appeared as:

> An acrobatic cat stuffed full of candid lechery and crafty indifference, a schoolboy (notice the collar and necktie in the Bakst water color), wheedling, thieving, swift-footed, utterly freed of the chains of gravity, a creature of perfect mathematical grace.
> Desire, mischief, self-satisfaction, arrogance, rapid bobbings of his head, and still other things, but especially a way of peering out from under the visor of the cap he wore pulled down over his eyebrows, the way one shoulder was raised higher than the other and his cheek pressed against it, the way the right hand was outstretched, the leg poised to relax . . ..[278]

The Harlequin's cunning stems from his ability to maneuver his body. Nearly every descriptor employed by Cocteau above contains some reference to physicality; his wit and wiles are inseparable from his movement. Particularly interesting is the "mathematical grace" with which he prowls, accentuated through deliberate and subtle movement of the eyebrow,

[277] I use the terms "fool," "clown," and "harlequin" here interchangeably when referring to traits that apply across multiple iterations of such characters. Each term encompass a broad range of characters, from the jester, to Harlequin/Arlecchino, to Petrushka/Pierrot (the Russian and French versions, respectively), and to Pulcinella. I will provide specific character names when applicable.

[278] Jean Cocteau, "Notes on the Ballet," as expressed to Boris Kochno, *Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes*, 40-1.

shoulder, and hand. Even the "leg poised to relax" reveals the physical calculation involved in the simple act of relaxation; each gesture or pose is carefully crafted and so as to appear nonchalant.

Aside from a reliance on the physical body, characters of *Commedia*, particularly the fool, provide a meta-discourse on the art of theater itself.[279] As James Fisher writes, "A significant and unique characteristic of fools resides within their ability to live in the world of a play, poem, or story and, at will, step out of the action or narrative to comment directly on it."[280] As an inherently self-reflexive character, the fool 'winks' to the audience, revealing the artifice of theater, even while endeavoring to entertain crowds through the same art form. Such reflexivity is seen, for example, in Picasso's early stage designs for *Pulcinella*; including a set onto which was painted an audience and proscenium stage, Picasso subtly reflected on the "meta"/satirical nature of *Commedia*.[281] While Picasso, at Diaghilev's behest, eventually removed the depiction of stage and audience from the set, the idea of the puppet theater was preserved in the final designs, thereby maintaining an element, though less obvious, of *Commedia's* self-admitted artificiality.[282]

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[279] For a brief history of the Fool, including his emergence in global theatrical performance see, Fisher, "Images of the Fool," 11. For more in depth histories of the Fool, look to: Enid Welsford, *The Fool: His Social and Literary History* (London: Faber and Faber, 1935); Allardyce Nicoll, *Masks Mimes and Miracles: Studies in the Popular Theater* (New York: Copper Square, 1963); and William Willeford *The Fool and His Scepter: A Study in Clowns and Jesters and Their Audience* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 1969).

[280] Fisher, 105.

[281] A full description of the set will be provided later in this chapter.

[282] As with *Parade*, we might think here about Dance Theorist Mark Franko's idea of *encryption* and the echoes or fragments that remain, even if they are not present in the final product of a performance. Picasso's original design intentions—to present live audiences with a false audience looking back at them—lives on in the performance, even only as a ghostly remnant.

Fisher goes on to describe the fool as "a character with the unique perspective of having one foot in and one out of the society he ridicules, the fool symbolizes a striving for empowerment over various forms of oppression and offers strategies—however comically outrageous—for surviving the unchanging and inescapable realities of life."[283] Garafola draws a parallel between the "inescapable realities of life" for the character Pulcinella and Massine himself. She writes, "In the padded, masked figure of Pulcinella, mischievously wagging his finger at the establishment, moreover, Massine found a way to express the increasing burden of his relationship with Diaghilev, while concealing his physical desirability as a man."[284] Setting aside for now any of Massine's personal resonances with the character, Massine's libretto for *Pulcinella* (based on a manuscript from the 1700s entitled *Les Quatre Polichinelles semblables*) certainly invokes the idea of the fool as a strategist for escaping life's pitfalls. Interestingly, the "strategies" offered by Pulcinella (in his attempts to evade jealous lovers) include faking his own death, and multiplying (through imposters in identical dress).

Beneath its lighthearted surface, *Pulcinella* reveals a tension between the desire for death and the desire for transformation or duplication; Pulcinella's survival is dependent on his ability to be simultaneously dead and 'many.' At one point, there are not one, but eight versions of Pulcinella (including four tiny Pulcinellas). The mask, of course, enables all of these schemes; uncovered/unmasked, Pulcinella's capers would be impossible. Notions of authenticity and identity, then, are at the core of this ballet.

[283] Fisher, 105.

[284] Garafola, "Léonide Massine's *Pulcinella*," 40.

Pulcinella

Pulcinella, the main subject of this chapter, is a distinctive figure within *Commedia* tradition. As his name suggests—"Pulcinella" originates from the Italian "pullet," translated as "chicken beak"—he is an inherently comedic character.[285] With his characteristically long, hooked nose, it is easy to see the resemblance between the character and his avian namesake.[286] 'Younger' than the Harlequin (Arlecchino), the character of Pulcinella emerged in *Commedia* tradition in the early-seventeenth century. However, Pulcinella's origins may date as far back as Ancient Rome or the Ottoman Empire. "Theater historians traced back origins of [Pulcinella's] mask to Macchus, a deformed character that represented a peasant fool, glutton, drunkard, libertine in the 'Atellan Farce,'" a collection of stories from Ancient Rome.[287] The character has appeared in many iterations globally, including as a Polichinelle in France, and as Punch (of the Punch and Judy puppet show) in England.

[285] In Neapolitan lore, it was believed that such a beak could protect against the evil eye. Porter, "The Naples *Pulcinella*," 55.

[286] As performance scholar Ninotchka Bennahum has pointed out, there is also a history of anti-Semitic iconography linked to the hooked nose. During WWII, caricatures featuring the enlarged nose of the "Christ-killer" were appropriated as a symbol for Nazi hatred. The fact that Massine embodies this figure of the oppressed "other," especially at this point in his life as he is struggling with his own sexuality and relationship with Diaghilev, is significant. I await Bennahum's future writings on Massine to further unpack this complex connection. Personal conversation with Bennahum.

[287] Nicolo Zanchi, Giovanni Zatti, Daniele Munegato, Michele Augusto Riva, "Puclinella's Secret. Further Hypotheses on the Etiology of the Double Hump in an Italian 16th-Century Mask," in *European Journal of Internal Medicine*, vol. 35 (November 2016): 34-35.

Historians have also supposed that "the hunched puppet Karagöz in the Ottoman tradition may have also influenced [Pulcinella's] mask."[288] However, Italian historian Benedetto Croce asserts that there is no ancient precedent for Pulcinella. Instead, he believes that late sixteenth - early seventeenth-century Neapolitan actor Silvio Fiorillo served as a living inspiration for the character.[289] Regardless of his specific origins, Pulcinella is always associated with the struggles of the everyday man and woman. Often portrayed as a proletarian hero of Naples, Pulcinella is "a symbol of the city. He is something of an *antimodello populare* (popular antihero)."[290] Writing of the *commedia* fool in general, James Fisher explains:

> Arlecchino is an improbable mixture of ignorance and naiveté with a quick and intelligent wit and resourcefulness; clumsy, but with a dancer's agility; coarse and vulgar, but also gentle and sweet; and intensely self-centered, but also fiercely loyal. He is forever amorous, but his needs are not solely sexual—he represents humankind's unsatisfied hungers and desires (even those which cannot be articulated), while also symbolizing the release of suppressed rebelliousness against authority and the will and resilience to survive life's most shattering adversities.[291]

Hunchbacked, with protrusive stomach, and hooked nose, Pulcinella is certainly a physically grotesque character. Yet, despite his shabby appearance and propensity for mischief, he has

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[288] "Pulcinella spread outside the Italian peninsula, giving inspiration to several characters in the following centuries. In France, where he is known as Polichinelle, he absorbed the revolutionary atmosphere of the eighteenth century, representing a bold Gascon with a double hump, usually drunk in a tavern, telling stories about the revolution. In Great Britain Pulcinella became Mr. Punch, leaving the original ingenuousness of the character and revealing a more dark and evil nature. In the puppet shows of Punch and (his wife) Judy, he seduces every woman he meets and his violent mood leads him to beat and kill people, including the Devil himself. From Macchus to the evil puppet Mr. Punch, however, the double hump remains one of pathognomonic characteristics of this mask." Zanchi et al, 35.

[289] Porter, "The Naples *Pulcinella*," 55.

[290] Porter, 54. See 54-60 for a fuller history of Pulcinella's status as an antihero in Naples.

[291] Fisher, 105.

represented a beloved figure of the working class. His characteristic resilience makes him a perfect emblem for any time of strife, but certainly for Europe's postwar period.[292]

Although the harlequin, and particularly Pulcinella, is physically articulate and affable, he is rarely an object of sexual intrigue or interest.[293] The image of the fool therefore stands in stark contrast to other male figures of *Les Ballets Russes*. He is distinctly gendered (as opposed to the purposeful androgyny of some of Nijinsky's characters), devoid of the allure of Eastern "exoticism," masked and sloppily sheathed in loose fitting garb (de-emphasizing any sense of anatomical eroticism), and clearly deviating from the posturing of the *danseur noble*. In her article "Léonide Massine's *Pulcinella*: In Quest of an Alternative Classicism," Garafola writes of the peculiar de-sexualization of Massine's body in the role:

> His Pulcinella wears the traditional costume, but over padding so thick that all the body's contours and most of its component parts are hidden. Only the hands are visible . . . The phallic suggestions are inescapable, as is the shock at seeing how Massine—with Picasso's collaboration—transforms his body into a grotesque carapace, concealing its beauty and rendering it corporeally impenetrable to the gaze.[294]

The covering over of the body, to the point of adding excess "flesh"—an element not seen in Fokine's *commedia* works—creates a strikingly different depiction of masculinity and physicality. Removed of sexual charge, Pulcinella was *not* one of Diaghilev's iconic

[292] In Russia too, as I will discuss shortly, the harlequin was employed as a subversive figure of revolutionary possibility during both the 1905 and 1917 Revolutions.

[293] Pulcinella, of course, with his often phallic nose and lewd gestures, is often associated with a sense of bawdiness. However, this is distinct from a sense of genuine sexual allure or romantic intrigue. The fool 'safely' alludes to a cruder sense of physical lust, as he himself is devoid of any such erotic charm. Pierrot, the unmasked fool, in contrast, is often associated with wistful, unrequited romantic longings, naiveté, and sadness. Whether lustful and bacchanalian—as with the Harlequin—or romantically impotent—as with Pierrot—neither fool possesses the "noble" qualities associated with romantic love.

[294] Garafola, "Léonide Massine's *Pulcinella*," 45.

heterodox danseurs.[295] Garafola suggests that Massine's decision to portray a character whose body was highly obscured was linked to his declining relationship with Diaghilev. As a means of working through his conflicted sense of identity and sexuality, Massine choreographically expressed "a desire for invisibility so urgent as to border on physical self-annihilation."[296] While anxieties surrounding this increasingly tenuous relationship surely manifested themselves in *Pulcinella*, I believe that a search for authentic expression (both as an individual, distinct from Diaghilev, and as a choreographer) was equally prevalent in this work.[297]

Corporeality and the Development of "Character"

As I have previously argued, the very notion of corporeality began shifting at the turn-of-the-century to encompass new modes of performed physicality and identity. As discussed in Chapter 1, the concept of "character" was no longer neatly paired with gendered stereotypes (physical or emotional). Bodies on stage could be amorphous, rather than bound; they could symbolize, rather than imitate or express something concrete. Dance historians and critics have discussed Massine's revival of "character" within early-to-mid-twentieth century ballet. For example, Jack Anderson wrote "Yet, despite these precedents [Fokine's "character-ballets" like *Petrouchka* and *Scheherazade*], it was Massine who most fully

[295] For more on Diaghilev's portrayal of gender see: Garafola, "Reconfiguring the Sexes" in *The Ballets Russes and its World*.

[296] Garafola, "Léonide Massine's *Pulcinella*," 45.

[297] For a more in-depth discussion of the impending dissolution of the relationship between Diaghilev and Massine around the time of *Pulcinella*'s creation, see García-Márquez*, Massine*, "Chapter 8: London, August 1919-Rome, February 1921," particularly 158-163.

developed the comic character-ballet as a genre."[298] Garafola too, asserts that "With Massine the Ballets Russes ceased to be a classical company; it became instead a *demi-caractère* one. The transformation itself had started before the war . . . but it was Massine who completed the process."[299] Although Massine was not the first to focus on character-driven roles, I argue that his implementation of character differed significantly from what came before. Through a loosening and expanding of balletic technique (begun, first by Fuller and Duncan in America/France, and Gorsky and Fokine in Russia), Massine altered the expressive capabilities of the body, and so too the idea of "character" roles onstage.

Even as a young artist, Massine seems to have understood the radical nature of his choreography. In a 1919 interview with *The Observer*, Massine commented:

> It was a complete revolution from the classic school, because in that school there are laws governing every action. If, for example, a man want to express his love he is taught to put his hand on his heart and to look enraptured, and if he wishes to kill you he must take three steps forward in a determined way and raise one of his arms in the attitude of striking a blow. These and all similar gestures are really miming. To me they seem just as false to art as if everyone were taught to say the same phrases in precisely the same manner. The richness of choreography lies in its freedom from these prescribed gestures.[300]

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[298] Jack Anderson, "Character-Ballets Are Again Painting Colorful Panoramas" *The New York Times* (Sunday, 14 August 1988), H7; Anderson cites *Parade* (1917), *Good-Humored Ladies* (1917), *La Boutique Fantasque* (1919), *Pulcinella* (1920), and *Les Matelots* (1925), as some of Massine's most notable character ballets. In an interesting assessment and comparison of Massine's work he writes: "At their best, character-ballets are as panoramic as some of the great 19th-century novels. Massine's comedies can even be called Dickensian for, like the novels of Charles Dickens, they contain a host of characters young and old, rich and poor, wise and silly, all of whom bustle about the stage, just as Dickensian characters bustle through the pages of their novels. And the characters of both Dickens and Massine can delight with their gusto."

[299] Garafola, "Reconfiguring the Sexes," 258. Garafola continues that Massine solidified a break between studio and stage – what was taught in the classroom now had little to do with what was expressed in production.

[300] Léonide Massine, quoted in "Massine's Ballets. Emancipation from the Classic School. Body Dancing," in *The Observer*, London (27 July 1919).

Massine understood how the "prescribed" nature of classical ballet limited the expressive potential of the body. To remedy this, he increasingly pulled from non-balletic dance styles (including the "national" dances of Spain), and from his study of graphic arts such as painting. In a separate profile of Massine from 1919, journalist Edwin Evans explained the intricate, unrestricted nature of Massine's choreography:

> The popular art of Spain yields up its secrets to him, and he learns at the same time what cubism has to teach. In fact, it is not merely the gestures of all countries that he adapts, but he assimilates the most vital element in the graphic art of all times, its pattern and rhythm. All is recruited to the service of choreography as he understands it. He makes of it, for the first time in the complete sense, a plastic art in movement.[301]

If before, "character" had been a physical and thematic representation of set attributes (such as the "stock characters" of *commedia*), Massine now loosened the boundaries of how one might expressively inhabit such a role. Massine choreographed movement that allowed dancers to embody a character, rather than to represent or imitate one. Whereas Fokine before had sought to achieve a "natural" and "ideal" dancing body inspired by Isadora Duncan, Massine endeavored to showcase a more gritty, grotesque body. In contrast to Fokine's vision of realism (i.e. "authentic" depictions of foreign dances, different steps for different types of dancers, etc.), Massine attempted to embody an *experience* of character, to emote through and with the body. Contrasting Fokine's movement to that of Massine, Cyril Beaumont wrote of the latter's style:

> [Massine's style was] Characterised by angular lines and a jerky, distorted style of movement quite opposed to the curved lines and flowing movement associated with Fokine's choreography. Massine also contrives to give a strong individuality to the characters in his ballets by investing them with burlesqued movements and attitudes, reinforced by special facial make-up.[302]

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[301] Edwin Evans, *The Outlook* (22 November 1919).

[302] Cyril W. Beaumont, *Complete Book of Ballets: A Guide to the Principal Ballets of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1938), 686.

Beaumont alludes to several important facets of Massine's aesthetic: a sort of stuttering angularity, special attention to facial expression (accentuated by stage makeup), and an emphasis on individuality, even within character roles. It is this sense of individuality that I find most intriguing.

Drawing parallels between prior iterations of early-twentieth century *Commedia* and Massine's 1920 ballet *Pulcinella*, I will now utilize my own theory of corporeality (as previously defined in this dissertation) to better understand the transfiguration of the male image through the trope of the clown. The harlequin—especially Pulcinella, whose mask both laughs and cries simultaneously—represents a repurposed emblem of modern man, whose bifurcated identity became only more complex (perhaps symbolized in the layering on of more costumed "flesh") in the years following The Great War. Through analysis of Massine's choreography and his own exploration of the character of the fool, I offer an interrogation of postwar authenticity, identity, and humanity in performance.

In the absence of any existing video footage of the original *Pulcinella* choreography, I utilize first-hand accounts of the 1920 performance (primarily from Massine himself, and Cyril Beaumont), along with original reviews. I also draw on dance sequences from Ettore Giannini's 1954 film *Carosello Napoletano*, choreographed by and featuring Massine as Punchinello (Pulcinella). While choreographed more than thirty years after the 1920 ballet, this film footage offers an authentic sense of Massine's own embodiment of the character. Many moments from the filmed ballet sequence, if not exact replicas, provide a similar image of the *type* of choreographic aesthetic Massine explored in 1920.

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A New Harmony: From Parade (1917) to Pulcinella (1920)

Premiering at the Théâtre National de l'Opéra in Paris on May 15, 1920, Léonide Massine's *Pulcinella* follows a legacy of Italian *Commedia dell'Arte* tradition, which had begun to recirculate within the first decade of the twentieth century.[303] The ballet was another collaborative endeavor, with choreography and libretto by Massine, music by Igor Stravinsky, and set and costumes by Pablo Picasso (all, of course, overseen by Diaghilev).[304] During the creation of *Parade* three years earlier, Massine—still nascent in his role as choreographer for *Les Ballets Russes*—had largely remained under the wing of Diaghilev, subject to the whims of his other collaborators Satie, Cocteau, and Picasso. Now, in *Pulcinella*, Massine took on a more prominent creative role, crafting not only the movements, but also selecting the theme and adapting the storyline.[305]

A month after the ballet's premiere, critic Edward Dent wrote that *Pulcinella* was "the quintessence of Diaghilevism," categorizing the work as "merely engaged upon a more

[303] A brief history of this recirculation of *commedia* themes will be provided in the forthcoming pages of this chapter.

[304] The cast of the original production of the ballet was comprised of: Léonide Massine (Puclinella); Thamar Karsavina (Pimpinella); Lubov Tchernicheva (Prudenza); Vera Nemchinova (Rosetta); Sigmund Novak (Fourbo); Stanislas Idzikowsky (Caviello); Nicholas Zverev (Florindo); Enrico Cecchetti (Il Dottore); Stanislas Kostetsky (Tartaglia); Bourman, Okhimovsky, Mikolaichik, Lukine (Four Little Pulcinellas). Ernest Ansermet served as conductor at the premiere.

[305] This is not to say that Massine did not take part in the creative process of *Parade*. Certainly, he alone created the choreography and was present during meetings, always at Diaghilev's side. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, Cocteau came to Diaghilev with the subject of the ballet, and both he and Satie had very strong ideas concerning theme and music. In *Parade*, Massine *responded* to the ideas of his collaborators, rather than working in tandem with them, as was more the case in *Pulcinella*. Reflecting on his later career, Massine wrote in a February 1932 interview with *Dance Journal*, "I keep constantly in touch with my collaborators to ensure the closest co-ordination in our work, and I discuss all my plans and ideas with them;" quoted in Beaumont, *Complete Book of Ballets*, 688.

elaborate *Parade*."[306] There are, certainly, clear genealogical traces between the two ballets.[307] However, the extent to which Massine was responsible for the creation of *Pulcinella* (in comparison to his involvement with non-choreographic elements of *Parade*) is significant. Massine was able to achieve a level of creative control over this ballet not previously possible with *Parade* in 1917. In *Pulcinella* we witness Massine himself: he created the ballet from concept to stage, he danced in the titular role, and, as Lynn Garafola has argued, he saw in himself elements of the character Pulcinella, using the ballet to channel anxieties and subvert his increasingly strained relationship with Diaghilev.[308] The result of Massine's endeavors was a true fusion: an excavation into the creative possibilities of the past, and a foray into the experimentalism of the future.

Conflicting Sources

> *Arcades—they radiated through the Paris of the Empire like fairy grottoes. For someone entering the Passage des Panoramas in 1817, the sirens of gaslight would be singing to him on one side, while oil-lamp odalisques offered enticements from the other. With the kindling of electric lights, the irreproachable glow was extinguished in these galleries, which suddenly became more difficult to find—which wrought a black magic at entranceways, and which looked within themselves out of blind windows.*[309]

[306] Edward J. Dent, "Covent Garden: 'Pulcinella'" in *Athenaeum* (18 June 1920). This comment is not meant to disparage the ballet, but rather, to point out what is, in Dent's opinion, the genius of Diaghilev.

[307] On an obvious level, both ballets feature a collaboration between Massine, Picasso, and Diaghilev (with Stravinsky taking over Satie's former role as composer). Both ballets too, take a theatrical space as their locale, with *Parade* occurring outside of a circus tent, and *Pulcinella* representing an Italian puppet theater. The two ballets also both rely on pantomime and character roles, combining elements of the grotesque and burlesque with classical ballet vocabulary.

[308] Garafola, "Léonide Massine's *Pulcinella*."

[309] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 564.

We might think of the elements of *Pulcinella* like Walter Benjamin's description of the Paris Arcades, mixing "fairy grottoes" and "black magic" to produce an eclectic mélange of modernity. While *Parade* highlighted the cacophonous commingling of disparate artistic ideas (a clash between the elements of movement, sound, text, and design), *Pulcinella* showcased a more tightly-woven blend of anachronistic elements. If *Parade* is a ballet about the collisions and disjunction of fragments, then *Pulcinella* is a ballet about the resonances and fruitfulness of fragments.

Pulcinella achieves its anachronistic harmony through the layering of multiple styles: Renaissance-era *Commedia dell'arte* characters; music in the style of eighteenth century Italian composer Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710-1736); the ingenuity of modern Russian composer Stravinsky; the avant-garde, Cubist designs and costumes of Spanish painter and sculptor Picasso; and the original choreography of Massine (intersecting the legacies of Imperial Russian ballet, avant-garde Russian theater, and the Feuillet and Rameau notation systems of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, respectively). These elements were combined neither to create a seamless "period piece," nor to shock or provoke audiences (as in past *Ballets Russes* productions), but rather to forge links between the past and present in a manner that was both satirical and revelatory. A preliminary understanding of both Stravinsky and Picasso's relationship to the material is helpful in understanding such a dynamic.

Stravinsky, Picasso, and Satire: ?

A substantial amount of literature has been written on Stravinsky's involvement with *Pulcinella*.[310] Critiques of his score for the ballet abound, especially in comparison to the dearth of choreographic critiques. I will, therefore, focus purely on Stravinsky's blending of old and new, in an attempt to probe the satirical nature of the work.[311] Speaking generally about his compositional style in 1920, Stravinsky asserted:

> I have attempted to achieve a comparable dynamism through the juxtaposition of instrumental timbres which form the foundation of the sonorous material. A color has value only in relation to the other colors with which it is juxtaposed. Red has no value in and of itself; it only acquires [value] through its position next to another red, or green, for example. That's what I wanted to do in music, and what I look for first of all is the sound quality.[312]

The composer's comment about "dynamism through juxtaposition" is evidenced in his composition for *Pulcinella*. The score combines music from the 18th century (originally attributed to Pergolesi, although the accuracy of this claim has since become contested) with

[310] See, for example, *Stravinsky's Pulcinella: A Facsimile of the Sources and Sketches*; Steven Walsh, *The Music of Stravinsky* (London: Routledge, 1988); Scott Messing, *Neoclassicism in Music: From the Genesis of the Concept through the Schoenberg/Stravinsky Polemic* (Ann Arbor & London: UMI Research Press, 1988).

[311] As literary critic, author, and poet Roger Shattuck wrote in 1963: "To speak of Stravinsky without full competence to deal in musical terms with his style, structure, and technique is to run an intellectual risk of the first order. . . Yet the literary man such as I, who must resign himself to being (in Stravinsky's own terms) an 'incompetent critic,' may have to run the risk of making interpretations." Despite being a 'literary woman' who considers herself an equally "incompetent critic" of music composition, I feel, like Shattuck, that some interpretation must be done. I will, however, allow Stravinsky himself to provide most of the commentary here.; Roger Shattuck, "Making Time: A Study of Stravinsky, Proust, and Sarte," in *The Kenyon Review*, vol. 25, no. 2 (Spring, 1963): 248.

[312] Igor Stravinsky, quoted in an interview published in André Rigaud, "M. Igor Stravinsky nous parle de la musique de 'Pulcinella,'" trans. Lynn E. Palermo, in *Comoedia* (15 May 15 1920).

Stravinsky's own additions and edits.[313] According to many musicologists, the result of such a combination was irony and satire. Stravinsky himself said of the ballet:

> That the result was to some extent a satire was probably inevitable—who could have treated *that* material in 1919 without satire?—but even this observation is in hindsight; I did not set out to compose a satire and, of course, Diaghilev hadn't even considered the possibility of such a thing. A stylish orchestration was what Diaghilev wanted, and nothing more, and my music so shocked him that he went about for a long time with a look that suggested The Offended Eighteenth Century.[314]

Stravinsky's question—how could "*that* material" not have been satirical in 1919/1920?—echoes back to a central point of Chapter 2. During WWI, and directly following, art could not be perceived through decontextualized eyes, especially for French audiences. A resurrection of the charming, light-hearted *opera buffa* popularized by Pergolesi may have seemed trite and outmoded to postwar French audiences.

However, it seems that not all critics who reviewed the original performance sensed this irony. Critic Raoul de Roussy de Sales who viewed the London premiere in June wrote:

> From the opening bars of the introduction we were all astonished at the fact that we were not more astonished. We had expected something quite different: more Stravinsky and less Pergolesi. As a matter of fact, the whole score is a kind of very curious contention between the two composers, which ends, if I may say so, in the victory, or rather vindication of Stravinsky. . . . We cannot help being grateful to Stravinsky for having so skillfully thrown into relief the beauties of the old master by underlining them.[315]

For de Sales, Stravinsky resuscitated an otherwise passé work, imbuing the composition with new vitality. His opinion seems to be more in line with what Diaghilev had envisioned: a

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[313] My writing does not attempt to authenticate the origins of the music attributed to Pergolesi. For a full exploration of this topic, including complete facsimiles of both Stravinsky and Pergolesi's scores, see Carr, *Stravinsky's Pulcinella: A Facsimile of the Sources and Sketches.*

[314] Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Expositions and Developments* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1962), 112-13.

[315] Raoul de Roussy de Sales, *The Chesterian*, n.s. 8 (June 1920): 234-36.

celebratory return to the past [a lost past], rather than a satire of it. As Roger Shattuck has poetically suggested, we are outside of time, or in a new time, when we listen to music.[316] In an essay on the music of Stravinsky, Proust, and Sartre's *Nausea,* Shattuck concluded that for the three artists, "music does not follow or obey established patterns but creates a direction and a scale of happenings that is all its own. That new time embodied in sound may then assert its hold over a portion of our experience."[317] Stravinsky himself echoed this sentiment: "A new piece of music *is* a new reality."[318] Whether satirical, reverential, or both, we hear in the music of *Pulcinella* a desire to fuse realities together, a reality of the past and the future, coalescing in a new time altogether.

The set and costume designs of Picasso, on the other hand, reveal a desire for irony that was vehemently expunged by Diaghilev. Stravinsky recounted an infamously tumultuous exchange between Diaghilev and Picasso regarding his design plans:

> Picasso's original *Pulcinella* was very different from the pure Commedia dell'Arte Diaghilev wanted. His first designs were for Offenbach-period costumes with side-whiskered faces instead of masks. When he showed them, Diaghilev was very brusque: "Oh, this isn't it at all," and proceeded to tell Picasso how to do it. The evening concluded with Diaghilev actually throwing the drawings on the floor, stamping on them, and slamming the door as he left. The next day all of Diaghilev's charm was needed to reconcile the deeply insulted Picasso, but Diaghilev did succeed in getting him to do a Commedia dell'Arte *Pulcinella.*"[319]

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[316] Shattuck married Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo ballerina Nora White in 1949.

[317] Shattuck, "Making Time," 254.

[318] Quoted in Shattuck, 257, author provides no original citation for Stravinsky's words.

[319] Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Conversation with Igor Stravinsky* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), 105.

The originally proposed sketches for the décor foregrounded a lavish, baroque stage painted in cream, gold, and red, complete with audience members in tiered box seats.[320] Behind this false proscenium stage were blue and black cubist buildings, with Mt. Vesuvius looming in the background.[321] With his set originally intended to be a 'stage within a stage,' Picasso wished to reveal to the audience the artifice of the performance. In Picasso's preliminary sketches, viewers of the ballet could, in a sense, watch 'themselves' watching the ballet.[322] Picasso historian Douglas Cooper writes of Picasso's proposed set (eventually rejected by Diaghilev): "This design, in the baroque tradition . . . shows that from the start Picasso wanted to underline the artificiality of the action, its puppet show element, for the dancers

[320] A 1923 program from La Gaîté-Lyrique in Paris contains a series of dance sketches by Picasso. One of those sketches shows an early set and costume design for *Pulcinella*. These sketches still contain the ornate audience and tiered seats that Diaghilev would reject. The next sketch included in the program is titled only "Dessins pour décors des Ballets Russes." While not explicitly marked as such, it would appear that this sketch was also intended for *Pulcinella*; Picasso's drawings depict two 'close-up' shots of audience members in box seats of a similar style as those he intended to paint onto the set. Perhaps these second sketches depict Picasso's more detailed designs for his painted audience. This sketch is interesting to note as it further highlights Picasso's ironic vision for the ballet. The bottom sketch features a richly dressed couple seated in their box. While the woman looks out towards the performance, the man, seated just beside her, holds his opera glasses up to scrutinize *her*. Here Picasso emphasizes the voyeuristic nature of the theater. However, he also drives home his original idea that the audience of *Pulcinella* should 'watch itself.' The real audience would not only see itself depicted in the set, but would also see that audience engaged in the act of watching. This sketch perhaps represents a final detail to the layers of self-reflexive satire that Picasso hoped to create. Pablo Picasso, "Dessins pour décors des Ballets Russes," from "Ballets russes de M. Serge de Diaghilew [Texte imprimé]: seizième saison . . . , Gaîté-Lyrique, juin 1923 : programme du 16 juin 1923. Paris (33, rue Godot-de-Mauroy): W. Fischer, 1923. *Bibliotheque national de France*, IFN-8415166 http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb413529395.

[321] Pablo Picasso, first sketches for the set design of the 1920 production of *Pulcinella*; 21.6 x 26 cm (gouache, Chinese ink, and graphite on paper). ©2012 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York. Photo Credit: Réunion des Musées Nationaux / Art Resource, NY. Reproduced in Katharina Clausius "Historical Mirroring, Mirroring History: An Aesthetics of Collaboration in *Pulcinella*," in *The Journal of Musicology* 30, no. 2 (Spring 2013): 223.

[322] Clausius, 223.

would have had to perform in the middle of the false theatre and in front of the inner stage."[323]

As Stravinsky documented, Picasso's ironic meta-theater was scrapped. Eventually, it was replaced by a streamlined, Cubist set of geometric buildings, through which the sea, Mt. Vesuvius, and the moon can be glimpsed. The color pallet for the backdrop now featured only variations of blue, black, and white, with the stage itself one large expanse of pure white.[324] All of the lighting came from above, as if from the moon, and the stage was painted a fresh coat of white before each performance in order to maintain its stark glow.[325] The final result was not one of irony (as Picasso had originally intended), but a modern Cubist set meant to further highlight the anachronism of the music and theme.

Similarly, Picasso's preliminary costume designs were also meant to emphasize the eighteenth-century style. However, as Garafola describes, "Prudenza, for instance, lost her eighteenth-century panniers in the translation from paper to fabric and wore instead a long tulle gown of the Romantic period. One of the fathers wore a burlesque eighteenth-century dunce cap' one of the lovers a hat heavy with plumes. With her fluffy red skirt and black velvet bodice, Pimpinella could have stepped out of an old Paris Opéra ballet set in Naples."[326] In her memoirs, Lydia Sokolova, who danced in a later staging of the ballet, describes her own reaction to watching the 1920 premiere of the ballet:

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[323] Douglas Cooper, "Pulcinella: 1920," in *Picasso: Theatre* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1968), 46

[324] Picasso, sketches for the set design presumed to be the version ultimately staged in the 1920 production of *Pulcinella*. 23.4 x 33.6 cm (gouache, Chinese ink, and graphite on paper). ©2012 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York. Photo Credit: Réunion des Musées Nationaux / Art Resource, NY. Reproduced in Clausius, 231.

[325] Sokolova, *Dancing for Diaghilev*, 152.

[326] Garafola, "Léonide Massine's *Pulcinella*," 44.

> Luba Tchernicheva looked lovely sitting in her window in a tulle dress of jade green, a white hat trimmed with ostrich feathers perched over her long curls. Slavinsky as her admirer was dressed in powder blue, also with a plumed hat. . . .Vera Nemchinova . . . and her swain were in pink. . . . Karsavina . . .wore a red tulle skirt, with a black velvet bodice over a white blouse, and a green cap on her head . . . The two Pulcinellas, Massine and Woizikovsky, were of course both dressed alike with flapping white garments, red socks, black shoes and pointed white hats.[327]

Sokolova's description creates a striking impression of the ballet. With its stark white stage (suggesting the sparse feeling of an actual puppet theater), the looming, monochromatic, abstract shapes of Cubist design, and bright, sumptuous costumes blending the Romantic and the Baroque periods (along with, of course, the traditional *Commedia* costuming and mask of Pulcinella), Picasso's stage was a meeting ground for blended temporalities. Like Stravinsky's score, Picasso's designs were neither in the past nor present, but rather, in a new, suspended time of generative possibility.

Massine's Return to Russia and a "Pre-Romantic" Past

To what extent, then, did any of the collaborators truly intend for *Pulcinella* to be received by audiences as satire? While neither Stravinsky nor Diaghilev originally endeavored to treat the material satirically, Picasso, it seems, was clearly bent on emphasizing the satirical elements in his early designs. Massine, however, seems to have had a different aim. In *Pulcinella*, Massine wished to genuinely explore the past (of both Italy and Russia), while expanding his own choreographic abilities. In his choreography for the ballet, Massine pulled from a pre-Romantic past that did not rely on the tradition of French ballet master Marius Petipa. Unlike most *Ballet Russes* dancers, who had worked under

[327] Sokolova, 151-152.

Petipa at the Imperial Ballet, Massine trained instead in Moscow at the Bolshoi.[328] Therefore, Massine's early introduction to ballet, and even his later training with Italian ballet master Enrico Cecchetti (1850 – 1928) were rooted more in an Italian than French tradition.[329] As Garafola explains,

> For Massine, the eighteenth century did not conjure up images of St. Petersburg or aristocrats at play or even theatrical figures like the plumed Duprès. Rather, it signified cities like Naples, with its slums and commedia heroes, the popular, impoverished sites of the European periphery. It also signified the world of the old itinerant dancing masters, with their manuals and Feuillet notation, wandering across Europe, dancing, teaching, and choreographing, not unlike the Diaghilev troupe itself during World War I.[330]

Pulcinella was an opportunity to connect with a country for which Massine had developed an early love: Italy. Between 1912-1913, Massine began to study painting with Anatoli Petrovich Bolchakov, who exposed the young dancer to artistic styles of the Italian Renaissance.[331] According to Massine, during this period, Bolchakov showed him "books containing illustrations of Italian cathedrals and of the frescoes . . . sepia photographs of St. Marks's in Venice and St. Peter's in Rome."[332] Massine became enraptured with Italy as a romantic, exotic locale. Interestingly, Massine also noted that Bolchakov exposed him to "such things as the curious angles and positions of the dancers in Degas's pictures, and …

[328] Despite Massine's education at the Bolshoi, he still received training rooted in the St. Petersburg tradition from Alexander Gorsky, who himself originally trained at the Imperial Russian Ballet.

[329] Ever a character actor, at the age of seventy, Cecchetti appeared in the role of Il Dottore in Massine's *Pulcinella*.

[330] Garafola, "Léonide Massine's *Pulcinella*," 46.

[331] García-Márquez, *Massine*, 21.

[332] Massine, *My Life*, 38.

the grotesque characterizations in Toulouse-Lautrec's posters."[333] It seems that Bolchakov instilled in Massine both an early fascination with Italy, and an interest in the plastique nature of bodies.[334] For Massine, then, the material of *Pulcinella* was not as much a 'return' to Italian Renaissance themes, as it was an opportunity to fulfill an early fantasy (begun in Russia) to explore Italy as an exotic locale. Massine's treatment of *Commedia* is not meant to be satirical or ironic, but rather rich with possibility.

Further establishing Massine's un-ironic connection to the *Commedia* material is his earliest education at the Moscow Imperial Theater School (beginning in 1904), which coincided with a resurgence of *Commedia* themes among avant-garde Russian theater practitioners.[335] While Diaghilev is often cited as "introducing" Massine to *Commedia* during their time in Viareggio in 1914, and then again in Naples in 1917 (where Massine discovered the manuscript that would become the inspiration for *Pulcinella's* libretto), this is not entirely true.[336] Many Russian artists of the early 1900s were already reviving similar themes. In the wake of the Russian Revolution of 1905 (and through the following Revolution of 1917 as well), *Commedia* was repurposed as a dissident form of theater for modern life. While the figure of the clown had been a central device in theater for centuries, one must consider: why

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[333] *My Life*, 38. The inspiration of Toulouse-Lautrec on Massine will be discussed in the following chapter.

[334] Massine's exploration of the expressive body was further supplemented by his training with Gorsky (see Theoretical Introduction of this Dissertation.)

[335] Sally Banes notes that, "Like their contemporaries in Europe, the avant-garde artists in Russia were inspired by folk and popular arts, but the Soviet political program gave this inclination a special import. The clown image that threads through so much of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century arts exemplifies this great shift. Meyerhold's use of the clown is a case in point. . . .The Symbolist icon of Pierrot . . . a trickster inspired by the subversive vernacular roots of commedia and the Russian *skomorokhi*, whose raucous persona, in keeping with the stridency of modern life and the momentum of revolutionary society, was built of an electrifying physical dynamism." Editor's note in Souritz, 14.

[336] García-Márquez, *Massine*, 142.

did it emerge again as a trope in Modernism? The increased circulation of the figure of the harlequin was clearly symptomatic of larger societal shifts. As Douglas Clayton explains in the essay "From Meyerhold to Einstein: Commedia dell'Arte in Russia," "CDA [*Commedia dell'Arte*] means liberty: the twentieth century with its search for new beginnings and change was to embrace it with enthusiasm: it was dangerous, subversive and uncontrollable."[337]

In Russia, there was a desire to move away from the realism of the prior century. With its emphasis on artifice, *Commedia* provided an ideal form through which to work out a new aesthetic.[338] "The interest in CDA in Russia was part and parcel of the nostalgia for the eighteenth century among Russian aesthetes—both for eighteenth-century St. Petersburg, a city in the culture of which Italians had played such a role, and for Venice, the Italian city with which the Northern capital has a special affinity, thanks to its architecture and its canals."[339] More than just nostalgia, however, *Commedia* served as a subversive form of art in a time of revolution.

An actor and director at the Moscow Art Theater (MAT), Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874 -1940) was an integral figure in bringing *Commedia dell'Arte* into avant-garde Russian theater.[340] Meyerhold first discovered *Commedia* in 1905;[341] the following year, he directed

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[337] J. Douglas Clayton, "From Meyerhold to Einstein: Commedia dell'Arte in Russia," in *The Routledge Companion to Commedia dell'Arte*, 365.

[338] See Clayton, 364-369.

[339] Clayton, 366.

[340] Founded in 1898 by Konstantin Stanislavski and Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, MAT was known for theatrical experimentation, particularly involving the expressive capacities of the body. Gorsky was highly inspired by Stanisklavski, and in turn introduced Massine to many of the avant-garde theatrical concepts that would later come to define his choreographic style.

[341] C. Moody, "Vsevolod Meyerhold and the 'Commedia dell'arte,'" in *The Modern Language Review* 73, no. 4 (October, 1978): 859-869.

and starred as Pierrot in Aleksandr Blok's (1880-1921) *Balaganchik* (*The Little Showbooth*).[342] With its emphasis on physicality, *Commedia*, in part, likely appealed to the actor due to his own interest in movement. Meyerhold wrote:

> Movement is the most powerful means of theatrical expression. The role of movement is more important than any other theatrical element. Deprived of dialogue, costume, footlights, wings and auditorium and left only with the actor and his mastery of movement, the theatre remains the theatre. The spectator understands the theatre's intent through the actor's movements.[343]

Meyerhold's interest in *Commedia* only grew, and in 1912, he published the article "Balagan" ("The Fairground Booth"), in which he "called for a grotesque, anti-realistic theater, incorporating the *lazzi* of the CDA, acrobatics, and metatheater."[344]

Naturally, Meyerhold's interest in physicality led him to participate in not only drama, but dance as well. In 1920, Meyerhold again played the part of Pierrot, but this time in Fokine's *Le Carnaval*.[345] In *Literature, Modernism, and Dance*, author Susan Jones asserts that, "Meyerhold almost certainly introduced Fokine to the idea of a 'living' puppet based on a *commedia dell'arte* figure combined with ideas from Hoffmann's *Tales*. Thus Massine's training with the early Diaghilev company and familiarity with *Petrouchka* (he later danced the title role in this ballet) and *Carnaval* made him the natural successor to Fokine's *commedia dell'arte* choreography."[346] Fokine was certainly an entry point for Massine's

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[342] Clayton, 365.

[343] V.E. Meyerhold, "Lyubov' k tryom apel'sinam," *Nos.* 4-5 (1914), 94. Quoted in Edward Braun, *Meyerhold on Theatre* (London, 1969), 147.

[344] Clayton, 366.

[345] Andrew Wachtel, "Introduction," in *Petrushka: Sources and Contexts*, ed. Wachtel (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1998), 25.

[346] Susan Jones, *Literature, Modernism, and Dance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 186.

exploration of *commedia*. However, Massine became arguably more than just Fokine's "natural successor."

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Massine's Modernization of *Commedia*

Building from the work of theater practitioner's like Meyerhold, and choreographers like Fokine and Gorsky, Massine brought *Commedia* into modernity. To make *Commedia* "modern," however, was not simply to place it next to, or in relationship with, Cubism. Rather, like Fuller and Duncan, Massine used *his own* body as a conduit through which to channel multiple times and spaces at once. In 1979, Anna Kisselgoff remarked that Massine wielded his "body as a creative instrument and the staccato broken-lined angular idiom in which he excelled became the signature of his choreographic style." Unlike his successors Balanchine and Ashton, Kiseselgoff noted, Massine actually choreographed ballets *on himself*; "In this respect, [he] was closer to the modern dance pioneers with whom he had much in common."[347] Massine worked out a theory of choreography in and through his own body, thereby making him a true "modern" artist by Marcia B. Siegal's seminal definition of "Modern dance [as] the art of the individual."[348] Using his own body as a temporal anchor, Massine brought the disparate design elements of *Pulcinella* together.

Musicologist Steven Walsh writes of the ballet, "[*Pulcinella*'s] vitality is architectural, a skillful balance of movement and proportion, just as in a cubist painting almost everything hangs on **the harmony of intersecting planes**."[349] Walsh's assessment of

[347] Anna Kisselgoff, "Dance View: The Legacy of Léonide Massine," *The New York Times* (1 April 1979), D9.

[348] Marcia B. Siegal, "Modern Dance—Tradition in Process," in *The Living Dance: An Anthology of Essays on Movement and Culture*, 3rd edition, eds. Judith Chazin-Bennahum & Ninotchka Devorah Bennahum (Kendall Hunt Publishing, 2012), 72.

[349] Walsh, *The Music of Stravinsky*, 97-98 (emphasis mine).

the ballet sounds much like Massine's own theory of choreography (which he was already cultivating *through* his body by 1920, but would not begin to write down and formally codify until several decades later). Massine wrote,

> The richness of the dance consists of dynamic evolution and of the harmonic progression of movements made by the different parts of the body. The progress of these movements creates distances or intervals. We must therefore be concerned with the substance and nature of these movements . . . in order to reach a better understanding of their individual possibilities as well as their relationships.[350]

What Massine aimed for in his choreographic theory was a contrapuntal harmony within both the limbs of an individual dancer (radiating from the spine), and a symmetrical, dynamic harmony *between* different bodies onstage.[351] Crucially, in tandem with establishing such a theory, Massine worked in collaborative relationships (like that of *Parade* and *Pulcinella*) in which the co-mingling of dance, text, music, and design created a very similar "harmonic" relationship.

It must be noted that my use of the term "harmonic" or "harmony" here does not denote the same sense of wholeness as in Wagnerian *gesamtkunstwerk.* Rather, harmony is a juxtaposition or crossing of elements that creates a dynamic whole. To understand juxtaposing harmony as evidenced in both the multi-modal elements of *Pulcinella* and within Massine's choreographic theory itself, Roger Shattuck's definition of "superposition" (a term coined specifically in regard to *fin-de-siècle* aesthetics) is useful to quote at length:

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[350] Massine, *Massine on Choreography*, 27.

[351] This emphasis on group dynamics was heavily inspired by Fokine (who in turn drew inspiration from Stanislavsky's initiative to portray living, at times even chaotic, crowds on stage, rather than *corps* or ensemble bodies merely onstage to frame the action of the soloists). In 1914 Fokine wrote: "The new ballet advances from the expressiveness of the whole body, and from the expressiveness of the individual body to the expressiveness of a group of bodies and the expressiveness of the combined dancing crowd." Michel Fokine, "The New Russian Ballet. Conventions in Dancing. M. Fokine's Principles and Aims," *Times* (6 July 1914): 6. Reprinted in Beaumont, *Michel Fokine and His Ballets* (New York: Dance Horizons, 1981), Appendix A(b), 144-147.

> A significant segment of the modern arts has been constructed by juxtaposition of mutually reacting units. They do not observe smooth transition through unified development. Conflict, as opposed to connection, produced a different strain of expression. . . .The term juxtaposition, which has served till now, finally breaks down. The 'nextness' which it connotes reveals itself as an inaccurate description of the structure of the arts. Juxtaposition implies succession, even if it is at random or provoked by conflict . . . Ultimately it becomes apparent that the **mutually conflicting** elements of montage . . . are to be conceived not successively but *simultaneously*, to converge in our minds as contemporaneous events. The conflict between them prevents us from fitting them smoothly end to end; what appeared an arbitrary juxtaposition of parts can now take its true shape of enforced *superposition*.[352]

"Superposition," as Shattuck defines it, is a totality born from conflict. A sense of harmony occurs through the comingling of disparate parts and a Futurist simultaneity of elements. Writing specifically of the poetry of Gertrude Stein and the music of [*Ballets Russes* collaborator] Eric Satie, Shattuck says "In both cases a technique of juxtaposition—or, more accurately, superposition—forces us to experience the world as simultaneous and continually present."[353] The continuous present to which Shattuck refers is the very essence of *Pulcinella*.[354]

Taking a slightly different approach, Lynn Garafola refers to this style of juxtaposition or "superposition" as "period modernism" (a term uniquely coined for the

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[352] Shattuck, *The Banquet Years*, 344-5 (italics in original, bold emphasis mine).

[353] *Banquet Years*, 348.

[354] Although not writing about the concept of "superposition" or even of ballet, a 1922 anonymous review of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* for the *Times Literary Supplement* bears striking resemblance to the aesthetic produced in *Pulcinella*: "Mr. Eliot's poem is also a collection of flashes, but there is no effect of heterogeneity, since all these flashes are relevant to the same thing and together give what seems to be a complete expression of this poet's **vision of modern life.** . . .This vision is singularly complex and in all its labyrinths utterly sincere. It is the mystery of life that it shows **two faces**, and we know of no other poet who can more adequately and movingly reveal to us **the inextricable tangle of the sordid and the beautiful that makes up life**." Unsigned review from the *Times Literary Supplement*, no. 1084 (26 October 1922), 690. Reprinted in *The Annotated Waste Land*, *with Eliot's Contemporary Prose Second Edition*, ed. Lawrence Rainey (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 34 (emphasis mine).

Diaghilev enterprise). In her definition, "Period modernism wed the retrospective themes of traditional lyric theater to the styles and techniques of the avant-garde."[355] She continues that works of this postwar period were "a response to the radical displacement of war . . . Comic works, poised between past and present . . . charmed a war-weary public cursed with memories of a vanished order."[356] The irony and satire that so many music critics have discussed certainly resonates with the idea of comedy through anachronism (humor in the collision between the old and the new). However, I believe that Massine was working through a choreographic technique meant to do more than simply "charm."

Through his layering of multiple nationalities and styles, Massine was creating an expressive body not limited by national boundaries. Similarly, *danse d'école* and *caractère* steps could be executed successively by the same dancer. The percussive attack and angularity of Spanish dancing[357] were combined with the theoretical structure and form of Russian Imperial ballet; the gesticulations of Italian *commedia* coalesced with the unbound and mobile body of American Modern Dance. In this way, Massine created an über-human, unbound by style, nationality, gender, and [through his roles as a puppet,] even human-ness. A part of humanity, yet removed from it, the puppet or clown, with the new choreographic potential imparted to it by Massine, presented new opportunities for an exploration of modern identity.

[355] Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, 90.

[356] Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, 94.

[357] Massine was deeply inspired by the figure of the gypsy and Spanish dancing, taught to him by Felix Fernández García while in Spain between 1917-1918. For more on Massine's relationship to Spain see García-Márquez, "Spain: June 18170July 1918," in *Massine*, 106-119.

The Fool: An Emblem of Modern Man

At the puppet theater, and in the absurdist realm of *Commedia*, life becomes distorted, exaggerated; a microcosm of caricatures in motion. Yet, such a theatrical space provides the spectator with an opportunity to view aspects of human nature, albeit in hyperbolized form. Of all the stereotyped characters of *Commedia*, the fool persists as a truly complex character, reinvented time and again by artists in the early twentieth century. I argue that, in his reincarnation by modern artists like Massine, Picasso, and Meyerhold, we might view the fool (particularly Pulcinella) as a manifestation of early twentieth century anxieties surrounding human connection, individual identity, and isolation. While Pulcinella is ostensibly comedic, he is ultimately rendered pathetic through his refusal (or inability) to truly connect to other humans. The fool is the quintessential character of duality, walking a line between sheer, frivolous entertainment, and deeper psychological implications.

The harlequin is a nomad, a travelling trickster deceiving all those around him. Yet, the fool is a performer, whose ultimate goal is to entertain (through self-ridicule or cathartic pathos). As all eyes on the stage watch the fool, his own isolation from humanity is exaggerated. Whether willful or not, the fool's distance from true human connection renders him an emblem of modern, post-industrial society. As soldiers began returning home from war, the very nature of human connection became tenuous. As Lynn Garafola describes, it was not just those soldiers fighting in the war who became impacted.

> WWI was obviously hugely important to all of them. For the Russians the years 1918-20 were also hugely important. Most did not know what was going on in Russia; news reports were few and often unreliable. However, all of them were struck hard by the news of the massacre of the Tsar and his family; the expropriation of the great estates and property; peasant uprisings and chaos everywhere. Nobody knew how it would end, and of course the ones in the West were the lucky ones and, maybe, also the guilty ones: unlike so many of their friends and relatives in Russia, they were in the West.[358]

[358] Lynn Garafola in a personal email correspondence, December 2015.

These conflicted feelings of relief (at being out of the direct turmoil), of guilt (at feeling such relief), and utter uncertainly were echoed in Ernest Hemmingway's letters back to his family while he was stationed in Italy in 1918.

> I wouldn't mind being wounded again so much because I know just what it is like. And you can only suffer so much, you know, and it does give you an awfully satisfactory feeling to be wounded. It's getting beaten up in a good cause. There are no heroes in this war. We all offer our bodies and only a few are chosen, but it shouldn't reflect any special credit on those that are chosen. They are just the lucky ones. I am very proud and happy that mine was chosen, but it shouldn't give me any extra credit. Think of the thousands of other boys that offered. All the heroes are dead. And the real heroes are the parents. Dying is a very simple thing. I've looked at death and really I know. If I should have died it would have been very easy for me. Quite the easiest thing I ever did. But the people at home do not realize that. They suffer a thousand times more. . . . And how much better to die in all the happy period of undisillusioned youth, to go out in a blaze of light, than to have your body worn out and old and illusions shattered.[359]

Hemmingway illuminates the peculiar sensation of welcoming death, and envying those who have died, yet feeling gratitude for life. The "happy period of undisillusioned youth," and the "blaze of light" seem to have faded for young Ernie (as he signed many of his letters), not yet nineteen years old. His body had become a mere "offering," a disposable object within a quest for a 'greater good.'

As a figure who exhaustively performs, who laboriously toils to make audiences laugh, making himself the subject of jokes, sometimes even inflicting physical pain on himself to provoke laughter, the clown (especially as it was artistically employed in the years just prior to and following The Great War) can be seen as symptomatic of a circulation of anxieties regarding human connection. Simultaneously laughing and crying, Pulcinella

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[359] Ernest Hemmingway, letter to his family, Milan, 18 October 1918. Letter originally published in *The Oak Parker* (Oak Park, Illinois), 16 November 1918, pp. 6-7. *Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters 1917-1961*, ed. Carlos Baker (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981), 18-19.

represents the misfortunes of both himself and society, reflecting back sadness, yet also attempting to mask it. In an example of art imitating life, Garafola writes, "Certainly, the obsession in *Pulcinella* with parodies, mockeries, travesties, and disguises, the patent absurdity of the romantic dalliances, and the non-stop action, reveal a choreographer unable—and unwilling—to venture unto the territory of the heart."[360]

It is not just the absurd content and rapid action that evades emotional terrain, however. The movements themselves reflect the performative labor of the fool. Lydia Sokolova, who succeeded Karsavina in the role of Pimpinella, recalled that the ballet was "very difficult" to perform. Such difficulty was due in part to the lighting and stage design: "The absence of footlights revealed the faces of the audience and the dancers realized, to their distress, that they were under observation."[361] Here, Sokolova inadvertently emphasizes the puppet-like nature of the dancers in *Pulcinella*. Aware of their labor, Sokolova suggests that the stage design thrust the dancers into an unusual relationship with the audience, one that forced them to confront their own position as objects on a stage. As Katharina Clausius writes, "Picasso's clever, amusing metatheatrical image destabilizes theatrical structure at its most basic level: holding a mirror up to the theater, Picasso obscures the distinction between audience and stage, reality and narrative."[362]

In 1917—as Massine was further developing his love for Italy— Italian playwright Luigi Pirandello (1867 – 1936) published *Cap and Bells*, a two-act play based on *commedia*-inspired characters. Pirandello, responsible for a revival of *Commedia* in Italy (although it never really left) also wrote of the quasi-tragic nature of the puppet/human in the early-

[360] Garafola, "Léonide Massine's *Pulcinella*," 45.

[361] Sokolova, 151.

[362] Clausius, "Historical Mirroring," 226.

twentieth century. Theater Historian James Fisher writes of Pirandello, "he is interested in the character's complex and contradictory inner emotions which exist, often in conflict, with the outer appearance, as is nearly always the case with the traditional fool."[363] The conflict between inner emotions and outward appearance is of course emphasized in the character of Pulcinella through his constant disguises and multiplications (not to mention his famed mask which both laughs and cries). The play *Cap and Bells* features Ciampa, a bank employee and cuckolded husband, in whom characteristics of both Arlecchino (the traditional trickster character, usually occupying a servant role) and Pantalone (a traditionally sinister character, marked by egoism and greed) are displayed.

> I am a puppet, you are a puppet, we are all puppets. Is it enough, do you think, to be born a puppet by divine will? No, Signor! Each can make himself the puppet he wants, the puppet he can be or that he believes himself to be. And this is where the insanity begins, Signora! Because each puppet wishes to be respected, not only for what he has inside of himself, but for the mask he wears to the world. Not one of the puppets is contented with his role, each would like to stand before his own puppet and spit in its face.[364]

Pirandello reveals the human struggle for authentic identity in his discussion of the puppet. The playwright highlights the inherent conflict—clearly seen in *Pulcinella*—of internal and external realities; for Pirandello, the human condition is to long for acceptance in both our 'masked' and 'unmasked' states, yet to find self-satisfaction in neither.

A mascot of performative labor, masquerading as the antithesis of labor (i.e. frivolity and entertainment); an utterly dispensable figure (with no real ties to anyone, and lacking in any pragmatic societal function); a character who mocks and is mocked, who ultimately fails at genuine humor, and who (importantly) self-referentially performs his own failure, the

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[363] Fisher, 109.

[364] Luigi Pirandello, *Sicilian Comedies. Cap and Bells. Man, Beast and Virtue*. (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1983), 27-8.

clown may be read as an icon of impotence, lost virility, failure, and loneliness. One can only make conjectures about what the character Pulcinella truly meant for Massine. However, it certainly appears that Pulcinella was an exceptionally timely character in Massine's life, as he himself struggled (as both a man entangled in an ambiguously homosexual, and increasingly chaotic, relationship with Diaghilev, and as an artist, finding his own choreographic voice) to carve out an authentic identity for himself. Perhaps, taking on the role of the Neapolitan trickster helped Massine channel a part of himself that he had always longed for. A closer analysis of Massine's libretto for the 1920 ballet, along with choreographic analysis of his role as Pulcinella in *Carosello Napoletano*, may help to illuminate such longings.

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Massine and the Ballet: Writing/Dancing

Libretto

Below I reproduce Massine's libretto in its entirety (from a handwritten letter to Stravinsky from October 1919).[365]

> [Scene 1]: Florindo and Coviello with a mandolin and a guitar sing and dance a serenade to their beloved, at the end of which cold water is poured on them.[366] They shake the water out and leave. The doctor runs in, pushes them away, and hides behind a column. Pulcinella jumps in and performs dancing stunts. Prudenza comes out of the house and declares her love to him. Seeing Pulcinella, the doctor wants to jump on him and fight, but hesitates and hides again. Pulcinella rejects Prudenza, who becomes desperate. (At the end of the scene between Pulcinella and Prudenza, Florindo appears. Seeing what is going on, he hides and waits). Prudenza runs away in despair, followed by the doctor, her father.

[365] A facsimile of Massine's original letter to Stravinsky in his own handwriting (in Russian) has been reproduced in *Stravinsky's Pulcinella*, 419-426. The letter was transcribed and translated into English by Roman Ivashkiv, Dina Lentsner, and Heinrich Riggenback, 427-429.

[366] Many sources, including Beaumont, suggest that in production, this "cold water" was changed to excrement from a chamber pot.

[Scene 2]: Pulcinella capers, tapping on his knees, and leaves. On his way out, he meets Tartaglia and Rosetta, his daughter. The father leaves, asking his daughter to behave herself. Rosetta sees Pulcinella and declares her love to him. In response, he bashfully backs off. Outraged, Rosetta runs away. Pulcinella turns around and sees his lover Pimpinella. She has just witnessed his meeting with Rosetta and is jealous. Caressing her, Pulcinella calms her down. They both go to her place. Coviello and Florindo rush to Pulcinella and start a fight. Prudenza and Rosetta run out to stop them. The brawl is on. Coviello and Florindo run away, while Pulcinella is being dragged about by everyone because they can't decide who will get to beat him up. Seeing the crowd, the fathers elbow in and push their daughters toward home.

[Scene 3]: Pulcinella is alone and afraid of being attacked. He rushes around in fear. He is pierced by a rapier from behind a column. He falls down as if dead.

[Scene 4]: Intermezzo. Pulcinella raises himself, looks around, and disappears. Four little Pulcinellas carry Furbo in and put him down.[367] Pulcinella, wearing a cape [in order to disguise himself], invites people to see. Everyone comes out. The daughters become desperate when they see Pulcinella dead. The magician [Pulcinella] appears and does his magic. Everyone asks that the dead Pulcinella be revived and bows respectfully to the magician. Furbo jumps up. Everyone is exuberant. The old men are stunned. After a while, they come to their senses and drag their daughters home.

[Scene 5]: Pulcinella and Furbo tease everyone and decide to sing a serenade to Pimpinella. Furbo copies Pulcinella's every move. At the end, Pulcinella pushes Furbo to Pimpinella, turns around, and sees Florindo and Coviello dressed as Pulcinella. He laughs and hides. Florindo and Coviello invite Prudenza and Rosetta and they all dance a gavotte. Then Pimpinella and Furbo appear. Not noticing the others, they join the dance. All of a sudden, everybody sees each other. They are all in awe, which only intensifies with the appearance of the real Pulcinella, who, having conquered his fears, tells about his pranks and dunks Coviello's and Florindo's mugs[368] a fountain [sic]. After the fathers appear, the magician (Furbo) offers to let them bless their daughters, to which they agree. Pulcinella takes Pimpinella and starts a wedding galop [sic], which turns into a general joyous finale.

[367] The idea for "four little Pulcinellas" comes from the 1700s manuscript that Massine found, *Les quartes Polichinelles semblables* (The Four Similar Polichinelles). The editors of *The Routledge Companion of Commedia dell'Arte* note that the origins of the four are unknown. While Pulcinella is known to double, "why there were 'four' is not at all clear," 280.

[368] The translators' note here reads: "I.e. faces; The Russian word is slang," 429.

Despite the simple wording and list-like narrative, Massine's libretto paints a complex portrait of Pulcinella.[369] He is a man who women want to be with, and who men wish to be. With the exception of the fathers, every male character in the ballet at some point becomes (through the theatrical deceits of costumes and masks) Pulcinella. Pulcinella is presumably enviable because of the throng of women who admire him. However, he responds to this affection and envy only with standoffish detachment and mockery (his "caresses" for Pimpinella read as a ploy to keep her attention rather than as an act of love). He "rejects" Prudenza, "bashfully backs off" from Rosetta, and even intentionally "pushes" his lover Pimpinella into the arms of another man. His schemes, of course, serve his own self-interest (protecting him from harassment and death). However, they also serve to further isolate him from true human connection. Pulcinella denies or hides his own feelings to the point of being all mask, a living mirror for the desires of others.

Though brief, the static or predictable wording used to describe each auxiliary character also suggests Pulcinella's uniquely mutable identity. The women in the ballet are all characterized through their markedly negative emotional outbursts ("desperate" Prudenza,

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[369] A condensed and simplified synopsis of Massine's libretto appeared as a program note for the 1920 premiere of the ballet:

« Le sujet de *Pulcinella* est tiré d'un manuscrit trouvé à Naples et datant de l'année 1700, contenant un grand nombre de comédies mettant en scène le personnage traditionnel du théâtre populaire napolitain. L'épisode choisi pour servir de livret au ballet est intitulé : *Quatre Polichinelles semblables*.

Toutes les jeunes filles du pays sont amoureuses de Pulcinella ; les jeunes gens, piques de jalousie, cherchent à tuer celui-ci. Au moment où ils croient a voir réalisé leur projet, ils empruntent le costume de Pulcinella pour se présenter à leurs bien-aimées. Mais Pulcinella, malin, s'était fait remplacer par un sosie, lequel avait feint de mourir sous les coups de ses ennemis. Pulcinella lui-même, s'habille en mage et vient ressusciter son double. Au moment où les jeunes gens se croyant débarrassés de lui, viennent chercher leur fiancées, Pulcinella, le véritable, fait son apparition et arrange tous les mariages. Il épouse lui-même Pimpinella, sous la bénédiction de son double (Fourbo), lequel prend, à son tour, l'aspect du mage. » « L'argument du Pulcinella » from « Programme officiel des Ballets russes [Texte imprimé] : Théâtre de l'Opéra, mai-juin 1920, soirée du 17 mai 1920. Paris : M. de Brunoff, 1920. *Bibliotheque national de France*, IFN-8415141, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb413398333.

"outraged" Rosetta, "jealous" Pimpinella). Similarly, the men are characterized primarily through their belligerence, constantly ready for a "fight" or "brawl." In contrast, Pulcinella has two emotional responses: fear and laughter. His laughter, however, is not genuine mirth, but mockery of others; he laughs at his ability to deceive those around him. In Massine's libretto, Pulcinella is self-interested and deceitful; he is surrounded by admirers, yet beholden to no one; he is frightened by death, yet resilient. Massine's corporeal presence as a character onstage, therefore, needed to be able to express such complexity and duality in a way that exceeded the limitations of prescriptive pantomime

A Dream Sequence: The "Pulcinelli" of *Carosello Napoletano*

While a record of Massine's original choreography no longer exists, we are able to capture a glimpse of what Pulcinella, as danced by Massine, might have looked like in the 1954 Italian film *Carosello Napoletano*.[370] Directed by Ettore Giannini, the film is an episodic tale of street performers, featuring both ballet and song. A 1961 reviewer for *The New York Times* described the film as a "Neapolitan saga, roughly covering three centuries up to the present, [which] is bridged by the intermittent appearances of a homeless, impecunious but happy hurdy-gurdy man's family." Such a loose plot, he continues, "is only a diversion, for it is obvious that Signor Giannini planned—very successfully—to crowd the film with as many tunes, ballets and dances as was possible."[371] In fact, the film contains five

[370] The film, produced by Lux Film America, Inc., was released in the United States in 1961 under the name *Neapolitan Carousel*. It won the international prize at the 7th Cannes Film Festival; "Foreign Language Feature Reviews: Neopolitan Carousel," in *Boxoffice (Archive: 1920-2000)* 79, no. 16 (7 Aug 1961).

[371] A.H. Weiler, "Movie Review: 'Neapolitan Carousel,'" *The New York Times* (12 October 1961).

different ballet sequences (all choreographed by Massine), with performances by the Marquis de Cuevas company, the African Ballet of Keita Fodeba, and the Rome Opera Theatre.[372] The film is known largely for its casting of a young Sophia Loren, who plays a minor role as "a somewhat lachrymose soubrette of the music halls at the turn of the century . . . physically imposing as ever, if not as spirited."[373]

In a dream sequence called "The 99 Misfortunes of Pulcinelli," Massine danced as Punchinello. The plot of this ballet seems loosely based off of Massine's libretto for his 1920 ballet, but is a decidedly more elaborate spectacle, with its profusion of uncanny imagery, and sinister ending. Even as a fantastical dream sequence, the ballet lacks the light-hearted nature of the original ballet. Nevertheless, Pulcinella interacts with his typical love interests Prudenza, Rosetta, and Pimpinella, is chased by men attempting to beat him up (presumably for his dalliances with multiple women), and contains a denouement of a triumphant, celebratory group number. Choreographically, too, "99 Misfortunes" contains a similar structure to the original ballet, with an alternation between *danse d'ecole* partnering and folk dancing.

It must be noted that the *Pulcinella* of 1920 and "99 Misfortunes" are not the same. Aside from variations in choreography, there is also the passage of time (thirty-four years). By 1954, Massine was no longer a youthful dancer. However, Massine himself considered such a passing of time beneficial to his work. In interviews in the later part of his career,

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[372] A 1954 review of the film disparaged the dance sequences: "The arty cosmopolitan touch of Massine's choreography is fatally in evidence. . . . One regrets . . . the director's reliance on Massine where 'Art' is concerned. Without 'Art', in fact, this might have been a highly enjoyable and successful entertainment, instead of only intermittently so." One can only surmise that the critic here is using "Art" to mean avant-garde techniques in dance and design. "Carosello Napoletano (Neopolitan Fantasy)," in *Monthly Film Bulletin* 21, no. 240 (1 January 1954): 171.

[373] "Carosello Napoletano (Neopolitan Fantasy)," 171.

Massine often spoke of his naiveté as a young choreographer, and how much (too much, in his estimation) he relied on "instinct" rather than a theoretical system.[374] For the Joffrey revivals of both *Parade* and *Pulcinella* in the 1970s, Massine admitted to altering choreography based on his deepened knowledge of the body and composition.[375] Of *Pulcinella*, he said, "I was not mature enough then, in 1920 . . . to grasp and interpret the dramatic situation completely. In the meantime, I have never stopped my research and study. And so I tried to correct my own mistakes."[376] Referring to the 1974 revival of *Pulcinella* at the Wolf Trap Theatre in Washington D.C.,[377] Massine commented,

> It is [now] more Neapolitan in character . . . Having spent so much time there, I feel Naples is now very much in my reach, I'm at home there. The Neapolitans, they are always gesturing, it is something they can't do without. The choreography of 'Pulcinella' needed a little more of this quality. Now it has more vitality, gaiety, its more scintillating.[378]

So, while Massine's 1972/4 choreography (and even his 1954 *Carosello* choreography) may not be identical to the 1920 version, the later iterations, at least for the choreographer, bear greater 'authenticity' and allegiance to the Neapolitan style of *Pulcinella's* heritage.

It would be inaccurate to suggest that one can read the choreography from "99 Misfortunes" as a replication of *Pulcinella*; the film was not a *Ballets Russes* creation, and so simply cannot contain the same *élan* as the original, regardless of how many similarities it

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[374] Massine said, "When I was young I had an overflow of imagination that hurt my work. I did things from instinct, I really didn't know what I was doing;" quoted in Alan M. Kriegsman, "Massine: New Principles: Crosscurrents," *The Washington Post* (18 August 1974), K1.

[375] For Massine's comments on the revival of *Parade*, see Chapter 2 of this Dissertation.

[376] Quoted in Kriegsman.

[377] The ballet was first revived by Massine in 1972 in Milan at La Scala, and again in the U.S. in 1974 (first in New York in October, and then in D.C. in August.)

[378] Quoted in Kriegsman.

may bear. However, the dream sequence of *Carosello Napoletano* can certainly serve as both a guide for imagining the choreography of *Pulcinella*, and as an archive of Massine's dancing body in the role. Perhaps more important than seeing the original choreography is understanding Massine's own execution of the character Pulcinella's choreography. As I shall discuss in the forthcoming pages, Massine himself was often the key to the vitality of the roles he made famous. Therefore, my description focuses primarily on Massine's choreographing of his own body. In this way, I hope to use Massine's corporeality (his *performed* identity) to rebuild a choreographic history from 1920 which no longer exists.

The Dance: "The 99 Misfortunes of Pulcinelli"

Hit on the head by another *Commedia* player (seemingly as retribution for a shouting match the two have just engaged in), Pulcinella (played by Massine) falls, belly-first, onto a white swing.[379] The swing propels him into the dream sequence, as the scene now cuts from a shadowy theater to an idyllic, pink-tinged landscape sprinkled with trees. Pulcinella (or *a* Pulcinella, for there will be many) now swings merrily back and forth, kicking alternating legs high into the air with each swing; a white parrot sways on a perch just above him. As quickly becomes apparent, the opening sequence presents a surreal adaptation of Adam and Eve. The Pulcinella and a woman (both dressed all in white, with tall white hats and white masks) briefly dance together in front of a large tree with an enormous yellow snake wrapped around its trunk. Another Pulcinella, this one more sinister with a red mask, sits in the crook of the tree above, seeming to 'orchestrate' the couples' actions with swaying hands, gesturing

[379] The following description is from my own viewing of *Carosella Napoletano* (1954). Directed by Ettore Giannini, choreography by Léonide Massine. "Pulcinella Da 'Carosello Napoletano' di Ettore Giannini" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3mkAZkYvDs.
For full cast and credits see: "*Carosello Napoletano* (*Neopolitan Fantasy*)," 171.

in tandem with the dancing below. The movements of 'Adam and Eve' are quick and repetitive, mostly in place; 'Adam' performs a movement typically associated with a jester (body bent over to the side, arms in fourth position, one leg extended to the side, foot flexed) while 'Eve' executes arabesque and waltz steps on a slight backwards diagonal.[380]

The Red Pulcinella in the tree then gives 'Eve' an apple, which she hands to 'Adam' with a flurry of quick *chaines* turns. 'Adam' takes a bight of the apple, and his stomach immediately protrudes, once, twice, and then a third time, at which point his stomach explodes, to the horror of 'Eve' and the delight of the Red Pulcinella. 'Eve,' who had shielded her eyes with her hands at the sight of 'Adam's' grotesque transformation, removes her hands to uncover a face that is now masked in black. The scene quickly cuts to 'Adam,' who now appears like a more traditional Pulcinella with a black mask, standing in front of an enormous white egg, out of which crawls a miniature, identically-dressed Pulcinella. The full-sized Pulcinella performs lilting *pas de bourrées* to the right and left, as the small Pulcinella sprightly hops up and down.

It seems that here, Massine has created a new mythology for Pulcinella, likening the *Commedia* character to the biblical Adam. While Pulcinella was once young, handsome, and pure, Eve's temptation transfigures his body, leaving him pot-bellied, grotesque, and weather-worn.[381] Massine's decision to fashion his own origin-story for a character with

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[380] Beaumont wrote of Puclinella's entrance in 1920: "He takes off his cap with a flourish, replaces it, and, from the depths of his blouse, produces a small violin and bow. With frenzied glee he scrapes a lively air to which he executes a merry dance. He springs into the air, pirouettes, leaps on one foot, then on the other. He stamps one foot in time to the measure, kicks his feet out sideways, bounds upwards, twists to right and left, then moves in a circle with a slow dragging gait, while he takes the violin in one hand and whirls it up and down in a circular movement. Again he emphasizes the theme with a rhythmic stamp of his foot, then stops and throws away the violin," *Complete Book of Ballets*, 736.

[381] According to *The Routledge Companion to Commedia dell'Arte*, the traditional black or dark brown mask worn by Pulcinella is meant to signify a working class man whose skin has become aged and worn by the sun.

whom he seems to relate so much is highly intriguing. While I do not wish to make claims about Massine's particular intention here, his portrayal, albeit comedic, of a biblical character who 'falls from grace' due to sexual temptation does not seem accidental. The temptation of a woman (Massine began his romantic pursuit of *Ballets Russes* dancer Vera Savini around 1920) led to the ultimate demise of his relationship with Diaghilev and his departure from the company in 1921. However, we might also consider 'Eve' as Diaghilev, as the initial temptation of forbidden love which caused Massine so much internal turmoil.

Whether the 'Adam and Eve' scenario serves as a composite image of his perceived sexual downfall(s), or merely as a clever way of re-imagining Pulcinella's origins, Massine certainly draws attention to an evolution of Pulcinella's character. It seems undeniable that Pulcinella was a character with whom Massine grew (in both age and experience). Portraying him first in 1920 at the age of twenty-five, and then again at the age of fifty-five, Massine was certainly aware of his own aging and physical limitations (although they are not apparent in his dancing) in 1954. By showcasing an initial stage of youth, purity, and even naiveté in Pulcinella, Massine emphasizes his own journey alongside (or embodied in) the character.

This section of the ballet, however, is relatively brief, with sharp cymbal crashes in the music prompting the end of 'Eden.' The scene then cuts to a large, ornate gate through which a procession of Pulcinellas of all sizes (including a dog dressed as Pulcinella, and the tallest one [the *real* Pulcinella] shouldering a basket filled with doll-size Pulcinellas) slowly march. Holding upstage hands, the group moves across the space in unison, hunched forward, as if bearing a large weight on their backs, with a slow-quick-slow gait matching the music's tempo. Here, the character of Pulcinella in his many iterations is emphasized. The Pulcinelli are uncharacteristically somber; as if trudging through history, they reveal their own exhaustion and performative labor. Behind the literal and figurative masks, Pulcinella

toils away. Always in isolation (in relation to the rest of humanity), but always with multiple versions of himself.

Such a processional scene recalls Guillaume Apollinaire's poem "Cortège" (first published in full in 1912), excerpted below.

> */. . ./ One day / One day I waited for myself / I said to myself Guillame its time you came / So I could know just who I am / I who know others*
>
> *I know them by my five senses and a few more / It is enough to see their feet to be able to reconstruct / Thousands of them / To see their frightened feet one of their hairs / Or their tongue when I play the doctor / Or their children when I play the prophet / . . . / One day I was waiting for myself / I said to myself Guillame it's time that you came / And with a lyric step all those that I love came forward / And I was not among them /. . ./*
>
> *The procession passed and I looked in it for my body / All these turned up and were not myself / Brought one by one the pieces of myself / They build me little by little as a tower is raised / The people heaped themselves up and I appeared myself / Who was formed of all bodies and all human things /. . ./*[382]

In "Cortège," Apollinaire struggles to truly understand himself as an individual, to "know" himself as he knows others. He searches for himself amongst his relations and acquaintances, yet finds himself nowhere. He sees himself only through the parts he plays ("doctor" and "prophet") in relationship to others. Finally, he finds himself not as an individual, but as a

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[382] *« Un jour / Un jour je m'attendais moi-même / Je me disais Guillaume il est temps que tu viennes / Pour que je sache enfin celui-là que je suis / Moi qui connais les autres / Je les connais par les cinq sens et quelques autres / Il me suffit de voir leurs pieds pour pouvoir refaire ces gens à / milliers / . . . De voir leurs pieds paniques un seul de leurs cheveux / Ou leur langue quand il me plait de faire le médecin / Ou leurs enfants quand il me plait de faire le prophète / . . . Un jour je m'attendais moi-même / Je me disais Guillaume il est temps que tu viennes / Et d'un lyrique pas s'avançaient ceux que j'aime / Parmi lesquels je n'étais pas / . . . Le cortège passait et j 'y cherchais mon corps / Tous ceux qui survenaient et n'étaient pas moi-même / Amenaient un à un les morceaux de moi-même / On me bâtit peu à peu comme on élevé une tour / Les peuples s'entassaient et je parus moi-même / Qu'ont forme tous les corps et les choses humaines / . . . .»* Guillaume Apollinaire, "Cortège," in *Selected Writings: Guillaume Apollinaire*, trans. Roger Shattuck (A New Directions Book, 1971), 74-79.

sum of all those he knows, living and dead.[383] Similarly, Pulcinella (and perhaps Massine himself) does not exist *as* himself or *for* himself. He multiplies, subtly shifting and multiplying identities both as a tactic of survival and as a way to suit the needs of those he performs for. As Massine himself wrote, Pulcinella is a "composite creature – magistrate, poet, schoolmaster, spy and philosopher, as befitted one who could evolve from the simple *zanni* or comic servant of the original character into the French Polichinelle and the English Punch."[384] Both the Guillame of "Cortège" and Pulcinella are a composite of history, traces of the past and present.

As the scene of "99 Pulcinelli" progresses, the vast skyscape now becomes a courtyard. Upon reaching a house, the smaller Pulcinellas leave, and the real Pulcinella removes his basket from his back. A ballerina in pink (presumably Prudenza) whirls onto the stage with a quicksilver series of *chaines, soutenus*, *fouettes*, her skirt blossoming out around her. The two then dance together.[385] Pulcinella leaps into a corkscrew jump, knees tucking and twisting up, while his upper body torques to the opposite side, arms haphazardly swinging diagonally overhead. Within this one movement is embodied a series of legacies: Nijinsky as Petroushka (1911), Massine as Petroushka (1916), and Massine as Pulcinella (1920). His movements in this sequence heavily recall those of Petrushka, as he springs in and out of turned in, knock-kneed positions. The sadness of Petrushka, however, is absent here. Massine seems buoyant, leaping into the air in what could be considered a burlesqued

[383] In the last stanza, Apollinaire writes "Nothing is dead but what has never been"; *« Rien n'est mort que ce qui n'existe pas encore. »*

[384] Massine, *My Life*, 145.

[385] Massine described his original dance with Prudenza (played by Tchernicheva) as a *pas de deux* in which he "rejected her advances with mercurial elusiveness until she gave up in despair." *My Life*, 150.

back *cabriole*, knees bent, and feet clacking together in the air instead of the classically streamlined and straight position of the body. From the air, he flings himself into a kneeling position, and then back into the air again in a haphazardly executed *sissonne* leap.

Massine's movements reveal a sense of incredible lightness that is simultaneously earth-bound. He is neither airy nor noble in his movements, yet his propulsive vitality engenders his movements with, if not elegance, finesse.[386] As he continues to dance, his movement largely consists of bounding leaps, small repetitive steps travelling side to side (which, despite the small amount of space travelled, make full expressive use of the entire body), and pantomimic gesticulations. The arms are typically always moving, accentuating beats in the score or acting in counterpart to the legs. Such movement dynamics are a characteristic element of Massine's theory of harmonic counterpoint.

A ballerina in green now enters (presumably Rosetta). In his duet with the second ballerina, Massine's movements accentuate the torso and hips (though in a way that suggests comedic sensuality rather than any true eroticism). He places a hand at his waist, jutting his hips out to the opposite side, or performs fast swiveling motions of the hips and arms, creating miniature s-curves with both his torso and upper body. Just as quickly, however, he transitions into a wide-legged second position (feet turned in), jumping and clapping like an excited child as he watches Rosetta dance. Next, Pimipinella enters, and he performs more traditionally virtuosic movements (though all with a *comic* style) including a *tour en l'air* and a barrel turn, alternating between lifting Pimpinella and jumping. Such shifts from pure dance movement to comedic pantomime disrupt any sense of a romantic narrative. As

[386] In Beaumont's account of *Pulcinella* he wrote of Massine's performance, "His movements have a cat-like elegance and sinuousness; his timing of step and gesture is superb; and his personality so vital and so compelling that he can force the spectator to follow the least crook of his finger." *Complete Book*, 689.

viewers, we are constantly reminded of Pulcinella's disconnect from others. He can move easily between different identities, but he perhaps truly belongs to none.

From here, the ballet becomes increasingly bizarre, as Pulcinella capers through multiple 'escape' scenes, including an attack in a kitchen with rolling pins, a siege in a bedroom via umbrellas, and the threat of a boiling cauldron of fire, stewarded by devilish creatures all in black, faces fully masked and hands clawed. These brief scenes are nonstop movement for Massine as he flails, contorts, and flings his body to evade capture. Finally, the figure of Pimpinella appears through a crack in the craggy mountain lair of the hooded figures. Massine slips through the crevice, and enters a new space, similar to that of the first Eden setting. Here, Pulcinella dances around an enormous water melon slice, and a mountain-sized pile of spaghetti, complete with giant forks. The "real" Pulcinella becomes lost as myriad Pulcinelli dance around him; some kick up their feet into front *attitudes*, performing character steps, some fly across the space, executing virtuosic *saut de basques* and *jetés*, and others wiggle their hips, arms thrown above their heads.[387] Finally, Pulcinella is revealed, holding his traditional small guitar, atop the pile of spaghetti. Strumming and caressing his guitar, he briefly dances with a new ballerina, this one shrouded in black lace. Beckoning to him, Pulcinella lifts the shroud, only to discover a ghastly, skeletal face of death. The sight causes Pulcinella to let out a high-pitched croaking sound, convulse, and fall to the floor. The dream sequence ends as he is awakened

[387] Of his choreography for the 1920 *Pulcinella*, Massine stated that the ending contained "a profusion of imaginary folk steps in the manner of a *saltarello*" (*My Life*, 151). The *Saltarello*, a fast-paced Italian dance of the fourteenth century featuring quick leaps, is certainly preserved (in augmented form) in the film.

Corporeality Enacted

In her memoir, Lydia Sokolova provided insightful commentary on Massine's particular aesthetic:

> All choreographers must agree that there are certain dancers who excel in the particular type of movement they invent . . . I am sure that Lopokova, Idzikovsky, Woizikovsy and myself were most suitable and adaptable to Massine's individual kind of ballet . . . I responded to his type of movement because the whole system of it seemed to be part of me. I was anyway so essentially a character dancer that other people could not be expected to perform all my contortions.

She goes on to say that the dances of Lopokova, Idzikovsky, Woizikovsy, created for them by Massine, "could never be repeated by anyone else. That is why these perfect ballets, although they are still done, **are in a way *lost***, and when Massine ceased inventing his extraordinary movements for Lydia, Stas, Leon and myself **we were lost too**, and never did anything so great again."[388] Without the original bodies who performed these movements—movements created from Massine's own body—Sokolova believed the material was "lost." Identity and choreography, at least in Sokolova's view, were enmeshed. For Massine then, who has notoriously been enigmatic about any particularities of his own identity, perhaps the only way to catch a glimpse of his true self is through his movement.

One of Pulcinella's most characteristic physical expressions, repeated throughout the dream sequence in slightly varying forms, is a violent shaking and twisting of the body from side to side. This movement seems to represent many emotions for Pulcinella, from excitement, to frustration, to fear. A similar variation of this movement appeared in the 1920 ballet as well. Massine wrote of his original portrayal of the character, "As I was unable to rely on facial expression because of my mask, I used every possible flourish, twist and turn to

[388] Sokolova, 143 (italics in original, bold mine).

suggest the unscrupulousness and ambiguity of Pulcinella's character."[389] Writing of his first duet with Prudenza, Beaumont described Pulcinella thus: "vastly amused at his defeat of Prudenza, he breaks into an animated dance; he twists his body from side to side, shrugs his shoulders, and nods his head."[390] Whether in 1920 or 1954, the twisted/twisting body seems to be a common factor in Massine's choreography for the character Pulcinella.

As if pulled in multiple directions at once, Massine characterized Pulcinella's complex, conflicted, and in Massine's own words "ambiguous" identity from the inside out, revealing emotion through the torque of the body. The frenetic contortions of Pulcinella help to illuminate the way in which Massine physicalized character. The twisting and contracting of the body from the core suggests physical and emotional turmoil (similar to the inverted, stuttering movements choreographed by Nijinsky years earlier). As with Nijinsky, such motions created a performance of modern corporeality. Benjamin's description of the modern *physis* is helpful to return to here: "In the nights of annihilation of the last war the frame of mankind was shaken by a feeling that resembled the bliss of the epileptic. And the revolts that followed it were the first attempt of mankind to bring the new body under its control."[391] Massine's choreography, and his own embodiment of the character of Pulcinella, highlight the bliss and the terror of modernity. His expansion of choreographic possibility not only broadened the vocabulary of dance for future generations, but also achieved a physicalized expression of fragmented and uncertain identity.

While often lauded for his use of character, Massine was at times also criticized for his reliance (or over-reliance) on grotesque dance. Writing in defense of

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[389] Massine, *My Life*, 150.

[390] Beaumont, *Complete Book*, 736.

[391] Benjamin, "To the Planetarium," 104.

Massine in 1919, journalist Edwin Evans wrote, “The few years of his active career have fallen in times which make the ironical attitude almost the only alternative to apathetic despondency. If we do not see the grotesque side of our present-day existence, we are in danger of being overwhelmed by its monstrous futility.”[392] Evans viewed Massine’s choreography as an attempt to thwart the blasé attitude necessitated by modern hyper-stimulus and trauma. Through his choreography, Massine embraced the grotesque side of [his] present-day existence”; through Pulcinella, he could mock death, laugh while crying, and wear a mask as a means for his own survival.

[392] Evans, *The Outlook* (22 November 1919).

*Chapter 4: *La Boutique Fantasque* (1919) – Trauma and Escape in the Cancan*

> *The* Boutique *has been a favorite with audiences [of] the world ever since its inception. The reason is not hard to find, for the ballet is so replete with good humor, joy, and happiness that it pleases both the serious devotee of dancing and the seeker after amusement. The quiet, harmonious scenery, the simple sparkling melodies of another age that better understood the difficult art of enjoyment of life, and the merry dances of the artistes, set free those memories of youth which lie, however deeply concealed, in the heart of every spectator*.[393]

Introduction and Chapter Premise

On June 5, 1919, audiences at London's Alhambra Theater delighted at the "merry dances" of vivified dolls celebrating the triumph of love. *La Boutique Fantasque* (or "The Magic Toyshop") is fondly remembered—by its cast of dancers and viewers alike—as a highlight of the *Ballets Russes'* postwar repertoire.[394] A collaboration between Léonide Massine (choreography and libretto), André Derain (set and costumes), and Gioachino Rossini (score, orchestrated by Ottorino Respighi), the light-hearted, charming ballet was received by the public without controversy or serious criticism. Loosely based on the 1888 Austrian ballet *Die Puppenfee* ("The Fairy Doll"), *Boutique* is set in a magic toyshop filled

[393] Beaumont, *Complete Book of Ballets*, 721.

[394] Unlike *Parade* and *Pulcinella*, the choreography of *Boutique* has survived. The work was performed frequently throughout Massine's career (with both the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo and the De Basil Company), and is still in repertory today. Massine restaged the ballet in Oakland just months before his death in 1979. Despite the ubiquity of the ballet, only brief clips of Massine dancing in his signature role exist. It was Massine's fervent desire to find funding for the filming of original *Ballets Russes* works, yet such a desire was sadly never realized during his lifetime.

with dancing dolls.[395] In Massine's version, the central figure (originally the beautiful "Fairy Doll") was replaced by a pair of Cancan dolls (lovers, first danced by Massine and Lydia Lopokova).[396] When the pair is purchased by different owners, the group of dolls aid in the lovers' escape, fighting the angry customers who have lost their purchase. The dolls are ultimately victorious, and the ballet ends with the entire cast high-kicking in a jubilant Cancan. As *Ballets Russes* dancer Lydia Sokolova recalled, *La Boutique Fantasque* "was probably the gayest and most exhilarating ballet ever invented."[397]

Ostensibly, *Boutique* lacked the avant-garde experimentalism at the heart of other postwar works (like *Parade* and *Pulcinella*). Generally, critics and audience members viewed the ballet as pure whimsy, an enchanting respite from dreary postwar realities.[398] In the

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[395] Composed by Josef Bayer (1852 – 1913), *Die Puppenfee* was produced first in Vienna in 1888, and then again in St. Petersburg in 1903, this time with choreography by Nikolai and Sergei Legat, and costumes and décor by Léon Bakst. *Die Puppenfee* is a simple ballet, without dramatic climax; the *divertissements* of various dolls (performed for prospective customers) are followed by a nocturnal ball, held by the eponymous Fairy Doll, in which more dancing ensues. In contrast, Massine's *Boutique* features several rises in dramatic action, including the escape of the Cancan couple from separate purchasers, and a battle between dolls and customers in the finale. Both *Die Puppenfee* and *Boutique* draw inspiration from *Coppélia*, the 1870 ballet about a seemingly-living mechanical doll, choreographed by Arthur Saint-Léon (1821 – 1870). In the forthcoming pages of this chapter, I will discuss *Boutique*'s relationship to *Coppélia* in more detail.

[396] While Lopokova originated the role, she only danced the part briefly, leaving the company suddenly to elope with a Russian officer. Her disappearance forced a new dancer—Vera Nemtchinova—to take up the part. According to the Alhambra program, Nemtchinova had already replaced Lopokova by 18 July 1919. "Serge Diaghileff's season of Russian ballets: [programme], The Alhambra Theater, Friday, July 18, 1919." FRBNF41337069, *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb41337069d.

[397] Sokolva, *Dancing for Diaghilev*, 137. Sokolova played the part of the Tarantella dancer in the original production.

[398] There were, of course, some critics who disparaged the ballet. Clive Bell, for example, saw the choreography of *Boutique* as "skim[ing] the edge of vulgarity" due to Massine mockery of Romantic tropes. "The New Ballet," *The New Republic* (30 June 1919): 414-16. Additionally, original reviewers and dance scholars, including Massine's biographer García-Márquez, *have* made critical claims about the ballet (these will be discussed in more detail in this chapter). As a whole, however, *Boutique* has been treated with far less serious consideration than other *Ballets Russes* works of this period.

quotation at the top of this chapter, Cyril Beaumont linked the ballet to "memories of youth," asserting that the work unearthed childhood reveries in all who saw it. Beaumont's assessment is apt; yet, I believe that *Boutique* is concerned with *more* than just childlike fantasy.

I argue that in *La Boutique Fantasque*, Massine evidenced another critical iteration of his postwar corporeality. Like *Parade*, the complex substance of the ballet is found interstitially, rather than overtly. The joyous dancing of the Cancan is 'encrypted' with deeper personal and social resonances. A ballet conceived in and constructed from an atmosphere of violence and war, *La Boutique Fantasque* could be read as a direct reaction to, and remedy for, audiences weary from World War I. However, *Boutique* is *not* a reaction to war in the mere sense that it provides escapist entertainment from an otherwise bleak reality. Rather, Massine used moments of trauma (both present *and* past) as creative impetus for the ballet. I agree with Beaumont's assertion that *Boutique* evokes childhood memories. However, for Massine, those memories were rooted in violence, rather than innocence. In this chapter, I argue that, housed within Massine's choreography and libretto for the ballet, is a profound glimpse into the artist's own ability to process and transform trauma into art.

Due to a dearth of serious, critical consideration of the ballet, this chapter will be highly theoretical in nature. While *La Boutique Fantasque* premiered in 1919, a year before *Pulcinella*, I have chosen to place this chapter after that of *Pulcinella*. As a ballet that has largely lacked scholarly reflection, my writing in this chapter is more original and experimental. Therefore, I rely on the arguments set out in my previous chapters to bolster my claims here. I will, in essence, use Massine's choreography (and my own theorization of his choreography) in *Parade* and *Pulcinella* as critical texts through which to better understand *La Boutique Fantasque*. My purpose in this chapter is twofold. First, I expand

upon the central arguments previously laid out in this dissertation: locating Massine's unique postwar corporeality in this ballet, showcasing his choreographic development of "character," and further exploring his personal association with, and embodiment of, what T.S. Eliot termed the '*unhuman*.' Second, I posit that the creative impetus, and perhaps even substance of this ballet, is not innocent merriment, but rather the artistic transformation of trauma.[399]

Trauma Transformed[400]

In May of 1917, *Les Ballet Russes* travelled to Spain. There, Massine studied flamenco dancing with Felix Fernández García and Señor de Molina, and began his choreographic preparation for *Le Tricorne* (1919). Further work on the Spanish ballet was postponed, however, as composer Manuel de Falla required several additional months to perfect his score, feeling that he needed to delve more deeply into the "native dances and music of Spain."[401] In the interim, Diaghilev introduced Massine to a compilation of short piano pieces by Italian composer Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868). Listening to the music, Massine envisioned the world of *La Boutique Fantasque*, hearing in the melodies a series of

[399] See Chapter 1 of this dissertation for my discussion of Eliot's use of the term "unhuman" in relation to Massine.

[400] The section, dealing with the mental state of Massine, is not meant to psychoanalyze or pathologize the artist. Rather, my goal is to provide *one* potential reading of Massine. In an effort to avoid misinterpretation, I rely solely on Massine's own words. In examining moments of trauma in Massine's life, I hope to shed light on his creative process. However, this writing is conjectural, and should be regarded as a hypothesis, rather than as a claim.

[401] de Falla wanted to "successfully translate the *jota* or *farruca* into a modern idiom" and therefore needed to study the "native" culture more closely. Massine, *My Life*, 115.

dancing dolls, each with their own unique movement vocabulary befitting their character.[402] With this idea in mind, preliminary work on the ballet began.

Several months later, in December of 1917, Massine and his companions found themselves in the upheaval of the Portuguese Revolution.[403] Massine recounted:

> One evening, when we had been in Lisbon only a few days, I was walking back from the theater with Diaghilev, Grigoriev and a Portuguese friend when we heard shouting and the sounds of firing. Bombs and shells were exploding in the street. We rushed to our hotel and were told to take shelter under the main staircase where we remained for the three days and three nights of the Portuguese revolution. Our Portuguese friend was an elegant balletomane, and I can still remember how his snowy-white pleated evening shirt-front gradually became greyer and greyer as smoke seeped into the lobby of the hotel from the street.[404]

Each man was affected by this experience differently. While Diaghilev was "irritated" at having lost valuable rehearsal time, Felix "locked himself in his room and stayed there, almost starving to death," falling even deeper into a state of anxious agitation. Massine, however, experienced a surge of creative inspiration.

> Instead of succumbing to the general panic, I found myself remembering the gaiety and fantasy of Rossini's music. While the fighting raged outside my thoughts went back to the beach at Viareggio, where I had seen two white fox-terriers coquettishly chasing and teasing each other. With a vivid picture in my mind of their frisky, flirtatious movements I mentally composed the poodles' dance for the new ballet. Throughout the revolution I remained in a highly creative mood and as a result, once the fighting had stopped, I was able to compose the major parts of *La Boutique Fantasque* in a few days.[405]

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[402] Massine, *My Life*, 119.

[403] This revolution was the attempt of military leader Sidónio Pais to establish a "New Republic," overturning the Sacred Union government currently in place in Portugal. For more on this revolution see Filipe Ribeiro de Meneses, "Revolutions (Portugal)," in *International Encyclopedia of the First World War: 1914 – 1918 online*, eds. Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson. Freie Universität Berline, https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/revolutions_portugal.

[404] Massine, *My Life,* 120-1.

[405] Massine, *My Life*, 121.

The Portuguese revolution proved just one of many instances in which Massine detached himself from the events around him. Rather than being frightened, anxious, or even irritated, Massine transported himself, through memory, away from the violence. In remembering Viareggio, a place that for him represented beauty and discovery, Massine tapped into a generative source of artistic creation.[406]

Throughout his life, Massine repeatedly transformed traumatic experiences into creative fervor.[407] To accomplish such a transformation, he relied on the possibilities for escapism and fantasy inherent in theatrical performance. In 1915, he described to friend Anatoli Petrovich Bolchakov his experience of an earthquake while in Rome:

> The new year came in a strange and frightful manner. I am still feverish. It was an unforgettable day and morning. In those seconds that brought death to so many people, I felt my worthlessness and pitiful helplessness. The shocks were so strong that it seemed that two or three seconds longer and everything would be finished. Afterwards it was pleasant and joyful, the sunshine and a perfect sky. **It all ended like a fairytale**; where the ground broke and a huge lake was formed. **If it were not for the newspapers and processions with stretchers it would be like the fifth act of a nightmarish fairy-play**.[408]

In this letter, Massine reimagined this "frightful" event as a fairytale, envisioning that the "huge lake" created by the force of the shocks was merely the pleasant resolution "of a nightmarish fairy-play." Massine dismissed the very real damage and death caused by the natural disaster, focusing instead on the dramatic structure or 'plot' within the happenings. Using such a strategy (of denial, of avoidance, of positivity, or of all three), Massine could

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[406] His hours spent at open air markets in Viareggio also served as inspiration for *Pulcinella*.

[407] For a theory of the link between artistic creativity and trauma see George Hagman, *The Artist's Mind: A Psychoanalytic Perspective on Creativity, Modern Art and Modern Artists* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

[408] Letter from Massine to Bolchakov, January 19, 1915, State Central Theatrical Museum, Moscow, no. 181571. Reproduced in García-Márquez*,* 49 (emphasis mine). García-Márquez notes that Bolchaov was Massine's "deepest emotional liaison outside of his family," 20.

'choreograph,'—or perhaps it is more accurate to say, 're-choreograph'—his life, transfiguring otherwise disturbing images within his own mental theater, of which *he* had complete control.

A close analysis of Massine's writing repeatedly reveals the artist as, if not out of step with the world around him, at least consciously detached from it.[409] In 1918, on the night of the Armistice, Massine remembered that as he was "pushed and shoved in all directions by the ecstatic crowd [in Trafalgar square], I remained curiously **unmoved**. A sense of **calm** came over me, and I felt that life could now resume its normal course."[410] As four years of war finally came to an end, the prevailing sensation for Massine was indifference. He was moved, not by the cessation of death, but by the possibility that "life could now resume its normal course." For Massine, consumed by his desire to create art (or escape into art), that "normal course" of life was one in which the production of ballets could more easily continue.[411]

Childhood "Detachment"

Massine's nonchalant attitude toward World War I was perhaps rooted in his childhood experiences growing up in Russia during a period of extreme upheaval. After the

[409] I refer here to Massine's writings from his autobiography *My Life*, various oral history interviews cited throughout this dissertation (Gruen, Horosko, Hunt, Walter) and Massine's correspondence folder "Massine, Léonide, 1896-1979. Papers, 1932-1968." *MGZMD 33, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

[410] Massine, *My Life*, 131 (emphasis mine).

[411] The war made it extremely difficult to find funding for *Ballets Russes* productions, and Diaghilev was constantly on the verge of needing to fold the company. Bookings were nearly impossible to secure during this period (except in Spain), and Diaghilev's personal finances had been cut off due to the Russian revolution of 1917. For more on the financial situation of the company see Lynn Garafola's *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, particularly Part II: "Enterprise," 147-269.

Moscow Uprising of 1905 (discussed in Chapter 1), Massine had walked through the city with his father and older brother Konstantin,

> …clutching their hands as we passed the piles of dead bodies, victims of the uprising. Twisted and contorted, their limbs had stiffened into every conceivable position of suffering. Rows of outstretched arms, torsos, and staring faces passed before my eyes as we searched among the dead for people we had known . . . Listening to [other children's] gay, carefree voices, I felt **a sudden sense of detachment** from their childhood world of innocence. Suddenly I let go of my father's hand, and walked home on my own.[412]

This moment seems symbolic of the way Massine would carry himself throughout his later life. At ten years old, he released his father's hand, and moved into the world on his own, alone. Perhaps this was a definitive moment of detachment for Massine, in which he began to process and interact with the world differently. In the above passage, Massine clearly describes a loss of innocence, but he also hints at his own feelings of alienation. His perception of being an outsider within society, and even within his own family, coupled with a forced realization of death on a massive scale, might have led Massine to this "sudden sense of detachment;" a need to repress or reject death for self-preservation.[413] Confronted with death at this young age, Massine mentally and physically removed himself from those around him. This moment, and in fact this coping technique, arguably reverberated throughout Massine's life. Massine's "unmoved" response to the Great War thirteen years later, then, is unsurprising.

[412] Massine, *My Life*, 27.

[413] Recall from the Theoretical Introduction that Massine described himself as a "freak" and "half-human." Interview with Rob Hardin, "A Conversation," 68; *My Life*, 82. For more on Massine's relationship with his family in context, see the Theoretical Introduction of this dissertation.

From Nightmare to Stage

My hypothesis of Massine's reaction to trauma supposes 1) that he mentally detached from traumatic moments, retreating into his own mind, and 2) that his mental retreat involved the transformation of traumatic images into theatrical spectacle. In the case of *La Boutique Fantasque*, I argue that three traumatic forces acted as creative catalysts: the Portuguese Revolution, The Great War raging across Europe (coupled with the 1917 Russian Revolution), and the Moscow Uprising of 1905. It is helpful here to return to a passage, quoted in the Theoretical Introduction of this dissertation, in which Massine recalled his experience during the uprising.

> Because of the fierce fighting, particularly round our quarter of the town, father closed the heavy shutters over all our windows and barricaded the door with a cupboard and sofa. For days on end we heard screams in the street outside and the noise of galloping horses as the Cossacks tried to break through the barricades. Sometimes the fighting came so close that we could hear the heavy Cossack whips, with their metal tips, whistling through the air.[414]

As with the Portuguese Revolution of 1917, Massine was forced to hide—this time for two weeks—barricaded inside his home. After the uprising, the young Massine was haunted by the disturbing ordeal: "Bewildered and terrified, I would wake at night from horrific dreams of Cossacks galloping into our courtyard."[415] In 1905, Massine had not yet developed his strategy for repressing and/or re-purposing fear into art. However, this very nightmare arguably reappeared—transformed—many years later, in *La Boutique Fantasque.* In 1919, Massine re-cast the nightmarish Cossaks of his childhood as lively and fantastical toys, creating a male *corps de ballet* of Cossack dolls. No longer fearsome, Massine partnered his Cossacks with toy ballerinas, even choreographing a duet for a Cossack and his

[414] Massine, *My Life*, 25.

[415] Massine, *My Life*, 26.

"sweetheart." While the Cossacks remain soldiers who engage in "battle," they fight to protect the Cancan couple (and by turn, Massine himself). Massine arguably drew upon his childhood nightmares as inspiration for the Cossack dolls of *Boutique*, now rendering them a safe, controllable aspect of his own fairytale, in a way that was not possible for him as a child.

The experience of being forced into a barricaded shelter in Portugal seems to have served as a link between 1919 and his childhood, dredging up similar memories.[416] A final detail from Massine's childhood seems to solidify the connection between these two events. Massine noted that after the uprising and his nightmares, his older brother Konstantin "did all he could to keep my mind off what was happening outside," including "buil[ding] me a miniature theater."[417] Massine occupied himself by constructing figures out of cardboard, and staging small productions. "I got a curious sense of satisfaction out of maneuvering my little cardboard characters, making patterns of movement which corresponded to …music. And the sight of them on the stage, lit only by wavering candlelight, made an impression on me which has remained one of my most vivid childhood memories."[418] In moments of fear, Massine turned to his theater, his space of comfort and control. His cardboard dolls were presumably the very dolls which he brought to life many years later in *La Boutique Fantasque*.[419] In

[416] I will return to this idea later in this chapter, using Freud's idea of repression and the uncanny (from his 1919 essay "The Uncanny") to consider this point further.

[417] Massine, *My Life*, 26.

[418] *My Life*, 26.

[419] Massine's biographer Vincente García-Márquez noted of this miniature theater: "Escape from an oppressive reality into theatrical fantasy: the rest of Massine's life would be punctuated by precisely this need to grab for security amidst bewildering uncertainty." However, García-Márquez does not make any direct connections between this incident and *Boutique*. See *Massine*, 12.

viewing the ballet as a re-choreographing or re-staging of moments from Massine's life (past and present), *Boutique* becomes an iconography of trauma made fantastic.

Having laid out my own theory of how images of trauma function within the ballet, I will now delve into the details of the work, providing context and choreographic analysis in order to return to ideas of corporeality and character.

An "Entirely Fantastic Mixture": Collaboration Between Massine, Derain, Rossini, Respighi, and Diaghilev[420]

In the preceding chapters, I argued that *Parade* and *Pulcinella* were ballets in which the respective collaborators worked *against* the notion of Wagnerian unity (of *Parade*, I argued for fragmented dissonance, while of *Pulcinella* I argued for disparate resonances). However, *La Boutique Fantasque* is perhaps a ballet which does more neatly conform to the *gesamtkunstwerk* model. Albeit "frothy" (Lynn Garafola's term for the ballet), *Boutique* is a "total work of art" in the sense that the collaborators aimed for a fully immersive production in which music, dancing, and design all coalesced in harmony.[421] The dancing and music are meant as compliments to one another, as Massine created and choreographed his characters based directly on the variations in Rossini's score. Similarly, Derain's décor, though stylized, adheres to the mid-nineteenth century setting of Massine's libretto. Unlike *Parade* and *Pulcinella*, too, there does not appear to have been major strife between the collaborators of *Boutique*. The elemental harmony within the ballet allowed viewers

[420] Roger Fry, "The Scenery of 'La Boutique Fantasque,'" *The Athenaeum* (13 June 1919): 466.

[421] Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes,* 92.

to be transported into fantasy, visually, aurally, and emotionally. However, as I will later argue, the ease with which the audience was able to slip into fantasy obscured deeper subtext (commentary on trauma, postwar humanity, modern bodies, etc.) within the ballet. Before delving into such subtext, a brief summary of the collaborative process for this ballet is necessary.[422] This section will focus most heavily on Derain, as in-depth musical analysis is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Gathering Ideas

As with *Pulcinella*, the original source of inspiration for *La Boutique Fantasque* was musical. This time, Diaghilev discovered unpublished manuscripts of a collection of piano music by Rossini, entitled "Les Riens" or "Pêchés de viellesse."[423] Whether Léon Bakst (who was originally slated as the designer for the ballet), or Massine, was consulted next is unclear. Massine claims that, upon listening to the music, he immediately envisioned a series of dolls: "The gaiety and variety of the music inspired me with the idea of choreographing a series of dances by animated toys, and it was agreed to create a ballet within the framework of a toyshop which offered its customers a wide range of dancing dolls."[424] According to Boris Kochno, however, designer Léon Bakst likely encouraged Diaghilev to stage *Boutique*

[422] Massine's own account of the collaboration for *Boutique* differs from that of Boris Kochno, inheritor of Diaghilev's archives. Knowing Massine to often be an unreliable narrator, I place more weight on Kochno's series of events. Differences in accounts will be noted.

[423] According to Massine, it was Respighi who introduced Diaghilev to the music: "[Diaghilev] told me that the previous winter, in Rome, the composer Ottorino Respighi had brought to his notice a series of little known works by Rossini." *My Life*, 119. García-Márquez echoes this statement, but here he is merely quoting from Massine's autobiography; see *Massine*, 114.

[424] García-Márquez, 114.

during their trip to Rome in the spring of 1917.[425] Bakst, who had been responsible for the décor and costumes for the 1903 production of *Die Puppenfee* with the Legat brothers (his first ballet project), was ostensibly eager to return to the theme. Ultimately, whether Massine or Bakst initially suggested the subject of the ballet becomes inconsequential; the choreographer's own libretto for *Boutique* is markedly different from the original *Die Puppenfee*, making Massine, if not the originator of the theme, still the author of this unique iteration.

During the fall of 1917, Diaghilev, Bakst, and Massine discussed details for *Boutique*. However, Diaghilev put off the ballet for two years, during which time it seems the Impresario had minimal contact with Bakst.[426] When Diaghilev did finally reach out to Bakst in 1919, the designer was dismayed. In a letter to Diaghilev, he wrote

> Since you are in such a rush, order the mise-en-scène from another painter. Perhaps he will throw it together for you on the double quick. As for me, I will still have the consolation of doing something important, which in due course I will have published under the title 'Boutique Fantasque,' or perhaps 'Naples Reverie, 1832.'[427]

Kochno asserted that "the general tone of [this letter] was playful and friendly"; Bakst never imagined that Diaghilev would actually commission a different painter. Diaghilev did in fact take this letter seriously, however, and promptly assigned artist André Derain (1880 – 1954) to the task.[428] During an interview in 1979 (as he was restaging *Boutique* for the Oakland Ballet), Massine told Pamela Gaye,

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[425] Kochno, *Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes*, 126.

[426] García-Márquez notes (citing only "Letters in private collection") that Massine and Bakst exchanged letters on the subject of *Boutique* throughout 1918. *Massine*, 125.

[427] Kochno, quoting Bakst in *Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes*, 129.

[428] According to Massine, Diaghilev originally "commissioned Bakst to design the setting and costumes … but when the preliminary sketches arrived he was disappointed. He felt that they lacked gaiety and charm." *My Life*, 132. Again, García-Márquez echoes this, but cites only *My Life*.

> With *Boutique Fantasque* there was a definite break in Diaghilev's mind. He certainly thought he had to turn to easel painting—and so it was silly since Bakst was his very best friend and Diaghilev said there is no such thing as best friends in art. It was artistically important to consider that kind of painting more important than that of scenic art.[429]

It seems that, in addition to Bakst's reluctance to produce the costumes and décor at the last minute, Diaghilev was already considering moving in a different direction. Perhaps Bakst's letter, as Richard Buckle has suggested, merely made it *easier* for Diaghilev to dismiss the outdated designer.[430] In Massine's words, Bakst's "pre-war style had lost its appeal," and it was crucial for Diaghilev to remain current.[431] Thus, with Derain in Bakst's place, Respighi commissioned by Diaghilev to orchestrate the score, and Massine already working on choreography, the collaborators for the ballet were finally set.

Derain's "Harmonious" Décor and Costumes

At the behest of Diaghilev, Massine travelled to Paris to visit Derain at his flat and discuss the ballet.[432] There, Massine described the plot and characters, and hummed the score.[433] "I explained that what we wanted in the way of décor was not a realistic toyshop,

[429] Gaye, "A Conversation with Léonide Massine," 23.

[430] See Richard Buckle, *Diaghilev* (New York: Atheneum, 1979), 352-3.

[431] Massine, *My Life*, 133.

[432] Prior to his work on *Boutique*, Derain had already been enmeshed in *Ballets Russes* scandal. In 1917, he testified in full military uniform (along with Braque, Léger, Apollinaire, and others) at a hearing on behalf of Erik Satie. The composer, having responded to music critic Jean Poueigh's harsh review of *Parade* with a few choice words, was being sued for libel. Satie's letter read "*Monsieur et cher amie, Vous êtes un cul, mais un cul sans musique* (You are an asshole, and an unmusical asshole at that). *Erik Satie*." Satie lost the trial, and was sentenced to eight days in prison. *Gazette des Tribunaux* (Paris), Monday, 16 July 1917. Discussed in Silvers, *Esprit de Corps,* 165.

[433] At his home on Rue Bonaparte, Derain had a miniature marionette theater (a more ornate version of what Massine had as a child), which he had purchased at a country fair. He used this theater to lay out his designs. *My Life*, 132.

but something entirely fantastic and imaginary. Before I left he had agreed to undertake the work and to bring us the designs as soon as they were ready."[434] What Derain eventually created was, according to Diaghilev, a revival of "the period of Edouard Manet, Stevens, and the earlier paintings of Renoir."[435] Audiences were enamored with Derain's creation. Beaumont noted that the "applause was literally deafening" on opening night, while Roger Fry wrote that "The public were so delighted that they had to interrupt Rossini's overture to relieve their feelings. And at the end of the ballet the public were not content until M. Derain himself had presented the genial expanse of his person to their excited admiration."[436]

Derain's drop cloth depicts a peaceful, 1860's scene, a white steamboat drifting down a harbor, trees and cottages framing the curving body of water. Reviewer Edwin Evans lauded Derain as "A classicist in colour and design and a neo-primitive in expression."[437] As such, Derain's color pallet is calming and subdued, yet his characters (seen in both his costume design and on the curtain) are sketched with rather "deliberately crude" outlines.[438] Fry elaborated on Derain's style:

> M. Derain represents to us the purest French classicism; one must almost define his qualities by negatives. It is by suppression of emphasis that he gets the full force of his accents. He willfully sets a rigid limit to the means at his disposal.

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[434] *My Life*, 132.

[435] Original program note from Serge Diaghilev. "La Boutique fantasque, ballet in one act / music by G. Rossini..., Curtain and Scenery by André Derain, First performance on June 5th 1919 at the Alhambra Theatre, London." FRBNF40361691, *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84151341/f10.image.

[436] Fry, "The Scenery of 'La Boutique Fantasque,'" 466

[437] Edwin Evans, "The Alhambra Season," *The Musical Times* 60, no. 918 (1 Aug 1919): 412-413.

[438] Neo-primitivism is defined as "A movement or trend in Russian painting in the early 20th century in which influences from the Western avant-garde were combined in a deliberately crude way with features derived from peasant art, lubki (brightly coloured popular prints), and other aspects of Russia's artistic heritage." John Glaves-Smith and Ian Chilvers (eds.), *A Dictionary of Modern and Contemporary Art,* third edition (Oxford University Press, 2015).

> His scene is painted with a few earth colours, shades of burnt Sienna for the warm colours, some gay greens, a dull grey blue, and notes of black and white. But by the summary simplifications of his modelling, and the ease and directness of his handling, these colours give an effect of singular luminosity and purity.[439]

The interior of the toyshop looked out onto this harbor, creating a *trompe l'oeil* that, according to Massine, "had the right atmosphere of a toy shop seen through the eyes of child, as well as all the wit and charm needed to enhance the impact of Rossini's music."[440] Derain's set was clearly enchanting, both in its whimsical design and its ability to transport the viewer to a space of imagination. Both Evans and Diaghilev commented on the immersive nature of Derain's designs, stressing the word "harmony" in their writing, and therefore harkening back to the idea of *gesamtkunstwerk*.[441] Evans wrote, "The result is a remarkably *harmonious* piece of merriment, in which the various elements dovetail with a completeness that suggests one controlling mind."[442] Similarly, Diaghilev praised Derain's combination of the costumes and set, which in his estimation presented "the admirable result of his quest of *harmonies* that are tender and calming."[443]

What was perhaps most harmonious in this ballet was the sense of temporal cohesion (clearly missing from *Pulcinella*). Although it was a distinctly 'modern' ballet, *Boutique* referenced back to nineteenth century style, both through Rossini's music and Derain's evocation of Impressionism. Fry was especially taken with the fact that Derain could refer to

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[439] Fry, 466.

[440] *My Life*, 133.

[441] Beaumont too used the word "harmonious" in his assessment of Derain. It seems likely, however, that he was parroting the vocabulary Diaghilev used in his note for the original program (which I have quoted). See quote at the top of this chapter.

[442] Evans, "The Alhambra Season," 412 (emphasis mine).

[443] Diaghilev's program note from 5 June 1919, *BnF* (emphasis mine).

the past without "the slightest hint of *pastiche* or the faintest flavor of archaism."[444] His work was regarded as contemporary, with clear, referential homage to the past. Clive Bell—who was not fond of Massine's choreography in *Boutique*—celebrated Derain's ability to blend styles, remarking:

> … no one who saw La Boutique Fantasque …will have forgotten the grave beauty of those sober grays, greens, browns and blues. It made one think of Poussin and Racine too … and yet the ballet was intensely modern … La Boutique Fantasque, which is not only the most amusing but the most beautiful of Russian ballets, balances on a discord. Even the fun of Derain is not the essentially modern fun of Massine. Derain is neither flippant nor exasperated; he is humorous, and tragic sometimes.[445]

Bell's comment about the tragi-comic nature of Derain's art hits at a core facet of *Ballets Russes* postwar productions. His inability to locate such qualities in Massine's work is unfortunate, as I would argue they are equally, fiercely present. Such oversight notwithstanding, his comment squarely positions *Boutique* as one of the "time-travelling" works of this period.[446]

As discussed in Chapter 3, between 1917 and 1920 *Les Ballets Russes* presented many works which Garafola categorizes as "period modernism," or "pastiche ballets."[447] Such works "wed the retrospective themes of traditional lyric theater to the styles and

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[444] Fry, 466.

[445] Clive Bell, "The Authority of M. Derain," *The New Republic* XXVI, no. 326 (16 March 1921): 66. Bell was truly in awe of Derain, asserting that "he, above all living Frenchmen, has the art to mould, in the material of his age, a vessel that shall contain the grand tradition."

[446] The term "time-travelling" originally comes from Constance Lambert, and is employed by Garafola throughout her discussion of "period modernism." See *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes,* "The Making of Ballet Modernism, 76-98.

[447] Marilyn Meeker made a similar classification of Massine's works during this period. While *Boutique* was a "revival," *Parade* was a "contemporary statement." *Pulcinella,* on the other hand, was both revival *and* contemporary statement. In all three ballets, she finds "multi-dimensional juxtaposition," which is similar to the layers that constitute Garafola's period modernism. "Putting the Punch in Pulcinella," *Dance Magazine* (April 1981): 76, 80.

techniques of the avant-garde."[448] A central factor in period modernism was Diaghilev's return to classicism. While Garafola's treatment of *Boutique* is rather brusque, I would argue that her definition of classicism vis-à-vis *Les Ballets Russes* is especially apt. Garafola writes,

> History exists at the intersection of time and place. Only style, with its ability to remake the transitory and circumstantial into the imperishable stuff of art, stand impervious to change. As the touchstones of European life collapsed around him, something akin to classicism joined the constellation of influences reshaping Diaghilev's aesthetic. Crystallizing initially as a compensatory response to the need for an instant, alternative past, "classicism," with its insistence on the primacy of style, offered a formal counterpoint to the nostalgia and sentimentality implicit in retrospective visions of the past.[449]

Classicism thus replaced nostalgia with an ironic lens through which to look back at the past. Such a response was arguably a tactic in self-soothing (from the mourning of a lost/destroyed past) through intellectually rigorous artistic endeavor. While Garafola only writes of Diaghilev, this tactic no doubt applied to Derain and Massine as well. Each man, in his own way, used the flexibility afforded by the structures of Diaghilev's period modernism, to reconstruct, re-sketch, and re-choreograph an "instant, alternative past."

Suggestions of War

Such an artistic re-writing of history is clearly seen within the ballet's libretto. Just as important as his costumes and décor was Derain's contribution to the libretto. Derain arrived in London in May of 1918, while Massine was attempting to work out the end of the ballet. As the choreographer was unable to find a resolution, Derain suggested that the dolls engage in a battle with their purchasers, "an idea which [Massine] was happy to adopt, seeing in the

[448] Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes,* 90.

[449] Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, 94.

conflict a natural crescendo in the successful evolution of the plot."[450] Having fought throughout most of World War I, it is unsurprising that ideas of battle would quickly come to mind for the artist. The Great War was a transformative period for Derain, altering the very way he viewed art. In a letter written from the trenches, Derain contemplated the relationship between war and the current, and future, states of art. He concluded, "Everything is going to change, and we will have simpler ideas."[451] While Derain's postwar art is by no means "simple," he clearly worked with a sparsity of design, and a disregard for techniques of 'realism.'[452] Bell wrote, "He accepts the age into which he has stumbled with all its nastiness, vulgarity and cheek. He accepts that woebegone, modern democracy which could not even make its great war fine. He believes he can make something of it. …so sure is he of his own taste that he can brush refinement aside." Derain's "acceptance" of the war, and his belief that art should now offer something substantive, yet unencumbered, clearly makes its way into the libretto of *Boutique.* His addition of the battle scene of course added in a structurally-necessary climax. Yet, is also suggests a deeper need to continue to process the events of the past four years, or at the very least to make subtle reference to them. Derain's addition to the

[450] *My Life,* 120.

[451] Letter from André Derain to French painter Maurice de Vlaminck. Cited in Silvers, 30.

[452] Interestingly, in 1921 T.S. Eliot wrote of *Boutique Fantasque* (along with *Good-humored Ladies* and *The Three-Cornered Hat*), "The … ballet is more sophisticated, but also more simplified, and simplifies more; and what is needed of art is a simplification of current life into something rich and strange." T.S. Eliot, "London Letter," *The Dial: A Semi-monthly Journal of Literary Criticism, Discussion, and Information (1880-1929)* (Aug 1921): 213. Derain's design is currently evidence of that which is rich and strange, yet simple.

T.S. Eliot had an interest in Massine that seems to have bordered on fanaticism. Impressed by how "brilliant and beautiful" he was during his performances at the Coliseum (of which he was in attendance), Eliot wrote to his friend Mary Hutchinson, "Do you think Massine likes me? And would he come to see me, do you think?" *The Letters of T.S. Eliot*, ed. Valerie Eliot, vol. 1 (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), 253, 530.

libretto reinforces my argument that, despite the seemingly superficial nature of the ballet, the collaborators of *Boutique* each brought their own histories to bear on the work.

Rossini/Respighi/Diaghilev's Music

> The manuscript of *La Boutique Fantasque* … raises in acute form the question that must be asked of musical period modernism generally. Who was the author? Gioacchino Rossini, who wrote the early nineteenth-century piano pieces on which the score was based? Respighi, the orchestrator, who added a handful of connectives? Or Diaghilev, who assembled the music for the ballet from numerous compositions, pruned bars and passages, changed chords, keys, and tempi, corrected Respighi's additions, and wrote notes to himself like, 'Don't forget that all the chords must approximate stylistically the *old* Rossini of *Barber* [*of Seville*].[453]

In her brief discussion of *Boutique*, Garafola considers the question: to whom should the score be credited?[454] Unlike the questionable attribution of *Pulcinella*'s original score to Pergolesi, there is no discrepancy over whether or not Rossini composed the foundational music. However, the exact transformations undergone by that music—where passages were whittled away at, expanded upon, or rearranged, and by whom—is less certain. Due to this lack of clarity surrounding the "true" composer (Rossini, Respighi, or Diaghilev), along with the already disproportionate weight afforded to music within accounts of *Les Ballets Russes*, my comments here will be brief. However, two things are important to note.

First, Massine heard within the music the intricacies of entire characters. Of his first experience listening to this music Massine recounted:

> … I visualized first two Italian peasant dolls who would dance a tarantella; then, for Rossini's rousing mazurka, I pictured a quartet of characters from a pack of cards: the Queen of Diamonds and of Clubs, the King of Spades and of Hearts.

[453] Garafola, *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes,* 92.

[454] After studying the manuscript for the ballet, in consultation with Sotheby's London staff musicologist Dr. Stephen Roe, Garafola feels that Diaghilev had considerable control over the final outcome of the composition.

> Another piece of music, an ingenious parody of Offenbach, naturally suggested two vivacious cancan dancers in the spirit of Toulouse-Lautrec's paintings. We all agreed that the ballet should be taken at top speed, the dancers following each other without a break.[455]

Hearing the score, it is not difficult to understand why Rossini's music inspired in Massine such creative excitement.[456] Rossini's jubilant, emphatic, fast-paced, dynamic, and most importantly, *varied*, musical selections provide an evocative listening experience. Massine's ability to create unique, idiosyncratic characters (aided by Rossini's music), is perhaps the most lasting choreographic contribution of *Boutique* (an idea I will return to shortly).

The second note of importance is that Rossini's original music seems to have been composed in a true spirit of joy and humor. Diaghilev noted Rossini's "gaiety, vivacity and *joie de vivre*" as fundamental components of the music that would eventually make up the score for *Boutique*.[457] The ironic vein in which Rossini composed these (previously unpublished) selections is highlighted by the titles he gave them: *"Four Hors-d'Oeuvre: Radishes, Anchovies, Gherkins and Butter, themes in variations*;*" "Dried Figs*;*" "Here I am, Good-Morning, Madame*;*" "Almonds*;*" "It is striking twelve, Good-Night, Madame*;*" "Anti-Dancing Valse*;*" "Funeral as Carnival*;*" "Asthmatic Sunday*;*" "Abortive Polka*;*' "Ugh! Peas!*;*" "Convulsive Prelude*;*" "Castor Oil*;*"* and *"Cappriccio Offenbachique."*[458]

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[455] *My Life,* 119-20.

[456] Ottorino Respighi (after Gioacchino Rossini), "La Boutique Fantasque." National Philharmonic Orchestra. London: Decca, 2014. Audio.

[457] Diaghilev program note from 5 June 1919, *BnF*.

[458] "Capriccio Offenbachique" is "dedicated to the composer whom [Rossini] admired beyond all others at this point in his life. …This delightful Parisian Bacchanal, this Can-Can with its amusing false note, dominates all the music of 'La Boutique Fantasque.' It is a work full of laughter, redolent of the period, and of its author's well expressed freedom from care." Diaghilev program note from 5 June 1919, *BnF.*

The gaiety in which these melodies were conceived is essential to note in light of my argument surrounding the traumatic foundations of *Boutique*. Unlike Massine (and arguably Derain), Rossini's contribution to the ballet was not burdened by trauma. During his later life, Rossini would play these musical morsels for the entertainment of dinner party guests. Rossini's score brings true levity and merriment to the ballet, enveloping audiences into a sound score that is truly *fantasque*.

Massine's Ballet

> The scene is laid about 1865. A number of customers enter a small toy-shop, the owner of which hastens to show them his latest novelties in dolls. Among them are dancers of the Tarantella, swells, street-hawkers, the kings and queens from a pack of cards, a pair of dogs, cossaks, and a couple of dancers from a café chantant. There are numerous purchasers, mostly tourists. One of them is an English lady, and there is a family of Americans, and a numerous Russian party of the rich merchant class. They are all fascinated by the two dancers, each of whom finds a different buyer. The bills are paid, the customers leave, and the shop is closed for the night.
>
> At nightfall, the dolls are lamenting the fate of the two dancers, who are lovers and are about to be separated, having found different purchasers. The lovers make up their minds to escape. They take an affectionate farewell of their companions, and leave at dawn.
>
> In the morning the proprietor and his assistant come and open the shop. The buyers return to demand their purchases. They are annoyed at not having received them as promised the previous evening, but the proprietor reassures them, and tells them they are packed up and ready to be taken away. When he goes to fetch them, he finds nothing but paper, and is completely disconcerted. The customers, who believe that he has fooled them, revenge themselves by throwing the shop into disorder, but the owner, who cannot account for what has happened, loses his head and becomes so excited that they become afraid and run out of the shop."[459]

This synopsis of *La Boutique Fantasque*, which appeared in the original Alhambra Theater program in June of 1919, provides an [admittedly, rather clunky] account of the

[459] "Serge Diaghileff's Season of Russian Ballets, 1919" program.

ballet's plot. Comprised largely of a series of *divertissements*, Massine's choreography features various dolls performing their characteristically unique routines for prospective buyers. These *divertissements* (particularly those of the Melon-hawker and The Snob, the Dancing Poodles, and the Can-Can Dancers) are fondly remembered as the playful, entertaining centerpieces of the ballet.[460] Intriguingly, what the above synopsis omits are the more plot-driven, climatic scenes, including the escape of the Cancan couple from their box prisons, and the battle between the dolls and human customers. These significant plot-points, however, are the places in which Massine most diverted from the original libretto, and therefore merit further discussion.

Romantic Escape

Cyril W. Beaumont described the escape scene as follows:

> It is the doll's hour, the hour when they forsake the darkness of their homes, those pent-up boxes in which they live. The music becomes sad and wistful, as if expressing the parting of the lovers, who, having found two purchasers, must forever be separated. … A burst of triumphant music heralds the arrival of the cossaks who crouch and spring into the air again and again. They divide into pairs, and arrange their sticks to form a series of horizontal bars. Now comes the snob who dashes up to the bars and swings himself over each in turn. Follow the two poodles, bounding and leaping, succeeded by the Tarantella dancers, who merrily stamped across the room, while the court cards bring up the rear. The melon-hawker comes forward with quaint, mechanical strides, and releases the lady Can-Can dancer from her box, then guides her to her friends.[461]

[460] The original cast for the production included Enrico Cecchetti as "The Shopkeeper," Lydia Sokolova and Leon Woizikovsky as "Dolls-Tarantella Dancers," Stanisles Idzikovsky as "The Snob," Vera Clark and Nicolas Kremneff as "Dancing Poodles," and Lydia Lopukhova and Léonide Massine as "Can-Can Dancers. For a full cast list, see "Serge Diaghileff's season of Russian ballets: [programme], The Alhambra Theater, Friday, July 18, 1919." As previously noted, however, Nemtchinnova quickly replaced Lopukhova, so her name appears on this cast list instead.

[461] Beaumont, *Complete Book*, 716.

Beaumont's diction emphasizes the military nature of this scene. The cossaks "crouch and spring," creating barricades with their toy weapons. The snob, like a soldier, "dashes" and "swings," hurtling over these barriers, as the Tarantella dancers "stamped," flanked by the pack of cards. While these movements are executed "merrily," they nevertheless create a theater of war, a child's fantasy of playing at battle.

This military iconography is intercut with images associated with Romantic ballet.[462] A *corps de ballet*, all in "pale roses…sky blues and whites," liltingly *piqué arabesque*, *développé*, and *waltz* in two straight lines across the stage.[463] The female Cancan dancer is eventually held aloft by her toy ballerina *corps*, aiding her escape.[464] As a group, they protectively float her offstage, *bourrée*-ing *en pointe*, as Massine (her Cancan counterpart) follows wistfully behind.[465] Reminiscent of the final moments of *La Sylphide*—as the sylph

[462] Descriptions of this dance come from the following footage: *Dance Films by Ann Barzel*, "La boutique fantasque (ca. 5 min., b&w) / recorded in three performances, ca. 1936, edited for continuity, with some repetition ; choreography, Léonide Massine ; libretto, scenery, costumes, André Derain; danced by the Original Ballet Russe," *MGZHB 12-2537; "La boutique fantasque [electronic resource] = The fantastic toyshop / choreography, Leonide Massine ; music by [Gioacchino] Rossini, [Ottorini] Respighi ; [performed by Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo]." Former call number *MGZIDVD 5-5276, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

Both of these films provide only clips of the ballet. Therefore, where parts of choreography are missing, I have referred to Cyril W. Beaumont's description to fill in those gaps. All descriptions, unless otherwise directly noted, are my own.

[463] Description of André Derain's costumes for the ballerinas by Roger Fry, "The Scenery of 'La Boutique Fantasque,'" 466.

[464] Reviewer P.W. Manchester and Cyril Beaumont noted that she is held up by the cossaks. However, in the Ballet Russes de Monte Carlo footage, the cossaks do not appear to be present (it is possible that they are hidden behind the ballerinas). The Barzel footage of the Original Ballets Russes does not show this particular sequence at all. Manchester, "Léonide Massine: 1895 – 1979. Massine the Dancer," *Dance Chronicle* 3, no. 1 (1979): 88; Beaumont, *Complete Book*, 717.

[465] P.W. Manchester wrote of this scene, "Yet [Massine's] dance with her in the Nocturne section that links the first to the final scene suddenly became so tender as to be almost heartbreaking, and we all had lumps in our throats when his beloved companion was carried out aloft on the staves of the Cossack dolls and he followed her with arms reaching up to her as she was carried out of sight." "Léonide Massine," 88.

ascends skyward, aided by her sisters—this image reaffirms the fantasy of the ballet.[466] Returning to icons from Romantic ballet, Massine reminded viewers that they were in a safe world, a world of imagination and escape.[467] Such imagery also signals the "ironic distancing" aspect of 'period modernism,' as Massine calls back to an earlier period, with more satire than sentimentality.

An admirer of *Boutique*, —in particular Derain's costumes and décor—art critic Roger Fry felt that audiences were able to appreciate the ballet precisely because it delved so deeply into the realm of fantasy.

> "[I]n the 'Boutique Fantasque' the uproarious fun of the whole thing, its entire subversion of all standards of verisimilitude and probability, actually prevent people from even for a moment noticing the outrage on their dignity and commonsense which is implied in the exhibition of a work of art."[468]

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[466] Equating the Cancan female with a sylph, or fairy-like character, was also likely a nod to the original *Die Puppenfee*, in which the Fairy Doll occupied the position of female lead.

[467] Moira Shearer, who danced as Massine's Cancan partner in *Boutique* in the 1950s—as well as dancing alongside him in the films *The Red Shoes* (1948) and *The Tales of Hoffman* (1951)—discussed the reality of dancing with the aging choreographer during this 'romantic' scene: "He was by then—58. … I was far too tall for him in *Boutique Fantasque*. In the slow, central movement, when the toy shop is closed and the dolls come to life, there is a farewell pas de deux for the can can lovers who have been sold to different families – it was very difficult and quite awkwardly arranged. When I was on point I towered above Massine and I cringed and crouched and hoped for the best, and he stretched up and stretched up. I was terribly aware that he was in his late 50's which to me, at my age then, seemed very old and I thought might damage him in some way (laughs). [It was awfully funny, not so funny for me, but I don't think, poor man, he ever realized and I would never have told him – but] there was a very difficult lift when we entered from the wings I was carried over his shoulder with one leg *developpe* high over his head—the other leg down. I was so long; my leg almost touched to the ground because he really wasn't quite tall enough for this. However, manfully he would hang on and on [and then, a really awful thing had to happen; he had to get me up like this into the middle of the stage; he then had to kneel, still holding me up, and put me down across his knee.] … When this moment arrived he had first to steady himself and I felt all the shaking and shivering going on and then he knelt and there was a terrible sudden sort of BOOM!, you see, as he got there. I thought 'Oh my God! Is he all right? Oh! His knees!' Then, poor man, he had to steer me into this position." (Words in brackets have been struck through in the transcript.) "Interview with Moira Shearer." Conducted by Dale Harris. NYPL Oral History Project. *MGZMT 3-431, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

[468] Fry, "The Scenery of 'La Boutique Fantasque,'" 466.

The "outrage on [the audience's] dignity and commonsense" which Fry refers to here is the very knowledge that the entire ballet, from plot to design, is fantastical; it does not reflect reality.[469] However, rather than further immersing the audience into an imaginary world, I find that Massine's references to Romanticism actually *interrupt* that very fantasy. As in *Parade*, Massine choreographically included in *Boutique* a certain degree of playful criticism of the strictures of ballet.[470] Here, in associating a Cancan doll with a fairy or sylph, Massine both mechanizes and sexualizes the quintessentially pure and angelic figure of ballet.

The Modern, Postwar Sylph

A body without a soul, the mechanical doll (or automaton) represents a vacuous vessel devoid of humanity. However, the automaton also signifies the triumph of technology over the human body. Jean-Claude Beaune writes, "Automata represent the dream, the ideal form, the utopia of the machine, the gauge of their absolute perfection is their independence, which endows them from the first with an anthropomorphic or living quality."[471] The doll is made even more complex, however, when its role within children's lives is considered. A

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[469] Of this lack of verisimilitude García-Márquez asserts, "[Massine's] burlesque treatment of an old theme was a further departure from the conventions of neoromanticism," 127.

[470] See Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

[471] Jean-Claude Beaune, "The Classical Age of Automata: An Impressionistic Survey from the 16th to 19th Century," trans. Ian Patterson, in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, pt. 1, ed. Michael Feher (Cambridge, Mass: Zone Books, 1989), 432.

Typically, the "independence" which Beaune refers to is not true independence in the sense of agency or a free will to move. Rather, the automaton is a machine that, when wound up or set in motion *by a human*, can then proceed on its own for a short period of time. As in *Coppélia* or even in the first act of *The Nutcracker* (both ballets inspired by E.T.A. Hoffman), the dolls' movement eventually slows before coming to a stuttering halt, as their charge winds down. In Massine's ballet, however, (and in the second act of *The Nutcracker*), the dolls do act independently, moving and thinking of their own accord. Although they are wound up by the shopkeeper and dutifully perform in the opening scenes, they have a life of their own throughout the second half of the ballet. The dolls in Massine's *Boutique* are *not* the typical automata; having transcended their mechanical forms (through the suspension of disbelief and disregard for structural logic afforded by ballet), they are individuals.

technological invasion of the domestic space, the object of the doll is the meeting point between the home and the factory; a machine made quaintly comforting.

While Massine's dolls both *have* souls, and execute characteristic movements, rather than the repetitions of a machine, the doll is nevertheless a reference to that which is lifeless, automatic, and mechanical.[472] Therefore, re-casting a doll in the role of the sylph, or ideal ballerina, seems to mock the traditions of Romantic ballet. The "ideal," pure female, even at the height of Romantic ballet and *le foyer de la danse*, was impossibly false; impoverished, starving, and forced into sexual relationships with wealthy male patrons, the reality of the ballerina scarcely resembled the ethereal roles she played. The doll, as manufactured and unreal as the 'ideal' woman, stands in as a reminder of the fantasy of ballet, for better or worse.

Massine's references to Romanticism become even more parodic, however, when the image of the doll is compounded with that of the Cancan dancer. Based off of Toulouse-Lautrec's depictions of late-nineteenth century Montmartre nightlife, Massine cast the Cancan dancers in the central role of his ballet.[473] Synonymous with bawdiness, sexuality, and working-class entertainment, the Cancan dancer is a far cry from the Romantic image of the ballerina. Massine's Cancan ballerina doll is a farce, and yet, she is a poignant representation of the modern physis. Machine and woman; doll and human; sexually promiscuous and angelically chaste, the Cancan ballerina embodies the juxtapositions of

[472] The ballets *Coppélia* and *Tales of Hoffman* are two prime examples of ballets that present this more common representation of the mechanical doll. Both ballets will be addressed more fully at the end of this chapter.

[473] While studying art and painting with friend and teacher Anatoli Petrovich Bolchakov between 1912-13, Massine was highly intrigued by the "grotesque characterizations of Toulouse-Lautrec's postures." *My Life, 38.*

modernity. Feverishly swishing the frills of her petticoat, she teases the possibilities of a new era.[474]

Massine perpetuates further this complex image by choreographically extending the Cancan farce to the *corps de ballet*. At the end of this 'nocturnal ball,' the hybridization of the Romantic-Ballerina-turned-Cancan-dancer is absorbed by the ensemble. The successful escape of the Cancan lovers prompts a lively, celebratory routine, with the whole cast embodying the Cancan energy. In a circle, the group runs frenetically about the stage, kicking up their legs in *front attitude*. While grainy video footage makes is difficult to differentiate characters in the flurry of movement, Beaumont notes that each female dancer is partnered by a Cossack.[475] Here, Massine further solidifies the link between fantastical escape and wartime reality, as Romantic-era ballerinas happily cavort with Russian Cossack soldiers. The women jump up to sit on the Cossack's shoulders, run, and repeat with a new partner. The entire ensemble cast then links arms, men facing into the circle, women facing out. Arching back, the women propel one leg over their head, now hanging suspended off the ground, their backs resting on the men's arms. This sequence is repeated, all while the group continues to *gallop* (a characteristic component of the Cancan) and rotate in a circle. The whole number gives a sense of swirling energy, as the stage is filled with the almost chaotic repetition of *chassés* and lifts.

[474] The Cancan, as a historical phenomenon, will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

[475] Beaumont, *Complete Book*, 717.

From the Western Front to the Stage: Playing at War

The Nocturne scene (comprised of the escape and celebration) is followed shortly after by Derain's "battle" between dolls and humans (mention of which was also omitted from the original synopsis). The morning after the escape, the customers return, only to find that the Cancan couple has disappeared. Enraged, they physically attack the shopkeeper and his assistant. The dolls spring to action, defending the shopkeeper from his assailants. Surrounding one of the men, the Cossacks make forceful jabbing motions with invisible bayonets. They repeat this action until they have successfully bayonetted him from the stage. While the film footage of the battle is incomplete, Beaumont noted that all take part in this war: the poodles "bite and snap" at the Russian woman, the ballet dancers use their "shockingly high kicks" to defeat the American and his wife, and "the American children are seized by the two porters, flung across their knees and soundly spanked."[476] In the end, the customers are chased out, the shopkeeper is spared, and the Cancan couple is reunited. Celebratory Cancan kicks ensue to conclude the ballet.

The reader will remember that in the original synopsis for the ballet included above, the shopkeeper "loses his head and becomes so excited that [the customers] become afraid and run out of the shop;" the involvement of the dolls is never mentioned. However, this is clearly not how the ballet ends (both footage from the ballet and Beaumont's description prove this).[477] Such a discrepancy between the official synopsis and the choreography prompts the question: why include this slight misdirect in the first place? While this is a

[476] Beaumont, 718.

[477] Interestingly, in later program notes the last line of the synopsis reads: "In spite of [the shopkeeper's] amazement, the customers think he is cheating them, and repay him by wrecking the shop; but the dolls come to life and chase them, terrified, into the street." Undated program note for the ballet cut out and pasted into Tamara Toumanova's Photographic Scrapbooks. MGZEB 90-9601, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

question that, at this time, I cannot fully answer, a plausible explanation is that Diaghilev wished to remove any associations of war from the original synopsis. Unlike *Parade*, *Boutique* was not a ballet meant to make a statement on current life.[478] Intended to entertain, rather than provoke, perhaps this program note was merely a tactic meant to further emphasize the fantastical nature of the ballet. To omit mention of any type of conflict or battle from the synopsis was to suggest (whether truthfully or not) that this was *not* a comment on wartime Europe.

Of course, this *was* a contemporary statement, if not directly on wartime Europe (although anything produced at this time, by artists who had lived through the war, was, *de facto*, a statement on wartime Europe), then of Massine's own vision of the world. While it may seem inconsequential whether the customers were frightened away by the shopkeeper, or by the dolls, I find importance in this detail. By coming to the aid of the shopkeeper, the dolls become the narrative heroes; they defeat the humans, who have been portrayed as ill-mannered throughout the ballet.[479] Massine clearly saw himself as "The Other," the *unhuman.* As has been discussed throughout this dissertation, Massine cast himself in roles in which he was *other-than-human*, portraying characters that, though they had human qualities,

[478] In 1919, the company was still struggling to recover from their lack of bookings during the war. Diaghilev was likely desperate to create a ballet that would excite and placate audiences, rather than antagonize them.

[479] The adult customers (parents of the children who want the toys) seem to represent gluttonous consumerism; fat and greedy, they move with an air of disdain. Beaumont wrote of the two older women: "Rendered haughtier than ever by [the shopkeeper's] display of servility, they raise their lorgnettes and, after rudely quizzing them from top to toe, express their desire to inspect the dolls" (711). Throughout his account of the ballet, Beaumont seems to stress the uncouth nature of the customers (particularly the Americans), describing the American woman as a "frigid, overbearing lady" (711), and making the seemingly tongue-in-cheek comment that the American husband and wife "ever careful of their high moral standard, bandage their unwilling children's eyes that they may not be aware that the same passions regulate the lives of lower animals as those of human beings" (714). For Beaumont's full description, see *Complete Book*, 708-722.

were markedly different (the supernatural Chinese Prestidigitator of *Parade*, the archetypal, ever-shifting Fool Pulcinella, and here, a magical doll). Therefore, Massine's decision to position the dolls as not only the victors within the "battle" of the ballet, but also the pillars of compassion and upholders of true love, seems telling.

García-Márquez explains that in *Boutique*, it is the dolls, rather than the humans, who are imbued with empathy.[480]

> The juxtaposition of human beings and toys that come to life only under the right conditions gave Massine the opportunity to assemble an ironic comedy of manners in which the nonhuman characters win the sympathy of the audience. His people are caricatures—the affected, aristocratic English ladies, the crass, nouveau-riche American family and its merchant-class Russian counterpart—but the toys become ever more human and admirable.[481]

In protecting the shopkeeper and helping the Cancan couple, the dolls support the values of decency and "true love." Massine inverted the typical structure of ballet so that the *danseur noble*—the valiant, debonair male love interest—was actually a burlesqued vaudeville doll. In so doing, Massine cast himself as the male 'ideal' within the ballet, while hinting at the moral superiority of the 'unhuman' characters. Unlike the Great War, fought in the name of power and greed, the battle of *Boutique* is fought in the name of preserving true love and human [or unhuman] moral decency. In Massine's theater of dolls—perhaps a microcosm of

[480] Poet Rainer Marie Rilke also discussed the issue of empathy and dolls. Rilke, however, believed that we could *not* empathize with dolls, for the very reason that they could not, and would not, answer back to him. According to Rilke, the doll presents to a child its first real encounter with estrangement, the acute feeling of being alone in the world. "At a time when everyone still tried hard to answer us quickly and soothingly it, the doll, was the first to inflict on us that larger-than-life silence that later wafted over us again and again from space when somewhere we approached the frontiers of our existence. Across from it, while it stared at us, we first experienced (or am I mistaken?) that hollowness of feeling, that heart pause, in which one would perish if the whole of gently persistent nature did not lift one, like a lifeless thing, over abysses." "Puppen" [1921] in *Schriften*, vol. 4, ed. Horst Nalewski (Frankfurt: Insel, 1996), 689.

[481] García-Márquez, *Massine*, 126-7.

life as he understood it—humanity had failed; love and compassion were now left only to the realm of fantasy.

The battle that had raged across the Western Front just a year before is made innocuous in *Boutique* through a "battle" of dolls; animated toys replaced human soldiers, mimed, imaginary weapons replaced real steel, and feigned shock and terror replaced mass violence and death. As in both *Parade* and *Pulcinella*, this ballet could 'wink' at death, even going so far here as to wage full on "war" between humans and toys. However, in all three cases, these various flirtations with death produce happy endings (the Acrobats of *Parade* could spring back up after tumbling from the tightrope; Pulcinella's death was only faked, and the toys of *Boutique*—markers of pretend play—defeat the humans in the name of love).

Unlike *Parade,* however, *Boutique* seemingly provided mass audiences with just what they were looking for in postwar dance: light-hearted entertainment. The ballet served as a vehicle for catharsis both for viewers (eager to escape into fantasy), and for Massine (who transformed his childhood nightmares into fantasy). As Historian Margaret MacMillan notes of this period, "The Great War marked a break in Europe's history. Before 1914, Europe for all its problems had hope that the world was becoming a better place and that human civilization was advancing. After 1918 that faith was no longer possible for Europeans. As they looked back at their lost world before the war, they could feel only a sense of loss and waste."[482] In 1919, European society still faced this pervasive "sense of loss and waste." However, *La Boutique Fantasque* seems to have projected a ray of hope, especially for London audiences in 1919. Twentieth century British economist Roy Harrod wrote of viewing *Boutique*, "The world was going awry" and yet, he remarked "here before our eyes

[482] MacMillan, *The War that Ended Peace*, 640.

something was enacted which achieved perfection. We could console ourselves that man's powers were not decaying."[483] In *La Boutique Fantasque*, theater provided an opportunity to rescript and re-embody trauma and violence and to literally "play" at war, in an environment where the stakes were nonexistent.

Corporeality, Character, and the Cancan Dance

Such "re-embodiment" was possible due to the very nature of ballet as a fantastical form. As typical of many ballets (*Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *The Nutcracker* are all prominent examples), the loose plot and varied characters of *Boutique* lent themselves well to what may appear as sheer *divertissement*. However, I argue that rather than *divertissement* purely in the service of dance (dance for the sake of dance), Massine utilized multiple, loosely related dance sequences to highlight modern corporeality. His many characters, from the Snob to the Poodles, to the Tarantella dancers, were ideal vehicles for Massine to refine his own emerging theory of choreography, particularly in relation to character. As Sokolova remarked of *Boutique*,

> One thing the public could not realize, as I did, was that Massine had seized the opportunity to type-cast every dancer with absolute precision. The interpreters of even the smallest part could flatter themselves that Massine had taken as much trouble to show them off to advantage as if they have been the stars of the ballet: and every part was marvelously interpreted. To watch Maestro Cecchetti as the fussy old Shopkeeper, so ingratiating to his customers, was an education in mime; Grigoriev was ideal as the great bear of a Russian Merchant, with Mme Cecchetti as his fat little wife; even Bourman and Evina in the small parts of the naughty children of the American couple were able to create living and laughable portraits.[484]

[483] Roy Harrod, *The Life of John Maynard Keynes* (London: Macmillan, 1951), 334.

[484] *Dancing for Diaghilev*, 137-8.

In his character choreography, Massine followed in the footsteps of both Alexander Gorsky and Michel Fokine, but with an emphasis on the idiosyncrasies of the dancer's *themselves* (rather than just the characters they portrayed). To accomplish this, Massine pulled from various genres of dance, melding classical ballet with *comique,* character, and more popular vaudeville styles. In *Boutique*, he also relied on his nascent training in Spanish dance forms, using, for example the rhythms and footwork of the *zapateado* in the Tarantella dance. With his blend of dancing, Massine could more fully create the "aesthetic harmony" that was integral to his theory of dance. As Pamela Gaye wrote of his *Boutique* choreography, "Massine thus synthesized into a personal, dramatic style the elements of the Spanish and Italian schools using his body and developing its parts in to the range of expression accorded an actor."[485]

Choreographing Character: Expressive Pantomime and Symbolic Dance

Massine's postwar corporeality is highlighted through his choreographic differentiation between dolls and humans. In theory, the mechanical nature of the dolls should impede their empathic capacities. However, by setting up a choreographic framework in which the dolls dance, while the humans use pantomime, Massine rendered the former 'more human' than the latter (as we tend to think of danced sequences as more emotive and organically expressive than mime). To return to my fundamental argument regarding corporeality, we might consider that the humans *express*, while the dolls *symbolize*.[486] Previously in this dissertation I have drawn the distinction between physicality and

[485] Gaye, "A Conversation," 20.

[486] See Chapter 1 of this dissertation for my distinction between "symbolizing" and "expressing."

corporeality, linking the purely mimetic or representative aspects of character to 'expression' and physicality. Such expression of character is reductive, and relies heavily on stereotypes of gender and physicality. In contrast, 'symbolic' movement is linked to corporeality, and is a performance of character (or idea or energy) that transcends physicality.

In *Boutique*, pantomimic action is expressive; the gestures of the humans are purposefully stilted and stuffy, highlighting their haughty and unsympathetic nature. As characters, they elicit no sympathy from the viewer. In contrast, the dolls symbolically express their identities through embodied movement. They are *not* defined by their costumes or set styles of movement (*noble* versus *comique* versus *demi-character*); rather, their particular, individual movement styles create and showcase their personalities. As 'Father of Psychological Ballets' Antony Tudor (1908 – 1987) would later become famous for, Massine used movement and gesture to *reveal* character and emotion.[487] The definition of corporeality (versus physical expression), that I have laid out in this dissertation is necessary, therefore, to understand the depth of Massine's work; a flat reading of performance (one that only considers the physical aspects of movement) is inadequate.

The Snob, played by Idzikowsky, is a perfect example of the subtlety of Massine's choreographic characterization. Each movement is a reflection of his mentality of superiority and bourgeois pomposity. Dressed in a grey suite, top hat, and monocle, Massine described

[487] Tudor was perhaps inspired by Massine, with whom he worked during the 1940s. Notably, he premiered the role of Zemphira's Father in Massine's 1942 *Aleko* for Ballet Theater, and danced the role of Pierrot in *Carnival* for Ballet Theater in 1944. Growing up in England, and studying with Marie Rambert, Massine was no doubt well-known to Tudor. Pamela Gaye noted of *Boutique* "Kinetically, the characterization of the 'shopkeeper's assistant,' where gesture creates an individual as opposed to general human characteristics, has been linked to the same system used by Tudor." Her comment, though partially apt, seems to misattribute causality between the two choreographers. Likely, her statement could more accurately read: Massine's system [was later] used by Tudor. "A Conversation with Léonide Massine," 20. For an in-depth account of Tudor and psychological expression see Judith Chazin-Bennahum, *The Ballets of Antony Tudor: Studies in Psyche and Satire* (Oxford University Press, 1994).

him as "the epitome of the point-device, mustachioed and pomaded young gentleman whom one might have met in any smart café in the 1860s."[488] Angular and brisk, the Snob marches about the stage, sharply torqueing his body side to side to give the appearance of mechanical haughtiness. His arms are kept stiffly at his sides, elbows bent so his lower arms create a ninety-degree angle (mimicking the rigid posturing of a doll). As he executes two double *tours en l'air*, he is knocked down by a melon cart. Taking a bite of the melon, he *tours* again, gives a twist of his monocle, falls down, and springs back up, taken aback by the quality of the melon-hawkers wares. In rapid, rhythmic succession, he shakes hands with the hawker, jumps side to side, brushes off his lapels (*jump, jump; brush, brush*), straightens his jacket, double *tours*, and marches off. An outspoken critic of virtuosity devoid of emotion, Massine utilized a step like the double *tour en l'air* to emphasize and make physical the Snob's attitude of hollow superiority. Although the Snob's dance is brief, the texture, tension, and rhythm of his movements are enough to depict to the audience a dynamic character. Derain's costumes of course aid in such a depiction, but it is Massine movements that *symbolize* the character's identity.

The Alienation of Postwar Corporeality

While each character showcased a unique style, embodied, corporeal performance is best demonstrated by Massine himself, in his portrayal of the Cancan dancer.

> In [his role] Massine was a Victorian wax doll. Under the mass of curly black hair was the shiny white face, hectically pink on the cheeks, with surprised eyebrows and jaunty moustache. That he was waxen of face, not china, was obvious. A dandy in black velvet and white spats, he delighted in the elegant naughtiness of his partner. As she kicked above his head in a froth of lacy

[488] Massine, *My Life*, 135.

> petticoats, he threw up his hands and ogled the audience to make sure everyone was appreciating exactly how naughty she was.[489]

Clearly inspired as much by Charlie Chaplin as by Toulouse-Lautrec, Massine's Cancan dancer is an amalgamation of burlesque performance, silent film, and Romantic ballet. An iconic image of Massine in costume captures the precision with which he executed his choreography, despite the chaos of the movement.[490] Balanced on the toes of one foot, other leg bent and raised up to hip-height, he arches back so far that his spine is almost parallel with the ground. Throughout his performance, he repeatedly returns to this position, usually while running across the stage. Despite the velocity of his movements, he maintains a poised, charming persona: the consummate performance of a doll created to entertain.

Focusing on the nuance of his character, video footage of Massine shows him accompanying many of his steps with a small bobble of the head (and a smile). This minute movement resembles that of a doll or puppet. However, his movements have an uncanny quality to them, as if referencing their own unnaturalness. He is clearly *performing* a human's imitation of a doll. In a very Brechtian sense, this movement—ostensibly meant to make his character appear *more* authentically like a doll—draws attention to itself. The attempt to reproduce the original marks itself as unnatural. In "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting" Brecht considered what is taken for granted (what has become so familiar, through repetition—be it an action, a gesture, or a phrase –that we no longer pay attention to it) and

[489] Manchester, "Léonide Massine," 88.

[490] See "'La Boutique Fantasque', 1934" photo illustration (between pages 136-137) in *My Life*.

what is actually, acutely unnatural in those acts that are assumed to be 'natural.'[491] Using the "alienation effect," Brecht's theater revealed itself to be a performance, figuratively (and at times perhaps literally) winking to the audience at its own artifice. Brecht described this effect:

> The actors openly choose those positions which will best show them off to the audience, just as if they were *acrobats*. A further means is that the artist observes himself. Thus if he is representing a cloud, perhaps, showing its unexpected appearance, its soft and strong growth, its rapid yet gradual transformation, he will occasionally look at the audience as if to say: isn't it just like that? At the same time he also observes his own arms and legs, adducing them, testing them and perhaps finally approving them. An obvious glance at the floor, so as to judge the space available to him for his act, does not strike him as liable to break the illusion. In this way the artist separates mime (showing observation) from gesture (showing a cloud), but without detracting from the latter, since the body's attitude is reflected in the face and is wholly responsible for its expression.[492]

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[491] While Brecht's Epic theater and Massine's work are not identical in either style or ideology, both existed as European performance styles in the early half of the twentieth century. Brecht wrote his first full-length play, *Baal*, in 1918 (first performed in 1923). The major ideological difference between Massine and Brecht's Epic theater (aside from the primary medium in which each functions—dance or text, respectively) is that Epic theater is expressly didactic. Brecht wrote extensively on his goals for Epic theater as a conduit for social reflection and change. While *Les Ballets Russes* made radical alterations to the way the early-twentieth century body was viewed both on and off stage (not to mention the countless artistic innovations that pushed the boundaries of theatrical exploration), Massine (and Diaghilev) did not have an [overtly] socio-political agenda. In contrast to Brecht's plays, while Diaghilev wanted to entertain, shock, excite, even challenge audiences, Massine's ballets did not *necessitate* a political conversation (though they very well may have sparked one).

Additionally, Brecht was heavily inspired by a slightly senior generation of experimental theater directors, including Russian Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874 – 1940), who began directing at the St. Petersburg theater schools around 1909. Meyerhold collaborated with *Ballets Russes* choreographer Mikhail Fokine on the ballet *Carnival* in 1910, and again in 1911 on *Orfeo* (Kendall, 165), and we know that Massine was involved in some productions of this "new theater." Therefore, in many ways, Epic theater and *Les Ballets Russes* both emerged (in one way or another) from the Russian Imperial schools, therefore making their striking resemblances, not a mistake, but a matter of causality. I use Brecht here because he clearly outlined his theory in a way that Massine did not; while Massine's theory was enacted *through* his performance, Brecht wrote clear instructions for how his theater should be viewed and understood. [Massine did write a clear theory of his dance, *Massine on Choreography* (1976), but this is a 'scientific' theory of how to construct choreography, unconcerned with how a viewer might interpret such movement.] Therefore, Brecht's theory of the "alienation affect" might be considered here, as a more documented way to consider performative self-referentiality.

[492] Bertolt Brecht, "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting" in *Brecht on Theater*, ed. and trans. John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), 92.

With the illusion of the fourth wall removed, the actor presents his own body as a site of experimentation for himself and for inquisition by the viewer. In the small movement of Massine's head, viewers are reminded of his own effort as a performer, and in turn, are prevented from fully 'escaping' into the fantasy of the moment.

This self-referentiality is seen in both *Parade* and *Pulcinella*, and is perhaps a component of the "ironic distancing" Garafola attributes to period modernism. I would argue that such alienation through self-referentiality is a central component of Massine's postwar corporality. As modern technology alienated people from their very bodies—from their connection to earth—and war alienated individual humans from a sense of collective humanity, postwar corporeality exposed a now fundamentally fragmented [individual and collective] body. Walter Benjamin wrote of the Great War and its aftermath,

> It is the dangerous error of modern men to disregard this experience [ecstatic contact with the cosmos] as unimportant and unavoidable, and to consign it to the individual as the poetic rapture of starry nights. It is not; its hour strikes again and again, and then neither nations nor generations can escape it, as was made terribly clear by the last war, which was an attempt at new and unprecedented comingling with the cosmic powers. Human multitudes, gases, electrical forces were hurled into the open country, high-frequency currents coursed through the landscape, new constellations rose in the sky, aerial space and ocean depths thundered with propellers, and everywhere sacrificial shafts were dug in Mother Earth. This immense wooing of the cosmos was enacted for the first time on a planetary scale, that is, in the spirit of technology. But because the lust for profit of the ruling class sought satisfaction through it, technology betrayed man and turned the bridal bed into a bloodbath.[493]

Despite the perceived 'harmony' between elements of the ballet (the layers of period modernism), *Boutique* (as well as *Parade* and *Pulcinella*) presents a self-referential fragmentation of time and space, in which only the dancing body serves as a marker of now-ness. Massine embodied history and trauma, and self-consciously pointed to his own

[493] Benjamin, "To the Planetarium," 103-4.

performance as a body anchored in present time, while simultaneously embodying the past.[494]

According to Bergson, we embody the past through a *leap* into memory.[495] Deleuze, using Bergsonian philosophy, described an embodied past, a mode of recollection that moves one beyond psychology (beyond a purely mental experience) and into a *physicalization* of memory itself. Embodied memory resides in the realm of "impassive Being" and the possibility of "psychologization": A Proustian, kinesthetic response to a life previously lived, enabled by Duration, that pulsating, rhythmic becoming, which yokes all experience, past and present, together. In the Bergsonian (via Deleuzian) conception of the past, *pure memory* is linked to embodiment; "psychologization" cannot occur without the presence and involvement of the physical body. In Massine's choreography, we see such "psychologization," as he *moves* through his own past trauma, and through the trauma of Europe at war.

As Bergson asserted, "The duration *wherein we act* is a duration wherein our states melt into each other."[496] He continued,

> If matter does not remember the past, it is because it repeats the past unceasingly, because, subject to necessity, it unfolds a series of moments of

[494] "The body [is] an ever advancing boundary between the future and the past, as a pointed end, which our past is continually driving forward into our future. Whereas my body, taken at a single moment, is but a conductor interposed between the objects which influence it and those on which it acts, it is, on the other hand, when replaced in the flux of time, always situated at the very point where my past expires in a deed." Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 40-1.

[495] "According to Bergson, we first put ourselves back into the past in general: He describes in this way the *leap into ontology*. We really leap into being, into being-in-itself, into the being in itself of the past**. It is a case of leaving psychology altogether.** It is a case of an immemorial or ontological Memory. It is only then, once the leap has been made, that recollection will gradually take on a psychological existence: 'from the virtual it passes into the actual state . . . .' We have had to search at the place where it is, in impassive Being, and gradually we give it an embodiment, a 'psychologization.'" Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism,* trans. High Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 57.

[496] Bergson, *Matter and Memory,* 101.

> which each is the equivalent of the preceding moment and may be deduced from it: thus its past is truly given in its present. But a being which evolves more or less freely creates something new every moment: in vain, then, should we seek to read its past in its present unless its past were deposited within it in the form of memory. Thus . . . it is necessary . . . that the past should be *acted* by matter, *imagined* by mind.[497]

In Massine's work we find a repetition of the past which imbues the present with a fresh sense of memory and *élan,* all generated through the very movement of the body itself. To actively remember, to embody, is to hold the past and present together, not as blind repetition, but as conscious perception. Massine took his trauma, and the trauma of a generation, and transformed it through a performed theory of symbolic corporeality.

Performing Modern Exhaustion

The self-referential corporeality of Massine's Cancan is further emphasized by the frantic, repetitious nature of the duet. The entire Cancan sequence is essentially an animated, mechanical repetition. Running back and forth like little toy dolls sped up, Massine and Nemtchinova kick their legs, visibly involving their torsos to swing their lower limbs up to varying heights. The movement vocabulary of the Cancan couple largely consists of running, kicking, crouching, and turning, emphasizing the repetitious nature of the choreography. Each dancer holds his/her leg out *à la seconde*, pivoting around in a circle, in a somewhat jerky display of bravura.[498] While this movement is meant to inspire excitement, is also

[497] Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 121.

[498] Massine clearly makes use of the authentic steps of this genre. According to Marie-Françoise Christout:

"The can-can is a complicated and technically demanding dance. Its most spectacular step is a pirouette on one foot, with the other foot grasped around the ankle and raised to eye level; other steps include high kicks, cartwheels, rapid runs, and wide splits." "Can-can," *International Encyclopedia of Dance*, ed. Selma Jeanne Cohen and Dance Perspectives Foundation (Oxford University Press, 1998), http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195173697.001.0001/acref-9780195173697-e-0318?rskey=yNmu0j&result=316.

highlights the effort and forced nature of their movement. In another repeated movement—which also appears to require considerable effort—Massine crouches down so that Nemtchinova can kick her leg over his head.[499] Constantly playing with high and low (as the dancers crouch and then spring away from the ground), and back and forth movement, Massine's choreography creates the impression that the dancers must constantly struggle to catch the beat.

In *Boutique*, the Cancan dancer visualizes the labor of performance, made only more obvious by the mechanical nature of the dolls. As a performance genre that emphasizes endurance and physicality, the Cancan requires dancers to kick exhaustively, repeating movements over and over again.[500] The Cancan couple embodies an exuberance and rhythm almost bordering on frenzy, as they continually work to keep up with the increasingly quickening tempo of the music. This focus on frenzy was likely inspired by Massine's study of *flamenco* during this period.[501] The fast rhythm also indicates the swirl of modern life, as if his dancers, dressed in the anachronistic garb of a more placid nineteenth century life, were physical embodiments of Cocteau's noise machines from *Parade*, beating out the sounds of

[499] The ensemble repeats this movement in the 'celebratory' dance sequence of the nocturnal ball, with all of the Cossacks crouching so that the ballerinas can kick over their heads. While Massine's choreography in *Boutique* typically emphasizes unique movement for each character, here we see movement characteristic of the Cancan dancers repeated in the ensemble. This instance of a shared movement vocabulary suggests that the Cancan energy is pervasive throughout the ballet.

[500] John Doyle's 2007 direction of Bertolt Brecht's play *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahogany* (1930) plays on this idea of the alienation inherent in the kick-line.

[501] During his choreographic process for *Boutique* Massine was mainly in Spain. The choreographer writes of this period, "I filled in time [between bookings in Madrid] by going to bullfights, to which I have become addicted. Several times a week I went to watch Juan Belmonte, Gaona, and Joselito, whose poise, control and elegant movements were as perfect, in their own way, as those of the best *flamenco* dancers. In fact I learned a great deal about folk-dancing from these bull-fighters; as I watched them actively engaged in the exercise of the sport at which they excelled I began to grasp the underlying ferocity present in such dances as the *farucca*. I realized too that it was essentially the same elements in the Spanish temperament which had produced both their dances and their national sport." *My Life*, 122.

typewriters with their feet (in the style of the *zapateado*) and mimicking the whaling sounds of sirens with the frenetic swooshing of a lacy petticoat.

Nineteenth Century Origins

Imaginative, vivacious, and audacious, the origins and history of the Cancan are more complex than have been portrayed in popular culture.[502] Understanding the nature of the Cancan—as a meeting point between dance halls and the stage ('low' and 'high' culture), as a transgressive act of female liberation within the public sphere, and as a dance formed through individual expression—perhaps sheds some light on Massine's choice to make the dance a focal point of *Boutique*.

> The can-can is characterized by its freedom from propriety and its imaginativeness. This dance requires great flexibility, a good sense of rhythm, and remarkable vivacity. It has no set steps and permits the most audacious improvisations. Originally it was performed by couples, who abandoned themselves to invention, leaping and kicking their legs as high as possible. The women flung up their flaring petticoats, which were edged with lace or embellished with embroidered ribbons—a gesture that charmed the audience, excited their partners, and shocked prudes at a time when an excessive display of ankle was considered dissolute.[503]

While the exact origins of the Cancan are not entirely clear (particularly with regard to who first popularized the form outside of dance halls), the dance takes its basic inspiration from the quadrille, an eighteenth and nineteenth century European couples' dance. According to British author Francis Gribble's 1933 account, the dance was introduced to French society by Comte Charles de la Battut, "a living link between the world of fashion and the

[502] For example, John Huston's *Moulin Rouge* (1952), or Jean Renoir's 1955 film *French Cancan* both emphasize polished, uniform dance sequences, which actually are in contrast to the more lively, individualized nature of the dance.

[503] Christout, "Can-can,"*IED*.

underworld."[504] Straddling a life of dandyism and *la vie bohème*, La Battut introduced spectators to the Cancan at an annual Carnival Ball at the Variétés in 1832. As he performed the characteristic high-kicks—which no one had seen before outside of the "dancing saloons of the exterior boulevards"—men and women began imitating him.[505] As the tale goes, an excited frenzy of kicking ensued; while the police were obliged to promptly shut the whole affair down, the Cancan was born.[506]

Whether or not Gribble provides the definitive account of the emergence of the Cancan in popular society, his timeline (1832) certainly fits within other scholars' accounts of the rise of Cancan fervor in France. David Price writes:

> It came to prominence in the 1830s at dancing-gardens not far from Paris's Latin Quarter. These establishments relied heavily on the patronage of rich young men, mostly students, who came in search of local girls. The Grande Chaumière and the Closerie des Lilas, later renamed the Bal Bullier, were chief amongst them, and it was here that a high-kicking, energetic form of dancing became popular. It was generally based on the quadrille, the final figure of which was a gallop, and it was this that came to be danced in an increasingly eccentric and exaggerated way.[507]

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[504] Francis Gribble, "The Origin of the Can-Can" (April 1933), *The Dancing Times* LXXXI, no. 961 (October 1990): 53.

[505] Gribble, 54.

[506] Gribble added that, "the feminine portion of the underworld … called [la Battut] by the affectionate nickname of Blond-Blond: and that was how it came about that he and the merry company of which he was the leader launched the can-can" (54). Gribble does not provide any explanation for the nickname "Blond-Blond," nor how the name "can-can" followed, aside from the obvious doubling of names. Other dance scholars have noted that the dance is similar to the *chahut*, "a rowdy dance performed in Paris at public ballrooms" (Christout, "Can-can"). Perhaps the word *chahut* phonically resembles *cancan*? However, David Price asserts that the Cancan was often described as the "Mabille dance or the Parisian quadrille" during the 1860s, noting that the word cancan is a "curious appellation." Price's comments thus suggest that the origin for the name is unknown. Price, "The Cancan: Misconceptions and Misrepresentations," *The Dancing Times* LXXXII, no. 995 (August 1993): 1075.

[507] Price, 1074.

As also accurately reflected in Gribble's account, originally, both men and women danced the Cancan. By the 1840s, however, women were becoming the stars of the art form, with different performers showcasing their signature renditions of the dance.[508] While the Cancan has become popularized as a regimentally uniform dance in which the whole group performs the same steps, individual expression was originally emphasized. During the 1920s, Bal Tabarin[509] choreographer Pierre Sandrini "gave his dancers scope for individual expression, and they were encouraged to develop specialties during rehearsals."[510] Despite this "individual expression," however, everything was choreographed, and there was no improvisation.

In this sense, the Cancan is very much like Massine's own choreography: while he showcased individual talent and idiosyncrasies (crafting character roles based on the dancers he had to work with), everything was planned and choreographed. Similarly, "No matter how expertly conceived and performed, [the Cancan] inevitably appears amiably disorganized and provocative, with a magnificent lack of subtlety."[511] Such organized chaos is a partial appeal of the Cancan. In understanding the role of imagination and individuality within the Cancan, we can better view it as a form of liberation, and especially a [welcome] aberration from the

[508] "From the 1840s to 1860s the likes of Céleste Mogador, Rose Pompon, Rigolboche, Finette and Alice la Provençale entertained crowds with solo performances at dance-halls and dancing gardens such as the famous Bal Mabille." Price, 1074.

[509] Bal Tabarin was "for many years recognized as presenting the cabaret with the definitive French Cancan." Later, the Moulin Rouge would claim this title. Price, 1077.

[510] Price, 1077. Price also notes that *Ballets Russes* dancer Alexandra Danilova, who would later dance the role of the female Can-Can doll, went to the Tabarin to watch Sandrini's choreography in preparation for her role in *Boutique*.

[511] Price, 1077.

strictures of ballet.[512] With his own focus on highly choreographed dance sequences that featured individual expression, Massine could use the Cancan to further expand his repertoire of movement, while giving audiences a taste of something rendered (through ironic distancing) safely 'naughty.'

Reading the Uncanny in the Fantastic

To return finally to the idea of repressed trauma reappearing in art, I include one final reading of the ballet, inspired by Freud's contemporary writing. In 1919, the year of *Boutique*'s premiere, Sigmund Freud published "The Uncanny," an essay exploring the titular term.[513] In his essay, Freud embarked on an investigation of aesthetics, understood here not only as "the theory of beauty but the theory of the qualities of feeling."[514] One such "quality of feeling" is the 'uncanny,' defined by Freud as "that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar."[515] The term uncanny derives from the German '*unheimlich*,' which "is obviously the opposite of *'heimlich'* [homely'], *'heimisch'*

[512] Price, 1074. Additionally, while the dance always featured women lifting their skirts, any truly "erotic" nature of the dance was not stressed until the 1880s. In the 1890s it became a dance about protest, coinciding with Loïe Fuller's performance of the female body onstage in a public space.

[513] Art historian Celia Rabinovitch notes that, due to hostility towards Germany after World War, Freud's work wasn't widely viewed as acceptable until the 1930s when Jacques Lacan "reinterpreted Freudian ideas for a French audience." However, regardless of European acceptance of Freud, the idea of the uncanny was circulating throughout Europe at this time. In 1919, the same year that Freud's essay was published in Germany as "Das 'unheimliche,'" the Surrealists produced the magazine *Littérature*, which similarly examined the uncanny. *Surrealism and the Sacred: Power, Eros, and the Occult in Modern Art* (Westview Press, 2002), 16. It is interesting to note that both Freud and Henri Bergson were in the same society, *The Society for Psychical Research,* with Freud joining in 1911, and Bergson joining in1913.

[514] Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," *New Literary History* 7, no. 3 (Spring 1976). Originally published in *Imago*, 5 (Autumn 1919).

[515] Freud, "The Uncanny," 620.

[native]—the opposite of what is familiar."[516] While this statement suggests that the *unheimlich*, or uncanny, is the *un*familiar, and therefore, something *new*, this is not the case. Rather, the uncanny is the sensation of encountering something seemingly (and unsettlingly) new in something that had once been familiar. Freud clarified: the "uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression."[517]

Repression is at the heart of the matter for Freud. When an anxiety (often from childhood) is repressed, that anxiety may eventually reoccur in an uncanny manner. That original anxiety, fear, or even desire is familiar to us, as it has always been with us (albeit buried). It is only through the act of repression that our intimately held feeling "become[s] alienated." Freud's theory of the uncanny—in particular, his link between the uncanny and repression, and his assertion that the uncanny may be manifested in surprising ways—is one way in which to better understand *La Boutique Fantasque*, especially in light of my own assertions of the links between Massine's creative process and trauma. Created in the same year, Massine and Freud's respective works both, in very different ways, draw inspiration from a common source or zeitgeist.

Familiar Themes: Dolls and Ballet

Dolls, puppets, and mannequins are perhaps some of the best-known examples of what might inspire feelings of the uncanny; these eerily life-like objects threaten our own sense of certainty regarding what is living and what is inanimate. A ballet about magical toy dolls come to life, *Boutique* relies on the trope of the animate doll, and in so doing, makes

[516] Freud, "The Uncanny," 620.

[517] Freud, "The Uncanny," 634.

direct reference to several precedent ballets on similar themes. Perhaps one of the most famous doll-themed ballets is *Coppélia* (originally choreographed by Arthur Saint-Léon in 1870), which itself is based off the earlier 1816 tale *Derr Sandmann* (*The Sandman*) by E.T.A. Hoffman.[518] Understanding how the uncanny functions within *Coppélia* and *Derr Sandmann* is integral to my argument regarding Massine. By relying on ballet audiences' familiarity with well-established themes, Massine inverted what was familiar (and therefore what had the capacity to be uncanny); as in *Copellia* and *Derr Sandmann*, elements of the uncanny emerge in unlikely places, subverting audience expectations.

In employing Freud's theory of the uncanny, my purpose is *not* to suggest that *Boutique* contains instances of the uncanny merely because of its subject of living dolls. Rather, I argue that Massine undid a legacy of uncanny associations with the doll, while at the same time imbuing the ballet with a deeper, more obscured vision of what was, in fact, uncanny. Essentially, through humanizing the dolls of *Boutique*, Massine took typically uncanny figures (ambiguously animate dolls) and rendered them 'canny,' or familiar, again (by making them *more* human and humane than the actual human characters). What becomes uncanny then, is not the dolls, but humanity itself.

Coppélia

In the ballet *Coppélia*, the major, imminent threat is the unclear distinction between human and doll, and the danger presented by relationships that might transgress that boundary. The story of *Coppélia* could be reduced to the following: the happy relationship of a human couple (Franz and Swanhilda) is disrupted when the man falls in love with a

[518] *Derr Sandmann* itself served as the inspiration for the opera *Tales of Hoffman* (1881), and the film by the same name (1951), in which Massine played (amongst other characters) Franz, while Moira Shearer played Olympia.

motionless woman he sees sitting in a window. This woman is Coppélia, a mechanical doll created by the somewhat sinister inventor Dr. Coppélius. To restore order, Swanhilda must convince Franz that his new love is in fact not human, and save him from Dr. Coppélius, who intends to use Franz as a human sacrifice to bring Coppélia to life. In the end, what Dance Theorist Sally Banes terms the "marriage plot" prevails: Franz and Swanhilda are wed, and Dr. Coppélius is left alone with his room of dolls.[519] While Swanhilda does not want to lose Franz to another woman (animate or otherwise), the true fear at the heart of the ballet seems to concern a disruption of "natural" love between a human man and woman. Franz and Dr. Coppélius' obsessed love for Coppélia positions her as a threat to humanity; despite the fact that she becomes the object of love for both men, as a doll, she represents an obstacle to the happy, heterosexual marriage plot. The love between a man and a doll is unproductive—it literally cannot produce new life—and is therefore not only perverse, but harmful, within ballet's established moral code.[520]

In *Coppélia*, the uncanny image of the doll is *not* frightening because it bears an eerily similar resemblance to a human; rather, the doll is frightening because of the *desire* it generates: the desire for something other than what is "human," or a desire for something or

[519] Banes indexes the trend throughout Western ballet history of relying on, and promoting, the "marriage plot," in which all plot points eventually lead up to the love (or failure of love) between a heterosexual couple. She argues that, through the prominence of the marriage plot in ballet, we can see a societal commentary on what was currently deemed acceptable or "right" within romantic relationships. See Sally Banes, *Dancing Women: Female Bodies Onstage* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

[520] As an art form which emerged out of French monarchical rule, ballet is enmeshed in religious, socio-political ideologies of good versus evil. Notions of angelic purity (embodied by the ballerina transcending her earthly form through pointe shoes), heterosexual love which leads to marriage (or, when marriage is not possible, death), and clear moral codes circulate throughout Romantic and Classical ballet.

someone that is forbidden.[521] In Freud's theory, this recurring desire is one that has been repressed, and then made uncanny through the object of the doll. Within the world of *Coppélia* (and Classical Ballet in general), the heterosexual love of Franz and Swanhilda epitomizes "acceptable" human love, and the two characters therefore represent the 'truest' or 'purest' forms of humanity. Having succumbed to the *amour fou* of his creation, Dr. Coppélius, while technically human, is beyond redemption, as he was willing to sacrifice Franz' human life for the possibility of Coppélia's animation. Therefore, his humanity is more or less disregarded within the larger scope of the ballet. "Human" love prevails in the end, as Swanhilda victoriously saves Franz from his perverse desires and reaffirms the socially acceptable sanctity of matrimony between a man and a woman.

Conclusion: The Uncanny, Made 'Canny'

In *Coppélia*, the uncanny object (the doll) clearly presents a threat to humanity; in *Boutique*, Massine flipped this dynamic, dictating that the humans, rather than the dolls, present a disruption of order. With this change, Massine subverted the possibilities for what might produce a feeling of the uncanny. Freud described that a sensation of the uncanny, particularly in literature, is dependent on which perspective the reader is aligned with. He provides the tale of Herodotus as an example:

> In the Herodotus story our thoughts are concentrated much more on the superior cunning of the master-thief than on the feelings of the princess. The princess

[521] Freud wrote of Olympia, the doll of Hoffman's *Derr Sandmann* (and the equivalent of the doll in *Coppélia*): "But I cannot think—and I hope most readers of the story will agree with me—that the theme of the doll Olympia, who is to all appearances a living being, is by any means the only, or indeed the most important, element that must be held responsible for the quite unparalleled atmosphere of uncanniness evoked by the story" (625). Freud's point here is that the uncanny can be layered. The uncanny doll Olympia is only an index for a much more deeply repressed anxiety: Olympia (a doll who has human eyes) represents the Sandman (an evil figure who takes human eyes), who is thought to be the murderer of the protagonist's father, who in turn represents the protagonist's castration complex (according to Freud).

> may very well have had an uncanny feeling, indeed she very probably fell into a swoon; but *we* have no such sensations, for we put ourselves in the thief's place, not in hers.[522]

Similarly, by privileging the perspective of the doll, rather than that of the human, Massine altered what had the power to be perceived as uncanny; if the audience is aligned with the doll, then the doll itself *cannot* be uncanny (for we cannot perceive *ourselves* as uncanny).

While the uncanny object typically disrupts our sense of the familiar and renders it frightening, Massine removed the "ghastly" element from what is uncanny, thereby reclaiming in that image a sense of something both familiar and charming. Particularly in the "battle" scene, Massine normalized and made benign the terror of real war and death. In *Boutique*, the dolls fight like valiant soldiers to preserve true love. Patriotically, they battle for the "right" cause (the love between the two Cancan dancers). Although they lay siege to the humans, they are fighting in the name of Romanticism, even as they mock it.

Boutique therefore presents a different moral code, in which the love between two dolls is viewed as more important than the happiness of human children (or their bourgeois parents). As I argued in my chapters on *Parade* and *Pulcinella*, Massine identified with characters who were social 'Others.' Perhaps we see here again a self-association with the character he is playing. Casting himself in a non-human role, yet as a figure deserving of love, may have been Massine's attempt to re-choreograph his own fraught personal and romantic relationship with Diaghilev at this time.[523] While certainly not a *danseur noble*,

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[522] Freud, "The Uncanny," 642.

[523] Massine remained constantly under the jealous gaze of Diaghilev. Their relationship was especially rocky during this period, and Diaghilev was highly suspicious of any contact Massine had with female ballet members. Vera [Clark] Savina, a new member of *Les Ballets Russes* recently cast in the role of the female Poodle in *Boutique*, was likely on Massine's mind as a living reminder of forbidden love. Despite attempts at secrecy, Massine and Savina's relationship eventually severed the choreographer's ties with Diaghilev, forcing him to leave the company at the start of 1921 (he was only twenty-five years old at this time). Massine and Savina were married on April 26, 1921 in London.

Massine re-cast himself from a self-described "freak" into the role of the noble lover, again creating on the stage his own controlled vision of life as he wished it to be.

This ballet is imbued, or encrypted, to use Franko's term, with a "particular shade of what is frightening."[524] The ballet itself is certainly not frightening, but rather, haunted by that which is frightening. As viewers, we are confronted with the *unheimlich* [uncanny], made to look *heimlich* [homely]. What we experience then, is the transformation of what could be uncanny or frightening (in this case, the automata or puppets) into something charmingly familiar. However, the transformation is more complex: terror and trauma have been transposed into the uncanny objects, made cheerful. In this way, we are fooled; we believe we have overcome what is frightful by rendering the almost-human into a more-than-human, or better-than-human, as the case is here. We have vanquished the fear of what is uncanny. However, like Olympia in *Derr Sandmann*, whose uncanny appearance was only an index for a more complex web of associative images, what is presented as uncanny in this ballet is actually covering up (or signifying) a deeper uncanny origin: the trauma of Massine's past, and the trauma of Europe, trembling from the destruction of War. As in *Coppélia*, what is uncanny is not the doll itself, but the frightening nature of what the doll reveals about human nature.

In Massine's libretto and choreography, audiences of 1919 found solace from the bleakness of their everyday life. Using a technique of coping with trauma that he was forced

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Massine eventually returned to the company but, as *Ballets Russes* dancer Felia Doubrovska noted, Diaghilev never forgave Massine. She related that Massine returned to the company after he and Vera divorced. Diaghilev invited her back at this time, and then (clearly intending to cause tension) invited Massine back as well. "I saw when he came to rehearsals he was very surprised to see his ex-wife. Then one day Diaghilev said, 'You will dance *Bluebird*,' and they danced together." "Interview with Felia Doubrovska," conducted by Marilyn Hunt. NYPL Oral History Project. *MGZMT 5-707, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

[524] Freud, "The Uncanny," 621.

to adopt at the age of ten in Moscow, Massine took audiences on a fantastical escape; an escape that re-choreographed trauma into fairytale. *Boutique* achieved its popularity through its referencing of erstwhile ballets of a Romantic era and its reliance on nostalgic memories. Playing on audience expectations, Massine capitalized on the comfort and 'canny' nature of familiar images and themes of childhood. However, beneath this familiarity lay a deeper statement about humanity, trauma, and war. As Fokine did with *Petrushka*, Massine imbued his dolls with souls, giving not only sentience, but also empathy to the otherwise mechanical automatons. Relying on his capacity for subtle, idiosyncratic gesture and movement vocabularies, Massine humanized his dolls (because he recognized something of himself in them). In so doing, he positioned himself as the 'Other,' yet an 'Other' who proved valiant and morally superior. While audiences may have received the cathartic performance experience they needed after years of war, so too did Massine (but for very different reasons). A heroic lover (but now on his own terms), Massine re-choreographed a life in which he could both escape trauma and take control (of his self-image, of his emotions, of his past). The cardboard cutouts of his childhood play-theater now danced in front of a rapturous audience, and perhaps the nightmares of his youth receded a little further back into memory.

Conclusion

The true historical reality is not the datum, the fact, the thing, but the evolution formed when these materials meld and fluidify. History moves; the still waters are made swift. In the museum we find the lacquered corpse of an evolution. Here is the flux of that pictorial anxiety which has budded forth from man century after century. To conserve this evolution, it has had to be undone, broken up, converted into fragments again and congealed as in a refrigerator. Each picture is a crystal with unmistakable and rigid edges, separated from the others, a hermetic island.

– José Ortega Y Gasset[525]

Ortega Y Gasset's poetic dictum that history in retrospect is "a hermetic island" is true of Léonide Massine's legacy. As I have argued, Massine's choreographic contributions to Modernism have been historically overlooked. In particular, his depiction of the postwar body in *Parade* (a true modern *physis* of the frenetic, techno-human body) has been overshadowed by the looming presence of Picasso (and the introduction of Cubism to the concert stage). Similarly, *La Boutique Fantasque* has remained, though celebrated, a trivialized ballet; Massine's unique, idiosyncratic gesture and expansion of character roles have gone largely unnoticed. While *Pulcinella* is a deservedly iconic ballet, the use of the *Commedia dell'arte* trope is discussed far more than Massine's unhuman, transnational aesthetic. In this dissertation, I have endeavored to break up and "convert into fragments again "—as Ortega Y Gasset suggested—these ballets, to elevate them to the status of living archives, rather than static artifacts. Through an examination of historical context, collaborative process, and choreographic material, I hope to have deepened an understanding of Massine's work, while defining a theory of postwar corporeality.

[525] "On Point of View in the Arts" [1949] *The Dehumanization of Art and Other Essays on Art, Culture, and Literature* (Princeton University Press, 1968), 107.

Massine crafted his postwar corporeality—his symbolic, rather than expressive, depiction of the modern body remolded by the trauma of industrialization, technology, and war—through his ability to blend movement styles, to imbue gesture with psychological motivation, and to create aesthetic harmony. We can find in Massine's work a direct extension of the legacies of Russian choreographers Alexander Gorsky and Michel Fokine, Russian theater practitioners Constantin Stanislavski and Vsevolod Meyerhold, and American modern dancers Isadora Duncan and Loïe Fuller (as I argued, particularly Fuller). However, Massine also created an aesthetic that was uniquely his own, an embodied language that has been difficult for future generations to replicate.

Massine's affinity for depicting the 'Other,' the puppet, the automaton—perhaps stemming from his own self-identification as a "freak"—allowed for an expansion of character roles as he granted a new vitality to typically hollow or stereotypical characters. With a constant fervor to prove himself worthy, and to control the world around him through whatever means possible, Massine subverted the norms of Classical ballet, re-casting the *danseur noble* (and himself) as a *grotesque caractère* dancer. However, rather than relying merely on the more comedic, mimetic, and reductive qualities usually associated with the *demi-caractère* or *comique*, Massine's hybrid dancer was utterly refined and subtle, yet vigorously energetic, a serious intellectual subject exuding lighthearted gaiety. Pulcinella, the character who laughs and cries simultaneously, is perhaps a powerful emblem of the postwar, fragmented self, as portrayed by Massine.

The nuanced juxtaposition (of narrative subject matter against encoded tone, of physical appearance against symbolic intention, of music and design against choreography) fundamental to Massine's postwar corporeality was possible, in part, due to his rigorous study of the body. His research—which manifested itself officially in his text *Massine on*

Choreography: Theory and Exercises in Composition (1976), but which he had been employing choreographically since 1919—lead to his creation of a system in which the slightest bodily movements (the elbow, the knee, etc.) could create dynamic harmonic counterpoints. While Massine himself may have claimed that it was this 'scientific' system which allowed him to achieve choreographic greatness, I would argue that the genius of his work lay in his ability to "symbolize." T.S. Eliot's apt assessment of the artist—that while "conventional gesture of the ordinary stage [was] supposed to *express* emotion … the abstract gesture of Massine …[instead] *symbolize[d]* emotion"—highlights Massine's transformation and elevation of gesture.[526] Massine's corporeal presence onstage could transcend the physical, becoming more-than or even other-than human, while utilizing the raw material of the human body as his source. Thus, Massine's postwar corporeality was a physical architecture of the fragmentation, trauma, and anxiety of modernity.

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Enigmatic, reclusive, and always laboring away through his acts of creative genius, Massine's decision to purchase and move to a private island—his own 'hermetic island'—only further solidified the artist's isolated existence. Writing of his research process for his theory of choreography, Massine gave the following interview in 1977 (the year before his death):

> With the idea that I had to do this research work, and had to do something about being ignorant in the very craft that I had chosen for my life, I had to find a place for refuge. To get away from everybody and start doing something about it. So, I took this island. The first thing I heard, "Here is the Russian fool who lives on the rocks where only rabbits can live.' I started like a madman planting … I am fighting, of course, natural weeds, and all that, but finally they don't say any more, 'Here is the Russian fool.' The say, 'Ah, something grows on it,'

[526] Eliot, "Dramatis Personae," 303-306.

> So, that is the story of the island. I enjoy it very much for refuge. **It is a place where nobody can come without permission. And there is silence."**[527]

Massine's island seems to have represented for him an escape—an escape from the noise, city, and people—and another opportunity to prove himself. The subtle comparison between cultivating plants on a barren island (despite being seen as a "madman" or "fool" by others) and attempting to establish a written legacy for himself by writing his *Theory on Choreography* is powerful. On his island, and through his book, his ultimate stance on how dance should be made, Massine could exert complete control of his own life and self-image. In everything he did, it seems that Massine sought control. In creating his choreographic method, in moving to an island, in transforming his childhood traumas into fairytale, he was driven by a need to manipulate all aspects of his life. Despite this mania for control, however, Massine understood that in order to tap into the boundless creative potential of the body, one must strip away technique and reside within the rhythmic *durée*.

On new dance and the use of electronics, Massine stated, "I think it is absolutely precarious to think that electrical effects and all that can replace the human. It must be from the human soul, human gift, human genius, you see, and not by machine."[528] Despite Massine's presentation of a modern *physis*, he did not view the human as a machine, nor did he view the role of technology in dance as particularly beneficial. Rather, Massine's choreography relied on the power of the body to symbolize emotion and perform identity. When viewed together, *Parade*, *La Boutique Fantasque*, and *Pulcinella* present Massine's modern choreographic statement on the postwar body, and kinetically manifest his choreographed presentation of self, as he felt himself to be, or as he wished himself to be.

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[527] Hardin, "A Conversation with Léonide Massine," 70 (emphasis mine).

[528] Hardin, 70.

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