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Dear members and readers,

Welcome to the 2006 issue of *Choreologica*. Following the changes introduced in 2005, it is time to move even further. Therefore, we would like to invite members and readers to submit articles and examples of their research to the Editorial Board. The aim is to turn the magazine into a forum for an interdisciplinary exchange of dialogues as stated on page 75.

The first example of this move towards a multidisciplinarity is Colin Counsell's article investigating the movement from psyche to soma. An eminent performance analyst and respected author on drama and the performing arts, Counsell opens a stimulating debate, which draws upon and encompasses theatre, dance and somatic studies.

Victoria O'Brien's MA dissertation has been welcomed with considerable praise so far. We are happy to present here its final instalment. Her works proves that our field of research benefits considerably from new voices and inputs. And it is in line with these reasons that we would like to invite other examples of new research from graduate and postgraduate students in the performing arts field.

Elena Grillo's contribution is yet another example of a creative interaction between different analytical approaches and research modes. The article, which was first presented as a paper at the study day held by EADH at Logroño in Spain, focuses on a biographical

exploration of the dancer Pepita Oliva as immortalised by her grand-daughter Vita Sackville West.

Finally, a multidisciplinary analytical approach is also what informs and underpins Astrid Bernkopf's study of Romantic ballet scenarios. A more in-depth version of her presentation at the EADH Study Day "Once upon a time ... in the Highlands" at Sadler's Wells in 2005, Bernkopf's article proposes a threefold approach to the Romantic ballet narrative.

From *Psyche* to *Soma*: Laban, 'Effort' and the Industrialisation of Expression

Colin Counsell

While positioning dance historically is always complex, locating its *kinesics* in history is especially difficult, and this is particularly true of abstract dance. Emphatically non-figurative, the gestures, postures and dynamics characteristic of Rudolf Laban's practice, for example, intrinsically denied any attempt to depict a locatable historical reality. They were nevertheless successful, evocative for performers and audiences alike, and so clearly spoke to some form of perception culturally available to both. In locating its kinesics in history, then, it is necessary to seek not a representation but a mode of cognition or recognition, a historically specific way of understanding the body's actions that those particular movements brought into interpretive operation, rendering them meaningful. It is this line of enquiry I will pursue in the following essay. I will focus not on Laban's choreography but on his training practice, and specifically his work on bodily dynamics or 'efforts', a field he termed *eukinetics*. I will seek to position eukinetic theory and practice, and so ultimately the kinesics it produces, in history by exploring the kinds of conceptual figures underpinning both, those that worked to make it culturally resonant.

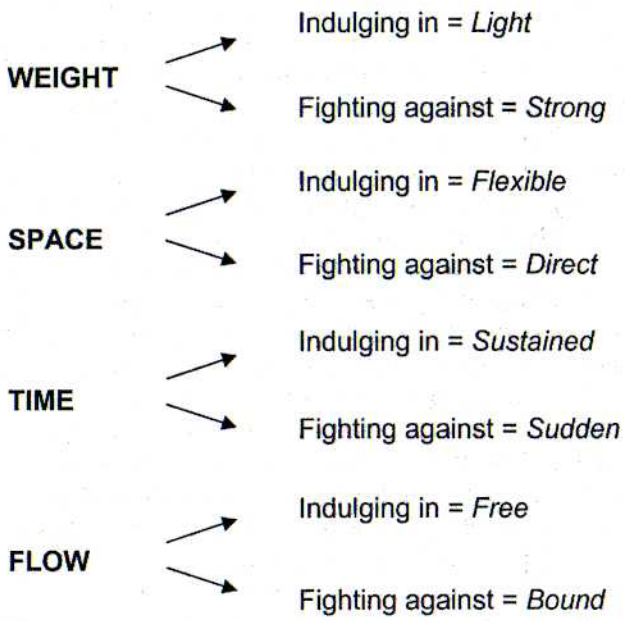
1

At the core of all Laban's practice lies a conception of the human subject as, in his terms, 'psychosomatic', a holistic whole in which 'motion and emotion, body and mind are inseparably united.'[1] While dominant Cartesian models presume interior and exterior selves to be discontinuous, separated by the screen of self-consciousness, for Laban they form a continuum, with each the consequence and reflection of the other. But if this 'minded body' is humankind's natural state, it is one that had by the early twentieth century become imperilled, the conditions of modernity – confined urban living, job specialisation and, most of all, subjugation to the motions of machines – having caused a rift between *psyche* and *soma*. Describing a formative encounter with the products of the industrial 'robot age', Laban explains:

> I saw with growing clarity how man will come under the domination of the machine. The soul-less steel-ox, the locomotive, is only a beginning. Thrilling as the power of conquest over air and sea may be, man will surely have to pay dearly for it. The whirring and clanking of thousands of wheels and chains is infectious; soon man himself will become a whirring of wheels and chains; soon he will see in life, in the whole of nature, and in himself, nothing but the machine, and the soul will be forgotten... hadn't the soul already withered and died in the maze of our spurious culture, in the turmoil of the big city?[2]

As a result of modernity, our bodies, the instruments for conveying thought and feeling, had become detached from the mind in which they are experienced, our actions made 'soulless', thus rendering the dancing body incapable of authentic expression. It is this which underpins Laban's aesthetic project: 'it became clear in that machine workshop,' he continues, 'that my place was not to serve the soul-less steel-ox but rather to become a kind of adversary and antithesis to it'. By reintegrating body and mind, Laban technique was to restore dancers to a prelapsarian wholeness, and so make their movements once again expressive.

This goal is at the heart of eukinetics. All movement, Laban explains, possesses purely material qualities of Weight, Space, Time and Flow: these are its essential 'motion factors'. But the Space or Weight attributes that a gesture exhibits are the product of the moving subject's 'inner attitude' to that motion factor, an internal posture that can vary between the extremes of 'indulging in' and 'fighting against'. 'Indulging in' Time, for example, makes for movement that uses up large amounts of it, and so is what Laban terms *sustained*, while 'fighting against' Time leads to action that is *sudden*.[3] 'Fighting against' Space leads to *direct* movement, taking the shortest path – using the least space – by moving in a more or less straight line, while 'fighting against' Weight produces movement that is *strong*. 'Flow' describes the degree of control exerted, and hence a movement's fluidity: *bound* Flow ('fighting against') is highly controlled, visibly subject to the mover's will, while *free* flowing movement ('indulging in') continues under its own momentum. With two possibilities for each motion factor, Laban compiles a list of eight essential dynamic qualities or 'efforts':



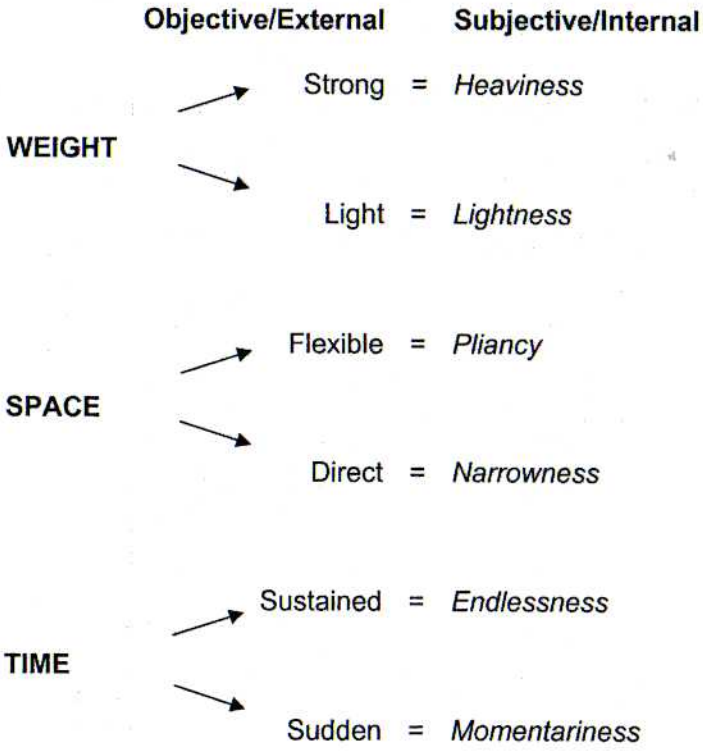
Thus each effort is the meeting point of mind and body, a 'psychosomatic' synthesis of mental disposition and physical action. Of course, real movements operate in multiple dimensions, have characteristics of Time *and* Weight *etc*. Combining 'light', 'flexible' and so on, Laban compiles a catalogue of eight key movement types – only eight because Flow plays a limited role at basic levels of eukinetic theory. He names these 'basic effort actions' after the everyday activities which best encapsulate their physical character – 'wringing', 'dabbing', 'thrusting' *etc*:

Weight		Space		Time		Basic Effort Action
Strong	+	Direct	+	Sudden	=	*Thrusting*
Strong	+	Direct	+	Sustained	=	*Pressing*
Strong	+	Flexible	+	Sudden	=	*Slashing*
Strong	+	Flexible	+	Sustained	=	*Wringing*
Light	+	Direct	+	Sudden	=	*Dabbing*
Light	+	Direct	+	Sustained	=	*Gliding*
Light	+	Flexible	+	Sudden	=	*Flicking*
Light	+	Flexible	+	Sustained	=	*Floating*

From this simple act of categorisation Laban goes on to build the vast, comprehensive typology of dynamics that is the basis of eukinetics. Eukinetic training entails sustained, practical exploration of all the different dynamic types, students sculpting their actions to render them precisely 'light' or 'direct', 'floating' or 'pulling' *etc.*[4] For the dancer, perhaps the first practical outcome is an ability to use dynamics themselves creatively. Schooled to work with carefully calibrated differences of Weight and Space, *etc*, dancers become adept at using dynamic nuance *per se* as material, employing fine shades of speed, force and gestural shape to build movement sequences. This is central to the kind of abstract dance work most associated with Laban technique. Eschewing narrative, character and established symbology, abstract work comprises patterns of pure movement, aesthetic structures formed entirely of kinesic parallels, contrasts and lines of thematic development: for 'in pure dancing,' Laban notes, 'the inner drive to move creates its own patterns of style.'[5] While Laban's compound 'basic effort actions' are crucial to narrative dance and theatre work, in such non-figurative dance they typically play a less prominent role, the more finely shaded qualities of effort – lightness, sustainedness *per se* – proving more useful tools.

This purely material typology is only one side of eukinetics, however. As we noted, with Laban's anti-Cartesian, psychosomatic self, interior and exterior form a continuum, the physical mirroring the psychic, and vice versa. Consequently each species of dynamic is associated with a specific psychic experience, a 'sensation' that is either realised in that form of movement or evoked when it is carried out. 'Sustained' action – the result of 'indulging in' Time – is innately

married to feelings of *endlessness*, and so experienced by dancers whenever they move in a sustained fashion, while actions that are 'flexible' bring forth sensations of *pliancy*. Each objectively-defined effort has its own equivalent subjective state:



Just as movement's physical 'efforts' are amalgamated into the compound forms of *slashing*, *dabbing*, *etc*, its psychic components also combine to form compounds, eight 'movement sensations' experienced by the performer, each the counterpart of a 'basic effort action'. Thus 'slashing' leads to the sensation of *collapsing* – an amalgam of feelings of 'heaviness', 'pliancy' and 'momentariness' – and 'flicking' leads to the feeling of being *excited*:

Basic Effort Action		**Movement Sensation**
Thrusting	=	*Dropping*
Pressing	=	*Sinking*
Slashing	=	*Collapsing*
Wringing	=	*Relaxed*
Dabbing	=	*Stimulated*
Gliding	=	*Elated*
Flicking	=	*Excited*
Floating	=	*Suspended*

'Efforts' and 'movement sensations', respectively the physical and psychic components of natural movement,

are both present in all human action, Laban asserts. But while physical 'efforts' dominate the practical, purpose-driven behaviours of everyday life, activities such as performance thrust 'movement sensations' to the fore. The effect is to make the body's actions inherently meaningful, automatically communicating to onlookers the sensations that dancers experience when moving in those ways: 'flexible' actions communicate feelings of *narrowness*, and 'dabbing' communicates the performer's *stimulation*.[6]

It was by this means that Laban sought to recreate the 'minded body' otherwise lost to modernity. By schooling dancers in movement's 'essential' forms, eukinetics was simultaneously to evoke essential *experiences*, the natural counterparts of specific dynamics. The dance was thus to comprise the 'psychosomatic' subject made flesh, a perfect, prelapsarian fusion of inner and outer selves. The result was to be pre-eminently expressive movement. If the self-reflexive Cartesian subject essentially *fabricates* its physical actions, manipulates somatic meaning from the distanced vantage of interiority, the eukinetic body is in contrast always authentic, genuinely expressing the sensations it experiences.

2

Despite its essentialist, ahistorical colouring, this notion of an expressive, psychosomatic subject rests on historically specific foundations, for it deploys conceptual figures that derive ultimately from the experience of advanced industrialisation. The second phase of

Western industrial development, beginning in broadly the 1880s, was famously powered by mass production. Previously, the consumption of finished commodities had been almost exclusively the preserve of affluent social elites, but new mass-production techniques, manufacturing consumer products cheaply and in quantity, enabled them to be targeted at almost all levels of developed society. As mass production grew to become that society's dominant economic rationale, the commodity complete for end-use became the mundane form of consumption, the staple of everyday existence for populations as a whole. The consumer society that emerged in the mid twentieth century, and even the commodity culture of the century's end, ultimately had their roots in innovations of the *fin de siècle*.

As has been well documented, a key consequence of this reorientation of production was massive social destabilisation, the breakdown of existing forms of communal functioning, as society moved towards late industrial work patterns, class relations, urbanisation and the nuclear family. This experience of profound social change was implicitly theorised by Ferdinand Tönnes in his *Community and Association* (1887), that seminal work of modern sociology in which he proposed a fundamental distinction between two modes of social organisation: *Gesellschaft* or 'society,' describing social relations built upon contractual obligations and divisions of labour, relations which exist only between discrete individuals and which are entered into solely for those individuals' self interest; *Gemeinschaft* or 'community,' describing social aggregates based on affect, kinship and group membership.[7] Although Tönnes offered these as theoretical abstractions, they nevertheless reproduced what was widely perceived as a *historical* shift, and

comparable binaries can be found in the writings of theorists as diverse as Weber, Klages and Nietzsche.[8] In their different ways, all propose a basic distinction between the kinds of social scheme deemed characteristic of the pre- and post-industrial worlds.

If the most obvious effects of production's remodelling were social, however, the corresponding changes in *consumption* prompted shifts of a more firmly cultural kind, including a change in the relative importance granted different conceptions of the human subject. A key characteristic of the modern period overall is of course the central role played by ideas of individual interiority[9] – but this did not emerge fully formed, instead developing progressively. Born with the 'self-fashioning' permitted privileged groups in the Renaissance, and propagated via the implicitly Cartesian subject underpinning modern science and reason, the notion of an inner self as determining identity was only gradually disseminated across social strata.[10] For much of the nineteenth century self-imaging was, for the majority of classes, still centred on markers of a social kind, identity defined largely in terms of family, class, occupation and ethnic, religious and regional allegiances, *etc.* But the distinguishing feature of the modern, fully-finished commodity is that it appears to appeal solely to personal desire. 'Hailing'[11] subjects in terms of their supposed appetites, it therefore attributes to them a profound internality, presuming a self defined less by its place in the social order than by its individual needs or wishes. The result was an expanded cultural recognition of interior, psychic selfhood, the very act of appealing to apparently personal desire propagating the idea of an enlarged inner space in which that desire was deemed to reside.

While the notion of profound interiority is a feature of the modern period *per se*, then, the massed and ubiquitous commodities of second-wave industrialisation, occupying the centre of everyday existence, worked to enhance and more widely disseminate it, reiterating a view of the subject that was rooted in the space of desire and evoked by the promise of its gratification. Crucially, in doing so the new socio-economic order created the conditions for a collision between competing models of the self, a clash between community-based forms of identification and those ultimately derived from the marketplace – in effect, between the *subjects* of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. This collision is at the core of modernity's defining experience of 'alienation'. For while industrialisation certainly caused real social disruption, the forms in which that disruption was perceived and theorised – as personal *anomie*, the rending of individual from community, thought from action, worker from the fruits of his labour – effectively restated in miniature the wider clash between modes of identification. Although modernity was for many genuinely abrasive, the experience of that abrasion was cognitively filtered through the lens of self-conception, such that modern identity reproduced a greater historical conflict.

What was in reality a historico-cultural conflict, then, was perceived and experienced as psychic schism, the rupturing of a self formerly whole, and this was realised most directly in the contemporary development of psychoanalysis. Freud's theories display the clear imprint of historical change, certainly, his 'family romance' of Oedipal relations in effect marking a real socio-economic shift of emphasis from extended community to nuclear family, *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*. But equally

significant is his imaging of a self shaped by desire, its actions propelled by a kind of 'will to gratification.' This is particularly pertinent because in Freud's psychic cartography that will is destined always to be brooked. For in posing a 'pleasure principle' against a 'reality principle', he in effect gave psychoanalytical form to the contest between a subject driven towards sensory satisfaction and one that is socially delimited and restrained, routinely checked by an external, tacitly communal world.[12] Freud's eroticised self does reflect a general contemporary concern with sexuality and the psyche, but the specific structure he proposed for that self, traced in the tension between desire and constraint, more specifically negotiates a conflict inherent to the new socio-economic order: the historical conflict was refigured as the 'history' of the formation of the self.

Most important for our purposes is that this tension was granted a specifically *somatic* form, nowhere more overtly than in the works of Central European Expressionism. As Peter Nicholls has noted, theatrical Expressionism from the 1910s to the early '30s was marked by a motif of 'strain,' a principle of *distortion* echoing through all the stage's media.[13] With its 'warped' sets, discordant contrasts of light and shadow, bright and clashing colours, and dialogue clipped into a 'telegraphese', Expressionist theatre imaged modern alienation as a clash between the individual and society, a self striving for freedom and the bourgeois world restraining it. This clash was inscribed most clearly on the Expressionist body. Expressionist acting was marked by its own figure of distortion, in the form of angular, contorted postures, disconnected gestures and *in extremis* facial expressions.[14] Together these imaged a subject in the act of struggle, a self physically contorted

as it battled with the normative forms of an oppressive external reality. Expressionism's avowed goal was to liberate individuals from bourgeois social mores, permitting unfettered expression, but in practice it figured that liberation as incomplete, instead etching onto moving bodies the ongoing fight to achieve it. In its very refusal of established physical decorum, the Expressionist body imaged the struggle of psychic against social, a struggle which already presumed their modern separation.

Permeating early twentieth-century Western culture,[15] then, is a figure of schism, a perceived rupture that appears variously as the separation of internality from externality, individual from society, mind from body. It is this schism that forms the conceptual foundation of eukinetic theory, providing the very 'problem' it seeks to address. For in proposing the rupture of *soma* from *psyche* as a specifically modern malaise, eukinetics rearticulates a conflict that is ultimately rooted in the historico-cultural clash between ideas of selfhood: what was in reality the contested rise to cultural dominance of a new model of the self was perceived by Laban as the disintegration of an old one. Unlike Freudian psychoanalysis, however, eukinetics does not present this schism as inherent to the structure of the self; and unlike Expressionist acting, Laban's dance had no innate tendency towards corporeal distortion. This is indicative of a key difference, for whereas Expressionist 'strain' imaged the battle between inner and outer worlds, Laban proposed to reunify them, eukinetics notionally providing a movement practice via which *psyche* and *soma* were again to be made one. Eukinetics addressed psychosomatic rupture not as a situation to be revealed

but a malady to be cured, offering a way of rebinding the modern, alienated, schismatic self firmly to its acts.

3

As well as underpinning eukinetic theory, this conceptual figure also provided a way of understanding the eukinetic body, an interpretive logic, culturally available to the spectator, by which it could be read. However, the means by which eukinetics-based movements brought this particular interpretive logic into play have still to be accounted for. If those material movements did evoke notions of the 'psychosomatic' self and authentic expression, they could only do so by material means, the very forms that eukinetics contrived, its kinesics, functioning semiotically.

Questions of psychosomatics aside, in a practical sense eukinetic training first schools dancers in the art of making movements whose dynamics are distinct and emphatic, so clearly *marked* in terms of their speed or force or spatial path (or any combination of these) that they are immediately distinguishable from each other. As we saw, this first provides dancers and choreographers with the raw material to create aesthetic formations. With light actions clearly distinguished from strong, the sudden from the sustained, practitioners are able to arrange these qualities into patterns, create abstract structures from the purely formal arrangement of bodily action. Whether or not Weight, Space, Time and Flow genuinely represent the ur-components of movement, the very act of categorisation renders these qualities

available for stage practice, makes of them raw materials from which performance can be built.

Movement of this kind also possesses a particular semiotic potency, however, one resulting from its relationship to the actions of the everyday. Most everyday social exchange occurs within the constraints of what Pierre Bourdieu has termed the *habitus*, that reservoir of rationales and their associated behaviours that dictates how one may act in given situations.[16] As a consequence, for the culturally competent observer the bulk of behaviour is communally coded, tells a recognisable social 'tale', even if that tale tells only of the subject's adherence to recognisable norms. One result is that behaviour which eludes the *habitus* is thrown into relief. For when we see dynamically notable action that exceeds social decorum – movement distorted by strong emotion, say, or practical, goal-orientated behaviours such as threading a needle, running for a bus: all markedly fast or slow, forceful or delicate – they first function as indications *of* exception, signalling that the subject is not functioning in a purely social fashion. By ignoring the codes of the social body, they effectively declare that they are to be understood in other terms.

Standing in relief from the social, then, such behaviours indicate that they must be read for other kinds of meaning. They signal that they emanate from elsewhere, are the product of forces beyond sociality – forces, moreover, which are of sufficient potency to overcome its constraints. In effect, such behaviours signify that they are the outcome of the individual's own exceptional focus or feeling, the expression of aims, emotions or a will so forceful as to override everyday communal restraint: that is, they suggest the subject's

emphatically *personal* investment in their acts. Whether or not the action is genuinely the outcome of the behaving subject's absolute engagement, its very exceptionality functions semiotically as *sign* of that engagement, signalling the individual's unqualified interior investment in what they are doing.

It is precisely action of this kind that eukinetics fosters. For it generates movement that is both dynamically *marked* – of such distinct speed, force and so on as to potentially signal determined purpose, will or affect – and *abstract*, disregarding all codes that might guide a spectator's reading along social lines. Eukinetics thus comprises a procedure for generating movement which signals its own personal, psychic content. The effect onstage varies according to the kind of performance in which it is used. When employed in theatre or narrative dance, its symbolic baggage is easily attributed to character, read as sign of his or her personality or response to events: the movement is woven into the fabric of the fiction, interpretively defined as an element of the piece's hypothetical world. But in abstract, 'pure' dance there are no events, and no character to function as the fictional site of emotion or intention. Faced with the task of reading such movement, bringing their own social experience to bear, the audience must adopt a different interpretive strategy, attribute its apparent affect, intention or volition to the only subject available, the real dancer – or, more accurately, that part of the dancer deemed to lie *behind* its actions, their source and origin: the dancer's interior self.

By this means eukinetics creates the *effect* of a psychosomatic subject. With actions apparently the result of a dancer's thoughts and feelings, eukinetic

practice conjures the image of perfect expression, a fictional self whose movements mirror his or her psychic experiences exactly. The results can be compelling, for even when we as spectators know that the dance is abstract, an arrangement of pure forms, social experience continually tempts us to read its movements as 'expressive', interpret the dancer's shift from markedly swift gesture to markedly slow, strong to light, emphatic 'thrusting' to serene 'floating', as born of immediate feeling, will or purpose.

That is not to say we attribute precise feelings or aims to individual movements. For although Laban asserts that each dynamic form communicates a given meaning – *flicking* expressing 'excitedness', *pressing* expressing 'sinking' – in reality bodily expression is rarely universal, and the semiotics of movement are overwhelmingly culturally specific. Rather, it signals a more general 'thought-feelingness', offering the spectacle of a self whose shifting, complex inner processes seem to be transcribed directly into what it does. With dynamically marked movements declaring their own status as emanations from a psychic interior, they effectively function as signs *of* that interior, writing a hypothetical subject, the emotions it feels and the thoughts it thinks, on the body's surface.

If the theory of eukinetics posits an essential, 'psychosomatic' self, then, its practice works to produce the image of that self on stage, in reality *manufacturing* a vision of that unified, holistic, prelapsarian subject it claims to find. By purely procedural means it generates movement that signals its own status as expressing not a character's thoughts or feelings but those of an equally fictional construct, the 'real dancer.' Although they

eschew representation, its kinesics can in this sense be positioned within the cultural processes of history. For just as the rationale underpinning eukinetics is directly informed by the experience of modernity, so its movements reiterate that rationale in mobile, physical form, demanding an interpretation of stage action that confirms the dancer's victory over schism.

References:

[1] Laban, R. (1966) *Choreutics*, ed. Lisa Ullmann, London: Macdonald and Evans, p.viii

[2] Laban, R. (1975) *A Life for Dance* [1936], trans. Lisa Ullmann, London: Macdonald and Evans, p.48

[3] Eukinetics does not use terms that may be construed as pejorative – 'sudden' is not posed against 'slow', or 'strong' against 'weak'. Practitioners are therefore not inadvertently prejudiced in favour of some kinds of movement.

[4] Eukinetic theory in fact underpins a range of practices. Used analytically to quantify the actions of everyday life and work, it forms the theoretical foundation of Laban's industrial 'Time and Motion' studies. It is also the basis of Labanian 'character analysis', the reading of an individual's movement patterns to discern his or her personality traits.

[5] Laban, R. (1950) *Mastery of Movement*, Trans. Lisa Ullmann, London: Macdonald and Evans, p.4

[6] The principle extends far beyond Laban's study of 'efforts'. Detailing his spatial practice or 'choreutics', he explains how off-balance, 'labile' movements automatically give rise to feelings of excitement, while reaching up into the 'high' zone of one's personal space evokes 'aspiration', again equating specific forms of movement with psychological states. Indeed, the same rationale informs Labanian 'personality analysis', with its assumption that character can be read in the way we move, and that even our unconscious traits can be divined from our 'shadow movements', those habitual gestures – shuffling the feet, smoothing the hair – we carry out inadvertently.

[7] Just a few years later Durkheim would reverse the implicit value-loading of these terms, describing modern democracies in terms of their 'organic solidarity' as opposed to the merely 'mechanical solidarity' of pre-industrial social forms, a move which is at least partly a product of the inherent optimism of the French rationalist tradition. See Durkheim, É. (1933) *The Division of Labour in Society*, [1893], trans. George Simpson, New York: Macmillan.

[8] This binary distinction takes what is perhaps its most interesting form in the work of Nietzsche. While it certainly functions as a critique of modern rationalism, the contrast Nietzsche proposes between the Apollonian and the Dionysian in *The Birth Tragedy* also functions as a description of the kind of cultural forms deemed characteristic of the pre- and post-industrial ages.

[9] Anthony Giddens, for example, has argued that because everyday life in the post-Renaissance world was increasingly organised via abstract systems,

consciousness became fundamentally detached from action, effecting an implicitly Cartesian split between what one does and one's abstract understanding of it. See Giddens, A (1990) *The Consequences of Modernity*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

[10] There are now numerous works available tracing the historical inception of the interior, individual self, each offering different perspectives on its development. Particularly interesting are Greenblatt, S. (1980) *Renaissance Self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, and Barker, F. (1984) *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection*, London: Methuen, whose oblique approaches to the subject prove illuminating.

[11] The Althusserian notion of interpolation or 'hailing' is particularly useful here for its implicit synthesis of material, cultural act with psychic identification. See Althusser's key essay [1970] 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)' in (1976) *Essays on Ideology*, London: Verso.

[12] See Freud [1911] 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning', and [1920] 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle',both reproduced in (1984) *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Angela Richards & trans. James Strachey, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

[13] See Nicholls, P. (1995) *Modernisms: A Literary Guide*, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

[14] An excellent account of Expressionist acting is offered in Gordon, M. (1975) 'German Expressionist Acting', *Drama Review*, 19.3, pp. 34-50.

[15] Most of the figures discussed here are German, of course, for the effects of second-wave industrialisation

were most keenly experienced in Germany. There is not room to cover this particular dimension of modern somatic experience in this essay, but for further discussion see Counsell, C. (2004), 'Dancing to Utopia: Modernity, Community and the *Bewegungschöre*,', *Dance Research Journal* 2004 (Winter), pp. 38-45.

[16] See for example Bourdieu, P. (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice* [1972] trans. Richard Nice, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, particularly pp.78-95.

The Abbey School of Ballet
Part 3

Victoria R. O'Brien

CHAPTER 4

No more my heart can grief contain
Since lost is earthly tie,
And memory now feels no pain
For senses born to die.
So should you feel my presence near,
Stand still and ponder on
The needless thrust of fearful fear --
And I will wander on.

de Valois, The Contented Ghost

The final chapter of this thesis investigates the continuation of the Abbey School of Ballet. It also attempts to evaluate certain accomplishments and consequences of the school and addresses the inspiration the school had on Yeats' and de Valois' subsequent work. But firstly, I have sought to focus on the sequel of the Abbey school through the work of two ex-students, Muriel Kelly and Cepta Cullen.

In her biography of de Valois, Kathrine Sorley Walker writes that "The Abbey Theatre, affected by financial shortages, decided to cut down on the ballet school", and dated the closure of the school to 1934. (Sorley Walker:1987;143) Based upon a collection of

approximately ten Abbey School of Ballet programmes, discovered during the research for this study, it appears that while the school under de Valois' supervision was certainly finished by that date, another incarnation of the dance school remained open. (Dublin City Archives: Abbey School of Ballet programmes.) This school, also called the Abbey School of Ballet and located at the Peacock Theatre, was directed by two young ex-students, Muriel Kelly and Cepta Cullen. (To avoid confusion, I will refer to Kelly and Cullen's Abbey School of Ballet as the "new school".) One can only surmise here, as unfortunately few records exist, that the new school was not financed by the Abbey Theatre, but perhaps the Peacock dance studio was rented to the two young women. By following the names of the casts in the programmes it can be seen that the new school continued to grow and performed a repertoire suggestive of de Valois' programming: *Les Sylphides, The Faun, Ballet from Faust* and *Suite of Hungarian Dances.* Although it has not been possible to confirm how long the new school existed, there are programmes that record works such as *Chopin Waltz, The New Hat* and *Tyrolese* still being performed as late as 1942. (Dublin City Archives: Abbey School of Ballet Programme, July 11, 1942.)

Of significant interest is an early theatre programme from a performance where "Muriel Kelly and Cepta Cullen Present the Abbey School of Ballet." (Dublin City Archives: Abbey School of Ballet programme, May 22, 1933.) This production of "Classical and Character Ballets" was held on May 22, 1933, at the National Theatre. This programme pushes forward the end of de Valois' directorship to some time before this date, and at least one year earlier than previously thought. The

performance included works such as *Les Sylphides, Serenade, Nursery Suite, Tyrolese, Les Buffons, Arts of the Theatre* and *Philida Flouts Him.* Unfortunately, there are no choreographers accredited in the programme, but the choreography was clearly part of the Abbey School of Ballet's repertoire. It is likely that the original choreography was by de Valois or Patrick, and was re-staged by Kelly and Cullen. The first production by the new school under its new directors was received well by the Press. The *Irish Independent* commented:

> The Abbey Theatre directors should be pleased with the progress being made by their School of Ballet. Under the direction of Misses Muriel Kelly and Cepta Cullen they gave a recital which proved delightful and showed a considerable improvement in standard. It was not a very ambitious programme but it was nicely balanced and its popularity with the audience was unquestionable.
>
> (The *Irish Independent*, May 23, 1933)

As well as her work with the new school, Kelly continued to choreograph and perform at the Abbey Theatre until at least 1936. Kelly's name can be found in the casts of the 1935 production of F.R. Higgins' *A Deuce o'Jacks,* and in October that year she appeared inYeats' *The Cat and the Moon.* In 1936, Kelly choreographed a revival of Sheridan's *The Critic,* as well as James Elroy Flecker's drama, *Hassan.* (Abbey Theatre Archives: Abbey Theatre Programmes.) As mentioned in chapter three, Kelly choreographed and performed in various Gate Theatre productions, and in

1941 she was in the position to "lend" students from the new school to the Christmas Pantomime at the Gate. (Dublin City Archives: Gate Theatre Programme, December 26, 1941.) This was not the first time she had arranged for students from the new school to perform in other venues. The year before, Kelly's students were included in the cast of the Theatre Royal's Christmas pantomime *Mother Hubbard Goes to Town*. (Dublin City Archives: Theatre Royal programme, December, 26, 1940.)

By the late 1930s, it appears that Cepta Cullen, the second student involved in running the new school, had left. (Dublin City Archives: Abbey School of Ballet programmes.) Nevertheless, by 1939, Cullen had become involved in another subsequent development to come out of the Abbey School of Ballet: the establishment of the Irish Ballet Club. This society, originally named Irish Ballet Production, was also based out of the Peacock Theatre. Cullen became the director of the Club and F. R. Higgins, one of the managing directors of the Abbey Theatre, was president. From a 1939 prospectus, it can be seen that the main objectives were to "To gather together dancers, musicians, artists etc., to produce old, and create new ballets as regularly as possible." (National Library of Ireland: Joseph Holloway Collection, prospectus for Irish Ballet Production.) The club's objectives seem similar to those of the popular British ballet clubs of that period, as they also tried to provide a valuable platform for dance classes and lectures, and supported the work of new or emerging choreographers. There were three suggested programmes for 1939 in the prospectus: one performance in April, another in September and a performance running for several days in December.

(National Library of Ireland: Joseph Holloway Collection, prospectus for Irish Ballet Production.) It appears that the first performance of the club took place on March 14, 1939, and included an address by F. R. Higgins. The programme was comprised of six works. There is no choreographer mentioned, but as Cullen was the director, it is possible that she also arranged the dances. The performance opened with three solo divertissements, *Czardas, Polka* and *Chopin Waltz*. This was followed by a trio piece, *Tyrolean Dance*. The last part of the programme was a ballet called *Emer and Aoife*, which was made up of two *Pas de Deuxs, Emer and Cuchulain* and *Aoife and Cuchulain*. The two *Pas de Deuxs* suggest a dramatic Celtic mood, possibly influenced by Cullen's experience performing in Yeats' dance dramas. Months later, the club used selected newspaper critiques pasted into Abbey Theatre programmes to promote the club's profile; *The Standard* wrote "There is not the slightest doubt that the first public performance of the Irish Ballet Club was an unqualified success"; *The Irish Times* felt "The performance was the most elaborate and successful yet made by Irish dancers"; the *Irish Independent* declared:

> The excellence of the Irish Ballet Club programme at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin, last night makes it seem possible that the occasion will be almost as important in the history of Irish Theatre as that night almost forty years ago when the Abbey Theatre had its inception.
>
> (Abbey Theatre Archives: Quotations from Abbey Theatre programme, December 4, 1939)

It is of interest to note here that on March 28, 1939, the choreographer Kurt Jooss gave a lecture under the auspices of the Irish Ballet Club. (National Library of Ireland: Joseph Holloway Collection, prospectus for Irish Ballet Production.) Jooss was in Dublin that week performing his monumental work, *The Green Table*, at the Gaiety Theatre.

Later, in December 1939, the Irish Ballet Club shared the programme with Yeats' *The Land of Heart's Desire,* performed by the Abbey School of Acting and staged at the Abbey Theatre. (Abbey Theatre Archives: Abbey Theatre programme, December 10, 1939.) The dance works performed were *Les Sylphides, Marriage Rites, The Birthday of the Infanta* and *Rhapsody.* All the dances were choreographed by Cullen, except the work *Rhapsody*, which was accredited to Margaret Severn. Another Club performance was held at the Abbey Theatre on May 13, 1940. (Abbey Theatre Archives: Abbey Theatre programme, May 13, 1940.) Cullen's piece *The Birthday of the Infanta,* to music by Moszkowski, was performed after a production of Nora MacAdam's play, *Birth of a Giant.* This style of programming – the dance sharing the billing with a play – clearly echoes the same pattern of de Valois' dance programmes at the Abbey Theatre.

As well as her work with the Irish Ballet Club Cullen's name can also occasionally be found listed as choreographer for productions at the Abbey and Gate Theatre in the early nineteen-fourties. Of particular interest was Cullen's involvement with the last revival of the Dublin Drama League. In December, 1941, Cullen directed the movement for the League's final production, *Scarecrow Over the Moon* by Blanaid Salkeld. The production was designed by the then young unknown

Irish artist, Louis Le Brocquy. (Katz Clarke and Ferrar:1979;20)

Cullen's venture with the Irish Ballet Club is also the link which connects the Abbey School of Ballet to what would become Ireland's first professional ballet company, the Irish National Ballet. In 1941, Cullen choreographed *Puck Fair* for the Irish Ballet Club. This Irish-themed work, with F. R. Higgins' libretto and music written by Elizabeth Maconchy, was staged at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin, that May. In 1948, Joan Denis Moriarity, the founder of Irish National Ballet, "re-choreographed" *Puck Fair* for her first season at the Opera House, Cork. (Fleischmann:1998;17) Again, in 1951, Moriarity re-choreographed one of Cullen's original ideas, *An Coitin Dearg* (The Red Petticoat), for the Cork company's fourth season. (Fleischmann:1998;108) Although it is not possible to ascertain if Moriarity saw the original productions in Dublin, it is plausible that she was aware of (and perhaps even influenced by) Cullen's use of Irish-themes, which would later become a leitmotif in Moriarity's choreography. It is also significant to note here that de Valois supported and encouraged Moriarity's work for dance in Ireland. As well as becoming patron of the Cork company, in 1973 de Valois donated half of her Erasmus award to Ireland's first professional ballet company.

One of the most surprising discoveries of this study, therefore, has been the continuation of the Abbey School of Ballet, as well as the other dance projects involving Muriel Kelly and Cepta Cullen. Traditionally, the Abbey School of Ballet has been almost exclusively associated with Yeats' dance dramas and de Valois, but as we have seen the scope of the school's activities were broader

and its effects lasted over a longer period than previously thought.

It is somewhat difficult to evaluate the overall accomplishments of the Abbey School of Ballet. There is obviously the temptation to compare the Irish school with the success of the Vic-Wells organisation in England. However, the Ballet school recruited, trained and produced choreographers, dancers and teachers at a time when there was no tradition of this style of dance in Ireland. Through its performances the school offered a platform to expose young dance students to the choreographic revolution taking place in Europe. It is important to re-establish here that de Valois, through her involvement with Diaghilev, Massine, Nijinska and Balanchine, as well as her own work, was part of this renaissance. The fact that most of these performances took place at the well-established Abbey Theatre implies that the performances gradually built up a local dance audience. Interestingly, when de Valois returned to Dublin in September, 1938, for the first performance by the Vic-Wells company in Ireland, she told the *Irish Independent* that she believed the work of the Abbey School of Ballet had "aroused an interest in dancing which has grown steadily and has expressed itself in the attendances we have had this week." (The *Irish Independent*, September 9, 1938.) The six years of the Abbey School of Ballet was also an important period of collaboration between dancers, musicians, designers, actors, directors and writers. As well as the dance school's productions at the Abbey Theatre, their work expanded to other companies and venues in Dublin and Cork. The compositions for Yeats' dance dramas, the scores for *The Fawn, When Philida Flouts Him,*

Bluebeard and *The Drinking Horn* were all composed or arranged specifically for the dance productions.

Of equal importance was the continuation of syllabi and exams from the Association of Operatic Dancing of Great Britain. It is believed that the Abbey School of Ballet was amongst the first dance schools in Ireland to implement this method of evaluation. Jill Gregory believes that her transition from the Abbey to Sadler's Wells Opera Ballet was made easier by the Elementary and Intermediate examinations taken at the Abbey. Gregory feels that these examinations helped her adapt to the style and standard of English Ballet at the time. Later, Gregory completed the Advanced examination in London. (In conversation with Jill Gregory.) The association, founded by Adeline Genee, changed its name in 1936 to the Royal Academy of Dancing and subsequently has become the largest examining and dance teaching organisation in the world. As late as 1939, the new Abbey school was advertising "Coaching for Royal Academy Dancing Examinations." (Dublin City Archives: The Arrow, 1939.) The Academy's methods are still used to this day in many Irish ballet schools to help raise the standard of classical ballet.

When de Valois' directorship ended, most of the school's core students were aged about seventeen and had six years of dance training. Unfortunately, few performance opportunities existed outside the commercial troupes such as the Royalettes at the Theatre Royal. Based upon the theatre programmes uncovered, the choreographers and dancers required for the productions at the Abbey or Gate would have been irregular and probably on a freelance basis, making earning a living very precarious indeed. Nonetheless, at least seven of the sixteen core students went on to

pursue careers in dance. As well as Cepta Cullen and Muriel Kelly, three core students, Doreen Cuthbert, Thelma Murphy and Arthur Hamilton, became teachers and ran dance schools of their own in Ireland. (Sorley Walker:1987;143) In turn, these five Abbey students taught dance to a new generation of Irish pupils. The two students who both went on to pursue successful performing careers, Jill Gregory and Toni Repetto-Butler, had to leave Ireland in order to do so. Jill Gregory, who continued to study and work under de Valois for over forty years, initially as a dancer with the Sadler's Wells Opera Ballet and later as ballet mistress to the Royal Ballet Company, has remained in England to this day.

Finally, Yeats and de Valois would also be influenced by their association with the Abbey School of Ballet. Yeats' fascination with the dancer and the dance continued after de Valois left the school. In late 1934, we know that Yeats invited Frederick Ashton to take over the Abbey School of Ballet, but the choreographer refused. (Ellis:1999;228) The same year, Ashley Dukes offered Yeats the use of the home of Ballet Rambert, the Mercury Theatre, in London. Initially Yeats wanted to produce *A Full Moon in March*, with de Valois performing the Queen, but this plan fell through. (Dorn:1984;93) He then organised a committee of artists to realise his dance dramas at The Mercury, including Robert Doone, Frederick Ashton, Margot Ruddock, T.S.Eliot and Edmund Dulac. A season with Robert Doone was arranged for 1935 with a suggested billing of Yeats' *The Resurrection, The Player Queen* and either *Fighting the Waves* or *A Full Moon in March*. Sadly, due to complications, these plays were never produced.

Yeats wrote three further dance dramas, *A Full Moon in March* (1935), *The Hern's Egg* (1935), and his last

play, *The Death of Cuchulain* (1939). These later dance dramas, while still based on the Noh form, drew their inspiration for movement from other sources than the rigid rules he had set himself in 1913. (Miller:1977;214) Yeats' fifty years as a dramatist was a period of continual refinement of language and form in trying to realise theatrical ideas. He needed the collaboration of artists who could capture his theatrical vision and perhaps in his association with de Valois, near the end of his life, he finally found a dancer who understood what he was trying to achieve:

> For him it was the call of the rhythm of the body, and musicality of words, the search for fusion in a unified expression of his dance dramas, symbolic in the oneness of the mystery that surrounded his great vision.
>
> (de Valois:1977;180)

Yeats died in Roquebrune, France, in January 1939. His remains were brought back and interred at Drumcliff in 1948.

An artist with vision and innovation, de Valois went on to transform dance in the twentieth century. As is well known, de Valois created a national tradition of Classical Ballet in Britain. She founded and directed the Royal Ballet Company and School, as well as the Birmingham Royal Ballet. In 1947, de Valois helped found the Turkish National Ballet and School, and also contributed to the establishment and success of a national ballet company in Iran, the National Ballet of Canada and the Australian Ballet. De Valois was the author of *Invitation to the Ballet* (1937), *Come Dance with Me* (1957), *Step*

by Step (1977), and two books of poetry, *The Cycle* (1985), and *Selected Poems* (1998). Although de Valois recalled her six years with the Abbey as amongst the "most exciting, exacting and rewarding experience of her career" (Sorley Walker:1987;152), it was, however, her work outside of Ireland which distinguished her.

In the context of all de Valois achieved, it is easy to underestimate what she gained by her time with the Abbey School of Ballet. The school allowed her to collectively experience the various artistic roles of director, choreographer, dancer and teacher. It also prepared her for the different interactions of these roles with other artists, such as the players, composers and designers. In his book *Ballet,* Arnold Haskell wrote of the importance of de Valois' association with the Abbey Theatre and the Festival Theatre, Cambridge:

> Her work in these theatres, in addition to her experience of pure ballet, decided her future bent. Working with actors unused to movement in the dancing sense, she was compelled to use theatrical production that would be effective. She gained at this time a rare conception of the relationship between ballet and theatre.
>
> (Haskell:1938;131)

De Valois' work with the Abbey developed her understanding of the interdependence of the arts, and was the catalyst that seemed to crystallize her attitude to dance and the theatre. Her time in Dublin was an important springboard which allowed her to successfully pursue her career as choreographer, artistic director, teacher and administrator for the following fifty years.

This thesis has recounted the history of the Abbey School of Ballet. It has also identified some areas which would benefit from further research. Firstly, while this study has uncovered two previously unrecorded dance performances by the Abbey School of Ballet, it is possible that there may exist more undocumented shows. Further research might allow us to establish additional information on performances, venues, choreographers, casts, designers and composers. Secondly, with regard to the discovery of the continuation of the Abbey school of Ballet and the establishment of the Irish Ballet Club, further research would allow us to better evaluate the legacy of de Valois' students on the subsequent movements of dance training, performance and choreography in Ireland. Based upon the material discovered and presented in this thesis, it is clear that the Abbey School of Ballet created an enduring practice of dance performance in Ireland and one which deserves more recognition than it has been given over the past seventy years.

APPENDIX A

This chronological list, to be used in conjunction with chapter three, includes the venues and the dates of the opening dance performances staged by the Abbey School of Ballet. This appendix has been included in light of the incomplete or conflicting chronologies of performances (Robinson and Sorley Walker), as well as incorporating two previously undocumented performances.

Date:		Venue:
1928		
January	30th	Abbey Theatre
April	16th	Abbey Theatre
September	24th	Abbey Theatre
1929		
April	22nd	Abbey Theatre
May	14th	Abbey Theatre
August	13th	Abbey Theatre
November	19th	Abbey Theatre
1930		
January	13th	Abbey Theatre
November	17th	Peacock Theatre
1931		
January	18th	Vice Regal Lodge
February	14th	Abbey Theatre
December	6th	Abbey Theatre

1932		
April	10th	Abbey Theatre
1933		
July	25th	Abbey Theatre

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PEPITA AND VITA

Elena Grillo

This paper aims to explore a truly particular issue somewhat marginal to a conference entitled *Spain in the eyes of the dancing world*. Especially, as this study day focuses on the dancing world. I will discuss a Spanish dancer of mid-nineteenth century, Pepita Oliva, as seen through the eyes of a British aristocrat of the 1930s and the daughter of one Pepita's daughters: Vita Sackville West. As we will see later the origin of an improbable relationship brought Vita Sackville West to write Pepita Oliva's biography in 1937. Since Pepita Oliva took her surname from her first husband, I will break with academic conventions and refer to her with her first name instead of surname, which will be employed when her first husband is mentioned.

To begin with, I quote what Vita Sackville West thought of mid-nineteenth century Spain as reported in the book *Pepita* (1937):

> Spain in the middle of the nineteenth century had scarcely been discovered by the foreigner ... Spain was not part of the Grand Tour and an acquaintance with Spain ... conferred a distinction upon the English traveller and might reasonably be regarded in the light of an unusual an somewhat hazardous adventure ... To the rare Englishman penetrating into that separate land, the difficulty of approaching the secret

> heart of the people soon became as obvious as the external beauty of the country or the picturesque appearance of its inhabitants.
> (Sackville West, 1937, p.13)

If it is true – and it is true – that mid-nineteenth century Spain was an unknown country, particularly to the English; and its costumes and its national traits too, then it is also true that at that time a number of Spanish dancers travelled throughout Europe. Sometimes soloists were alone on the road, whereas at other times small groups of dancers and musicians made their journeys from one country to the other. Through their presentation of the dances, the music and its principal instruments such as castanets and guitars, their costumes and hair dresses, scarves, fringes, fans and all other paraphernalia, the Spanish artists created an often biased vision of their very own country. Not to mention the equally biased vision of a Spanish dance of which little we know today, particularly in terms of authenticity and a truthful adherence to the original models.

These dancers, contrary to common belief, were, generally speaking, very strict in their moral habits. Their private life therefore adhered to the most rigid canons of mid-nineteenth century socially accepted behaviour. Indeed, Alexandre Dumas reported in a letter to a female friend that he had had his ears boxed by Petra Camara simply because he had dared to kiss her hand upon being introduced to her.

Why did Vita Sackville West venture to write Pepita's biography at the end of the 1930s?

We have already mentioned the relationship existing between the British aristocrat and the Spanish dancer. But what were the origins of this curious relationship? Sackville West, and through her voice Lionel Sackville West too, explains this, given that Lionel had been Pepita's lover between 1852 and 1872, the year of Pepita's death.

> It was in the autumn of 1852 that Lionel Sackville West had travelled from Stuttgart to meet his parents and his young brother in Paris. Eluding their parents one evening, the two young men went together to the theatre, and Lionel pointed out a woman sitting on the opposite side of the house. He told his brother that this was the dancer Pepita Oliva ... She was living at the Hotel de Bade, near the Boulevard des Italiens ... [a friend] took him there to introduce him, Lionel says, 'not as a fast woman but as an artist and a lady and a danceuse ... I know she was at that time living a perfectly respectable life' ... Then comes the simple statement: 'I was in love with Pepita'. They become lovers at once ... They were both young, she was intoxicatingly beautiful, he had only a week to spend in Paris, and they spent every night of it together.
> (Sackville West, 1937, p.54-55)

Their love generated numerous offsprings, among them Vita Sackville West's much beloved mother to whom the second part of the book is dedicated and, if my psychological inkling is not wrong, probably the first too.

Who is Vita Sackville West, the author of Pepita's biography? Arguably, in these days she was not a well-known character, apart from few books, some historically famous relationships and above all the creation of England's most beautiful garden: Sissinghurst.

Yet, until a few years prior her death in 1962, Vita Sackville West was at least fairly well-known to the British radio listeners. From the 1930s onward she had had a weekly broadcast on BBC dealing with various issues and, as from the 1950s a truly popular gardening radio program as well. As we know for every Brit the garden is the centre of the universe.

Vita Sackville West was born in 1892 at Knole, the Kent manor to which she remained obsessively attached all her life and which she could not inherit because of strict male chauvinist lineage. She began writing and publishing early in her life: novels, poems, biographical works, historical works, travel books. Still out of such literary wealth only a few novels are still in print today: *All Passion Spent* (1931) (a real masterwork), *The Edwardians* (1930), *Passenger to Teheran* (1926). Her poetry, already at the time criticised and disregarded, is today forgotten. Her literary work was the catalyst in her acquaintance with some members of the Bloomsbury Group, and most notably her friendship with Virginia Woolf. Such a relationship continued to cast a tremendous influence on Sackville West even after the end of the more intimate affair with Woolf. *Orlando* (1928) by Virginia Woolf is without doubt moulded on Sackville West's life, her passion for writing, her androgynous nature as well as her passionate love for Knole house.

Returning to Pepita's biography it has to be said that the book has not stood the test of time.
One casual yet essential question is how Vita Sackville West met her topic Pepita?

Eternally lost – like most writers – in the continuous quest for a suitable subject for a new book, Sackville West bumped into a stack of dusty yellowish papers. They were legal papers collated by the family solicitors to prevent a Spanish member of Pepita's family from claiming any right on Knole house. What had to be demonstrated was that, at the time of her relationship with Lionel Sackville West, Pepita was still married with the dancer Juan Antonio Oliva and, thus, she could not have been the British aristocrat legal spouse.

The papers were a gold mine of information about Pepita, her partly gypsy family, Malaga, Madrid, Spain of mid-nineteenth century, the career of the dancer: in other words all the materials that could be instrumental in recreating the life and career of the Star of Andalusia, as Pepita Oliva was billeted in the theatres she danced for.

What needs to be stressed is that Sackville West's interest in Pepita focused more on the grandmother's persona, the picturesque and somewhat romantic history of the family, her relationship with Lionel Sackville West than on the dancer artistry and career. Artistic features that were not explicitly acknowledged by her Spanish contemporaries, regardless of the immense popularity she had all over Europe, the unparalleled sums of money the theatres were ready to pay for her performances.

Although, as it has been said, Sackville West's interest did not focus primarily on artistic matters, there are sundry references to Pepita's art whether they are positively or negatively biased. The first reference, as a matter of fact, is a negative one. In the autumn 1849 Pepita, aged nineteen and accompanied by her mother, went to seek advice regarding a dance teacher from the direction of the Teatro del Principe of Madrid. Her covered intention, however, was to gain an engagement at the Teatro del Principe which at that time was one of the most important Spanish venues. The director fell into the trap. He provided her with the name of a teacher – a dancer from the theatre – and offered her a contract.

Pepita had already appeared on stage in Malaga with a non-Spanish opera company and records concerning that engagement were positive though not entirely objective given they are to be credited to friends and relatives. In Madrid, all came differently: Pepita's new teacher found that her artistic skills were not up to the capital's standards. The contract was, therefore, immediately cancelled.

It is not know how Pepita became the Star of Andalusia and gained international repute only few years later.
Copenhagen, Frankfurt am Main, Stuttgart, Berlin, London, Vienna and Prague were among the principal venues were she was applauded and praised for the execution of different dances. Among which one especially composed for her: *La Farsa Pepita* (date unknown)
In London, her presence is recorded by *The Times* on the 22nd of May 1852: "First appearance of the Spanish dancer Doña Pepita Oliva from the Teatro Real del

Principe di Madrid". Arguably a lie. Pepita appeared at Her Majesty's Theatre in *La prova di un'opera seria* (first performed in Milan, Autumn 1805) by Francesco Guecco (or Gnecco; 1769-1810) in which she danced *La Madrilena*, *La Aragoneza* and *El Haleo de Jerez*.

As Sackville West writes:

> She [Pepita] had been a great success in London and elsewhere. In Germany she had been such a popular success that the audience had shouted for her to let down her marvellous hair on stage to prove that it was not false.
>
> (Sackville West, 1937, p.75)

And then she goes on describing an engraving by an artist from Berlin showing Pepita in *La Aragoneza*. Sackville West writes: "she was lightly posed on one toe, her tiny foot pointed in a pink satin slipper" (Sackville West, 1937, p.60) and describe the castanets that Pepita held in her hands.

Other testimony collated by Sackville West revealed Pepita's high quality professional attitude and her constant concern on how best to improve and enhance her repertoire. As for instance when, while in Madrid, she begged the dancer Rafael Guerrero to visit her in the middle of the night to teach her *La Manola*. The lesson was six hours long.

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Dramaturgy of Desire: An Analytical Approach to Dance Narratives.

Astrid Bernkopf

Present-day dance research allows analytical investigations into various features and elements of the performance. However, a dogmatic and ideological attitude towards research topics and their treatment can be observed. Movement and choreography are the most prominent themes of research, followed by the body and issues relating to the performer. Such selective view has catered for one essential feature of theatre performances to be overlooked: namely, the stories that are told onstage. Hence, although dance analysis has developed research tools to study various elements, there is a lack of dance specific theory relating to danced narratives. Through this theoretical vacuum, the commonly accepted and traditionally upheld focus on movement and choreographic analysis has been further cemented in the discipline.

The aim of this article is to introduce a method to investigate the narrative of the Romantic two-act *ballet fantastique*. This model of analysis may stand alone or may work in co-operation with other analytical tools. Theories on fairy tales and modes of storytelling in literature and theatre form the theoretical basis for the construction of this dance-orientated method of narrative analysis. Such approach stems from the erroneous perception/notion of the nineteenth-century ballet plot as a danced fairy tale. Moreover, the constant repetition of

stories, and therefore actions, suggests that it may be treated in similar ways as the fairy tale. Consequently, a literary model of narrative analysis created for the fairy tale constitutes the basis of this method of inquiry.

In his seminal work *Morphology of the Folktale* (2003), Russian scholar Vladimir Propp follows the general trend of Russian Formalism and investigates literary narratives. In Propp's case, these narratives are magic tales, which, defined by seven distinct features, constitute a sub-category of the fairy tale. Magic tales display a supernatural bride or groom, a supernatural enemy, a marvellous task, supernatural helper, supernatural abilities or knowledge, magical tools and objects or any other supernatural or marvellous features, abilities and occurrences. A corpus of research was found by Propp (2003, p. 23 – 24) in one hundred magic tales presented in Afansiev's collection that clearly belong to this category of the fairy tale.

Concerning the structure of these tales, Propp states that the magic tale consists of thirty-one recurrent actions, which he defined as functions. These functions are main or key actions, which directly advance the story (ibid., p. 21). Minor details of these actions are discarded completely. Hence, it is important that the fairy tale's hero receives a present and not what kind of gift this is. One significant feature of this method of structural investigation is, thus, that the functions are recurrent elements, which may change in their execution or appearance (ibid., p. 20). Therefore, an individual function is not bound to one or the other representation, but, although being a recurrent element of the fairy tale, it is at the same time in flux and variable.

Nineteenth-century ballet tradition offers a corpus of research similar to the one Propp investigated. The *ballet*

fantastique can be seen as close to the magic tale, since it confronts its audience with the same features that constitute the magic tale. Besides depicting supernatural occurrences and fairy tale-like elements, the *ballet fantastique* follows the standard plot treatment of the nineteenth-century ballet performance and displays the conventions predominant in ballet tradition. The time between 1830 and 1860 is generally considered as the age of the *ballet fantastique*, during which it grew and conquered the entire European continent, thus leading to national styles that nevertheless follow the most distinct conventions of the genre. Although works displaying the most significant features of the *ballet fantastique* can also be found outside this timeframe, such restricted period gives a compacter corpus of research that, despite its limitations, reveals changes in storytelling strategies during the three decades. A problem concerning these materials was, however, found in their composition in one, two or three acts. Such variety did not prove beneficial for a comparison of many ballet plots. Therefore, a focus on two-act productions only is followed throughout this study. A final limitation of source materials can be found in the complete reliance on the ballet scenario. As film or video recordings of these ballet performances are not at all available, the libretto stands in for the performance by giving a detailed account of the plot. Hence, reference to *performance* should be understood as relating to the performance as read and constructed from the libretto and not the live or recorded stage performance. Within financial and time constraints, it was possible to gather 70 scenarios following the criteria outlined above that constitute the main corpus of research.

An analysis of these materials according to the rules Propp established resulted in the functions not following the order Propp has outlined. Moreover, some functions did not appear at all in any of the sources. On the other hand, however, other actions were constantly repeated in the ballet plot, therefore suggesting the presence of independent ballet-specific functions.

An investigation into the recurrent actions of the ballet plot has led to the definition of three types of functions. Firstly, a group of functions remains true to the definition Propp has attached to them and have merely been transcribed to fit their representation on the ballet stage. A second group has undergone slight changes, which are reflected in the differing definitions these received. However, the main idea or notion behind these functions still remained similar to that discovered by Propp for the fairy tale. Hence, their titles were kept, although their characterisation varies. The third group comprises functions that do not appear at all in Propp's list. These functions were given definitions and are considered as ballet-specific functions. Although it could be argued that some of them might as well be present in the fairy tale and have been overlooked by Propp, this line of reasoning is not followed in a study focusing on the ballet narrative. All functions transcribed and defined for ballet tradition will from now on be labelled as *ballet functions*.

One feature of the functions defined by Propp (2003, p. 21) that has not yet been mentioned is that any character may execute any of the functions. In a similar manner, the functions of ballet tradition are not connected to the characters of the ballet plot and may be found in the range of action of all characters. Additionally, their appearance is not bound to any

particular enactment onstage. Therefore, like their colleagues of the fairy tale, the group of ballet functions can take on various guises. Moreover, they are not bound to any hierarchical presentation and may appear at any point within the plot. This is easily observable when considering the *Wedding*, which is the traditional end of the fairy tale and so appears last in Propp's list. In ballet tradition, some productions set the *Wedding* at the very end of the plot as it can be seen in *Der Kobold* (librettist not stated, 1838), *La Filleule des Fées* (lib. Saint-Georges/Perrot, 1849) and *Sacountala* (lib. Gautier, 1858). Contrary to the trend set in these ballets, others such as *La Fille du Danube* (lib. F. Taglioni, 1836) and *Orfa* (librettist not stated, 1852) begin their course of action with the *Wedding*. The same applies for all other functions. These findings suggest that the venture into the recurrent actions of the ballet plot does not lead to a structural order of functions as the one Propp described for the fairy tale.

So far, the storytelling strategies of the *ballet fantastique* have been compared to a literary form. Theatre has, in its course, developed its very own and distinct storytelling devices that also influenced the composition of the ballet plot. Theatre conventions can be found in all theatre arts and find their origins in Greek theatre tradition. In this sense, an influential treatise can be found in Aristotle's *Poetics* (2005). Here, Aristotle describes the structure of a performance as consisting of an exposition, knotted middle section, *péripétie* and *dénouement*. Aristotle's influence has not only left its imprints on storytelling and performance composition in drama and opera, but has also shaped the earliest attempts of independent storytelling in the field of dance.

Following suit, French theorist and choreographer Jean-Georges Noverre states in his *Lettres sur la Danse et sur les Ballets* (1760) that a ballet must have "son exposition, son nœud & son dénouement" [its exposition, its entanglement & its resolution] (Noverre, 1760, p.20). This notion applies, according to Noverre not only to the entire plot, but should be the structural outline of each act and scene too. Italian choreographer Gasparo Angiolini also underlines the importance of Aristotle's teachings by stating a ballet should have "un principo [sic], un mezzo, un fine" [a beginning, a middle, an end] (Angiolini, 1773, p. 14). Despite their *querelle* on who the true inventor of the *ballet d'action* was, in this particular point, an agreement between Angiolini and Noverre can be detected that shows how close the theatre arts were interrelated and influenced each other. Therefore, it can be said that these elements constitute theatre conventions, which regulate certain parts of the plot and provide a structural frame within which the story unfolds.

The exposition introduces the audience to the fictional world of the performance and displays the most important characters by conveying background information about them. Here, a whole set of functions is used to set up the future conflict between the characters. In the middle section, an intensification of the conflict is brought about, and the main characters are caught in a web of intrigues. Like the exposition, the middle section is composed of an entire range of functions. With the sudden and surprising reversal of action, the *péripétie*, the good fortunes of the main characters change through the open outburst of the conflict. At this point, all seems lost and the evil forces of the plot appear to win. Again, this part of the performance is presented to the audience through several functions. In some cases, a repetition of

actions with increasing intensity takes place during the *péripétie*. This can be observed in *Giselle* (lib. Gautier/ Saint-Georges, 1841) where game-keeper Hilarion confronts Giselle three times with evidence that her sweetheart is an impostor. In the *dénouement*, the knot is untied, whereas the ending aims at either closure by seeking to provide a definite solution to the conflict or denies such sense of closure. Here, the last entrances take place, and in most cases all is restored to its proper place. The fictional social order that has been subverted in the course of the plot is re-established and the supernatural spirits return to their graves.

The monologue is another theatrical feature that can be counted among theatre conventions. It is present in all theatre arts and carries very distinct messages. Information about the characters, their origins, plans and emotions is conveyed to help the audience become orientated within the plot and follow its progress. Again, as with the other conventions, the monologue does not display one particular function, but may include any function selected from the whole group.

In addition to the monologue, narrative links provide connections between the single events of the plot. These bridge the acts and scenes and ensure a continuous flow of information. Usually, repetitions of functions serve as narrative links that establish connections by reminding the audience of events, facts or plans. In *Giselle* (lib. Gautier/Saint-Georges, 1841), the hunters retell the legend of the Wilis at the beginning of Act II, which, on the one hand, ties in to Giselle's mother Berthe's story in the first act and, on the other hand, indicates that they have entered the realm of the Wilis where the action of the ballet will continue.

Within the descriptions of the various theatrical elements one significant feature has been that not one single function constitutes one convention, but an entire range of functions. Moreover, repetitions of functions occur frequently and emphasise the problem of all functions appearing at any moment within the ballet plot. Furthermore, two of these conventions hold a specific position in this group. The monologue and narrative links are themselves not bound to a particular location within the plot as the other conventions are. Hence, they change through their differing appearance and location.

A second group of stage conventions is represented by dramatic, operatic and choreographic conventions that are specific to each the theatre arts. These sub-conventions deal with storytelling aspects in ways particular to the genre and have their origins in the divergent nature of theatre arts and their development as independent art forms. In ballet tradition, the most apparent of these conventions is the presentation of the principal characters. As this convention is generally conveyed through a solo variation, all functions and narrative elements connected to the monologue can be found in it.

Therefore, the interplay between mimed and danced scenes forms the first sub-convention in this category. In nineteenth-century ballet tradition, approximately the same amount of time was allocated to mime scenes and danced sequences (Poesio, 1999, p. 841; Smith, 2000, p. 175). Both conventions may convey the same narrative content and, therefore, it is a matter of choice whether one function is presented through danced or mimed movement.

Another distinct element of the ballet performance are solo variations and sections for the *corps de ballet*.

Generally, dances of soloists are seen as advancing the plot, whereas the divertissement engaging the entire *corps de ballet* is understood as causing a disruption of the ongoing action (Foster, 1986, p. 69). However, the materials suggest that divertissements and the dances of the *corps de ballet* carry narrative agencies that further the development of the plot and create suspense. The divertissement delays the outbreak of the conflict and is in many cases the enactment of a celebration. The audience is distracted by the dances, and the interference of the *péripétie* will have an even bigger impact. The solo variations, on the other hand, carry all narrative agencies of the monologue.

One particularly well-known feature of Romantic ballet is the division of acts into one earthly and one otherworldly. With this tradition, the borders between reality and dream are blurred, and the plot is transferred to the realm of the unconscious. In this part of the performance, the *dénouement* traditionally takes place and the main character is tested. All this allows the plot to be untangled and a solution to the conflict may be reached. In most cases, this happens in an enchanted forest, an under water kingdom, fairyland or a fairy palace.

All these sub-conventions represent a means through which the performance gains an individual appearance. As a result of their non-hierarchical status, they may be exchanged for each other, and no rule concerning which convention is to be preferred is detectable in the source materials. The same can be said about the functions occurring in these conventions. All functions may find their expression in danced as well as mimed form or may be used for solo variations and ensemble dances too,

which once again overthrows any attempt of a linear explanation of the ballet plot.

The final and perhaps most important element of a story are its characters. Romantic ballet tends to focus on a limited group of characters in ever-changing situations. So far, ballet characters have been divided into the "pagan dancer" (Gautier in Guest, 1986, p. 16) and "Christian dancer" (Gautier in Guest, 1986, p. 15) as Fanny Elssler and Marie Taglioni have been described. Another distinction would be that of the "robust, earthly, vivacious foreigner" (Foster, 1998, p. 200) which separates the characters according to their nationality.

When focusing on the narrative and the narrative agency characters have in the ballet plot, a different distinction arises through five types of characters that are presented in differing combinations. Firstly, ballet shows the *Hero*, who yearns for a partner and has to prove himself worthy of his lover. The *Unthreatening Woman* displays the docile side of femininity and is the one and only correct choice for the *Hero*. She is a shy, industrious girl who does not indulge in sensual pleasures. Her counterpart, the *Threatening Woman*, lives an active and sensual life by hunting men on moonlit forest clearings. Her over-indulgence, activity and sexuality almost inevitably lead to her death; or at least to separation from the *Hero*. With the *Parental Figures*, the fictional society of the ballet narrative has the equivalent to parents who seek to protect their offspring from harm. Mothers, fathers, foster parents and fairy godmothers side with the lovers in their quest for a relationship. In most cases, all their attempts are in vain, and the lovers have to face their fate. However, contrary to this trend, in some ballets the *Parental Figures* are the ones who test the lovers and so ensure a happy end. The most important

characters of the narrative are the *Trickster Figures*. These mischievous characters, be they male or female, are the ones who through their evil deeds and intrigues drive the lovers into the catastrophe. Thus, without the constant interferences of the *Trickster Figures*, the plot would lose momentum. A noteworthy feature is that the *Trickster Figures* do not only represent the antagonists of the lovers, but also show a counterweight to the *Parental Figures* whose aim is to unite the lovers.

These findings lead to the observation of ballet characters being close to those of *Commedia* tradition. Like the *maschere* of *Commedia Dell'Arte*, the most basic characterisation of these five types does not change from one narrative to the other. The difference between various narratives is the combination in which the characters are presented. Whereas in one ballet the *Hero* loves the *Unthreatening Woman*, he follows the *Threatening Woman* in the next. Furthermore, the personal descriptions of characters vary and so no *Unthreatening Woman* is exactly like the other due to different situations, background and personal stories. Moreover, it is observable that all functions may be executed by any of the characters. The actions are, thus, not part of the range of action of one or the other character.

In regard to the model Vladimir Propp (2003) introduced for the fairy tale, it can be said that the actions of the ballet plot do not offer a linear structural solution. Conversely, the ballet narrative can be seen as composed of three very distinct layers. The first of these is constituted by the theatrical devices employed to convey the narrative. These have been identified in the group of theatre conventions and the sub-conventions of dramatic, operatic and choreographic traditions. Within

this layer, a division between one macrostructure and one microstructure is discernable. The macrostructure's elements form a framework for the microstructure.

Macrostructural elements are the theatre conventions as represented by exposition, middle section, *péripétie*, *dénouement* and end. They appear in this fixed order and do not tend to shift place in nineteenth-century ballet tradition. As such, these features can be considered as constants of the ballet narrative. One feature of these constant elements that has not yet been considered is their duration. Whereas in *Giselle* (lib. Gautier/Saint-Georges, 1841) the exposition, middle section and *péripétie* take place during the first act, *La Fille de Marbre* (lib. Saint-Léon, 1847) presents these conventions until well into the second act (see Figure 1). With such treatment an emphasis on either the first part of the narrative or the second part after the *péripétie* can be achieved. This also entails that the constants are not fixed and have to be considered variants at the same time.

Exposition	Act I	Exposition
Middle Section		Middle Section
Péripétie		
Dénouement	Act II	*Péripétie*
		Dénouement
End		End

Figure 1: Table outlining differences between the macrostructural layout of *Giselle* (lib. Gautier/Saint-Georges, 1841) [left] and *La Fille de Marbre* (lib. Saint-Léon, 1847) [right].

The elements of the theatrical microstructure can be found in the choreographic conventions and the monologue. They are not bound to any order and can appear at all points within the plot. Through these devices, the appearance of the acts or scenes is created from an interplay between the various conventions. Therefore, it is possible that one ballet presents a function as danced sequence, whereas another performance displays the same situation as mimed scene. As these conventions are another recurrent element of the ballet narrative, their simple presence results in them becoming constants, whereas their flexibility constitutes their variable nature. With such theatrical layout of the performance an individual sequence of conventions and their duration can be created for each ballet.

The next layer in this analytical model is formed of narrative conventions. These may again be divided into narrative macrostructure and microstructure. As literary studies have adopted Aristotle's *Poetics* (2005) to investigate literature (Chatman, 1980, p. 47; Barry, 2002, p. 21 – 22; Jahn 2002, N2.1.4; Abbott, 2004, p. 53,), the conventions constituting the theatrical macrostructure are at the same time the features of the narrative macrostructure. Hence the double agency of this layer that keeps its constant and variant character for the narrative side of the performance. The narrative microstructure is formed by the arrangement of functions that gives each act or scene its individual appearance. As recurrent elements of the ballet narrative, the functions of Romantic ballet provide another set of constant elements. However, due to them not being bound to any hierarchy and thus appearing at any point in the plot, the functions are yet another set of constant variants.

Another implicit third narrative layer can be found in the characters and their conflict. The conflict as the underlying notion of the plot is created from the clashing interests of the characters. Each character strives to achieve or gain something. In the case of the nineteenth-century ballet plot, this generally is love and a relationship. However, through moral implications this goal is not always achieved. The conflict as the overarching notion can, thus, be considered as providing another macrostructure. The characters and their individual characteristics, emotions and desires can be seen as representing a microstructure each. The entanglements between the characters result in the individual presentation of a conflict in a particular ballet. As these conflicts deal with love and the trials of lovers,

this thematic choice is another constant feature of the Romantic ballet plot. By following the example of *Commedia Dell'Arte* and presenting the characters in ever changing situations, the narrow focus on one thematic range nevertheless allows for variety and is, therefore, another shifting constant. The stock characters, on the other hand, are through their presence in the ballet plot constant elements, but in as far as they are portrayed in differing ways and combinations variants at the same time.

Having outlined the nineteenth-century ballet narrative as consisting of three distinct narrative layers composed through shifting constants, it remains to be said that with this analytical approach a first step towards narrative analysis in the field of dance analysis has taken place. The method does not represent an application of a pre-existing model, but has been conceived for theatre and its purposes. The single elements outlined in this article may be arranged in alternating ways as to suit the case study and account for the difference, variety and individuality found in the ballet scenario. Thus, it is possible to change the approach from one case study to the other without major problems. Additionally, one element may be left out or a focus on either narrative or theatrical structure can be followed. It is, therefore, that the *Dramaturgy of Desire* emerges through application.

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