Edward Nye

The Eighteenth-Century Ballet-Pantomime and Modern Mime

Histories of mime largely overlook one of the most remarkable theatrical phenomena of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century: the ballet-pantomime. In contrast, it is widely discussed in dance history circles, as if there were a tacit understanding that only one half of this hyphenated art mattered: the ballet rather than the pantomime. This article explores the mime component of the ballet-pantomime in order to compare and contrast it with modern mime, especially Etienne Decroux's principles and practices. Through the works of Noverre particularly (since Decroux declares himself an admirer), but with reference also to other famous and less famous eighteenth-century choreographers and dancers, Edward Nye discusses five aspects of mime: use of the body, mime and dance, mime and language, objective and subjective mime, and pedagogy. He finds differences as well as similarities between modern and eighteenth-century mime, but overall argues that there is no reason to exclude the ballet-pantomime from histories of mime. Edward Nye is Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, and University Lecturer in French. He has published on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century subjects in French literature and the arts, notably *Literary and Linguistic Theories in Eighteenth-Century France* (OUP, 2000), and on the literary aesthetics of sports writing, in *A Bicyclette* (Les Belles Lettres, 2000), and of dance, in *Danse et littérature; sur quel pied danser?* (ed., Rodopi, 2003).

GIVEN THE SCALE of the phenomenon of the eighteenth-century ballet-pantomime and the wealth of interesting evidence it has left us, it is odd that it is omitted from general histories of mime. As a rule, they start with ancient Greek and Roman mime, continue with medieval 'jongleurs', go on to the tradition of the court masque and the *commedia dell'arte* in the early-modern period, at which point they leap to the famous nineteenth-century white-faced Pierrot Jean-Gaspard Deburau, before reaching the father of modern mime in the twentieth century, Etienne Decroux.

Perhaps it is one half of this hyphenated art, the 'ballet', which has encouraged historians of dance rather than mime to claim it as their own. Most forms of mime, however, are conceptually hyphenated, even if the name they conventionally go by does not reveal as much, so there is no reason to exclude the ballet-pantomime from the history of mime on the grounds that it is not 'pure'. This article takes its cue from a remark by perhaps the purest of mime artists, Etienne Decroux, who nevertheless regretted not exploring more fully the ballet-pantomime and its most famous practitioner and advocate, Jean-Georges Noverre. In *Words on Mime*, Decroux writes:

> In the French edition of this book, I did not pay tribute to the memories of the Frenchman Noverre, nor to the German Jooss. Was this regrettable omission caused by their belonging to the world of dance? Certainly. But in their case, this cannot be considered a good reason. Noverre . . . was primarily a dancer. But he worked with both theory and practice to build up a type of pantomime the character of which had previously been unknown. Jooss, also a dancer, placed himself outside dance and old-style pantomime. . . . One day I hope to write further on the contribution made by these two 'brothers'.[1]

Decroux never did publish his thoughts on Noverre or Jooss. Nor, indeed, has any other writer on mime. Jooss is at least sometimes accorded a passing reference in the context of the tradition of dance theatre, along with such choreographers as Marie Wigman or Pina Bausch, but Noverre is never mentioned in mime histories. Nor, for that matter, are a host of other eighteenth-century mime-dance choreographers.

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Since Decroux provides us with our cue to study the ballet-pantomime, he shall also be our main point of comparison. Few would dispute the eminent position he occupies in the development of modern mime, nor, by extension, his key place in the history of the art. So it seems appropriate to evaluate a missing link according to its relation to a touchstone. What emerges from such a comparison are as many differences as similarities of technique and principle, but above all a shared sense of what the challenges are.

Eighteenth- and Twentieth-Century Renewal

The roots of Decroux's mime lie in a reaction against theatrical conventions perceived as affected, conformist, and lacking expression. He owed his first radical inspirations to his teacher, Jacques Copeau, whose theatre school, Le Théâtre du Vieux Colombier, was founded in 1913 with the ambition of revitalizing the art of acting through an eclectic pedagogical programme, including a strong emphasis on physical, non-verbal expression. Decroux's epiphany came while watching a theatrical production staged by his more advanced classmates at the end of his first year at the school in June 1924:

> Sitting comfortably in my seat, I saw an astonishing performance. It consisted of mime and sounds. Not a single word was spoken, no make-up was used, there were no costumes, no special lighting, no props, no furniture, and no scenery. The progression of the plot was so intelligent that several hours were compressed into a few seconds, several different locations into one. The gesture was moving, understandable, plastic, and musical.[2]

From Copeau's and subsequently Decroux's point of view, all the most abused aspects of theatre were absent from this performance:[3] there was no affected diction, the body was not disguised with make-up or costume, and the actor's movements were unencumbered by scenery or stage props. All that was left was clear, structured ('musical'), emotive movement. The entire focus was on the actor's art.

The physicality of acting which this necessitated was taught by Copeau in the exercise he called 'le masque', in which pupils wore expressionless masks and were obliged to channel their expressive efforts through the body rather than the face.[4] It is an interesting choice of name, derived from the means rather than the objective of the exercise. Decroux was inspired by this exercise, but christened his own art specifically according to its objective, 'corporeal mime', thus making a priority what was only one aspect of Copeau's training: the expressive body.

Like so many radical artistic innovators, Decroux's creative energy derived to a significant extent from the view that fossilized institutions need revitalizing and hardened conventions need challenging. Eighteenth-century mime dancers were no different in this respect. Of all eighteenth-century choreographers, Noverre's voice is heard most loudly today because he published a monograph, but the ardent desire for change that he constantly expressed is genuinely representative of his contemporaries. It was no doubt reading Noverre's book that inspired in Decroux the ambition to write about him.

The fundamental tenets of *Lettres sur la danse* are that the body has untapped expressive potential, that it expresses some things better or faster than words can express them, and that mechanical, formalistic dance can be made meaningful by freeing the body from the constraints of convention. The best way to challenge the conventions of dance, according to Noverre, is to integrate them with the art of acting. In his characteristically strident manner, however, he claims few choreographers are up to the task:

> It is hard to find a ballet master who feels; there are so few who are excellent actors and who possess the art of painting with gesture the movements of the soul.[5]

Noverre complains that dance without drama is soulless, that too many dancers

> spend all their time studying the movement of the feet and legs, and far from using their minds and their souls, they overlook the language of the passions, the animated and expressive action which gesture must have.[6]

His major contemporary rival, Gasparo Angiolini, agreed, as did a host of critics militating

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for the reform of stage dance.[7] There was in fact a contemporary surge of interest in the expressive body which went beyond stage dance. David Garrick is a model mentioned frequently by Noverre. He also discusses Denis Diderot whose diverse and complex writings on practical as much as theoretical matters of somatic expression are a good measure of the breadth of contemporary interest.[8]

There was, then, a momentum, an impulsion towards reform in the second half of the eighteenth century which is analogous to the desire for change in theatre practices in the early twentieth century. Each period constitutes an equivalent point in the historical cycle of theatrical theory and practice when verbal expression wanes and physical expression (somatic or material) takes precedence. The following will show how Decroux and eighteenth-century choreographers asked similar questions and had similar priorities, even if they did not necessarily find the same answers.

Use of the Body

One of the most important principles of Decroux's mime derives from Copeau's 'masque' exercise: meaningful movement should not depend on the use of the periphery of the body, the face, and the hands, as it did in nineteenth-century mime; instead, the entire body, especially the torso, should be engaged.

To this end, Decroux sometimes performed in a body stocking or little more than a loincloth, covering the face with an expressionless mask or even a more rudimentary stocking. He pointed out on numerous occasions how radically different this makes his corporeal mime from nineteenth-century mime. It would have been impossible, for example, for a nineteenth-century mime to perform with his back to the audience, as Decroux did in *L'Usine*.[9] It is in some ways paradoxical for a somatic art to be so mistrustful of certain parts of the body, but in other ways it is entirely consistent with Decroux's belief in the untapped expressive potential of the *whole* body.

Part of his rationale for excluding the face is fundamental to his concept of corporeal mime: we interpret faces in uncompromising ways which can undo the expressive efforts of the rest of the body. Thus, the natural low brow of an actor may be an impediment when playing roles which suit a high brow. Or again: a young man can never play an old man. Recourse to stage make-up solves the problem in some ways, but is also an implicit admission of the limits of the actor's art.

In contrast, Decroux regarded the actor as a creative artist with the same right as any other artist to create what he wants to create rather than create what he happens to be.[10] It is therefore a major underestimation of the actor's art to assume that he or she is destined always to play the same kind of roles merely because of his or her given facial features. Better, according to Decroux, to exclude or marginalize the face.

The other part of Decroux's rationale for marginalizing the face is based on the moral observation that most people live their lives in the periphery of their body, the face and hands, which is trained to lie, to obscure the truth, much more than the rest of the body.[11] The socio-cultural codes and conventions imprinted on us and sustained in daily life are so unyielding that the mime artist faces a stark choice between incorporating or at best adapting them to his art, or excluding them altogether. In characteristically resolute fashion, Decroux chose to exclude the face and to subordinate the hands to the arms and torso.

In contrast, the ballet-pantomime of the eighteenth century has a reputation for making a great deal of the arms, and especially the face. The repeated assertions by Noverre in *Lettres sur la danse* that the face is a vital channel of expression seem to render Decroux's admiration problematic. Noverre's faith in the artistic truth of the face seems limitless: 'It is the soul alone which imprints on the facial features in energetic characters the sentiments, affections, passions, pleasures, and pains that it experiences.'[12] He contends that it is as important to remove the masks from stage dancers as it is to raise the curtain before a performance.[13]

Even if these remarks are in part posturing by Noverre, and intended to promote his

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questionable claim to have been the inventor of contemporary mime technique, reports from witnesses of his own time tend to confirm that he sought to emphasize the face. Thus, a London spectator expressed his admiration for the French dancer and actress Mme Simonet in the 1782 performance of Noverre's *Rinaldo and Armida* because of 'that rapid and strong marked *Transition* of *Countenance* for which she has unrivalled Commendation' (the emphasis is original).[14]

So many other contemporary spectators remarked on the expressive power of the face in the works of so many different choreographers that the technique does not seem to have been a particular characteristic of Noverre's productions. Probably the most famous Italian woman dancer of the period is Maria Medina Viganò, wife of the even more famous Salvatore Viganò. The *Gazzetta urbana veneta* writes flatteringly of her that her dancing is a mirror of the passions of the soul, and that she demonstrates that the art of dancing does not only lie 'in the mechanics of the feet, in the agility of the legs, [but] in the ability to make the face and arms speak'.[15] Gaëtan Vestris, 'le dieu de la danse', made an impression on the journalist Louis de Bachaumont at the Paris Opéra precisely because he danced without a mask and used the mobile face as an actor might, reporting that he was 'without a mask, and surprised the audience by the energy of his performance, not only as a dancer, but also as an actor'.[16]

When the face and arms were, on the contrary, immobile and inexpressive, this also caused comment. Ange Goudar criticized the daughter of the eminent dancer and choreographer Jean-Baptiste Pitrot for her lack of expression, despite her technical talents: 'She has good legs and arms, but her face is worthless, being all of a piece.'[17] He seems to sum up a widespread view about eighteenth-century pantomime when he says in the context of an article on one of the most famous and groundbreaking contemporary works, Angiolini's *Semiramis*, that 'the arms and the face . . . are the tongue [*langue*] of pantomime'.[18] There seems, therefore, to be a great deal of reliance on what Decroux calls the periphery of the body, which would suggest that eighteenth-century mime dance made significant use of the face and the arms.

Mask and Face

The prominence given to face and arms by contemporary commentators is, however, arguably, relative to the strong and particularly emblematic status of the mask in the specifically French stage tradition. Such was its status that removing it caused a stir which may have obscured other aspects of the performance and other expressive uses of the body, both for contemporary and modern critics. Some idea of the extent of the stir it caused can be gathered from the fact that it seems only to have been the most famous dancers in exceptional circumstances who dared to drop the mask at the Opéra.

Marie Sallé and Antoine Laval in 1729 are thought to have been the first, but their innovation took place in an afterpiece, *Les Caractères de la danse*, rather than in the main performance of the evening, Molière's *La Princesse d'Elide*.[19] As far as we know, the next person to drop the mask at the Opéra was Gaëtan Vestris in 1770 in his version of Noverre's *Médée et Jason*. In the meantime, the status of Parisian masked dancing was such that other major cultural centres adopted the mask. In Vienna, even Frantz Hilverding, a founder of the ballet-pantomime, is reported to have 'imitated' Paris in this respect.[20]

Given the contemporary status of the mask, therefore, it is probably unsafe to conclude on the basis of hyperbolic spectators' responses that the face was the primary medium of expression of the ballet-pantomime. The hyperbole probably derives more from the novelty of unmasked dancing than from the importance *per se* of the face in mime dance. Other sources suggest that the face was only one of many mediums. Even the most vociferous advocate of facial expression, Noverre, seems, in fact, to regard it as a 'hallmark' of the genre, not as the main channel of expression. Although he writes that the face is 'the most essential part of the actor's expression', he immediately goes on to say that it is 'the hallmark of perfect gesture [*le jeu*]'.[21]

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Hence, even without the 'hallmark' use of the face, there would nevertheless remain '*le jeu*', a term coined in the mid-eighteenth century to mean the actor's use of the whole body.[22] The importance of *le jeu* is evident from the way Noverre describes the first time he sees a performance by David Garrick, the famous English physical actor. If Noverre had an epiphany equivalent to Decroux's in 1924, then it was during the 1755–6 season watching Garrick perform at Drury Lane.[23] His repertoire shows a marked change after this date, which would seem to confirm the extent to which this was a defining moment.[24]

In the eight pages Noverre devotes to Garrick, more space is given to expression by the whole body than by the face or arms in particular. When describing Garrick playing a dying tyrant, Noverre describes first the voice, then the face, and then in much greater detail the way in which Garrick uses his body. When the moment of death comes, it is 'the convulsive movements of physiognomy, the arms and the chest' which impress him. The chest is as important in this moment as the face ('physiognomy') and arms. Perhaps it is this kind of comment which led Decroux to feel Noverre was a kindred spirit, given Decroux's emphasis on the torso.

'Pantomime of the Human Species'

Perhaps also Decroux was impressed by Noverre's quite remarkable chapter on anatomy which sets him apart from any other contemporary choreographer, except John Weaver.[25] Noverre must have been interested in more than the face and arms to have written in such detail about the anatomy of the dancer. The implications of this chapter are that the body is an instrument which we can refine and use as a tool of artistic expression – a principle which is certainly in keeping with Decroux's approach.[26] The detailed practical application which Noverre makes of the latest or most distinguished anatomists such as Borelli (considered the father of modern biomechanics) or Winslow (who wrote the first treatise of descriptive anatomy) would doubtless have struck Decroux as evidence that Noverre was intensely interested in the possibilities of expression by the whole body, not just the face and arms.

Diderot makes a fleeting comment on Noverre which would seem to confirm that Noverre's mime techniques were far from limited to the face and arms. The comment comes in what must be one of the most fascinating contemporary literary explorations of mime, *Le Neveu de Rameau*. The eponymous nephew is explaining the '*pantomime de l'espèce humaine*' ('pantomime of the human species') – mime as a social art of survival. The poor man does not walk like others, his gait is sycophantic: 'He jumps, he crawls, he wriggles, and he creeps, he spends a lifetime choosing and executing different positions.' When asked, 'What is a position?' the Nephew replies: 'Go and ask Noverre. There are far more in the world than his art can imitate.'[27]

The Nephew's point is that the social art of mime is endless: everyone participates, even the King, who would stoop and crawl for the pretty nose of a princess. The nearest analogy the Nephew proposes is the range of movement used by Noverre. If Noverre's dancers moved in anything like the agile manner of the Nephew's poor man, jumping, crawling, wriggling, and creeping, then the face and arms did not dominate his choreographies.

The same point becomess even more evident when we consider the ballet-pantomime beyond Noverre and the French school he exemplifies. The Italian school of *grotteso* dancers were renowned for their combination of feats of physical virtuosity and mime. The extent to which the whole body is used in the Italian *ballo-pantomimo* emerges during the polemical exchange of letters between Noverre and his major Italian rival, Gasparo Angiolini. The substance of Angiolini's argument in *Lettere a Monsieur Noverre* is that there are dramatic rules, such as the neoclassical three unities, which apply as much to stage dance as they do to spoken drama.

He comments at one point that within these rules any kind of physical movement can be deemed to constitute dance: 'I know of no gesture, no movement which does not constitute dance, when all is subject to the rules of the art.'[28] His contemporary com-

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patriot Gallini makes essentially the same remark, that dancing is not only about the legs, hands, and face, but that 'expression should be pantomimically diffused through the whole body'.[29] In practice, what they mean is sometimes evident in Magri's seminal treatise: a *pas de bourrée fallito* is used for the expression of grief, a *salto dell'impiccato* for drunkards.[30]

The fact that the whole body is implicated in *grottesco* dance leads one contemporary to argue that mime dance is the most complete form of physical exercise. All other activities develop isolated parts of the body at the expense of the rest of the body: horse riding strengthens the haunches but weakens the legs, fencing develops one arm and one foot. The ballet-pantomime 'exercises the feet, the arms, the face, and the whole body . . . and provides what all other gymnastic exercises combined cannot'.[31] Again, there is no sign of dominance by the face or arms. On the contrary, Italian mime dance has a holistic approach to the body, a gymnastic physical aesthetic reminiscent of the importance of sport to Decroux, who thought that the central role of the torso in many sports made it a better inspiration for his form of mime than any existing stage art.

If sport had been the social phenomenon in the eighteenth century that it has since become, perhaps choreographers would have made more reference to it. Despite the then relatively minor scale of the phenomenon, Noverre draws an analogy which brings the French school closer to the more athletic Italian school, and closer also to Decroux's interest in sport. He proposes an idiosyncratic etymology for 'ballet', deriving the word from *balle* or ball on the principle that the movements of a real-tennis player are aesthetically akin to dance.[32]

It would be stretching the analogy too far to relate this too closely to Decroux's anthropological and aesthetic concept of *L'Homme de sport*, since the tennis player is for Noverre a vision of grace, by which he means physical effort disguised by beauty. Decroux's *L'Homme de sport* does not disguise effort; on the contrary, he struggles constantly against weight. Nevertheless, Noverre's remark has great implications for the corporeal aesthetic of his dancers. It emphasizes natural, spontaneous movement by the whole body in contrast to the limitations imposed by social conventions of dress and comportment which theatrical performances could not escape. It is further demonstration that it is a caricature to regard the ballet-pantomime as an art of only the face and arms.

Mime and Dance

Decroux seems to regard Noverre in some sense as a kindred spirit despite the evident difference which lies between them in their attitude to dance. Decroux makes categorical distinctions between his art of mime and dance, in contrast to Noverre who incorporated one with the other. Decroux's distinctions are based on the fundamental aesthetic characteristics of mime, which are qualitatively different to those of dance, making these two somatic arts quite distinct.

The nucleus of Decrouxian mime, from which come many of its distinctive characteristics, is the way it seeks to highlight the body's relation to weight.[33] Weight, gravity, is in fact the source of the drama of mime, the force which demands effort and engenders a physical and psychological struggle. The drama it provokes is one in which man is in conflict with the world, resisting it, defending himself against it, attacking it. The conflict is not only between man and the rest of the world, but it is also internalized so that man is in conflict with himself, because the feeling of weight acting in one way on the body is at odds with the force of the will, which acts on the body in another way. Decrouxian mime is in some ways a dramatization of a radical, Cartesian mind–body distinction.

Dance seems to Decroux to be based on different principles. It disguises weight so that, for example, the force of rebound as a body responds to contact with the floor, wall, or other material is not revealed. The movement tends to be continuous, as if there had been no impact, or as if it were an inanimate rubber ball rebounding rather than a flesh-and-blood body.[34]

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The conflict between the body and the world is not emphasized in dance, and there is therefore no consequent internal, mental conflict between mind and body as there is in mime. On the contrary, the dancer's mind is in harmony with his body. This is why it is possible to dance spontaneously, but not to mime spontaneously. The mime artist's mind is not in harmony with the body, he does not give over his mind to his body. Instead, his mind remains independent, wholly rational. Decroux illustrates this difference by contending that unlike a dancer, a mime artist could solve a problem in arithmetic while performing.[35] Movement for the dancer is rest from the mind–body distinction. For the mime artist, movement is a dramatization of it.

What are the grounds, then, for Decroux's admiration of Noverre's combination of mime and dance? Perhaps it lies in the acute sensitivity felt by Noverre and other choreographers to the manner in which the combination should be achieved. Noverre draws a very clear distinction between the 'mechanical' part of performance and 'pantomime or dramatic dance'.[36] The first is effectively synonymous with the baroque dance of his day and constitutes the 'material' part of performance, while the second is 'the soul'.

The Mime–Dance Distinction in Practice

Like Decroux, Noverre's way of formulating the clear distinction between dance and mime, 'material' and 'soul', each with its discrete nature, is quasi-Cartesian. The Cartesian overtones are especially noticeable when he condemns those 'soulless' performers who cultivate only the 'material' side of performance as '*hommes machines*', machine men.[37] It is a provocative term, made infamous in the eighteenth century by Joseph de la Mettrie's atheist-materialist treatise which uses the phrase in its title. It is Noverre's way of expressing an unambiguous distinction between dance and mime. Provocative as it is in atheist-materialist terms, it is a distinction commonly made by choreographers and critics. Angiolini's distinction between *la danza pantomimo* and *la danza materiale* is conceptually identical.[38]

This distinction is not only a conceptual one, but is manifest in performance. When Gaëtan Vestris staged Noverre's *Médée et Jason* at Choisy in 1770, the editor of the influential *Correspondance littéraire*, Melchior Grimm, remarked that Vestris had not maintained Noverre's trade-mark distinction between dance and mimed scenes:

> In Noverre's ballets, dance and rhythmic walking are quite distinct; dance is reserved for the great movements of the passions, the decisive moments; in the transitional scenes [*les scènes*], the walking is done to the rhythm of the music, but there is no dancing. The change between rhythmic walking to dance, and from dance to rhythmic walking is as essential to this performance as is, in opera, the change from recitative to aria and aria to recitative.[39]

The roles Noverre apparently reserved for dance and for mime are not incompatible with Decroux's understanding of each: dance is for spontaneous eruptions of emotion, while mime ('rhythmic walking') is the equivalent of recitative in opera, the technique of rhythmic speaking intended to advance the action.

A sharp distinction between dance and mime was not only a characteristic of Noverre's work. A comment by Ange Goudar on Angiolini's *L'Orphelin de la Chine* suggests the same use of 'rhythmic walking' distinct from dancing, even if Goudar was clearly not impressed. He writes that the ballet could be renamed '*le ballet des promenades*', because most of the performance is walking with short breaks for acrobatic '*grotteschi*' dancers to 'show their behind to the audience'.[40]

Whether Noverre and Angiolini always separated dance from mime is debatable. Noverre probably did so much more than Angiolini.[41] Other influential choreographers such as Angiolini's mentor Frantz Hilverding probably did the opposite, cultivating an integrated approach.[42] Whatever style spectators were presented with, however, they did not take for granted the relation between dance and mime. In fact, it was often the focus of specific debates concerning the merits of the ballet-pantomime. According to Giuseppe Carpani, it was one of the key questions which Noverre's Milanese critics asked

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him: 'What do you know about ballet? . . . What do you know about pantomime? When did you learn how to marry one to the other?'[43]

The issue was also raised in probably the most extended contemporary analytical study of the ballet-pantomime, by the Milanese playwright and critic Matteo Borsa. One of his reasons for general scepticism about the ballet-pantomime is that he thinks mime and dance are so far apart as to make them very difficult to combine in the same work. The only solution is to confine each to specific kinds of dramatic moment: dance for moments of spontaneity and joy, mime for plot progression.[44]

Mime dance need not, therefore, be anathema to Decrouxian mime, and the ballet-pantomime is not entirely foreign to his principles by virtue of being a less 'pure' form of mime. Decroux did not, in any case, value pure mime for its own sake. He did not object in principle to other arts 'accompanying' mime, as long as mime was aesthetically independent, autonomous.[45]

Mime and Language

The issue of the purity and aesthetic autonomy of mime is especially controversial in relation to language. To what extent can mime include vocalized or written language; and, more profoundly, should mime be in some sense a 'translation' of language? Decroux's mime was silent and made no use of written language, but he did not consider silence an absolute principle. Rather it was a necessary stage in the development of a new theatrical language. His vision was that after twenty years of developing corporeal expression in isolation from other mediums ('one must first block out everything else'),[46] mime could then gradually be allied to vocal language. After thirty years, it could be allied to all the other arts.[47]

In this way, he did not seek the independent practice of mime so much as an independent aesthetic. In other words, he had no objection in principle to mixing corporeal expression with other modes of expression, including speech, but he was nevertheless acutely concerned that mime should not be aesthetically derivative, that it should not 'translate' what can be said in language. This is one of the reasons why he disliked nineteenth-century mime, which he thinks 'sought to communicate in gesture what could so easily be said using words'.[48] It also constitutes his major criticism of many kinds of contemporary spoken theatre: 'Here is an art which claims to be a performance art, but which starts by writing.'[49]

There is therefore an underlying caution in the way Decroux approached the subject of mime's relation to language, an implicit recognition of the insidious way in which language infiltrates the way we practise the arts as well as the way we think about them. His attitude to language is similar to that of his like-minded contemporary, the theatrical visionary Antonin Artaud:

> We need to put an end to this superstition about texts and *written* poetry. . . . Beneath the poetry of texts, there is just poetry, without form and without text.[50]

The 'poetry' of non-verbal expression is the reason for Decroux's determination that mime should be aesthetically independent of language.

The ballet-pantomime has the same ambitions. Many of the opinions of Decroux or Artaud on the hegemony of language which obscures the existence of poetry elsewhere would sit comfortably alongside the ideals of advocates of the ballet-pantomime. Noverre's attitude to language is simply that he does not need it: 'A well-made ballet can easily do without the aid of words.'[51] The only 'speaking' is done by the body: 'Everything will be eloquent, each movement will articulate a sentence; each attitude will paint a situation; each gesture will reveal a thought; each look will declare a new sentiment.'[52]

Noverre is not unusual in his attitude to language. Angiolini applies the same principles when he criticizes the use of printed programmes sold to spectators before performances. He argues that the ballet-pantomime is derived in the final analysis from our ability to interpret body language, that even if language and writing had never been

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invented, physical semantic 'signs' would exist, and that the ballet-pantomime is therefore a highly developed but 'natural' art with no need for speech or writing:

> an art . . . which emerges directly from nature . . . has no need of speech, nor writing, nor performance programmes to express itself. [53]

Making Language Superfluous

The ideal of making language redundant is borne out by the comments of many spectators. The *Gazzetta urbana veneta*'s praise for Maria Medina Viganò is typical. Speech in mime is as 'superfluous' as it would be in a visual art such as painting, or a three-dimensional art such as sculpture:

> How can I describe the rapid movements, the eloquent groupings which, at every moment, inspire the feeling of the most felicitous inventions of painting and sculpture, and that expressive magic which manages to ennoble nature, to cause our sense of sight to replace our sense of hearing, and to express in visual terms, with such clarity, the most profound feelings of the heart, such that the use of language seems superfluous? [54]

Analogies between mime and painting or sculpture abound in contemporary reports, precisely because the ballet-pantomime was considered to be closer to the visual and plastic arts than to the linguistic ones. Thus, Noverre's historical ballet-pantomime *Les Horaces* was compared to a painting by Carracci or Le Brun, and his pastoral work *Les Ruses de l'amour* to the style of Boucher or Albani.[55]

Recurrent painterly analogies are based on more than superficial critical conventions; they derive from painterly techniques at the heart of the staging of ballets-pantomimes. One of the most widely used techniques is the 'tableau', a positioning of characters in relatively static situations so as to give time for the spectator's eye to move from one motif to another, connecting them in a meaningful narrative, as if viewing a painting. In the advice that Vestris gave for the 1804 production of Noverre's *Médée et Jason*, a tableau replaces the *protasis* of classical tragedy, the exposition or synopsis of the action at the opening of a play which makes the subsequent action comprehensible to the spectator.[56] Perhaps the most telling symptom of the visual, non-linguistic qualities of Noverre's productions is not from the realm of theatre or literature, but from the advice given by a silk dyer, Houbert de l'Hiberderie, to his students to look for compositional inspiration to his ballets-pantomimes.[57] Silk dying is a long way indeed from the linguistic arts, and suggests little dependence of the ballet-pantomime on language.

Dramatic practice often confirms that the ballet-pantomime does not need language. Dialogue is the very stuff of spoken theatre, but Noverre famously found an alternative to it in a crucial moment of his *Les Horaces*. During Camille's imprecation scene, the victorious Horace must tell his sister Camille that he has killed her lover, one of the Curiace brothers. Noverre's solution is for Horace to pull from inside his breastplate the now bloodied scarf that Camille gave her lover before he departed for battle. He holds it forth proudly as a hard-earned war trophy, but is no match for Camille as she snatches it away from him. This emotive use of a stage prop had a powerful effect on spectators, precisely because it was physical and visual rather than linguistically derived.[58]

Managing the Need for Words

Sometimes, however, choreographers do not live up to their ideals, in part because their ideas were expressed in the context of debate, sometimes heated debate, and were meant to win arguments more than reflect stage practice. Observations by Noverre and Angiolini should be read with this in mind. Both state that language is redundant in mime dance, yet both use it. In Act One of Angiolini's *Semiramide*, the eponymous heroine awakes from a nightmare to see a hand writing on the wall: 'My son, avenge me: tremble, perfidious spouse!' In Act Three, Ninias sees words appear on his father's tombstone: 'Come, run, avenge your father.'[59] The plot synopsis from which we quote these words is part of Angiolini's first treatise on mime dance, *Dissertation sur les ballets-pantomimes*. It is telling of

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Angiolini's unproblematic conception of the combination of language and mime dance that he should include without discussion these two moments in a treatise designed to be his first statement of values, one that is likely to have been co-written by a major contributor to discussions concerning reform of contemporary stage practice, Ranieri de Calzabigi.

The same practice in Noverre's productions provides insight into how the ghostly writing hand was staged. In *Iphigénie en Tauride*, Thoas's nightmare is seen in his expression of terror as he sleeps and in the red, silhouetted hand of Atropos, one of the three Fates of classical mythology, writing on the wall of the bedchamber 'Your reign will end.'[60] Noverre's detailed footnote in the programme of the ballet suggests that the effect was achieved with lighting, filters, and a translucent canvas.

This is a demonstration of how contemporary mime dance coped with what is arguably an intractable problem: the *récit* of classical tragedy. Especially in the French tradition of tragedy, action on stage is reported rather than shown directly: it is an irredeemably wordy genre. Eighteenth-century choreographers usually translated the *récit* into staged action, but this risked confusing the spectator when the *récit* concerned a dream. Noverre avoided confusion by beginning the dream sequence with the silhouetted hand so that when subsequently a ghost entered on stage, the spectator could guess that it is part of Thoas's dream. For all its visual effectiveness, however, it is another example of the dependence of mime on written language.

Pupils of Angiolini and Noverre continued these practices. Campioni added to the use of stage words in his version of Angiolini's *Semiramide* in the recognition scene, when Semiramide realizes that Ninias, the man she is about to marry, is in fact her son. Goudar explains how this crucial moment is staged: 'A panel can be seen at the back of the stage with the words: "Stop, perverse mother; he is your son".'[61] Goudar is merciless in mocking Campioni for the implausible nature of this staging. Perhaps he has a point: perhaps a recognition scene is an impossibly difficult challenge for mime dancers. These scenes are recurrent and fundamental moments in many kinds of early-modern drama, and arguably a key aesthetic aspect of narrative form in general, but they are essentially linguistic in nature, and therefore beyond mime.[62]

Perhaps it is not possible to mime specific deictic meanings and blood relations such as 'Ninias is your son'. In any case, Angiolini did not try; his use of written words on a sign descending onto the stage reminds Goudar of painters who label their figures in order to make clear who they are.[63] Visual arts, it seems, resort to language when they cannot manage complex deictic meanings.

The same techniques were used by one of Noverre's most famous pupils, Charles Le Picq, in his mime dance version of the legend of Castor and Pollux. At the end of Act Two, the sign from the gods to Pollux that he should descend into Hell to find his dead brother comes in the form of written words:

> Go: descend to hell, renounce the light,
> It is fate's will that you should save your brother.[64]

Other choreographers used this technique with alacrity. The little-known Pierre-Germain Pariseau had constant recourse to staged words in *Sophie de Brabant*.[65] The more one reads contemporary reports and plot synopses, the more one learns to expect the use of written language on stage. Although it did not dominate the mime and dance components, it was used at crucial junctures to clarify the narrative, demonstrating the reliance on language in the ballet-pantomime.

Evidence for the written words on stage comes from a source which adds to the apparent importance attributed to language: the plot synopses in the programme. These texts are complex phenomena and deserve a fuller study than is possible here.[66] Their salient characteristic, however, is that they recount the plot of the ballet with a degree of linguistic and psychological detail which provoked many spectators to question their relation to the stage action. Choreographers were accused of using them for artistic fraud, since programmes prime the spectator to understand meaning in the performance which is

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not objectively there. Angiolini felt sufficiently strongly about Noverre's questionable use of programmes to write a treatise on the subject.[67]

A new proverb circulated in 1770s Milan: '*bugiardo come un programma*', or 'nothing lies like a programme'.[68] These plot synopses are analogous in many ways to the 'programme notes' circulated before concert performances, particularly of orchestral music, in the nineteenth century and today, a controversial mix of objective and subjective information. The controversy caused by the programmes arose from the way the synopsis combined simple plot with more subjective interpretation of the action. Almost all choreographers of ballets-pantomimes, including Angiolini, used them in some shape or form. Their prevalence suggests again a degree of dependence on language by the ballet-pantomime which would be anathema to Decrouxian mime.

There is more dependence on language in the ballet-pantomime than Decroux would doubtless like, but this needs to be seen in context. This dependence arose at least in part from the general neoclassical practice of adapting works from a stock, largely written repertoire rather than inventing new works. Given the frequency with which recognition scenes, the *récit*, or dreams occur in neoclassical theatre, it would have been almost impossible for eighteenth-century choreographers to progress very far in their careers without tackling them in mime. Decroux did not have to face this challenge. Perhaps we should therefore allow a little latitude to the ballet-pantomime. It is probably more important to judge it by the extent to which it de-prioritized language.

Blending the Components

A good example of de-prioritizing words in the ballet-pantomime is Noverre's use of the chorus: he hides it in the wings so that it cannot be seen, synchronizing the singing with specific action on stage.[69] He claims to have devised the idea in collaboration with Gluck in rehearsals for the opera *Alceste*, but he subsequently used the same technique in other, autonomous ballets such as *Les Danaïdes*, *L'Enlèvement de Proserpine*, and *Agamemnon*. Thus, he did not exclude the words of the chorus; on the contrary, he introduced the chorus into his autonomous ballets which, unlike the opera *Alceste*, did not initially include them. He introduced them, however, on condition that they be one component of the dramatic whole rather than the dominant factor.

The 'most terrifying effect' he sought was an equal balance of four components: the action, the orchestra, the mime, and the chorus.[70] The audience hears the chorus as it does the musicians, without seeing them. Thus, the dramatic contribution of each to the overall effect is not impeded by the jarring implausibility of their physical presence on stage, and the singing bonds more closely to the action, promoting Noverre's ideal of a unified dramatic effect.

In conjunction with the elaborate scenery which spectators frequently comment on,[71] this constituted a particular characteristic of Noverre's productions. Far from detracting from the quality of Noverre's mime, this combination enhanced it – as long as we do not take an unduly narrow view of what mime should be. Decroux certainly does not. His understanding of mime is that it is a somatic art which can be 'accompanied' by many things: 'whether it is done with music, musical sounds, scenery, words recited by a narrator or even by the mime himself, it is still mime.'[72]

Not only is the linguistic component in Noverre's chorus not dominant, but in some senses it is scarcely even linguistic, since Noverre specifies that he does not want the chorus to sing in fully-formed verse, but 'broken words, cries of despair and pain, and exclamations'.[73] Thus, in *Les Danaïdes*, before the curtain rises to reveal the dying brothers, their 'plaintive cries and painful accents' are sung by the chorus.[74] Later, the populace rebels against the tyrant Danaïs, and their 'cries of indignation' are again sung by the chorus.[75]

In contemporary terms, this kind of semi-inchoate vocalization is reminiscent of the 'cry of nature' ('*cri de la nature*'), the primitive

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emotional energy which, according to the likes of Diderot, should underpin all artistic expression, particularly opera.[76] Unlike most of its advocates, however, Noverre seems to have found an effective way to put the principle into practice. In modern terms, the combination of mime and such vocalization is congruent with Decroux's conviction that, when used appropriately, the voice is part of mime: 'diction is mime, vocal mime'.[77] By 'vocal mime', Decroux means the physical, audible voice, as opposed to the meaning of the words spoken. The former is in some sense primary, since the audience are aware of it before the meaning of the words registers in their minds.

Arguably, de-prioritizing language is the best way to judge all mime, eighteenth-century or modern, since with a few notable exceptions (such as Deburau and Marcel Marceau), mime has always been more than a mute use of the body. More than a somatic art, it is an art of the physical which explores the physical world related to the body as well as the body itself. It would be an impossibly narrow view of the *commedia dell' arte* tradition to regard only the mute, corporeal movements as mime.[78]

Similarly, in our own time, it would be an impoverished view of mime to exclude the profusion of 'physical theatres' which have developed since the 1980s. The feature uniting them is that language is radically unseated from its dominant role. It unites them, also, to the ballet-pantomime. Relative to the pervading neoclassical culture, the ballet-pantomime significantly downgraded the importance of language. It made mime a medium for the most serious themes and the highest forms of tragedy. The same cannot be said for the *commedia dell'arte*, which, on the contrary, rooted mime in a comic repertoire that occupied the lower echelons of a very stratified neoclassical canon. Despite the key place usually reserved for the *commedia* in histories of mime, therefore, its lack of dignity creates a deep gulf between it and the mime of Decroux. Perhaps this is a feature which attracted Decroux to Noverre: he dignified mime by using it to interpret the most serious and revered subjects.

Objective and Subjective Mime

One of the defining features of Decrouxian mime is the distinction it makes between 'objective' and 'subjective' mime, and indeed the principle that the first can be a means to produce the second. 'Objective' or 'indicative' mime creates the illusion of objects in space, 'showing' them to the spectator. If the object is an envelope, for example, then the mime will reproduce the movement of the hands necessary to give the illusion that an envelope really is being opened and that a letter is being taken out and read.[79] Objective mime is thought to have been a distinctive characteristic of nineteenth-century performers, and was more recently developed to remarkable levels of virtuosity by Marcel Marceau.

In contrast, subjective mime depends on indirect evocation. Decroux's collaborator Jean-Louis Barrault explains the distinction with the example of throwing an imaginary stick into the air: if it is the throwing gesture which is mimed, this constitutes objective mime, but if it is the movements of the stick once it is in the air, then this is subjective mime.[80] The indirect nature of this mime is vital to the Decrouxian principle that 'what interests us about the world is not things, but Man'.[81] Or in Barrault's terms, the stick is less interesting than our feelings or thoughts about it. What is actually seen by the spectator, then, does not need to be an imitation of the movement of the stick; it can be the subjective, emotional, mental, psychological, or other such 'subjective' response by the mime artist. Hence, subjective mime uses the physical to represent the metaphysical, the turning of the stick in the air to represent the internal 'state of the soul'.

According to Decroux, the principle of indirect, subjective mime would have been better understood by early-modern culture than it is by our own. He refers to the seventeenth-century poet and theorist Boileau, for whom 'imitation' does not mean 'replication' for the purposes of objective, photographic realism. It means what 'representation' suggests to our era – the '*re*-presentation' of one idea through another.[82] Subjective mime thus

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expresses some kind of internal state of mind, heart, or soul through an imaginary external object.

It is potentially an extremely rich principle, since there are so many different ways in which we can relate to the physical world around us. Physical objects may provoke an insight into internal states by implication, by inference; the association may be more or less oblique; more or less contingent on contextual matters; it may lie deeply embedded or in the shallows of the memory; it may be taboo or customary. As soon as it is accepted that the purpose of mime is to provoke a subjective feeling or thought, then the range of subjective feelings or thoughts is enormously wide. If the seventeenth-century poetic theorist Boileau were alive today, he could return the compliment which Decroux pays him and write a poetics of mime, an 'art poétique' which would classify the vast range of subjective responses possible and the formal means by which they can be expressed.

The 'Grammar of Pantomime'

This is a hard act for the ballet-pantomime to prefigure. It is a modernist aesthetic which properly belongs to the modernist era; there is no direct equivalent of Decroux's subjective mime in the eighteenth century. It is also a difficult subject to discuss, since we know very little in practice about the movement vocabulary used by eighteenth-century mime dancers. It is effectively impossible to take an example of a particular objective mime and enquire to what extent it engendered subjective mime. The specific movement vocabulary we do know about tends to be discussed by unsympathetic contemporary critics who may be selective in the examples they give. If there is a degree of truth in their observations, however, then we can assume that some choreographers overused objective gesture some of the time, with the result that their performances lacked the evocative, subjective dimension that modern mime strives for.

Ange Goudar gives a series of examples from his experience as a spectator in northern Italy of what he considers to be the impoverished 'diction' of mime dancers. To express 'I am awaiting my mistress', the dancer points to where he is standing. To convey that he is struck by the woman's beauty, he draws two fingers of the right hand across his chin as if he needed to shave. To communicate his intention to marry her, he joins the fingertips of the two first fingers of each hand. To refer to the woman's old father, he takes the measure of the distance from his chin to the middle of his chest, as if stroking his beard. To tell his mistress that they can talk freely, he places one hand over his ear, inclining his head, meaning that the father or chaperone is sleeping. To indicate 'let us flee', he raises both arms to the horizontal, lowering and raising them alternately. To express contempt for the woman who rebuffs him, he puts his thumb into his mouth and pushes forward his top front teeth with his thumbnail. Goudar ends his long list with: 'This is more or less the grammar of pantomime performance.'[83]

He extends his criticism with an analogy suggesting that what he thinks is lacking in these performances is a more evocative, less literal idiom: mime dancers are more mute than deaf-mutes, since they have developed a sign language 'which renders their ideas as clearly as if they were using articulated language'.[84] He knew, as many knew all over Europe in the eighteenth century, that the sign language invented by l'Abbé de l'Epée, effectively the founder of the National Institute for the Deaf in Paris, was remarkably adaptable to the expression of abstract meaning, feelings, and thoughts.[85] Its success was dependent to a large extent on the fact that it mostly abandoned any pretence of 'natural' signs – the kind of body language which we express in a more or less untutored way as a natural reaction to our emotions, thoughts, or circumstances. Nor did it borrow very much from the gestural conventions most societies employ ('waving' to greet, nodding for 'yes', and so on).

Showing, Not Narrating

Rather, L'Epée invented new signs, devising a system according to proto-Saussurian principles of artificial signs which he called

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'*signes méthodiques*'. It is hard to underestimate the importance of the system he developed in psychological as well as semiotic terms. So Goudar sets a difficult challenge for the language of mime dance: like sign language for the deaf, it must match the levels of abstraction possible in articulated language. It will not meet this challenge if it relies too much on natural signs or conventional gesture. If Goudar's observations on specific mime vocabulary are reliable, then the mime dance he saw in northern Italy does seem to have relied to an extent on conventional gesture – and some of the vocabulary he mentions is, in fact, listed in Andrea de Jorio's *Gesture in Naples*, the first ethnographic study of conventional gesture.[86]

The Milanese playwright and critic Matteo Borsa also highlights the use of conventional gesture for the purposes of objective mime, and he is as sceptical about the results as Goudar is. In the longest independent essay of the period on the ballet-pantomime, he devotes substantial space to the question of the semiotics of the genre. He gives an example from an unidentified source which could, given earlier references, be Angiolini's *Didone*:[87] how does the mime dancer render the meaning 'the Queen has fainted in her chamber'? The answer, according to Borsa, is that he divides the proposition into two parts: 'Queen' and 'fainted'. To render the first part, he circles the right hand above the head to signify a crown, while standing as tall and straight as possible and puffing out his chest to signify 'majesty'. Borsa comments ironically that this is nothing if not precise. In other words, he finds this a very basic and uninspiring objective gesture based on self-evident body language.

To render the second part, 'fainted', he holds out his hand and turns it over, lowering it to signify 'fall'. A faster and more emphatic movement of the hand would signify 'die'.[88] Borsa remarks that this is anything *but* precise: how are we to know if the queen 'falls' into a chair, or onto a bed or divan? At what point does the speed of the gesture change its meaning from 'fall' to 'die'?

The two parts of this mime demonstrate the pitfalls of the genre: objective gesture can become so precise as to lose all artistic value, or so ambiguous as to be incomprehensible. Borsa's point is that the ballet-pantomime focuses too much on objective mime because it tries too hard to recount a narrative instead of acknowledging that it is a thoroughly 'representational', visual art like painting which 'does not narrate an action, but shows it'.[89] It would therefore do better to show on stage whatever is necessary for the progress of the plot rather than digress into objective mime.

These critics are harder on mime dancers than Decroux may have been, perhaps because they underestimate the difficulties. Decroux acknowledged the amount of effort required to make clear the kind of deictic matters which Goudar and Borsa refer to:

> Let's take the example of a letter announcing very bad news: so much mime is needed for someone to get across the idea that he is a postman and not a butcher's boy, and that he really brings a letter rather than a Christmas calendar.[90]

Borsa's solution would probably have been to use a real envelope, but Decroux would have found this unsatisfactory.[91] Elaborate objective mime is acceptable to Decroux as long as it does not obscure the emotional reaction of the reader of the letter expressed in subjective mime.

There are some critics in the eighteenth century who had some sympathy with the semiotic difficulties of mime. In response to criticism of Noverre's *Médée et Jason* that the transition between the scenes is sometimes difficult to follow, Grimm says that there is only so much clarity that can be expected of mime: 'These weaknesses derive from the inherent limits of the art form.'[92] Carpani responds on behalf of Noverre to those who criticize tragedy in mime because it does not have the clarity of spoken tragedy by exclaiming with a rhetorical question: 'But is this really the fault of the artist?'[93] The implied answer to this question is slightly unclear. If the fault does not lie with the artist, does Carpani mean that it is the dancers' fault? This is unlikely, given that Noverre mostly employed his former pupils who could be relied upon to dance in the

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manner that he expected.[94] Carpani must be suggesting that the fault lies with the interpretative skills of spectators unused to the new language of mime. Implicitly, Carpani demands that spectators make more effort to understand a new form of stage language.

Towards a Vocabulary of the Passions

The severity of eighteenth-century criticism may derive not only from underestimating the difficulties of mime, but from a selective approach to the evidence. Observations by Borsa and Goudar suggest that the main idiom of the ballet-pantomime was based on vocabulary borrowed from conventional gesture, but there are clearly other dimensions of the genre which they chose not to discuss. The most conspicuous absence in their extensive writings on the genre is the depiction of the passions. Its function in the ballet-pantomime is not so much theatrical as painterly, not so much related to Aristotelian principles of catharsis as to the imitation of physical 'symptoms' of mental or emotional states, as defined by Descartes in *Les Passions de l'âme* (1649) and adapted to artistic expression by the seventeenth-century Academy painter Charles Le Brun, particularly through the posthumous publication of *Méthode pour apprendre à dessiner les passions* (1698).

These two works in particular, but also many other seventeenth-century philosophical writings on the passions, influenced the aesthetics of eighteenth-century art.[95] The translation of philosophical ideas on the passions into fine art initiated by Le Brun gathered pace in the eighteenth century and spread to all the arts. At the same time, philosophical enquiry into the passions waned considerably, as if understanding the passions had become a matter solely for the arts. The ballet-pantomime was part of this phenomenon, and it seems a major oversight on the part of Goudar and Borsa that they did not acknowledge it in some manner.

An aesthetic of the passions is not based on conventional gesture. It is the formalization of natural signs, the use of physical 'symptoms' of mental or emotional states and their development into a recognizable system of artistic signs. There are three main sources of evidence which suggest that this is an important part of the aesthetic of the ballet-pantomime, if not the primary aesthetic: it is a major feature of the published plot synopsis, of the musical accompaniment, and of spectators' response.

The reliability of the synopsis is disputed in many ways, both by contemporary and modern critics, questioning the exact relation between the words on the page and the action onstage, but their criticism never concerns the elaborate rhetoric of the passions in these texts. This would suggest that it is at least uncontroversial and probably a good indication of the aesthetics of the genre. It is such a common aspect of the plot synopsis that one could take almost any example. Given Decroux's specific interest in Noverre, however, it is instructive to take a well-known moment from one of his most famous works. Below is the synoptic description of that moment – from Act Two of *Médée et Jason* – describing Médée's vain attempts to disguise her jealousy and her subsequent outburst:

> She acts the passion of fury, but she is skilled in the art of deception, so she hides her rage beneath a veil of candour; she runs to Créuse and holds her tenderly in her arms; Jason, whose passion blinds him and who has eyes only for Créuse, forgets the respect he owes to Médée. She, the sorceress, is by degrees overcome with the effects of jealousy, and finding it more than her life can bear to tolerate the ingratitude and unfaithfulness of her husband, she falls lifeless into her arms; Créuse hastens to tend to her; but when Médée opens her eyes and sees her rival, she flees from her in horror. Since jealousy is powerless, she abandons herself to fits of vengeance, she draws her dagger, lunges at Créuse; Jason fends off the mortal blow, he disarms Médée, who, in desperation at being prevented from assuaging her rage, leaves, making threats and expressing the most frightening hate and fury. Créuse is greatly distressed at the danger she has just faced, and she leaves Jason while assuring him of the constancy of her sentiments.[96]

This is a passion synopsis as much as it is a plot synopsis. Jason's all-consuming 'passion' for Créuse causes him to ignore Médée. In response, Médée deceitfully tries to appear gracious ('candour') and tender, but in fact is alternately furious, horrified, jealous, vengeful, despairing, threatening, hateful, and

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frightening. Créuse is shocked, but remains devoted to Jason.

We do not know exactly what techniques were used to render these passions, but our discussion above concerning the 'use of the body' suggests that it was probably the whole body, not only the mobile, expressive face we see in Le Brun's illustrations of the passions. Médée's mixture of fury and despair when she is repulsed by Jason, for example, may have been expressed in part with a '*pas de bourrée tombé*'. According to the contemporary Italian dancer and choreographer Gennaro Magri, this step can express impotent fury and was much used by Noverre.[97]

However it was done, the wordbook suggests that the intention was not only to relate simple actions in a narrative, but to render a gamut of internal mental and emotional states. François de Chevrier, an early promoter of Noverre's *Lettres sur la danse*, refers to this dual intention as 'rendering physical and metaphysical nature'.[98] It is this relation between the 'physical' and the 'moral', the internal and external, which is analogous with Decroux's balance of objective and subjective mime. It is what is meant by supporters of the ballet-pantomime when they assert that dance must 'mean' something, that it cannot only be a matter of aesthetic appeal.[99] It would be misleading to regard it as a direct equivalent of Decrouxian subjective mime, but it is what one might call a corresponding cultural and aesthetic coordinate. It is the eighteenth-century way to render an internal state of mind, heart, or soul.

The Role of Music

Music is a key ingredient in the representation of the passions. Generally speaking, it is composed especially for the ballet and is adapted very closely to the dramatic needs of the plot. The intimate nature of the relationship between passions and music is evident from one of the extant manuscripts of the score for Noverre's *Médée et Jason*, which is annotated with what we could either call stage directions or 'passion' directions.

The moment of Médée's feigned goodwill which opens the excerpt from the plot synopsis we quote above is marked in the score with the words 'Médée returns with her children, carrying a gift of precious stones.' The music captures her hypocrisy with contrasting styles between the oboes playing light, melodic music and the violins playing a dissonant version of the musical motif which is by now emblematic of Médée.[100] The frightened reaction by Créuse which ends the excerpt from the plot synopsis is marked in the score with 'Créuse is frightened by the threats', and is rendered by the music with a slow, descending chromatic movement of the viola and a similar movement played faster by the violins, suggesting suffering and apprehension.[101]

Critics such as Goudar and Borsa, who focus attention on the simplistic objective mime based on conventional gesture, do not take into account the expressive music. It is a major omission, as important as it would be to take no account of the contribution which Gluck's music makes to the drama of his operas. In fact his reform music and the music of the ballet-pantomime have much in common; they share the fundamental principle that music should contribute to the overall dramatic unity of the work, and Gluck's reforms for the operatic stage derived in part from his extensive collaboration with Noverre and Angiolini, even to the point that he reused some music originally composed for ballets-pantomimes in later operas.[102]

If Goudar and Borsa had taken more account of the music accompanying mime, they would not have paid so much attention to the objective mime. Even if Gluckian music seemed, to its detractors, disjointed or unmelodious, they were obliged to acknowledge at least the intention on the part of the choreographer and composer to express the subjective – the passions of the characters.

The third kind of evidence suggesting a selective approach on the part of Goudar and Borsa is the reaction of other spectators who made no mention of conventional gesture or objective mime but who were manifestly impressed with the expression of the passions. This was a common reaction to the ballet-pantomime, and spectators in Paris of Vestris's version of Noverre's *Médée et Jason* were

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no exception. A striking example is the reviewer in the *Mercure de France*, not only because this was a pre-eminent and quasi-official cultural journal, but more importantly because the tone is uncharacteristically informal, even breathless. Usually, articles in the *Mercure* are written in a rather moderate, measured tone which makes it sometimes difficult to distinguish polite approval from real praise, or indeed polite disapproval from real criticism. This is certainly not the case with the following – a hyperbolically passionate extract replete with the same kind of references to the passions as we find in the plot synopsis and in the music to this ballet. The reviewer explains why the work 'was a great success':

> The inconstancy of Jason who abandons Médée to marry Créuse, the expression of his love, Médée's contempt, the efforts she makes to awaken the tenderness of her unfaithful husband by bringing forward their children; the fury of this jealous woman, her magic spells, Créuse's wedding celebrations, Médée's insidious conciliatory approach to her rival, the poisoned gifts she makes to her; the agony and death of Créuse; Jason's despair, the furies which torment him, Médée's hateful rage as she flies away in a chariot pulled by dragons; the murder of her children whom she stabs under the eyes of their father; a rain of fire and the burning of the palace; all of this action and spectacle made the greatest of impressions. But what is most admirable is Mademoiselle Heynel's talent for expressing the energy of the most conflicting passions and sentiments; her dancing, her gestures, her attitudes, her facial features make a rapid and imposing tableau which the spectators found moving and stirring, such is the power of the art of pantomime when it is executed with precision and naturalness.[103]

Embodying Painterly Techniques

According to this report, the depiction ('tableau') of the passions enraptured the audience, and Anne Heynel dancing the part of Médée had a particular talent for expressing an impressive gamut of passions. The action was 'precise' yet 'natural', which sounds as if meaning was distinct without relying excessively on simplistic and unconvincing objective mime.

There are many examples of this kind of reaction to the works of choreographers of all kinds. Even if Goudar and Borsa seem not to have been impressed by this aspect of performance, others clearly were. The London daily newspaper, *The Public Advertiser*, even deployed a neologistic term for it: 'impersonification', used to describe Dauberval's performance of 'Old Age'.[104] The word is a hybrid of 'impersonation' and 'personification', as if Dauberval's role were so powerfully characterized or 'impersonated' that it seemed to be a veritable embodiment or 'personification' by the dancer.

This is indeed an apposite term if we think of the representation of the passions in dance as an adaptation from Le Brun's canvas to the physical stage. It suggests that mime dancers successfully translated painterly techniques to their corporeal domain, that they 'embodied' them. The reviewer was evidently not content with discussing Dauberval's performance in terms of the readily available word 'character',[105] perhaps precisely because it was too suggestive of a static mode, like a mask that an actor or dancer could don at the beginning of a performance and keep, immutable, throughout.

From all reports, including that in the *Mercure* above, passions in the ballet-pantomime were expressed too fluidly to make the notion of 'character' very useful. 'Character' seems appropriate to the art of painting in which only a moment's action is depicted; 'impersonification' suits better the art of dance which inhabits time. Decroux would perhaps have appreciated the *Public Advertiser*'s neologism. In the course of explaining subjective mime, he warns not to confuse 'character' with emotion. 'Character' is an actor's crystallization of a dominant trait, such as pity, but it is inadequate if it is so static as to obscure the subtle gamut of emotions related to it.[106] His concept of subjective mime was that it should express the subtle gamut of emotions, not static 'character'.

Even if there were sceptics such as Borsa and Goudar, there was obviously more to the ballet-pantomime than they claimed. Not to take into account the aesthetics of the passions is significantly to underestimate its objectives. In contemporary terms, the passions give to the ballet-pantomime the status of an 'art of

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imitation', an art with genuine insight into the nature of man. In a modern context, it is not a direct equivalent of Decrouxian subjective mime, but what we can regard as a corresponding cultural coordinate, the eighteenth-century way to represent subjective states of mind and heart.

Mime and Pedagogy

One of the most remarkable aspects of Decroux's life is that it was devoted to teaching and research, not performance. Even before he decided in the 1950s to concentrate all his energies on teaching and research, he had a very particular view of what performance should be, insisting sometimes on a select audience of three or four.[107] As remarkable as this is for a figure who has been so influential in a performance art, it is not idiosyncratic. He was, after all, originally a product of a theatre school founded by a non-performer, Jacques Copeau, who closed the theatre he directed in 1924 in order to concentrate solely on his teaching. Other leading lights in the field such as Jacques Lecoq were also non-performers.

Pedagogy is at the heart of the twentieth-century development of mime. It is also part of the reason we know so much about its principles and practices, since although only a small proportion of Decroux's work is recorded on film, pupils have recounted their detailed experiences on paper. Accounts of how the classroom functioned and what the teacher said in this or that pedagogical situation tell us a great deal about Decrouxian mime, perhaps more than watching him on the limited number of films available.

In contrast, the pedagogy of eighteenth-century mime dance is largely a mystery. Very little evidence of professional training has escaped the confines of rehearsals, not even in the form of instruction manuals for amateurs as it did in the case of *danse noble*. Eighteenth-century mime dance was clearly a wholly professional occupation, and no one translated it into terms the amateur could understand. The general result is that it is very difficult to say what importance was attached to teaching.

The indications are that the ballet-pantomime sustained itself in much the same way that physical theatre often does, through body-based modes of transmission from dancer to dancer. In order to stage Noverre's *Médée et Jason* in Paris in 1804, for example, Gaëtan Vestris was brought out of retirement to train the two lead dancers, his son Auguste and Clotilde Mafleuroy. This was apparently the only way to maintain a degree of fidelity to Noverre's work.[108] We can assume, therefore, that there was no well of pedagogical practice at L'Ecole de Danse de l'Académie Royale de Musique, founded in 1713, that could be drawn upon to restage even a well-known work from the repertory such as this.

The 'School' of Noverre

When contemporaries write of 'the Noverre school', therefore, they are not referring to an institution, but to the many dancers trained by Noverre who subsequently formed their own companies and made his ballets famous all over Europe.[109] It was clearly nonetheless a very effective 'school' in the sense that dancers from Noverre's company restaged his ballets with enough fidelity to avoid, usually, aggravating their famously irascible master.

His success as a teacher is an argument used by Noverre in response to Angiolini's criticisms.[110] Even though the scale of his 'school' seems to be exceptional, the principle of training within the company seems to be the norm. Goudar confirms this in his inimitably scornful way when he accuses the dancer and choreographer François Pitrot of being *only* a 'professeur' and not enough the 'connoisseur', with the implication that he taught members of his company badly.[111]

Although it is likely that most mime technique was taught within the company, many mime dancers already had formal, institutional training in the *danse noble* style. According to Goudar, Campioni trained first at the Conservatoire at Parma, then at the Ecole de Danse of the Paris Opéra.[112] Angiolini tells us that his teacher, Frantz Hilverding, trained at the Paris Opéra under Michel Blondy.[113]

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Beyond knowing where mime dancers trained, it is hard to know how they trained and the relative importance given to training. Before concluding too quickly that an absence of evidence suggests a relative absence of contemporary interest in pedagogy, we ought to bear in mind an important factor: for the first time, choreographers wrote books or treatises about their work. Before John Weaver, Noverre, and Angiolini, anything more conceptual than a dance instruction manual was written by non-dancers. Of these three innovators, Noverre is in some senses the most outstanding, because he was specifically provoked by the dance writing of a non-practitioner, Cahusac, to compose his book.[114] He obviously considered that the standard text on dance (not to mention the articles for Diderot's *Encyclopédie* which Cahusac also wrote) should be written by a dancer.[115]

The texts by Noverre, Angiolini, and Weaver are 'pedagogical' in the profound, Enlightenment sense of 'shedding light' on fundamental aesthetic principles, underlying motivations, and artistic ambitions. In this sense, they are comparable in tenor to Decroux's *Paroles sur le mime* in that they seek to explain and justify the fundamental aesthetic rationale of their genre. They are self-consciously innovative, and intimately aware of the efforts required to bring their artistic ambitions to fruition. Even if one did not know that Decroux valued teaching as much as he did, one would guess as much from reading *Paroles sur le mimes*. We would probably guess the same from reading Noverre or Angiolini's works.

It would be inconceivable for a director of a stage company to write such texts without also being interested in teaching. The concepts they deal in are quite daunting, and assume a fair degree of pedagogical effort on the part of the choreographer to inculcate their dancers with them. Even if no evidence of how it was done has escaped the confines of rehearsals, we can assume that it took a great deal of effort.

Decroux's regrets at having omitted to write further on Noverre are understandable in many ways, since Noverre in particular, but also the ballet-pantomime in general, clearly deserves a place in the history of mime. It is not surprising to find important differences, but they are not so numerous or significant as to justify excluding the genre altogether from the broad school which is mime. One would not expect, for example, Decroux's highly innovative principles of the *contrepoids* or of the segmentation of movement to be compatible with classical notions of grace, and indeed there is nothing like them in the ballet-pantomime. On numerous occasions, however, we find quantitative differences rather than qualitative ones. On still other occasions, we find eighteenth-century mime-dancers struggling with recognizable challenges, some of which were doubtless harder to meet then than now.

Jacques Lecoq highlights perhaps the most recurrent difficulty by referring obliquely to one of the most comic episodes in the works of the Renaissance writer Rabelais, the conversation in mime between Panurge who is improvising absurd gestures and the English theologian Thomast who assumes that they must be deeply meaningful.[116] This leads Lecoq to observe that the mime artist is acutely aware that

> everything depends . . . on the intentions of those who produce such gestures, the effect they intend to have and the state of those who observe them.[117]

Somehow, a mutually comprehensible 'language' has to develop between performer and spectator. At least a modern spectator is used to different forms of representation, different ways to 'tell a story' in all kinds of cinema and television, animated cartoons, and advertising. He is primed by experience to engage with an innovative and potentially disorientating visual experience. An eighteenth-century spectator was inevitably more naive in his approach, and a choreographer consequently more limited in what he could do. Notwithstanding this factor, notwithstanding also the different aesthetic and cultural expectations associated with two eras separated by two centuries, there is a great deal to suggest that Decroux and Noverre are more distant cousins than *faux-amis*.

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Notes and References

1. Etienne Decroux, *Words on Mime*, trans. Mark Piper (Claremont CA: Mime Journal, 1985), p. 154.
2. Etienne Decroux, *Paroles sur le mime* (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), p. 18.
3. Copeau expresses his dissatisfaction with contemporary theatrical practice in numerous reviews and writings; see for example 'Un Essai de rénovation dramatique', in Marie-Hélène Dasté, ed., *Registres I*: *Appels* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), p. 19–32.
4. For Copeau's use of the mask, see Dasté, *Registres VI: L'Ecole du Vieux-Colombier* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), p. 298–310.
5. Jean-Georges Noverre, *Lettres sur la danse, et sur les Ballets* (Lyon: Delaroche, 1760), p. 15–16.
6. Noverre, *Lettres sur la danse et les arts imitateurs* (Paris: Lieutier, 1952), p. 37. For quotations like this one, from a letter which Noverre added to later editions of his *Lettres*, I shall refer to the modern comprehensive edition published by Lieutier.
7. For a general treatment of these currents of thought on dance in France, see Jeffrey Giles, 'Dance and the French Enlightenment', in *Dance Chronicle*, IV, No. 3 (1981), p. 245–63. See also the introduction to Ivor Guest's *The Ballet of the Enlightenment: the Establishment of the Ballet d'Action in France, 1770–1793* (London: Dance Books, 1996). For Italy and particular reference to Angiolini, see Lorenzo Tozzi, *Il Balletto pantomimo del settecento; Gaspare Angiolini* (L'Aquila: Japandre, 1972). For Vienna with particular reference to Frantz Hilverding and Angiolini, see Bruce Alan Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), particularly Chaps. 5, 8, and 9.
8. Diderot's interest in somatic expression is a recurrent topic in many studies of the author's work; see for example Angelica Gooden, *Diderot and the Body* (Oxford: Legenda, 2001).
9. This is a remark made by Decroux to his students and collated with others in an imaginary interview in Patrick Pezin, ed., *Etienne Decroux, mime corporel; textes, études, et témoignages* (Saint-Jean-de-Védas: L'Entretemps Editions, 2003), p. 61. His work *L'Usine* is available on a DVD entitled *Enfin voir Decroux bouger*, in *Le Silence des mimes blancs* (Montreuil: La Maison d'à Côté, 2006).
10. Pezin, *Etienne Decroux*, p. 135.
11. This is a remark reported by one of his students, Thomas Leabhart, in Pezin, *Etienne Decroux*, p. 376.
12. Noverre, *Lettres sur la danse* (1952), p. 20.
13. Ibid., p. 22. The whole of Letter IX concerns the inadequacy of masked performance and the virtues of the mobile, expressive face.
14. *Public Advertiser*, 25 February 1782.
15. *Gazzetta urbana veneta*, 18 January 1792, p. 39–40.
16. Louis Petit de Bachaumont, *Mémoires secrets pour servir à l'histoire de la République des Lettres en France, depuis MDCCLXII, ou Journal d'un observateur, contenant les analyses des pièces de théâtre qui ont paru durant cet intervalle, les relations des assemblées littéraires* (London: John Adamson, 1783–89), 36 vols in 18, XIX, p. 245–6 (entry for 8 December 1770). The ballet takes place in the middle of Act Two of the opera *Ismène et Isménias*, music by Laborde.
17. [Ange Goudar], *Lettre d'un des petits oracles de M. Campioni au Grand Pitrot* (1774), p. 16. For attribution of this anonymous text and others by Ange Goudar, see Francis L. Mars, 'Ange Goudar, cet inconnu', in *Casanova Gleanings* (1966), p. 1–64.
18. Goudar, *Lettre de Madame Sara Goudar sur le Carnaval de Toscane à Monsieur L****, (1776), p. 28.
19. See *Mercure de France* (Paris, 1721–91), 17 February 1729.
20. *Journal étranger, ouvrage periodique*, ed. A. F. Prevost d'Exiles *et al*., 45 vols (Paris: April 1754–September 1762), May 1760, p. 104: '[The shepherds and the Roman soldiers] wore masks, and this is the first time they have been used on the Viennese stage, in imitation of the Paris Opéra.'
21. Noverre, *Lettres sur la danse* (1952), p. 20.
22. See *Sept Traités sur le jeu du comédien et autres textes: de l'action oratoire à l'art dramatique (1657–1750)*, ed. Sabine Chaouche (Paris: Champion, 2001), p. 12.
23. For Noverre's admiration of Garrick, see *Lettres sur la danse* (1760), p. 209–17. For biographical details on Noverre's relations with Garrick, see Deryck Lynham, *Father of Modern Ballet: the Chevalier Noverre* (London: Dance Books, 1972), Chap. II.
24. Noverre's first ballet-pantomime proper is arguably *La Toilette de Venus ou Les Ruses de l'amour*, first performed in Lyon in 1757. See my article '"Choreography" is Narrative: the Programmes of the Eighteenth-Century Ballet-d'Action', in *Dance Research*, Summer 2008, p. 42–59.
25. Noverre, *Lettres sur la danse* (1952), Chap. VIII. See also John Weaver, *Anatomical and Mechanical Lectures upon Dancing, wherein Rules and Institutions for that Art are Laid Down and Demonstrated* (London: J. Brotherton and W. Meadows, 1721). Weaver died the year Noverre first published his *Lettres sur la danse*.
26. See Pezin, *Etienne Decroux*, p. 65, in which Decroux is reported as saying 'le corps humain est tel un clavier, un clavier dont on peut jouer, d'une clef à la fois, ou bien de plusieurs'.
27. Denis Diderot, *Le Neveu de Rameau*, in *Oeuvres Complètes*, 33 vols (Paris: Hermann, 1975–), XII, p. 189.
28. Gasparo Angiolini, *Lettere di Gasparo Angiolini a Monsieur Noverre sopra i Balli Pantomimi* (Milan: G. B. Bianchi, 1773), p. 95–6.
29. Giovanni-Andrea Gallini, *A Treatise on the Art of Dancing* (London: R. and J. Dodsley, T. Becket, and W. Nicholl, 1762), p. 96.
30. See Gennaro Magri, *Theoretical and Practical Treatise on Dancing* (Naples, 1779; London: Dance Books, 1988), p. 101–2, 165.
31. See the anonymous translation of Lucien's treatise on dance, *Della Danza, dialogo di Luciano, con annotazioni* (Firenze: Gaspero Pecchioni, 1779), p. 9 n.
32. Noverre, *Lettres sur la danse* (1952), p. 268.
33. My remarks here are a brief summary of Decroux's views in the chapter 'Danse et mime' in his *Paroles sur le mime.*
34. Decroux, *Paroles sur le mime*, p. 73.
35. Pezin, *Etienne Decroux*, p. 108.
36. Noverre, *Lettres sur la danse* (1952), p. 37–8. For a similarly clear distinction between dance and mime, see also his preface for the programme of *Eutimo ed Eucari* (Milan: Giovanni Montani, 1775), p. 4.
37. Noverre frequently uses this term; see, for example, *Lettres sur la danse* (1760), p. 28.
38. Angiolini, *Lettere di Gasparo Angiolini a Monsieur Noverre sopra i Balli Pantomimi*, p. 82.
39. Friedrich Melchior Grimm, *Correspondance, littéraire, philosophique et critique*, 16 vols (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1877–82), IX, p. 237 (January 1771).

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40. Ange Goudar, in *Oeuvres mêlées de Madame Sara Goudar, Angloise*, 2 vols (Amsterdam, 1777), I, p. 47.

41. Kathleen K. Hansell argues that Angiolini's practice later evolved towards a more integrated approach than Goudar suggests that he had in the early stages of his career. See Hansell, *Opera and Ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan, 1771–1776*, doctoral dissertation, Ann Arbor, MI., p. 917.

42. On Hilverding's integrated approach, see Bruce Alan Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna* (Oxford: OUP, 1991), p. 177.

43. [Giuseppe Carpani], *Memorie per servire alla storia degli spettacoli del teatro di Milano degli anni 1774, e 1775. Ossia Lettere Controcritiche del Marchese N . . . al Cavaliere K . . .* (Brescia: Fratelli Pasini, 1776), p. 5.

44. Matteo Borsa, 'Saggio filosofico sui balli pantomimi', Lettere prima, in *Opuscoli scelti sulle scienze e sulle arti, tratti dagli atti delle accademie, e dalle altre collezioni filosofiche e letterarie, dalle opere piu recenti inglesi, tedesche, francesi, latine, e italiane, e da manoscritti originali, e inediti* (Milano: Giuseppe Marelli, 1782–3), Vol. V, Parte III, p. 137–51 (42–4). The second and third letters are published in Vol. V, Parte IV, p. 311–21, and Vol. VI, Parte II, p. 153–69.

45. Pezin, *Etienne Decroux*, p. 101–2.

46. Ibid., p. 102: 'il faut d'abord faire le vide'.

47. Decroux, *Paroles sur le mime*, p. 42.

48. See Pezin, *Etienne Decroux*, p. 59.

49. Ibid., p. 69.

50. Antonin Artaud, 'En finir avec les chefs-d'œuvre', in *Le Théâtre et son double* (1938; Paris: Gallimard, 1964), p. 119.

51. Noverre, *Lettres sur la danse* (1760), p. 121.

52. Ibid., p. 122.

53. Gasparo Angiolini, *Riflessioni di Gasparo Angiolini sopra l'uso dei programmi nei balli pantomimi* (London, 1775), p. 11–13.

54. *Gazzetta urbana veneta*, 18 January 1792, p. 39–40, regarding a performance of Salvatore Viganò's *Creature di Prometeo*.

55. *La Feuille sans titre* (Amsterdam), No. 70 (11 April 1777), p. 280.

56. Gaëtan Vestris, *Observations sur le Ballet de Médée*, Archives Nationales de France, AJ^{13}4.

57. Joubert de l'Hiberderie, *Le Dessinateur pour les fabriques d'étoffes d'or, d'argent et de soie* (Naples, 1733; Paris: S. Jorry, 1765), p. 112.

58. Compare the scene in Corneille's play, *Les Horaces*, IV, ii, with III, ii, of Noverre's adaptation, in *Recueil de Programmes de ballets de M. Noverre, Maître des ballets de la cour impériale et royale* (Vienna: Joseph Kurzböck, 1776). See also observations on this scene by La Harpe, *Correspondance littéraire, adressée à S. A. I. Mgr le grand duc, aujourd'hui empereur de Russie, et à M. le comte André Schowalow . . . depuis 1774 jusqu'à 1789*, 1801–1807, Letter LXII, I, p. 404; and in the *Journal de Paris*, 22 January 1777.

59. Angiolini (and probably Ranieri de Calzabigi), *Dissertation sur les ballets-pantomimes des anciens pour servir de programme au ballet-pantomime tragique de Sémiramis*, reproduced in Calzabigi's complete works, *Scritti teatrali e letterari*, ed. Anna Laura Bellina (Roma: Salerno, *c.* 1994), Vol. I, p. 165, 167. Neither of these lines are from Voltaire's *Sémiramis*. The first bears some resemblance to Crébillon's *Sémiramis*, III, vi: 'son sang va me venger'.

60. Noverre, *Iphigénie en Tauride, ballet tragique*, II, i, in *Recueil de Programmes de ballets de M. Noverre*.

61. [Ange Goudar], *Lettre de Madame Sara Goudar sur le Carnaval de Toscane à Monsieur L**** (1776), p. 19. According to Antonio Piazza, it is Campioni's version of Angiolini's *Semiramide* which Goudar has seen. See Antonio Piazza, *Discorso all'orecchio di Monsieur Louis Goudar* (Londra [Venice], 1776), p. 50.

62. On recognition scenes and their relation to narrative, see Terence Cave, *Recognitions: a Study in Poetics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

63. [Ange Goudar], *Lettre de Madame Sara Goudar sur le Carnaval de Toscane à Monsieur L****, p. 20.

64. Charles Le Picq, *Castor et Pollux, ballet héroique-pantomime en cinq actes* (St Petersbourg: Imprimerie Impériale, 1803).

65. Pierre-German Pariseau [or 'Parisau'], *Sophie de Brabant*, music Dupré, first staged 15 June 1781, Théâtre des Grands Danseurs du Roi, Paris. Variant title: *Adélaïde ou l'innocence reconnue.* See synopsis, published Paris: Brunet, 1781.

66. See Edward Nye, 'Dancing Words: Eighteenth-Century *Ballet-Pantomime* Wordbooks as Paratexts', in *Word and Image*, XXIV, No. 4 (2008),p. 403–12.

67. Angiolini, *Riflessioni di Gasparo Angiolini sopra l'uso dei programmi nei balli pantomimi* (London [Milan], 1775).

68. See for example Anon., *Due lettere scritte a diversi soggetti* (Naples, 1774), p. 4, 6, 11, 17; and Carpani, *Memorie per servire alla storia degli spettacoli del teatro di Milano*, p. 59. Carpani's text is in part a reply to *Due lettere*.

69. Noverre, *Lettres sur la danse* (1952), Chap. XX, 'Des Coryphées'.

70. Ibid., p. 176.

71. See for example Anon., *Due lettere scritte a diversi soggetti*, p. 35; or *Carteggio di Pietro e di Alessandro Verri, dal 1766 al 1797*, ed. Francesco Novati, Emanuele Greppi, Alessandro Giulini, Giovanni Seregni, 12 vols (Milano: L.F. Cogliati, 1910–), VII, p. 9 (3 August 1774).

72. Pezin, *Etienne Decroux*, p. 103.

73. Noverre, *Lettres sur la danse* (1952), p. 172.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid., p. 174.

76. Diderot, *Entretiens sur le Fils naturel*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, X, p. 157.

77. Pezin, *Etienne Decroux*, p. 70.

78. Many examples of *lazzi* using props would serve to illustrate this point. See, for example, Giuliana Colajanni, *Les Scénarios franco-italiens du Ms 9329 de la B. N.* (Rome: Edizione di Storia e letteratura, 1970), p. 8, in which Harlequin performs a *lazzo* with suitcases.

79. Decroux gives this example in Pezin, *Etienne Decroux*, p. 117.

80. Jean-Louis Barrault, 'Le Corps magnétique', in *Cahiers Renaud Barrault*, No. 99 (1979), p. 71–135 (110–11).

81. Pezin, *Etienne Decroux*, p. 116.

82. Ibid., p. 102–3.

83. Goudar, *Supplément au supplément sur les Remarques de la musique et de la danse, ou Lettres de Mr G . . . a Milord Pembroke* (1774), p. 80–2. Mars indicates that these remarks are probably inspired by performances of ballets-pantomimes in Bologna and Florence. See Mars, 'Ange Goudar, cet inconnu', item 102.

84. Goudar, *Supplément au supplément sur les Remarques de la musique et de la danse*, p. 82–3.

85. See Edward Nye, *Literary and Linguistic Theories in Eighteenth-Century France* (Oxford, 2000), p. 199–204.

86. Andrea de Jorio, *Gesture in Naples and Gesture in Classical Antiquity*, trans. Adam Kendon (Naples, 1832; Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2000). Com-

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pare Goudar's signs for 'marriage' and 'sleep' with Jorio's signs for 'love' and 'sleep' (p. 83, 201).

87. Borsa refers to Ovide's *Dido* two pages before the example we discuss, in 'Saggio filosofico sui balli pantomimi', Lettera seconda, in *Opuscoli scelti sulle scienze e sulle arti*, Vol. V, Parte IV, p. 311–21 (313).

88. Ibid., p. 316.

89. Ibid., p. 317.

90. Pezin, *Etienne Decroux*, p. 117.

91. There would have to be an additional reason to use a real envelope. In *Petits soldats*, for example, Decroux uses real plates because he can make noise with them. See Pezin, *Etienne Decroux*, p. 117–18.

92. Grimm refers to the 1780 Paris production; see *Correspondance, littéraire, philosophique et critique*, XII, p. 368.

93. Carpani, *Memorie per servire alla storia degli spettacoli del teatro di Milano*, p. 15.

94. Hansell, *Opera and Ballet at the Regio Ducal Teatro of Milan, 1771–1776*, p. 831–2.

95. On Le Brun's influence, see Jennifer Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions: the Origin and the Influence of Charles Le Brun's 'Conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière'* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1994), especially Chap. IV, 'The Tradition of Expression in the Other Arts'.

96. Noverre, *Médée et Jason*, in *Recueil de Programmes de ballets de M. Noverre*. The synopsis is also reproduced as an appendix in Noverre, *Lettres sur la danse* (1952).

97. Gennaro Magri, *Theoretical and Practical Treatise on Dancing*, p. 101–2.

98. François Antoine de Chevrier, *L'Observateur des spectacles ou anecdotes théâtrales; ouvrage périodique*, 3 vols (The Hague: H. Constapel, 1762–3), III, p. 37.

99. See for example Diderot, *Entretiens sur le Fils naturel*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, X, p. 152.

100. See Edward Nye and Fanny Thépot, 'Dramaturgie et musique dans le ballet-pantomime *Médée et Jason* de Noverre et Rodolphe', *Revue de l'Histoire du Théâtre*, No. 4 (2007), p. 305–23 (312).

101. Ibid., p. 314.

102. See Bruce Allan Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna* (Oxford: OUP, 1991), p. 339.

103. *Mercure de France*, February 1776.

104. *The Public Advertiser*, 19 March 1784. The name of the ballet is not specified. This use is fifteen years earlier than the first use given by the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1799, and is the earliest use one finds when searching the digitized version of the British Library's Burney Collection of British Newspapers.

105. On the idea of character in dance, see Edward Nye, 'Le Petit-maître dansant et le caractère de la danse: les héritiers de La Bruyère au dix-huitième siècle', in *Sur quel pied danser*, ed. Edward Nye (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2003), p. 137–56.

106. Pezin, *Etienne Decroux*, p. 133.

107. Thomas Leabhart, *Modern and Post-modern Mime* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 43.

108. See the letter from the Directeur des Théâtres to the Préfet, Archives Nationales de France, AJ^{13}5.

109. For references to a 'Noverre school', see Carpani, *Memorie per servire alla storia degli spettacoli*, p. 14, 74, 87. Advocates of Noverre claim that Angiolini cannot be said to have formed a 'school' of dance; see Anon., *Due Lettere*, p. 34.

110. Noverre, p. 17 of his preface to *Les Horaces*, in *Recueil de Programmes de ballets de M. Noverre*.

111. Goudar, *Lettre d'un des petits oracles de Monsieur Angiolini au Grand Noverre*. The first few pages refer to Pitrot repeatedly as 'professeur'.

112. Ibid., p. 3–4.

113. Angiolini, *Lettere di Gasparo Angiolini a Monsieur Noverre*, p. 9.

114. See Noverre's comments in *Lettres sur la danse* (1760), p. 381.

115. Cahusac, *La Danse ancienne et moderne, ou traité historique de la danse* (The Hague: Jean Neaulme, 1754).

116. François Rabelais, *Pantagruel*, Chap. 19.

117. Jacques Lecoq, *Theatre of Movement and Gesture* (1987; London; New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 21.

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