BALET- TRADICIJA I SUVREMENOST

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INTRODUCTION

This text discusses historical and theoretical perspectives on the diachronic development of ballet and modern/contemporary dance. Its main argument is that although they have had separate developmental lines, they shared mutual influences and periodically overlapped through intersections of the fields.

This paper is a result of an extensive research in this sphere of academic interest and can serve as a distillation of the relevant ideas of the main authors in the field such as Janet Adshead, Deborah Jowitt, Ivor Guest, Sally Banes, Lynn Garafola, Susan Foster, Selma Jeanne Cohen and many others. It can be read linearly or any of the chapters can serve as a point of entry, depending on the readers'/students' interests.

The first chapter discusses classicism in ballet drawing upon Alistair Macaulay, supported by Tim Scholl, Luke Jennings and others. In the second chapter the emergence and evolvement of modern dance is discussed, while the third chapter considers their mutual influences through the prism of theories of art as postulated by Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen. The following chapter explores postmodern concepts in ballet and dance, while the last chapter delves into dancefilm/ videodance leaning on Eric Brannigan's work. Altogether, it presents fundamental knowledge required of the students for this subject. The Conclusion summarises the discussion and points out aims and objectives, as well as guidelines for further study, defining students' competences.

CLASSICISM IN BALLET

The syntagm 'classical ballet' is often used colloquially, but its exact meaning is not clearly determined: whether it refers to a time period, a dancing style or academic school of codified dance technique. Drawing on critic Alastair Macaulay, Jennifer Jackson (1999:109) summarises that:

> Traditionally viewed, ballet's heritage can be traced back over nearly four hundred years of an evolving technique that is under-pinned by the strict principles and vocabulary first codified when Louis XIV established the Académie Royale de la Danse in 1661. The link at that time with the Renaissance (the most significant revival of art and aesthetics of ancient Greece and Rome), is historically significant as the source of the balletic aesthetic. 'Classical' denotes the rules of harmonic proportions and rational ordering of form which are characteristics of an understanding of that aesthetic, while 'ballet classicism' is evident in those ballets that exhibit classical qualities through their dance form. The high point of ballet classicism is generally seen to have occurred at the end of the nineteenth century and is epitomised by Petipa's ballets, in particular *The Sleeping Beauty* of 1890.

The term is too complex to be reduced to a simple definition, which according to David Best (1974:23) 'must be wide enough to encompass all the legitimate instances of the application of the term to be defined, yet it must not be so wide that it will allow in extraneous instances.' Best (1974:42) continues that meanings of terms can be comprehended conclusively only in relation to a context.

Macaulay (1986:68) drawing on deliberations of Sergei Diaghilev (1872-1929), states that one can speak of classicism in two senses. The first one implies that 'classicism is simply the academic training of ballet'. When the traditional and popular forms of dance (tribal, folk, social, ethnic) are codified into a canon, classical forms appear—like Bharatanatyam (one of eight forms of Indian classical dance) or classical ballet. In the western world, ethnic court dancing transitioned into classical ballet with the canonization that came from Pierre Beauchamp (1631-1705), the first ballet master in the period of Lully and Molière, who

introduced the five feet positions and the first notation and Jean-Georges Noverre (1727-1810), the eighteenth-century choreographer and theorist (Robey 2011:para. 1).

The author of the first written ballet methodology was Carlo Blasis (1797-1878). His students were teachers of Enrico Cecchetti (1850-1928), one of the great ballet teachers and theorists who advocated the Italian school of ballet. It celebrated virtuosity and his principles characterised the works of many artists of the dance like Ninette de Valois, Marie Rambert, Frederick Ashton and Anthony Tudor, and still forms part of the study of dance for many professional choreographers and dance students (Adshead, 1994). Another famous dance technique was that of August Bournonville (1805-1879), a ballet master of the Royal Danish Ballet, who was a pupil of his father Antoine (who was a student of Noverre and worked both at the Royal Swedish and Royal Danish Ballets) and other French ballet masters such as Auguste Vestris. Even today this ballet technique resembles the original dancing techniques of Paris in the 19th century. Nicolai Legat (1869-1937), a student of Christian Johansson, (a ballet master in St. Petersburg who followed the Swedish and Danish Bournonville techniques), emigrated to the West and introduced the Russian Imperial School of ballet under the name Legat technique. On the other hand, Agrippina Vaganova (1879-1951) studied both the French and the Italian schools of ballet that were present in St. Petersburg at the turn of the century and set down in 1934, in Soviet Russia, one of the most complete set of ballet rules of the century known as the Vaganova methodology.

The various classical ballet traditions Cecchetti, Bournonville, Vaganova, Legat, etc. evolved around the same concept of 'the beautiful' in dance. For the classically minded, beauty resides in a set of universals that should not be questioned; for classical ballet, those universals embrace the concepts of line, symmetry, and harmony (Robey 2011:para. 3). The differences in their

approaches are extremely small, as they all yearn for the same ideal of perfection. Classical dance demands a dogged dedication and challenges innovation or alteration. Classical thinking has a 'fundamentalist foundation'; other ways and forms are not simply lesser ways, they are 'wrong' (Robey 2011:para. 7).

The second use of the term 'classicism' is more theoretical and philosophical than technical (Macaulay 1986:71). It stands for idealism and order employing conventions and traditions that originate in classical heritage. Macaulay (1986:76) states that in looking at classical dancing one was looking at life, but 'life refined and ordered, life where aggression and emotion and sensuality are not repressed but confined within a code of manners or used to enlarge that code of manners...'. For him, this is about 'a system of morality' and certain 'etiquette' (Macaulay 1986:71). Diaghilev states that this is the kind of classicism that evolves (cited in Macaulay 1986:68). A code of manners can be widened or changed, drawing upon classical heritage and its tradition. While Macaulay sees elements of classicism in a lot of contemporary works, the British choreographer Frederick Ashton (1904-1988) saw all the modern dance as tributaries of the main stream. At the time he considered classical ballet so rich, that it can take in anything, and absorb all outside influences into itself (quoted in Cohen 1992:171).

Dance teacher Vera Volkova (1905-1975) states:

> Ballet is a science as well as an art because it has rules. It is a science, also, because if any of the rules which are propounded in the classroom are broken, not only the experts can see it is wrong but the audience too can see it is wrong. It is our job as teachers to see that the rules are maintained and that the dancers understand the rules. It is the job of the choreographer then to break all the rules, to use distortions from the basic classroom technique (quoted in Crisp & Clarke 1974:63).

However, it may be argued that both meanings of classicism are historically connected with imperial politics. Michael Greenhalgh in his book *What is Classicism*? (1990) explains how

classical art is linked to imperialistic politics and ideologies. It may be argued that, regarding the art of ballet, this idea corresponds to historical facts. The first court ballet emerged in Paris, *Ballet Comique de la Reine* (1582) after the libretto of Balthasar de Beaujoyeulx (Cohen 1992:19). From a historical point of view, this was a very important Court Masque that created 'the first integrated theatrical dance, the forerunner of our ballet' (Sorell 1957:371). It coincided with the structure and values of Catherine de Medici's court in Paris and could easily be read as a political allegory, perhaps even national propaganda. During the reign of Louis XIII, Cardinal Richelieu gave the court ballet a further political bent, employing it to consolidate the power of the king (Au 2002:17). Like Louis XIII, Charles I performed leading roles in court masques (Au 2002:20). Louis XIV, who established the Paris Opera, was the most famous dancer of the mid-seventeenth century. He dominated the ballet of France that prevailed over the European ballet (Cohen 1992:9). The closing decades of the 18th century marked the emergence of dance as an autonomous theatre art in the form of *ballet d'action*; the pre-Revolutionary repertoire developed at royal courts. Imperial Russian ballet had its peak at the end of the 19th century in St. Petersburg, while after the Russian Revolution, with the establishment of the new Soviet 'empire', the capital moved to Moscow, which became the centre of the new Soviet ballet. Even in Britain, according to critic Luke Jennings (2003:5) after the coronation in 1952, the audience saw Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty* as 'a balletic representation of the young Queen Elizabeth'. However, after having historically been left without the support of various monarchies and empires (dictatorship in case of the Soviet Union), classical ballet has survived in democratic countries. The following paragraphs discuss the manner in which its classicism has changed and survived until today.

Historically, the origins of Western Classicisms are located within the art and culture of the Greco-Roman antiquity. After its revival in the Renaissance, themes from Greek mythology

and Roman history were again employed in *ballets d'action* of the 18th century. Yet, according to Macaulay (1986:64) the word 'classical' became much more applied to ballet after the 18th century, when the Greco-Roman themes had been rejected. Furthermore, ballet as a theatre art emerged much later than other art forms simultaneously embracing romantic trends of the 19th century and establishing its classical vocabulary. For critic Lincoln Kirstein (1983:365) 'romanticism becomes not an opposition to, but a stylistic department of classicism'. Macaulay (1986:65) drawing upon critic André Levinson's (1887-1933) discussion of classical dance states that in the 19th century and even earlier, 'ballet was no longer seen as imitating another classicism, but as possessing its own'. Macaulay highlights three reasons for this change. The first is the loss of the aristocracy when ballet ceased to be related to the social dances of the ruling class. It remained 'an art that proposed a physical and emotional ideal' and 'ordered the dancer's body and language according to geometrical principles of alignment and proportion' (ibid.). This bodily classicism re-invented old Greco-Roman principles of expressing harmony. Ballet's own formal rules took the place of old Greek and Roman ideals. The second reason is the development of its 'array of vocabulary, forms, devices, rhythms and structures...' (ibid.). Language and structure of the 19th century ballet were developed by Marius Petipa (1818-1910) whose ordering of dances was classical in the musical sense in terms of formal perfection and was often called a symphonisation of ballet. According to Vera Krasovskaya (cited in Cohen 1992:95), Petipa's *Sleeping Beauty* is closer in form to symphony than to drama. The third reason is the development of *danse d'école,* the academic dance, making dance itself the subject of choreography, putting aside narrative and mime, and praising dance composition as the choreographer's main achievement (Macaulay 1986:65).

In *From Petipa to Balanchine* (1994) Tim Scholl states that the peak of the Imperial ballet at the end of the 19th century was *The Sleeping Beauty,* a paradigmatic classical ballet that united

the entire history of classical dance. Scholl explains how references to classical dance roots of the 15th century French and Italian Banquets (that were the predecessors of the earliest ballets such as Beaujoyeulx's *Ballet comique de la Reine* [1582]), together with *apogée* of the court ballet with Louis XIV and the structural similarities of romantic ballets united various periods and styles. These were the *ballet-féerie*, *ballets à entrées*, court spectacles, blended into a total work of art, together with rich costumes, sets and the music of Tchaikovsky and the libretto by Vsevolovsky after the fairy-tale of Perrault. Its creation in 1890 marked the beginning of a period of classical revival in Russian culture. Unlike the romantic predecessors, this work had separate formal dancing parts like solo variations and *divertissements*, dance for the sake of dance that had impact on the way of thinking of the following generations of choreographers. Scholl argues that the revival of classical aesthetics was *The Sleeping Beauty*'s legacy; it significantly influenced artists like Diaghilev who led the artistic movement assembled around the journal *Mir Iskusstva* (World of Art) and the famous touring company Ballets Russes (Scholl 1994: 21-45).

After the Revolution, Ballets Russes remained in exile in the West, spreading a significant influence on western art by drawing on the early influences from the Imperial Ballet. Concurrently, in Soviet Russia, 'the tradition of full-length ballets continued uninterruptedly across the great divide of the Revolution' (Crisp & Clarke 1974:42). That way *The Sleeping Beauty* may be considered to have had immeasurable consequence for ballet art and was the starting point for further development of the two artistic lineages; one that went to the West and one that remained at home in a new socio-political environment.

The most prominent representative of the line that went into exile from Russia in the West was a member of the Ballets Russes, George Balanchine (1904-1983). Macaulay (1986:73) calls

Petipa, Balanchine and Ashton the 'Holy Trinity' of classical ballet. Generations of western choreographers were continually evolving on the heritage of Balanchine and his colleagues in diverse individual styles, while the other artistic line that stayed in Russia remained quite homogenous, creating the Soviet ballet style which had its peak in the 1960s with Yuri Grigorovich (b. 1927 -) in Moscow and his most renowned work *Spartacus*.

Arguably, those two lines were connected by Lavrovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* that set a model for narrative ballets in the West. After the collapse of the iron curtain, the borderline between the East and the West dissolved and today's eclectic repertoire is performed worldwide. Hence, it may be concluded that choreographies may be considered classical, or at least connected to classicism, if the basic required technique is academic training and on the other hand if the choreography grows and evolves on the classical heritage and deals with its conventions and traditions.

MODERN DANCE

'The absolutism of classical dance paved the way for the modern era that challenged the dogma of one right way, to find many subjective alternatives' (Robey 2011:para. 9).

Already during the peak of classical ballet in St. Petersburg at the end of the 19th century, modern dance evolved as a true revolt against what was perceived as the 'restrictions' of ballet (Ambrosio 1999:61). Many perceive modern dance as an American invention, but it had two simultaneous birthplaces, the USA and Germany. Its characteristics are anti-academism, liberation of body and its expression, creation of prominent schools and masters and refusal or ignorance of ballet and its aesthetic paradigms. Maria del Pilar Naranjo Rico (n.d.:online) discusses how many dance historians credit Isadora Duncan (1877-1927), with being the first dancer to present 'modern dancing' to the public, although Francois Delsarte (1811-1871) and Émile Jacques Dalcroze (1865-1950) are considered its precursors by modern dance history. According to Cohen (1992:118) Delsarte's American disciples, influenced by his theories, were instructing that each bodily gesture had emotional meaning. Pilar Naranjo Rico (n.d.:online) continues that Delsarte formulated a theory on the relationship between human movement and feelings; worked on a new code of gestures, completely independent from the classical dance tradition; created a system for the study, analysis and teaching of movement; studied and codified a logic system on the relationships between the various parts of the body and types of movement and different human emotions; established the importance of the upper body (trunk, arms, face) as the central mechanism of expression of the soul. Delsarte's student Steele MacKay spread his theory and teachings in the States, influencing among others Ruth Saint Denis, Ted Shawn and Isadora Duncan.

Dalcroze presented the idea of relationship between movement and rhythm and created Eurhythmics, an original method of education through movement. Pilar Naranjo Rico (n.d.:online) mentions some of his fundamental principles: body blockages are caused by rhythmic blockages; relaxation is necessary for achieving the right movement; breathing is vital for attaining relaxation and is the fundamental rhythmic movement. Furthermore, Dalcroze's method was spread throughout the United States by Hanya Holm, a student of Mary Wigman.

As mentioned previously, Isadora Duncan presents the appearance of another type of dance, which would be the consequence of an interior movement of the dancer. Duncan denounced ballet 'as unnatural and harmful in its system of training, empty and unworthy in its theatrical form' (quoted in Cohen 1992:119). She carried a new spirit of liberation from conventions and the notion that dance, is an expression of the divinity inside every human being. Susan Foster (1986:145) mentions that Duncan dedicated herself to the mission of reinventing Greek dance, although her choreographic vision did not lean on the cognizance of Greek culture and its mythology, but on her comprehension of the Greeks' visions of the soul and the body. Beside her, performers such as Loie Fuller (1862-1928) who experimented with electric lighting and with light fabrics created fascinating shapes of colour and light, thus producing a new type of movement and Maud Allan (1883-1956) who wanted to 'revive the forms of ancient Greece' (Cohen 1992:119) displayed dancing that was 'new and different for the audiences' (Ambrosio 1999:61). At the same time, Ruth Saint Denis (1877-1968) unlike Duncan materialised her emotions in dramas of Eastern ritual and required all the devices of spectacle (Cohen 1992:119). Pilar Naranjo Rico (n.d.:online) mentions that Ruth Saint Denis was initiated in Delsarte's method, but had her own philosophical and mystical discourse too. For her, the female dancer was like a priestess, which contradicts the prejudice of that time of the female dancer as a woman of low morality. Dance for her was a means for reunification with the divine.

Simultaneously, in the other birthplace of modern dance, Germany, appeared Rudolf von Laban (1879-1958). He believed that the human movement was the basis of life and expressed the social state of being; therefore, dance would be a fulfilling need of communitarian experience. Laban was convinced that teaching individuals and groups by the means of movement could improve society. He also invented Labanotation (or kynetography Laban), which is the most extensive and productive system for analysing and writing down movement (Pilar Naranjo Rico n.d.:online).

The above-mentioned artists were followed by a second generation of choreographers who continued in their struggles to find new forms and styles of movement. Laban influenced Mary Wigman (1886–1973) who developed her own understanding of dance. She contended against classical dance values and methods, in a search for a dance that would accomplish an expressive function of the dancer's soul. Wigman believed that dance can express shock, ecstasy, joy, melancholy, grief and gaiety through movement, but that the expression lacking the inner experience in the dance is valueless (cited in Huxley and Witts 1996:366). Foster (1986:152) explains how Wigman declared that every true composition must be conceived as a confession and that the choreographer should unmask the inner working of the psyche. Pilar Naranjo Rico (n.d.:online) continues that Wigman's choreographic work and ideas are considered as part of the artistic trend called German Expressionism and her practice itself was called dance of expression or *Ausdrückstanz*.

Kurt Jooss (1901-1979) as a student of Laban captured much of Laban's principles and put them into his own work. He is famous for choreographing *The Green Table* in 1932, which was a protest against war. Kurt Jooss, unlike Wigman, used ballet and his technique as a fusion

between ballet and Laban's ideas. On the other hand, Wigman fully opposed the use of ballet, whether as a training method or as a creative source (Pilar Naranjo Rico n.d. online).

As Selma Jeanne Cohen (1992:123) states, the promise of German modern dance was interrupted by WWII. Until then, Laban influenced Wigman, Jooss, Albert Knust and almost all European modern dancers from the period between the two wars. But Wigman's ideas were imported to the States by Hanya Holm, who came there to open a school of German modern dance technique and who passed the heritage to artists such as Alwin Nikolaïs.

In the 1920s in the United States, Saint-Denis, being already famous, founded together with Ted Shawn (1891-1972) the Denishawn School and company (Los Angeles, 1915-1931). Shawn was inspired by Delsarte and contested the prejudice of the effeminate performer. He trained boys who looked like muscular athletes, creating an image of a masculine and sportive dancer. He also founded the Jacob's Pillow, a choreographic centre which is a significant dance centre even today (Pilar Naranjo Rico n.d.:online). Denishawn company took dance seriously and 'was as escapist in concept as the romantic ballet had been; its ideas were realised under guises of ancient legends of exotic lands; its forms were borrowed from distant rituals, from folk tales of the past, from the universal abstraction of music' (Cohen 1992:120).

Martha Graham (1884-1991) entered the Denishawn School and company in 1916. She developed her training technique, which still today has world-wide success. According to Pilar Naranjo Rico (n.d.:online) she created an original choreographic vocabulary directed to the movement of the pelvis, because for her this body part was the zone of expression of the feminine libido. Her ideas were to alternate between 'contraction and release' and to focus on the 'centre' of the body; make a bond with the floor and harmonise breathing and movement

(ibid.). According to Cohen (1992:121) where Graham looked inward to one's relation to own emotions and experiences, her former colleague in Denishawn Doris Humphrey (1895-1958) was aware of the individual's relationship with the surrounding world. Humphrey is the author of one of the major theoretical works on dance composition *The Art of Making Dances* (1958) in which, according to Foster (1986:xv), she asserts the aversion of choreographers to articulate compositional methods. According to Pilar Naranjo Rico (n.d.:online), Humphrey enacted a main physical principle for dance: Fall and Recovery which she describes as: 'Movement is situated on a tended arc between two deaths': which are vertical balance and horizontal balance. Not only was she the first in modern dance history to select imbalance as the basis for her movement, she also trained significant technical means such as weight, rebound, suspension and the control of breath (ibid). Furthermore, for Humphrey, the dancing group was the main choreographic entity and not only a mass counterpointing the soloist. The person who spread Humphrey's technique in Europe was José Arcadio Limón (1908–1972). In his *The Moor's Pavane* (1949) he dressed the dancers in Venetian Renaissance costumes, although the plot of the dance only minimally outlines the narrative account, concentrating instead on the internal desires and motivations of characters (Foster 1986:75).

In modernism (dance, art or philosophy), beauty, as well as values, are shaped by human view—beauty is now open to opinion. What is beautiful to one culture may not be beautiful to another (Robey 2011:para. 4). Modernism believes there is more than one right way, but that one way, in particular, is better than the others. With modernism and the world of 20th century American concert dance, we see the growth of a multitude of approaches and techniques: Graham, St. Denis, Humphrey-Weidman, Limón, Taylor, Horton, etc. They each offered their personally subjective version of the beautiful and accepted the variety of other approaches, albeit often with scorn and derision (Robey 2011:paras. 6-7). Modernism introduced multiplistic thinking

and subjectivity that resulted in a great number of competing modern dance techniques. These techniques and their creators took themselves almost as seriously as the 'Absolutist authorities' they supplanted. They replaced the one objective hierarchy with a plurality of them (Robey 2011:para. 10). As Foster (1986:166) explains performers had to 'connect their personal histories to the archetypal life patterns of the dance'.

The previous paragraphs dealt with modern dance that was extremely important for the historical lineage of dance. Although some of modern dance choreographers like Martha Graham referred to her dances as 'ballets' and used ballet dancers in her works (Cohen 1992:221), modern ballet had an entirely different lineage. Nora Ambrosio (1999:62) mentions how Duncan, known to many in America as a rebel, became celebrated in several parts of Europe and Russia between 1907 and 1927 and while in Russia, many believed that her 'new' dance form inspired many of the contemporary ballet choreographers who soon appeared on the dance scene, such as Fokine.

BALLET AND MODERN INFLUENCES;
THEORIES OF ART AS IMITATION, EXPRESSION AND FORM

Although some of modern dance choreographers like Martha Graham referred to her dances as 'ballets' and used ballet dancers in her works (Cohen 1992:221), ballet had an entirely different lineage. However, the influence of modernistic thinking is very significant for ballet—the intersection between the two fields, the classical and modern dance is best visible in the famous touring company, the Ballets Russes[1]. Under Diaghilev, the Ballets Russes thoroughly transformed the nature of ballet—its subject matter, movement idiom, choreographic style, stage space, music, scenic design, costume, even the dancer's physical appearance. Diaghilev brought together some of the leading artists of his time[2] (Garafola 1999:para. 3). From 1909 to 1929, the Ballet Russes nurtured some of the greatest choreographers in dance history[3].

For this intertextual analysis of special interest are two choreographers: Fokine and Balanchine[4]. Fokine felt constrained by balletic conventions—the separation of pantomime and dancing and the monotony of style (Cohen 1992:92). He converted the classical vocabulary to his dramatic purpose for example in *Firebird* and *Petrushka*. Fokine stood for reform within

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[1] Classical aesthetics of *The Sleeping Beauty*'s legacy significantly influenced artists assembled in the artistic movement around the journal *Mir Iskusstva* (World of Art) led by Sergei Diaghilev, the founder of the Ballets Russes. However, according to Lynn Garafola (1989: vii), although only 20 years in existence, this company altered the face of dance and brought about a new period of modernism. Those two decades substantially changed every aspect of ballet practice in the West (Garafola, 2011:32).

[2] composers Igor Stravinsky, Claude Debussy and Sergei Prokofiev; artists Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque and Henri Matisse and poets Hugo von Hoffmansthal and Jean Cocteau, etc.

[3] Mikhail Fokine, Vaslav Nijinsky, Léonide Massine, Bronislava Nijinska and George Balanchine

[4] However, the third dance artist of that time Vaslav Nijinsky, whom Andrew Hewitt calls "the scandalous male icon" (2005:155-157) must also be mentioned not just as a famous dancer, but as an innovative choreographer who anticipated the choreographing of ballets almost devoid of ballet vocabulary a century ago. For example, ballet historian Cyril Beaumont commented on the "slow, uncouth movements" of the dancers, finding these "in complete opposition to the traditions of classical ballet" in ballet *The Rite of Spring* (Beaumont in White 1966: 177–78. Furthermore, *The Times* described Nijinsky's performance in *An Afternoon of a Faun* as "extraordinarily expressive... we had been given a new phase of [ballet's] art which appealed through quite different channels from those with which anything else in the repertory has been concerned" (in Buckle 1971).

the tradition. He set out to dismantle the firmly rooted dualism of mime and dance, that way advocating a complete unity of expression (Copeland & Cohen 1983:18).

In the mid-1920s, Balanchine joined the Ballets Russes and his first ballet *Apollo* (1928), which was firmly grounded in classical forms, became the example of his style (Cohen 1992:94). For Foster (1986:14), his dances were 'visual masterpieces of design, proportion, and form...Balanchine's dances take as their format either the pantomimic story dance or the plotless, abstract divertissement'. His knowledge of music was evident in his ability to make musical structure visible in the choreography, thus creating a 'perfectly measured consonance of visual and aural patterns' (Foster 1986:16). As Balanchine (1945:21) said: 'choreographic movement is an end in itself, and its only purpose is to create the impression of intensity and beauty'. This statement implies his preference for pure formalism.

In the history of ballet there has been constant dichotomy between narrative works based on librettos that try to tell a story and self-sufficient *art for art's sake* abstract works in which the dance itself is in the main focus. Roger Copeland and Marshall Cohen in *What is Dance?* (1983) go further and split that dichotomy into three traditional theories that intertwine throughout history prevailing over each other—the theories of art as imitation, expression and form that has implications not only on the classical, but also on other forms of dance.

The prevailing theory of art in the Western tradition, emanating from Aristotle's *Poetics*, assumed that art was a form of imitation (Copeland & Cohen 1983:2). This theory received its most influential articulation in Noverre's *Lettres sur la danse et les ballets*, first published in Stuttgart in 1760. Noverre contended that ballet should be an imitative art. It should combine pantomime and dancing in a manner that conveys passions and sentiments stirred in a gripping

narrative and include its related elements of music, scenery and costume in order to add cohesion and enhance the general effect (Guest 1997:6).

Since then, in classical ballet, until the appearance of Fokine, the performance's pantomime parts were separated from the formal dancing parts. However, both Noverre, a proponent of imitation, and Fokine, who spoke mainly of expression, rejected what they considered 'empty spectacle and meaningless virtuosity', but they did so 'in the name of significantly different ideals' (Copeland & Cohen 1983:3). However, Fokine was not the first to emphasise expression. According to Copeland and Cohen (ibid.) the theory that 'art is a form of self-expression, or an expression of emotions, has been especially influential since the romantic era...'. Hugh Honour (1981:20) explains that the criteria that were accepted to judge all works of art, literature and music of all periods were 'spontaneity, individuality and the inner truth'. This highlighted a very characteristic quality of romantic art; the supreme value the Romantics placed on the artist's sensibility and emotional authenticity as the qualities that alone conferred validity on his work (ibid.). Likewise, the idea that art is a form of self-expression or an expression of emotions has been particularly influential with proponents of modern dance, one of them being critic John Martin. He believes that the 'art of dance is the expression and transference through the medium of bodily movement of mental and emotional experiences that the individual cannot express by rational or intellectual means' (quoted in Copeland & Cohen 1983:3). This thought-conveying quality of movement, Martin calls 'metakinesis' (ibid.).

It may be argued that there is a connection in the sense of expressionism between *romantic ballet—Fokine—modern dance*. Yet romantic ballets, in addition to expressive dance, were also responsible for the revival of the formal dance through *ballet blanc* (white ballet), a pure academic form of ballet. Critic Lincoln Kirstein (1983:365) follows the development of

classical ballet and shows how romantic and classical ballets were reconcilable: 'romanticism becomes not an opposition to, but a stylistic department of, classicism'. This dualism, expressionism—formalism can be paralleled with the work of Fokine who had expressive works like *Petrushka* or *Scheherazade*, but also choreographed retrospective, more formalistic works like *Les Sylphides* where he made academic ballet more or less his subject matter.

For critic André Levinson dance is neither imitation nor expression and for him dance is 'pure form and it is wrong to think of the dancer's steps as gestures imitating character or expressing emotion' (quoted in Copeland & Cohen 1983:5). He ascribes to Mallarmé the essential theoretical disparity between gestures (through which mime expresses emotions or character) and the dancer's steps which he regards as crucial (ibid.). Levinson states that choreographers should present 'the intrinsic beauty of a dance step, its innate quality, its esthetic reason for being...' (quoted in Cohen 1992:113). This quality is especially visible in Balanchine who, according to Foster (1986:121) seems an inheritor of the neoclassical tradition that emerged at the end of the 17th century. Therefore, it may be argued that there is also a connection between *formal court dances—Petipa's classical choreographies—Balanchine and neoclassical choreographers*—and arguably *post-modern neoclassicists* like William Forsythe (b. 1949-) and his followers, as is discussed later on, who make abstract choreographic works, where the choreography and the steps are the subject matter of their 'art for art's sake' approach.

It may be postulated that both Fokine and Balanchine drew from the classical heritage but were under the modernist influences. Since Balanchine is regarded a neoclassicist, this requires further explanation. For Banes and Carroll (2006:54-55), David Michael Levin in his essay *Balanchine's Formalism* (1983:123-141) makes the most compelling argument for Balanchine's

modernism. According to Levin, the focus of Balanchine's abstract ballets[5] is the explicit demonstration of the constitutive elements of classical ballet. This includes dismantling the ballet to its fundamental components—abandoning the story, mime, drama, decorated sets, colour, and costume—so there is nothing other to see but the basic movement patterns or conventions, the *syntax* of classical ballet. Scholl (1994:104) observes that *Apollo*'s rigour and precision of performance responds to Leon Bakst's call for 'a return to man and a naked, lapidary style'. But the denuded condition of the work was formal in the sense of simplification and purification, not literal. Where Bakst proposed 'a return to the human figure, Balanchine and Stravinsky returned to an equally essential foundation: the vocabulary and syntax of the classical academy' (ibid.).

It may be concluded that the works of Fokine and Balanchine may be considered as significant text sources for the development of western ballet lineage. Fokine's concept of unity of expression between mime and dancing steps and Balanchine's academic ballet steps as choreographic subject matter determined two main lines of development of narrative and abstract ballets in the West. However, in the Soviet Union, the tradition of large-scale narrative ballets continued in a more traditional, imitative manner[6].

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[5] *Monumentum pro Gesualdo*, *Stravinsky Violin Concerto, Duo Concertant,* and *Symphony in Three Movements*

[6]Prokofiev explains the difference in the eastern and western comprehension of ballet art at the time**:**

> [The Russians] like long ballets which take a whole evening; abroad the public prefers short ballets....This difference of viewpoint arises from the fact that we [Russians] attach greater importance to the plot and its development; abroad it is considered that in ballet the plot plays a secondary part, and three one-act ballets give one the chance to absorb a large number of impressions from three sets of artists, choreographers and composers in a single evening. (quoted in Balletmet/Romeo and Juliet 1998:para. 52)

On the other hand, perhaps the work of neoclassic choreographers in the West in the first half of the 20th century is best described by Cohen S. J. in Crisp and Clarke, in a text about Anthony Tudor (1908-1987):

> The dancer as character may contribute movement ideas to Tudor's choreography. But as a dancer he is never allowed to 'interpret' a movement. Margaret Black, Tudor's assistant at Julliard says, 'In Tudor's choreography you never have to super-impose feeling. You don't have to make the movements speak: it does,' and Diana Adams elaborates: 'Tudor does not want interpretation; he wants simplicity of execution. When he refrains from telling a dancer verbally about her role, it is because he does not want her to be influenced by her personal feeling about the character. The movements itself should suffice, without interpretation being added to it.' (quoted in Crisp & Clark 1974:49)

After the Revolution, the Ballets Russes remained in exile, spreading a significant influence on western art by drawing on the early influences from the Imperial Ballet as well as by artistic experimentation. Concurrently, in Soviet Russia, 'the tradition of full-length ballets continued uninterruptedly across the great divide of the Revolution' (Crisp & Clarke 1974:42).

If it may be postulated that St. Petersburg was at the turn of the 19th century an artistic melting pot and *The Sleeping Beauty* was the most important ballet work at the time, I would argue that Prokofiev and Lavrovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* (1940) bridged the two artistic lines that emerged from the imperial St. Petersburg which is of special significance for this text, since it established a long line of narrative ballets inspired by canonical literature. Prokofiev composed this work upon his return from the West and with Lavrovsky and other associates created a ballet whose firm scaffolding was a base for numerous later versions to come in the West. It incited new interest for narrative ballets that were in fashion from the 1960s.[7]

Arguably, those narrative ballets merged western and eastern European lines synthesising the imitative, expressive and the formalistic approaches that served them as intertextual sources. It

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[7] According to Camille Cole Howard (1992), Ashton's version for the Royal Danish Ballet in 1955 preceded Cranko's and MacMillan's versions which denote a connection of the two artistic lines, the eastern and the western, but also a new beginning in the approach to narrative ballets in the West. Cranko eventually became even more famous for his creations of *Onegin* (1965) and *The Taming of the Shrew* (1969), establishing himself as one of the greatest narrative ballet choreographers of the 20th century. However, regardless of the worldwide success of Cranko's *Romeo and Juliet*, it could be argued that the most famous version of *Romeo and Juliet* in the West is MacMillan's who also created many other masterpieces of the 20th century like *Manon* (1974) and *Mayerling* (1978). Together with Cranko's, MacMillan's *Romeo and Juliet* anticipates choreographic expression in the narrative ballets of the late 20th century. It may be argued that these versions had impact on many following choreographers, such as Neumeier (b. 1942-). He was also commissioned to do *Hamlet* by the American Ballet Theatre. While in the 1960s narrative ballets were in fashion, some choreographers approached them more formalistically like Roland Petit (1924-2011) in *Notre Dame de Paris* (1965); other ballet choreographers slowly abandoned the established choreographic frames and turned to more contemporary expressions and created non-narrative abstract works, such as Maurice Béjart (1927-2007) who, under the influence of modernism gave accent to expression, for example in his *Bolero* (1961). This expression was not used to support the character or plot, but left more space for the spectators' imagination. This was explicitly visible later on in the Dutch and Portuguese schools where, for example, Jiří Kylián inspired by the Expressionist painter Munch created his *Forgotten Land* (1981) and the Portuguese choreographer Vasco Wellenkamp, inspired by Fado music, created for the Zagreb Ballet *Ballads....brought by the Wind* (1992).

may be contended that the classical approach on the model of imitative theory of art enabled them to tell the story. However, according to the tradition of romantic ballet and modern dance[8] there was a lot of space for interpretation, acting and self-expression. Since classical ballet is a codified technique that demands strict form, they had to satisfy this element, respecting its rules. It may be postulated that by a combination of pantomime, ballet, character and historical dances they made a synergy of art theories as imitative, expressive and formalistic.

In relation to those theories, Foster (1986:92-93) goes further and differentiates three choices regarding choreographic syntax: *mimesis*, *pathos* and *parataxis* which may be working in the same dance at different times or at different levels. In *mimesis* the structure of the music or even the narrative structures are reproduced, where the choreography is made on the basis of corresponding structural features of the music as in Balanchine. In his formal ballets and in his story ballets, he establishes additional syntactic decisions on the narrative structure. In the principle of *pathos* like in ballets of Graham a progression of human emotions unravels where choreographic decisions are informed by emotional and dream life, intuition, inspiration and impulse, which can also be linked to Fokine. The third syntactic principle *parataxis* involves diverse procedures like in Merce Cunningham's aleatoric syntax in which he organises predetermined moves randomly in space and randomly designates their duration (Foster 1986:94-95). Therefore, *parataxis* can be linked to Cunningham, the key figure who is a bridge between the modern and the postmodern and who worked both with Graham and Balanchine[9]. Cunningham supported independence between dance and music. He defied the rules of

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[8] For example, Martha Graham inspired by Greek mythology, confronted emotions like anxiety, fear, jealousy, guilt and self-doubt through dance and just as Fokine accentuated expressiveness.
[9] Regarding the choreographic mode of representation Foster (1988:236) discerns four modes: mode of resemblance which she connects with the literary trope of metaphor (e.g. allegorical late Renaissance European court spectacles but also the work of Deborah Hay); imitation that she connects with the literary trope of metonymy (e.g. neoclassical proscenium theatre ballets, but also the work of Balanchine); replication which she connects with synecdoche (e.g. expressionist modern dance and Martha Graham); and reflection that she connects to the literary trope of irony (e.g. contemporary post-expressionist dance such as Cunningham 1950- present).

perspective and symmetry defined by court ballet, by breaking the scenic space conceptions of front, centre and hierarchies. For him space was equal at any point, fragmented, non-conventional, and there was no hierarchy among the dancers (Pilar Naranjo Rico n.d.:online). According to Cohen (1992:194), Cunningham sought 'objective ways of combining and ordering movements, trying devices of chance or arbitrary systems'. Even though Cunningham tried out ordinary movement before the emergence of the postmoderns, it was not an imperative, recurrent fixture of his art; whereas a genuine obsession with pedestrian movement is a principal, repeating, even determining theme of the postmoderns (Banes & Carroll 2006:60). Therefore, the next chapter discusses postmodern influences on dance and ballet.

POSTMODERN DANCE AND BALLET

The term 'postmodernism' is usually linked to the 1960s and the postmodernists around the Judson Group. Deborah Jowitt (2011:7) mentions that Cunningham's ideas and especially those of John Cage set off the influential revolution of the 1960s in New York, under the auspices of the Judson Dance Theatre. To understand the so called 'postmodern' dance, it is important to remember the social context in which it developed. The 1960s in the USA were years of re-examination of the historical and ideological principles that governed the social, political and artistic fields. Society commenced a process of recognising plurality and relativism of knowledge and subjectivism of perception (Pilar Naranjo Rico n.d.:online). From this time on, choreographers have ceased establishing 'schools' or 'styles' as their modern masters had done. Influences between them were less direct and more fragmented.[10] There was cooperation between artists in various fields such as dancers, composers, writers and filmmakers, and there was an air of variety and independence. The boundaries of artistic genres were vague and dancers, musicians, actors and visual artists were all equal (Robey 2011: online).

Some of the postmodern dance features are that everything proposed is acceptable; examination of daily life movement as an adequate aesthetic experience and refusal of the significance of technical virtuosity (degree zero of movement); denial of the pretention of creating a vocabulary, repertory or style; importance of improvisation; challenging the value of the idea of 'author' of an art piece; search for a lack of expression by the dancer. With skill of execution discarded as a form of hierarchical oppression, irony and impact became the ways in which to appreciate the effectiveness of a work of art. Something was not a great work of art because it

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[10] Among the artists who started performing and assembling at the Judson Memorial Church in New York between 1962 and 1964 were Steve Paxton, Fred Herko, David Gordon, Deborah and Alex Hay, Yvonne Rainer, Elaine Summers, Simone Forti, Judith Dunn, Trisha Brown, Lucinda Childs and Meredith Monk.

was done with skills and some sense of beauty; rather, it was a great work of art if it altered how the art itself was perceived (Robey 2011:para. 10). 'Exploration of everyday movement, the use of untrained performers, dances structured like tasks or ingenious games, objects used literally, process as a possible element of performance, absence of narrative or emotion, avoidance of virtuosity and glamour to seduce an audience…' were some of the 1960s postmodernist characteristics (Jowitt 2011:8-9).

Generally, in the 1970s the stage of postmodern dance was minimalistic, functional, and objective. The postmodernists replaced costumes with sweatpants and T-shirt/casual daily dress, music with silence, and special lighting effects with plain, well-lit rooms. Not only did they reject music and rhythm, they got rid of dramatic phrasing, contrast, and resolution. They wanted the audience to see the structure and movements themselves (Banes 1987:xx). The postmoderns also employed ordinary tasks[11] and speech[12]. Correspondingly, with ordinary movement came ordinary bodies not trained by dance class. The postmodern honouring of ordinary bodies, thus anticipated the way for the influx of all kinds of *different* bodies onto the dance stage (Banes & Carroll 2006:61). The postmodern choreographer appealed to the audience to cherish an enchantment for the sort of everyday movement[13].

In the preface of Banes' book *Terpsichore in Sneakers* (1987), she distinguishes several strands of post-modernism in dance, extending over three decades. Banes (1987:xxii) argues that post-modern dance went through several stages, from analytic post-modern dance in the late 1960s and the 1970s when it pursued to redefine movement to the rebirth of content in the 1980s. The

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[11] Rainer in *Room Service,* Deborah Hay in *Would They, or Wouldn't They*? and Forti in *Slant Board* and *Rollers*
[12] used by Paxton in *Intravenous Lecture* and by Childs in *Street Dance*
[13] For example, Rainer in *Trio A* presented movement that was minimised to its bare essentials; no dynamic changes of the movements occurred throughout the dance (Ambrosio 1999:67). Brown created *Man Walking Down Side of Building* which was self-explanatory and was performed on the streets of New York.

analytic postmodern dances drew the spectator into the process of choreography, sometimes even by direct participation. Banes (1987:xxiii) explains that 'where analytic post-modern dance is exclusive of such elements, metaphoric post-modern dance is inclusive of theatrical elements of all kinds, such as costume, lighting, music, props, character, and mood'.

According to Elizabeth Dempster (2010:232-233), Foster defines two stages/modes of postmodern dance practice: objectivist and reflexive. The first is the precondition for the second, but the two modes were coextensive in the 1960s and 1970s and together constitute the genre. Objectivist dance used untrained performers, minimalist vocabularies, and a matter-of-fact style to suggest a continuum between art and life to establish a more democratic relationship with the audience (Foster 1986:169). Objectivist dance throughout its various stages has asked dancers to freely explore their individual reactions to the choreography (Foster 1986:179). The viewer's role as a receiver of the message is called into question (Foster 1986:184). No deep connotation, as in expressionist or allegorical dance, lies in the movement; the dances are about what they look like (Foster 1986:185). Objectivist dances 'refer to their own structured movement, and ... construe a fundamentally arbitrary relationship between movement and meaning' (Foster 1986:186). The movement relieved of any symbolic references to the world is the dance's message (Foster 1986:188).

Unlike objectivist dance which calls viewers to perceive more than to interpret, the next phase of postmodernism, reflexive dance, involves observers in the task of classifying and integrating the multiple interpretations it identifies (ibid.). As Foster (1986:245) states 'any given art event is oriented in two directions simultaneously: it refers to itself as an artistic event and to the cultural and social circumstances of which it is a part', making a reference to the world. Rainer indicates that by returning to narrative structures in which the body inevitably relates to things

other than itself, while interrupting those narrative structures as they spread out in the performance, the performance can unmask the ideological message of the body and hence permit viewers to think of the body as a signifying practice (cited in Foster 1986:259). Hal Foster makes a distinction between reactionary and resistive forms of reflexive postmodernism. Reactionary postmodernism, as in Twyla Tharp's work, demonstrates how reflexive choreographic techniques can be implemented to convey a playful, but uncritical message. Resistant postmodernism deals with critical deconstruction of tradition and with criticism of origins, not a return to them (cited in Foster 1986:260). The resistive works of the Grand Union and Monk blur boundaries between mediums and blend the roles of choreographer, dancer, and viewer (Foster 1986:225).

According to Jowitt (2011:8) the term 'postmodernism' applies most accurately to choreographers of the 1980s and 1990s whose artistic strategies and interests were more in concordance with post-modernism in architecture and art than were those of the Judson group and the independents who began to emerge around them, such as Monk, Kenneth King and Tharp. According to Gayle Kassing (2007: 267), the 1980s and the 1990s were productive in dance exploration and the second generation of postmodern choreographers combined arts with mathematics, challenged gravity and continued to perform in both indoor venues and outdoor spaces. According to Banes (1994:309) from the 1980s postmodern is no longer a descriptive term, but a prescriptive one—a 'commitment to a project that takes postmodernist, poststructuralist theory as a set of directive guidelines'.

Hans Thies-Lehmann in *Postdramatic Theatre* (2006:25) states that the term 'postmodern theatre' can be defined in many ways: 'theatre of deconstruction, multimedia theatre, restoratively traditionalist theatre, theatre of gestures and movement'. He also mentions that

some theatrical pieces were called postmodern simply because they brought classical material into the contemporary everyday world (ibid.).

Some of the key words for international postmodernism are:

> ambiguity; celebrating art as fiction; celebrating theatre as process; discontinuity; heterogeneity; non-textuality; pluralism; multiple codes; subversion; all sites; perversion; performer as theme and protagonist; deformation; text as basic material only; deconstruction; considering text to be authoritarian and archaic; performance as a third term between drama and theatre; anti-mimetic; resisting interpretation. ... (It is) dominated by mediation, gestuality, rhythm, tone. ... nihilistic and grotesque forms, empty space, silence. (ibid.)

One could add here what Rainer declared in a postmodern manifesto of 1965. According to Banes she formulated a strategy of denial for demystifying dance and making it objective:

> NO to spectacle no to virtuosity no to transformations and magic and make-believe no to the glamour and transcendency of the star image no to the heroic no to the anti-heroic no to trash imagery no to involvement of performer or spectator no to style no to camp no to seduction of spectator by the wiles of the performer no to eccentricity no to moving or being moved. (quoted in Banes 1987:43)

Therefore, classical ballet choreographies need heroes, modern choreographies arguably deal more with anti-heroes, and postmodern choreographies deal with neither heroes nor anti-heroes. Furthermore, postmodern choreographies discard binaries like male/female, black/white, straight/homosexual, etc. Postmodern choreographies prefer neither the imitative nor the expressive artistic approach, but rather favour the formalistic mode of choreographing. It may be argued that the postmodern approach deconstructs the topic it deals with and extends the boundaries of the artistic vocabulary, especially in the field of dance and demands an adaptation, modernisation and even departure from the literary text[14].

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[14] Furthermore, according to Charles Jencks (1989:7):
  Post-Modernism is fundamentally the eclectic mixture of any tradition with that of the immediate past: it is both the continuation of Modernism and its transcendence. Its best works are characteristically double-coded and ironic, because this heterogeneity most clearly captures our pluralism. Its hybrid style is opposed to the minimalism of Late-Modern ideology and all revivals which are based on an exclusive dogma or taste.

Some of the relevant features located within the French postmodern dance tradition (e.g. Philippe Decouflé[15]) are: fascination with quoting from past styles and traditions; merging of artistic styles; irony and pastiche; the blurring of boundaries; intertextual collage and technological innovation (Bixler 1999:236).

Jowitt (2011:2) states that:

> one of the ironies of dance history is that the cross-pollination of ballet and modern dance has not only produced hybrids, but it has also occasionally created ballet-makers trained in the classical lexicon, such as William Forsythe, who are more 'contemporary' in outlook than some choreographers who have come up through modern dance.

Bremser and Sanders (2011:164) state that the postmodern philosophers Barthes, Foucault, Derrida as well as the pioneer of modern dance Laban were significant to Forsythe. Forsythe can also be considered as continuing Balanchine's work because of his way of working with classical ballet from a contemporary aesthetic perspective.

Forsythe dismantled the usual vocabulary of classical ballet and created a new syntax. He did not only deconstruct the vocabulary of classical ballet, but according to Jowitt (2011:14) his *Impressing the Czar* (1988) 'deconstructed *fin-de-siècle* Russian art and social politics'. Ann Nugent (2000:79) believes that although Forsythe's ballets are perceived as 'disordered', there is consistently an underlying logic. However, it is not easy to observe the organisation because of the rupture with tradition and the change of normative practices in dance such as fragmentation. Another concept of postmodernism that is evident in Forsythe's work is

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[15] His work is a good example of the French New Dance; the recent move from Cunnigham-inspired abstractionism and towards more theatrical and fragmented narratives that do not compulsory disconnect dance from theatre or high art from popular culture (Adolphe 1990). Decouflé has a camp sensibility, a fondness for cross-dressing and an aspiration to debase the codes of high art in favour of a more popular appeal (Bixler 1999: 231-232). He performed with Karole Armitage and Régine Chopinot and they all had affinity for popular culture. He has produced works for the stage like *Triton* (1990) and *Technicolor* (1988) but also films such as *Codex* (1987), *Abracadabra* (1998).

intertextuality[16]. In conventional ballet circumstances there are dancers and choreographers, but Forsythe is interested in dismantling divisions. He believes that his dancers have a right to take part in the creative life of his company, and to provide ideas of their own (Nugent 2000:66). Though Forsythe is named as the choreographer, in some works he shifts from a position of single authority and is named within the collaborative network. He has clarified his role saying 'I try to deconstruct their [the dancers'] pre-conception of over-idealizing any authority figure. I find that disabling... I'm an initiator, and that's delightful - he who invents the game but not necessarily the rules' (Forsythe quoted in Littler, 1991:C6). With this probing of the conventional division between creator and performer, there is an alteration in the status of choreographer. Performers operate within a network of creative equality. His methodology has been collected together into a four-gigabyte digital recording called Improvisation Technologies (Nugent 2000:77). Forsythe is a ballet choreographer in whose works postmodern concepts are evident, such as deconstruction, fragmentation, intertextuality and diffuse authorship as well as the use of digital technology. His work is a paradigmatic example of postmodernity in ballet and his practical use of theoretical postmodern concepts sets directions for future ballet choreographers.

According to Cohen (1992:220), albeit ballet and modern dance still have their own territories, the borderline between them has been quite interrupted. If modern dance artists such as Duncan, Graham and Cunningham influenced ballet art of that time, today many modern dancers take ballet classes to enhance their techniques and ballet dancers take modern classes to expand their range. Many postmodern choreographers have created works for ballet companies, blending the

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[16] In 1983, shortly after Balanchine's death, Forsythe had created *France/Dance* for the Paris Opera Ballet, which was recognised as a tribute to Balanchine. At least one critic thought that it included 'direct quotations from *Apollo'* (Dunning, 1988).

two forms in varying ways[17]. Andreja Jeličić (2011:9) in journal *Kretanja* gives an example of crossing boundaries: Wayne McGregor's choreography when performed by the Random Dance Company is considered as contemporary dance, while it becomes ballet when performed by the Royal Ballet or when staged at *La Scala*.[18]

The term 'contemporary dance' does not relate only to the dance of our time. It has been in wide use from the second half of the 20th century when its meaning most commonly refers to choreographies which fuse historical and cultural styles and incorporate elements from many diverse dance practices, African, Asian, classical, modern, jazz, etc. (Jowitt 2011:15). Contemporary dance incorporated various styles and types of movement, such as folk, pedestrian, aerial, multicultural, athletic, minimal and repetitive (Kassing 2007:267). The choreographers of the 1980s and the 1990s were an eclectic group[19] and some moved past postmodern dance and collaborated with other artists; they used ballet, modern dance, gymnastics, contact improvisation, martial arts and body therapies (ibid.). Furthermore, Robey (2011:online) states that in our contemporary dance world, a commixing of postmodern processes and ideals with modern and classical techniques has resulted in a wide variety of contemporary forms. As Jowitt (2011:15) states:

> Post-modernist eclecticism fosters the incorporation or plundering of other forms—club dancing, hip hop, burlesque, cinema, literature, closed-circuit television, digital manipulation—whether to enhance a work's visual texture as Philippe Decouflé has done with film—or to ignite ideas and vision by rubbing disparate "texts" together.

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[17] According to Banes (1994:309) some events like the appointment of Baryshnikov as director of ABT in 1980, the death of Balanchine in 1983 and the growing regional ballet movements which demanded new choreography, all added to the move into the ballet arena of a number of postmodern choreographers including Gordon, Childs, Tharp, Laura Dean, Karole Armitage and Mark Morris.

[18] Arguably, Nijinsky's century-old vision of ballets almost devoid of ballet vocabulary mentioned on page 15, nowadays has become a widely accepted manner of choreographing new works.

[19] Brown, Gordon, Lar Lubovitsch, Bebe Miller, Morris

Postmodern blending of various styles is in accordance with the Integral theory promoted by Ken Wilber which synthesises pre-modern, modern and postmodern realities; that way, according to some authors, postmodernism has evolved to post-postmodernism and carries several names, one being transmodernism.[20] According to James Robey (2011:online) the artist who has included and blended aspects of all the preceding movements into his/her work implementing modern technical developments and postmodern theatrical devices and processes, surpasses a simple blend of styles and starts to develop a truly transmodern artistic statement. Like the postmodernists, the artist has embraced all states, but does so with understanding of the increasing level of complexity. In integrating classicism and modernism into his/her work, the skill of execution becomes important anew, but it is not placed above the process-driven postmodern developments.

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[20] In 1997, John Frow wrote an essay 'What Was Postmodernism?' However, according to Brian McHale (2007:para. 15), for Frow, 'the changed tense indicates, not that postmodernism is "dead and gone", over and done with, but that it continues to obey the modernist logic of innovation and obsolescence'. In his view, postmodernism is 'precisely a moment of the modern' (Frow cited in McHale 2007:para. 15). Modernism innovates and each innovation is made obsolete by the next innovation. It constantly distances itself from its latest manifestation, which then 'slides into the past' (ibid.). This logic of *superseding oneself* eventually demands that modernism itself becomes obsolete, needing a successor—postmodernism (ibid.).

Dr Alan Kirby (2006:para. 1) in his article 'The Death of Postmodernism and Beyond' claims that postmodernism is 'dead and buried' and that a new paradigm has taken its place, the 'paradigm of authority and knowledge formed under the pressure of new technologies and contemporary social forces'. He names this new paradigm pejoratively pseudo-modernism. In his words: 'In postmodernism, one read, watched, listened, as before. In pseudo-modernism one phones, clicks, presses, surfs, chooses, moves, downloads' (Kirby 2006:para. 18). In 2009, Kirby invents a new name for the new paradigm and discusses it in his book *Digimodernism: How New Technologies Dismantle the Postmodern and Reconfigure Our Culture* (2009).

In the article 'Postmodernism: Dead but not Gone' the theologian Colin Hansen (2011:para. 4) claims that the modernists wanted to open a window into a new world. Contrary to this, postmodernism resembles more 'a broken mirror, a reflecting surface made of many fragments'. In his view, there is a strong family resemblance between modernism and its 'prodigal son'. In his words 'the son swore he would never grow up to be like his father, who lusted after money and power. Then postmodernism looked in the mirror one day and recoiled at the likeness' (Hansen 2011:para. 6).

Cultural theorists Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker (2010:para. 15-16) define the next paradigm as metamodernism. Metamodernism is an oscillation between modernity and postmodernity: between the desire for sense and a doubt about the sense of it all, between sincerity and irony, hope and melancholy, etc. In their manifesto they claim that they recognise oscillation to be the natural order of the world and that they must liberate themselves from the inertia resulting from modernist ideological naivety and the cynical insincerity of its 'antonymous bastard child' as they call postmodernism.

Another post-postmodern concept called transmodernism was founded by philosopher Enrique Dussel. Transmodernism's philosophical views contain elements of both modernism and postmodernism. In transmodernism, there is a place for both tradition and modernity, and it seeks as a movement to revitalise and modernise tradition rather than destroy or replace it (cited in Cole 2007:68-69). Accordingly, Ken Wilber`s Integral theory draws together "an already existing number of separate paradigms into a network of interrelated, mutually enriching perspectives." (Visser, 2003:xii).

It is particularly interesting that in our time there has been a general interest in reviving masterworks of the past, as authentically as possible. But, there has also been interest in reinterpreting them anew—*Swan Lake, Cinderella* and *The Nutcracker* have all undergone various transformations (Cohen 1992:221). This depicts one of the contradictions in postmodernism—it can be neoconservatively nostalgic/reactionary or radically disruptive/revolutionary.

Among the first European contemporary dance choreographers to have revisited the masterworks of ballet history such as *Giselle* (1982) *Swan Lake* (1987)*, Sleeping Beauty* (1996) was Matz Ek who radically modified the means of expression—namely the dance idiom—and who brought the subject matter up to date. When reworking ballet classics Ek enlarged the psychological characterization of the roles and in greater depth considered the characters' relationship and their emotional response to the development of the action. Irony is a typical element in his works; dramatic situations and strong images are often contrasted with brief, humorous episodes[21].

According to Bremser and Sanders (2011:322) one of the best known French contemporary-dance choreographers of the generation that became prominent in the 1980s was Angelin Preljocaj. He learned classical ballet and continued to study both European and American modern-dance techniques (Meisner 2000:para. 9). He was one of the first to make radical changes and create a new contemporary version of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. He used fragmentation of Shakespeare's text and Prokofiev's music. Preljocaj recast Shakespeare's

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[21] In his *Swan Lake* there are references to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*; Siegfried is portrayed as the Danish Prince and the Queen as Gertrude, which is related to the concept of intertextuality. He also restaged several dramas like García Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba* (1978), Molière's *Don Juan* (1999), Jean Racine's *Andromaque* (2002) and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (2005) (Bremser & Sanders, 2011:144-147).

Romeo and Juliet (1990) as a conflict between the military of a dictatorship state and a group of homeless rebels[22].

Despite the newly revived interest in adaptations of canonical literary works, interest still lies in adaptations of the Petipa-Tchaikovsky ballets. One of the most inventive restaging of *The Nutcracker* was *The Hard Nut* (1991) by Morris. His work united two diverse trends: traditional modern dance with weightiness, musicality and liberal humanism with postmodern sensibility, irony, self-conscious historicism and political emphasis. He had an eclectic dance education—he studied ballet, dance, flamenco, Balkan folk dance, etc. (Bremser&Sanders 2011:233). According to Susan Au (2002:207) in *The Hard Nut* (1991), 'hearty rather than delicate in their unisex tutus, the male and female snowflakes trace choreographic patters as intricate as those of Petipa'. Using male black dancers as snowflakes he drew attention to biases of both race and gender.

Gender issues were also of interest to Matthew Bourne who created an all-male cast of *Swan Lake* (1995), and criticised monarchy's power plays in general, but particularly Britain's royal family (Jowitt 2011:14). His training included a combination of styles and techniques. Bourne made a career of revisiting famous ballets operas and films. Some of his other works are *The Nutcracker* (1992), *Cinderella* (1997), *Nutcracker!* (2002), etc.

These were just a few of the paradigmatic examples how ballet transforms itself in the contemporary artistic world. Despite the dedication to innovation and fusion of diverse styles and techniques, numerous young choreographers still draw upon this inexhaustible well for new inspirations. McGregor observes that ballet's 'extremity of line, the conformity, the detail, the

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[22] Some of his other prominent works are *Le Parc* (1994), *Le Sacre du Printempts* (2001), *Blanche Neige* (2008), *Les Nuits* (2013), etc. (Jowitt 2011:14).

precision, [and] the difficulty of clean technique [are] all amazing places from which to excavate, push, contradict, relearn'. He continues that the ballet vocabulary 'is a mine of potential, a breathtaking idea[s] bank!' (quoted in Bremser&Sanders 2011:257).

The ballet vocabulary is an inexhaustible inspiration that can be combined with other dancing styles as well as media. Jowitt (2011:16) says that recent choreographers experiment with computer-generated imagery and techniques juxtaposing live dancers with virtual ones. Choreographers such as Wim Vandekeybus and Lloyd Newson engaged in the possibilities of cinema creating dance films (Jowitt 2011:15). Youtube and other web sites provide a plenitude of video excerpts spanning from early works of Loie Fuller to recent works of Jérôme Bel, Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker, etc., so the next chapter discusses dance video.

DANCE FILM

Erin Brannigan in her book *Dancefilm: Choreography and the Moving Image* (2011) uses the term 'dancefilm' that encompasses a range of different formats; a variety of film types which include dance on screen. However, although there are many dances for the camera in the history of film making, such as in musicals, this text focuses on the lineage that had an impact on video dance as an autonomous genre of art.

Brannigan (2011) follows the lineage from early modern dance and the first 19th century recordings to the present-day contemporary video dance, but does not discuss the use of film or video as a component of stage productions. She makes a clear distinction between a dance film/video as documentary work and dance for camera that is choreographed and edited for the purpose of an artistic dance film. As scholar Dave Allen (1993:26) states:

> A clear distinction needs to be made here between those programmes which seek to re-present existing dance on the screen in order to make the work more widely available ... and other works in which directors, choreographers, and dancers attempt to address themselves to the nature of the medium and create *dance* film video specifically to be screened.

It is not by chance that the appearance of the camera coincides with the beginnings of modern dance. This is best described by Patrick Bensard (quoted in Brannigan 2011:19): 'It is no coincidence that as modern dance began, the cinematograph was invented and that as the first swirls of Loïe Fuller's veils occurred, the Lumière brothers cranked their camera for the first time...' while she danced her *Danse Serpentine* in 1896. In the same year, the first exhibition of Edison's projecting version of the Kinetoscope called the Vitascope showed the Leigh sisters doing their umbrella dance (Mitoma 2002:xix).

Silent cinema and modern dance share non-narrative, variety hall origins and reference points such as circus, slapstick, spectacle, acrobatics, melodrama and social dance (Brannigan 2011:81). Modern dance that appeared in greater part from vaudeville and music halls had similarities with early movie preoccupations. In Hollywood, in the early years of cinema numerous actors who were originally dancers studied at the Denishawn School in Los Angeles, where the Dalcroze and Delsartean training systems were combined with ballet classes, free movement and oriental dance (Brannigan 2011:16&82). Between 1894 and 1910 there were many short dance films featuring solo dancers mainly from vaudeville and burlesque such as *Karina* (1902), *Betsy Ross Dance* (1903) and *Little Lillian Toe Dancer* (1903). Dance was also included in the earliest narrative feature films such as St. Denis's work in *Intolerance* (1916) (Brannigan 2011:19).

Fuller appears as an important figure of this historical period because she embodied many influential ideas, especially the changing perception of the body in motion and its function regarding the productions of meaning. According to Brannigan (2011:23) Fuller preempted the famous modern artists such as Isadora Duncan and Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. The result of her spectacle was a figure in constant transformation—an 'unstable signifier' moving beyond the efforts and intentions of the dancer. This dancing figure was a departure from both the ballerina and the showgirl in terms of her physical dimensions and kinetic range. For Mallarmé, the performances of Fuller were an 'industrial accomplishment' due to her use of lighting, design and the use of technology that were intrinsic to her choreographic innovations (Brannigan 2011:32).

Fuller and Duncan as examples of early modern dancers wanted to create a form independent of the other arts, by creating new types of movement. The 'dissolution of the pose' brings Fuller

and Duncan into the same field of motion; for Duncan via Delsartism and the notion of 'an involuntary stream of movement' and for Fuller via her use of costumes and technology. Today, they can be perceived as part of a movement revolution that integrated popular culture and high art, cinema and modern dance corresponding to the developments in the field of philosophy (Brannigan 2011:34).

Lynn Garafola (1998) shows how cinematic influence was evident at the beginning of the 20th century even on the classical stage, at least in those segments that were open to modern tendencies such as the Ballet Russes and their encounter with the Futurists who were producing numerous films at that time. Choreographer Massine collaborated with Giacomo Balla on *Feud'artifice* and the result was a performance that had a 'light show played on a setting of geometrical solids' that according to Garafola (1998:12-13), 'most closely approximated film'. The era of Diaghilev was abundant in crossovers between dance and film (Garafola 1998:21). Cocteau and Nijinska also implemented cinematic effects in their works, including *Le Train Bleu* (1924), such as freezes, silent film characters and slow-motion action. Jane Pritchard (1996:29) suggests that even Fokine fell under the influence of the acting style present in silent cinema in his resistance to balletic pantomime. Fokine's revolt against stylised pantomime and his insistence on a more natural style of acting paralleled the changes in acting on the drama stage of the preceding decades and corresponded with silent screen acting.

Although Diaghilev played with film as a setting and a mimetic device, it was his rival Rolf de Mare who first made it part of a ballet: in 1924, Ballets Suedois premiered *Relache,* choreographed by Jean Börlin to the music of Eric Satie. With a scenario by the painter Francis Picabia, who designed the sets, the ballet included a cinematic interlude, *Entr'acte*, directed by Rene Clair, who made his first on-screen appearance in Loie Fuller's *Le Lys de la vie* and as a

director with *Paris qui dort* in 1923 (Garafola 1998:17). However, in 1928 Diaghilev produced for Ballet Russes a multimedia spectacle *Ode*, choreographed by Massine to the music of Nabokov with designs by Tchelitchew, in which film projections and lighting effects enjoyed the same right as the choreographic presentation and at times even appeared to dominate these (Woitas n.d.:para. 22). Tchelitchew's scenario describes the ballet's cinematic and lighting effects that recall earlier experiments by Fuller and newer ones by film-maker Henri Chomette (Rene Clair's brother) and the surrealist artist Man Ray (Garafola 1998:17). With the development of theatre technology that offers numerous editing possibilities, cinematic effects are increasingly present in live contemporary dance works. Jochen Schmidt in his *Exploitation or Symbiosis* (1991:97) outlines the more recent history of this stage practice, examining the works of Trisha Brown, Hans van Manen, Pina Bausch, Jerome Robbins and William Forsythe. Bausch was greatly influenced by cinema in her work and Schmidt states that 'the works of Pina Bausch are much closer to an Eisenstein movie than to classical or narrative ballet' (quoted in Daly 2002:12). Bausch used montage, foreground/background contrasts, fade-outs and cross-fades thus resulting in a work which challenged the linear, syntactical approach favoured by most theatrical dance (Ana Sanchez-Colberg 1993:219-20). Bob Morris (1989:47) writes about choreographers of the 1960s and the 1970s who were engaged with filmic aesthetics and inspired by the screen, including the work of Cunningham, Tharp and the Judson Group. Recent choreographers like Forsythe use film as an influence on their choreographic process, where his dancers improvise to sequences from *Alien* and *Aliens* in Forsythe's stage work *Alie/na/ction* (1992). Choreographers such as Matthew Bourne and Mark Murphy have also drawn their inspirations from cinematic spectacle. Thus, choreographers draw upon their familiarity with film culture and cinema, as a cultural structural and aesthetic influence and a key reference point (Brannigan 2011:5).

From early cinema Brannigan (2011:125-126) charts a lineage of experimental dance film through the Surrealist and Dadaist filmmakers over singular revolutionaries such as Maya Deren to contemporary short dance films. Maya Deren (1917-1961), real name Eleanora Derenkowskaia, is the next important milestone after Fuller who, according to Brannigan is the logical precursor of Deren. Both of them placed the human body at the centre of their aesthetic and technological exploration. Unlike Fuller, Deren never credited herself as the choreographer of her films, although she collaborated with choreographers and made five movies with explicit dance content starting with *A Study in Choreography for Camera (*1952*)*. She developed her own aesthetics and dance film form, working against the conventions of mainstream cinema and rejecting documentary, abstract and surrealist traditions (Brannigan 2011:100-102). Deren (1967:10) said: 'I feel that film is related more closely to dance than any other form because, like dance, it is conveyed in time....[I]t conveys primarily by visual projection and ...it operates on a level of stylisation—it is the quality of the movement that renders the meaning'.

Deren developed the experimental dance film dealing with fluidity of movement, but also applied three innovative concepts: vertical film form, depersonalisation and stylisation of gesture. Her vertical film form concept accounted for the different film structure in non-narrative films which she calls 'poetic film'; rather than progressing horizontally with the logic of the narrative, vertical film sequences explore the quality of moments, ideas, images and movements (Brannigan 2011:101). She also introduced depersonalisation—'a type of screen performance that subsumes the individual into the choreography of the film as a whole' (ibid.). Through her third concept, stylisation of gesture, the manipulation of gestural action happens via individual performances as well as cinematic effects (ibid.).

Deren's model of dance can be linked with contemporary dance practices—it looked to stylizations, abstraction, and depersonalisation in order to distance movements from the utilitarian everyday and cliché. Artists of the later 20th century, such as Yvonne Rainer and Trisha Brown, turned their attention to radical methodologies that dramatically changed the phrasing and quality of movements, opposing habit, recognitions, and familiarity (Brannigan 2011:14-15). Deren employed cinematic techniques such as multiple exposures, slow-motion, jump cuts, superimpositions, matches-on-action, freeze-frame, negative film sequences and acute camera angles (cited in Brannigan 2011:100). According to Brannigan (2011:123) the success of dance film artists such as Andrea Boll with the Hans Hof Ensemble, Lloyd Newson with DV8 Physical Theatre, Pina Bausch with Tanztheater Wuppertal and WimVandekeybus with UltimaVez owes much to early experiments undertaken by Deren.

Yvonne Rainer in the 1960s is the next key person who is a choreographer and filmmaker and who is responsible for the further development of dance film. Although her predecessor Cunningham also made some recordings especially with an educational purpose of presenting his dancing technique, Rainer continues the developmental line of Deren dealing with the fluidity of movement and the incapability of the human eye to notice every choreographic i.e. dancing movement. Rainer's development of a movement model which is characterised by continual and consistently oscillating motion, challenges the regular patterns and rhythms of human action relating to dramatic performance and the everyday, producing what Brannigan (2011:126) calls 'anarchic phrasing'. Rainer wanted to give an impression that the body is 'constantly engaged in transitions'; that there is a 'continuity of separate phrases' that did not repeat and she 'does not allow for pauses, accents, or stillness' (quoted in Brannigan 2011:129). The film *Trio A* (1978) Rainer directed twelve years after its original stage performance and

featured herself. In it the movements go one into the next, with no pauses or stillness; the transitions are imperceptible from the steps themselves (Brannigan 2011:130).

Brown further developed the idea of phraseless, neutral, unpredictable movement in her choreographic research especially in her extremely fast and fluid choreography *Watermotor* which has two video versions. In the late 1970s, Babette Mangolte's film titled *Water Motor* as well as Peter Campus's version from 1980, presented the type of dance that 'challenges the parameters of human perception' (Brannigan 2011:125). Mangolte stated that the affinity between ballet and the pose and the tendency for modern dance to avoid any such decisive moments actually put her off photographing dance altogether and led her to record *Watermotor*.

It may be argued that film, since its emergence that coincided with the modern tendencies in art and the appearance of modern dance, had great impact on ballet and dance art since the first works of Fuller, through the fact that the first Hollywood actors were accomplished dancers; over the influence of film on the new choreographers' ideas since the beginning of the 20th century and the presence of dance in musicals and other films; over documentary recording of choreographies to the usage of video as a component of stage productions. However, for this discussion, the lineage from Fuller and Deren to postmodernist Rainer through Brown and other contemporary dance filmmakers such as Philippe Decouflé, who is also famous for his dance films and pop videos, has the main significance for a distinctive field of art called video dance, which led the filmmakers to experiment with various rendering techniques such as slow motion, multiple-exposure, repetition, reverse-motion, and digital postproduction techniques such as image scratching. These all serve to produce new forms of choreographic practice and new modes of cine-choreography. The rendering process surpasses reproduction, taking the

choreographic elements to a new state or condition; the film itself becomes dance-like (Brannigan 2011:127).

CONCLUSION

In this paper dance and ballet works are considered in a wider context creating tools for thinking and reasoning. The text offers an insight into the relationship of dance and ballet art until today, their diversity and influence. Linear history of ballet is paralleled with the linear history of contemporary dance focusing on the intersections of the fields. Questions relating to defining classicism in ballet as well as the diverse modern and post-modern influences are discussed.

It is demonstrated that although ballet and modern dance still have their own territories, the borderline between them has been interrupted. Many postmodern choreographers have created works for ballet companies, blending the two forms in varying ways, defining characteristics of the contemporary approach such as multiculturality, crossing genres, hybridisation, usage of multimedia, etc.

After reading this paper the students will be able to:

- Recognise the role and position of ballet and dance art throughout history and today

- Recognise a wider context that determines the evaluation criteria in a specific historical, spatial, cultural and political moment

- Understand the specific implications that prominent choreographic works have on dance art today.

Furthermore, they are expected to continue their own individual research and:

- Gather, analyse and evaluate information

- Master and use available resources

- Debate on the basis of arguments and different postulates of renowned experts in the field

- Conduct individual work, self-initiative and problem solving.

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